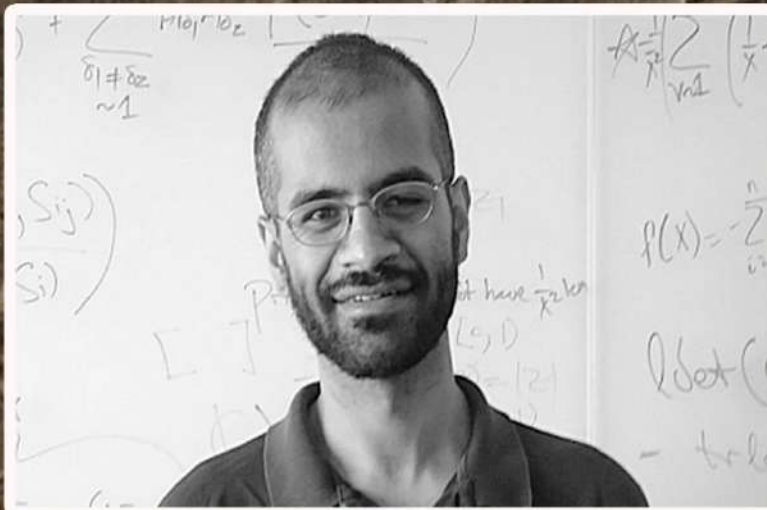


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TNPSC BITS

- ❖ The 7th World Tamil Economic Conference and Virtual Global Economic Summit 2020 was virtually inaugurated by the Pudhucherry Chief Minister Narayana Samy.
 - It was organized by the World Tamils Economic Foundation and Madras Development Society.
- ❖ India's junior Grandmasters (GM) Nihal Sarin, D Gukesh and Women International Master (WIM) Rakshitta Ravi recorded victories to bag a gold medal each in the Fide Online World Cadets and Youth Rapid chess championships.
- ❖ The Global Family Day is celebrated every January 1 in the United States as a global day of peace and sharing.
- ❖ The Andhra Pradesh government has launched the housing-sites distribution exercise under the 'Pedalandariki Illu' (houses for all the poor) scheme.
- ❖ The Serum Institute of India has launched the country's first indigenously developed pneumococcal vaccine PNEUMOSIL for children.
- ❖ The Indian Oil Corp (IOC) has launched the country's first remote monitoring system for oil refineries' turbines.
 - The project, located in Hyderabad, is implemented by BHEL-GE Gas Turbine Services (BGGTS), a joint venture of BHEL and General Electric.
- ❖ The Chhattisgarh government signed a contract for the country's first ethanol plant to be set up in the state under the public-private partnership (PPP) model.
- ❖ India's first pollinator park was established at Haldwani in Nainital district of the Uttarakhand.
 - Pollinators include bees, birds, butterflies, moths, beetles, wasps, bats and small mammals.
- ❖ The leaders of the European Union (EU) on December 30, 2020 signed the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the Brexit trade deal.
- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Bhutan to enhance cooperation for the peaceful use of outer space.
 - The Outer Space Treaty was passed by United Nations in 1963.
- ❖ The Australian government amends its National Anthem to honor its indigenous people.
- ❖ The Union Cabinet has also given its approval for the opening of Indian Diplomatic Missions in three nations including Estonia, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic in 2021.
- ❖ The Ministry of Labor has notified 8.5% rate of interest on Employees Provident Fund for 2019/20.



- ❖ The US White House has recently issued a directive for the first ever nuclear reactor on the Moon by 2026.
- ❖ Argentina has legalized abortions up to the 14th week of pregnancy.
- ❖ The chairman of railway board V.K. Yadav was conferred with Eminent Engineer Award 2020.
 - It was given by the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) for his outstanding contribution towards modernization and reforms over Indian Railways.
- ❖ Chhattisgarh's tableau has been chosen for the 2021 Republic Day parade for the second time in a row.
 - The tableau will display folk instruments used in tribal areas of Chhattisgarh with its cultural surroundings.
- ❖ The Chinese industrialist Zhong Shanshan has overtaken Mukesh Ambani to become Asia's richest person.
- ❖ The former Eastern Railway General Manager Suneet Sharma was appointed as the new Railway Board Chairman and CEO.
- ❖ Soma Mondal has taken over as the new chairperson of Steel Authority of India Limited, SAIL.
 - She is the first woman chairperson of the SAIL.
- ❖ The Uttar Pradesh Government is to launch Kisan Kalyan mission.
 - It aims to double the farmer income covering all the Assembly constituencies of the state of Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ The cabinet of Punjab recently approved the Punjab state data policy.
 - It becomes the first state in India to formulate a comprehensive data policy.
- ❖ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the extension of tenure of K.Sivan for a period of one year up to January 14, 2022.
 - He is the current Secretary (Space) and ex-officio chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation.
- ❖ The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) observed the 63rd Foundation Day of its establishment on January 01, 2021.
 - It was established in 1958.
- ❖ Goa's 14-year-old Leon Mendonca has become India's 67th chess Grandmaster (GM) by winning at the Vergani Cup held in Italy.
 - Leon is the second Indian to become GM this year after G. Akash of Tamilnadu.
- ❖ The home minister of India released the National Police K-9 Journal in New Delhi.
 - The publication is first of its kind in the country on the subject of police service K9s, police dogs, etc.



- ❖ Kazakhstan recently abolished the death penalty.
- ❖ Pakistan has become the second highest audience for Doordarshan and All India Radio.
- ❖ Britain became the first nation in the world to roll out the low-cost and easily transportable Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.
- ❖ The Miss World 2017 winner Manushi Chillar has been roped in by United Nations Women for a global initiative called #OrangeTheWorld to raise awareness on gender-based violence.
- ❖ The Puducherry government has announced ₹200 as Pongal gift each to below poverty line (BPL) ration cardholders in the Union territory of Puducherry.
- ❖ Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has unveiled Khadi India's official e-Commerce site eKhadiIndia.com.
- ❖ The North Zone Cultural Centre, Patiala under the Indian Ministry of Culture and Jammu & Kashmir Academy jointly organized the National folk dance festival at Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ The UK PM Boris Johnson cancelled his planned trip to India to be the chief guest at the Republic Day Parade 2021.
- ❖ The Madhya Pradesh Cabinet has approved the Freedom to Religion Bill, 2020 as an Ordinance.
 - Previously, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh have passed similar laws.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami announced that the State government would grant a public holiday on Thai Poosam day every year.
- ❖ The Indian government, the Government of West Bengal, and the World Bank signed a project of USD 105 million for improving the inland water transport infrastructure in Kolkata of West Bengal.
- ❖ The Delhi Government recently issued guidelines to reduce the weight of school bags of students in the National Capital Region.
 - The weight of the school bag of students between Class 1 and Class 10 should not be more than 10% of their body weight.
- ❖ Pablo Caesar of Argentina was announced as the head of the international jury of 51st International Film Festival of India.
- ❖ The World Bank recently released the Global Economic Prospects report.
 - According to the report the Indian economy is to contract by 9.6% in 2020-21.
- ❖ Union Education Minister Ramesh pokhriyal nishank and the Union Minister of textiles and women and child development Smriti Irani launched Toycathon 2021.
 - It will promote the manufacturing of indigenous toys.
- ❖ UNICEF recently announced that more than 371,504 babies were born in the World on January 1.

- At 59,995, India records highest number of births on New Year's Day.
- ❖ The Union petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the India's first migrant worker cell at Surat in Gujarat.
 - It is to help Odia migrant workers working in different industries of the city.
- ❖ Claire Polosak of Australia has become the first woman to match official in men's test.
 - She is to take up as the fourth umpire role in the third test of Australia-India series starting at Sydney Cricket Ground.
- ❖ The Central government has decided to form a 10-member committee for the protection of the language, land, and culture of the Ladakh region.
 - The committee by the government will be headed by G Kishan Reddy, the Minister of State for Home.
- ❖ Madhya Pradesh has rolled out 'Launch Pad Scheme' to make the youth in the state self-reliant.
- ❖ The Bombay High Court recently declared that the advertisement of an article using the name of god and claiming that it has Supernatural qualities is illegal.
- ❖ The Punjab Chief Minister Amrendra Singh launched a scheme to provide free sanitary pads to high school and college girls.
 - Also, he launched the Basera program to give property rights to slum dwellers.
- ❖ After Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh states, Telangana has become the third state to successfully undertaken the urban local body reforms stipulated by the Ministry of Finance.
- ❖ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs recently chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the scheme to boost the industrial development of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - It has allocated 28,400 crores of Rupees for that scheme.
- ❖ In a first of its kind initiative to promote education of the girl child, the Assam State Government has said every school-going girl student will get Rs 100 per day for attending classes.
- ❖ According to a new German law, the Listed companies with four executives or more must appoint at least one woman to their boards.
 - It was proposed after voluntary efforts failed to close a gender gap at Germany.
- ❖ India's head coach Ravi Shastri launched a book 'India's 71-year Test: The Journey to Triumph in Australia'.
 - The book reflects on India's first 12 tours to Australia – from 1947/48.



- ❖ Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank (SMCB) becomes first urban co-operative bank to transition to Small Finance Bank.
 - It currently operates in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, and Uttarakhand.
- ❖ The Tripura state cabinet has decided to provide government jobs to the next of kin of those who lost their lives in political violence till March 2018.
- ❖ The Defence Ministry of India has launched the Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO).
- ❖ New Zealand has achieved the top spot in the Test cricket rankings.
 - It achieved this feat for the first time in the rankings' history.
- ❖ The Union Cabinet has given its approval to the sign the agreement between India and Japan on 'Specified Skilled Worker'.
 - It will facilitate the mobility of workers and skilled professionals from India to Japan.
- ❖ The Social media firm Twitter has permanently suspended US President Donald Trump's account.
- ❖ The North Korean leader Kim Jong-un recently called the United States the "biggest enemy" of his country.
- ❖ The Justice Hima Kohli was sworn in as the first female chief Justice of the High Court of Telangana.
- ❖ The fashion designer Satya Paul passed away at the age of 79.
 - He launched the first saree boutique in India L'Affaire.
- ❖ Punjab dedicates the month of January to girl child as 'Dheeyan Di Lohri' scheme.
 - Lohri is the harvest festival of north India celebrated annually on January 13.
- ❖ The World's largest Floating solar energy project is to be constructed at Omkareshwar dam on Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh.
 - Three agencies namely International Finance Corporation, World Bank and Power Grid would be providing aid for the project.
- ❖ The Chief Minister of Karnataka, B.S. Yediyurappa launched Krishi Sanjeevani Vans in Bengaluru.
 - It will reach out to the agriculture fields for testing water, soil and will also suggest remedies for pest control to improve yield.
- ❖ A High-Level Committee, headed by the Prime Minister has been constituted to commemorate the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.
 - It will decide on the activities for a one-year long commemoration, beginning 23rd January 2021.
- ❖ Agnes Keleti, the oldest living Olympic champion, turned 100 on January 9, 2021.



- She won 10 medals for Hungary in gymnastics at the Olympic Games.
- ❖ The storm Filomena has brought the heaviest snowfall in Spain.
- ❖ A passenger plane of Indonesia's Sriwijaya Air crashed into waters off Jakarta.
 - The Boeing 737-500 was started from Jakarta to reach Pontianak on Indonesia's Borneo Island.
- ❖ Twitter has permanently suspended the account of outgoing President Donald Trump due to "risk of further incitement of violence".
- ❖ The Supreme Court on January 12, 2021 criticised the government's handling of the farmers' protests and stayed the implementation of the three farm laws until further notice.
- ❖ In the 51st International Film Festival, Bangladesh will be the country of focus.
 - It will be held at Goa.
- ❖ Bharat Biotech has signed an agreement with Precisa Medicamentos for the supply of COVAXIN to Brazil.
- ❖ The External Affairs Minister Jaishankar proposed an eight-point agenda to address the menace of terrorism.
 - He made it at the UNSC open debate on 'International Cooperation in combating terrorism 20 years after the adoption of 1373'.
- ❖ The Union Cabinet gave its approval for the purchase of 10 trainer aircraft and 83 Tejas Light Combat Aircraft fighter jets.
 - The Tejas LCA is an indigenously designed and manufactured fourth-generation fighter.
- ❖ The commander Abhilash Tomy retired from Indian Navy.
 - He was the first Indian to circumnavigate the globe solo and unassisted in a sail yacht.
- ❖ The Union Cabinet recently approved India-UAE Memorandum of Understanding for Scientific and Technical Cooperation.
- ❖ The Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry recently announced that the new Foreign Trade Policy 2021-26.
 - It aims to make India a 5 trillion USD economy in 2024.
- ❖ 'Gazing Eastwards: Of Buddhist Monks and Revolutionaries in China' is a new book authored by Romila Thapar.
- ❖ The Former chief election commissioner (CEC) S Y Quraishi has come out with his book titled "The Population Myth: Islam, Family Planning and Politics in India".
- ❖ The 4th edition of the Cherry Blossom Festival was virtually inaugurated at Mao in Manipur.
 - Manipur has been celebrating the festival every year since 2017.

- ❖ The Women will be inducted as pilots in the Army Aviation Corps from 2022.
 - Till now, they have only been a part of ground duties in the Aviation Corps.
- ❖ The Indian Army signed a contract with the firm ideaForge to procure high-altitude variant of SWITCH drones or UAV, Unmanned Air Vehicles.
- ❖ In a historic first since Independence, the Union Budget 2021-22 will go paperless due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Usually, the Budget gets printed every year by over 100 employees who need to stay together for around 15 days.
- ❖ The Prime Minister flagged off a weekly train service from Chennai to Kevadiya in Gujarat.
 - Kevadiya Station in Gujarat is also the first railway station of India with a Green Build Certification.
- ❖ India's first voter Shyam Saran Negi (103) voted in the panchayat elections in Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh on January 17, 2021.
 - Believed to be the first voter in the 1952 General Election, Negi was born on July 1, 1917.
- ❖ The Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' was conferred with the "Sahitya Gaurav Samman" by the Hindi Writers Guild, Canada for his literary work.
- ❖ The 51st edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Goa has conferred Biswajit Chatterjee with the Indian Personality of the Year Award.
 - He is a veteran actor, producer, director and singer of Hindi and Bengali cinema.
- ❖ The Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Ordinance, 2020 came into effect from January 18.
 - The Ordinance bans slaughter of cows, bulls, and bullocks of all ages, besides he or she buffaloes aged below 13.
- ❖ The UN Human Rights Council elected Fiji as its 2021 President.
- ❖ India will provide 2 million doses of the 'Covishield' vaccine to Bangladesh as a gift.
 - The Covishield vaccine is locally manufactured by the Serum Institute of India.
- ❖ The Nepali Mountain climbers are the first to climb the world's second highest mountain K2 in winter.
- ❖ The Mountain is located in Gilgit-Baltistan side of Karakoram range.
- ❖ A bird festival is to be organised at Mahananda wildlife Sanctuary in West Bengal.
 - The festival is first of its kind in West Bengal.



- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched Rs 1,000-crore 'Startup India Seed Fund'.
 - It was announced at the 'Prarambh: Startup India International Summit' 2021.
- ❖ The Outgoing Trump government of USA declares China's atrocities against Uyghurs as 'genocide'.
 - Uyghurs are recognized one of China's 55 officially recognized ethnic minorities and native to the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in Northwest China.
- ❖ India will supply COVID-19 vaccines to six countries- Myanmar, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, and Seychelles.
 - While Covaxin is an indigenous vaccine developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with ICMR, Covishield has been developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca.
- ❖ The Semeru volcano located in Indonesia's East Java province erupted recently.
- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India said that SBI, ICICI and HDFC banks continue to be Domestic Systematically Important Banks.
- ❖ The book — 'Abdul Kalam-Ninaivugalukku Maranamillai' (immortal memories) — has been penned by A P J M Nazema Maraikayar, the niece of the late President.
- ❖ The Maharashtra government has renamed Gorewada International Zoo in Nagpur as 'Balasaheb Thackeray Gorewada International Zoological Park.
- ❖ The Union government has appointed RS Sharma as the chairperson of an empowered committee for the administration of Covid-19 vaccine.
 - He was the former Chief of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.
- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India has constituted a working group led by Jayant Kumar Dash on digital lending — including online platforms and mobile apps.
- ❖ The Chief Minister of Bihar Nitish Kumar has inaugurated the first-ever bird festival of the state, 'Kalrav', at Nagi-Nakti bird sanctuary.
- ❖ Infosys has recently announced that it has been accredited with the Google Cloud Partner Specialization in the data and analytics space.
- ❖ Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has launched Himachal Pradesh's first online youth radio station "Radio Hills-Youngistan Ka Dil".
- ❖ The Howrah-Kalka Mail has been renamed as the 'Netaji Express'.
 - The train connects Howrah in Kolkata in the Eastern Indian state of West Bengal to Kalka in the North-Western state of Haryana.
- ❖ The Defence Research and Development Organization signed an MoU with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
 - The agreement is for promoting and strengthening the sustainable geohazard management.



- ❖ The Sri Lankan bowler Lasith Malinga has decided to retire from franchise cricket.
 - He was a part of the Mumbai Indians franchise in the Indian Premier League since 2008.
- ❖ The Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa recently launched Avalokana software.
 - The software will enable the state government to access data on expenditures and sanctions incurred on 1,800 programmes.
- ❖ Pakistan has successfully test-fired the Shaheen-III missile.
 - It is a nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile which can strike targets up to 2,750 km.
- ❖ The U.S. has resumed its funding for the World Health Organization (WHO).
 - The US is the largest contributor to the WHO.
- ❖ The Andhra Pradesh government is set to introduce ration door delivery system.
 - Already Delhi government is implementing such a scheme.
- ❖ Tripura Government has announced that it is to provide free sanitary napkins to all girls from class sixth to twelfth.
 - This new scheme will be called 'Kishori Suchita Abhiyan'.
- ❖ Madhya Pradesh has started the Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme for Power Subsidy in Vidisha District.
 - It is the first time in India.
- ❖ Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has inaugurated the annual Toshali National Crafts Mela in Bhubaneswar.
 - It has become one of the most popular handlooms and handicrafts fairs in Eastern India.
- ❖ Meghalaya Chief Minister, Conrad K. Sangma has inaugurated India's longest road arch bridge "Wahrew Bridge" at Sohbar in East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya.
- ❖ The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has won the Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI) 10th National Ice Hockey Championship trophy after a win over Ladakh in the finals in Gulmarg.
 - Ladakh has been considered as the capital of ice hockey in India.
- ❖ The Department of Science and Technology announced that India is currently in third position in scientific publications after China and US.
- ❖ The Union Minister of Home Affairs Amit Shah launched the Ayushman Bharat Health Scheme for the Central Armed Police Force (CAPF).
- ❖ Shruti Goswami, a nineteen-year-old Haridwar-based student, become the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand for one day on National Girl Child Day.
- ❖ Himachal Pradesh celebrated its 50th Statehood day on January 25, 2021.

- Himachal became the 18th state of India on 25 January 1971.
- ❖ The first BTR (Bodoland Territorial Region) Accord Day was celebrated on January 24, 2021 at Assam.
- ❖ Spain and France have recently signed an agreement to build 590 MW of solar power plant at Spain.
 - This will be the largest solar power plant in Europe.
- ❖ The United Arab Emirates cabinet has approved the setting up of an embassy in Tel Aviv, Israel.
 - Israel also officially opened its embassy in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates.
- ❖ Nepal PM KP Sharma Oli has been expelled from the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) over his decision to dissolve the Parliament.
- ❖ The first commercial flight services between Delhi and Sikkim commenced.
 - The flight landed at Pakyong airport at Sikkim, the 100th Airport of the country.

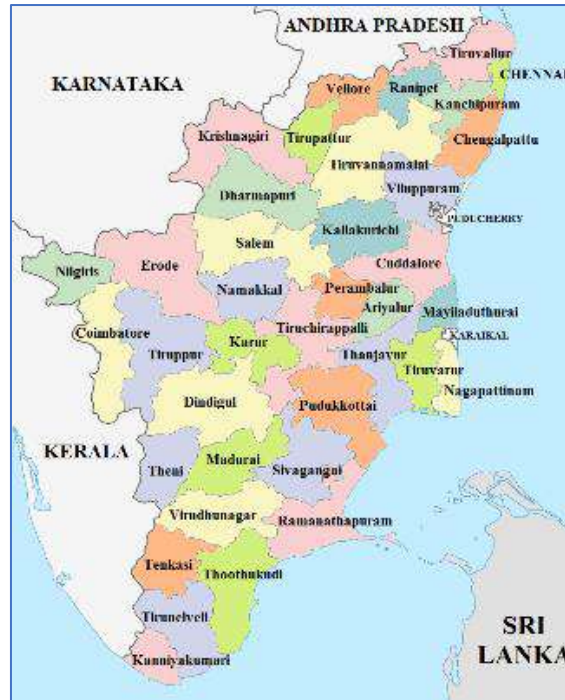
TAMIL NADU

Spotlight on Infant Feeding in Tamil Nadu report 2020

- ❖ Thirty-four per cent of births in Tamil Nadu are by the caesarean part.
- ❖ It is above the WHO threshold of 15 percent.
- ❖ It is also greater than the speed recorded in different States.
- ❖ Out of total caesarean sections, 26 per cent happen in public health facilities and 51 per cent in private facilities.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu is ranked tenth among all States based on infant feeding score.
- ❖ It was provided by the National Health Mission of the Ministry of Health.

38th district of Tamilnadu

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palanisamy on 28th December inaugurated the newly-formed Mayiladuthurai district.
- ❖ The 38th district in the state has been carved out of Nagapattinam district.
- ❖ The new district comprises four taluks - Mayiladuthurai, Sirkazhi, Tarangambadi, and Kuthalam.



Cauvery-Vaigai-Gundar River linking

- ❖ The Foundation stone for the Cauvery-Vaigai-Gundar river linking project will be laid in January 2021.
- ❖ The project involves construction of a 255.60-kilometre-long canal from Mayanur in Karur district to link river Kaveri with Vaigai.
- ❖ The link canal will run through the districts of Karur, Trichy, Pudukkottai, Sivaganga, Ramanathapuram and Virudhunagar.

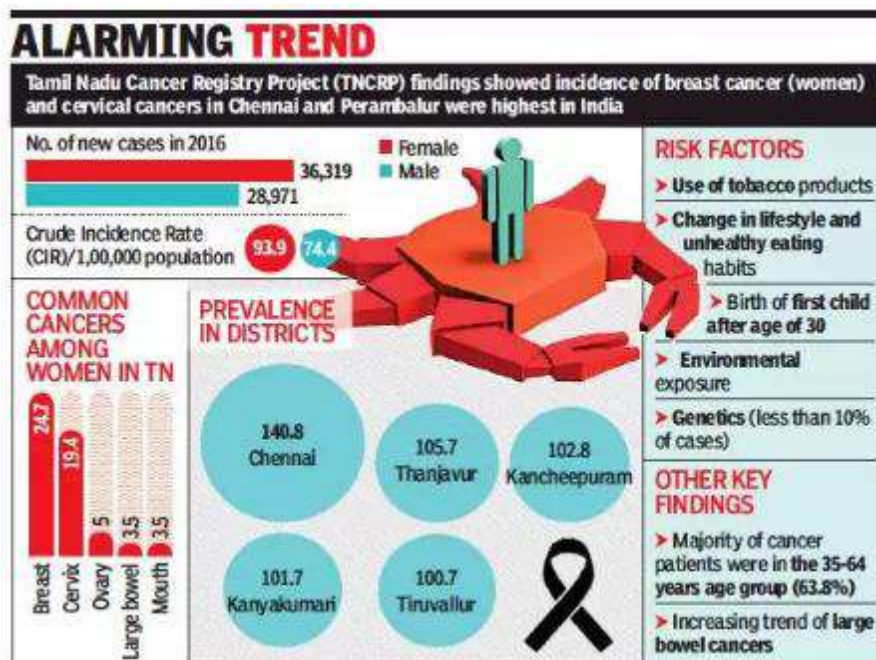


Cubes in Space

- ❖ Riyasdeen from Tamilnadu had participated a global competition the Cubes in Space.
- ❖ His 37 mm sized FEMTO satellites VISION SAT v1 and v2 has made it to the world's lightest FEMTO satellite.
- ❖ This satellite is expected to be launched in NASA Zero pressure Research Balloon under RB 6 mission during August 2021.
- ❖ Riyasdeen, a student at Sastra University, is from Karanthai in Thanjavur.
- ❖ The Cubes in Space competition is organised by 'idoodle Eduinc' of NASA for the students in the age group between 11 and 18.



Tamil Nadu Cancer Registry Project



- ❖ Tamil Nadu Cancer Registry Project (TNCRP) report was jointly released by the Cancer Institute and the state health department.
- ❖ The Crude Incidence Rate (CIR) of all cancers per 1,00,000 population was 93.9 among women compared to 74.4 in men.
- ❖ This is the highest demographic evaluated by any cancer registry in the world.
- ❖ The highest CIR of cancers was observed in Chennai (140.8) and the least in Krishnagiri (48.5).
- ❖ The incidence of breast cancer in women observed in Chennai (46.4 per 1,00,000 women) was the highest in the country.

New Madras Chief Justice High Court

- ❖ The Supreme Court Collegium has proposed the appointment of Justice Sanjib Banerjee as Chief Justice of the Madras High Court.
- ❖ He will be the 50th Chief Justice of Madras High Court.
- ❖ Currently he is serving as Judge of the Calcutta High Court.
- ❖ The present Chief Justice AP Sahi retired on December 31.

New Chairman of TN SHRC

- ❖ The retired Judge of Madras High Court S.Bhaskaran took charge as the new chairman of the Tamilnadu State Human Rights Commission.
- ❖ He was appointed by the Governor of Tamilnadu.
- ❖ The appointment as members and the Chairman of the Commission are to be recommended by a Committee comprising the Chief Minister, Speaker of the State Legislative Assembly, Minister in-charge of the Home Department and the Leader of the Opposition.
- ❖ The Post was vacant since the last December 2019 after the tenure of Retired High Court Judge Meena Kumari.
- ❖ In 2020 February, the Justice Jayachandran has been appointed as the Acting Chairman to this commission.

Modernize and restore the irrigation system of Cauvery

- ❖ Tamil Nadu government has embarked on a ₹350 crore work to modernize and restore the irrigation system of Cauvery sub basin.
- ❖ It includes:
 - Budalur and Tiruvaiyaru taluks of Thanjavur district,
 - strengthen Nandan canal in Villupuram district, and
 - construct seven check dams between Bhavanisagar dam and Kalingarayan anicut in Erode district.

- ❖ The seven check dams will come up at various locations of Bhavani river and its tributaries over a length of 69km.
- ❖ The proposed artificial recharge structures will be built in Sathya Mangalam, T N Palayam, Gobichettipalayam and Anthiyur blocks.

Bio-heritage sites

- ❖ The Tamilnadu State government identified three ecologically fragile areas.
- ❖ They are:
 - Arittapatty in Madurai,
 - Vagaikulam in Tirunelveli and
 - Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) in Coimbatore.
- ❖ It will be shortly issued as Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS).

About Arittapatti

- ❖ Tamil Brahmi stone inscriptions, dating back to the second century BCE (Before Common Era), are found in Kalinjamalai located at Arittapatti.
- ❖ An inscription found at Arittapatti indicated that earlier the village was called 'Paathirikudi'.
- ❖ The inscriptions indicate that two persons - Nelvazhi Sizhivan and Ilanji Imayavan - had given shelter to the Jain monks at this cave
- ❖ During the Pandya reign, the Arittapatti village was part of 'thenparappu nadu'.
- ❖ Near the cave, a sculpture of an ancient Jain Thirthankara is found.
- ❖ A 10th century CE vattezhuthu inscription found under the sculpture says that Kalinjamalai was earlier called as 'Thiruppinaianmalai'.
- ❖ The other important heritage spot in the village is the 8th century rock-cut temple of Lord Shiva with a rare sculpture of Lakulisa.
- ❖ An inscription belonging to Sadayavarman Vikaramapandiyan period is found at another structural Shiva temple.

Flood mitigation project

- ❖ The Tamilnadu Water Resources Department has finalised a tie-up with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Development Bank (AIIDB).
- ❖ The project was designed to create an effective water management system to augment water storage capacity, restore missing links of water bodies, and mitigate flood in highly vulnerable areas.
- ❖ It includes in Chennai, Kancheepuram, Chengalpet, Tiruvallur and Cuddalore districts.

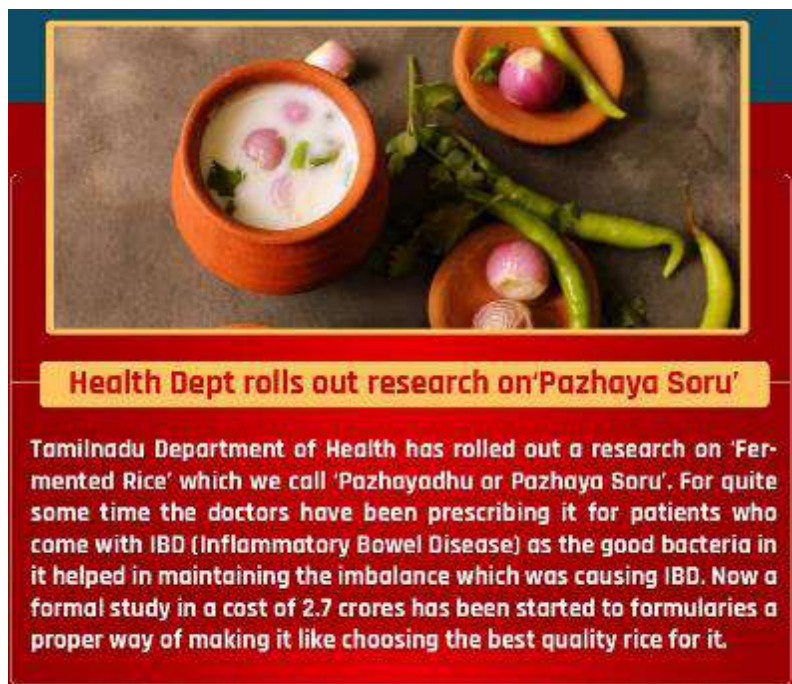
Namma Tiruvannamalai app

- ❖ It is a mobile application to ensure better communication between the district administration and the public.
- ❖ It was created by the district administration with the help of a private agency.
- ❖ It will have all information about Tiruvannamalai district.



Pazhaya soru

- ❖ The state health department has commissioned a research project involving 600 patients to study the effect of probiotics in fermented rice (pazhaya soru).
- ❖ It will research the use of this in treating inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) like Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis (UC).
- ❖ IBD treatment normally involves taking steroid drugs, immunosuppressants and anti-cancer drugs, and in some cases surgical intervention.



PMAY Award

- ❖ Puducherry has bagged an award for the best performing Union territory in India in the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban (PMAY-U) in 2019.
- ❖ Puducherry was selected for the second time for the award.

