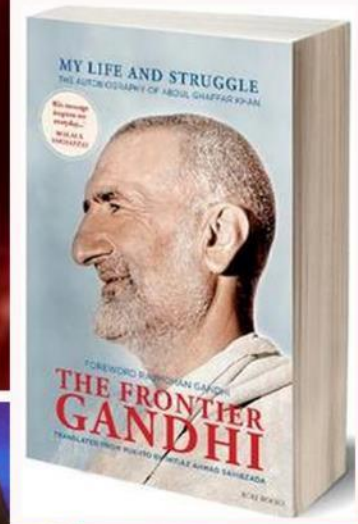


# TNPSC THERVUPETTAGAM

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## TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Prakash Javadekar, Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change used Sanskrit for the first time in UNSC Debate on climate change.
  - He addressed with the Sanskrit hymn from Sukla Yajurveda.
- ❖ The second edition of 'Khelo India National Winter Games 2021' has been inaugurated in Jammu and Kashmir's Gulmarg district.
- ❖ Recently the Rajasthan government presented its first paperless budget in the state assembly.
- ❖ The All-India Football Federation has announced that, Odisha will host the Indian Women's League (IWL) in 2021.
- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has dedicated to the nation, the 1000 MW lignite based 'Neyveli new thermal power station' at Neyveli.
- ❖ HP has developed its first ever consumer PC using the plastic waste in ocean.
- ❖ Madhavaram is all set to get Chennai's largest metro rail train maintenance depot.
- ❖ Aequs Private Limited is developing a 400-acre toy manufacturing cluster at Koppal in Karnataka.
  - It is India's first toy manufacturing cluster to boost domestic industry.
- ❖ The Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal has inaugurated the New Delhi World Book Fair 2021-Virtual Edition organized by the National Book Trust (NBT).
  - The theme of this Book Fair is 'National Education Policy-2020'.
- ❖ The all-women crew of onboard Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) vessel MT Swarna Krishna created history and started its journey from Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) at Navi Mumbai.
  - This is the first time in the world maritime history that a ship is being sailed by all women officers.
- ❖ Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat has won the gold medal in the women's 53-kg category at Ukraine wrestling event held at Kyiv, Ukraine.
  - She is the only Indian woman wrestler to have qualified for the Tokyo Games.
- ❖ The Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry launched the field assessments for the Swachh Survekshan 2021.
  - It is the annual cleanliness survey of cities (covers 4,242 cities) that culminates in a ranking.
- ❖ Karnataka has launched the country's maiden Engineering Research & Development (ER&D) Policy.



- ❖ Anindya Dutta has penned a new book titled “Advantage India: The Story of Indian Tennis”, a chronicle of Indian Tennis.
- ❖ India described Sri Lanka ‘Priority One’ partner in the defence sector.
- ❖ The Prime Minister dedicated to the nation the 7500th Janaushadhi Kendra at NEIGRIHMS (North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health and Medical Sciences), Shillong of Meghalaya.
- ❖ China introduced the first “virus passports” aimed at boosting international travel.
  - The digital certificate shows a user’s vaccination status and virus test results.
- ❖ On the occasion of International Women’s Day, Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narrotam Mishra decided to appoint a woman constable as the state’s home minister for the day.
  - Meenakshi Verma acted as Madhya Pradesh’s home minister for the day, wherein she took important decisions and addressed public grievances.
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh gets 8th Airport at Bareilly.
  - It became the first state to have highest number of Airports.
- ❖ International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach won an unopposed second term that will keep him in the post until 2025.
  - He received 93 of the 94 eligible votes cast in an online process.
- ❖ The European Parliament has declared whole of the European Union as “LGBTIQ Freedom Zone”.
- ❖ Trivendra Singh Rawat resigned as the Uttarakhand chief minister.
  - Tirath Singh Rawat took oath as the new chief minister of Uttarakhand.
- ❖ The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution launched Mera Ration Mobile App.
  - This will benefit the ration card holders who move to new places in search of livelihood.
- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the Kindle version of Swami Chidbhavananda’s ‘Bhagavad Gita’.
  - Swami Chidbhavanandaji is the founder of Sri Ramakrishna Tapovanam Ashram at Thirupparaithurai, Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The Sangay volcano of Ecuador was recently erupted.
- ❖ The BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues (CGETI) leaders held their first meeting under India’s Chairship.
  - The theme of BRICS this year is "BRICS@15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus”.



- ❖ The Uttar Pradesh government ordered the removal of all religious structures on public roads.
- ❖ The Jharkhand cabinet has approved the employment policy of mandating the private sector units to reserve 75 per cent of jobs for local people.
  - Before Jharkhand, Haryana government had also approved a similar policy.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu's Chadalavada Anandha Bhavani Devi became the first-ever fencer from India to qualify for Olympic Games.
  - Bhavani secured a spot for the Tokyo Olympics at the World Cup in Hungary.
- ❖ The United States overtook Saudi Arabia as India's second biggest oil supplier.
  - Iraq remains Top supplier to India.
- ❖ India's foreign-exchange reserves have become the fourth largest in the world, surpassing Russia.
  - China has the largest foreign currency reserves followed by Japan and Switzerland.
- ❖ The researchers from the US National Institutes of Health have found that, a mosquito protein called AEG12 strongly inhibits the family of viruses which causes dengue, yellow fever, Zika and West Nile.
  - They also noted that the protein also inhibits the corona viruses.
- ❖ Mumbai defeated Uttar Pradesh by six wickets to lift the Vijay Hazare Trophy at the Ferozeshah Kotla, New Delhi.
- ❖ The Supreme Court ruled that no serving bureaucrat could be given additional charge of state election commissioner.
- ❖ Moderna has started testing its Coronavirus vaccine on infants and children between the ages of 6 months and 12 years.
  - The clinical trial, called the KidCOVE study by Moderna, will enroll approx. 6,750 children in Canada and the United States.
- ❖ The Indian Parliament is discussing over a proposal to form a Parliamentary Friendship Group with the friendly nations.
  - This initiative is to strengthen the bilateral relations.
- ❖ The Dutch inventor of audio cassette tapes, Lou Ottens passed away recently.
  - He also engineered the concept of magnetic tape players and the computer discs (CDs).
- ❖ Murali Shree Shankar qualified for the Tokyo Olympics in the long-jump event.
  - The qualification mark for the Olympics was 8.22 metres. Shree Shankar set a national record of 8.26 metres in his final attempt at the Federation Cup.



- ❖ Social housing architects Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal have been named the 2021 winners of the Pritzker Architecture Prize.
  - They are the founders of French studio Lacaton & Vassal.
- ❖ The central government will soon establish a women helpline centres in foreign countries which will look after the distressed overseas residents.
  - These Women Helpline Centres are being set up with the help of Ministry of external affairs in other countries.
- ❖ Veteran Kathakali exponent Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair died recently at the age of 105.
  - He was conferred with Padmashri in the year 2017.
- ❖ A team of Scientists from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research have found a method that mimic the Photosynthesis.
  - This method harnesses the solar energy and converts the captured carbon dioxide into carbon monoxide (CO).
- ❖ In a first since 1940, Tiger is seen in Maharashtra's Guatala Autramghat Wildlife sanctuary.
- ❖ The Spain's parliament voted a law legalizing passive euthanasia.
  - This makes Spain the fourth European nation to decriminalise assisted suicide, alongside the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg.
- ❖ The digital green certificate is a proposal from the European Commission.
  - It aims to facilitate free but safe movement within the European Union amidst the pandemic.
- ❖ The Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Ashok Gehlot, announced the launch of Universal Health Scheme (UHS) called "Mukhya Mantri Chiranjeevi Yojana".
  - Under the scheme, a cashless health services will be provided to all the families in Rajasthan.
- ❖ The UNESCO joins USO India and Toonz Media Group for Water Conservation Programme awareness programme for students.
- ❖ Samia Suluhu Hassan was sworn as Tanzania's first female president.
- ❖ The Chinar Corps celebrated their 80th Raising Day in Srinagar.
  - Chinar Corps was raised during World War II at Barrackpore, 1942.
- ❖ Taiwan recently launched a "Freedom Pineapple" campaign on Twitter.
  - It was to condemn the ban on the import of pineapples from Taiwan by China.
- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh has inaugurated the state's first formal indigenous language and knowledge system school Nyubu Nyvgam Yerko.





- ❖ Sharath Kamal, a professional table tennis player from Tamil Nadu, becomes the first Indian paddler to qualify for Tokyo Olympics.
- ❖ MGM Healthcare hospital has become the third hospital in Chennai and one of the 39 hospitals in India to have received accreditation by the Joint Commission International (JCI).
  - JCI is a US-based non-profit organisation that accredits hospitals across the globe based on their quality and patient safety standards.
- ❖ Aadhaar is no longer mandatory for pensioners to get digital life certificate, Jeevan Pramaan, that is required to collect their pensions.
  - The government has also made Aadhaar verification voluntary for its instant messaging solution 'Sandes'.
- ❖ Delhi government has taken a decision to reduce the minimum age for liquor consumption in the city to 21 from 25.
- ❖ The Jal Shakti Ministry has signed a pact with the United Nations Office for Project Services and the government of Denmark.
  - This is to bring the tap water connections to the 11 water-scarce districts of the Bundelkhand and Vindhya regions in Uttar Pradesh under the Jal Jeevan mission.
- ❖ The Joe Biden administration has announced the re-establishment of Homeland Security Dialogue with India.
  - This was discontinued by previous Donald Trump dispensation.
- ❖ Senior bureaucrat Saurabh Garg has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).
- ❖ IAS officer Sanjeev Kumar has been appointed as the Chairman, Airports Authority of India (AAI).
- ❖ IAS officer Atish Chandra has been appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director, Food Corporation of India.
- ❖ Times Network India Economic Conclave 2021 is being organised on March 25-26, 2021.
  - Theme for this year is 'India's Decade: Reform. Perform. Transform'.
- ❖ Maggie O'Farrell's book "Hamnet," has won the National Book Critics Circle prize for fiction in US.
  - Tom Zoellner's "Island on Fire: The Revolt That Ended Slavery in the British Empire" won for nonfiction.
- ❖ Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has included Yogasana in Khelo India Youth Games 2021.



- Yogasana sport for both male and female categories have been included in Khelo India Youth Games, 2021.
- ❖ Bangladesh celebrates 50 years of its Independence and National Day on 26 March.
  - The day coincides with the grand celebration of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- ❖ The Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad addressed at inauguration of new building of Bombay High Court in Goa.
  - The Bombay High Court already has regional branches at Nagpur and Aurangabad in Maharashtra.
- ❖ Erode district will attract tourists to Kural Malai, a hill that will have all 1,330 couplets of Thiruvallur engraved on it.
  - Work on the project, funded by the Central and State governments, will take off after the Assembly elections.

## **TAMIL NADU**

### **Retirement age of government staff**

- ❖ The retirement age of Tamil Nadu state government employees has been increased from 59 to 60 years.
- ❖ All those who were in service and those who would retire on May 31, 2021, would be covered under this announcement.
- ❖ Last year, the government had increased the retirement age from 58 to 59 years.

### **Internal quota for Vanniyars**

- ❖ The Government of Tamil Nadu on February 26 passed a Bill temporarily providing an internal reservation of 10.5 per cent to the community under the category Most Backward Classes (V).
- ❖ It has received the assent of Governor on February 26<sup>th</sup> itself.
- ❖ It is shortly called Special Reservation Act of 2021.
- ❖ It has created two more groups — one covering 25 MBCs and 68 DNCs and another covering the remaining 22 MBCs.
- ❖ The Vanniya kula kshatriya community includes vanniyar, vanniya, vannia gounder, gounder, padayachi, palli and agnikula kshatriya.



- ❖ The Bill also provides an internal quota of 7% to Denotified Communities and the Most Backward Classes communities having similarity with Denotified Communities.
- ❖ Other Most Backward Classes, not included in the above category, are provided with 2.5% quota.
- ❖ This is only a temporary arrangement.
- ❖ Changes will be made after the Justice A Kulasekaran Commission make its recommendations
- ❖ It was set up to collect quantifiable data on castes, communities and tribes of Tamil Nadu.

### **Asia's largest Livestock Research centre**

- ❖ TN Chief Minister inaugurated the Advanced Institute of Integrated Research in Livestock and Animal Science (AIIRLAS) near Thalaivasal at Salem.
- ❖ It is the largest facility in Asia.
- ❖ AIIRLAS has four wings such as
  - Livestock Farm Complex,
  - Livestock Products Technology Complex,
  - Extension education, Skill Training and Research complex and
  - Veterinary College and Research Institute (VCRI).

### **E-Daakhil portal**

- ❖ E-Daakhil portal for consumer grievance redressal is now operational in 15 states and Union Territories.
- ❖ A web application for e-filing of consumer complaints named 'edaakhil.nic.in' has been developed by the National Informatics centre (NIC) for the purpose.
- ❖ The E-filing was launched by the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission.
- ❖ Delhi was the first state to implement it on September 8, 2020.
- ❖ The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 came into force from July 20, 2020.
- ❖ It has a provision for e-filing of consumer complaints in the consumer commissions and online payment of the fees for filing a complaint.

### **Namma Chennai Smart Card**

- ❖ Namma Chennai Smart Card is a Ru-Pay powered co-branded, contactless prepaid card.
- ❖ It facilitates various digital payments like tax and utility bill payments Greater Chennai Corporation centres.
- ❖ ICICI Bank has partnered with the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) and Chennai Smart City Limited (CSCL) for the launch of this card.



### **Competition Commission of India's South Regional Office**

- ❖ The Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman virtually inaugurated the Competition Commission of India's (CCI) Regional Office (South) in Chennai.
- ❖ The Chennai Office of CCI will act as an office to facilitate enforcement, investigation, advocacy function in coordination with Delhi office.
- ❖ This regional office will cater to the requirements of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and the Union Territories Puducherry and Lakshadweep.