PH Pandian Memorial

- ❖ Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami inaugurated the statue and Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam opened the Mani mandapam of former Assembly Speaker PH Pandian at Govindhaperi in Cheranmahadevi in Tirunelveli District.
- ❖ He served as the Speaker of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly from 1985 to 1989.
- ❖ He was instrumental in establishing Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in 1990 at Tirunelveli.



A Madhavan

- ❖ Tamil writer A. Madhavan (87) recently passed away in Thiruvananthapuram of Kerala.
- ❖ He won the Sahitya Akademi award in 2015 for his collection of essays Ilakkiya Chuvadukal.



- ❖ He was also a recipient of Kalai Mamani Award in 2009.
- ❖ It is the highest recognition bestowed on writers and artists by the Tamil Nadu Government.

Unemployment rate

- ❖ It was a data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE).
- ❖ India's unemployment rate in December 2020 stands at 9.06%.
- ❖ This is also the first time that rural unemployment rate was higher than urban in the entire year of 2020.
- ❖ The country saw very high unemployment rates during April (23.5%) - June (10.18%) in 2020 due to lockdown impact.
- ❖ In terms of states, Haryana (32.5%) and Rajasthan (28.2%) had the highest unemployment rates in December 2020, while Odisha (0.2%) and Tamil Nadu (0.5%) saw the least.
- ❖ The unemployment rate in Tamil Nadu declined to a five-year low of 0.5% in December 2020.
- ❖ The unemployment rate in Tamil Nadu showed a direct correlation to the unlock guidelines.
- ❖ When the state was under complete lockdown in April, the rate was 49.8%.
- ❖ It was greater than national unemployment rate of 23.5% at that time.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu had 41-million-person days of employment under the scheme in October 2020, the highest among states and an increase of 151% year on year.

Unemployment Rate (%) Dec 2020			
Andhra Pradesh	6.7	Maharashtra	3.9
Assam	7.6	Meghalaya	6.6
Bihar	12.7	Odisha	0.2
Chhattisgarh	7.2	Puducherry	2.7
Delhi	7.6	Punjab	4.4
Goa	13.2	Rajasthan	28.2
Gujarat	3.0	Sikkim	0.7
Haryana	32.5	Tamil Nadu	0.5
Himachal Pradesh	7.9	Telangana	7.0
Jammu & Kashmir	16.6	Tripura	18.2
Jharkhand	12.4	Uttar Pradesh	14.9
Karnataka	1.4	Uttarakhand	5.2
Kerala	6.5	West Bengal	6.0
Madhya Pradesh	4.0		

Free Data for students

- ❖ Tamilnadu Government will provide free data card of 2GB per day to over 9.69 lakh college students from January 2021 to April 2021.
- ❖ This is being done to enable the students attend online classes at ease.
- ❖ Students enrolled in government and government aided arts and science colleges, polytechnic colleges, engineering colleges as well as scholarship funded private colleges are eligible for the scheme.
- ❖ These data cards will be issued by the Electronics Corporation of Tamil Nadu Ltd. (Elcot).

Rainfall in Tamilnadu

- ❖ The entire state of Tamil Nadu has registered a record high rainfall of January.
- ❖ All 37 Districts recorded the Large Excess rainfall for the First-Time Ever.
- ❖ Total monthly rainfall for Tamil Nadu in January stands at 15.5mm.

Tamilnadu State Awards

- ❖ The Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami announced State government awards for the year 2020, Tiruvalluvar award for 2021 and the Chithirai Tamil New Year and Tamil Chemmal awards for 2020.
- ❖ Thirty-eight Tamil scholars have been chosen from 38 districts for Thamizh Chemmal awards for 2020.
- ❖ The writer Ki Rajanarayanan has been chosen for U.Ve.Sa award.
 - He is being hailed as the father of Karisal literature.
 - He has authored a dictionary titled Karisal Vattara Vazhakku Agarathi.
- ❖ Kambar award was given to HV Hande.
 - He was the veteran politician and a close associate of former Chief Minister MG Ramachandran.
 - He has translated Kamba Ramayanam in English.

Thiruvalluvar Thirunal Awards

- Thiruvalluvar Award for the year 2021 - Dr. Vaigaichelvan
- Thanthai Periyar Award - A. Tamilmagan Hussein
- Annal Ambedkar Award - Varakur A. Arunachalam
- Perarignar Anna Award - Mr. Amarar. Kadampur MR Janarthanan
- Perunthalaivar Kamarasar Award - Dr. C. Devaraj
- Mahakavi Bharathiar Award - Poet Poovai Senkuttuvan
- Pavendar Bharathidasan Award - Arivumathi (A) Mathiyazhagan
- Tamil thendral Thiru.Vi.ka Award - V.N. Saami

- Muthamizh kaavalur K.A.P. Viswanathan Award - Dr. V. Sethu ramalingam

Chithirai Tamil New Year Awards

- Tamil Thai Award for 2020 - VGP World Tamil Association
- Kapilar Award - C. Ezhumalai
- U.Ve.Sa Award - Ki. Rajanarayanan
- Kambar Award - Dr.H.V. Hande
- Sollin Selvar Award - Nagai Mukundan
- Umarupulavar Award - M.A. Syed Asan (A) Paridasan
- GU Pope Award - Dr. Ulrike Nicholas from Germany
- Ilangovadigal Award - Ma. Vaidyalingan
- Amma Ilakkiya Award - Dr. T. Mahalakshmi
- Sindhanai Sirpi Singaravelar Award - A. Azhagesan
- Maraimalai adigalar Award - Marai.T.Thayumanavan
- Ayodhidhasa Panditar Award - Dr. K.P.Chellamal
- Arutperunchothi Vallalar Award - Dr.Ooran adigal
- Karaikal Ammaiyar Award - Dr. Mo. Gnanappoongothai
- Tamizhar Thanthai C.P. Adithyanar Naalidhazh Award - Dinamani Daily
- C.P. Adithnar Weekly Magazine Award - Kalki Weekly Magazine
- C.P. Adithyanar Monthly Magazine Award - Senthamizh Monthly Magazine
- Devaneyya pavanar Award - Dr. Ku. Sivamani
- Veerama munivar Award - Dr. Gregory James from Hong Kong
- Best Translator Award: Cho. Sesachalam, Dr. Rama. Kurunathan, P. Gunasekar, Dr. Padmavathi Vivekanandan, Su.Jyotirlatha Girija, J.Ramki (Rama kiruttinan), Swami Vimurthanandar, Meera Ravishankar, Thilagavathi, Kiruttina Prasad
- Chief Minister's Computer Tamil Award for 2019 - Se.Rajaraman

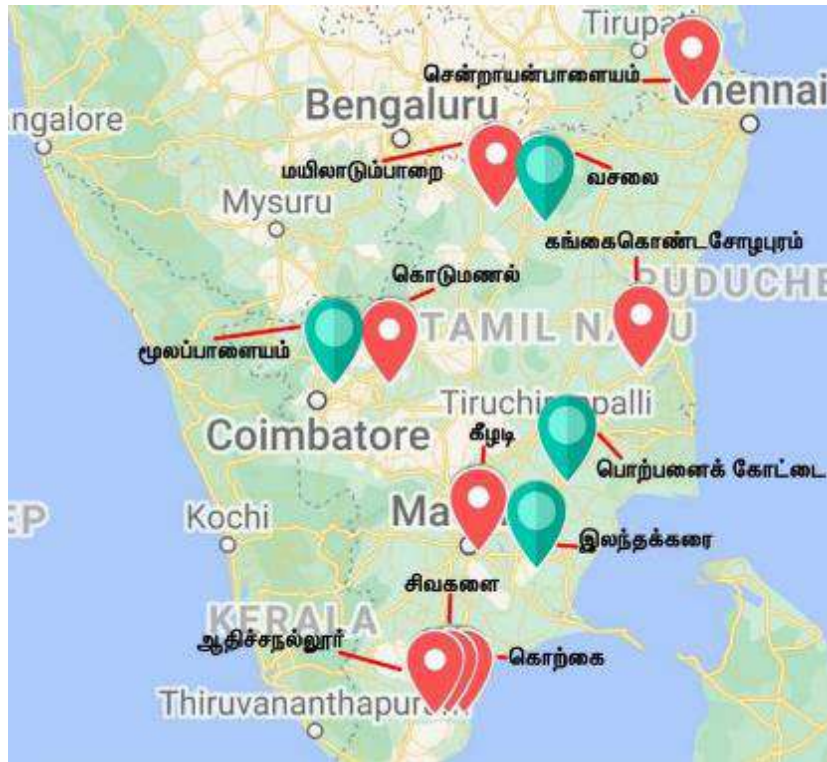
Madurai World Tamil Sangam Awards:

- Literary Award for 2020 - Dr. Alexis Thevaras senmark from France
- Grammar Award - Professor Arunachalam Shanmugadasu from Sri Lanka
- Linguistics Award - Dr. Suba.Thinnappan from Singapore

Archaeological excavations

- ❖ The Tamilnadu Archaeological Department has decided to launch excavations at seven more sites and field studies in two places.

- ❖ This is the first time the State will have more than 10 excavation projects by different agencies, including the State Archaeology Department and various universities.
- ❖ The excavations would be carried out in
 - Keeladi and surrounding areas in Sivaganga district,
 - Adichanallur, Sivakalai, Korkai and surrounding areas in Thoothukudi district,
 - Kodumanal in Erode district,
 - Mayiladumparai in Krishnagiri district,
 - Gangaikondacholapuram and Maligaimedu in Ariyalur district.
- ❖ One field study will be conducted to find new Stone Age sites in Krishngiri, Vellore, Dharmapuri, Tiruvannamalai and Salem districts.
- ❖ Another field study will be done in Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts to find the Thamiraparani river civilization.
- ❖ Sharma Centre for Heritage Education has sought permission for excavation in Chenrayanpalayam in Tiruvallur district while Alagappa University has proposed to excavate in Ilanthakarai in Sivaganga district.
- ❖ Tamil University has submitted a proposal for Moolapalayam in Coimbatore district; the University of Madras for Vasalai in Vellore district and Tamil Nadu Open University for Porpanaikottai in Pudukottai.



Doctor Shantha Passed away



- ❖ She recently passed away on 19th January.
- ❖ She was an Indian oncologist and the chairperson of Adyar Cancer Institute, Chennai.
- ❖ she had joined the Cancer Institute in 1955.
- ❖ In 2013, former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa had presented her with the 'Avvaiyar Award'.
- ❖ Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy set up the Cancer Institute in 1954 at Adayar, Chennai.

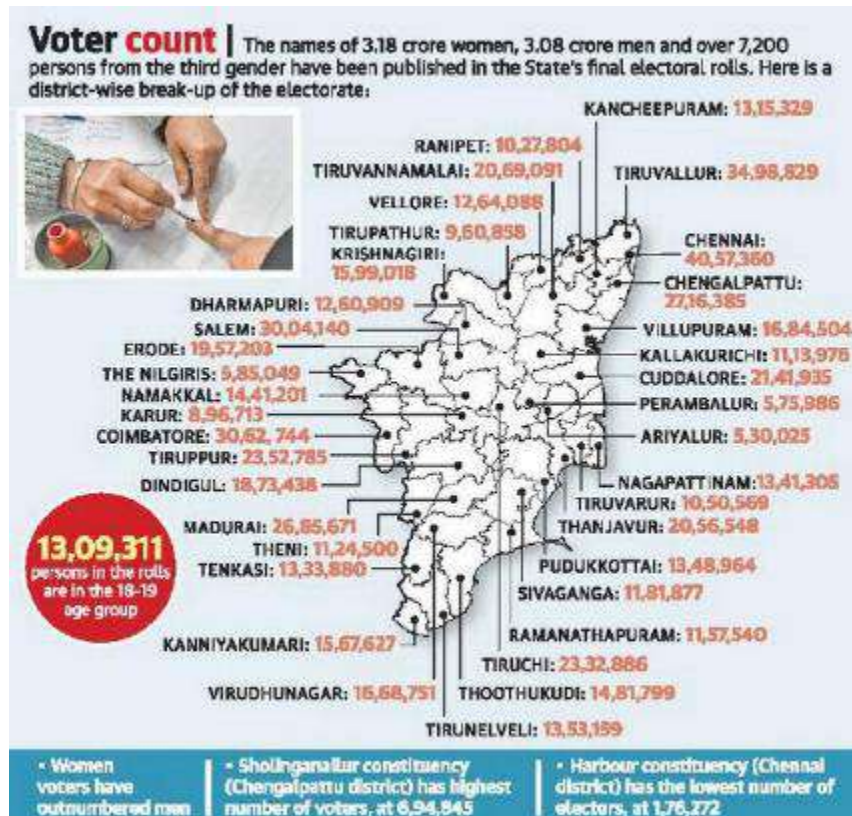
Covid vaccine drive in Tamilnadu



- ❖ Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on January 16th inaugurated the COVID-19 vaccination programme.
- ❖ It was started at the Government Rajaji Hospital at Madurai.
- ❖ The first shot of the Covishield vaccine was administered to Dr Senthil.
- ❖ He is the state president of the Tamil Nadu Government Doctors Association (TNGDA).

Tamil Nadu electorate

- ❖ The electorate in Tamil Nadu stands at 6.26 crore.



- ❖ It was including 3.18 crore women, 3.08 Crore men and over 7,200 persons from the third gender.
- ❖ The Women voters outnumber men voters in the State.
- ❖ The Sholinganallur Assembly constituency in Chengalpattu district continues to have the highest number of electors with 6,94,845 electors.
- ❖ While the Harbour Assembly constituency in Chennai continues to be the lowest with 1,76,272 electors.
- ❖ The elections for 234 legislative assembly seats of Tamil Nadu will be held in the month of May as the current term of the government ends on May 2, 2021.

Portraits in Tamilnadu Assembly

- ❖ The Chief Minister of Tamilnadu said that the life-size portraits of Omandurar Ramaswamy Reddiar, V.O. Chidambaram Pillai and Paramasivan Subbarayan would be unveiled in the Assembly soon.
- ❖ Earlier he unveiled a portrait of freedom fighter SS Ramasamy Padayatchiyar in the State Assembly hall in July 20th in 2019.
- ❖ SS Ramasamy Padayatchiyar's portrait is the 12th to be unveiled in the House.
- ❖ SS Ramasamy Padayatchiyar founded the Tamil Nadu Toilers Party in 1952.

- ❖ In 1954, he became a minister in the Cabinet headed by the late K Kamaraj.
- ❖ Portraits of Thiruvalluvar, Mahatma Gandhi, BR Ambedkar, Periyar, Rajaji, K Kamaraj, Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar, Arignar Anna, Quaid-e-Milleth, MG Ramachandran and J Jayalalithaa were unveiled since 1948.

S.No	Portrait	Unveiled on	Unveiled by
1	C. Rajagopalachari	24 June 1948	Jawaharlal Nehru
2	Mahatma Gandhi	23 August 1948	C. Rajagopalachari
3	Thiruvalluvar	22 March 1964	Zakir Hussain
4	C. N. Annadurai	6 October 1969	Indira Gandhi
5	K. Kamaraj	18 August 1977	Neelam Sanjiva Reddy
6	Periyar E. V. Ramasamy	9 August 1980	Jothi Venkatachalam
7	B. R. Ambedkar	9 August 1980	Jothi Venkatachalam
8	U. Muthuramalingam Thevar	9 August 1980	Jothi Venkatachalam
9	Muhammad Ismail Sahib	9 August 1980	Jothi Venkatachalam
10	M. G. Ramachandran	31 January 1992	J. Jayalalithaa
11	J. Jayalalithaa	12 February 2018	P. Dhanapal
12	S. S. Ramaswami Padayachi	19 July 2019	Edappadi K. Palaniswami

Caste Census - Kulasekaran commission

- ❖ Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami appointed a commission under the former high court judge Kulasekaran.
- ❖ It will begin collection of caste data in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The state government had recently announced that a survey will be undertaken across Tamil Nadu to ascertain the population based on caste.
- ❖ The decision comes amid the backdrop of the Supreme Court directions to all the states to collect quantifiable data highlighting the inadequacy of representation of a particular class in public service.
- ❖ Recently the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) cadres engaged in protests across Chennai demanding 20% reservation for Vanniyars in government jobs and education.
- ❖ Besides, the caste-wise data is also required to conduct the case regarding the 69 per cent reservation for Tamil Nadu, pending before the Supreme Court.
- ❖ The Commission is also the first such panel to be put in place in Tamil Nadu since the 1950s.



Tamil Nadu Background

- ❖ The First Backward Classes Commission led by A N Sattanathan in 1969 availed the pre-Independence census data to arrive at population of various castes in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ In 1983, the Second Backward Classes Commission led by JA Ambasankar conducted caste-wise socio-economic and educational survey through door-to-door enumeration.
- ❖ It submitted a report in 1985.
- ❖ The state government enacted the Tamil Nadu Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act, 1993 to protect the existing 69% quota.
- ❖ It was included in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution by the 76th Amendment 1994.

Caste Census in India

- ❖ The Centre has decided to collect data on Other Backward Classes during Census 2021.
- ❖ This will be the first general census to collect such data since 1931, although a socio-economic census was conducted in 2011.
- ❖ The Socio Economic and Caste Census 2011 (SECC) was conducted for the 2011 Census of India.
- ❖ It was the first caste-based census since 1931 Census of India.
- ❖ It was the fourth exercise conducted by Government of India to identify households living below the poverty line (BPL) in India that would get various entitlements, after three censuses in 1992, 1997 and 2002.
- ❖ The SECC was conducted independently of the Population Census,
- ❖ The Population Census is mandated by the Census Act of 1948.
- ❖ It was carried out by the Union Rural Development Ministry in the rural areas and the Union Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation Ministry in the urban areas.
- ❖ For the first time since 1931, data on OBC population was also collected in 2011.
- ❖ The first caste census was conducted in India in 1881.

- ❖ In 1941, the census exercise was severely curtailed because of World War II.
- ❖ The SC/ST column were to be included in the census slips from 1961.
- ❖ The First Backward Classes Commission was constituted under Kaka Kalelkar in 1953 under Article 340 of the constitution.
- ❖ In 1979, the Second Backward Classes Commission was constituted under Mandal.
- ❖ According to the Mandal Commission report, scheduled castes and tribes made up 22.56 per cent of the population.
- ❖ Mandal Commission had put Other Backward Classes at 52 per cent.
- ❖ This was made on the basis of the 1931 Census.
- ❖ It gave the result in the provision of a 49.5 per cent quota in government jobs and public universities.
- ❖ This included a declaration for 27 per cent reservation for OBCs for the first time ever.
- ❖ It was implemented in 1990 by the Government led by VP Singh.

Hansraj Verma committee

- ❖ CM Palaniswami announced that seven sub-sects of the Scheduled Caste — Kudumban, Pannadi, Kadaiyan, Pallan, Kalladi, Vathiriyar and Devendrakulathan — will be called as Devendrakula Vellalar.
- ❖ It was based on the recommendation of a committee headed by Hansraj Verma.
- ❖ This has been a long-standing demand of the Devendrakula Vellalar community and Puthiya Tamizhagam (PT) party.



- ❖ The state government will recommend the centre to include the seven sub-sects under Devendrakula Vellalar community.
- ❖ But owing to their socio-economic conditions, the community will continue to enjoy the same reservations in education and jobs.
- ❖ However, the other demand of the community of delisting them from Scheduled Caste (SC) category is still pending with the government.



NATIONAL

Scientist of the year Award

- ❖ The DRDO scientist Hemant Kumar Pandey was conferred with the DRDO's 'Scientist of the Year Award'.
- ❖ It was given for his contribution in developing an herbal drug called Lukoskin for leukoderma.
- ❖ 'Lukoskin' has been developed using herbs found in the Himalayan region.
- ❖ leukoderma is an autoimmune disorder characterised by the loss of skin colour in parts of a body.

Jammu and Kashmir District Development Council Election

- ❖ This was the first election in the Union Territory after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 5, 2019.
- ❖ The Farooq Abdullah-led People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration made a big victory.
- ❖ Out of the 280 seats, the alliance has won 110 seats, while the BJP emerged as the single largest party by getting 75 seats.
- ❖ The Gupkar Alliance is an amalgam of six regional parties, including the National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

COVID-19 vaccine Mock Drill

- ❖ A Covid vaccine Mock drill has been planned to be conducted in four states Gujarat, Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab.
- ❖ These vaccine trials will be co-sponsored by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).
- ❖ The Serum Institute of India has already produced around 50 million dosages of the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine 'Covishield'.
- ❖ The Pune based Serum Institute of India (SII) is the world's largest vaccine manufacturer.
- ❖ The drug regulator ICMR is considering three vaccines – AstraZeneca's, Pfizer/BioNTech's and one developed by a domestic company, Bharat Biotech, for emergency approval.
- ❖ India has eight COVID-19 vaccine candidates under different stages of trials, including three indigenous ones.
- ❖ These vaccines include the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine - Covishield, ICMR-Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, Russia's Sputnik-V and Zydus Cadila's ZyCoV-D.
- ❖ The others include Serum Institute's NVX-CoV2373 and Geneva's HGC019 and two unlabelled vaccines by Bharat Biotech and Biological E Limited.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Awards

- ❖ The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has selected Vishakhapatnam Municipal Corporation as the best performing civic body.
- ❖ Andhra Pradesh secured the third position in best performing state category.
- ❖ Mirzapur of Uttar Pradesh won the best performing Municipal body.
- ❖ Tripura has been selected the best performing state in implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban, under the North Eastern and Hilly States category.
- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana aims to provide “Housing for All”.
- ❖ It aims to 20 million affordable houses to the urban poor by March 31, 2022.
- ❖ PM Modi had also announced 2019-20 as the ‘Construction Technology Year’.

6th Edition of Digital India awards 2020

- ❖ The event is conducted by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), an agency of the IT Ministry.
- ❖ The Digital India Awards (DIA) was instituted under the aegis of the National Portal of India.
- ❖ Its purpose is to encourage “digital transformation of government service delivery”.
- ❖ Only the central and state government entities, and ‘Indian Missions Abroad’ are eligible to win these awards.
- ❖ Two new categories have been introduced in this year’s edition namely
 - Innovation in Pandemic Category and
 - Exemplary Product category awards.
- ❖ Haryana has been given the first position among the states and union territories for its e-governance efforts at the Digital India Award, 2020.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu came second for its e-governance efforts, followed by UP and Bengal.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu has won a gold award under the category of Excellence in Digital Governance in the State/U.T.
- ❖ The Department of Post won the Gold award and the E-Committee-Supreme court of India under the department of Justice won the platinum award in the category of Excellence in Digital Governance Ministry/Department (Central).
- ❖ Haryana won the ‘platinum award’ and Uttar Pradesh won Silver award in the category for ‘Excellence in Digital Governance’.
- ❖ Bihar won the silver medal in the Innovation in Pandemic category.

3	Excellence in Digital Governance - STATE / UT	Haryana
		Tamil Nadu
		Uttar Pradesh
		West Bengal

Nagaland as 'disturbed area'

- ❖ The Union Home Ministry on December 30, 2020 declared entire Nagaland as 'disturbed area' for six more months under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958.
- ❖ Nagaland has been under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act for almost six decades.
- ❖ The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) has been in force in the Northeast since 1958.
- ❖ The Home Ministry had previously withdrawn AFSPA completely from the state of Meghalaya and some stations in Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ Currently, the AFSPA is in force in states of Nagaland, Manipur (except for Imphal Municipal Council), Assam, Some districts of Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The Governor of the state or the central government can declare the whole or part of the state or union territory as disturbed area.

WHAT IS ARMED FORCES SPECIAL POWERS ACT?

➤ Introduced in 1958, AFSPA confers on members of the armed forces special powers to rein in suspects in areas declared "disturbed" on account of insurgent activities or similar threats. It has been in force in Manipur since 1980, and the alleged excesses committed under it are the reasons why activist Irom Sharmila has been on a hunger strike since 2000.

WHAT ARE SPECIAL POWERS?
AFSPA allows any commissioned officer, warrant officer and non-commissioned officer – or any other

person of equivalent rank – to:

- Fire upon or use force against any person acting 'in contravention of any law for the time being in force in the disturbed area'
- Arrest suspicious people without warrant
- Destroy any structure suspected to house an arms dump, shelter from which armed attacks are made or are likely to be made
- Conduct searches without warrants for evidence, to recover a wrongfully confined person or property or arms or explosives
- AFSPA bars prosecution or proceedings – except with Centre's nod – against personnel for action committed while exercising powers under the Act

R P Tiwari Committee

- ❖ The University Grants Commission (UGC) has set up a seven-member committee headed by R P Tiwari.
- ❖ This committee will consider the issue of holding common entrance test at undergraduate (UG) level only from the next academic year in central universities to provide a single platform for admission.
- ❖ The new National Education Policy (NEP) advocates reducing the number of entrance tests to eliminate the need for taking coaching for these exams.
- ❖ If the NEP suggestion is implemented, the National Testing Agency will be established.



Ramgopal Rao Committee

- ❖ The Ministry of Education had appointed a committee, headed by IIT-Delhi V Ramgopal Rao.
- ❖ It was appointed to suggest measures for implementing reservation in student admissions and faculty recruitment in IITs.
- ❖ The committee has suggested that the 23 IITs should be exempted from reservations.
- ❖ It suggests that IITs should be added to the list of “Institutions of Excellence”.



Vistadome tourist coaches

- ❖ The Indian Railways has successfully completed the trial run of new Vistadome tourist coaches.
- ❖ These coaches were manufactured by the Integral Coach Factory in Chennai.
- ❖ Vistadome coaches are made with see through glass roof tops and wide Windows to offer panoramic view.
- ❖ Currently there are 13 Vistadome coaches operated in India.
- ❖ They are operated at Araku Valley, Dadar and Madgaon, Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway, Kangra Valley Railway, Kalka-Shimla Railway, Nilgiri Mountain Railway, Matheran Hill Railway.



Global Pravasi Rishta Portal and Mobile app

- ❖ The Ministry of External Affairs launched this App.
- ❖ It will help to connect 3.12 crores Indian diaspora spread all over the world.
- ❖ The portal created will enable the registration of Indian diaspora members.
- ❖ This includes PIOs (Person of Indian Origin), NRIs (Non-Resident Indians) and OCIs (Overseas Citizens of India).



AIIMS at Rajkot in Gujarat

- ❖ PM laid the foundation stone of the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences at Rajkot in Gujarat.
- ❖ It is established by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojna (PMSSY).
- ❖ It is expected to be completed by mid-2022.
- ❖ The AIIMS Rajkot will be the 16th institute in the country.
- ❖ The last AIIMS to be made operational was AIIMS Deoghar, Jharkhand in 2019.
- ❖ These institutes have been declared by an Act of Parliament as Institutes of National Importance.
- ❖ AIIMS New Delhi, the forerunner institute, was established in 1956.
- ❖ Since then, 22 more institutes were announced.

Light House Projects

- ❖ Light House Projects (LHPs) showcase the new-age best of alternate global technologies, materials and processes in the construction sector at a large scale for the first time in India.
- ❖ They are being constructed under the Global Housing Technology Challenge-India (GHTC-India).
- ❖ Launched in 2019, the challenge is undertaken under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban (PMAY-U).
- ❖ GHTC was launched by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.
- ❖ It will be undertaken at Rajkot in Gujarat, Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh, Indore in Madhya Pradesh, Ranchi in Jharkhand, Chennai in Tamil Nadu and Agartala in Tripura.



Mother Teresa Memorial Awards for Social Justice 2020 – 16th Edition

- ❖ It has been given since 2004 annually or biannually.
- ❖ It is an initiative of Harmony Foundation.
- ❖ Harmony Foundation is an international NGO that works in the realm of Social Justice.
- ❖ It was created by Dr. Abraham Mathai in 2005 at Mumbai.
- ❖ This award is the only award endorsed by Sister Prema, the Superior General of the Missionaries of Charity.
- ❖ It was the organization started by Mother Teresa at Calcutta in 1950.
- ❖ The theme for this year's awards was, 'Celebrating Compassion in Times of Covid '.
- ❖ Awardees this year included
 - Dr Anthony Fauci (USA)
 - Father Fabio Stevenazzi (Milan, Italy)
 - Cristian Fracassi and Alessandro Romaioli (Italy)
 - Dr Pradeep Kumar (Chennai)
 - IPS Sanjay Pandey (Maharashtra)
 - Vikas Khanna (Manhattan, USA)
 - KK Shailaja (Minister of Health, Kerala).

Emergency use approval in India

- ❖ The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) has recommended the restricted Emergency Use Authorisation for COVISHIELD.
- ❖ COVISHIELD vaccine was developed by Serum Institute of India.
- ❖ It is developed by the University of Oxford and the British Pharmaceutical firm Astra Zeneca.
- ❖ In India, this vaccine is to be made and marketed by Pune Serum Institute of India.
- ❖ It is the first vaccine to be approved in India.
- ❖ India's Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has also reportedly recommended to the DCGI for granting the emergency use approval to the Bharat Biotech's Covaxin coronavirus vaccine.
- ❖ This makes that the Bharat Biotech's Covaxin the second vaccine to get marketing approval from the expert panel.
- ❖ Both the vaccines will have to be administered in two doses and they will have to be stored at 2-8° C.



Tansen Samman

- ❖ The 96th Tansen Music Festival was held at Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ The festival pays tribute to Tansen, one of 9 gems in Akbar's court.
- ❖ The renowned Santoor player Pandit Satish Vyas was conferred upon the Tansen Samman.
- ❖ Bhopal-based institution Abhinav Kala Parishad was honoured with Raja Mansingh Tomar award.



Human Rights cell

- ❖ The Indian Army recently created a new Human Rights cell headed by major General of India.
- ❖ The cell has been created for Greater transparency and probity in the functioning of Indian Army in disturbed areas.
- ❖ General Gautam Chauhan has taken charge as the first additional director general Human Rights at the army headquarters in New Delhi.

Vikram-1

- ❖ The Indian space startup Skyroot Aerospace of Hyderabad, has successfully test-fired its first solid rocket propulsion stage demonstrator called Kalam-5.
- ❖ With this, India's first-ever privately designed and developed rocket, Vikram-1, is a step closer to becoming a reality.
- ❖ Kalam-5 uses the same propellant, materials, and interface as the motors that will be installed on Vikram-1.
- ❖ Vikram-1 rocket is powered by four engines - three solid-fuel stages and one Liquid-fuel stage.



Meteorological Centre in Ladakh

- ❖ The Union Minister of Earth Science Dr Harsh Vardhan recently inaugurated a Meteorological centre in Union Territory of Ladakh.
- ❖ This is the first Meteorological Centre in Ladakh.
- ❖ The Meteorological Centre is the highest centre in India located at a height of 3,500 metres.
- ❖ The Indian Meteorological Department has six regional meteorological centres such as Kolkata, Guwahati, Mumbai, New Delhi, Chennai and Nagpur.



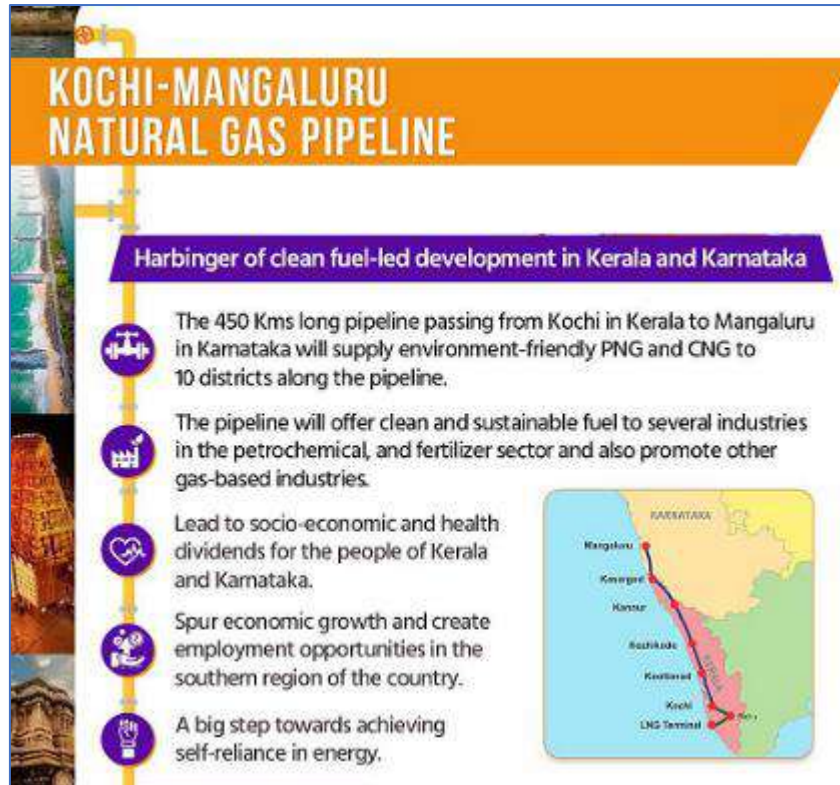
Sagarmala Seaplane Services Project

- ❖ The Government of India is to initiate the project of Sagarmala Seaplane Services on selected routes.
- ❖ The sea plane service between Kevadiya and Sabarmati riverfront in Ahmedabad is already in Operation.
- ❖ It was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on October 31, 2019.
- ❖ Currently this is the only seaplane service that is operational in the country.
- ❖ The proposed routes are
 - Andaman and Nicobar Islands
 - Lakshadweep Islands
 - Mumbai
 - Dwarka, Gujarat
 - Kandla, Gujarat
 - Yamuna riverfront, Delhi
 - Guwhati riverfront, Assam
 - Umrangso reservoir, Assam
 - Khindsi dam, Maharashtra
 - Erai Dam, Maharashtra.



Kochi-Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline

- ❖ The Prime Minister Narendra Modi has dedicated this pipeline on January 5th.
- ❖ The pipeline is 444 kilometres long.
- ❖ The pipeline passes through Ernakulam, Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod districts and ends at Mangaluru in Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka.
- ❖ It is implemented by the Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL).



KOCHI-MANGALURU NATURAL GAS PIPELINE

Harbinger of clean fuel-led development in Kerala and Karnataka

- The 450 Kms long pipeline passing from Kochi in Kerala to Mangaluru in Karnataka will supply environment-friendly PNG and CNG to 10 districts along the pipeline.
- The pipeline will offer clean and sustainable fuel to several industries in the petrochemical, and fertilizer sector and also promote other gas-based industries.
- Lead to socio-economic and health dividends for the people of Kerala and Karnataka.
- Spur economic growth and create employment opportunities in the southern region of the country.
- A big step towards achieving self-reliance in energy.

The infographic includes a map showing the pipeline route from Mangaluru in Karnataka to Kochi in Kerala, passing through Kannur, Kozhikode, and Kollam. It also features small images of a gas pipeline, a factory, a heart, a person working, and a hand holding a torch.

Delhi Tamil Academy

- ❖ The Delhi government has set up a Tamil Academy to protect the Tamil language and culture.
- ❖ It also appointed Ex-MCD councillor and current member of Delhi Tamil Sangam N Raja as the Vice-Chairman of the academy.
- ❖ Tamil became the first language to be classified as a classical language in India in 2004.
- ❖ The Delhi government already runs Sanskrit, Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Maithili and Bhojpuri Academies.
- ❖ The official languages of Delhi are Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and English.

National Metrology Conclave 2021

- ❖ It is held on the 75th foundation day of CSIR, January 4, 2021.
- ❖ It is organised at Delhi by the Council of scientific and Industrial Research- National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL).
- ❖ Theme for this conclave is Metrology for the Inclusive Growth of the Nation.
- ❖ On this occasion Prime Minister dedicated 'Bhartiya Nirdeshak Dravya' and 'National Atomic Timescale' to the nation.
- ❖ The National Atomic Time Scale will generate Indian Standard Time- IST with an accuracy of 2.8 nanoseconds
- ❖ He also laid the foundation stone of the 'National Environmental Standards Laboratory'.

Agri-hackathon 2020

- ❖ It is the largest virtual gathering to create dialogues and accelerate innovations.
- ❖ It was organised by the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare in association with the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), Pusa, New Delhi.
- ❖ This 2-month long event is the first of its kind & the largest virtual event in the history of Indian agriculture.

4th global Ayurveda festival

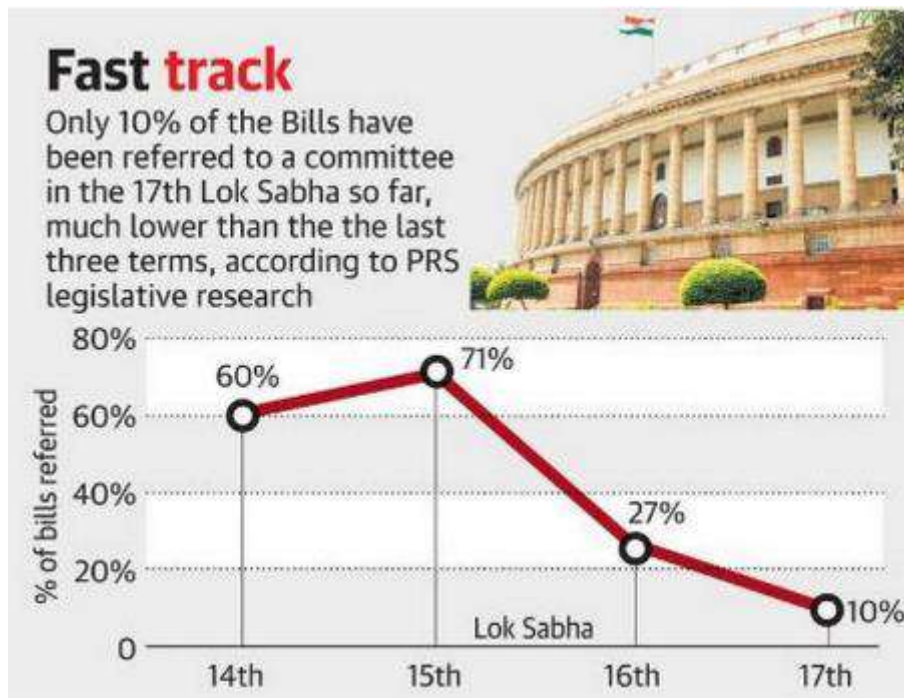
- ❖ The 4th Global Ayurveda Festival will be held at Kochi, Kerala in May, 2021.
- ❖ The theme of the event is Ayurveda Medical Tourism: Actualizing India's credibility.
- ❖ It will be the largest Ayurvedic event ever to be held anywhere across the world.



Rajya Sabha - Lowest number of sittings

- ❖ The Rajya Sabha sat for just 33 days in 2020, its lowest-ever tally of sittings in a year.
- ❖ Both sessions of Parliament — Budget session and the monsoon session — had to be cut short due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- ❖ The Budget session was scheduled to have 31 sittings but it was brought to a close after 23 sittings.
- ❖ Similarly, the monsoon session, which was to have 18 sittings amidst strict restrictions, could manage to have only 10.
- ❖ There are only three other occasions when the Upper House sittings were below 50 days in a year.
- ❖ They are 48 in 1999 and 46 each in 2004 and 2008.

- ❖ But during the year 2020, the annual productivity of Rajya Sabha has been 82.7%, the highest annual productivity during the last 11 years.
- ❖ A total of 39 Bills have been passed by the Rajya Sabha during 2020, including 12 during the Budget session and 27 during the monsoon session.



World Longest Railway Platform

- ❖ Karnataka's Hubballi railway station is set to get the world's longest railway platform with dimensions of 1,400 metres length and 10 metres width.
- ❖ Hubballi is the headquarters of South Western Railway (SWR).
- ❖ Gorakhpur railway station in Uttar Pradesh has the longest platform (1366 m) operational now, the second on the list is Kollam Junction (1180 m) in Kerala.



Dadasaheb Phalke South Awards 2020

- ❖ The winners of Dadasaheb Phalke Awards South 2020 have been announced for Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam films.
- ❖ From the Tamil film industry, Dhanush has bagged the Best Actor award for his performance in Asuran, while Jyothika won the Best Actress award for the film Raatchasi.
- ❖ Parthiban has been awarded Best Director for his remarkable film Oththa Seruppu Size 7.
- ❖ Ajith won the Most Versatile Actor in Tamil films.



DADASAHEB PHALKE AWARDS SOUTH - 2020

WINNER LIST

DADASAHEB PHALKE AWARDS SOUTH 2020

TAMIL	
Best Film	To Let
Best Actor	Dhanush (Asuran)
Best Actress	Jyothika (Raatchasi)
Best Director	R Parthiepan(Oththa Seruppu Size 7)
Best Music Director	Anirudh Ravichander
Most Versatile Actor	Ajith Kumar

40th Scientific Expedition to Antarctica

- ❖ India launched the 40th Scientific Expedition to Antarctica.
- ❖ It is marking the 40 years of India's scientific endeavour to the continent.
- ❖ The expedition was flagged off from Goa on the ice-class vessel MV Vasilii Golovnin.
- ❖ India began its Antarctic expeditions in 1981.
- ❖ India built 3 permanent research base stations in the continent - Maitri, Dakshin Gangotri, and Bharati.
- ❖ Now, India has two operational stations in Antarctica names Bharati and Maitri.
- ❖ The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research-NCPOR in Goa manages the entire Indian Antarctic Program.



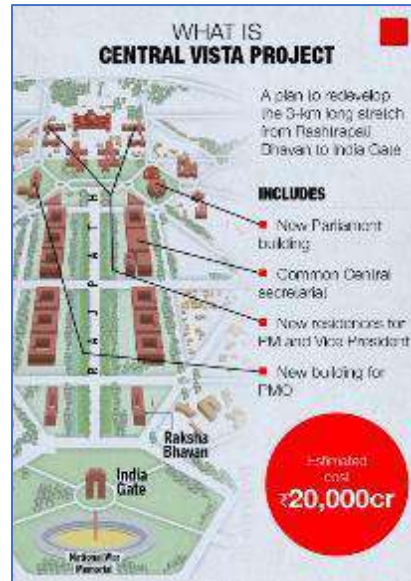
Floating Solar Energy Project

- ❖ The Government of India is to construct the largest floating solar energy project in the world.
- ❖ It is to be constructed at Omkareshwar Dam on Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ The floating solar power plant refers to solar panels installed on structures that float on surface of the water.
- ❖ International Finance Corporation and World bank are to provide the financial assistance to this project.



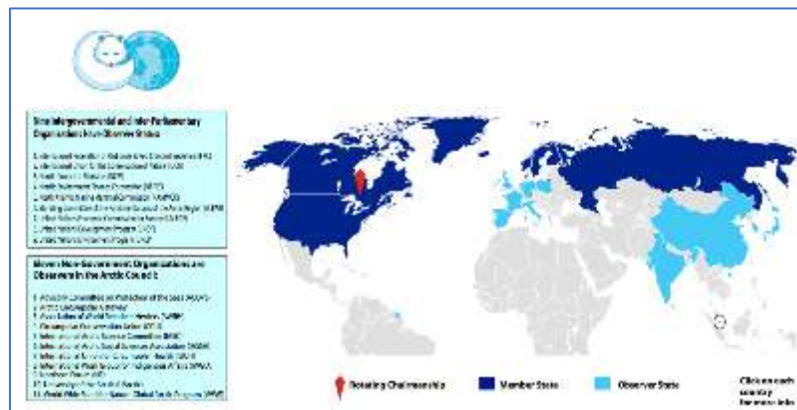
Central Vista Project

- ❖ The Supreme Court allowed the Central Vista Project to go ahead.
- ❖ This project aims to renovate 86 acres of land in the Lutyen's Garden in New Delhi.
- ❖ It includes Landmark structures of Indian government such as Rashtrapati Bhavan, Parliament, India Gate and North and South Block.
- ❖ The current Parliament was built in 1927 by the British.



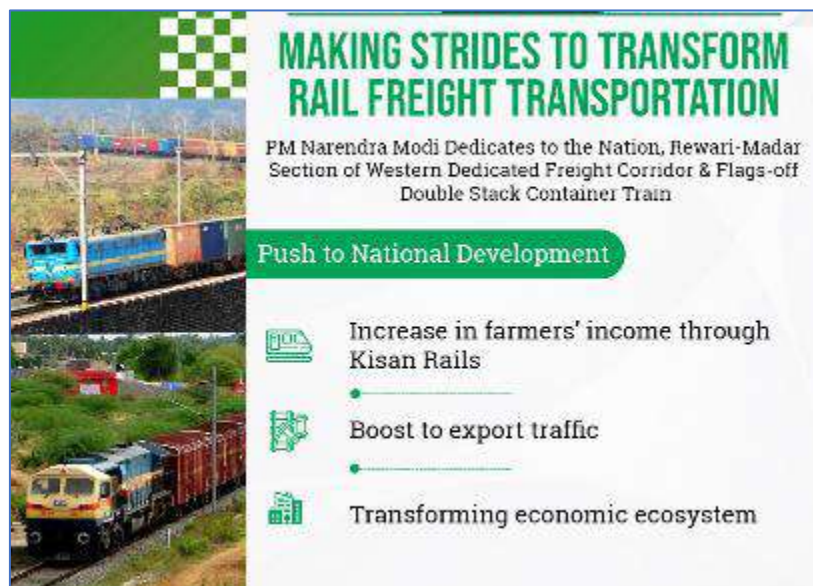
Draft Arctic Policy

- ❖ The Government of India recently released the Draft Arctic Policy.
- ❖ The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research that operates under the Ministry of Earth Sciences will serve as the nodal agency in implementing the Arctic Policy.
- ❖ The policy envisages to connect the Arctic residents, especially the indigenous communities with those living in the Himalayan regions.
- ❖ The policy ensures that the Arctic resources are explored and used sustainable.
- ❖ Under its policy, India will make sure that it abides by rules and regulations of Arctic Council.
- ❖ India became the observer of Arctic Council in 2013.
- ❖ Its membership as an observer was renewed in 2018 for another five years.
- ❖ India under British rule had signed the Svalbard Treaty in 1920.
- ❖ In 2008, India established a research base called Himadri at Ny Alesund, Svalbard, Norway.



Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC)

- ❖ PM inaugurated the 306 km New Rewari-New Madar Section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor.
- ❖ The new stretch will be for commercial operations between Rajasthan's Madar and Haryana's Rewari.
- ❖ During the event, PM Modi also flagged off the 1.5 km long world's first Double Stack Long Haul container train.
- ❖ It is hauled by electric traction from Ateli in Haryana to Kishangarh in Rajasthan.
- ❖ Western Dedicated Freight Corridor starts from Dadri in Uttar Pradesh to Mumbai in Maharashtra.
- ❖ The Corridor passes through the states of Uttar Pradesh, Delhi NCT, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- ❖ The Western DFC meets Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC) at Khurja in Uttar Pradesh.

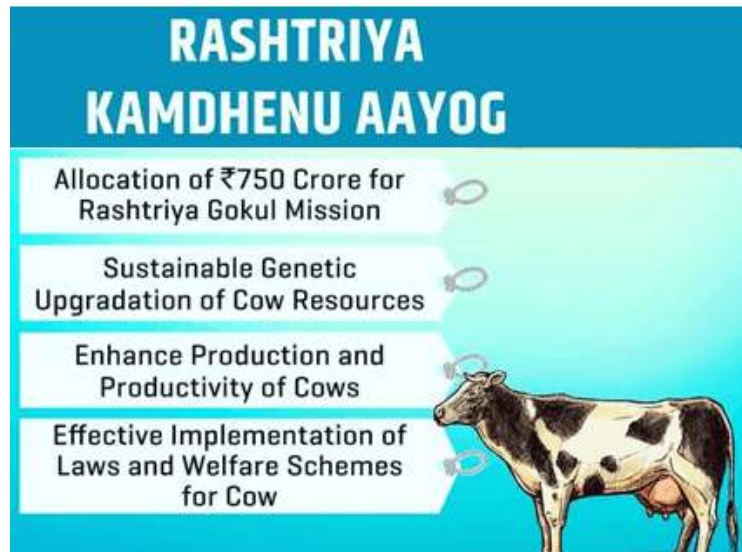


Vertical and Horizontal Reservations

- ❖ Through the Saurav Yadav case, the Supreme Court clarified the position of law on the interplay of vertical and horizontal reservations.
- ❖ The Supreme court has ruled against the Uttar Pradesh government order.
- ❖ Vertical reservation refers to as reservation for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Other Backward Classes (OBC).
- ❖ Horizontal reservation refers to the equal opportunity provided to other categories of beneficiaries such as women, veterans, and individuals with disabilities, cutting through the vertical categories.

Rastriya Kamdhenu Aayog

- ❖ It is a high powered permanent advisory body.
- ❖ It helps the Central Government to develop programmes for conservation, sustainable development and genetic upgradation of indigenous breeds of cows.
- ❖ It will function as an integral part of Rashtriya Gokul Mission.
- ❖ It is constituted to organize animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines and to take steps for preserving and improving breeds.



Bureau of Indian Standards

- ❖ It celebrates its foundation day on 6th January 2021.
- ❖ It is the National Standard Body of India working under the aegis of Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.
- ❖ The Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016 made the BIS a National Standards Body.

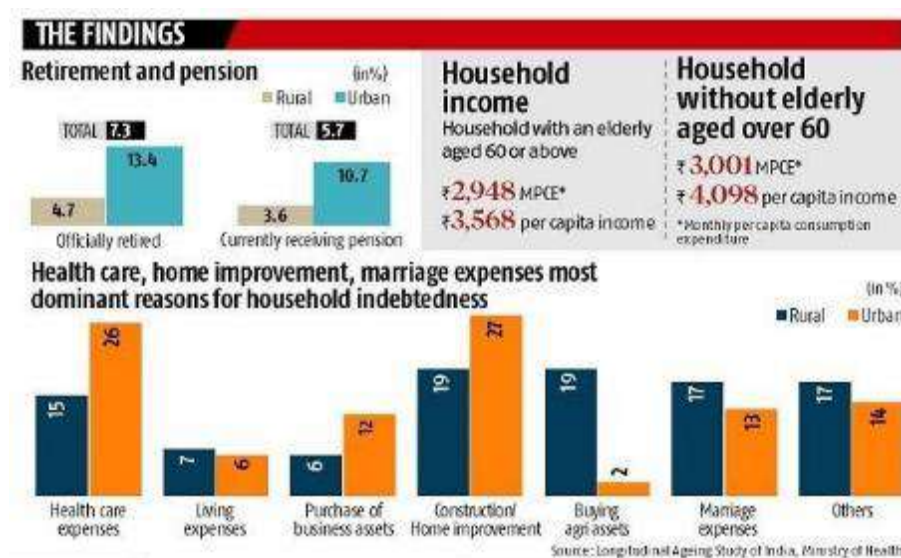


Longitudinal Ageing Study of India

- ❖ The Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan released the Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI).
- ❖ It is a full-scale National survey of scientific investigation of economic, health and social determinants and consequences of population ageing in India.
- ❖ This report will provide a base for national and state level programmes and policies for elderly population.
- ❖ It has been undertaken by the National Programme for Health Care of Elderly, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- ❖ The report was prepared by the International Institute for Population Sciences, (IIPS), Mumbai
- ❖ It is India's first and the world's largest-ever survey for designing policies and programmes for the old age people.
- ❖ It covers all States and Union Territories (UTs) of India (excluding Sikkim).

Key Findings

- ❖ There will be over 319 million elderly by 2050, threefold the number identified by the Census in 2011.
- ❖ While 75% of them suffer from one or the other chronic disease, 40% have one or the other disability and 20% have issues related to mental health.



EDUCON 2020

- ❖ The union Education Minister Ramesh pokhriyal nishank inaugurated at today virtual International Akhand conference EDUCON 2020.
- ❖ Theme of this conference is envisioning education for transforming youth to restore global peace.
- ❖ The conference is organised by Central University of Punjab and global Educational Research Association.

16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD)

- ❖ It is organized on 9th January 2021 by the Ministry of External Affairs.
- ❖ The theme of this year is “Contributing to Aatma nirbhar Bharat”.
- ❖ The event also featured the keynote address by the Chief Guest President of Suriname, Chandrikapersad Santokhi.
- ❖ It is celebrated on 9th January to mark the contribution of Overseas Indian community in the development of India.
- ❖ It was on this day in 1915 that Gandhi returned to India from South Africa.
- ❖ PBD conventions were held every year since 2003.
- ❖ Since 2015, its format has been revised to celebrate the PBD once every two years.

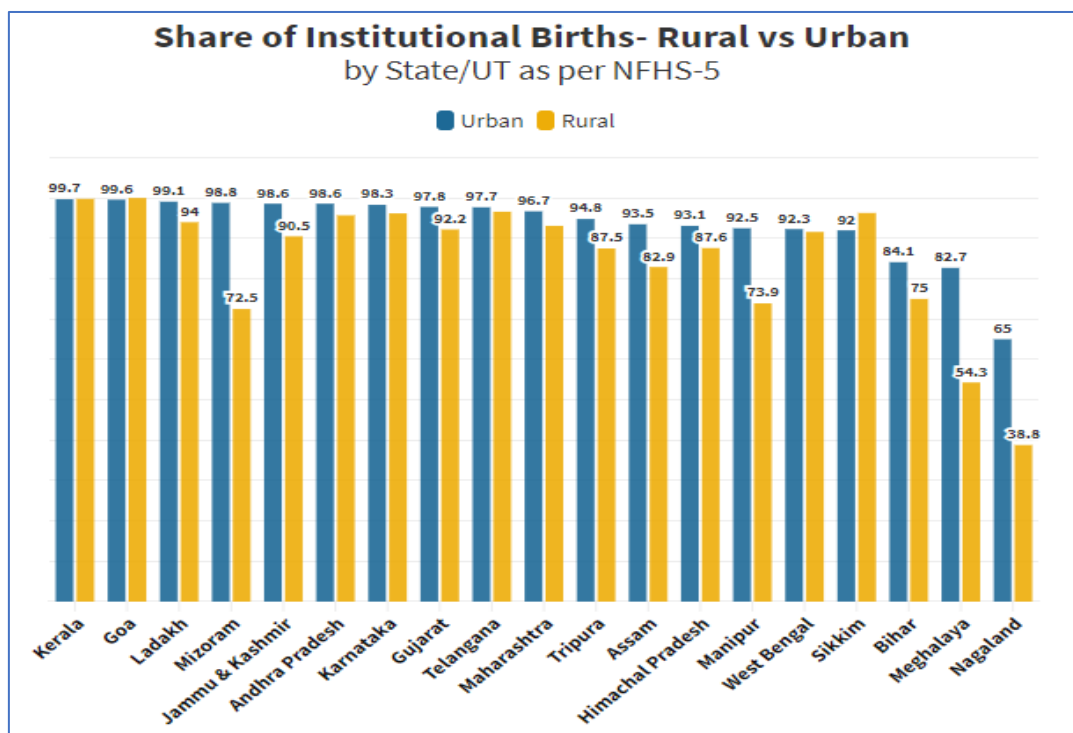


Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) Lab

- ❖ The Minister for Science & Technology, Health & Family Welfare and Earth Sciences Dr Harsh Vardhan recently virtually inaugurated CEPI Lab.
- ❖ It is one of seven labs globally designated as centralised network labs of the CEPI.
- ❖ It is established at Translational Health Science & Technology Institute (THSTI), Faridabad, Haryana.
- ❖ The laboratory is also accredited by National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL).
- ❖ All Covid-19 vaccine developers can use this network for free to assess immunogenicity of their vaccine candidate.
- ❖ The CEPI is an innovative partnership between public, private, philanthropic, and civil organisations.
- ❖ It was launched at Davos in 2017 to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics.

NFHS 5 findings

- ❖ The Health and Family Welfare Ministry has set up a technical expert group to examine the adverse findings from the National Family Health Survey 5 (NFHS 5).
- ❖ It released the Factsheets of key indicators on population, reproductive and child health, family welfare, nutrition.
- ❖ The first phase of NFHS 5 covers the 22 states and Union Territories in the period of 2019-20.
- ❖ Four rounds of NFHS (1992-93, 1998-99, 2005-06 and 2015-16) have been successfully completed in India.
- ❖ All the rounds of NFHS have been conducted by the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai.



Key Findings

- ❖ The replacement level of fertility (2.1) has been achieved in 19 out of the 22 States/UTs.
- ❖ Only 3 states Manipur (2.2), Meghalaya (2.9) and Bihar (3.0) have Total Fertility Rate above the replacement levels now.
- ❖ Overall Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) is the highest in Himachal Pradesh and West Bengal (74%).
- ❖ More than two-third of children are fully immunized in all the States and UTs except Nagaland, Meghalaya and Assam.
- ❖ Sikkim, Assam, Goa and Jammu & Kashmir witnessed a steep decline in Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR), Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Under-Five Mortality Rate (U5MR).

- ❖ Meghalaya, Manipur and Andaman & Nicobar Island reported increase in all the three categories of child mortality – NMR, IMR and U5MR.
- ❖ Among all the surveyed states and UTs, Bihar displayed the highest prevalence in Infant and child mortality in all three categories, while the lowest death rate was reported in Kerala.
- ❖ Infant and child mortality declined in most of the Indian states.
- ❖ Majority of the states are in normal sex ratio of 952 or above.
- ❖ It is below 900 in Telangana, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, Dadra Nagar Haveli & Diu Daman.
- ❖ The children born between 2014 and 2019 are more malnourished than the previous generation.
- ❖ Though India displayed improvement in child malnutrition between NFHS 3 (2005-06) and NFHS 4 (2015-16), the nation has now taken U-turn for the worse in terms of malnutrition among children.
- ❖ The percentage of men with high or very high blood glucose is highest in Kerala (27%) followed by Goa (24%).

Jammu & Kashmir cadre officers with AGMUT

- ❖ The central government has merged the Jammu & Kashmir cadre for all India Services with that of AGMUT - Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram, and Union Territory.
- ❖ It was done through an ordinance for the amendment of the J&K Reorganisation Act 2019.
- ❖ This move will allow the officers posted in these UTs and states to work in Jammu & Kashmir.
- ❖ The all-India Services include IPS, IAS, and IFoS officers.

Citizen-centric reforms

- ❖ The Centre has given additional financial assistance of Rs 1,004 crore to Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ It is given under the newly launched Scheme of Special Assistance to States for Capital Expenditure.
- ❖ Both the states completed three out of the four citizen-centric reforms.
- ❖ They have completed the One Nation, One Ration Card Reforms, Ease of Doing Business Reforms, and Urban Local Bodies Reforms.
- ❖ The 4th reform is Utility Reform and Power Sector Reform.



NCAVES India Forum 2021

- ❖ NCAVES means Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of the Ecosystem Services
- ❖ It is being organised by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- ❖ India is one of the five countries taking part in this project.
- ❖ The other countries are Brazil, China, South Africa and Mexico.
- ❖ The project is funded by the European Union.



Maximum Speed of Railways

- ❖ The Railway ministry has drastically increased the maximum speed to 130 km per hour for 1,280 km length.
- ❖ The enhancement has been done out of 1,612 km in Golden Quadrilateral - Golden Diagonal route.
- ❖ The mentioned route covers the whole GQ-GD route over South Central Railway except the Duvvada-Vijayawada section.
- ❖ The Golden Quadrilateral (GQ) is a national highway network connecting most of the major industrial, agricultural and cultural centres of India.
- ❖ It forms a quadrilateral connecting the four major metro cities of India, viz., Delhi (north), Kolkata (east), Mumbai (west) and Chennai (south).
- ❖ It is the largest highway project in India and the fifth longest in the world.
- ❖ The South-Central Railway is one of the 18 zones of Indian Railways.
- ❖ It is spread over the states of Telangana, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ Its headquarters is at Secunderabad.

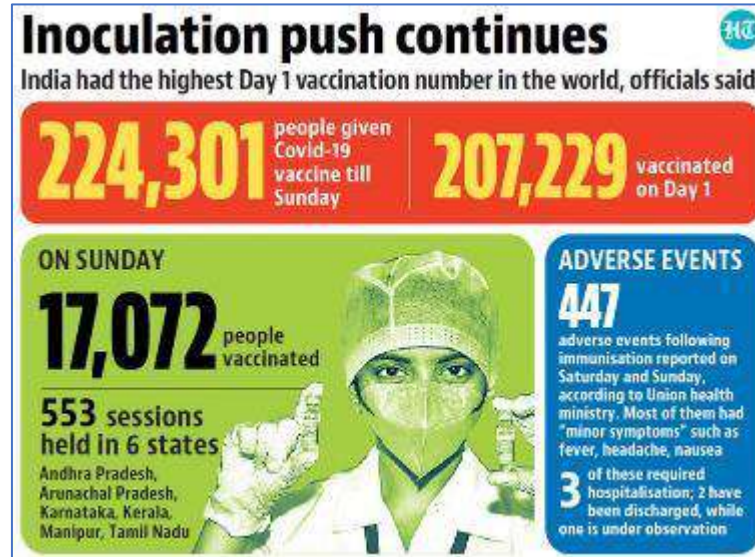


Chief Guest at Republic Day 2021

- ❖ Suriname's Indian-origin President Chandrikapersad Santokhi will be the Chief Guest at Republic Day 2021.
- ❖ The Suriname President was earlier the Chief Guest at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention.
- ❖ It comes after UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson cancelled his visit to India.
- ❖ Suriname is a former Dutch colony.

- ❖ The Indian-origin people make up the largest ethnic group.
- ❖ Suriname is a country on the north eastern Atlantic coast of South America.