### **Dr J Jayalalithaa University in Villupuram**

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu assembly passed the Dr J Jayalalithaa University Bill 2021 to establish a new university.
- ❖ According to this the Thiruvalluvar University would be bifurcated and a new university would be established in Villupuram.
- ❖ The new university will start functioning from this academic year.
- ❖ Thiruvalluvar University was created by the former chief minister M Karunanidhi.



### **Jayalalitha special kalaimamani awards and other awards**

- ❖ Veteran cine actors B. Saroja Devi and Sowcar Janaki, noted playback singers P. Susheela and Jamuna Rani and Bharatanatyam artistes Ambika Kameshwar and Parvathi Ravi Ghantasala have been named for the Puratchi Thalaivi Dr. J. Jayalalitha Special Kalaimamani Awards for 2019 and 2020 by the Tamil Nadu government.
- ❖ Noted artistes Vani Jayaram and S. Rajeswari have been named for receiving the all-India award — the M.S. Subbulakshmi Award (Music) for 2019 and 2020 respectively.
- ❖ Artistes Alarmel Valli and Chandra Dhandayuthapani, too, are to receive the all-India award — the Balasaraswathi Award (Dance) for 2019.
- ❖ A total of 59 personalities have been named for receiving the Kalaimamani Award for 2019 and 65 personalities for the year 2020.
- ❖ The 'Akkarai Sisters' — S. Subhalakshmi and S. Sornalatha, Nadhaswaram artiste Achalpuram S. Chinnathambi, singer Jolly Abraham, actors Ramarajan, Yogi Babu and Devadarshini, cinema producer Kalaipuli S. Thanu, cine editor Antony and K.N. Ramaswamy of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan will also receive the Kalaimamani Award for 2019.
- ❖ Actors Siva karthikeyan and Aishwarya Rajesh, music director D. Imman and film director Gautham Vasudev Menon were among those selected for the award for 2020.
- ❖ Pollachi Tamil Isai Sangam and Tamil Isai Sangam at the Raja Muthiah Mandram in Madurai will receive shields for best cultural organisations.
- ❖ Sabari Nadaka Kuzhu in Tiruvannamalai will receive the rolling shield for the best drama troupe.

### **New Food Park at Gangaikondan**

- ❖ The TN state government has approved the establishment of a Mega Food Park in Gangaikondan, Tirunelveli.
- ❖ It is also proposed to establish Food Parks in Dharmapuri, Ariyalur, Perambalur, Karur, Nagapattinam, Ramanathapuram and Tenkasi districts.
- ❖ Eight more agro processing clusters are proposed to be established in Theni, Dindigul, Krishnagiri, Tiruvannamalai, Salem, Cuddalore, Villupuram and Madurai.
- ❖ These are setup under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana.



### **MGR tradition paddy conservator award 2021**

- ❖ “Bharat Ratna Dr.M.G.R. Traditional Rice variety conservator Award” would be conferred for supporting the traditional paddy variety growing farmers and to conserve traditional varieties.
- ❖ The first prize was given to N. Sakthiprakash from Namakkal and the second prize was given to S. Velmurugan from Salem and the third prize was given to U.Sivaraman from Sivangamai district.

### **Third World Thirukkural Conference**

- ❖ The Third World Thirukkural Conference was started in Thanjavur.
- ❖ It is held on behalf of the World Tamil Research Institute, Bharath College of Science, Australia Melbourne Tamil Association, Ilangadu Natramizh Association and Thanjavur Tamil Thai Foundation.

### **Gowsalya Shankar**

- ❖ The U.S. Consulate honoured Tamil Nadu-based anti-caste activist and human rights defender Gowsalya Shankar with the International Woman of Courage (IWOC) Award.
- ❖ Gowsalya was U.S. Mission India’s nominee for the 2021 U.S. Secretary of State’s IWOC Award.

### **Best paediatric hospital**

- ❖ Kanchi Kamakoti CHILDS Trust Hospital has been adjudged the best paediatric facility in the country.
- ❖ The survey was by the News Week magazine.
- ❖ The survey was done in partnership with Statista Inc.
- ❖ The survey included hospitals from 25 countries, including the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada and India.

### **Keeladi excavation - 7<sup>th</sup> phase**

- ❖ In Keezhadi's 7<sup>th</sup> phase excavation, a damaged clay lid was found.
- ❖ It is said to be 2,600 years old.
- ❖ This lid resembles an earthen pot lid-like structure with a knob, used to hold water.
- ❖ Being so small, it is likely to be a used as a playing toy 2,600 years ago.

### **Potsherds in Ramanathapuram**

- ❖ Potsherds with inscriptions similar to the Indus Valley scripts have been discovered in Uthirakosamangai in Ramanathapuram.
- ❖ Earlier, Chinese potsherds were discovered and documented along with a trident symbol pertaining to the Sethupathi period in Keelakarai in Ramanathapuram district.
- ❖ At present, a total of 20 new potsherds were found near a local tank in Mariyapuram near Uthirakosamangai.





## **MitraClip**

- ❖ In a first for Asia, four back-to-back MitraClip procedures were successfully performed in a single day at Apollo Hospitals, Chennai.
- ❖ It surpassed Japan where MitraClip procedures were performed on three patients in a single day.
- ❖ The minimally invasive method used in MitraClip therapy allows repair of a leaking mitral valve without open heart surgery.
- ❖ It is a lifesaver for patients at high surgical risk.
- ❖ Apollo Hospitals is at the forefront of making the MitraClip available.
- ❖ MitraClip becomes the standard of care for patients with heart failure showing no improvement with medicines.
- ❖ MitraClip is a revolutionary device.
- ❖ It was introduced in the country just three years ago.
- ❖ It provides a non-surgical alternative to treat patients with mitral valve leaks (mitral regurgitation), which can lead to cardiac failure.

## **Devendrakula Velalars bill**

- ❖ The Parliament passed the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2021 recently.
- ❖ It seeks to group seven Scheduled Caste communities in certain districts of Tamil Nadu under 'Devendrakula Velalars'.
- ❖ The seven groups are,
  - Devendrakulathan
  - Kalladi
  - Kudumban
  - Pallan
  - Pannadi
  - Vathiriyar
  - Kadaiyan (in the districts of Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Ramanathapuram, Pudukottai, Thanjavur, Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam)
- ❖ It may be noted that Article 341 of the Constitution empowers the President to specify the list of Scheduled Castes in various States and Union Territories.
- ❖ Further, it permits Parliament to modify this list.



## Operation Tiruvallur

- ❖ Indian Army has undertaken 'Operation Tiruvallur'.
- ❖ This operation is for the safe disposal of nearly 10 tonnes of unexploded ordnance.
- ❖ The aim of the operation is to provide a safe environment for citizens in and around Gummidipoondi area in Tiruvallur.
- ❖ Dakshin Bharat Area under the Southern Command of the Army is undertaking this sensitive operation.

## Tamil Nadu - Highest revenue deficit among poll-bound States

**States' report card**  
Among the poll bound States/UTs, Assam had the highest average economic growth rate (8.6%) in FY16-20, followed by Tamil Nadu (8%)

State	Average economic growth rate in % (FY16-20)	Inflation for Feb. 2021 (%)	Unemployment rate for Feb. 2021 (%)
Assam	8.6	6.5	3.4
Tamil Nadu	8	7.2	4.8
Puducherry	6.7	8	5.8
West Bengal	6.7	5.3	6.2
Kerala	6.3	4.9	4.3
All India	6.7	5	6.9

Source: CARE Ratings report data sourced from Budget documents, RRI, CMIF, PRS Legislative

- ❖ Tamil Nadu has the highest revenue deficit at ₹65,994 crore, among poll-bound States, according to a report.
- ❖ This is as per revised budget estimate for 2020-21.
- ❖ In terms of size of the economy, Tamil Nadu's economy is the largest (third largest in India).
- ❖ It is followed by West Bengal (sixth), Kerala (11th), Assam (17th) and Puducherry (26th).
- ❖ Together, they account for around 20% of India's economy.
- ❖ According to the report, Assam has witnessed the highest average economic growth of 8.6% during the four-year period to FY20.
- ❖ West Bengal and Puducherry's economy grew on par with the national average.
- ❖ With 6.3% Kerala's economic growth was lower than the national average due to the devastating floods of 2018 and 2019.



## **NATIONAL**

### **President's rule in Puducherry**

- ❖ The President rule is imposed recently in Puducherry after Narayana Samy government resignation.
- ❖ Constitution of India under article 239A provides for legislature and Council of Ministers in Union territories.

### **Model code of conduct**

- ❖ The Election Commission announced the full schedule for Assembly polls in 4 states.
- ❖ The 4 states are West Bengal, Kerala, Assam, Tamil Nadu and 1 UT of Puducherry.
- ❖ Model Code of Conduct (MCC) came into force immediately after the announcement of the election dates.
- ❖ MCC is the set of norms has been evolved with the consensus of political parties.
- ❖ They have consented to abide by the principles embodied in the said code in its letter and spirit.

### **No postal ballots for NRI**

- ❖ The Election Commission of India announced that the Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) will not be able to vote by postal ballots for the upcoming elections in five states.
- ❖ It is a facility whereby a voter can cast their remotely.
- ❖ The user cast the vote by recording preference on the ballot paper.
- ❖ The Voter will send it back to the election officer before counting.
- ❖ The Section 60 of the Representation of People Act,1951 provides for the person to be given a postal ballot facility.

### **City Innovation Exchange**

- ❖ The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched the 'City Innovation Exchange' platform.
- ❖ This platform will provide eco-system to connect innovators with cities at national level.
- ❖ It will create innovative solutions to the growing challenges of cities.

- ❖ It will facilitate the discovery, design and validation of solutions through a robust, transparent and user-centric process.
- ❖ Also, it will reduce barriers between innovators and cities to search for appropriate solutions.

### **Swachh Iconic Places phase IV**

- ❖ The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti has announced the selection of twelve iconic sites under Phase IV of Swachh Iconic Places.
- ❖ The initiative aims at enhancing the experience of both domestic and foreign visitors by improving the sanitation and cleanliness standards at and around the sites.
- ❖ The new sites include

S No	Iconic Site	State
1.	Ajanta Caves	Maharashtra
2.	Sanchi Stupa	Madhya Pradesh
3.	Kumbhalgarh Fort	Rajasthan
4.	Jaisalmer Fort	Rajasthan
5.	Ramdevra	Jaisalmer, Rajasthan
6.	Golconda Fort	Hyderabad, Telangana
7.	Sun Temple	Konark, Odisha
8.	Rock Garden	Chandigarh
9.	Dal Lake	Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir
10.	Banke Bihari Temple	Mathura, Uttar Pradesh
11.	Agra Fort	Agra, Uttar Pradesh
12.	Kalighat Temple	West Bengal

### **Cross-Border Firing in Kashmir**

- ❖ India and Pakistan militaries have agreed to “strictly” observe all agreements and adhere to ceasefire along the Line of Control from midnight of February 24.
- ❖ It is the first such understanding since the 2003 ceasefire violations pact.
- ❖ The ceasefire agreement was reached in November 2003, four years after the Kargil War.
- ❖ On November 26, 2003 the ceasefire took effect along the entire stretch of the India-Pakistan frontier.



### **One District One Focus Product**

- ❖ The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in consultation with the Ministry of Food Processing Industries has finalized the products for One District One Focus Product.
- ❖ The products have been identified from agricultural, horticultural, animal, poultry, milk, fisheries and aquaculture, marine sectors for 728 districts across the country.
- ❖ The list of products has been finalized after taking inputs from the States/UTs and Indian Council of Agricultural Research.
- ❖ These products will be promoted in a cluster approach through convergence of the Government of India schemes.
- ❖ This helps to increase the value of the products.
- ❖ It's main aim is also to increase the income of the farmers.
- ❖ These identified products will be supported under the PM-FME scheme of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries.
- ❖ Fruits have been identified for 226 districts, vegetables for 107 districts and spices for 105 districts.
- ❖ The chief food crop paddy has been identified for 40 districts while wheat for 5 districts.

### **"Sugamya Bharat App" and "Access - The Photo Digest"**

- ❖ The Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thaawar Chand Gehlot launched the 'Sugamya Bharat' App and a handbook titled 'Access - The Photo Digest'.
- ❖ The App and the handbook have been developed by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.
- ❖ It enables people with disabilities and even the elderly to register accessibility-related problems
- ❖ This mobile app will also address coronavirus-related issues faced by the differently abled.
- ❖ The handbook is a collection of photographs from across different States and UTs.
- ❖ It acts as a tool and guide for stakeholders, to sensitise them about 10 basic features of accessibility and related good-bad practices in easy-to-understand pictorial form.
- ❖ The app provides five main features, four of which are directly related to enhancing accessibility, while the fifth is a special feature meant only for people with disabilities for coronavirus-related issues.

### **CERA Week global energy and environment leadership award**

- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be honoured with the CERAWeek global energy and environment leadership award.
- ❖ It is recognition of his commitment to sustainability in the energy and the environment.
- ❖ The year 2021 marks the 39th edition of the conference.

### **Global Bio India 2021**



- ❖ The Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the second edition of Global Bio-India-2021 in New Delhi through virtual mode.
- ❖ The 3-day event will showcase the strength and opportunities of the India's biotechnology sector at national level and to the global community.
- ❖ The three-day event being held from 1st to 3rd March 2021 has been organized on a digital platform.
- ❖ The theme for this year is “Transforming lives” with the tag line “Biosciences to Bio-economy”.

### **Registration of political parties**

- ❖ The Election Commission has said it had reduced the public notice period for new political parties seeking registration.
- ❖ It is reduced from 30 days to 7 days due to the delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ❖ The relaxation in notice period would remain in force till the last dates of nomination for the Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry and West Bengal elections.
- ❖ Last dates of nomination for



- Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry is March 19
- West Bengal elections is April 7.
- ❖ According to this guideline, the applicants are supposed to publish the proposed name of their party in two national and local daily newspapers each on two days within 30 days.