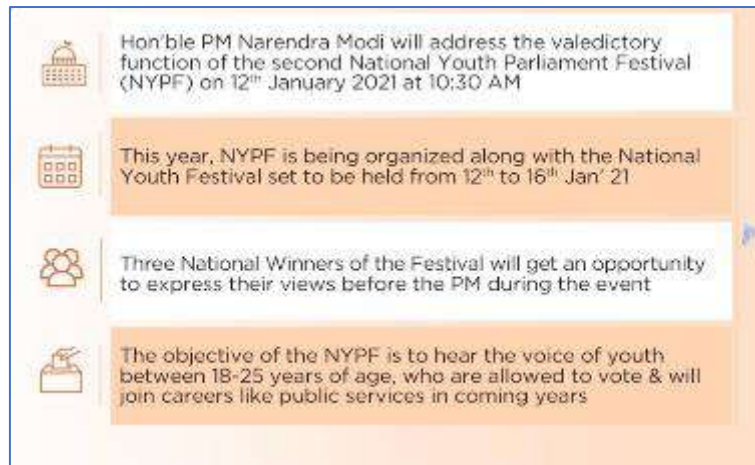
COVID-19 Vaccination Drive in India



- ❖ India started the world's largest vaccination drive from January 16, 2021.
- ❖ Two Made in India vaccines have been given emergency use approval.
- ❖ The Drugs Controller General of India (DGCI) had granted Emergency Use Authorisation to two vaccines — Covishield and Covaxin.
- ❖ The government plans to vaccinate around 30 crore people under the vaccination drive.
- ❖ Initially it will include healthcare professionals and front-line workers and people over 50 years of age.
- ❖ The beneficiaries will get administered with these vaccines - Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covishield and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin.
- ❖ Covishield vaccine will be available at a price of Rs 200 per dose.
- ❖ The real-time information will be available on the unique digital platform Co-WIN Vaccine management system.
- ❖ It is a digitalized platform named Covid Vaccine Intelligence Network.
- ❖ People need to self-register on the Co-WIN website or app.

National Youth Parliament

- ❖ The Prime Minister has addressed the National Youth Parliament.
- ❖ It is organised to hear the voice of the youth between the age of 18 and 25 years.
- ❖ It is held on January 12 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.



The infographic contains four points:

- Hon'ble PM Narendra Modi will address the valedictory function of the second National Youth Parliament Festival (NYPF) on 12th January 2021 at 10:30 AM
- This year, NYPF is being organized along with the National Youth Festival set to be held from 12th to 16th Jan' 21
- Three National Winners of the Festival will get an opportunity to express their views before the PM during the event
- The objective of the NYPF is to hear the voice of youth between 18-25 years of age, who are allowed to vote & will join careers like public services in coming years

- ❖ Also, the Government of India celebrates the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda as National Youth Day.
- ❖ The first National Youth Parliament was held in 2019 under the theme “be the voice of new India and find solutions and contribute to policy”.
- ❖ The National Service Scheme operating under Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports organises the National Youth parliament.

Atal Tinkering Labs

- ❖ The Indian Space Research Organization recently announced that it is to adopt 100 Atal Tinkering Labs across the country.
- ❖ NITI Aayog established Atal Tinkering Labs.
- ❖ Atal Tinkering Labs are established under Atal Innovation Mission.
- ❖ The Atal Innovation Mission was launched to promote entrepreneurship and innovation in the country.

Republic Day Chief Guest 2021

- ❖ The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced that there will be no foreign leader as the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations 2021.
- ❖ This will be the first time in more than 50 years that there will not be any foreign head at the Republic Day parade.

Heritage Conservation Committee

- ❖ The Heritage Conservation Committee has approved the construction of a new parliament.
- ❖ It is set up under the Ministry of Urban Affairs.
- ❖ It was setup under the provisions of in Delhi Building Byelaws, 1983 to protect heritage buildings.
- ❖ Only buildings in and around Delhi are governed by these laws.

All Women Pilot Group

- ❖ Air India recently operated the longest non-stop Flight operated by an all-women pilot group.
- ❖ The new route has saved fuel consumption, flying time, and curbing carbon footprint by flying over the polar route as the flight path.
- ❖ The flight is Air India's longest route in its network at approx 14,000 km (8,698 miles) and the longest flight to and from India (approximately 16 hours).
- ❖ It includes the four women - Captain Zoya Aggarwal, Captain Papagari Thanmai, Captain Akansha Sonaware and Captain Shivani Manhas.
- ❖ They flew for 17 hours.
- ❖ The flight was started at San Francis of the USA.
- ❖ It landed at the Kempegowda international airport in Bengaluru.
- ❖ This route is also one of the top 10 longest routes in the World, in terms of distance flown.
- ❖ Air India has the most number of Women pilots in the world.



The Kayakalp Awards 2019-20

- ❖ These are presented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- ❖ They are annually given to the health facilities with the highest standards of sanitation and hygiene.
- ❖ The award was for the category Group A Central government health facility, or hospitals with more than 1,000 beds.
- ❖ The District Hospital Reasi of Jammu and Kashmir was given the first prize.
- ❖ The Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) was awarded the second prize under the Kayakalp Awards scheme.
- ❖ AIIMS Bhubaneswar has received the best central government hospital under Category B of the Kayakalp Awards for cleanliness.

30th National energy conservation awards 2020



- ❖ The award is instituted by Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the Ministry of Power, Government of India.
- ❖ During the event, the Standards and Labelling Programme for Air Compressors and Ultra High Definition (UHD) TV on voluntary basis was initiated.
- ❖ SAATHEE Portal was also launched.
- ❖ State-wise Actions on Annual Targets and Headways on Energy Efficiency (SAATHEE) is a Management Information System (MIS) portal.
- ❖ It is an initiative of the Department of Science & Technology.
- ❖ The Paradip Refinery of Odisha has won First prize in the “Petroleum Refinery Sector”.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0

- ❖ It will focus on training eight lakh candidates during the scheme period of 2020-2021.
- ❖ It will be spearheaded by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
- ❖ It will focus on new-age India and COVID-related skills.
- ❖ Under the third phase, 729 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra are to be established.
- ❖ More than 200 ITIs are to be rolled out under Skill India mission.
- ❖ Prime Minister had launched Skill India Mission on July 15, 2015.
- ❖ The mission gained momentum through the launch of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY).
- ❖ The National Policy on Skill Development had set a target of skilling 50 crore people by 2022.



Food Corporation of India

- ❖ On January 14, 2021, the 75th foundation day of the Food Corporation of India was celebrated.
- ❖ It is a statutory body that operates under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
- ❖ It was founded on January 14, 1965 having its first District Office at Thanjavur – rice bowl of Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Its initial headquarters was located in Chennai and was later moved to New Delhi.

SKOCH Challenger Award

- ❖ The Union Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda was honoured with the SKOCH Challenger Award.
- ❖ It has been conferred to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for e-Governance, for its IT-led initiatives and other transformational initiatives.

Prarambh - Startup India International Summit 2021

- ❖ The Startup India International Summit marks five years of the launch of the Startup India initiative.
- ❖ It has played a key role in encouraging the spirit of entrepreneurship across India.
- ❖ It is being organised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

- ❖ The first day of the Summit has been dedicated to host BIMSTEC Startup Conclave.



Ethanol blending in India

- ❖ India plans to achieve 20% ethanol-blending with gasoline by 2025.
- ❖ It will be five years ahead of its previous target.
- ❖ It is to help reduce its dependence on costly oil imports.
- ❖ In 2020, the government had set a target of reaching 10% ethanol-blending by 2022.
- ❖ It means 10% of ethanol mixed with 90% of gasoline – and 20% by 2030.
- ❖ India relies on foreign suppliers to meet more than 80% of its demand.



India's first Fire Park

- ❖ The Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the 'Fire Park'.
- ❖ It is a first of its kind initiative in the country, to bring awareness on fire safety measures.
- ❖ It is located inside the premises of the Odisha Fire and Disaster Academy in Bhubaneswar.

- ❖ He also launched a dynamic online portal, 'Agnishama Seva' of Odisha Fire Service on virtual platform.



India Meteorological Department

- ❖ The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) celebrated its 146th Foundation day on 15th January 2021.
- ❖ It was established in 1875 at Calcutta.
- ❖ It is an agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Government of India.
- ❖ It is the principal agency responsible for meteorological observations, weather forecasting and seismology.
- ❖ It is also one of the six Regional Specialised Meteorological Centres of the World Meteorological Organisation.
- ❖ It has the responsibility for forecasting, naming and distribution of warnings for tropical cyclones in the Northern Indian Ocean region.
- ❖ It will include the Malacca Straits, the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf.

SAKSHAM Awareness Campaign

- ❖ The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas recently launched SAKSHAM awareness campaign.



- ❖ The campaign was launched to spread awareness about green energy.
- ❖ It is a one-month long people centric fuel conservation campaign.

India's first 'Labour Movement Museum'

- ❖ India's first Labour Movement Museum would be launched in Alappuzha, Kerala.
- ❖ It will showcase the history of world labour movement.

Republic Day parade, 2021

- ❖ The Republic Day parade of 2021 will feature the newly acquired Rafale fighter jets.
- ❖ The Rafael Jets will be a part of the Ekalavya formation.
- ❖ The Ekalavya formation will include one Rafale jet, two MiG 29s and two Jaguars.

Central Adoption Resource Authority

- ❖ The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) recently celebrated its 6th annual day on January 15, 2021.
- ❖ It was granted the status of statutory body on this day under the Juvenile Justice act, 2015.
- ❖ It operates under the Ministry of Women and Child development.
- ❖ It acts as the nodal body for the adoption of Indian children.

**Central Adoption Resource Authority
(CARA)**

- The **Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)** is an Autonomous Body under the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India and is responsible for both in-country and inter-country adoptions in India.
- Its objectives are to find an affectionate and caring family for every orphan/destitute/surrendered child in the country.
- It firstly ensures that no Indian child is given for inter-country adoption without him/her having been considered by Indian families residing in India.
- It also provides financial assistance to various NGOs and Government run Homes to promote quality child care to such children and place them in domestic adoption.

Shree Somnath Temple Trust

- ❖ PM Modi was named as next Chairman of this trust.
- ❖ He becomes the second PM to hold the post after the former Prime Minister Morarji Desai.
- ❖ The temple is in Gujarat.
- ❖ Somnath temple is also believed to be the first among the 12 Jyotirlinga shrines of Shiva.
- ❖ The present Somnath Temple was reconstructed and was completed in 1951 in the Style of Hindu Temple Architecture.
- ❖ The reconstruction of the temple was started on the orders of former Home Minister of India Vallabhbhai Patel.

- Architectural Style : Chalukya Style of Temple Architecture or Kailash Mahameru Prasad
- Architect : Prabhaschandra
- Period : No specific period, as it was rebuilt 7 times.
- Reason for Construction : It stands as a dedication to Lord Someshwar.

Parakram Diwas

- ❖ The central government has decided to celebrate Netaji's birth anniversary on January 23rd every year as Parakram Diwas.
- ❖ This year is the 125th Birth Anniversary year of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.



- ❖ The honour of Netaji was conferred on Subash Chandra Bose in Germany, in early 1942 by the Indian soldiers of the Indian Legion and by the German and Indian officials in the Special Bureau for India in Berlin.

Winter mountaineering

- ❖ The Indian Mountaineering Foundation recently approved a three-member team of mountaineers led by Arjun Vajpai for winter climbing expedition to Mount Trishul.
- ❖ In India, the mountaineering expeditions are taken up only during pre-monsoon and post-monsoon period.
- ❖ For the first time, the Indian Mountaineering Foundation has approved the concept of winter mountaineering.
- ❖ Arjun Vajpai is the youngest Indian to climb Mount Everest at the age of 16 in 2010.
- ❖ Mount Trishul is located in the western Kumaon of Uttarakhand.

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)

- ❖ The NDRF celebrated its 16th Raising Day on 18th January.
- ❖ It is a specialized multi-skilled, humanitarian force of the country.
- ❖ It was setup under the Disaster Management Act, 2005
- ❖ It came into existence on January 19th, 2006.
- ❖ It is under the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).
- ❖ The Chairman of the NDMA is the Prime Minister.
- ❖ The responsibility of managing disasters in India is that of the State Government.
- ❖ The 'Nodal Ministry' in the central government for management of natural disasters is the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)

India 1st air taxi



- ❖ Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated the country's first small aircraft air taxi service.
- ❖ The air taxi service in its first phase will function from Chandigarh to Hisar.
- ❖ It will be operated under UDAN scheme of the central government.

Driverless metro

- ❖ The Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) unveiled 'Driverless Metro Car' for Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA).
- ❖ It is a defence public sector equipment manufacturer under the Ministry of Defence (MoD).



Gucchi mushroom

- ❖ A geographical indication (GI) tag has been sought for Gucci mushroom, one of the costliest mushrooms in the world.
- ❖ It grows in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district.



India Innovation Index 2020

Best performers Four of the five highest scoring major States in the India Innovation Index are from the south 	Rank	Major States	Score
	1	Karnataka	42.5
	2	Maharashtra	38.03
	3	Tamil Nadu	37.91
	4	Telangana	33.23
	5	Kerala	30.58
	6	Haryana	25.81
	7	Andhra Pradesh	24.19
	8	Gujarat	23.63
	9	Uttar Pradesh	22.85
	10	Punjab	22.54

- ❖ It was released by NITI Aayog.
- ❖ The first edition of the index was released in October 2019.
- ❖ It was developed on the lines of Global Innovation Index.
- ❖ Under the index, the states and union territories have been divided into 17 Major States, 10 North-East and Hill States and 9 City States and Union Territories for effectively comparing their performance.
- ❖ Karnataka retained its position as the most innovative major state in the country.
- ❖ It was followed by Maharashtra at second place and Tamil Nadu at third place.
- ❖ Bihar was ranked the last in the index.
- ❖ Himachal Pradesh topped among the North East/ Hilly states.
- ❖ Delhi tops among UT/ city states.

Question Hour

- ❖ It had been suspended by the government during the monsoon session in 2020.
- ❖ It will resume when Parliament meets for the Budget session from January 29.
- ❖ The first hour of every parliamentary sitting is termed as Question hour.
- ❖ It is mentioned in the Rules of Procedure of the House.
- ❖ The presiding officers of the both Houses (Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha) are the final authority with respect to the conduct of Question Hour.
- ❖ Question Hour in both Houses is held on all days of the session.
- ❖ But there are two days when an exception is made

- There is no Question Hour on the day the President addresses MPs from both Houses in the Central Hall.
- Question Hour is not scheduled on the day the Finance Minister presents the Budget.

STARStreak Air Defence System

- ❖ Thales, a French Multinational Company has signed an agreement with the Bharat Dynamics Limited.
- ❖ It is to jointly work on STARStreak Air Defence System.
- ❖ The STARStreak is a short-range surface-to-air missile.
- ❖ The minimum range of the system is 0.3 km and the maximum range is 7 km.
- ❖ It travels at Mach 3 speed
- ❖ Mach is the speed of sound.



15th India Digital Summit

- ❖ It is the flagship event of the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI).
- ❖ The theme for this year's summit is 'Aatma nirbhar Bharat – Start of New Decade'
- ❖ It will be in line with the government's 'Make for the World' Initiatives.



IFFI Film Festival

- ❖ The Italian cinematographer Vittorio Storaro was honoured with the lifetime achievement award at the 51st Edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) held at Goa.
- ❖ For the 51st IFFI, the Country in Focus is Bangladesh.
- ❖ The IFFI is Asia's oldest and India's biggest film festival.



Citizen Centric Reforms

- ❖ The four citizen-centric reforms identified were the implementation of One Nation One Ration Card system, ease of doing business reform, ULB/utility reforms and power sector reforms.
- ❖ These reforms are stipulated by the Department of Expenditure, the Ministry of Finance.
- ❖ The central government enhanced the borrowing limit of States by 2% of their Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).
- ❖ It was the part of the Atma nirbhar Bharat package.
- ❖ It was announced on May 17 of 2020 in view of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ❖ Only Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have completed three reforms - One Nation One Ration Card system, ease of doing business reform, ULB/utility reforms – till now among the other states.
- ❖ Manipur has become the fourth state in the country to successfully undertake 'Urban Local Bodies (ULB)'.
- ❖ Earlier, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh had successfully completed urban local bodies reform reforms.
- ❖ Kerala has become the 8th state in the country to successfully undertake Ease of Doing Business reforms.

- ❖ Seven other states namely, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Telangana have already completed this reform.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu became 11th state to implement 'One Nation One Ration Card' reforms.
- ❖ Other states are Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh is the biggest beneficiary followed by Karnataka and Gujarat.

Aadhaar review petitions

- ❖ The Supreme Court, in a majority view, has dismissed a series of petitions seeking a review of its 2018 judgment.
- ❖ The 2018 Judgement uphold the Lok Sabha Speaker's certification of Aadhaar law as a Money Bill and its subsequent passage in Parliament.
- ❖ It was enabling the money bill to get cleared without getting the assent of a majority in the Rajya Sabha.
- ❖ Section 7 of Aadhaar Act provided that the expenditure for subsidy, services or benefits under welfare schemes would be met from the Consolidated Fund of India.
- ❖ Because of this, the bill was qualified to be categorised as a money bill.

Exercise Kavach

- ❖ The Indian Army is to conduct a large scale joint military exercise Kavach in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.
- ❖ The exercise is to be held under the aegis of Andaman and Nicobar Command.
- ❖ It will involve Indian Navy, Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Indian Coast Guard.
- ❖ It is to fine tune the joint war capabilities of all the three forces of the India.



7th MASCRADE

- ❖ The Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the seventh edition of “MASCRADE 2021”.
- ❖ MASCRADE is Movement against Smuggled and Counterfeit Trade.
- ❖ It is organised by FICCI.



Shram shakthi Portal

- ❖ The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) has launched a National Migration Support Portal called Shram Shakti.
- ❖ This would effectively help in the smooth formulation of State and National level programs for migrant workers.
- ❖ This is the first time that MoTA is working towards collating state level data centrally on tribal migrants.
- ❖ It is for not only know their numbers but also link them to schemes.
- ❖ Goa will be leading the ground test on data collection through its brand-new migration cell.

Operation Sard Hawa

- ❖ It was launched by the Border Security Force in the western border of Rajasthan.
- ❖ The purpose of the operation is to check the instances of infiltration due to dense fog in the region.

Vasuki Train

- ❖ The South-East Central Railways (SECR) zone in Chhattisgarh has successfully operated the longest ever freight train.
- ❖ It was done by amalgamating five rakes of goods trains as one unit of around 3.5 km.
- ❖ It is named as ‘Vasuki’.
- ❖ It covered the distance of 224 km between the railway stations of Bhilai and Korba.

- ❖ The SECR has also operated two freight trains recently.
- ❖ These freight trains got attention due to their length.
- ❖ The two freight trains were 'Sesh Naag' and 'Super Anaconda'.

AMPHEX – 21

- ❖ It is a large-scale tri-service joint amphibious exercise.
- ❖ It was conducted in Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- ❖ It involved the participation of Indian Naval ships, Indian Army troops and different types of aircraft from the Air force.



Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards

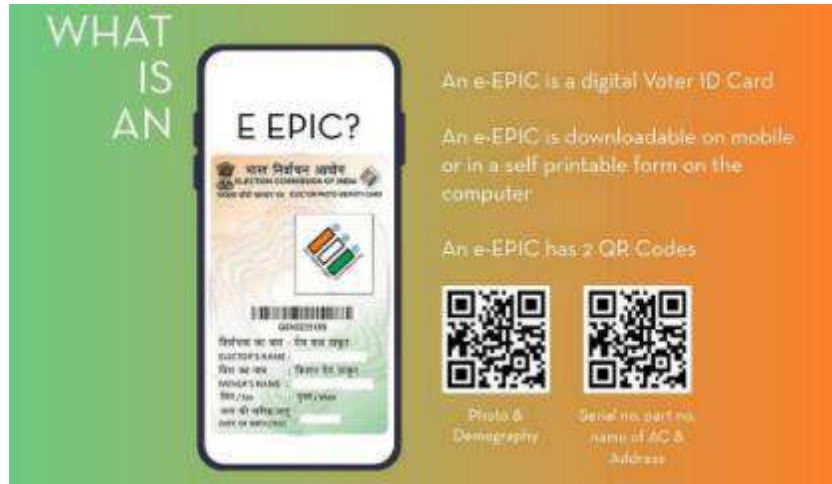
- ❖ President Ram Nath Kovind has approved the conferment of this award for 40 persons
- ❖ The awards include Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak (8), Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak (1) and Jeevan Raksha Padak (31).
- ❖ One Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak award was conferred posthumously to Muhammed Muhsin from Kerala.



- ❖ Jeevan Raksha Padak awards are conferred to honour people who have displayed the meritorious act of human nature by saving the life of another person.

e-EPIC

- ❖ The Election Commission of India (ECI) launched a non-editable digital version of the voter ID card.
- ❖ It is named Electronic Electoral Photo Identity Card (e-EPIC).



- ❖ The e-EPIC card can be printed in PDF format.
- ❖ It can be saved online in facilities like Digi locker.
- ❖ It is to provide faster delivery and easy accessibility to the document.
- ❖ The elector photo identity cards were introduced in 1993.
- ❖ It was the time TN Seshan headed the election commission of India.
- ❖ He was appointed the 10th Chief Election Commissioner of India (1990–96).

Jail Tourism

PLAN FOR JANUARY 26

Deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar will inaugurate jail tourism at Yerawada prison on January 26 at 11am

Chief minister Uddhav Thackeray and home minister Anil Deshmukh are expected to mark their attendance at the inaugural function virtually



File photo

UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS

Institutes such as schools, colleges, and others, will have to seek permission from the Yerawada jail superintendent to visit the facility, submit a list of students and furnish their identity proof

Visitors will have to pay an entrance fee of ₹1, ₹10 and ₹15,

per person. They will have to surrender their phone and baggage at the entrance gate

Visitors will not be allowed to click photographs or shoot videos. Instead, jail authorities will click photos and shoot videos of visitors. The digital images will be shared with educational institutes free of cost

- ❖ The government of Maharashtra has decided to start a 'jail tourism' from the Yerawada prison of Pune.
- ❖ Some of the freedom fighter who were imprisoned in Yerawada jail under the British rule include Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Lokmanya Tilak, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Subhas Chandra Bose.

Gallantry Awards 2021

- ❖ The President has approved awards of Gallantry awards to Armed Forces personnel.
- ❖ It was announced on the eve of 72nd Republic Day celebrations.
- ❖ These include one Mahavir Chakra, 05 Kirti Chakras, 05 Vir Chakras, 07 Shaurya Chakras.
- ❖ Mahavir Chakra was given to Colonel Santosh Babu (posthumous), the Commanding Officer of 16 Bihar Regiment.



Padma Awards 2021

- ❖ On the eve of 72nd Republic Day, India has honoured 119 people.
- ❖ These awards will be conferred by the President of India at ceremonial functions at Rashtrapati Bhawan.
- ❖ In the list, there are 7 Padma Vibhushan, 10 Padma Bhushan and 102 Padma Shri Awards.
- ❖ Women awardees counts at 29.
- ❖ It also includes 10 persons from the category of Foreigners, 16 Posthumous awardees and 1 transgender awardee.

Padma Vibhushan (7)			
S.N	Name	Field	State/Country
1.	Shri Shinzo Abe	Public Affairs	Japan
2.	Shri S P Balasubramaniam (Posthumous)	Art	Tamil Nadu
3.	Dr. Belle Monappa Hegde	Medicine	Karnataka
4.	Shri Narinder Singh Kapany (Posthumous)	Science and Engineering	USA
5.	Maulana Wahiduddin Khan	Others- Spiritualism	Delhi
6.	Shri B. B. Lal	Others- Archaeology	Delhi
7.	Shri Sudarshan Sahoo	Art	Odisha

About Padma Awards

- ❖ It is one of the highest civilian Awards of the country.
- ❖ This award is given in three categories namely, the Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.

Padma Bhushan (10)			
8.	Ms. Krishnan Nair Shantakumari Chithra	Art	Kerala
9.	Shri Tarun Gogoi (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Assam
10.	Shri Chandrashekhar Kambara	Literature and Education	Karnataka
11.	Ms. Sumitra Mahajan	Public Affairs	Madhya Pradesh
12.	Shri Nripendra Misra	Civil Service	Uttar Pradesh
13.	Shri Ram Vilas Paswan (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Bihar
14.	Shri Keshubhai Patel (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Gujarat
15.	Shri Kalbe Sadiq (Posthumous)	Others-Spiritualism	Uttar Pradesh
16.	Shri Rajnikant Devidas Shroff	Trade and Industry	Maharashtra
17.	Shri Tarlochan Singh	Public Affairs	Haryana

Bharat Parv 2021

- ❖ It is being organised from January 26, 2021 till January 31, 2021.
- ❖ It celebrates the spirit of India.
- ❖ It is organized by the Ministry of Tourism every year.
- ❖ It is being organised with the overall theme focusing on the Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat.



INTERNATIONAL

Covid-19 in Antarctica

- ❖ Antarctica is the last continent to reach Covid 19.
- ❖ The pandemic has finally reached every continent on Earth.
- ❖ The Chilean authorities confirmed the cases at two military bases in Antarctica.

Mission SAGAR III

- ❖ It is part of India's Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief assistance to Friendly Foreign Countries during the ongoing pandemic.
- ❖ This Mission is being undertaken in accordance with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region).
- ❖ The Indian Naval Ship Kiltan arrived at Sihanoukville Port, Cambodia as part of this Mission.
- ❖ Earlier, under Mission SAGAR-II, INS Airavat delivered food aid to Djibouti, Sudan, South Sudan and Eritrea.

Five Eyes network

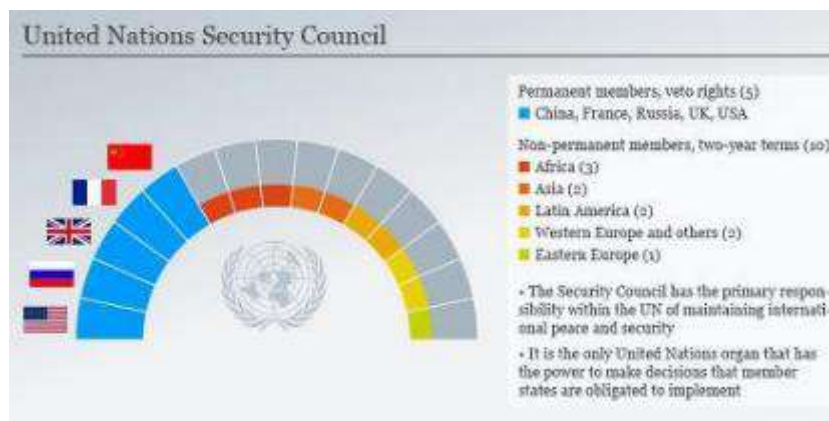
- ❖ Japan is now to join the Five Eyes network to become the sixth eye.
- ❖ It comprises of five nations namely Australia, Canada, Britain, US and New Zealand.

- ❖ It collaborated to respond against the increasing threats by China and North Korea.
- ❖ The origins of Five Eyes alliance can be tracked to the Atlantic Charter that was issued in August 1941.
- ❖ In June 2020, the Five Eyes countries signed an Economic Agreement to isolate China.
- ❖ The United States has sought to add three democratic countries India, South Korea and Japan in Five Eyes Network.



Non-permanent UNSC member

- ❖ India began its two-year term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council on January 1, 2021.
- ❖ This is the eight-time that India would have a seat in the powerful organ of the United Nations.



- ❖ The Four other nations are Ireland, Kenya, Mexico and Norway.
- ❖ India will be the UNSC President in August 2021 and again for a month in 2022.
- ❖ The presidency of the council is rotated among each of the members for one month according to alphabetical order.

GAVI Board

- ❖ Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan has been nominated by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) as a member on the GAVI Board.
- ❖ He will be representing the South East Area Regional Office (SEARO)/ Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) constituency on the GAVI Board.
- ❖ He will succeed MyintHtwe of Myanmar.
- ❖ He will hold this post for 2021 to 2023.
- ❖ Dr Harsh Vardhan was also elected as the chair of the World Health Organization.
- ❖ Gavi is an international organisation created in 2000
- ❖ It is a global Vaccine Alliance, bringing together public and private sectors.
- ❖ It works to achieve the objective of “Immunisation for All”.



Reporters Without Borders

- ❖ At least 50 journalists and media workers have been killed worldwide last year alone.
- ❖ The overall number of killings has down from 53 in 2019.
- ❖ Mexico was the deadliest nation for journalists in 2020.

- ❖ Iraq was the second-deadliest country followed by Afghanistan.
- ❖ It was a data according to the Reporters Without Borders.
- ❖ It is an international non-profit and non-governmental organization headquarters at Paris, France.



INS Sindhuvir

- ❖ It is officially inducted into Myanmar Navy.
- ❖ It is the first and only submarine of the Myanmar Navy.
- ❖ It is given the name of UMS Minye Theinkhathu in Myanmar language.
- ❖ It is the first submarine to be given by India to another country.



Covid Vaccine emergency supply

- ❖ The UK Government has approved the emergency supply of Astra Zeneca and Oxford University vaccines.
- ❖ The Serum Institute of India has tied up with AstraZeneca to supply the vaccines in UK.
- ❖ This new vaccine is a viral vector vaccine.

- ❖ It works in a different way than the mRNA vaccines that have already been approved.
- ❖ A viral vector vaccine uses another non-replicating virus to deliver SARS-CoV-2 genes, in the form of DNA.

UK New Year honors list

- ❖ Seven-time Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton was awarded knighthood in the United Kingdom New Year Honors list.
- ❖ Hamilton won his seventh world title at the Turkish Grand Prix in November 2020.
- ❖ By this win, he equaled the Michael Schumacher's World record.
- ❖ Hamilton also surpassed Michael Schumacher's all-time record of 91 wins in October 2020.
- ❖ By this win, his total win tally has gone to 95.
- ❖ The UK knighthood and Damehood honor dates back to medieval times.
- ❖ It carries the title 'Sir' for men and 'Dame' for women.
- ❖ Dr Raghu Ram Pillarisetti has been named in this list.



International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)

- ❖ It has become an associate member of the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO).
- ❖ The first International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in India has been set up at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT).

Nuclear exchange

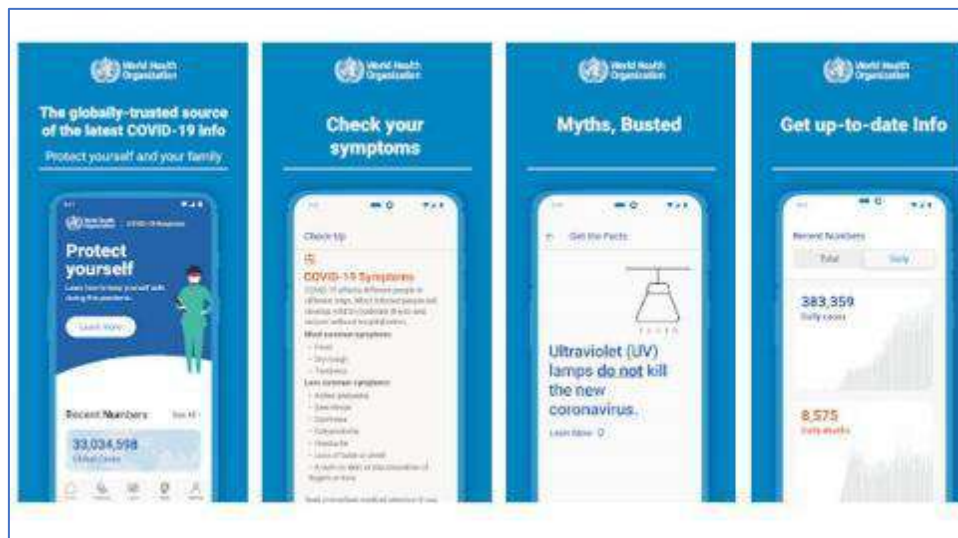
- ❖ Pakistan and India conducted the annual practice of exchanging the list of their nuclear installations.
- ❖ This was signed on December 31, 1988.
- ❖ The agreement contains the provision that both countries inform each other of their nuclear installations and facilities on January 1 every year.

- ❖ This has been done consecutively since January 1, 1992.



Covid App

- ❖ The World Health Organization recently launched a COVID-19 mobile application called the “WHO COVID-19 app”.
- ❖ The app is available in seven different languages such as English, Arabic, Portuguese, French, Chinese, Spanish, Russian.



4 Asian Tea Cultivation Sites

- ❖ The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) has named 4 Asian Tea Cultivation Sites across three countries as the Globally Important Agricultural Sites (GIAHS).
- ❖ These are:
 - Pu'er Traditional Tea Agrosystem in Yunnan province at China
 - Traditional Tree Grass system - Japan

- Fuzhou Jasmine tea site - China
- Traditional Hadong Tea Agrosystem - South Korea
- ❖ The Yunnan province in China is considered as the World's origin for tea.
- ❖ China is the World's largest tea producer while India is the 2nd.
- ❖ In India, tea cultivation was introduced only by the British in 19th century.
- ❖ Tea is produced in the states of Assam, West Bengal and Kerala among others in India.

Maritime Cooperation

- ❖ The Indian Coast Guard has entered into memoranda of understanding with seven Asian countries for cooperation in maritime search and rescue operations.
- ❖ These include Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Vietnam.

Tampon Tax

- ❖ The British government abolished the tax on women sanitary products as the "tampon tax".
- ❖ It is a measure to 'End Period Poverty'.
- ❖ India, Australia and Canada have already eliminated this tax.
- ❖ Scotland became the first country in the world to make these period products free of cost.

Malala Yousafzai Act

- ❖ The United States recently passed this Act for Pakistani Women.
- ❖ The Act requires the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to award at least 50% of scholarship to Pakistani women between 2020 and 2022.
- ❖ Malala is a Pakistani activist for female education.
- ❖ She is also the Youngest Nobel Prize Laureate in 2014.

Maitre Setu bridge

- ❖ It is the bridge over the River Feni.
- ❖ It connects South Tripura with Ramgarh of Bangladesh.
- ❖ It provides access to the Chittagong seaport of Bangladesh.
- ❖ Currently, the only sea trade access point of North eastern states is the Haldia port of West Bengal.

Asia Protected Areas Partnership

- ❖ India has been chosen as the co-chair of the IUCN-supported Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP) for a period of three years till 2023.
- ❖ India will replace South Korea.
- ❖ The APAP is chaired by IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Asia.



Flash Flood Guidance Services

- ❖ India launched this service for South Asia.
- ❖ It is the first of its kind for South Asian countries namely India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
- ❖ It is a robust system designed by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD).



Sea Wing drones

- ❖ China has deployed a fleet of underwater drones called Sea Wing (Haiyi) glider in the Indian Ocean.
- ❖ It can operate for months on end and make observations for naval intelligence purposes.
- ❖ These are a type of Uncrewed Underwater Vehicle (UUV).

US Capitol riots

- ❖ The supporters of President Donald Trump storming into the building of the US Capitol in Washington DC.
- ❖ The US Capitol houses both the US Senate and the House of Representatives.
- ❖ The Capitol Building, built in 1800, is the meeting place of the United States Congress.
- ❖ The US Congress was set to officially ratify President-elect Joe Biden's electoral victory.
- ❖ Twitter went to lock President Trump's twitter account for 12 hours to stop any further instigation to the already violent protests.
- ❖ Many people have reportedly urged the Vice President Mike Pence to invoke the 25th Amendment and remove Trump from the highest office.
- ❖ The 25th Amendment lays down the procedure on how a US President or Vice President can be succeeded or replaced.
- ❖ As per the Amendment, the Vice President becomes President if the sitting President dies, resigns or is removed from the office.
- ❖ The 25th Amendment was proposed by the Congress on July 6, 1965 after the assassination of the 35th President of the United States - John K Kennedy.



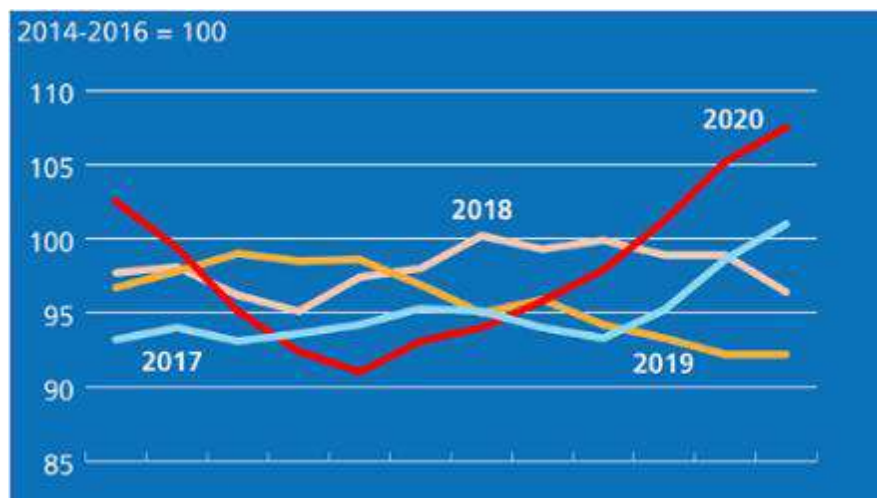
Next US President

- ❖ The US Congress has confirmed the victory of Joe Biden as the next United States' President.
- ❖ Biden cleared the desired majority mark of 270 Electoral Votes.
- ❖ 306 were in favour of Joe Biden and 232 were in favour of the current President Donald Trump.
- ❖ Joe Biden will be inaugurated as the next President of the United States of America on January 20, 2021.



Food Price Index

- ❖ The Food and Agriculture Organization recently released the Food Price Index.
- ❖ It rose in December 2020 for the seventh month in a row.
- ❖ It measures monthly changes in international prices of cereals, dairy products, oilseeds, meat and sugar.
- ❖ For the year of 2020, the food price index was 97.9 point.
- ❖ This is a three-year high and 3.1 % increase as compared to that of 2019.
- ❖ The historical peak of the food price index occurred in 2011.



Bloomberg Billionaires Index

- ❖ It ranks the world's 500 wealthiest people.
- ❖ Elon Musk has become the world's richest person, surpassing Amazon founder Jeff Bezos.
- ❖ Elon Musk is the CEO of SpaceX and Tesla.



UNSC's Counter-Terrorism Committee

- ❖ India has been asked to chair 3 major bodies of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- ❖ India is to chair this Counter Terrorism Committee in 2022.
- ❖ This committee was formed in September 2001 after the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre in New York, United States.
- ❖ India had last chaired this committee in 2011-12.
- ❖ India is also to chair the Taliban Sanctions Committee and Libya Sanctions committee.

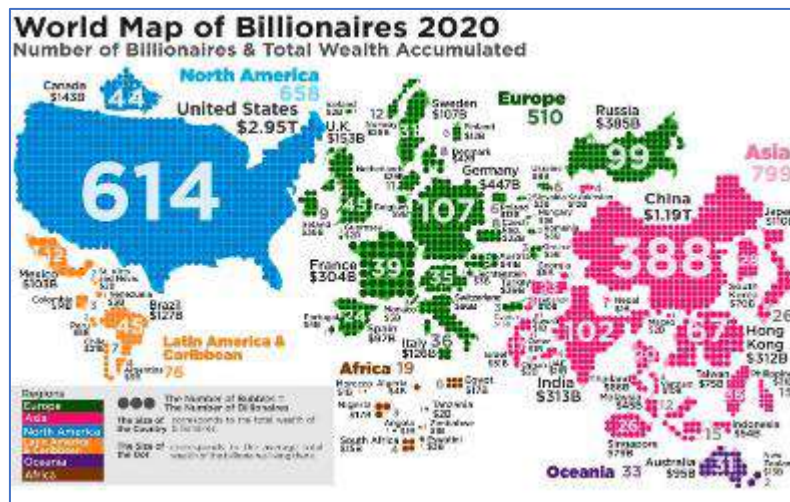
VOC-202012/01

- ❖ The World Health Organisation recently announced that the United Kingdom covid-19 variant has been detected in more than 41 countries.
- ❖ It was first detected in South Africa.
- ❖ The National Institute of virology, Pune has successfully isolated this virus.
- ❖ India launched recently INSACOG (Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genetic Consortium) labs.
- ❖ It is a consortium of ten labs namely NIBMG Kolkata, ILS Bhubaneswar, NIV Pune, CCS Pune, CCMB Hyderabad, CDFD Hyderabad, InSTEM Bengaluru, NIMHANS Bengaluru, IGIB Delhi, NCDC Delhi.

South Asia Group for Energy (SAGE)

- ❖ It has been set up under the Ministry of External Affairs.
- ❖ It will be headed by former Union Power Secretary Ram Vinay Shahi.
- ❖ It is to build a South Asia-focused energy security architecture.

Richest person in the world 2020



- ❖ As per the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, Elon Musk of the USA becomes the richest person in the world surpassing Jeff Bezos of the USA.
- ❖ As of 2020, the USA is the home to the highest numbers of billionaires worldwide (614).
- ❖ It is followed by China (389), Germany (107) and India (102), as per Forbes.

South Asia multilateral meet

- ❖ China has held its third multilateral dialogue with countries from South Asia.
- ❖ It has brought together every country in the region barring India, Bhutan and the Maldives.
- ❖ All three dialogues have been attended by Pakistan and Nepal.

H-1B visa norms

- ❖ The US administration has once again amended the H-1B visa norms.
- ❖ Now the norms will give priority to higher wages and skills for selection of deserving candidates.
- ❖ The old lottery system of work visa selection will not be followed now.
- ❖ The US H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ graduate level workers in specialty occupations.

‘Indian Cities in Post-Pandemic World’ Report

- ❖ This report was carried out by the World Economic Forum (WEF).
- ❖ It highlights the country’s most pressing urban challenges.
- ❖ The study found that an average of 25-30 people migrate to cities from rural areas every single minute.
- ❖ The study further said that about 35% per cent of all urban households cannot afford housing at market prices.

Stockpile of Ebola vaccine

- ❖ It was recently established by four international health and humanitarian organizations.
- ❖ They are World Health Organization (WHO), Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and UNICEF.
- ❖ It was established at Switzerland to control future outbreaks of ebola.
- ❖ The World Health Organization is pressing to establish a global stockpile of Ebola vaccines.
- ❖ The GAVI Vaccine alliance will be providing financial support for the vaccine stockpile to ensure outbreak response.

Sea Vigil-21



- ❖ The Indian Navy started the second edition of coastal defence exercise.
- ❖ The exercise aims at assessing India’s preparedness in the domain of coastal defence and maritime security.
- ❖ The exercise by the Indian Navy will be undertaken along the entire 7,516 km coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone of India.

- ❖ It will also involve all the 13 coastal states as well as UTs.
- ❖ The inaugural edition of this exercise took place in January 2019.
- ❖ The Sea Vigil is a build-up towards the major theatre level exercise TROPEX.
- ❖ The Indian Navy conducts TROPEX every two years.
- ❖ TROPEX is Tropical Level Readiness and Operational Exercise.
- ❖ It is an inter-service military exercise that involves the participation of Indian Air Force, Indian Army and Indian Navy.
- ❖ The exercise is held to test the combat readiness of the Indian Navy, Indian Air Force, Indian Army and Indian Coast Guard.
- ❖ The first TROPEX was held in 2005.

Henley Passport Index

- ❖ It was launched by the International Air Transport Association (IATA).
- ❖ The index is released based on the number of destinations the holders can access without visa.
- ❖ Nepal and Pakistan continue to be the “Worst passports to hold” category.
- ❖ Japan was the top performer.
- ❖ The Japanese citizens can travel to 191 countries.
- ❖ Singapore was in second position.
- ❖ India ranked 85th in this index.

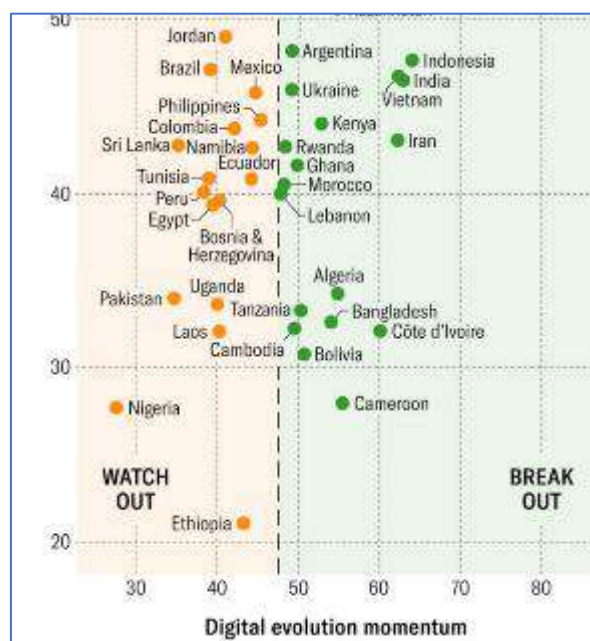


State sponsor of terrorism

- ❖ The US government designates Cuba as state sponsor of terrorism.
- ❖ The step by the Trump administration has reversed an Obama era decision.
- ❖ Sudan was recently removed to sign Israel-Sudan Normalisation Agreement.
- ❖ Iran, Syria and North Korea are currently in the list of state sponsors of terrorism.
- ❖ The list was first released in 1979 with Iraq, Libya, Syria and South Yemen in it.



3rd Edition Digital Evolution Scorecard 2020



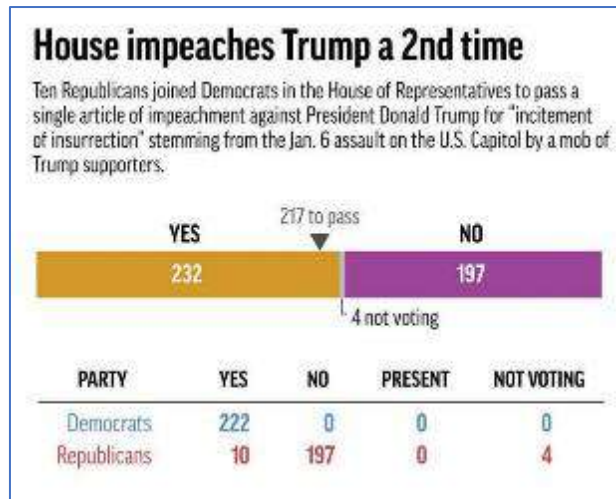
- ❖ It was developed by Tufts University's Fletcher School in partnership with Mastercard.
- ❖ India was ranked 4th among "Break Out Economies" in the third edition.
- ❖ China tops the scorecard.
- ❖ "Break Out Economies" are those that are digitalising very quickly and yet have a lot of room to grow.
- ❖ India doubled its internet connectivity in the last four years.
- ❖ The country is on track to add 350 million smartphones by 2023.

Trump Impeachment

- ❖ Donald Trump becomes first US President to be impeached twice.
- ❖ He was impeached by the US House of Representatives with 232 - 197 vote.
- ❖ After securing enough votes to pass the US House of Representatives, the impeachment resolution will now go to the US Senate.
- ❖ The Upper House of the USA, the Senate will be required to set up a trial.
- ❖ However, it will not hold it before January 20th
- ❖ On 20th January, the President-elect Joe Biden will be inaugurated as the next President of the United States.
- ❖ This means that Donald Trump will escape the risk of being removed from office.
- ❖ Three US Presidents have been impeached by Congress- Donald Trump, Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton.
- ❖ Among them, only Trump has been impeached twice in a single term.
- ❖ However, no US President has ever been removed from office through impeachment.

Process of impeachment

- ❖ Firstly, the House of representatives of the United States has to vote for the charges framed against the president.
- ❖ After the passage of votes with simple majority, the president will be impeached.
- ❖ However, the President is not removed from the office.
- ❖ In the next phase, the upper house, that is US Senate, is convened like a court.
- ❖ The President shall be removed from office only if two thirds of the Senate vote for it.



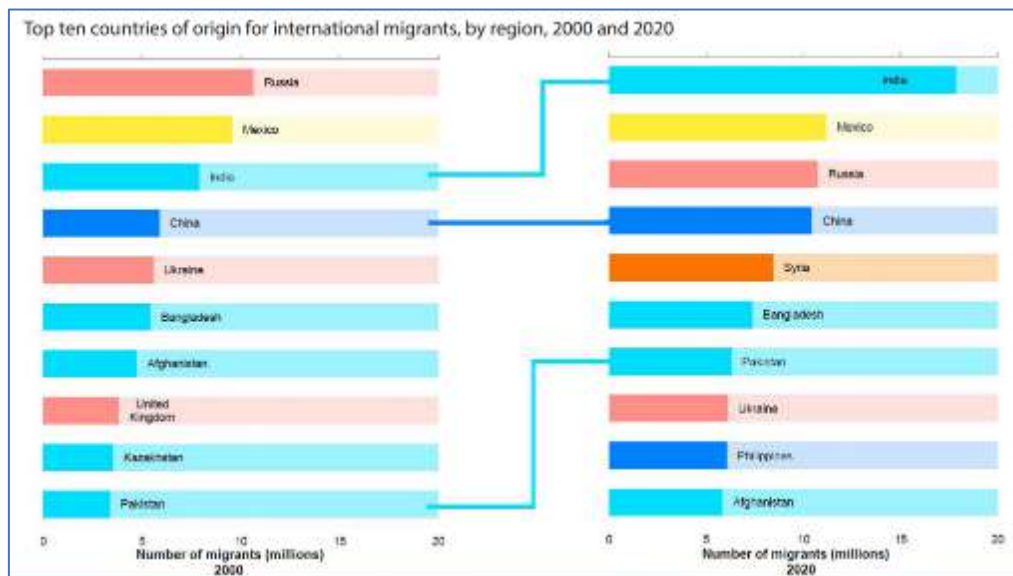
Palestine Elections

- ❖ Palestine is to hold first national elections after 14 years in 2021.
- ❖ The three elections, parliamentary, presidential and National Council polls, will be conducted in the Palestine in 2021.
- ❖ Two Palestinian groups - Hamas and Fatah - have been against each other ever since Hamas seized the Gaza Strip from its rival in 2007.
- ❖ However, in September 2020, the two groups met in Turkey and agreed to hold parliamentary and presidential elections.
- ❖ President Mahmoud Abbas agreed to stay on as President of Palestine until the next election.
- ❖ But he is recognized as president only in the West Bank and not by Hamas controlled Gaza strip.
- ❖ The first-ever legislative and presidential elections of Palestine were held in 1996.
- ❖ The Palestinian National Authority has a multi-party system with Fatah being the dominant party.

International Migration 2020 Highlights

- ❖ The United Nations recently released the report "International Migration 2020 Highlights".
- ❖ According to the report, the Indian diaspora is the largest in the world.
- ❖ More than 18 million people from India were living outside India as of 2020.
- ❖ It is distributed across a number of major countries such as UAE (3.5 million), Saudi Arabia (2.5 million) and US (2.7 million).
- ❖ The other countries hosting large number of migrants from India are Oman, Australia, Kuwait, Canada, Qatar, Pakistan and UK.
- ❖ The other countries with large diaspora are Mexico, China, Russia and Syria.

- ❖ The United States was the largest country of destination for international migrants.
- ❖ It was followed by Germany, Saudi Arabia, Russia and the UK.



148th session of WHO Executive Board

- ❖ Dr. Harsh Vardhan of India chaired this session.
- ❖ He said that while 2020 is described as the year of science, the Year 2021 shall be the year of global solidarity and survival.



Global Britain, Global Broker

- ❖ The Chatham House recently published a report proposing a blueprint for foreign policy of UK after Brexit.
- ❖ The report classed India as one of the “difficult four” countries along with China, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.
- ❖ The report was titled “Global Britain, Global Broker”.
- ❖ The Chatham House is also called the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Desert Knight - 21

- ❖ It is a bilateral Air exercise held between Indian Air Force and French Air and Space Force.
- ❖ This year, it will be held at Jodhpur in Rajasthan.
- ❖ the French Air and Space force and the Indian Air Force have so far held six editions of air exercise called “Garuda”.
- ❖ The Ex-Desert Knight 21 is being held in addition to the Garuda series exercise.

Voting rights in UNGA

- ❖ Iran and six other countries Libya, Niger, Central African Republic, Congo Brazzaville, Zimbabwe and South Sudan lost their voting rights in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
- ❖ These nations failed to pay their dues.

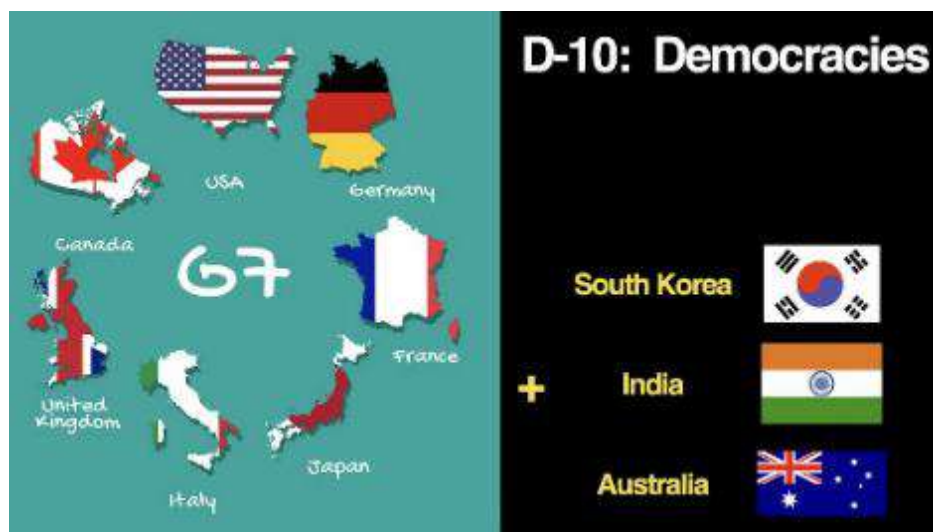
Open Skies Treaty

- ❖ Russia has announced that it is leaving the Open Skies Treaty (OST).
- ❖ It is an accord between over 30 countries.
- ❖ It allows participants to fly unarmed reconnaissance flights over any part of their fellow member states.
- ❖ In 2020, the US announced that it is to leave the Open Skies Treaty.
- ❖ The Open Skies Treaty was signed in 1992 after the Disintegration of the Soviet Union.



D10 Countries

- ❖ The United Kingdom has invited India, Australia and South Korea to attend the G7 summit as “guest countries”.
- ❖ For a country to become the member of G7, it must hold high net national wealth and high Human Development Index.
- ❖ It is scheduled to be held in June at United Kingdom.
- ❖ The D10 group of countries was proposed by Britain.
- ❖ The D10 group will include all the G7 countries and additionally India, Australia and South Korea.
- ❖ D10 means Ten biggest democracies in the world.
- ❖ G7 was originally formed in 1975.
- ❖ The members are USA, Canada, Germany, France, Japan, Italy, UK. Russia was formally inducted as a member of the group in 1998.
- ❖ With this G7 became G8.
- ❖ However, when Russia moved its troops into eastern Ukraine and conquered Crimea in 2014, the other G8 countries criticized Russia heavily.
- ❖ With this, the G8 again became G7 in 2014.



Ndrangheta

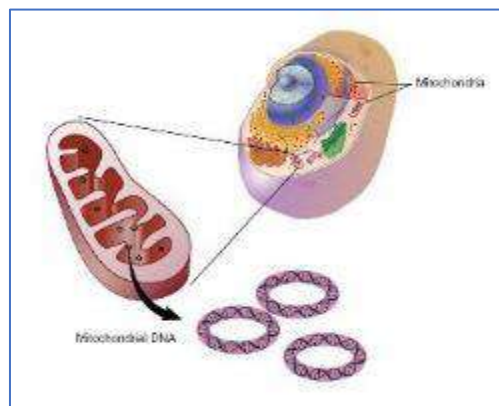
- ❖ The Italian Government believes that the Ndrangheta Mafia is responsible for controlling the massive amount of cocaine entering Europe from South America.
- ❖ It is a prominent Italian Mafia based in the region of Calabria in Italy.
- ❖ According to EUROPOL (European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation), Ndrangheta is the most powerful organized crime groups in the world.

Tsari Chu river

- ❖ Satellite images show that China built new village in Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The settlements are situated on the banks of Tsari Chu river in Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The village lies south of the McMahon Line.



Mitochondrial DNA based COVID-19 test



- ❖ The United States scientists have developed a new rapid COVID-19 test to measure mitochondrial DNA in the blood sample of the COVID-19 patients.
- ❖ The mitochondrial DNA is a unique type of genetic material that normally resides inside the energy factories of the cells.
- ❖ The test will be highly helpful to identify people at the highest risk of the virus.
- ❖ The Mitochondrial DNA is located in the mitochondria of the body cells.
- ❖ Mitochondria converts chemical energy in food into Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP).
- ❖ The ATP provides energy for muscle contraction and nerve impulse propagation.
- ❖ The mitochondrial DNA is inherited from the mother.
- ❖ Apart from humans, the mitochondrial DNA is also found in algae and fungi.

- ❖ Mitochondria is called the power house of the cell.

Davos Agenda Summit

- ❖ The Davos Agenda Summit is organised by the World Economic Forum.
- ❖ It is to be held at Singapore this year.
- ❖ The “Great Reset Initiative” of the World Economic Forum is to be launched during the Davos Agenda Summit.
- ❖ The theme of this Agenda Summit is “Stakeholders for a cohesive and sustainable world”.
- ❖ In 2021, the World Economic Forum has brought up a new twin-summit format in its Davos meeting.
- ❖ One of the meets is the usual Davos Agenda Summit and the other is the new Great Reset Initiative.
- ❖ Basically, the Great Reset Initiative is being started to recover global economy from COVID-19 crisis.

United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT)

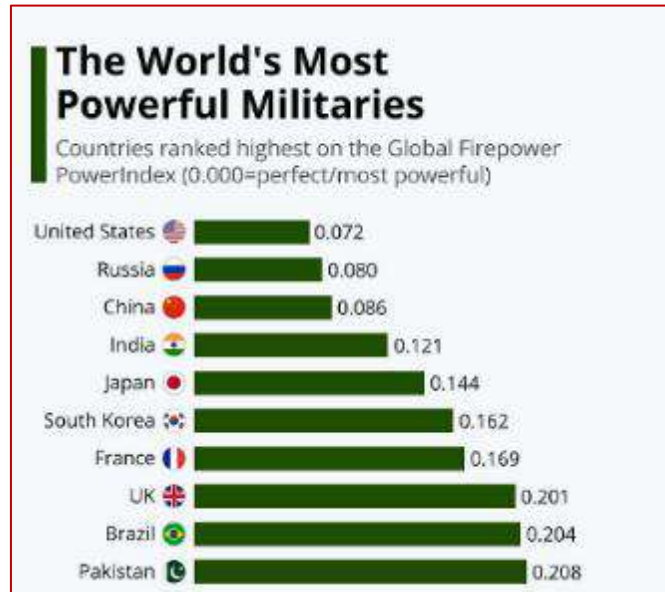
- ❖ It launched a global program to counter the terrorist threats against the vulnerable targets.
- ❖ It is in partnership with the UN Alliance of Civilizations and the UN interregional crime and Justice Research Institute.
- ❖ It is also in consultation with Interpol and UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate.



The Global Firepower Index

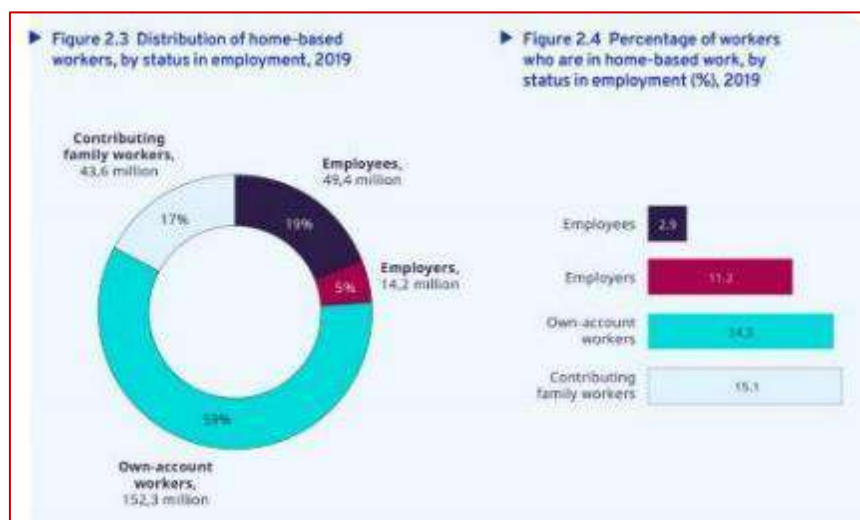
- ❖ It ranks the countries based on their potential military strength.
- ❖ The Global Firepower Index ranked 138 countries.
- ❖ The countries were evaluated based on prolonged offensive and defensive military campaigns.
- ❖ The United States topped the index.
- ❖ It was followed by Russia.
- ❖ China was ranked third.
- ❖ India was ranked fourth in the index.

- ❖ Pakistan Army surpassed Israel, Canada to become 10th most powerful in world.



Working from Home - from Invisibility to decent work

- ❖ It is a report released by the International Labour Organization.
- ❖ With the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, many in the world's workforce have shifted to homeworking.
- ❖ This report seeks to improve understanding of home work as well as to offer policy guidance that can pave the way to decent work for homeworkers both old and new.



New President of USA- Joe Biden

- ❖ Joe Biden from Democratic Party sworn in as the 46th President of the United States on January 20, 2021.

- ❖ The President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris sworn in at the 59th Presidential Inauguration ceremony at the West Front of the US Capitol.



- ❖ At 78, he will be the oldest US President to take oath.
- ❖ The 2020 US Presidential Elections was Biden's third attempt to run for US Presidency.
- ❖ The first attempt was made in 1988 and second in 2008.
- ❖ He had then served as the Vice President of the United States under former President Barack Obama's administration for two terms from 2008 to 2016.
- ❖ Kamala Harris was also sworn in as the first female, African and Asian-American Vice President of the United States.
- ❖ In 2016, she became the first South Asian American and second African American woman to serve in the United States Senate.
- ❖ Trump's 45th US presidency will come to an end at noon on January 20.
- ❖ Former Presidents Barack Obama, Bill Clinton and George W Bush presented a united front at the inauguration ceremony.
- ❖ Donald Trump decided to skip the ceremony altogether.