**Note :**

- ❖ Registration of Political parties is governed by the provisions of Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- ❖ A party seeking registration under the said Section with the Election Commission has to submit an application to the Commission within the said period following the date of its formation as per guidelines prescribed by the Election Commission of India in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 324 of the Commission of India and Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

**LSTV-RSTV merged**

- ❖ Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha Television - the two TV channels have been formally merged into a single entity called 'Sansad Television'.
- ❖ Rajya Sabha Television used to broadcast the proceedings of the upper House of Parliament.
- ❖ Lok Sabha Television used to broadcast the proceedings of the lower House of Parliament.
- ❖ Now under the banner of Sansad, TV it is expected that Lok Sabha TV will continue to telecast live proceedings of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha TV that of the Rajya Sabha.
- ❖ A retired IAS officer of the 1986 batch, Ravi Kapoor, has been appointed as Sansad TV Chief Executive Officer for one year.

**Miss India 2020 award**

- ❖ 23-year-old Manasa Varanasi from Telangana was crowned the winner of Miss India 2020.
- ❖ She will represent India at the 70th Miss World pageant in December 2021.
- ❖ Miss India 2019, Suman Ratan Singh Rao from Rajasthan crowned her successor Manasa the Miss India 2020.
- ❖ In the event Manika Sheokand became Miss Grand India 2020, whereas Manya Singh went on to become Miss India 2020 Runner-up.



### **Champion Publisher of the Year 2020**

- ❖ The Hindu Group received two golds and two silvers at WAN IFRA's South Asian Digital Media Awards.
- ❖ This made them to earn the name 'Champion Publisher of the Year 2020'.
- ❖ The awards are introduced in recognition of excellent work achieved by information publishers, in digital media.
- ❖ The World Association of News Publishers or WAN-IFRA, is a global organisation of the world's press.
- ❖ It has a network of 18,000 publications in 120 countries.

### **Interim director of CBI**

- ❖ The Centre appointed Praveen Sinha as the interim director of the Central Bureau of Investigation.
- ❖ He is a 1988-batch Gujarat cadre Indian Police Service officer.
- ❖ He has been appointed in place of the incumbent chief RK Shukla, whose tenure came to an end on February 03, 2021.

### **Ease of Living Index-2020**

- ❖ Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, announced the final rankings of Ease of Living Index (EoLI) 2020.
- ❖ The rankings under Ease of Living Index 2020 were announced for cities with a population of more than a million, and cities with less than a million people.
- ❖ 111 cities participated in the assessment exercise that was conducted in 2020.
- ❖ Bengaluru emerged as the top performer in the Million+ category.
- ❖ In the Less than Million category, Shimla was ranked the highest.
- ❖ The Ease of Living Index (EoLI) is an assessment tool that evaluates the quality of life and the impact of various initiatives for urban development.
- ❖ It provides a comprehensive understanding of participating cities across India based on quality of life, economic-ability of a city, and its sustainability and resilience.

### **Municipal Performance Index:**

- ❖ Similar to the EoLI index, the assessment framework under MPI 2020 has classified municipalities based on their population.
- ❖ They are Million+ (municipalities having over a million population) and Less than Million Population.

- ❖ New Delhi Municipal Council topped the "Municipal Performance Index" in the "less than a million" population category.
- ❖ Indore topped the "Municipal Performance Index" in the million-plus population category.

Rank	Ease of Living Index				
	Population Million+			Population Less than Million	
	City	Score		City	Score
1	Bengaluru	66.70		Shimla	60.90
2	Pune	66.27		Bhubaneswar	59.85
3	Ahmedabad	64.87		Salvassa	58.43
4	Chennai	62.61		Kakinada	56.84
5	Surat	61.73		Salem	56.40
6	Navi Mumbai	61.60		Vellore	56.38
7	Coimbatore	59.72		Gandhinagar	56.25
8	Vadodara	59.24		Gurugram	56.00
9	Indore	58.58		Davangere	55.25
10	Greater Mumbai	58.23		Tiruchirappalli	55.24

Rank	Municipal Performance Index				
	Population Million+			Population Less than Million	
	Municipality	Score		Municipality	Score
1	Indore	66.08		New Delhi MC	52.92
2	Surat	60.82		Tirupati	51.69
3	Bhopal	59.04		Gandhinagar	51.59
4	Pimpri Chinchwad	59.00		Karnal	51.39
5	Pune	58.79		Salem	49.04
6	Ahmedabad	57.60		Tiruppur	48.92
7	Raipur	54.98		Bilaspur	47.99
8	Greater Mumbai	54.36		Udaipur	47.77
9	Vishakhapatnam	52.77		Jhansi	47.04
10	Vadodara	52.68		Tirunelveli	47.02





### **MTRC system**

- ❖ Indian Railways' Western Railway zone (Mumbai local train) has introduced the Mobile Train Radio Communication (MTRC) system.
- ❖ It will play an important role in preventing train accidents through effective communication.
- ❖ It facilitates an instant and constant interaction of train crew with the Control Centre and the Station Master.

### **National committee**

- ❖ The National Committee is set up to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence.
- ❖ It is a 259-member high-level national committee.
- ❖ The committee includes Union Ministers, Chief Ministers, Governors and leaders from different political parties.
- ❖ The 75 years of India's Independence falls on 15th August next year.
- ❖ The celebrations are proposed to be launched 75 weeks prior to this date on 12th of this month.
- ❖ 12th March is the 91st anniversary of the historic Salt Satyagraha led by Mahatma Gandhi.

### **Red Rice**

- ❖ In a major boost to India's rice exports potential, the first consignment of 'red rice' was flagged off to the USA.
- ❖ This rice variety is called 'Bao dhaan' - Integral part of Assamese food.
- ❖ 'Red rice' is grown in Brahmaputra valley of Assam.
- ❖ It is grown without the use of any chemical fertilizer.
- ❖ It is rich in iron.
- ❖ Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has promoting rice exports through the Rice Export Promotion Forum (REPF).
- ❖ REPF has representations from rice industry, exporters, officials from APEDA, Ministry of Commerce.
- ❖ It has directors of Agriculture from major rice producing states - West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh and Odisha.



### **Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship**

- ❖ The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India under its “Waste to Wealth” Mission launched the “Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship”.
- ❖ It is to recognize students, community workers/self-help groups, and municipal/sanitary workers who are engaged in tackling the enormous challenge of waste management, scientifically and sustainably.
- ❖ Three Categories of Awards under the Fellowships:
- ❖ Category A: Open to School students from 9th to 12th standards engaged in waste management community work.
- ❖ Category B: Open to College students (UG, PG, Research students) engaged in waste management community work.
- ❖ Category C: Open to Citizens working in the community and through SHGs, municipal or sanitary workers working beyond specifications of their job requirements/descriptions.

#### **Waste to Wealth Mission**

- ❖ Waste to Wealth Mission is a mission to identify, develop, and deploy technologies to treat waste to generate energy, recycle materials, and extract worth.
- ❖ It is one of the nine national missions of the Prime Minister’s Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).

### **FSSAI guidelines on GMO Crops**

- ❖ The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) issued an order setting the permissible limit for genetically modified organisms (GMO) in imported food crops at 1%.
- ❖ It amounts to an advocacy for zero presence of GMO in food and some other consumables.
- ❖ The task of regulating GMO levels in imported consumables was initially with the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) under the Union environment ministry.





- ❖ Now it is under the control of the FSSAI of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare since 2006.
- ❖ In GMO, genetic material (DNA) is altered or artificially introduced using genetic engineering techniques.

### **First Outcome Based Budget**

- ❖ The government of Jharkhand has presented the “Outcome-Based Budget” for the first time.
- ❖ In this budget, all the departments were given specific targets and responsibilities that are required to be completed in a specified time.
- ❖ The results with respect to those targets will be evaluated at the end of financial year 2022.
- ❖ This technique of presenting budget was recommended from the budget 2007-08.
- ❖ Under this mechanism, each ministry handling a sector are required to present a preliminary outcome budget to the Ministry of Finance.
- ❖ This budget is presented with the objective of establishing correlation between the outlay, output and outcome of the budget.

### **3 Umbrella schemes**

- ❖ The Women and Child Development Ministry classifies major programmes under 3 Umbrella schemes.
- ❖ The Ministry has decided to classify all of its major programmes under three Umbrella Schemes - Mission Shakti, Mission Poshan 2.0, and Mission Vatsalya.
- ❖ Mission Poshan 2.0 will look into the ways and measures for strengthening the nutritional content, outreach, delivery, and outcomes.
- ❖ Mission Vatsalya will be looking into the child welfare services and child protection services all over the country.
- ❖ The schemes covered under Mission Shakti will be:
  - One-Stop Centre
  - Mahila Police Volunteer
  - Beti Bachao Beti Padhao
  - Women’s helpline
  - Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana.

## Municipal Performance Index 2020

- ❖ The Municipal Performance Index (MPI) was launched as an accompaniment to the Ease of Living Index.
- ❖ It seeks to examine local government practice in municipalities across areas of services, finance, policy, technology and governance.
- ❖ It seeks to simplify and evaluate the complexities in local governance practice and promote the ethos of transparency and accountability.
- ❖ The Ease of Living Index encapsulates the outcome indicators while the Municipal Performance Index captures the enabling input parameters.
- ❖ MPI 2020 has classified municipalities based on their population - Million+ (municipalities having over a million population) and Less than Million Population.

Rank	Municipal Performance Index			
	Population Million+		Population Less than Million	
	Municipality	Score	Municipality	Score
1	Indore	66.08	New Delhi MC	52.92
2	Surat	60.82	Tirupati	51.69
3	Bhopal	59.04	Gandhinagar	51.59
4	Pimpri Chinchwad	59.00	Karnal	51.39
5	Pune	58.79	Salem	49.04
6	Ahmedabad	57.60	Tiruppur	48.92
7	Raipur	54.98	Bilaspur	47.99
8	Greater Mumbai	54.36	Udaipur	47.77
9	Visakhapatnam	52.77	Jhansi	47.04
10	Vadodara	52.68	Tirunelveli	47.02

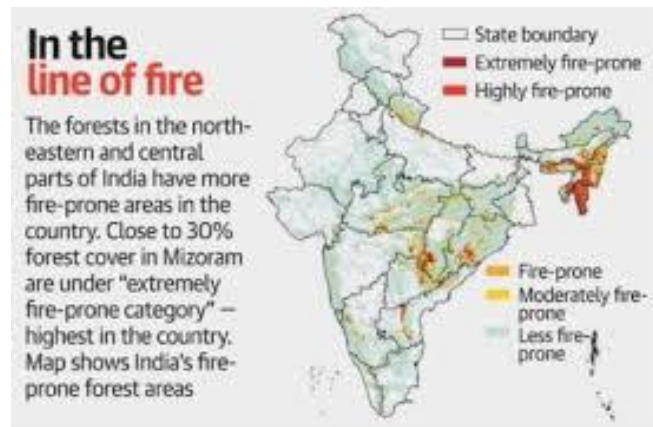
- ❖ In the Million+ category, Indore has emerged as the highest ranked municipality, followed by Surat and Bhopal.
- ❖ In the Less than Million category, New Delhi Municipal Council has emerged as the leader, followed by Tirupati and Gandhinagar.

### **FSI Report on forest fires**

- ❖ The Forest Survey of India (FSI) has released a report on forest fires in the country.
- ❖ Forest fires have become an issue of global concern.
- ❖ In many countries, wildfires are burning larger areas, and fire seasons are growing longer due to global warming.

#### **Key findings:**

- ❖ At least 5,291 forest fires were recorded in Odisha between February 22 and March 1, 2021 - the highest in the country for the same period.
- ❖ Collection of mahua flowers and kendu leaves, practice of shifting cultivation and grazing in forest areas are some of the reasons for forest fires in Odisha.
- ❖ Telangana recorded the second-highest fires in the country at 1,527 during the same period.
- ❖ It was followed by Madhya Pradesh (1,507) and Andhra Pradesh (1,292).



### **Amrit Mahotsav**

- ❖ 'Amrit Mahotsav' will be celebrated to mark India's 75 years of Independence.
- ❖ This could be held at 75 locations across the nation for 75 weeks.
- ❖ This grand festival will begin from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad in Gujarat from March 12.

### **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi**

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi as a single non-lapsable reserve fund.



- ❖ The major benefit will be enhanced access to universal & affordable health care through availability of earmarked resources, while ensuring that the amount does not lapse at the end of financial year.
- ❖ The fund will be administered and maintained by the Ministry of Health & Family welfare.
- ❖ This revenue in the fund will be used for the flagship schemes of the Health Ministry including the
  - National Health Mission,
  - Ayushman Bharat – Health and Wellness Centres and
  - Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.
- ❖ The fund also includes the emergency & disaster preparedness & responses during the health emergencies.
- ❖ It also seeks to achieve the progress towards Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the National Health Policy 2017.

### **Mobilising Electric Vehicle Financing in India report**

- ❖ NITI Aayog and Rocky Mountain Institute India released a new report ‘Mobilising Electric Vehicle Financing in India.’
- ❖ The report highlights the role of finance in India’s transition to electric vehicles.

### **Biggest floating solar power plant**

- ❖ India’s largest floating solar power plant is expected to be commissioned at Ramagundam in Peddapalli district of Telangana.
- ❖ It belongs to the National Thermal Power Corporation.
- ❖ The Capacity of the power plant at Ramagundam is 100 MW.
- ❖ Apart from this, the NTPC corporation is setting up 92 MW floating unit at Kayamkulam gas plant in Kerala and a 25 MW unit at Simhadri power plant in Visakhapatnam.

#### **About NTPC:**

- ❖ NTPC Limited is an Indian Public Sector Undertaking, engaged in the business of generation of electricity and allied activities.
- ❖ It is a company incorporated under the Companies Act 1956 and is promoted by the Government of India.
- ❖ The headquarters of the company is situated at New Delhi.
- ❖ It is the largest power company in India.

## **BBC awards**

- ❖ Kerala-based long jumper and Olympian Anju Bobby George has bagged the BBC lifetime achievement award for best athlete in India.
- ❖ Anju Bobby George is a native of Changanassery in Kottayam of Kerala.
- ❖ Anju bagged a bronze medal by clearing 6.70 m in the long jump at the World Athletic Championship 2003 in Paris.
- ❖ She is the first Indian athlete ever to win a medal in the world athletics championship.
- ❖ Chess champion Grandmaster Koneru Humpy bagged the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the year 2021 award.
- ❖ The Shooting star Manu Bhaker won the BBC's emerging player of the year award.
- ❖ In 2020, BBC honoured Olympian PT Usha from Kerala with the lifetime achievement award.

## **INS Karanj**



- ❖ Indian Navy's third stealth Scorpene class Submarine INS Karanj, was commissioned in Mumbai.
- ❖ It is equipped with potent weapons and sensors to neutralise any threat above or below the sea surface.
- ❖ Six Scorpene class submarines are being built in India by the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited Mumbai, under collaboration with French company Direction des Constructions Navales (DCNS).
- ❖ INS Karanj is the third Kalavari-class submarine to be commissioned into the Navy.
- ❖ INS Kalvari was the first Scorpene-class submarine to be commissioned in October 2017.
- ❖ Subsequently, INS Khanderi was commissioned in September 2019.
- ❖ Both INS Kalvari and INS Khanderi are in active service.



- ❖ All remaining submarines as part of this programme are expected to be delivered by 2022-2023.
- ❖ INS Vela and INS Vagir are currently under sea trials.
- ❖ INS Vagsheer is under construction.

### **OBC Reservation**

- ❖ The Supreme Court ruled that the reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) is only 'statutory', unlike the 'constitutional' reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
- ❖ It also said that if the reservation for SCs and STs were to consume the entire 50% of seats of SCs/STs/OBCs in the concerned local bodies, the question of providing further reservation to OBCs would not arise.
- ❖ The quantum of reservation for OBCs ought to be local body specific.
- ❖ A dedicated Commission has to be set up to conduct empirical inquiry into the nature and implications of the backwardness qua local bodies, within the State.
- ❖ The proportion of reservation required to be provisioned local body wise would be specified in light of recommendations of the Commission.

### **12 PSUs for Privatization**

- ❖ NITI Aayog submitted its first list of about 12 public sector undertakings (PSUs) to be privatised.
- ❖ This list will now be reviewed by Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) and Core Group of Secretaries on Divestment (CGD)
- ❖ The CGD is headed by cabinet secretary.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Global Ayurveda Festival 2021**

- ❖ It showcases Ayurveda as a global treatment programme.
- ❖ The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries is the festival and industry partner.
- ❖ International Ayurveda Seminar will be organised under the Theme "Strengthening Host Defence System – Ayurveda A Potential Promise".
- ❖ The International Delegate Assembly will be organised under the Theme "Globalizing Ayurveda – Scope, Challenges and Solutions".
- ❖ The "International Business Meet" will be organised under the Theme "Global Ayurveda Pharmacy – Practices, Possibilities and Policies".





### **Sahitya Akademi Award 2020**

- ❖ Sahitya Akademi have announced the names for the “Sahitya Akademi Award 2020”.
- ❖ The award is conferred to the most outstanding books of literary merit.
- ❖ It is given for the works published in any 24 major Indian languages.
- ❖ The languages include Hindi and other 22 languages of the Eighth Schedule of Constitution along with English.
- ❖ Subramaniam have won the award for her poetry collection called “When God is a Traveller” in English.
- ❖ Veerappa Moily has been named for his epic poetry called “Sri Bahubali Ahimsa Digvijayam” in Kannada language.
- ❖ Tamil writer Imayam won the Sahitya Akademi Award for 2020 for his novel Sellatha Panam.
- ❖ He calls himself a writer of the Dravidian movement.
- ❖ He is the first writer from ‘Nadu Nadu’ — Cuddalore, Villupuram and Arcot districts — of Tamil Nadu to win the award.

### **The Geographical Indication (GI) Mahotsav**

- ❖ The Union Minister for Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda inaugurated the Tribes India GI Mahotsav at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) at Mussoorie, Uttarakhand.
- ❖ The purpose of the GI Mahotsav is the exhibition and demonstration of the various GI products from across the country in a bid to increase the awareness of these products amongst the IAS probationers and sensitize them about the rich cultural heritage of India.
- ❖ It is with the vision towards “Vocal for Local” and building an “Atma nirbhar Bharat”.

### **Framework for water quality testing, monitoring**

- ❖ Jal Shakti Ministry launches framework for water quality testing and its monitoring.
- ❖ The framework is part of the Centre’s flagship Jal Jeevan Mission.
- ❖ The guidelines mandate a network of the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) accredited labs.
- ❖ These labs are to be set up in every State, district and block over the next year.

- ❖ At the panchayat level, teams of women in the village water and sanitation committees will be given field testing kits.
- ❖ All results of testing will be fed into the Water Quality Information Management System.



### **INS Jalashwa**

- ❖ The Indian Naval Ship Jalashwa has reached the port of Anjouan in Comoros.
- ❖ The ship carried a consignment of 1000 metric tonnes of rice.
- ❖ After handing over the consignment to Comoros, the INS Jalashwa will travel to the Port of Ehoala.
- ❖ It will deliver another consignment of 1000 metric tonne of rice and 1,00,000 tablets of Hydroxychloroquine there.
- ❖ INS Jalashwa is the only Indian naval ship that has been procured from United States.

### **Study panel for Sarasvati River**

- ❖ The Archaeological Survey of India stated that it has reconstituted an Advisory Committee for Multidisciplinary Study of the River Sarasvati.
- ❖ The river is also known as Ghaggar-Hakra River.
- ❖ It has been reconstituted for the next two years (2021-23).
- ❖ The Head of the Committee will be Prahalad Singh Patel, Union Minister for Culture.
- ❖ The committee will use remote sensing imagery for studying environmental changes, history of archaeological culture concentrating more on the protohistoric era of River Sarasvati.

## **National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project**

- ❖ It is launched by the Centre to address cyclone risks in the country.
- ❖ The objective of the project is to undertake suitable structural and non-structural measures to mitigate the effects of cyclones in the coastal states and UTs of India.

### **About the project**

- ❖ It is to be implemented by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) under the aegis of the Ministry of Home Affairs, along with coordination from the respective state governments and the National Institute for Disaster Management (NIDM).
- ❖ The Project has identified 13 cyclone prone States and Union Territories (UTs), with varying levels of vulnerability.
- ❖ It is to be assisted by the World Bank.
- ❖ These States/UT have been classified into two categories.
- ❖ Category I: Higher vulnerability States i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.
- ❖ Category II: Lower vulnerability States i.e. Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Goa, Pondicherry, Lakshadweep, Daman and Diu, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

## **Baralacha Pass**

- ❖ For the first time ever, the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has started work on reopening the Baralacha Pass in Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ This is to restore connectivity to Leh in Ladakh.
- ❖ Baralacha Pass is a high mountain pass in Zaskar range.
- ❖ It connects Lahaul district in Himachal Pradesh to Leh district in Ladakh, situated along the Leh–Manali Highway.
- ❖ The pass also acts as a water-divide between the Bhaga river and the Yunam river.





### **India-Maldives MoU**

- ❖ The Union Cabinet chaired by the PM Narendra Modi, has given its approval on the memorandum of understanding on cooperation in sports & youth affairs between India and Maldives.
- ❖ This will help to expand the expertise and knowledge with respect to sports science, sports medicines, coaching techniques and participation in youth festivals & camps.

### **India-Finland Virtual Summit**

- ❖ The India-Finland Virtual Summit was held with the participation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland Ms Sanna Marin.
- ❖ The virtual summit was organised to discuss the entire gamut of bilateral issues as well as other regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest.

### **All India Tourist Vehicles Authorization & Permit Rules**

- ❖ The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has announced a new set of rules known as “All India Tourist Vehicles Authorization & Permit Rules, 2021”
- ❖ The new rules announced under the scheme aims to promote state revenue and tourism.
- ❖ This will be applicable from April 1, 2021.
- ❖ Under the scheme, any tourist passenger vehicle operator can apply to get “All India Tourist Authorization or Permit” in the online mode.

### **States leading in drip irrigation**

- ❖ The data is presented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare to Lok Sabha.
- ❖ According to this, four states namely Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka & Maharashtra have more than half of the net cultivated farmlands under micro-irrigation in India.
- ❖ The data also shows that 27 States (including UTs) have less than 30% micro-irrigation system out of which 23 have fewer than 15% micro-irrigation.

## Medical Termination of Pregnancy Bill, 2020

- ❖ The bill seeks to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971.
- ❖ It provides for enhancing the upper gestation limit from 20 to 24 weeks for special categories of women.
- ❖ But this does not specify the category.
- ❖ Currently, abortion requires the opinion of one doctor if it is done within 12 weeks of conception and two doctors if it is done between 12 and 20 weeks.
- ❖ The bill allows abortion to be done on the advice of one doctor up to 20 weeks, and two doctors in the case of certain categories of women between 20 and 24 weeks.
- ❖ The bill also ensures that women get access to safe and legal abortion services on therapeutic, eugenic, humanitarian grounds.

Table 1: Changes proposed in conditions for terminating a pregnancy at different gestational periods

Time since conception	Requirement for terminating pregnancy	
	MTP Act, 1971	MTP (Amendment) Bill, 2020
Up to 12 weeks	Advice of one doctor	Advice of one doctor
12 to 20 weeks	Advice of two doctors	Advice of one doctor
20 to 24 weeks	Not allowed	Two doctors for some categories of pregnant women
More than 24 weeks	Not allowed	Medical Board in case of substantial foetal abnormality
Any time during the pregnancy	One doctor, if immediately necessary to save pregnant woman's life	

## Dr. Harsh Vardhan - Chairman of 'Stop TB Partnership Board'

- ❖ The Union Health Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, has been appointed as the chairman of "Stop TB Partnership Board".
- ❖ This appointment was made to recognise his outstanding contribution towards the movement of eradicating Tuberculosis (TB) from India by 2025.
- ❖ He will be serving the global body for a three-year term from July 2021.
- ❖ Stop TB Partnership is an international body which is having the power to align the nations to fight against TB.
- ❖ The body works with the vision of a "TB-free world".

### **Sahi Disha campaign**

- ❖ The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has launched a campaign named 'Sahi Disha'.
- ❖ The campaign highlights issues and the hurdles that impact the opportunities of women living in rural India to access livelihoods and jobs.
- ❖ The Disha initiative is a five years collaboration between the IKEA Foundation and the United Nations Development Program.
- ❖ It benefited around 1 million women through counselling and skilling services.
- ❖ The initiative benefitted women living across five states of India
  - Haryana,
  - Delhi NCR,
  - Maharashtra,
  - Karnataka and
  - Telangana.

### **Indian Naval Landing Craft Utility L58**

- ❖ Indian Naval Landing Craft Utility (LCU) L58 was commissioned into the Indian Navy at Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- ❖ It is the eighth and last ship of the Landing Craft Utility (LCU) Mark IV Class.
- ❖ It is Indigenously designed and built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd (GRSE), Kolkata.

### **Vehicle Scrapping Policy**



The infographic features the PIB logo at the top left and the title 'VEHICLE SCRAPPING POLICY' in large, bold letters. Below the title is an illustration of a red car being scrapped. To the right, under the heading 'Policy proposes the following', there are five bullet points, each with a corresponding icon: a clipboard for the first point, a car with a wrench for the second, a car with a '1 of 1' sign for the third, a car with a recycling symbol for the fourth, and a recycling symbol for the fifth.

**Policy proposes the following**

- Setting up of Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility across India & encourage public & private participation
- Commercial vehicles be de-registered after 15 years and private vehicles after 20 years in case of failure to get the fitness certificate
- All vehicles of Central Govt, State Govt, Municipal Corporation, Panchayats, State Transport Undertakings, PSUs & autonomous bodies may be de-registered & scrapped after 15 years from the date of registration.
- Strong incentives to owners through registered scrapping centers, which can also provide owners with a scrapping certificate
- Scrapping facility to comply with environmental & pollution norms



- ❖ The Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, has introduced the Vehicle Scrapping Policy on March 18, 2021 in the Lok Sabha.
- ❖ This will come into effect from April 1, 2021.
- ❖ It was first announced by Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Union Budget Speech 2021-2022 on February 1, 2021.

**Note:**

- ❖ 51 lakhs of the light motor vehicles which are 20 years old and more will be scrapped under this policy.
- ❖ 34 lakhs of light motor vehicles are older than 15 years while around 51 lakhs of light motor vehicles are older than 20 years.
- ❖ 17 lakh medium & heavy commercial vehicles are older than 15 years.

**Highlights:**

- ❖ The scrapping policy will bring the transformational changes in automobile sector by reducing the vehicular emission of pollutants.
- ❖ The policy was introduced with the aim of creating an ecosystem to phase out the unfit, old and polluting vehicles.
- ❖ Under the policy, personal vehicles will have to undergo the fitness tests at the automated centres after 20 years.
- ❖ On the other hand, the commercial vehicles will have to undergo the fitness test after 15 years.
- ❖ If the vehicles failed to pass the fitness test for three times, the owner would not be able to drive it on the road.