15 executive orders - USA

- ❖ Joe Biden on the first day of his administration signed 15 executive orders.
- ❖ He is undoing the key policies of his predecessor Donald Trump over the last four years.
- ❖ The first executive order signed by President Joe Biden was on COVID-19, aimed at boosting the federal response to the coronavirus crisis.
- ❖ The order mandates masks to be worn and social distancing be kept on Federal property.
- ❖ Some of the other major orders include halting the construction of Trump's border wall with Mexico, recommitment to Paris Climate Accord, ended the Muslim travel ban.

- ❖ He has also halted the US withdrawal from World Health Organisation.
- ❖ He also revoked the presidential permit that was granted to the Keystone XL Pipeline project.
- ❖ The keystone pipeline system is an oil pipeline system in the United States and Canada.
- ❖ He has also signed an executive order, revoking the Trump administration's plan to exclude non-citizens from the census count.

World's Oldest Cave Painting

- ❖ The world's oldest known cave painting was discovered in the limestone cave of Leang Tedongnge of Indonesia.
- ❖ The painting made using red ochre pigment depicts a wild boar endemic to the Sulawesi island of Indonesia.
- ❖ The painting of the Sulawesi warty pig seems to be the world's oldest surviving representational image of an animal.



Salvator Mundi painting

- ❖ Italy recently recovered a sixteenth century copy of "Salvator Mundi".
- ❖ It is the world most expensive painting of Leonardo da Vinci.
- ❖ The painting depicts Jesus in Renaissance dress making the sign of cross with his right hand.
- ❖ Leonardo da Vinci was an Italian polymath.
- ❖ Polymath is an individual whose knowledge spans a substantial number of subjects.



Global Risks report 2021

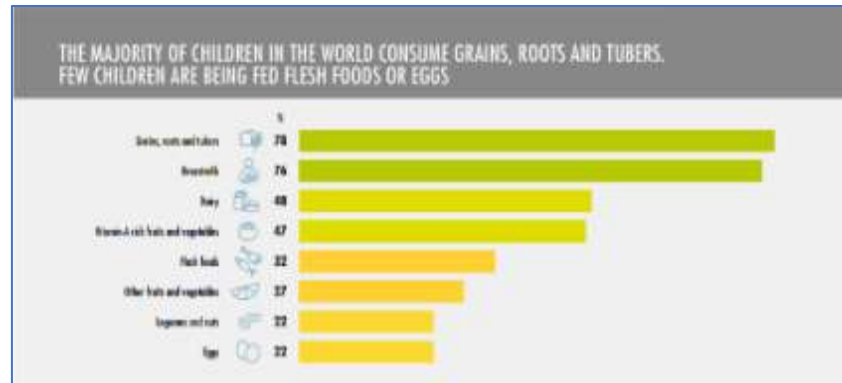
- ❖ The World Economic Forum (WEF) has released the Global Risks Report 2021, 16th Edition.
- ❖ The findings of the report are based on the Global Risks Perception Survey (GRPS) undertaken by over 650 members of WEF's diverse leadership communities.
- ❖ The top three risks by impact are climate action failures, infectious diseases and weapons of mass destruction.
- ❖ The top three risks by likelihood that are to happen in the next ten years are climate action failure, extreme weather and human environmental damage.

Top Risks by likelihood	Top Risks by impact
1 Extreme weather	1 Infectious diseases
2 Climate action failure	2 Climate action failure
3 Human environmental damage	3 Weapons of mass destruction
4 Infectious diseases	4 Biodiversity loss
5 Biodiversity loss	5 Natural resource crises
6 Digital power concentration	6 Human environmental damage
7 Digital inequality	7 Livelihood crises
8 Interstate relations fracture	8 Extreme weather
9 Cybersecurity failure	9 Debt crises
10 Livelihood crises	10 IT infrastructure breakdown

Food Security Report

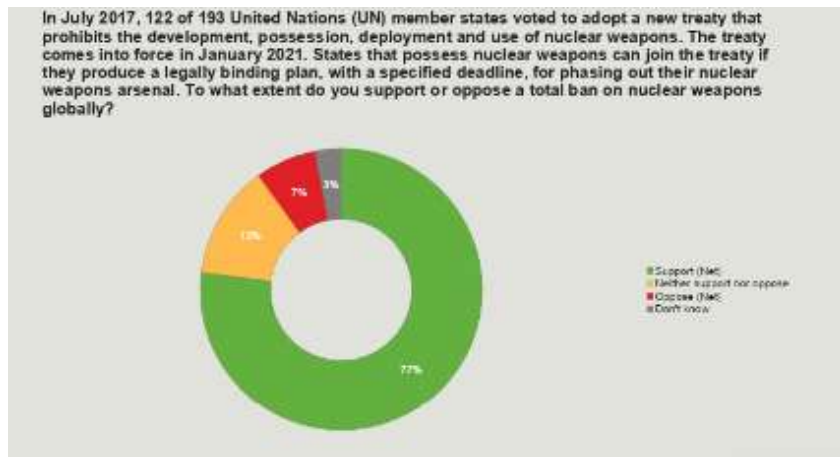
- ❖ It was a report, 'Asia and the Pacific Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2020: Maternal and Child Diets at the Heart of Improving Nutrition'
- ❖ It found that 1.9 billion people were unable to afford a healthy diet in this region, even before the COVID-19 outbreak.

- ❖ The report was published jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization.
- ❖ This is the third annual report jointly written by United Nations agencies on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2 – Zero Hunger) and the World Health Assembly targets 2030 on nutrition in the Asia and Pacific region.



Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

- ❖ On January 22, 2021, the first treaty to ban nuclear weapons called the “Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons” came into force.
- ❖ This treaty is the first legally binding international agreement that aim to eliminate nuclear weapons completely.
- ❖ The treaty was approved by United Nations General Assembly in 2017.
- ❖ It was supported by 120 members of the UN.
- ❖ However, none of the nine members of the UN that possess nuclear weapons supported it.
- ❖ These nine countries are US, Britain, Russia, China, France, Pakistan, India, Israel and North Korea.
- ❖ India does not support the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
- ❖ India is committed to the policy of “No First Use” against nuclear weapon states and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states.
- ❖ India is also committed to negotiations regarding the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty.
- ❖ FMCT is a proposed international agreement.
- ❖ The agreement prohibits production of enriched Uranium and Plutonium.
- ❖ India has also not signed Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.



Asia Cooperation Dialogue

- ❖ It was held under the theme “The new Normal and Safe and Healthy Tourism”.
- ❖ The Asia Cooperation Dialogue countries also adopted the “Ankara Declaration” in the end of the meet.

Resolution to promote a culture of peace and tolerance

- ❖ The United Nations recently adopted a resolution to promote a culture of peace and tolerance.
- ❖ The resolution aims to safeguard religious sites spread all over the world.
- ❖ The resolution was titled “Promoting a culture of peace and tolerance to safeguard religious sites”.
- ❖ The resolution condemns offences against religious sites and symbols.
- ❖ The resolution also condemns forcible conversions of religions.
- ❖ India supported this resolution.



New START Treaty

- ❖ The US President Joe Biden recently proposed to extend New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) Treaty by five years.
- ❖ The New START Treaty was signed between United States and Russia in 2010 in Prague (capital of Czech Republic).
- ❖ It entered into force in 2011.
- ❖ It was signed to reduce nuclear arms production and utilisation by US and Russia.

ECONOMY

Ease of doing business reforms

- ❖ Rajasthan is the 6th state to complete ease of doing business reforms.
- ❖ Other five states that have also completed the 'Ease of Doing Business' reforms are Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana.
- ❖ The scheme aims to link grant of additional borrowing permissions to states undertaking the ease of doing business reforms.
- ❖ As per the scheme, the Centre has enhanced the borrowing limit of states by 2 per cent of their GSDP.
- ❖ The reforms are implementation of one nation one ration card system, ease of doing business reform, urban local body or utility and power sector reforms.

TABLE 1: EASE OF DOING BUSINESS RANKS, TOP 10 IN 2019					TABLE 2: REFORMS, APPLICABLE/IMPLEMENTED			TABLE 3: SHARE (%) IN NEW INVESTMENTS ANNOUNCED		
State	2015	2016	2017	2019	State	Applicable	Implemented	State	2017-18	2018-19
Andhra Pradesh	2	1	1	1	Andhra	187	187	Andhra	6.56	16.29
Uttar Pradesh	10	14	12	2	UP	186	184	Haryana	3.37	15.74
Telangana	13	1	2	3	Telangana	186	184	Tamil Nadu	4.01	9.32
Madhya Pradesh	5	5	7	4	MP	187	187	Gujarat	6.76	7.74
Jharkhand	3	7	4	5	Jharkhand	187	186	Maharashtra	18.09	6.32
Chhattisgarh	4	4	6	6	Chhattisgarh	187	186	Karnataka	3.32	6.08
Himachal	17	17	16	7	Himachal	185	175	Rajasthan	2.01	3.04
Rajasthan	6	8	9	8	Rajasthan	186	183	MP	2.87	2.73
West Bengal	11	15	10	9	W Bengal	187	187	Odisha	8.25	2.43
Gujarat	1	3	5	10	Gujarat	187	187	NCT Delhi	1.38	1.76

Source: DPIIT

Source: DPIIT

Source: CMIE

India's First Social Impact Bonds

- ❖ The Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal corporation (PCMC) in Pune and United Nations Development Programme signed a Memorandum of Understanding to create the first Social Impact bond of India.

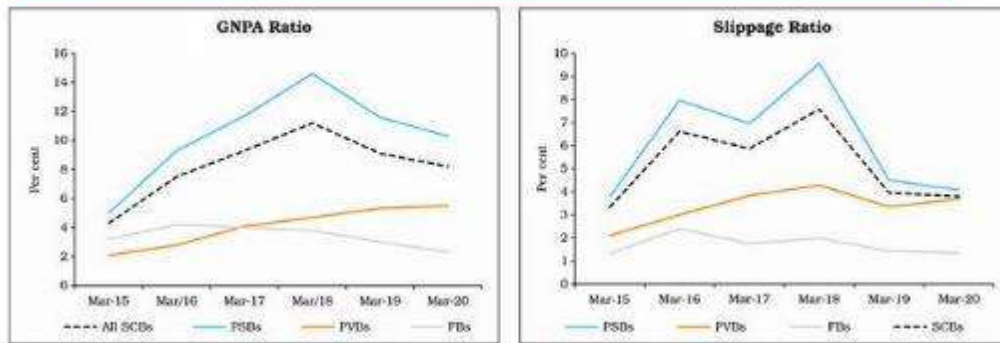


- ❖ The municipal administration will bear the cost of a public welfare project associated with the bond.
- ❖ A Social Impact Bond is basically a contract with public sector authority where it pays for better social outcomes.

RBI Trend and Progress Report, 2020

- ❖ It provides information about performance of the banking sector.
- ❖ This includes non-banking Financial Institutions and cooperative banks.
- ❖ The report is a statutory compliance of Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- ❖ The commercial bank's gross non-performing assets ratio has declined from 9.1% in March 2019 to 7.5% in September 2020.
- ❖ The capital to risk weighted assets ratio of the scheduled commercial banks strengthened from 14.3% in March 2019 to 15.8% in September 2020.
- ❖ This helped in recapitalization of public sector banks.

Asset Quality Of Banks



Note: GNPA ratio is calculated using annual accounts of banks and off-site returns (global operations)

The BFSI Movers and Shakers 2020

- ❖ It was report released by Wizikey Firm.
- ❖ According to the report, HDFC, ICICI, and SBI were the top three banks of 2020.
- ❖ Google Pay and PhonePe are the top UPI players in the country.
- ❖ Google Pay has emerged as the number one, followed by Phone Pe.
- ❖ YONO emerged as the number one followed by Niyo and Kotak 811 in the Neo Banks category.

Export of Akash

- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved the export of Akash Missile System aiming to achieve the target of USD 5 billion of defence export.
- ❖ The Akash missile is a short-range surface-to-air indigenous missile with a range of 25 km.
- ❖ It is developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation under the Integrated Guided Missile Development programme (1984).
- ❖ It was inducted in 2014 in the Air Force and in 2015 in the Indian Army.

INDIA'S 'AKASH' TO COUNTER DRAGON FIRE

Surface-to-Air missile (SAM) system was one of the five core missile systems of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme launched by India in 1983. After long delays due to technical glitches, Akash now finally being deployed by IAF & army

IAF »
Inducting eight squadrons, each with 2 'flights' of 4 launchers
Cost | ₹6,200 cr

Army »
Inducting 2 Akash regiments, with six firing batteries & hundreds of missiles each
Cost | ₹14,180 cr

Mission »
To track & destroy hostile aircraft, helicopters, drones & sub-sonic cruise missiles

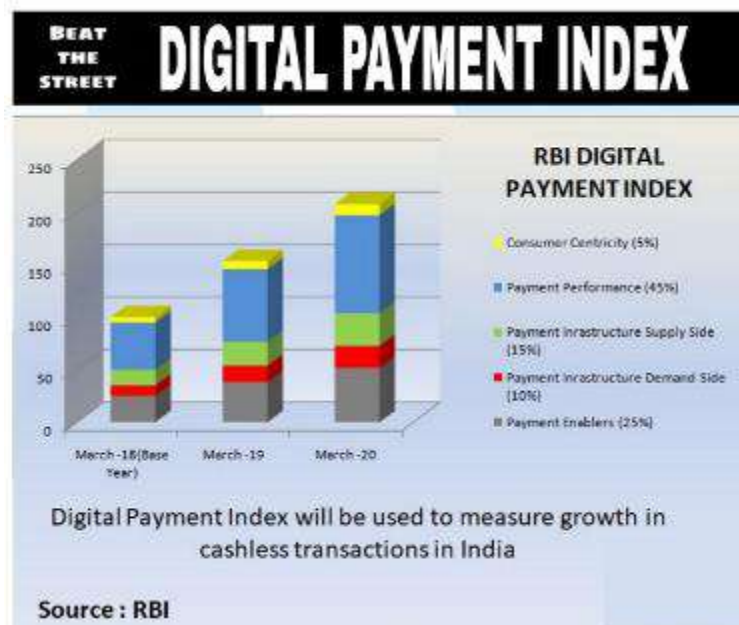
MISSILE CHARACTERISTICS

- 5.6 metre in length;**
integrated two-stage Ramjet rocket propulsion technology; powered by an air-breathing engine; can carry warhead of 60kg
- 25-km interception range**
Low reaction, all-weather capability
- 96% indigenous**
Can handle multiple aerial threats from several directions simultaneously
- 88% kill probability** within a specified kill zone




Digital Payment Index

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India launched this index.
- ❖ The RBI is to publish the Digital Payments Index on a semi-annual basis from March 2021.



- ❖ It aims to measure the growth in cashless transactions in India.
- ❖ The March 2018 is the base period.
- ❖ The index comprises of five broad parameters such as payment enablers, payment performance, payment infrastructure – demand side factors and supply side factors and consumer centricity.

Standard Travel Insurance Policy

- ❖ The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) recently proposed the “Standard Travel Insurance Policy”.
- ❖ The Policy aims to ensure insurance coverage during domestic as well as international travel.

India's Rice Exports to Vietnam

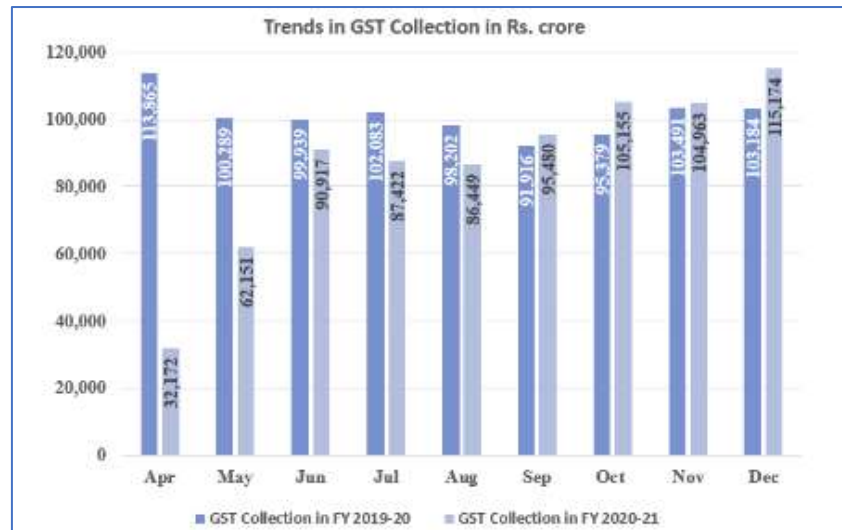
- ❖ Vietnam has started to import rice from India.
- ❖ But Vietnam is the third biggest exporter of rice in the world.
- ❖ It is mainly because the local prices in Vietnam jumped to the highest in nine years due to Limited domestic supplies.
- ❖ Also, the Indian prices of rice are highly attractive.

TRIFOOD parks

- ❖ The TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India) operating under Ministry of Tribal Affairs signed a memorandum of understanding with Akhil Bhartiya vanvasi Kalyan Ashram to setup TRIFOOD parks in Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ The TRIFOOD is a joint initiative of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of food processing industry and TRIFED.
- ❖ It was launched under Van Dhan Yojana in August 2020.

GST collections

- ❖ The GST collection in December hit an all-time high with over Rs 1.5 lakh crore collected as revenue.
- ❖ The collection in December 2020 is almost 12 per cent higher than the same period a year ago.
- ❖ It must be mentioned here that GST for November transactions is collected in December.

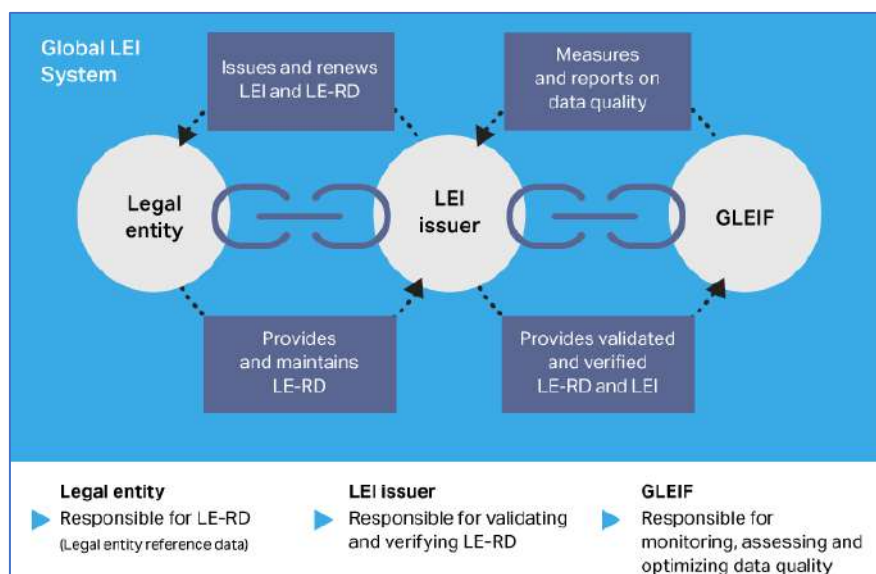


Payments Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF)

- ❖ This fund was operationalised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- ❖ It is to increase payments acceptance infrastructure by adding 30 lakh touch points every year in Tier-3 to Tier-6 centres.
- ❖ There would be special focus on the north-eastern states.
- ❖ An Advisory Council, under the chairmanship of RBI Deputy Governor BP Kanungo, has been constituted for managing the PIDF.

Legal Entity Identifiers

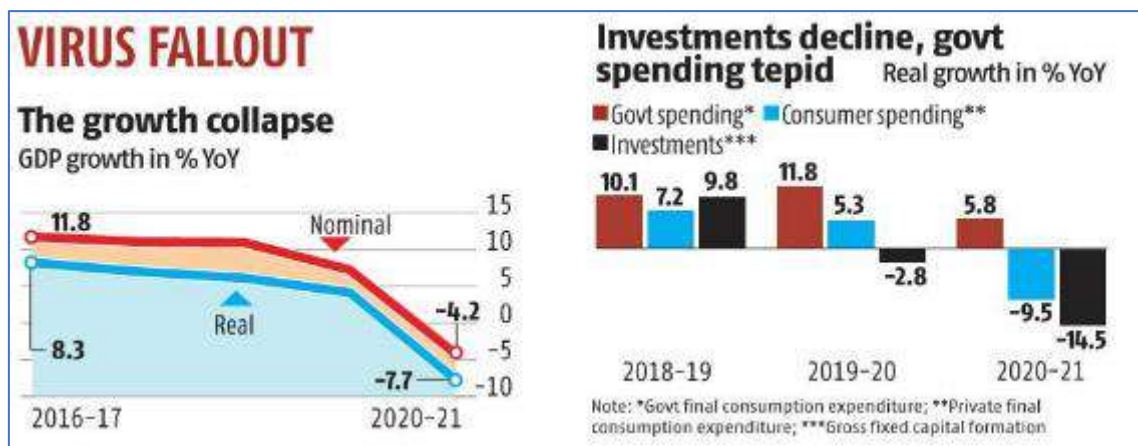
- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India informed that the legal entity identifiers will be mandatory for all the fund transfers worth Rs. 50 crores and above.
- ❖ It is a 20-digit number that will be used to uniquely identify the parties involved in financial transactions all over the world.



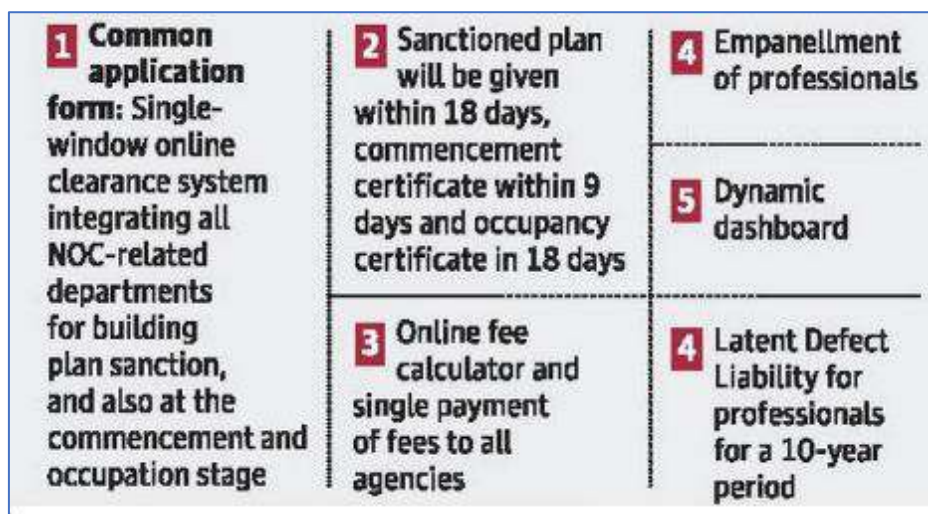
- ❖ It will help banks and regulators in tracking large value transactions more closely.

India's GDP 2020-2021

- ❖ The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released the First Advance Estimates (FAE) for the financial year 2020-2021.
- ❖ The advanced estimates of the national income was released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) under that ministry.
- ❖ Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the total value of all final goods and services produced within the country in one financial year.
- ❖ According to this, India's GDP will contract by 7.7% in 2020-21.
- ❖ The contraction was seen in all the sectors, except agriculture.
- ❖ Indian manufacturing sector is likely to contract by 9.4%, while the agriculture sector is predicted to grow at 3.4% in FY21.
- ❖ The 4.2 percent growth recorded in 2019-20.



Single Window Clearance System



- ❖ The Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched 'Single Window Clearance System' for coal mines.
- ❖ It is an online platform to obtain clearances for the smooth operationalisation of coal mines.
- ❖ In June 2020, PM Narendra Modi had launched the auction of 41 coal mines for commercial mining, as a part of the announcements made under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
- ❖ Despite of the fact that India is the fourth largest producer of coal in the world, the country is the second largest importer of coal in the world.
- ❖ In 1973, the coal sector was nationalised.
- ❖ This meant that domestic coal can only be mined by public sector companies.

India's 7th Trade Policy Review

- ❖ The second session of the 7th Trade Policy Review (TPR) of India concluded at the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- ❖ This was the final session of the 7th trade policy review.
- ❖ Trade Policy Review is a key mechanism under the monitoring function of WTO.
- ❖ Before this, the last Trade Policy Review of India was held in the year 2015.

Financial Stability Report (FSR)

- ❖ It was released by the Reserve Bank of India.
- ❖ It is a biannual report.
- ❖ This is the 22nd issue.
- ❖ According to this report, Banks' gross non-performing assets may rise to 13.5% by September 2021.
- ❖ It was 7.5% in September 2020 under the baseline scenario.
- ❖ The RBI Financial Stability Report is released by the Financial Stability and Development Council.
- ❖ The Union Finance Minister is the chairperson of the Financial Stability and Development Council.
- ❖ The idea of the council was mooted by Raghuram Rajan Committee in 2008.

Revamped Women Entrepreneurship Platform

- ❖ NITI Aayog and Flipkart launched a revamped Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP).
- ❖ It aims to uplift and empower women-led businesses in the country.

- ❖ The theme is 'Women First, Prosperity for All.'
- ❖ The idea of the platform was first mooted by NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant who
- ❖ It was setup at 8th Global Entrepreneurship Summit held in Hyderabad during 2017.



Corporate Social Responsibility

- ❖ The ministry of corporate affairs (MCA) has permitted the funds spent on awareness programmes and public outreach campaigns regarding the Covid - 19 vaccination drive, to be classified as corporate social responsibility (CSR) activity.
- ❖ These would fall under the permitted CSR activities as per the seventh schedule of the Companies Act, 2013.

Iron Ore Policy

- ❖ The Ministry of Railways recently approved a new Iron Ore Policy.
- ❖ The policy is to come into effect on February 10, 2021.
- ❖ The Iron Ore Policy governs the allocation of rakes and transportation of iron-ore.
- ❖ The policy will provide high priority to the movement of iron-ore for domestic manufacturing activity.
- ❖ Iron ore is the second most important stream of traffic of Indian Railways.
- ❖ Iron ore and steel together account for more than 17% of total freight loading of Indian Railways.
- ❖ The principal states producing iron ore in India are Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Goa, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan.

Section 32 A of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code

- ❖ The Supreme Court recently upheld the validity of Section 32 A of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.
- ❖ Under its judgement, the apex court pronounced that the successful bidders for a corporate debtor will be immune from any investigations conducted by an investigating agency (like Enforcement Directorate or other statutory bodies such as SEBI).
- ❖ The Section 32A provides immunity to the corporate debtor and its property.

National Faceless penalty scheme

- ❖ The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) notified that the penalty cases are assigned to the National Faceless Penalty Centre and to be disposed of by National Faceless Assessment Centre under Faceless Penalty Scheme, 2021.
- ❖ All the penalty cases were initiated under the Income-tax Act, 1961.
- ❖ It will have an unbiased and transparent digital faceless mechanism for imposing penalties on tax defaulters.

Regulation of NBFCs

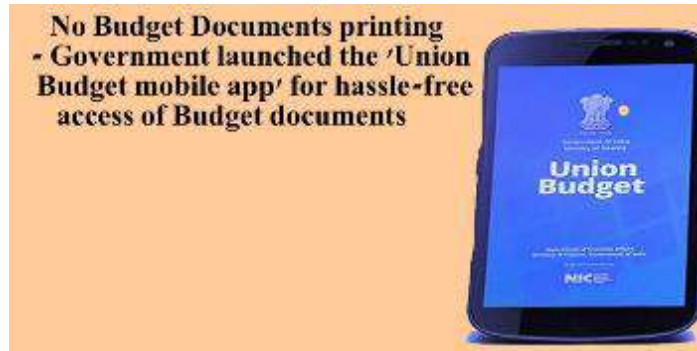
- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has created a four-tier structure for a tighter regulation of Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs).
- ❖ The four-layered structure includes Base Layer, Middle Layer, Upper Layer and a possible Top Layer.
- ❖ The RBI has proposed classification of non-performing assets (NPAs) of base layer NBFCs from 180 days to 90 days overdue.
- ❖ The responsibility of regulation and supervision has been entrusted with the RBI under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.

About NBFC

- ❖ NBFC is a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956.
- ❖ NBFC cannot accept the demand deposits.
- ❖ They are not the part of the payment and settlement system.

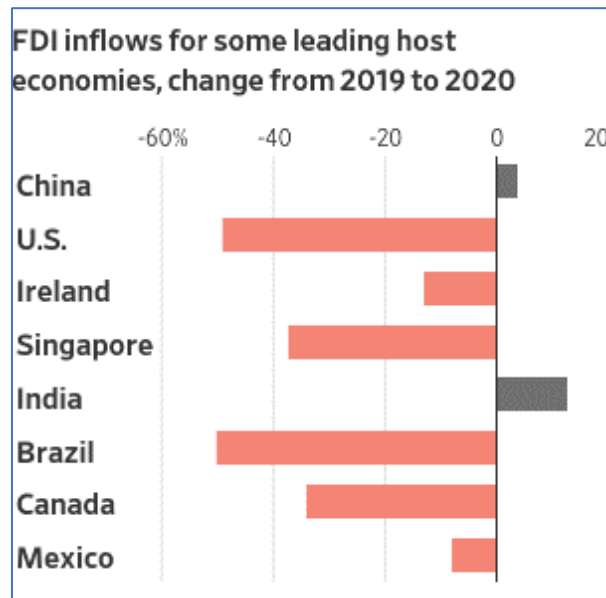
Union Budget Mobile App

- ❖ The Finance Minister of India has launched the “Union Budget Mobile App” ahead of the presentation of the Union Budget.
- ❖ The mobile app was launched for hassle-free access of Budget-related documents by Members of Parliament (MPs) and the public.
- ❖ The budget will completely be paperless for the first time after.



FDI in 2020

- ❖ China has surpassed the United States as the world's top destination for the foreign direct investment (FDI) in the year 2020.
- ❖ It was the recent figures by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Digital Ocean

- ❖ It is the first of its kind digital platform for Ocean Data Management.
- ❖ It was developed by Indian National Centre for Oceanic Information Services (INCOIS)
- ❖ The INCOIS is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Ruthenium 106 Plaque

- ❖ Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) Mumbai has developed the first indigenous Ruthenium 106 Plaque.
- ❖ It will be developed for the treatment of the Eye Cancer therapy.