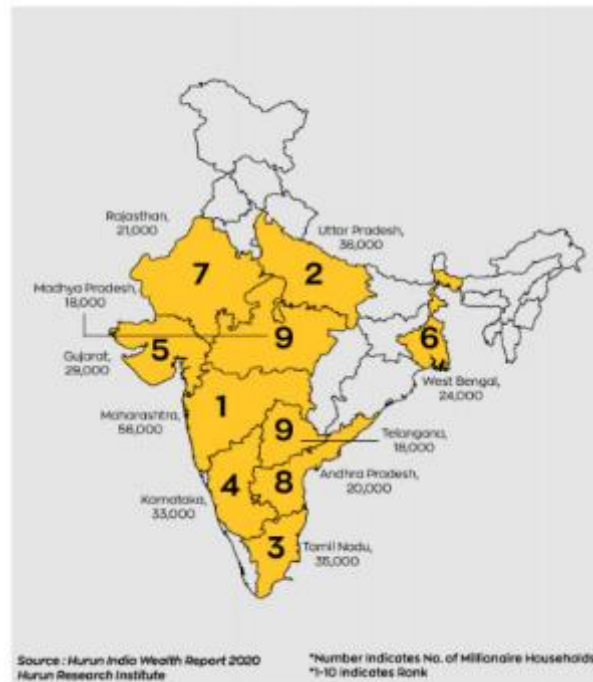
**Poshan Pakhwada 2021**

- ❖ The Ministry of Women and Child Development is celebrating the Poshan Pakhwada from March 16 to March 31, 2021.
- ❖ The Department of Women & Child Development or the Social Welfare Department will be the nodal department to look after the Poshan Pakhwada.
- ❖ It is celebrated across the states and Union Territories.
- ❖ The key focus areas of the Pakhwada are to address the nutritional challenges using the Food Forestry and to organize the Poshan Panchayats.
- ❖ Under this the National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) working under the Ministry of AYUSH, will distribute 4 samplings of the nutritional rich plants to each of the Anganwadi Centres.

### Chairperson of National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)

- ❖ The Union government appointed Harsh Chauhan as the chairperson of NCST.
- ❖ The chairperson, vice-chairperson and members of the NCST are appointed by the President for three years.
- ❖ The chairperson has the rank of Union Cabinet minister and the vice-chairperson that of minister of state.
- ❖ NCST was established under Article 338-B of the 89th Constitutional Amendment Act 2003.

### Hurun India Wealth Report 2020



- ❖ It has identified a novel household category in India – the ‘New Middle Class’ – with an average savings of Rs 20-lakh per annum.
- ❖ India is home to 4.12-lakh dollar-millionaire households.
- ❖ At 4,593, India is fourth after US, China, Germany in the globe in the Ultra high net worth individuals’ category.
- ❖ Maharashtra (56,000), Uttar Pradesh (36,000), Tamil Nadu (35,000), Karnataka (33,000) and Gujarat (29,000) account for 46 per cent of the total millionaire households.
- ❖ City-wise, Mumbai is home to most millionaires (16,933), followed by Delhi (16,000), Kolkata (10,000), Bengaluru (7,582) and Chennai (4,685).





### **Mobile Seva Appstore**

- ❖ India has developed its first indigenously developed App Store called “Mobile Seva Appstore”.
- ❖ This Indian App Store will be available for free of cost in the initial phases.
- ❖ It is a mobile application hosting platform which is owned by the government of India.
- ❖ It is an innovative initiative which has been launched by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- ❖ It is implemented by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC).
- ❖ It seeks to enable all the central, state and local government departments and agencies to deliver their services using the channels of mobile.
- ❖ India is the largest user of mobile apps.
- ❖ As per India App Market Statistics report 2021, around 5 percent of the apps on Android belongs to the Indian Apps developers.

### **Allotting Election Symbol**

- ❖ The Supreme Court dismissed the special leave petition challenging the Kerala High Court judgments.
- ❖ That upheld the Election Commission of India's order allotting the 'Two Leaves' symbol to Kerala Congress (M).
- ❖ The Election Commission (EC) has plenary powers under Article 324 of the Constitution to decide on the allotment of symbols.
- ❖ Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, empowers the EC to allot symbols to the political parties at elections in Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies.

### **Van Dhan Vikas Yojana**

- ❖ Manipur has been declared as model state for Van Dhan Vikas Yojana.
- ❖ The Van Dhan Vikas Yojana is a programme for value addition, branding & marketing of Minor Forest Produces.
- ❖ Manipur has emerged as the Champion state where the Van Dhan programme has emerged as a major source of employment for the local tribals.
- ❖ The Van Dhan Scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED.

## World's Highest Railway Bridge

- ❖ The Chenab Bridge is an Indian railway steel and concrete arch bridge under construction between Bakkal and Kauri in the Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir, India.
- ❖ The world's highest rail bridge over the Chenab river in Jammu and Kashmir is in the last stages of construction.
- ❖ The rail line is expected to be 35 metres taller than the Eiffel Tower in Paris.
- ❖ Once completed, it will surpass the record of the Beipan river Shuibai railway bridge (275 m) in China.
- ❖ It will be 359 metres above the Chenab river bed.
- ❖ The overall length of the bridge is 1,315 metres.



## 82<sup>nd</sup> Raising Day – CRPF

- ❖ The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is India's largest Central Armed Police Force.
- ❖ It functions under the authority of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) of the Government of India.
- ❖ It came into existence as the Crown Representative's Police on 27 July 1939.
- ❖ After Indian Independence, it became the Central Reserve Police Force on enactment of the CRPF Act on 28 December 1949.
- ❖ This day in 1950 (march 19), the then Home Minister, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel presented President's colour to CRPF.
- ❖ In 1986, the CRPF had raised the first armed women's battalion in the Asia region.



- ❖ CRPF plays a crucial role in dealing with Naxalism.
- ❖ CRPF have also efficiently worked towards the security of pilgrim places like Vaishno Devi, Ram Janmabhoomi and Amarnath.

### **Insurance Amendment Bill, 2021**

- ❖ The Bill amends the Insurance Act, 1938
- ❖ It is to increase the maximum foreign investment allowed in an Indian insurance company.
- ❖ The Bill increases the limit on foreign investment in an Indian insurance company from 49% to 74%.
- ❖ It removes restrictions on ownership and control.
- ❖ While control will go to foreign companies, the majority of directors and key management persons will be resident Indians who will be covered by law of the land.
- ❖ Foreign investment in the insurance sector was first permitted in the year 2000 up to 26%.

### **Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2021**

- ❖ It seeks to put seven castes under one nomenclature of “Devendrakula Vellalars” with some exceptions for some of the castes in certain districts of Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The castes include Devendrakulathan, Kadaiyan, Kalladi, Kudumban, Pallan, Pannadi and Vathiriyar.
- ❖ It is to amend the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 to modify the list of Scheduled Castes in the state of Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ It was introduced by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- ❖ The Constitution empowers the President to specify the Scheduled Castes (SCs) in various states and union territories.
- ❖ Further, it permits Parliament to modify this list of notified SCs.

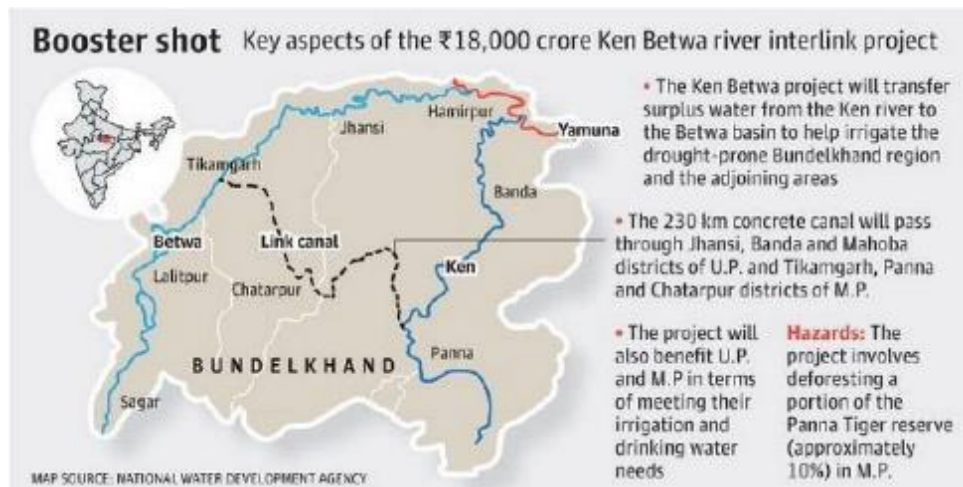
### **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2021**

- ❖ It seeks to amend the Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act 1957.
- ❖ It aims to provide for the removal of the distinction between captive and merchant mines.
- ❖ It empowers the central government to issue directions regarding the composition and utilization of funds maintained by the District Mineral Foundation.

- ❖ It allows the centre to reserve any mine (other than coal, lignite, and atomic minerals) to be leased through an auction for a particular end-use (such as iron ore mine for a steel plant).
- ❖ The Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act 1957 provides that the states will conduct the auction of mineral concessions (other than coal, lignite, and atomic minerals).

### **Ken-Betwa Interlinking**

- ❖ The Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have signed a historic agreement to implement the Ken Betwa Link Project (KBLP).
- ❖ This is the country's first river interlinking project.
- ❖ The project aims to transfer surplus water from the Ken river in MP to Betwa in UP to irrigate the drought-prone Bundelkhand region.
- ❖ Ken and Betwa rivers originate in Madhya Pradesh and are the tributaries of Yamuna.
- ❖ Ken meets with Yamuna in Banda district of UP and with Betwa in Hamirpur district of UP.
- ❖ Ken River passes through Panna tiger reserve at Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ The Construction of Daudhan dam will submerge 10% of the critical tiger habitat of Panna Tiger Reserve.



### **Gram Ujala Scheme**

- ❖ The government of India has launched the “Gram Ujala Scheme” to provide the cheapest LED bulbs in rural areas.
- ❖ It offers the world's cheapest LED bulbs in rural areas at a mere ₹10.

- ❖ It also proposes to take back the incandescent and compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) bulbs of the rural consumers.
- ❖ The scheme does not come with the government's support or subsidy.
- ❖ It will be financed entirely through the carbon credits.
- ❖ That will be claimed under the "United Nations' Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)".
- ❖ This is the first such scheme in India.
- ❖ The scheme was launched by the Union power and new and renewable energy ministry.
- ❖ In the first phase, the scheme was launched from Arrah district in Bihar.
- ❖ In this phase, around 15 million LED bulbs will be distributed in the villages of Arrah (Bihar), Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Nagpur (Maharashtra), and western Gujarat.
- ❖ In the year 2014, the previous Unnat Jyoti by Affordable Lighting for All (Ujala) scheme had cut the LED bulb prices.
- ❖ India is currently the second-largest LED market across the world by value.

**Gram Ujala programme** will provide affordable, high-quality, and long-lasting LED bulbs, which will **positively impact energy** usage and **economies** of rural households.

### **Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain**

- ❖ It will be implemented from March 22 to November 30 during the pre-monsoon and the monsoon period in the country.
- ❖ The theme of the new campaign will be 'Catch the rain, where it falls when it falls.'
- ❖ It will take place across India, in both the rural and the urban areas.





### **State law against Central law**

- ❖ The Supreme Court on prima facie found no harm in State Legislative Assemblies, passing resolutions against Central laws.
- ❖ Recently, Kerala and West Bengal state assemblies had passed resolutions against Central laws such as Citizenship Amendment Act and the new farm laws.
- ❖ The court held that these resolutions are merely “opinions” of the majority members of a Legislative Assembly and do not have the force of law.

### **Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM)**

- ❖ The Kalyani Rafael Advanced Systems (KRAS) have released the first batch of Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM) kits.
- ❖ It is a joint venture between the Kalyani Group of India and Rafael Advanced Defence Systems of Israel.
- ❖ The missile was released for the Indian Army and Indian Air Force.

### **HK Mittal Committee**

- ❖ The Government of India has constituted an expert advisory committee to execute and monitor the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS).
- ❖ The committee will be chaired by H K Mittal from the Department of Science and Technology.
- ❖ The total investment of the scheme, Rs.945 core will be divided over 4 years for providing seed funding to eligible startups through eligible incubators across India.

### **SISFS**

- ❖ On 5th February 2021, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry approved the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS).
- ❖ This was approved for a period of 4 years starting from 2021-22.
- ❖ This will be implemented with effect from 1st April 2021.
- ❖ The SISFS is aimed to support around 3600 startups across India.
- ❖ It aims to provide financial assistance to startups for proof of concept, prototype development, product trials, market entry and commercialization.



### **COVID-19 Vaccine pill**

- ❖ India's Premas Biotech has collaborated with Oramed Pharmaceuticals Inc. to develop an oral COVID-19 vaccine candidate.
- ❖ This has shown efficacy after a single dose.
- ❖ Premas Biotech is an Indian company.

### **National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021**

- ❖ The Lok Sabha passed the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021 recently.
- ❖ This seeks to give more powers to the Delhi Lieutenant Governor.
- ❖ According to the bill, the "government" in Delhi means the "Lieutenant Governor".
- ❖ The bill also makes it mandatory for the Delhi government to take the opinion of the L-G before any executive action.

### **Sputnik V Vaccine production in India**

- ❖ Hyderabad based Virchow Biotech and the Russian Direct Investment Fund-RDIF announced an agreement to produce up to 200 million doses of Sputnik V in India.
- ❖ It is Russia's COVID-19 vaccine.
- ❖ The technology transfer is expected to be completed in the second quarter of the year 2021.
- ❖ It will be followed by the full-scale commercial production of Sputnik V.

### **National Biopharma Mission**

- ❖ The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) has initiated cabinet approved National Biopharma Mission.
- ❖ The mission is with the objective of strengthening emerging biotechnology enterprise across India.
- ❖ The National Biopharma mission was launched to support small and medium enterprises in order for them to overcome the risks associated with early stages of development of products.
- ❖ It promotes entrepreneurship by supporting enhanced industry-academia inter-linkages.
- ❖ It also provides mentoring & training for academia, innovators and entrepreneurs.