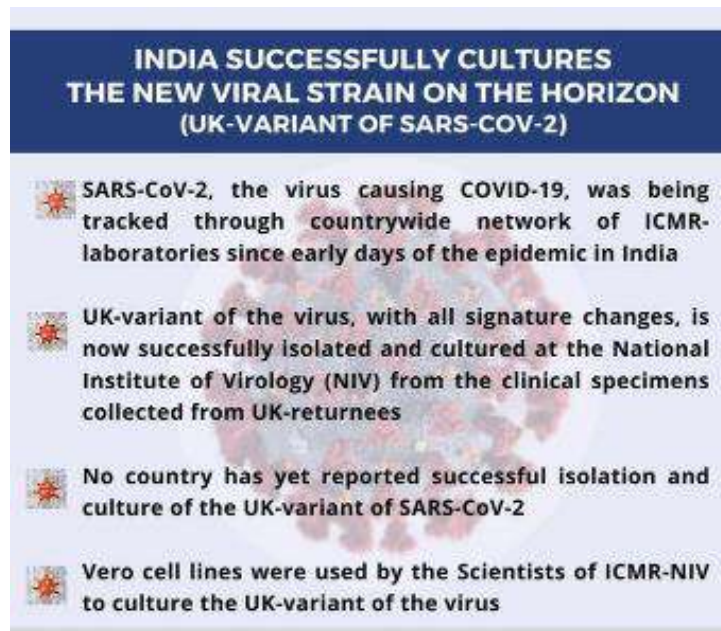
SAHAYAK-NG

- ❖ It is the first indigenously developed air droppable container, with a parachute system.
- ❖ After the safe separation from the aircraft, the parachute controls the descent of Sahayak-NG for safe touchdown on water.
- ❖ It was designed by Defence Research Development Organization (DRDO) and Avantel, a private company.



UK-Variant of Sars CoV-2

- ❖ The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has successfully isolated and cultured the UK- variant of Coronavirus strain.
- ❖ ICMR also informed that no other country has yet reported the successful culture and isolation of the new Coronavirus strain.
- ❖ It had first originated in the United Kingdom.



Patna Meteorological Observatory (PMO)

- ❖ It gets centennial observing station status by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), Geneva in Austria.
- ❖ PMO was established in 1867.
- ❖ The India Meteorological Department (IMD) was formally established in 1875.

Wooden satellites

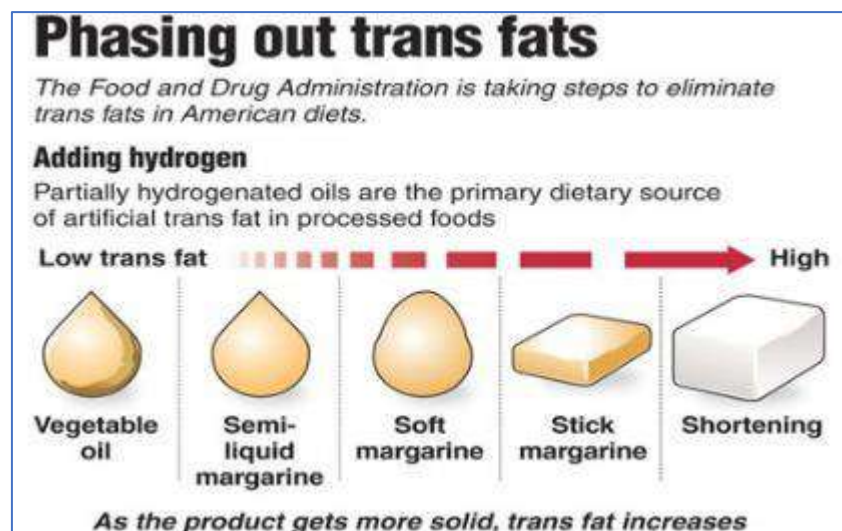
- ❖ Japanese researchers are to launch wooden satellites by 2023.
- ❖ It will solve the problem of space debris.
- ❖ All the satellites that re-enter the earth atmosphere burn and create tiny Alumina particles.
- ❖ These particles float in upper atmosphere for many years.
- ❖ But These new satellites are made of wood.



- ❖ They will burn up without releasing harmful substances into the atmosphere when they plunge back to the earth.
- ❖ With this the satellite will not leave out any waste in space after it completes its service or when it becomes de functional.

Trans Fat levels

- ❖ The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India recently announced that all edible refined oils, vegetable fat spreads, Vanaspati, margarines, Bakery shortening and mixed fat spreads can contain only 3% or less trans fats.
- ❖ It also aims at reducing it to 2% by the year 2022.
- ❖ India in 2011 had first passed a regulation which had set a limit of 10%.
- ❖ It was further reduced to 5% in 2015.
- ❖ The World Health Organisation has called for global elimination of trans fat by 2023.
- ❖ The trans fats are created artificially during the hydrogenation process of vegetable oils.
- ❖ They result in partially hydrogenated vegetable oils.
- ❖ These partially hydrogenated vegetable oils are the major source of Trans fats.
- ❖ Consumption of Trans fats results in heart diseases.
- ❖ India has the highest burden of heart diseases due to high trans-fat in the world.



Stratospheric Warming

- ❖ Sudden stratospheric warming (SSW) event took place January 5, 2021.
- ❖ This would be the reason behind the very cold weather in large parts of the world.

- ❖ It was potentially the most dangerous kind, where the polar vortex split into two smaller 'child' vortices.
- ❖ The polar vortex is a large area of low pressure and cold air surrounding both of the Earth's poles.



IN Domain

- ❖ The National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) announced that it will offer a free IDN (Internationalized Domain Name) in any of their preferred 22 official Indian language.
- ❖ It will be available along with every IN domain booked by the registrant.
- ❖ This offer has been created to stimulate the adoption of IDN domain name and proliferation of local language content.
- ❖ National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) is a not-for-profit organization
- ❖ It is working since 2003 for spreading the internet technology to the citizens of India.

What is Domain Name:

- A domain name is a **Web address**, such as **google.com**, that is linked to an IP address (which represents a physical point on the Internet). When someone types a domain name google.com into a Web browser, the requested Web page displays.
- **Domain Name** is an **identification string** controlling the realm on internet
- Ex:- .com , .net , .edu , .org etc.

Saguna Rice Technique

- ❖ It will help stop the stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana.
- ❖ This zero till technique is a unique Conservation Agriculture (CA) type of cultivation method.
- ❖ This method is used to cultivate rice and related rotation crops without ploughing, puddling and transplanting rice on permanent raised beds.
- ❖ The SRT iron forma tool facilitates planting of crop in predetermined distances enabling precise plant population per unit area.

Khadi Prakritik Paint



- ❖ The Union Minister Shri Nitin Gadkari launched “Khadi Prakritik Paint”.
- ❖ It is a non-toxic eco-friendly paint with anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties.
- ❖ It was developed with cow dung as its main ingredient.
- ❖ It is odourless and cost-effective.
- ❖ It is the first-of-its kind product in such category.
- ❖ Khadi and Village Industries Commission has developed Khadi Prakritik Paint.
- ❖ The Khadi Prakritik paint is available in two forms namely plastic emulsion paint and distemper paint.
- ❖ The paint is free from heavy metals such as mercury, lead, arsenic, chromium, cadmium.

Sagar Anveshika

- ❖ Union Minister for Earth Sciences, Harsh Vardhan has launched Coastal Research Vehicle 'Sagar Anveshika' at the Chennai Port.
- ❖ The vehicle will be used to carry out environment indexing and bathymetric (mapping underwater features) in both coastal and offshore waters.
- ❖ It will be used for research purposes by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) located in Chennai.
- ❖ It has been built by Titagarh Wagons, Kolkata, West Bengal.



Heliophysics Missions

- ❖ NASA has approved two heliophysics missions to explore the Sun and the system that drives space weather near Earth.
- ❖ Together, NASA's contribution to the following will help in understanding the Sun and Earth as an interconnected system,
 - Extreme Ultraviolet High-Throughput Spectroscopic Telescope Epsilon Mission (EUVST) and
 - Electrojet Zeeman Imaging Explorer (EZIE).

EUVST

- ❖ The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) leads the EUVST Epsilon Mission (Solar-C EUVST Mission), along with other partners.
- ❖ It is targeted for launch in 2026.
- ❖ It is a solar telescope.

EZIE

- ❖ It is to be launched in 2024.
- ❖ It will study electric currents in Earth's atmosphere linking aurora to Earth's magnetosphere.
- ❖ The magnetosphere responds to solar activity and other factors.

H3 rocket

- ❖ The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) is to launch H3 rocket in 2021.
- ❖ It is to pave the way for the next generation of transportation technologies.

Asmi Pistol



- ❖ India's first indigenous 9mm Machine Pistol has been jointly developed by the Indian Army and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- ❖ The machine pistol has been named 'Asmi'.
- ❖ It means self-respect, hard work and pride.
- ❖ DRDO's Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) in Pune and Army's infantry school in Mhow jointly developed and designed this pistol.

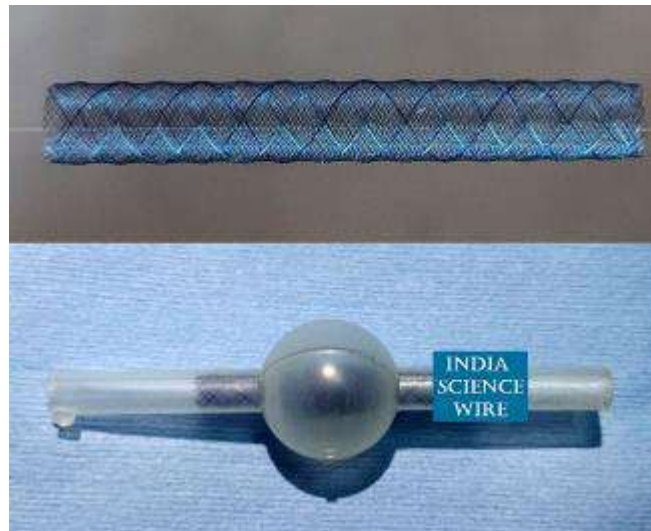
RAKSHITA ambulance

- ❖ The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) launched a specially developed bike ambulance 'RAKSHITA'.
- ❖ The bike ambulance has been launched to attend to urgent evacuation needs of the security force personnel in the event of a medical emergency or battle injury in Naxal affected areas.
- ❖ The ambulances have been developed on Royal Enfield bikes.
- ❖ The red corridor is the region in eastern, central and southern parts of India where the Naxalite and Maoist activities are higher.



Indigenous Flow diverter Stent

- ❖ Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), Thiruvananthapuram and National Aerospace Laboratories of CSIR (CSIR-NAL) have developed an indigenous flow diverter stent.
- ❖ It is the first one to be manufactured in India.
- ❖ It is easily affordable than the imported ones.
- ❖ It is used for diverting blood flow away from localized ballooning of arteries in the brain.
- ❖ It is a device that promotes better healing of the hole in the heart.



Abell 370 galaxies

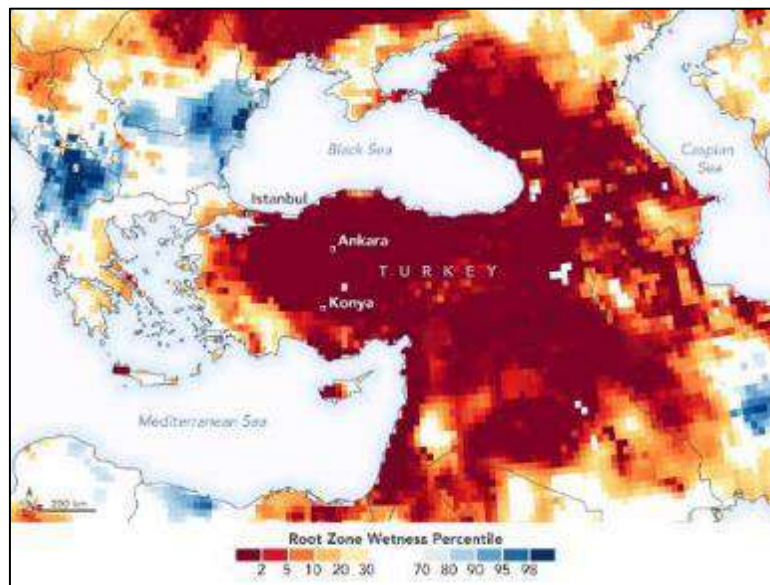
- ❖ NASA recently shared the picture of a huge cluster of galaxies called Abell 370.
- ❖ It is a galaxy cluster located four billion light years away from the earth.
- ❖ The galaxy cluster is located in the constellation called Cetus.
- ❖ It is also nick named as The Dragon by the NASA scientists.

Quantum Computing Applications Lab

- ❖ The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has announced the establishment of a Quantum Computing Applications Lab in partnership with Amazon Web Services (AWS).
- ❖ The move will give select researchers; scientists access to Amazon's Bracket cloud-based quantum computing service.

Root zone moisture

- ❖ NASA recently released the estimates of soil moisture in the root zone such as the top 39 inches of soil.
- ❖ Accordingly, the Konya Plains had the lowest "root zone moisture".
- ❖ The Konya Plains is located in Turkey.
- ❖ It received 38% less rainfall in 2020 as compared to 2019.
- ❖ This is the main reason for the region to become the lowest "root zone moisture" area in the world.
- ❖ The estimate was done based on the GRACE-FO satellite data.

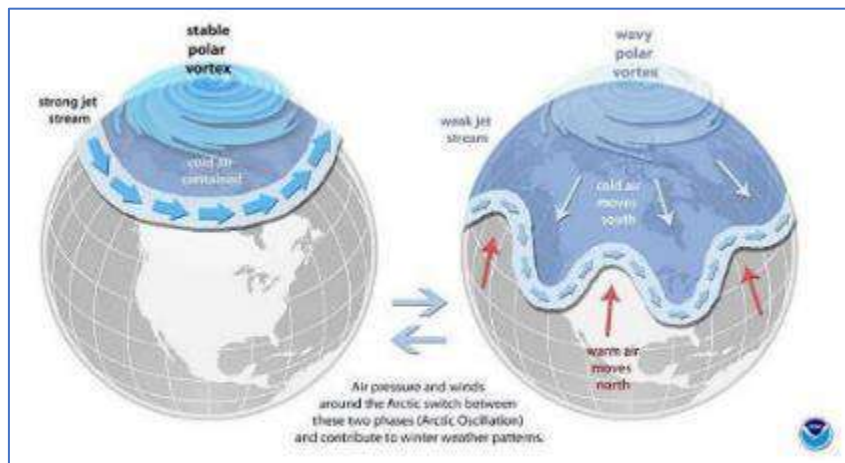


The LongOps Project

- ❖ It is a collaboration between UK and Japan.
- ❖ Under the operation, the scientists from Japan and UK will develop new and safe technologies to dismantle old nuclear facilities such as the Fukushima.
- ❖ It was severely damaged by tsunamis and earthquakes.
- ❖ The project is to use long-reach robotic arms and hence is called "LongOps Project".

Sudden Stratospheric Warming

- ❖ The Southern India received excessively heavy rainfall (ten times the normal) between January 1, 2021 and January 17, 2021.
- ❖ This winter rain, according to the scientists, is due to sudden stratospheric warming that occurred in Arctic region.
- ❖ The Sudden Stratospheric Warming is an event where the polar stratospheric temperature increases up to fifty degrees Celsius.
- ❖ It is preceded by a situation where the polar jet stream of westerly winds in the northern hemisphere is disturbed by natural weather patterns.
- ❖ This is usually addressed as polar vortex.
- ❖ It is a whirling cone of low pressure over the poles.
- ❖ It is the strongest in winter.
- ❖ It is due to the difference in temperature between polar and mid latitude regions.
- ❖ It spins in the stratosphere.
- ❖ The Stratosphere is the layer of the atmosphere at a height of ten to fifty kilo metres above the earth surface.



SAAW (Smart Anti Airfield Weapon)

- ❖ The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited recently test fired SAAW the from Hawk aircraft successfully.
- ❖ SAAW was developed by Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO).
- ❖ SAAW is the first smart weapon fired from an Indian Hawk.
- ❖ It is a long-range precision guided anti-airfield weapon.
- ❖ Basically, SAAW is a bomb.
- ❖ The Government of India approved SAAW project for Indian Navy and Indian Air Force.

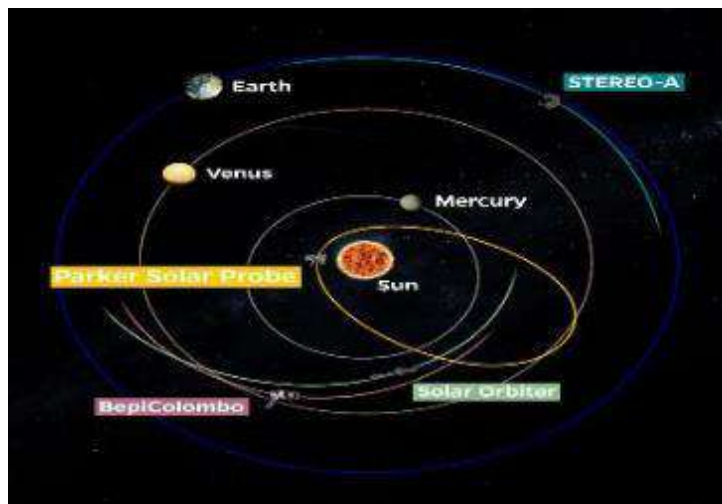


NGC 2808

- ❖ The Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) has spotted rare hot UV-bright stars in the massive globular cluster NGC 2808 of our Milky Way Galaxy.
- ❖ It was found with the help of UVIT.
- ❖ UVIT is Ultra Violet Imaging Telescope.
- ❖ It is placed in Astrosat satellite.
- ❖ The Astrosat is the first multi wavelength space satellite of India.
- ❖ The Ultra Violet Imaging Telescope is a three in one imaging technology.
- ❖ It can observe in Near Ultraviolet, visible and far-ultraviolet wavelengths.
- ❖ NGC 2808 is said to have at least five generations of stars.
- ❖ IIA is an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India.

Parker Solar Probe

- ❖ Parker Solar Probe Marks Seventh Successful Swing around the Sun.
- ❖ It passed just 8.4 million miles (13.5 million kilometers) from the Sun's surface.



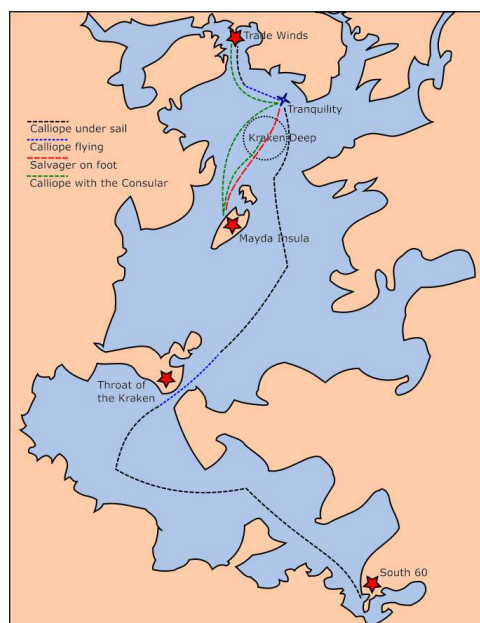
- ❖ NASA's Parker Solar Probe mission provides inputs about our understanding of the sun.
- ❖ It will travel through the sun's atmosphere, closer to the surface than any spacecraft before it.

The Hum of the Universe

- ❖ It was recently detected by the North American Nanohertz Observatory for Gravitational Waves (NANOGrav).
- ❖ According to the researchers, the hum was produced by gravitational waves.
- ❖ It comes from a type of dead star called a "Pulsar".
- ❖ These stars are basically neutron stars.
- ❖ This is the first time the humming sound has been heard from a pulsar collision.
- ❖ Earlier scientists have observed such humming sound.
- ❖ However, they were from black hole mergers.
- ❖ The humming sound from blackhole mergers were detected by LIGO observatories.

Kraken Mare in Titan

- ❖ The researchers have recently found that the largest sea in Titan (moon of Saturn) is thousand feet deep in its centre.
- ❖ Kraken Mare is huge liquid body located in the north pole of Titan.
- ❖ It is made of ethane and methane.
- ❖ It was discovered by the space probe Cassini.



- ❖ Cassini was developed under the collaboration of NASA, Italian Space Agency and European Space Agency.
- ❖ Cassini was the first space probe to orbit Titan.
- ❖ An island in Kraken Mare has been named “Mayda Insula”.
- ❖ It is the first island to be named on a planet or moon other than the earth.

MeerKAT Radio Telescope

- ❖ The MeerKAT Radio Telescope is located in Northern Cape of South Africa.
- ❖ It recently discovered two giant radio galaxies.
- ❖ The galaxies were discovered under the MIGHTEE survey.
- ❖ The discovered galaxies are bigger than 93% of any other giants discovered before.
- ❖ MeerKAT is one of the four precursors to the final Square Kilometre Array (SKA).
- ❖ The SKA is an intergovernmental radio telescope project built in South Africa and Australia.
- ❖ The SKA is an international effort to build the world largest radio telescope.

Blue Jet Lightning

- ❖ The Scientists from the International Space Station (ISS) have observed a bright-blue lightning bolt that is shooting upward from the thunderclouds.
- ❖ Such blue jets are hard to observe from the ground because the electrical discharges emerge from the tops of thunderclouds.
- ❖ But from space, one can easily observe the phenomenon.
- ❖ Blue jets are initiated as “normal” lightning discharges.
- ❖ It emerges between the upper positive charge region in a thundercloud and a negative screening layer above the charge region.



ENVIRONMENT

The India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative

- ❖ It is a collaboration between Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME).
- ❖ As per this report, the Air pollution killed 1.7 million Indians in 2019.
- ❖ The toll in India was 18 % of the total deaths in the country.
- ❖ The indoor or household air pollution led to 64% fewer deaths in the last two decades (1990-2019).
- ❖ The death rate from outdoor air pollution has increased during this period by 115 per cent
- ❖ Lung diseases caused by air pollution accounted for the highest share.
- ❖ India has lost 1.4 % of GDP (Rs 2,60,000 crore) due to premature deaths and morbidity from air pollution.
- ❖ The economic loss due to air pollution as a % of the state GDP was higher in the northern and central India states,
- ❖ The highest was in Uttar Pradesh (2.2 % of GSDP) and Bihar (2 % of GSDP).
- ❖ Delhi had the highest per-capita economic loss due to air pollution, followed by Haryana in 2019.

International Blue Flags

- ❖ The Blue Flag Programme for beaches is run by the international, non-governmental, non-profit organization FEE (Foundation for Environmental Education).
- ❖ It was hoisted in India at Kappad (Kerala), Shivrajpur (Gujarat), Ghoghla (Diu), Kasarkod and Padubidri (Karnataka), Rushikonda (Andhra Pradesh), Golden (Odisha) and Radhanagar (Andaman & Nicobar Islands).

The beaches which have been awarded the certification are:

- Shivrajpur (Dwarka-Gujarat),
- Ghoghla (Diu),
- Kasarkod and Padubidri (Karnataka),
- Kappad (Kerala),
- Rushikonda (Andhra Pradesh),
- Golden Beach (Puri-Odisha), and
- Radhanagar (Andaman and Nicobar Islands)

- ❖ India had secured the International Blue Flag Certification for these 8 beaches.
- ❖ FEE was started in France in 1985.
- ❖ Spain tops the list with more than 560 such beaches.

Ice Age Woolly Rhino

- ❖ A perfectly preserved woolly Rhinoceros was found by scientists in Yakutia of Siberia in Russia.
- ❖ The age of the carcass has been dated as 20,000 to 50,000 old.
- ❖ It was revealed due to the melting of permafrost in Russia.
- ❖ Around 65% of Russia is covered by permafrost.
- ❖ Permafrost is the ground that remains completely frozen for at least two years.
- ❖ Permafrost is defined based on temperature and duration.
- ❖ The permafrost is found in Russia, Canada and USA (Alaska).



Mathikettan Shola National Park

- ❖ One-kilometre area surrounding the Mathikettan Shola National Park was declared as ESZ.
- ❖ The notification was issued by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change under the Environment Protection Act 1986.
- ❖ Mathikettan Shola National Park is situated in the high ranges of southern Western Ghats in Kerala.
- ❖ It is the last remnant of the original forests of the Cardamom Hill Reserve.
- ❖ It shares an inter-state boundary with Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The area earmarked for the construction of the Neutrino Observatory is in Theni.
- ❖ It is the east side of Mathikettan Shola National Park.
- ❖ This area will not be an ESZ.

- ❖ Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZ) or Ecologically Fragile Areas are areas within 10 kms around Protected Areas, National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.
- ❖ The purpose of declaring ESZs is to create some kind of "shock absorbers" to the protected areas by regulating and managing the activities around such areas.
- ❖ They also act as a transition zone from areas of high protection to areas involving lesser protection.

Kolar Leaf-Nosed Bat

- ❖ Karnataka Forest Department is on a war footing to save these bats from extinction.
- ❖ It is endemic to India and is found in only one cave in Karnataka.
- ❖ The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) status of this species is Critically Endangered.



Climate of India in 2020

- ❖ The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) recently released its Statement on Climate of India during 2020.
- ❖ IMD mainly monitors formation of cyclones and issues warnings to the Northern Indian Ocean region.
- ❖ The Northern Indian Ocean including Malacca Straits, Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, Persian Gulf.
- ❖ According to IMD, 2020 was the eight warmest year on record since 1901.
- ❖ The past decade, 2019-20 was the warmest decade on record.
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh and Bihar were the hardest hit states due to adverse weather.
- ❖ Thunderstorm and Lightning caused 815 deaths in India during 2020.
- ❖ The annual mean land surface air temperature averaged over India during 2020 was above normal.

- ❖ According to the World Meteorological Organization, the Global mean surface temperature anomaly was recorded as +1.2 degrees Celsius.
- ❖ The rainfall as a whole during South West Monsoon was above normal.
- ❖ It was 109% of the Long Period Average calculated between 1961 and 2010.
- ❖ There were five cyclones formed in the North Indian Ocean in 2020.
- ❖ They were amphan, burevi, nisarga, nivar and gati.
- ❖ Of these cyclones, Nisarga and Gati formed over Arabian Sea and the remaining formed in Bay of Bengal.

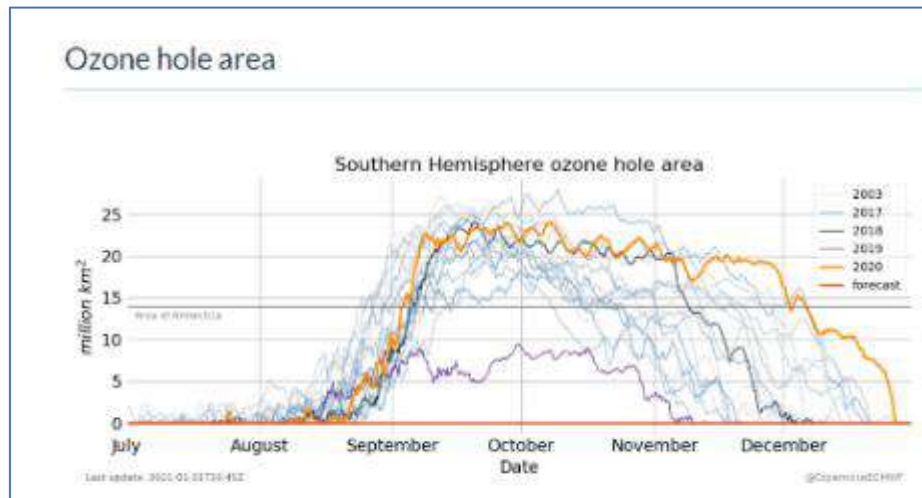
Human wildlife conflict advisory

- ❖ The National Board of Wildlife recently approved the advisory for management of human wildlife conflict.
- ❖ The advisory envisages to empower the gram panchayats to deal with human wildlife conflict under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- ❖ The advisory the National Board of Wildlife has also included Caracal into list of critically endangered species.

Antarctic Ozone Hole

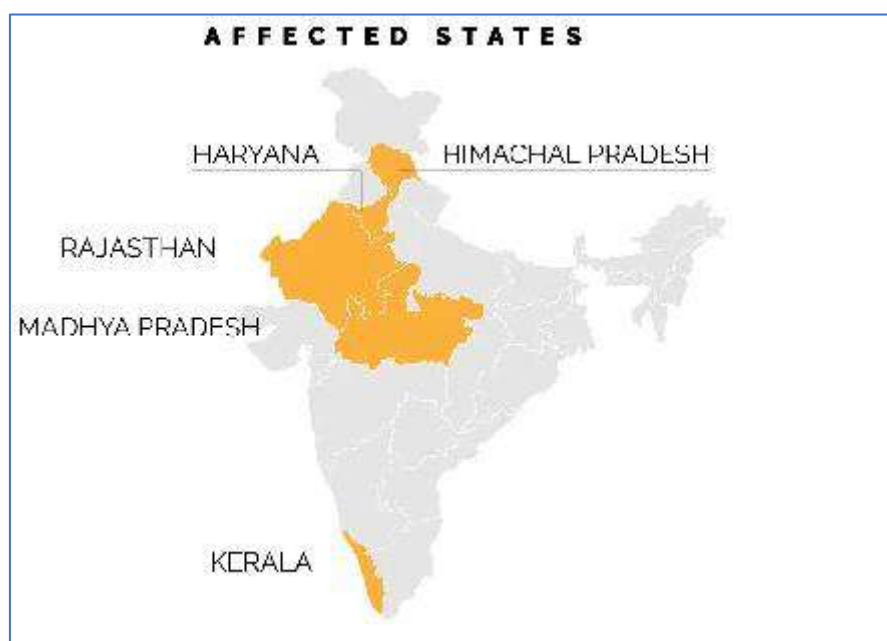
- ❖ One of the deepest and the largest gap in the ozone layer - Antarctic ozone hole - has closed.
- ❖ The annually occurring ozone hole over the Antarctic had rapidly grown from mid-August and peaked in early October 2020.
- ❖ The expansion of the hole was driven by a strong, stable and cold polar vortex and very cold temperatures in the stratosphere.
- ❖ The same meteorological factors also contributed to the record 2020 Arctic ozone hole, which has also closed.
- ❖ A polar vortex is a wide expanse of swirling cold air, a low-pressure area, in Polar Regions.
- ❖ During winters, the polar vortex at the North Pole expands, sending cold air southward.
- ❖ An ozone hole is the thinning of the ozone layer
- ❖ It was boosted in size by colder temperatures.
- ❖ As the temperatures high up in the stratosphere starts to rise, ozone depletion slows, the polar vortex weakens and breaks down.
- ❖ Human-made chemicals migrate into the stratosphere and accumulate inside the polar vortex.
- ❖ It begins to shrink in size as warmer temperatures dominate.

- ❖ The 2020 Antarctic hole was unprecedented as the polar vortex kept the temperature of the ozone layer cold.



Bird Flu outbreak in India

- ❖ The Bird Flu in India has been reported in wild Geese in Himachal Pradesh, ducks in Kerala, crows in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ It also reported in Haryana.
- ❖ Bird Flu is a contagious viral disease caused by Influenza Type A virus.
- ❖ There are several types of Influenza Type A virus.
- ❖ The H5N1 strain was the first Influenza virus to infect humans.
- ❖ According to the World Health Organization, the H5N1 does not spread from person to person.
- ❖ The virus is highly sensitive to heat and dies in cooking temperature.