### **Poshan Abhiyan for the Elderly**

- ❖ The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment aims to launch 'Poshan Abhiyan' for the Elderly to provide them 'nutrition support'.
- ❖ Under the mission, supports will be provided to indigent elders who are not staying in Old Age Homes and are victims of malnutrition.
- ❖ The Mission will focus on procuring healthy food material which are available locally to serve hot-cooked mid-day meals.
- ❖ The Scheme will be implemented by "Gram Panchayats and Urban Municipalities".
- ❖ 'Senior Citizens Welfare Fund' will be utilized to fund & implement the mission.

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### **NV Ramana - Next CJI**

- ❖ The Chief Justice of India SA Bobde has recommended Justice NV Ramana's name as the 48<sup>th</sup> CJI after he retires next month.
- ❖ SA Bobde is set to retire on 23<sup>rd</sup> April.
- ❖ The Justice Ramana is from Andhra Pradesh.

### **ICG Ship Vajra**

- ❖ The Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Vajra' was commissioned at Kattupalli in Chennai.
- ❖ The 98-meter ship has been designed and built by M/s Larsen & Toubro Ltd at Kattupalli, Chennai.
- ❖ The Ship is equipped with state-of-the-art facility and is designed to carry one twin-engine helicopter and four high speed boats.
- ❖ The vessel can also be used in Search and Rescue, Law Enforcement and Maritime Patrol.
- ❖ It is also capable of carrying Pollution Response Equipment for oil spill response at Sea.





### **Annual export ranking index**

- ❖ The Union Commerce and Industry Ministry announced that the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) will assist states and union territories to prepare an annual export ranking index of different districts.
- ❖ The index will rank each district on its export competitiveness.
- ❖ A district export action plan that will include identification of goods and services with export potential in the district.

### **Inter-state Tiger Relocation Project**

- ❖ Sundari - a tigress, shifted as part of India's first inter-state translocation project in 2018 from Madhya Pradesh to Odisha, returned home recently.
- ❖ The five-year-old tigress spent 28 months in captivity in Satkosia Tiger Reserve, Odisha.

#### **Tiger Relocation Project:**

- ❖ The tiger relocation project was initiated in 2018.
- ❖ A male (Mahavir) from Kanha Tiger Reserve and a female (Sundari) from Bandhavgarh from Madhya Pradesh were relocated to Satkosia Tiger Reserve in Odisha, to shore up the tiger population in the state.
- ❖ Sundari was brought to Satkosia a week after Mahavir's arrival.
- ❖ The relocation was meant to serve two purposes,
  - reducing tiger population in areas with excess tigers to majorly reduce territorial disputes,
  - to reintroduce tigers in areas where the population has considerably reduced due to various reasons.

### **Tuberculosis Report 2021 - India**

- ❖ It is estimated that 18.05 lakh TB cases were registered in India.
- ❖ This Report also found that, between January and February 2020, registrations of TB increased by 6% on year.
- ❖ This Report highlights that 24.04 lakh cases were reported in 2019, among which treatment success rate was 82% while mortality rate was 4%.
- ❖ According to report, 4% of patients were lost in follow ups while treatment failure & regimen change accounts for about 3%.

#### **TB Cases in India**

- ❖ India has the largest caseload, 2.64 million tuberculosis patients, across the world.



- ❖ It accounts for 30% of the world's TB cases.
- ❖ The Government of India has aimed to have TB-free India by 2025, five years ahead of global target date, 2030.

### **100+ comic books**

- ❖ Union Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launched 100+ comic books created by teachers and students of CBSE schools and curated by NCERT.
- ❖ These comics can be accessed online on DIKSHA web portal ([diksha.gov.in](http://diksha.gov.in)) or via DIKSHA app on any android Smartphone.
- ❖ The comics can also be accessed through a new WhatsApp powered Chatbot.
- ❖ The chatbot presents a unique opportunity to expand the scope of digital learning.
- ❖ During the occasion, Minister also launched CBSE Assessment Framework for Science, Maths and English classes as part of CBSE Competency Based Education Project.

### **CoreNet Global Academic Challenge 6.0**

- ❖ A team of four undergraduate students from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur emerged as winners at the CoreNet Global Academic Challenge 6.0.
- ❖ The challenge was sponsored by Cushman and Wakefield, KI and IA: Interior Architects.



#### **Academic Challenge 6.0**

- ❖ The team from IIT Kharagpur was one of the four teams to progress into the final round out of 1300 teams all over the world.
- ❖ The other teams were from
  - University of Washington,
  - New York University and



- University of Denver.
- ❖ This is the first time that a squad from India has emerged as winners in the CoreNet Global Academic Challenge since the inception of the competition in 2015.

### **MICE Roadshow Meet in India**

- ❖ 'MICE Roadshow Meet in India' Brand and Roadmap for Promotion of India as MICE Destination were launched by Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ 'Chhatrasal Convention Centre' was also launched at Khajuraho.
- ❖ It has been developed under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism.

#### **About**

- ❖ This event is being organised with the objective of promoting India as MICE Destination (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions).
- ❖ It is being organised by Ministry of Tourism in association with Madhya Pradesh Tourism and India Convention Promotion Bureau.
- ❖ This event is an effort under Aatma nirbhar Bharat to realize MICE potential of India.
- ❖ 'Meet in India' is the distinct sub-brand under 'Incredible India' in achieving the objective of event.

### **My Experiments with Silence book**

- ❖ The book "My Experiments with Silence" is authored by Samir Soni on anxiety and self - discovery.
- ❖ Soni's book aims to be a personal account of his dialogues with himself during his growing-up years in Delhi, his stint at Wall Street and his time in Bollywood.
- ❖ The book will be published by OM Books International.
- ❖ Soni said his book will be an "ode to anyone who has fought or is fighting their inner demons".

### **Tribal TB Initiative**

- ❖ Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan launched 'Tribal TB Initiative' in pursuit of TB Mukta Bharat.
- ❖ He said, the government has already increased the Budget allocation for TB in India a four-fold in the last five years.

- ❖ The Union Territories of Lakshadweep and district of Badgam in Jammu and Kashmir have been declared TB Free on World TB Day this year.

### **NATHEALTH summit**

- ❖ Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan, addressed the 7th annual summit of NATHEALTH in virtual mode.
- ❖ The summit focused on 'Indian Health system expansion in post-COVID era'.
- ❖ Government has launched the "National Health Policy" in 2017.
- ❖ The primary vision of policy-framework is to attain highest possible level of health and well-being for all irrespective of all age groups.

#### **Note:**

- ❖ Health has been identified in Budget 2021-22 as one of the six main pillars to drive growth.
- ❖ Health was allocated an enormous financial allocation of Rs 2,23,846 crore in 2021-22
- ❖ This is a 137% increase over the previous year.
- ❖ It is in line with increasing health expenditure as a percentage of GDP to 2.5 % by 2025.



### **India – US naval exercise**

- ❖ India and the US began a two-day naval exercise in the eastern Indian Ocean Region recently.
- ❖ The Indian and US navies were part of joint drills in a passage exercise (PASSEX).
- ❖ The IAF fighters were part of such an exercise for the first time.
- ❖ PASSEXs are conducted regularly by Indian Navy with units of friendly foreign navies, whilst visiting each other's ports or during a rendezvous at sea.



## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **Eradicating poverty in China**

- ❖ President Xi Jinping declared that China has scored a “complete victory” in its fight against poverty.
- ❖ He said that, the country lifting over 770 million people out of it in the last four decades.
- ❖ With this, China has achieved the U.N. goal of poverty eradication 10 years ahead of the 2030 deadline.
- ❖ China has a population of around 1.4 billion.

### **Pakistan in grey list**

- ❖ The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) announced that Pakistan will continue to remain on its grey list.
- ❖ This is due to failure to comply with all the points of a plan of action set by it to combat terror financing.
- ❖ The Paris-based FATF had placed Pakistan on the grey list in June 2018.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Trilateral dialogue**

- ❖ A trilateral dialogue was held among India, France, and Australia recently.
- ❖ It focusses on further enhancing cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.
- ❖ The aim of this trilateral dialogue is to build strong bilateral relation among the three countries.
- ❖ The first India-France-Australia Trilateral Dialogue was held virtually on September 9, 2020.

### **Conference on Pharmaceutical & Medical Devices**

- ❖ The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Conference on Pharmaceutical & Medical Device sector was inaugurated by Union Minister Piyush Goyal.
- ❖ The conference includes INDIA PHARMA 2021 & INDIA MEDICAL DEVICE 2021.
- ❖ It was to encourage and bring forward the best technology solutions and manufacturing, for the overall growth of the Pharma & Medical Device sector.
- ❖ The theme of India Pharma 2021: ‘Indian Pharma Industry: “Future is Now”’.
- ❖ The theme of India Medical Device 2021 is “India MedTech Future: Innovate & Make in India through Global Alliance”.



### **First nation to get COVAX vaccines**

- ❖ Ghana has become the first country in the world to receive vaccines acquired through the United Nations-backed COVAX initiative.
- ❖ 6,00,000 doses of the Astra Zeneca vaccine have been made by the Serum Institute of India.
- ❖ This was the first step in immunizing of that West African nation of 30 million.
- ❖ The vaccines are delivered by UNICEF.

### **India on BRICS Chair ship**

- ❖ India has started its BRICS Chair ship with the inaugural three-day-long Sherpas' meeting on February 25, 2021.
- ❖ BRICS is the acronym for Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.
- ❖ The BRICS state meet annual formal summits starting from 2009.
- ❖ The 12th BRICS Summit was held by the Russia virtually.

### **Loneliness Minister to Check Suicide**

- ❖ Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga added a minister of loneliness to his Cabinet.
- ❖ This move is to check rising suicide cases in wake of coronavirus.
- ❖ Japan's suicide rate reportedly increased for the first time in 11 years during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- ❖ UK became the first country to create a similar role in 2018.

### **18<sup>th</sup> Edition of BioAsia 2020**

- ❖ Asia's Largest Life Sciences and Biotechnology Convention – BioAsia 2021 was held in Hyderabad.



- ❖ It focused on COVID-19 with the participation of industry leaders in the global life sciences sector.
- ❖ Theme of the event is “Moving the Needle”.

### **Re-establishes of House of Representatives**

- ❖ The Supreme Court of Nepal restored the dissolved House of Representatives.
- ❖ Nepal was facing a political crisis after President Bidya Devi Bhandari dissolved the House of Representatives on December 20, 2020.
- ❖ She further announced the fresh elections in the country to be held on April 30 and May 10, 2021.

### **Symposium on Sustainable Development of Dams & River**

- ❖ The International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD) Symposium on Sustainable Development of Dams & River Basins was inaugurated by the Minister for Jal Shakti.
- ❖ It is being organised by the International Commission on Large Dams (INCOLD) in association with
  - Dam Rehabilitation Improvement Project (DRIP),
  - Central Water Commission (CWC) and
  - National Hydrology Project (NHP).
- ❖ It aims to providing an opportunity to Indian Dam Engineering Professionals and Agencies to share their experiences, ideas and latest developments.

### **‘The Opportunity Index 2021’ report**

- ❖ The report seeks to understand how people perceive opportunities and the barriers that stand in the way of achieving them.
- ❖ This year’s report dives deep to understand how women perceive opportunities, and how the gender gap is further slowing down career progress for working women in India amid the pandemic.
- ❖ This Report was made by LinkedIn.
- ❖ The survey was conducted in January.
- ❖ It saw participation from more than 10,000 respondents across the Asia Pacific (APAC) region.
- ❖ It covered 2,285 respondents in India.

### Findings

- ❖ 9 in 10 or 89 per cent of women were negatively impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.
- ❖ About 85%, or 4 in 5 working women in India believe they have missed out on a raise, promotion, or work offer because of their gender.
- ❖ This average stands at 60% for the APAC region.
- ❖ More women in India have experienced the impact of gender on career development when compared to the APAC region.

### **Hurun Global Rich List 2021.**

THE RICH & FAMOUS: Hurun Global Rich List 2021					
Rank		Wealth (\$bn)	Change YOY	Company	Country of residence
1*	Elon Musk	197	328%	Tesla	USA
2↓	Jeff Bezos	189	35%	Amazon	USA
3↓	Bernard Arnault	114	7%	LVMH	France
4↓	Bill Gates	110	4%	Microsoft	USA
5-	Mark Zuckerberg	101	20%	Facebook	USA
6↓	Warren Buffet	91	-11%	Berkshire Hathaway	USA
7*	Zhong Shanshan	85	New	YST	China
8↑	Mukesh Ambani	83	24%	Reliance	India
9-	Steve Ballmer	80	19%	Microsoft	USA
9*	Bertrand Puech & family	80	45%	Hermes	France

Source: 10th Edition of Hurun Global Rich List 2021 Report

- ❖ It is a ranking of the US Dollar billionaires in the world.
- ❖ This is the tenth year of the ranking.
- ❖ Tesla's Elon Musk becomes the richest man in world for first time.
- ❖ Amazon.com Inc. boss Jeff Bezos and Bernard Arnault, chief executive of LVMH ranked second and third globally, respectively.
- ❖ Country-wise, China leads with the most number of billionaires at 1058, followed by the US (696), India (177), Germany, the United Kingdom and Switzerland at over 100 each.
- ❖ By continent, Asia accounts for 51 per cent of the billionaires.
- ❖ According to this report, the world added 8 billionaires a week in 2020 – 421 in a year – taking their total number to a record 3,288
- ❖ The Hurun Global Rich List 2021 ranked 3228 billionaires from 2,402 companies and 68 countries.