Asian Waterbird Census

- ❖ The two-day Asian Waterbird Census-2020 commenced in Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ It is an annual event started in the year 1987.
- ❖ Its main focus is to monitor the status of waterbirds and the wetlands.
- ❖ It is annually coordinated by the Bombay Natural history Society (BNHS) and Wetlands International.

Caracal

- ❖ It is a medium size wild cat found in parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat.
- ❖ It has been included into the list of critically endangered species by the National Board of Wildlife (NBWL).
- ❖ The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) is the apex body in India for all wildlife-related matters.
- ❖ Constituted in 2003, it is chaired by the Prime Minister.
- ❖ The Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change is the Vice-Chairperson of the Board.
- ❖ It is a statutory body constituted under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (WLPA).
- ❖ It approves projects (including government projects) in and around the protected areas such as national parks and wildlife sanctuaries etc.



One Planet Summit

- ❖ The summit aims to advance the protection of nature.
- ❖ Theme of this summit is 'Let's act together for nature'.
- ❖ United Nations, World Bank and France has organised this summit.
- ❖ The first Summit was organised in 2017 after the historic Paris Agreement in 2015.



Management effectiveness evaluation

- ❖ The minister of environment Prakash Javadekar released management effectiveness evaluation of 146 national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in the country.
- ❖ The report is first of its kind in the country.
- ❖ Currently India has a network of 903 protected areas covering 5% of the total Geographic area of the country.
- ❖ The top five national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in India are Jaldapara National Park and Raiganj wildlife sanctuary of West Bengal, Tirthan wildlife sanctuary and Sainj wildlife sanctuary and the Great Himalayan National Park of Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The Turtle Wildlife Sanctuary of Uttar Pradesh, Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary of Uttar Pradesh were ranked at the bottom most.

Management Effectiveness Evaluation	
•	Ministry for Environment, Forest and Climate Change released Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) of 146 national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in the country.
•	According to the survey, Tirthan Wildlife Sanctuary and Great Himalayan National Park in Himachal Pradesh have performed the best among the surveyed protected areas.
•	The Turtle Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh was the worst performer.
•	Under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 India had 903 formally designated Protected Areas with a total coverage of 1,65,012.6 square km.
•	National Parks-101. Wildlife sanctuaries-553
•	Conservation Reserves-86. Community reserves-163

Insect Apocalypse

- ❖ The entomologists from all over the world attended the proceedings of National Academies of Sciences recently.
- ❖ According to the entomologists, the insect population is declining at rapid rate.
- ❖ The Earth is losing 2% of its insects every year.
- ❖ The scientists have named this as Insect Apocalypse.
- ❖ The main reasons of Insect Apocalypse are as follows:
 - Insecticides
 - Climate Change
 - Light Pollution
 - Herbicides
 - Invasive Species
 - Changes in land use
 - Intensive agriculture
- ❖ Insect decline is the worst in North America and in parts of Europe.
- ❖ The rate of extinction of insects is eight times faster than that of birds, mammals and reptiles.

Adaptation Gap Report 2020

- ❖ It was released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- ❖ The report informs national and international efforts to advance climate change adaptation.
- ❖ The report has found that the annual cost of adaptation to the effects of climate change for developing countries would quadruple by 2050.
- ❖ Adaptation Finance Gap is the difference between Adaptation Cost and Adaptation Finance.

Great Green Wall Initiative

- ❖ The Great Green Wall for Sahel and Sahara Initiative recently received 14 billion USD funds at
- ❖ the recent One Planet Summit for Biodiversity.
- ❖ The Great Green Wall initiative aims to transform the lives of 100 million Africans by growing
- ❖ 8,000 kilo metre long and fifteen kilo metre wide mosaic of trees, vegetation, grasslands, plants.
- ❖ It is an African-led initiative.

- ❖ It will contribute fifteen of the seventeen United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



- ❖ The initiative aims to sequester 250 million tonnes of carbon and create ten million green jobs.
- ❖ The project aims to restore 100 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.
- ❖ Chad, Burkina Faso, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Nigeria, Sudan, Senegal, Djibouti are the countries selected as intervention zones for this initiative.
- ❖ The main objective of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification is to reach Land neutrality by 2030.

E waste report

- ❖ It is a recent report by the Central Pollution Control Board.
- ❖ India collected just 10 per cent of the electronic waste (e-waste) estimated to have been generated in the country 2018-19 and 3.5 per cent of that in the generated in 2017-18.
- ❖ India generated 708,445 tonne e-waste in 2017-18 and 771,215 tonnes in 2018-19.
- ❖ In 2019-20, the figure rose 32 per cent to 1,014,961 tonnes.
- ❖ The union environment ministry has formulated in the E-Waste Management Rules, 2016.
- ❖ It had made the producers responsible for collection of end-of-life electronic products as part of the Extended Producer Responsibility.

Biggest 'Floating' Solar Power Plant

- ❖ The Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) commissioned one of the biggest floating solar power plants in the Kerala state with a capacity of 452 KWh.
- ❖ It has been setup over two artificial lakes.
- ❖ The water from these artificial lakes is used for irrigating the lawns of the golf course.
- ❖ The Cochin Airport became the world's first solar-powered airport in 2015



1G ethanol Production in India

- ❖ The Department of Food & Public Distribution has modified earlier scheme & notified the modified scheme
- ❖ It is also used for extending financial assistance.
- ❖ The Government is also encouraging distilleries to produce ethanol from maize; & rice available with Food Corporation of India.
- ❖ It aims to achieve 20% blending by 2025 as well as to meet out the requirement of ethanol production capacity in the country.
- ❖ India will need about 1,000 crore litres of ethanol for doping in petrol by 2030 with a view to cut dependency on imports for meeting oil needs.
- ❖ The nation currently has a capacity of 684 crore litres.



- ❖ The 1st generation (1G) ethanol is produced from feed stocks such as cereals (rice, wheat, barley, corn and sorghum), sugarcane and sugar beet.
- ❖ The move is also being seen as a helping hand for the sugar sector and farmers.
- ❖ There has been surplus production of sugar in the country since 2010-11 (except reduction due to drought in sugar season 2016-17).

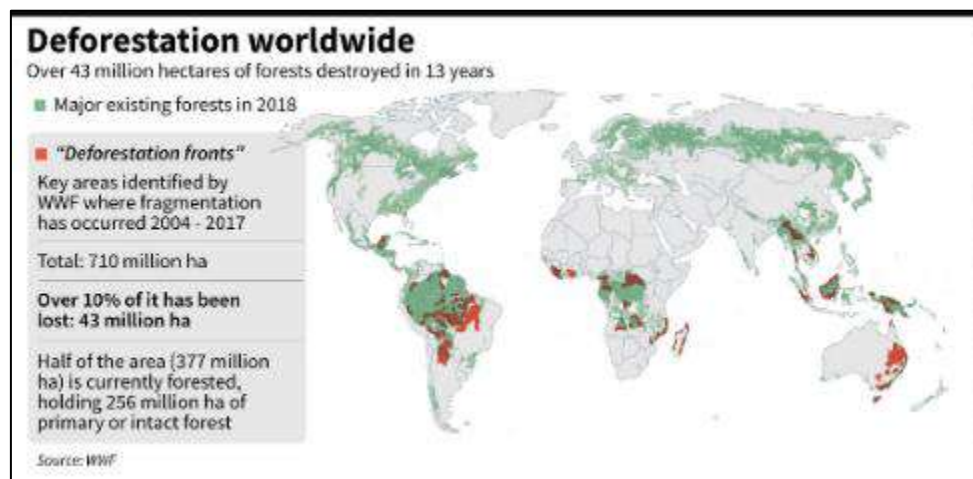
Bankapur Wolf Sanctuary

- ❖ Karnataka State Wildlife Board approved the formation of the first-ever 'Wolf Sanctuary' in the drylands of Bankapur of Koppal district.
- ❖ Indian Grey Wolf is a subspecies of grey wolf that inhabits semi-arid and arid areas.
- ❖ It inhabits the dry grassland regions of Deccan Plateau.



WWF Report

- ❖ It said that more than 43 million hectares of forest have been lost in a little over a decade in just a handful of deforestation hotspots.
- ❖ It found that just 29 sites across South America, Africa and South East Asia were responsible for more than half of the global forest loss.



- ❖ Brazilian Amazon and Cerrado, Bolivian Amazon, Paraguay, Argentina, Madagascar, along with Sumatra and Borneo in Indonesia and Malaysia were among the worst affected.

New Ant species

- ❖ Two new species of a rare ant genus have been discovered in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ They differ from others of the same genus on the basis of the number of antennal segments.
- ❖ *Ooceraea Joshii* was found in the Periyar Tiger Reserve of Kerala.
- ❖ *Ooceraea decamera* was discovered from Alagarkoil in Madurai.



STATES

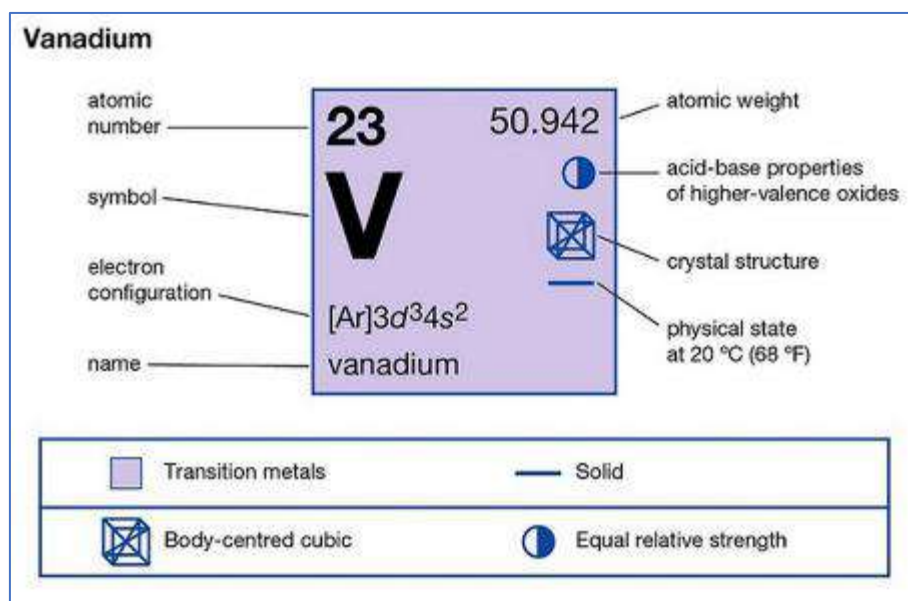
New Anubhava Mantapa

- ❖ Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa laid the foundation stone for the 'New Anubhava Mantapa' in Basavakalyan.
- ❖ It is the place where 12th century poet-philosopher Basavanna lived for most of his life.
- ❖ The building will adopt the Kalyana Chalukya style of architecture.
- ❖ Basavanna was a 12th-century philosopher during the reign of the Kalachuri-dynasty king Bijjala I in Karnataka.
- ❖ Basavanna spread social awareness through his poetry, popularly known as Vachanaas.



Vanadium in Arunachal Pradesh

- ❖ Vanadium has been found in the palaeo-proterozoic carbonaceous phyllite rocks in the Depo and Tamang areas of Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ This was the first report of a primary deposit of vanadium in India.
- ❖ The Exploration is being carried out by Geological Survey of India (GSI).
- ❖ Vanadium is the High-value metal used to strengthen steel and titanium.
- ❖ Vanadium mineralisation in Arunachal Pradesh is geologically similar to the “stone coal” vanadium deposits of China in carbonaceous shale.
- ❖ This high vanadium content is associated with graphite with fixed carbon content of up to 16%.
- ❖ Vanadium steel is used in gears, bicycle frames, axles and other critical components.
- ❖ 85% of the Vanadium produced in the world are used as steel additive.
- ❖ India consumes 3,360 metric tonnes of vanadium annually.
- ❖ This is 4% of Vanadium consumed by the world.
- ❖ China produces 57% of the world’s vanadium and consumes 44% of this metal.
- ❖ The largest deposits are in China, followed by Russia and South Africa.



Kamalam Fruit

- ❖ The Gujarat state government has decided to rename dragon fruit as Kamalam.
- ❖ It means Lotus in Sanskrit.
- ❖ The renaming has been done as the outer shape of the fruit resembles a lotus.



Ratle Hydro Power Project

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the investment to the Ratle Hydro Electric Project.
- ❖ Ratle Hydro Electric Project is located on river Chenab in Kishtwar district of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

₹5281.94 Crore for 850 MW Ratle Hydro Power Project Approved

- 

A new Joint Venture Company to be incorporated between NHPC* and JKSPDC** for construction of the project, located on river Chenab in J&K
- 

Govt to provide a grant of ₹776.44 crore for equity contribution of JKSPDC & NHPC to invest ₹808.14 crore
- 

Will result in direct & indirect employment to around 4000 persons in J&K; the project to be commissioned within a span of 60 months
- 

UT of J&K to get free power worth ₹5289 crore and ₹9581 crore through levy of Water Usage Charges during the project life of 40 years

Statehood Day

- ❖ On January 21, 2021, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura celebrated their statehood day.
- ❖ The three states gained their statehood on January 21, 1972.
- ❖ The North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971 was a major reform of the boundaries of India's North-East region.
- ❖ The erstwhile princely States of Tripura and Manipur were merged with India in October 1949.
- ❖ Meghalaya was created as an autonomous state within the state of Assam on 2 April, 1970.



PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

Bhawana Kanth

- ❖ She becomes the first woman fighter pilot to participate in Republic Day parade 2021.
- ❖ She will be the part of the tableau of the Indian Air Force.
- ❖ In 2019, Bhawana Kanth became the first female fighter pilot of India to qualify to undertake combat missions.
- ❖ She received the Nari Shakti Puraskar from President of India Ramnath Kovind in March 2020.
- ❖ She was one among the first women fighter Pilots inducted in Indian Air Force in 2016.



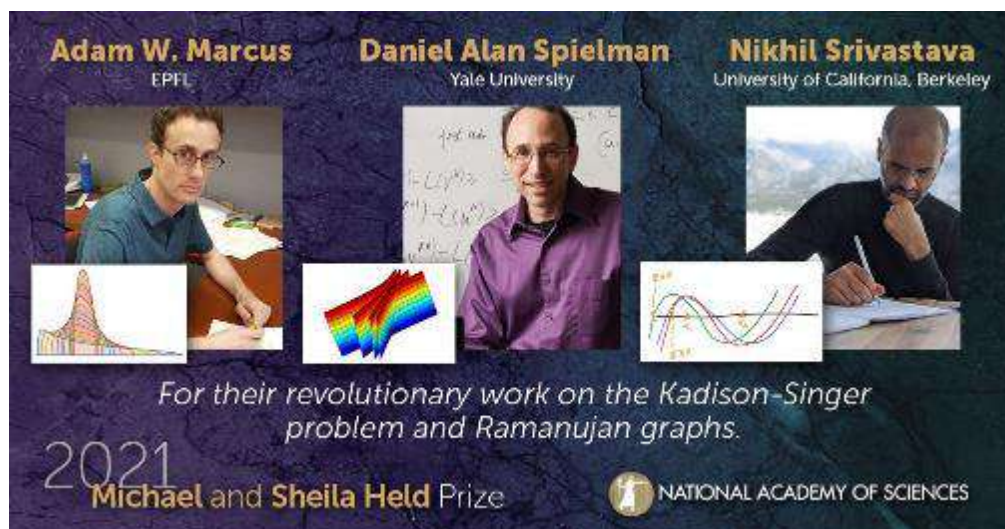
Coal minister's award

- ❖ Union coal and mines minister Pralhad Joshi presented coal minister's award to Central Coalfields Ltd.
- ❖ It is a subsidiary of Coal India Ltd (CIL) with its headquarters in Ranchi, Jharkahand.
- ❖ The minister also presented the same award, instituted for promoting best and sustainable coal mining in the country, to other CIL subsidiaries.
- ❖ While Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL) received the award for outstanding performance in coal production, Western Coalfields Limited (WCL) got it for sustainable mining.



2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize

- ❖ Srivastava from the University of California, Berkeley, and Adam Marcus, the Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne (EPFL) and Daniel Alan Spielman from Yale University will receive the 2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize.
- ❖ Nikhil Srivastava is a young Indian mathematician.
- ❖ He was given this award for solving long-standing questions on the Kadison-Singer problem and on Ramanujan graphs.



Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2021

- ❖ It has been conferred to 32 children, hailing from 32 districts of 21 States/UTs.
- ❖ It is given by the Government of India to the children with exceptional abilities and outstanding accomplishments, in the fields of innovation, scholastic, sports, arts & culture, social service and bravery.
- ❖ The award is formerly known as the National Child Award for Exceptional Achievement.
- ❖ This is Highest Civilian Honour in India that is given to the exceptional achievers under the age of 18.
- ❖ The Ministry of Women and Child Development has instituted this Puraskars in the 1996.

SPORTS

International Cricket Council (ICC) Spirit of Cricket Award of the Decade

- ❖ The former Indian Cricket Captain MS Dhoni won this award.
- ❖ He won the award for his decision to call back Ian Bell after the former England batsman was run out in a bizarre manner during a Test match in 2011.
- ❖ Virat Kohli of India wins the Sir Garfield Sobers Award for ICC Male Cricketer of the Decade.
- ❖ Ellyse Perry of Australia wins the Rachael Heyhoe-Flint Award for ICC Female Cricketer of the Decade
- ❖ Other Awards
 - ICC Men's Test Player of the Decade: Steve Smith (Australia).
 - ICC Men's ODI Player of the Decade: Virat Kohli (India).
 - ICC Men's T20I Player of the Decade: Rashid Khan (Afghanistan)
 - ICC Men's Associate Player of the Decade: Kyle Coetzer (Scotland)
 - ICC Women's ODI Player of the Decade: Ellyse Perry (Australia)
 - ICC Women's T20I Player of the Decade: Ellyse Perry (Australia)
 - ICC Women's Associate Player of the Decade: Kathryn Bryce (Scotland)



Ekalavya Puraskar

- ❖ India women's hockey team player Namita Toppo was conferred with the prestigious 'Ekalavya Puraskar' for her contribution to the game.
- ❖ Toppo was honoured for her performance from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2020 at both national and international levels.
- ❖ This award was instituted by IMPACT in 1993.
- ❖ It is given to encourage young sports talents of the state.



Globe Soccer Awards

- ❖ The Portugal Football player Cristiano Ronaldo has been crowned the Player of the Century.
- ❖ He was awarded this prize at the Globe Soccer Awards in Dubai.
- ❖ The Bayern Munich's coach Hansi Flick bagged the Coach of the Year award.
- ❖ Also, Bayern Munich won the Club of the Year award.
- ❖ The Real Madrid won the Club of the Century award.
- ❖ The Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola won the Coach of the Century award.



T Natarajan

- ❖ Natarajan became the first Indian cricketer to make his international debut across all three formats of cricket during the same tour at Australia.
- ❖ The Tamil Nadu player came to Australia as a net practice bowler.
- ❖ He was born in Chinnappampatti, a village near Salem in Tamil Nadu.



1st ever Khelo India winter games

- ❖ The Khelo India Zaskar Winter Sports Festival began at Zaskar, Kargil district of Ladakh.
- ❖ It aims to promote Zaskar as a destination for winter tourists in Ladakh.
- ❖ It aims to promote Ladakh as a centre for Ice Hockey.



Cristiano Ronaldo

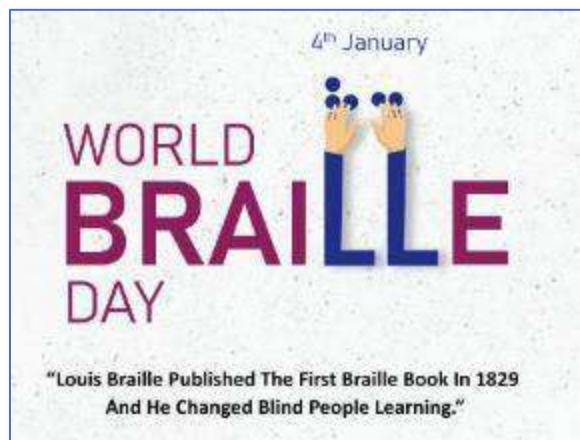
- ❖ He now holds the record for the most goals scored for club and country in football history.
- ❖ He is a Portuguese footballer.
- ❖ He was the five-time Ballon d'Or winner.
- ❖ He scored his 760th career goal on behalf of Juventus club in the Italian Super cup.
- ❖ Brazil's Pele's scored 757 goals earlier.
- ❖ Josef Bican of the Austrian-Czech legend scored 759 goals.



IMPORTANT DAYS

World Braille Day – January 04

- ❖ Louis Braille, the inventor of Braille language, was born on January 4, 1809 in France.
- ❖ To remember him and his contribution to the world, Louis' birth anniversary is celebrated as World Braille Day on January 4 every year.
- ❖ It is observed to raise awareness of the importance of Braille as a means of communication in the full realization of the human rights for blind and partially sighted people.
- ❖ It was officially approved by the United Nations General Assembly in November 2018, celebrated since 2019.



World Day of War Orphans – January 06

- ❖ The day aims to address the war orphans as it has become a growing worldwide humanitarian and social crisis.
- ❖ The World Day of War Orphans was initiated by the French organization, SOS Enfants en Detresses.
- ❖ World War II created millions of orphans in Europe, with 300,000 orphans in Poland and 200,000 in Yugoslavia alone.



Marathi Journalism day – January 6

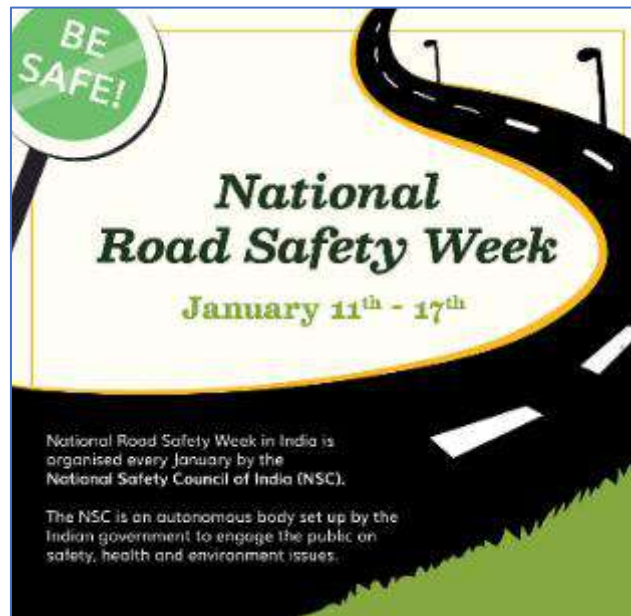
- ❖ On 6th January 1832, Balshastri Jambhekar started the first newspaper 'Darpan'.
- ❖ It was also the first Marathi News Paper.
- ❖ Jambhekar is known as Father of Marathi journalism.
- ❖ He was also born on January 6 in 1812 at the Konkan region of Maharashtra state.

World Hindi Day – January 10



- ❖ The first World Hindi Day was first celebrated in 2006 by former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.
- ❖ It is to mark the anniversary of world's first Hindi conference.
- ❖ That was organised by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on this day in 1975.
- ❖ Hindi is derived from Sanskrit and written in Devnagari script.
- ❖ Hindi is among the fourth most spoken languages of the world.
- ❖ Hindi Diwas is celebrated on 14th September every year to honour the Hindi writers, thinkers and philosophers.
- ❖ It is observed to mark adaptation of Hindi written in Devanagari script as the Official Language of the Union by the Constituent Assembly on September 14, 1949.

National road safety week



- ❖ It is celebrated from 11th January to 17th January every year in our country India.
- ❖ It is to create awareness about road safety and minimize road accidents & save life.
- ❖ On this 2021, India is celebrating 32nd National Road Safety Week.
- ❖ At first in the year 1989, awareness for the National Road Safety Week was celebrated.
- ❖ 32nd National Road Safety Week 2021 theme, 'Safe yourself to save your family'.
- ❖ National Safety Council of India organizes every year National Road Safety Week along with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

National Youth Day - January 12



- ❖ It was chosen to honour the birthday of Swami Vivekananda.
- ❖ The theme of this is 'Channelizing Youth Power for Nation Building'.
- ❖ He was born Narendra nath Datta at Calcutta in 1863.
- ❖ Since 1985, the event is celebrated in India every year.
- ❖ Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission.
- ❖ He introduced Hinduism at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893.
- ❖ He is best known for his speech "Sisters and brothers of America".

Armed Forces Veterans Day - January 14

- ❖ The day is being celebrated since 2017.
- ❖ It is to commemorate the sacrifices of the veterans and also to salute those who served the Indian Armed Forces
- ❖ The day was initially called Armistice Day.
- ❖ Armistice Day is celebrated on November 11 all over the world.
- ❖ The first Armistice Day was celebrated on November 11, 1919 marking the anniversary of the end of World War I.
- ❖ However, in India the day was first marked through a resolution passed by the Congress in 1926.



1st National Road safety month 2021

- ❖ The National Road Safety Month will be observed to spread awareness regarding road safety and reduce road accidents in India.
- ❖ It will be observed from 18th January to 17th February.
- ❖ It is the inaugural edition of the National Road Safety Month.
- ❖ It is being held in place of National Road Safety Week.



National Youth Festival

- ❖ The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports organized a week-long National Youth Festival in the country commencing from the 12th of this month.
- ❖ Every year, the festival is being held to commemorate the birth anniversary of youth icon Swami Vivekananda.
- ❖ It began in 1995 as a major activity under the programme of National Integration Camp (NIC).
- ❖ In collaboration with Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) and the National Service Scheme (NSS), the Government of India conducts this programme every year.



Army Day - January 15

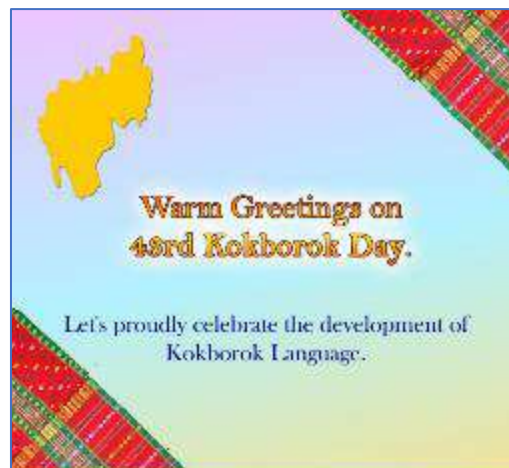
- ❖ It is celebrated in recognition of Field Marshal KM. Cariappa's, the then a Lieutenant General.
- ❖ He took over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher on 15 January 1949.
- ❖ Butcher was the last British Commander-in-Chief of India.
- ❖ Cariappa had led the Indian forces to victory in the 1947 war.
- ❖ He is one of only two Indian Army officers to hold the Five-star rank of Field Marshal.

- ❖ The other one was Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw.



43rd Kokborok Day – January 19

- ❖ It is celebrated in Tripura to celebrated the development of Kokborok language.
- ❖ The Kokborok is the official language of Tripura.
- ❖ This language was recognized as an official language on this day in 1979.
- ❖ The first left front government led by former chief minister Nripen Chakraborty carried out this.



National Girl Child Day – January 24

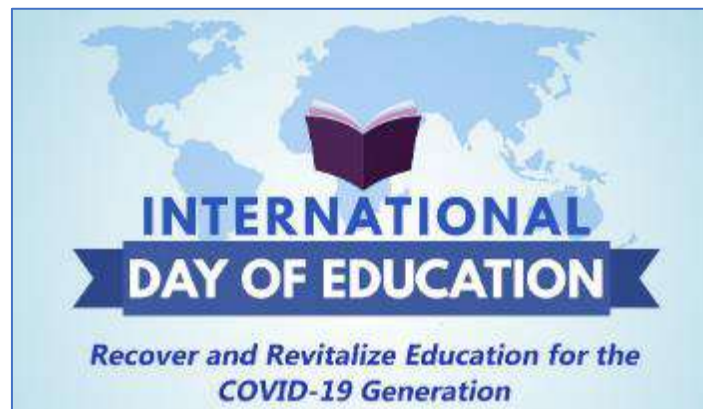
- ❖ It was started by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Government of India in 2008.
- ❖ It is being celebrated across the nation with objectives of generating awareness on the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and create a positive environment around valuing the girl child.



- ❖ India is observing National Girl Child Week 2021, which begins from January 21 and continues till January 26.
- ❖ The state of Punjab has announced January 2021 to be the "month of Girl Child".
- ❖ The theme for this is 'transforming education for girls'.

International Education Day - January 24

- ❖ The United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming this day as International Day of Education on December 3, 2018.
- ❖ The theme for this year will be "Recover and Revitalize Education for the COVID-19 Generation."
- ❖ Sustainable Development Goal 4 aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030.
- ❖ The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted in 1989.



National Voter's Day – January 25

- ❖ It was started for the very first time on 26th January 2011 to mark the Indian Election Commission's Foundation Day in 1950.
- ❖ The theme for this will be "Making our voters Empowered, vigilant, safe and informed."

- ❖ The Chief Election Commissioner of India was Sukumar Sen.



National Tourism Day – January 25

- ❖ India's National Tourism Day is celebrated on January 25.
- ❖ India also participates in the celebration of the UN World Tourism Day (September 27).

The International Customs Day (ICD) - January 26

- ❖ The theme for this year will be “Customs bolstering Recovery, Renewal and Resilience for a sustainable supply chain”.
- ❖ It is observed by the World Customs Organization (WCO).
- ❖ WCO is the only international body dedicated exclusively to international customs and border control matters.



71st Uttar Pradesh Day – January 24

- ❖ The Uttar Pradesh Day celebrations held from 24 January to 26 January 2021.

- ❖ The theme of Uttar Pradesh Day 2021 is 'Respect for self-reliant Uttar Pradesh, women young farmers, development of all'.
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath has launched the 'Udyam Sarathi App' on this occasion.
- ❖ It has been launched under the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme.
- ❖ It was on this very same day in 1950, Uttar Pradesh had got itself renamed.
- ❖ Earlier the state was known as United Provinces.



International Holocaust Remembrance Day – January 27

- ❖ It is an international Memorial Day on 27 January commemorating the tragedy of the Holocaust that occurred during the Second World War.
- ❖ It marks the anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau by Soviet troops on 27 January 1945.
- ❖ The theme for 2021 is to "be the light in the darkness".
- ❖ For the first time, this year the United Nations and UNESCO will jointly organize a series of events.



World Leprosy Day – January 31

- ❖ It is observed internationally every year on the last Sunday of January.
- ❖ It aims to increase the public awareness of Leprosy.
- ❖ Leprosy is also known as Hansen's disease.
- ❖ India has the highest burden of the disease.