INDIA A-LISTERS: Hurun India Rich List 2021			
India Rank (Global Rank)	Rank	Net worth (\$bn)	Company
1(8)	Mukesh Ambani	83	Reliance Industries
2(48)	Gautam Adani & family	32	Adani
3(58)	Shiv Nadar & family	27	HCL
4(104)	Lakshmi N Mittal	19	ArcelorMittal
5(113)	Cyrus Poonawalla	18.5	Serum
6(117)	Hinduja Brothers	18	Hinduja
7(154)	Uday Kotak	15	Kotak Mahindra Bank
8(160)	Radhakishan Damani & family	14.5	Avenue Supermarts
9(185)	Jay Chaudhry	13	Zscaler
10(194)	Dilip Shanghvi & family	12.5	Sun Pharmaceutical Industries

Source: 10th Edition of Hurun Global Rich List 2021 Report

### **Malaria Elimination Certificate - El salvador**

- ❖ El Salvador became the first country in Central America to be awarded a certification of malaria elimination by the World Health Organization.
- ❖ Certification of malaria elimination is granted by WHO when a country has proven that the chain of indigenous transmission has been interrupted nationwide for at least the previous three consecutive years.

### **International Year of Millets**

- ❖ United Nations has unanimously declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets.
- ❖ This was initiated by India with Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Russia and Senegal and was co-sponsored by over 70 nations.

### **“Freedom in the World 2021: Democracy under Siege” report**

- ❖ The report is released by U.S. think tank, Freedom House.
- ❖ It has classified India as ‘partly free’.

#### **Key points:**

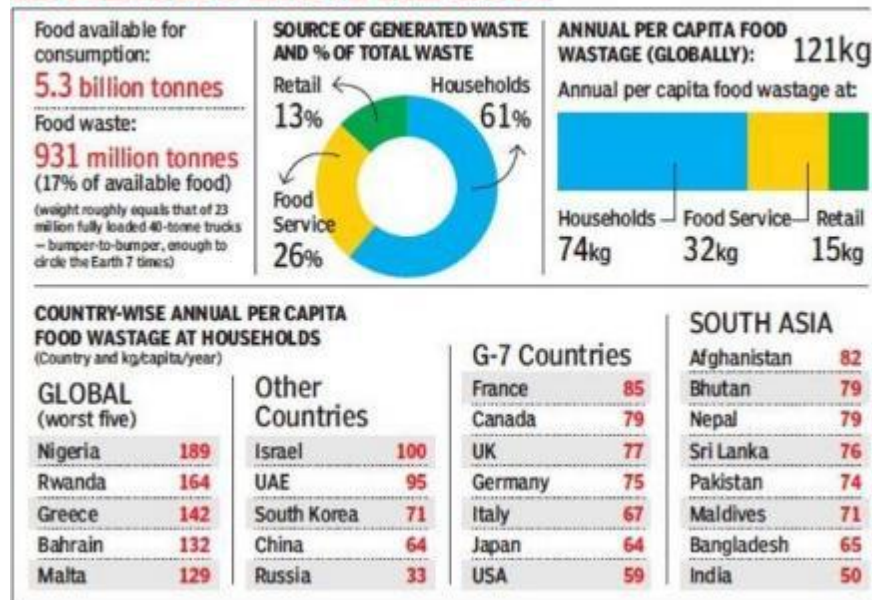
- ❖ India’s score was 67.
- ❖ Last year, its score was 71/100 (free category).
- ❖ According to the report, the Indian government and its State-level allies continued to crack down on critics during the year.



### Food Waste Index Report-2021

- ❖ It is the most comprehensive food waste data collection, generating a new estimate of global food waste.
- ❖ The index report was published by the UNEP in collaboration with the partner organisation WRAP.
- ❖ UN report shows close to 931 million tonnes of food were wasted globally in 2019.
- ❖ The household waste in India is 50 kg per capita per year which equals 68.7 million tonnes per year.

### HOUSEHOLDS WASTE THE MOST



### In other countries

- ❖ The household food waste in USA is 59 kg per capita per year which equals the 19,359,951 tonnes per year.



- ❖ In China, the household waste is 64 kg per capita per year which accounts for 91,646,213 tonnes in a year.
- ❖ Austria produces very low amounts of waste at 39 kg/capita/year.
- ❖ Nigeria is producing waste at 189 kg/capita/year.

### **QS World University Rankings**

- ❖ The 11th edition of the QS World University Rankings was recently released.
- ❖ The QS World University Rankings 2021 ranks the top 1,000 universities from around the world, covering 80 different locations.
- ❖ The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the United States has retained its top position as the best university for the ninth year in a row.
- ❖ Stanford University, the United States and the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom are the second and third best University globally in QS World University Rankings 2021.

#### **Regarding India:**

- ❖ The Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay has emerged as the best institution.
- ❖ It is placed at 172 position.
- ❖ No institute in India is in the top 100.
- ❖ Indian Institute of Science (185), Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi (193) are the only other universities from India to feature in the top 200.
- ❖ In terms of subject, twelve Indian universities and higher education institutions have made it to the top 100, with three Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) making it to the top 50 for their respective subject.
- ❖ The 12 universities are IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IIT Madras, IIT Kharagpur, IISc Bangalore, IIT Guwahati, IIM Bangalore, IIM Ahmedabad, JNU, Anna University, University of Delhi, and O.P Jindal University
- ❖ IIT Madras ranks 30th for Petroleum Engineering, IIT Bombay ranks 41st and IIT Kharagpur ranks 44th for Minerals and Mining Engineering, and the University of Delhi ranks 50th for Development Studies.

### **First World Report on Hearing**

- ❖ The World Health Organization has published the first world report on hearing on World Hearing Day (March 03).
- ❖ The WHO has highlighted that, one in every four individuals across the world will be experiencing mild-to-profound hearing loss by 2050.



- ❖ This roughly accounts for 2.5 billion people across the world.

**Key Findings of the report**

- ❖ As per the report, at least 700 million people will be suffering from disabling hearing loss and they would require ear & hearing care.
- ❖ The report highlights that, billion young people in the age group 12–35 years are at risk of hearing loss because of noise pollution in recreational settings.
- ❖ WHO said, around 60 per cent of hearing loss in the children is because of preventable causes.

**78<sup>th</sup> Golden Globe Awards**

Film Awards	
Award Category	Winner
Best Motion Picture — Drama	Nomadland
Best Director — Motion Picture	Chloé Zhao for Nomadland
Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture — Drama	Chadwick Boseman for “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom”
Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture — Drama	Andra Day for “The United States vs. Billie Holiday”
Best Motion Picture — Musical or Comedy	Borat Subsequent Moviefilm
Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture — Musical or Comedy	Sacha Baron Cohen for “Borat Subsequent Moviefilm”
Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture	Rosamund Pike for “I Care A Lot”
Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in Any Motion Picture	Jodie Foster for “The Mauritanian”
Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in Any Motion Picture	Daniel Kaluuya for “Judas and the Black Messiah”
Best Motion Picture — Animated	Soul
Best Motion Picture — Foreign Language	Minari- USA
Best Screenplay — Motion Picture	“The Trial of the Chicago 7”— Aaron Sorkin
Best Original Score — Motion Picture	“Soul” – Trent Reznor, Atticus Ross, and Jon Batiste
Best Original Song — Motion Picture	“Io Si,” from “The Life Ahead”

- ❖ The 78<sup>th</sup> Golden Globe Awards ceremony took place in a hybrid format, filmed from Los Angeles and New York City.
- ❖ The Golden Globe Awards 2021 were the first major televised awards show of 2021.
- ❖ Netflix had received the most nominations this year (42), with 22 in film categories.



- ❖ The film categories include the Best Picture (Drama) nominations for its films “Mank” and “The Trial of the Chicago 7” and 20 in Television categories, which were dominated by “The Crown” and “Schitt’s Creek.”
- ❖ Nomad land won the Best Motion Picture – Drama award and the Best Director award went to its director Chloé Zhao, making her the second woman ever to win the award.
- ❖ The first was Barbra Streisand, in 1984.
- ❖ Late American actor Chadwick Boseman won the Golden Globe award for Best Actor in a Motion Picture - Drama for his portrayal of Levee Green in 'Ma Rainey's Black Bottom'.

Television Awards	
Award Category	Winner
Best Television Series — Drama	The Crown
Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series — Drama	Josh O’Connor — “The Crown”
Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series — Drama”	Emma Corrin — “The Crown”
Best Television Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television	The Queen’s Gambit
Best Performance by an Actress in a Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television	Anya Taylor-Joy for “The Queen’s Gambit”
Best Performance by an Actor in a Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television	Mark Ruffalo for “I Know This Much is True”
Best Television Series — Musical or Comedy	Schitt’s Creek
Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series — Musical or Comedy	Jason Sudeikis for “Ted Lasso”
Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series — Musical or Comedy	Catherine O’Hara for “Schitt’s Creek”
Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Series, Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television	John Boyega for “Small Axe”
Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Series, Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television	Gillian Anderson for “The Crown”

### **Economic Freedom Index 2021**

- ❖ The Heritage Foundation, a US Conservative think-tank, recently launched the “Economic Freedom Index”.
- ❖ In the index, Singapore has topped the global ranking for the second consecutive year.
- ❖ The second place was obtained by New Zealand and third place was Australia.



RANK	COUNTRY	OVERALL	CHANGE
1	Singapore	89.7	0.3
2	New Zealand	83.9	-0.2
3	Australia	82.4	-0.2
4	Switzerland	81.9	-0.1
5	Ireland	81.4	0.5
6	Taiwan	78.6	1.5
7	United Kingdom	78.4	-0.9
8	Estonia	78.2	0.5
9	Canada	77.9	-0.3
10	Denmark	77.8	-0.5

### Swarnim Vijay Varsh

- ❖ ‘Swarnim Vijay Varsh’ commemorates 50 years of Bangladesh's liberation war against Pakistan in 1971.
- ❖ INS Sumedha is an indigenously built offshore patrol vessel and Kulish is an indigenously built guided missile corvette.
- ❖ They are visiting Bangladesh to commemorate the ongoing ‘Swarnim Vijay Varsh’.
- ❖ This is the first time that any Indian Naval Ship is visiting the port of Mongla to pay homage to the Bangladeshi and Indian combatants who laid down their lives during the Liberation War of 1971.
- ❖ It is also aimed to reiterate India’s firm resolve and commitment to maintain peace, stability and good order in the region, in line with SAGAR - Security and Growth for all in the region.

### Desert Flag

- ❖ The Indian Air Force (IAF) participated for the first time in the multinational exercise called “Desert Flag” in the United Arab Emirates.
- ❖ The Indian Air Force is participating in the Exercise along with air forces of United Arab Emirates, United States of America, France, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Bahrain.

- ❖ The “Desert Flag” exercise is a multinational exercise that involves the participation from ten countries such as France, United States (US), Bahrain, South Korea, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.



## Maitri Setu

- ❖ The bridge ‘Maitri Setu’ has been built over the Feni river.
- ❖ Feni river flows between the Indian boundary in Tripura State and Bangladesh.
- ❖ The 1.9 km long bridge joins Sabroom in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh.
- ❖ With this inauguration, Tripura is set to become the ‘Gateway of North East’ with access to Chittagong Port of Bangladesh.



### Switzerland to ban on face coverings

- ❖ In a recently held referendum, Switzerland voted in favour of banning face coverings in public, including the burka or niqab worn by Muslim women.
- ❖ The Swiss people are given a direct say in their own affairs under the country's system of direct democracy.
- ❖ They are regularly invited to vote on various issues in national or regional referendums.
- ❖ France was the first country in Europe to ban burqas and niqabs in public places in 2011.

### Women Will

- ❖ Google has launched a new web platform 'Women Will' on March 8, 2021 on the occasion of "International Women's Day".
- ❖ This platform will provide its support to 1 million rural women in India in order for them to become entrepreneurs with the help of accelerator programmes, business tutorials and mentorship.

### UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

- ❖ The 14th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice is being held in the Japanese city of Kyoto.
- ❖ This year, the event is being held in a hybrid format.
- ❖ Key issues related to criminal justice, strategies for crime prevention and international cooperation in promoting the rule of law and preventing all forms of crime are expected to be discussed.
- ❖ This is the first time that Japan is hosting this congress since 1970.



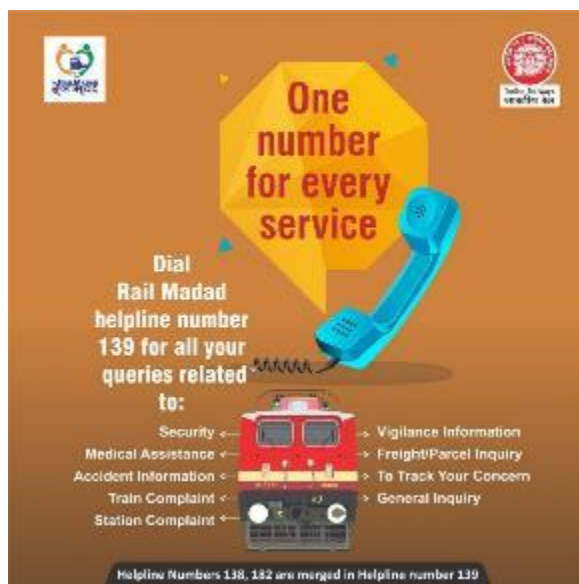


## China-Russia Planetary Pact

- ❖ Russia and China have announced plans for a joint lunar space station.
- ❖ Russia had signed an agreement with China's National Space Administration to develop a "complex of experimental research facilities created on the surface and/or in the orbit of the Moon".
- ❖ With this, Moscow is seeking to retake the lead in the space race.
- ❖ This year celebrates the 60th anniversary of Russia's first manned space flight when Yuri Gagarin entered into space in April 1961.

## 139

- ❖ The new Railway Helpline Number is 139.
- ❖ The Indian Railways has merged all railway helpline numbers into a single number (139) for all queries, complaints, assistance, and quick grievance redressal during the journey.



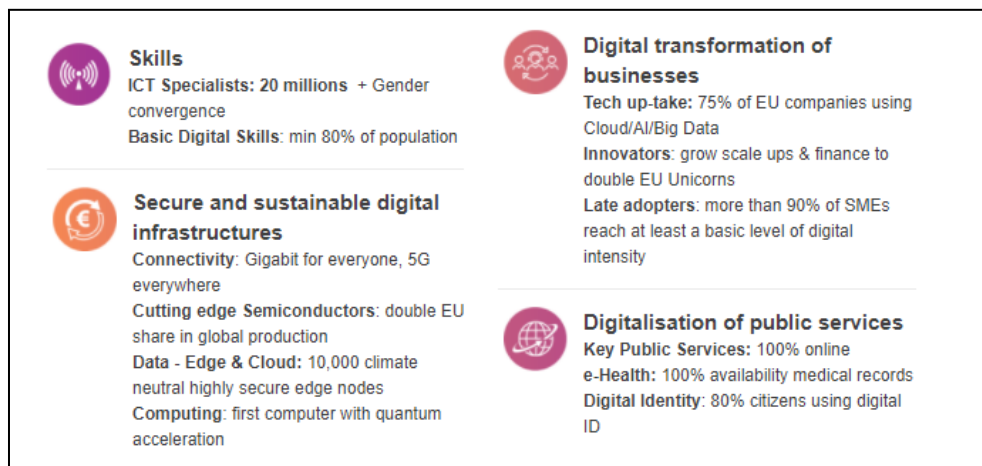
## Transport Integration in Eastern South Asia

- ❖ The World Bank has recently published its report called "Connecting to thrive: Challenges and Opportunities of Transport Integration in Eastern South Asia".
- ❖ As per the report, the greater transport connectivity in between India and Bangladesh can increase the national income of both the nations.
- ❖ It says that seamless transport connectivity between India and Bangladesh has the potential to increase national income of Bangladesh by 17 percent and 8 percent in India.

- ❖ Also, it says that seamless transport connectivity between the countries could increase India's export by 172 percent while Bangladesh export to India could almost rise 3 times.

### 2030 Digital Compass plan

- ❖ The European Union has released its plan called "2030 Digital Compass Plan".
- ❖ This move is being taken in an effort to cut down its dependence on the technologies coming from the non-European countries.
- ❖ This vision for the EU's digital decade evolves around four cardinal points
  - Skills,
  - Infrastructures,
  - Business and
  - Government.



### AsterX - military exercise

- ❖ France has successfully launched the first military exercise in space.
- ❖ It will help the country to evaluate its ability to defend its satellites and other defence equipment from an attack.
- ❖ The exercise has been codenamed as 'AsterX'.
- ❖ The German Space force and the US space force have also been participating in it.
- ❖ France wants to become the third space superpower in the world after the US and China.



### **Digital Payment Scorecard**

- ❖ The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) has released the list of “Digital Payment Scorecard”.
- ❖ In the list, the State Bank of India (SBI) has topped the list for 3 consecutive months.
- ❖ The scorecard tracks Commercial Banks’ performance on various digital parameters.
- ❖ SBI remained the top remitter bank by recording the highest UPI transaction volume of nearly INR 640 million.
- ❖ SBI is also among the largest issuers of debit cards.

### **Arjuna Sahayak Irrigation Project**

- ❖ The “Arjuna Sahayak Irrigation Project” will be launched in the state of Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ The project will be inaugurated by the Prime Minister.
- ❖ This irrigation project will bring positive changes for farmers.
- ❖ It is being built on the river Dhasan.
- ❖ The project will provide irrigation facilities to 1.5 lakh farmers across 168 villages of Banda, Mahoba and Hamirpur in Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ After this project is completed, around four lakh people will get pure drinking water.
- ❖ The irrigation facility will be provided to the area of 15,000 hectares under this project.

### **National Rail Plan**

- ❖ National Rail Plan is prepared in order to establish a future ready Railway system by the year 2030.
- ❖ The Union Railway Minister highlighted that the National Rail Plan has been prepared with the aim of formulating the strategies on the basis of both operational capacities as well as the commercial policy initiatives.
- ❖ The plan also seeks to create the capacity ahead of the demand in the country.
- ❖ It will also cater to the future growth in demand up to the year 2050.
- ❖ It also aims to increase the modal share of Railways to 45 percent in freight traffic.

## NDC Synthesis Report

- ❖ The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has released its Initial Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) Synthesis Report.
- ❖ The United Kingdom and the European Union are the only regions among 18 of the world's biggest emitters that have significantly increased their greenhouse gas reduction targets.
- ❖ Nationally determined contributions are at the heart of the Paris Agreement and the achievement of the long-term goals of Paris Agreement.
- ❖ NDCs embody efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

## Fifth annual democracy report

- ❖ Fifth annual democracy report, titled 'Autocratisation goes viral', has been released by Sweden's organisation Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute.
- ❖ The report summarises the state of democracies of the world against the backdrop of developments that have taken place over the past decade.
- ❖ India's position has been downgraded from "the world's largest democracy" to an "electoral autocracy".

	CHANGE	LDI 2010	LDI 2020	REGIME TYPE 2010	REGIME TYPE 2020
1 Poland	-0.34	0.83	0.49	Liberal Democracy	Electoral Democracy
2 Hungary	-0.32	0.68	0.37	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
3 Turkey	-0.29	0.40	0.11	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
4 Brazil	-0.28	0.79	0.51	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Democracy
5 Serbia	-0.27	0.51	0.24	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
6 Benin	-0.26	0.55	0.29	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
7 <b>India</b>	-0.23	0.57	0.34	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
8 Mauritius	-0.23	0.73	0.50	Liberal Democracy	Electoral Democracy
9 Bolivia	-0.18	0.41	0.231	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
10 Thailand	-0.17	0.34	0.17	Electoral Autocracy	Closed Autocracy

## China's New Five-Year Plan

- ❖ China formally approved the outline of its 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025).
- ❖ It includes the first dam in Tibet on the lower reaches of the Yarlung Zangbo or Brahmaputra and a Sichuan-Tibet railway line near the India border.
- ❖ It aims to develop the Polar Silk Road as a component of the wider Belt and Road Initiative.



### **First Quad Summit 2021**

- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Joe Biden, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japan Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga come together for the first QUAD Summit.
- ❖ The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue nations are planning to counter China.
- ❖ QUAD is also known as the Asian NATO.
- ❖ It is an informal strategic forum comprising India, the United States, Japan, and Australia.
- ❖ The idea of QUAD was first brought up by the then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe back in 2007.

### **Energy office' in Moscow**

- ❖ India opens 'energy office' in Moscow as Delhi-Moscow focuses more on sector.
- ❖ This energy office will have the presence of five prominent Indian power supplies.
- ❖ The five main Indian energy PSUs that will be present are:
  - ONGC VIDESH Limited,
  - Indian Oil Corp,
  - GAIL (India),
  - Oil India Limited and
  - Engineers India.

### **SIPRI report on arms imports and exports**

- ❖ It is released by Swedish think tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).
- ❖ India continues to remain the second largest arms importer after Saudi Arabia.
- ❖ The U.S. was the second largest arms supplier to India in 2011 - 15.
- ❖ But in 2016 - 20 India's arms imports from the U.S. were 46% lower than in the previous five-year period, making the U.S. the fourth largest supplier in 2016 - 20.
- ❖ Russia was the largest arms supplier in the World.
- ❖ France and Israel were the second and third largest arms suppliers in 2016 - 20.



### **Largest Floating Solar Farms being in Singapore**

- ❖ The largest floating solar farm of the world is being built in Singapore.
- ❖ The country has resorted to set up the energy plants off the coasts and reservoirs across it.
- ❖ Singapore is one of the biggest per capita carbon dioxide emitters in India.
- ❖ Thus, to cater to the issue of climate change and to cut the greenhouse gas emission, Singapore is building the floating solar farm.
- ❖ This project is being built by Sembcorp Industries.

### **IBSA Women's Forum meeting**

- ❖ The Sixth India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum meeting was organised on March 16, 2021 in virtual mode.
- ❖ The meeting was led by the Ministry of Women and Child Development of the Government of India.
- ❖ The forum discussed the issues which has contributed in transforming the lives of women.
- ❖ IBSA is a unique Trilateral Cooperation Forum bringing India, Brazil and South Africa together.
- ❖ These countries are the three large democracies and major economies located in different continents.

### **IQAir Study**

- ❖ According to World Air Quality report, New Delhi was the world's most polluted capital for the third straight year in 2020.
- ❖ Globally, New Delhi is ranked as the 10th most polluted city in the world.
- ❖ The topmost polluted city in the world is Xinjiang in China.
- ❖ World Air Quality report is released by IQAir.
- ❖ IQAir is a Swiss group that measures air quality levels based on the concentration of PM2.5.
- ❖ The report also states that, twenty-two of the world's 30 most polluted cities are in India.
- ❖ Prolonged exposure to PM2.5 can lead to deadly diseases, including cancer and cardiac problems.



### **New 5G Radio Solutions**

- ❖ The Finnish company, Nokia has planned to develop a new cloud-based 5G radio solution.
- ❖ It has partnered with Microsoft, Amazon web services and Google for this.
- ❖ This solution will be developed with its radio access network (RNA) technology.

### **ReNew Power in Global Lighthouse Network**

- ❖ ReNew Power has been named to the World Economic Forum's Global Lighthouse Network.
- ❖ It recognises companies using new technologies to achieve environmentally sustainable, community supportive, profitable growth.
- ❖ ReNew Power is an Indian renewable energy company.
- ❖ ReNew Power is one of the two Indian companies to be recognised by the Global Lighthouse Network this year.

### **PASSEX with Bahrain's Navy**

- ❖ Indian Navy undertook Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Bahrain Naval Force Corvette Al Muharraq in the Persian Gulf.
- ❖ This was done under Operation Sankalp.
- ❖ PASSEXs are conducted regularly by the Indian Navy with units of friendly foreign navies.

### **Italy joins International Solar Alliance**

- ❖ The Ministry of External Affairs of India has informed that Italy has signed a framework agreement with India to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- ❖ The Italian Republic signed the framework agreement of ISA following the amendment made to the framework agreement of ISA.
- ❖ This amendment had opened the membership in the Solar Alliance to all the members of the United Nations.

#### **ISA:**

- ❖ ISA is a treaty-based intergovernmental alliance comprising of 121 countries.
- ❖ The establishment of the alliance was initiated by India.
- ❖ Most of the member countries are the sunshine countries.
- ❖ Sunshine countries are the countries that are located either completely or partly in between Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn.



### **Sinatra Doctrine**

- ❖ The Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) member countries have accepted the “Sinatra Doctrine” as a counter to the increasing China’s aggressiveness to undermine the unity of the European Union through the divide and rule policy.
- ❖ The Sinatra Doctrine will be based on two pillars,
  - Continuing cooperation with China with respect to address the global challenges like covid-19, climate change & regional conflicts and
  - Strengthening the strategic sovereignty of European Union by protecting the technological sectors of its economy.

### **World Happiness Report 2021**

- ❖ It has been released by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network.
- ❖ It ranks 149 countries by how happy their citizens perceive.
- ❖ Finland was once again crowned as the world's happiest country for the fourth consecutive year.
- ❖ It is followed by Iceland, Denmark, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Sweden, Germany and Norway.
- ❖ India has been ranked 139 out of 149 countries.
- ❖ In 2019, India was ranked 140th.
- ❖ Among India’s neighbouring countries, Pakistan ranked 105th, China 84th, Sri Lanka 129th and Bangladesh 101st.
- ❖ People in war-torn Afghanistan are the most unhappy with their lives.
- ❖ It is followed by Zimbabwe (148), Rwanda (147), Botswana (146) and Lesotho (145).

### **World Energy Transitions Outlook report**

- ❖ It was brought out by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).
- ❖ It estimated that by 2050, 90% of total electricity needs would be supplied by renewables, followed by 6% from natural gas and the remaining from nuclear.
- ❖ It stresses the need to focus on the expansion of emerging technologies such as green hydrogen.

### **CDRI**

- ❖ The European Union (EU) comprising of 27 members has joined the “Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) initiative” of India.





- ❖ CDRI is an international coalition of countries, United Nations (UN) agencies, private sectors, multilateral development banks and academic institutions.
- ❖ The initiative aims to promote the disaster-resilient infrastructure.
- ❖ The CDRI Initiative was launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the year 2019.
- ❖ The initiative was launched at the UN Climate Change Summit, held at Spain.

### **World's most dangerous roads report**

- ❖ It was according to a study undertaken by international driver education company Zutobi.
- ❖ Among the list of 56 countries in the study, South Africa has world's most dangerous roads.
- ❖ Thailand came in second position and the US took up third spot.
- ❖ India came in at fourth place in this list.
- ❖ The safest roads in the world can be found in Norway.
- ❖ It is followed by Sweden and Japan.

### **Patent Cooperation**

- ❖ India and Japan have agreed to recognize each other's offices to act mutually as competent International Searching and International Preliminary Examining Authority (ISA/IPEA) for any international patent application filed with them.
- ❖ This decision was taken during the recent review meet of Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) programme.
- ❖ The Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) is a set of initiatives for providing accelerated patent prosecution procedures by sharing information between some patent offices.

### **Global House Price Index**

- ❖ India finished last place at 56th rank in the latest global house price index.
- ❖ It was released by Knight Frank.
- ❖ According to the report, markets like New Zealand (19%), Russia (14%), the US (10%), Canada and UK (both 9%) have recorded accelerated growth in rankings.
- ❖ Turkey continues to lead the annual rankings, followed by New Zealand and Slovakia.

## 2011 Istanbul Treaty

- ❖ Turkey has pulled out of the world's first binding treaty to prevent and combat violence against women.
- ❖ The 2011 Istanbul Convention requires governments to adopt a legislation prosecuting domestic violence and marital rape.
- ❖ It is a human rights treaty of the Council of Europe against violence against women.



## Strongest military force in the world

- ❖ China has the strongest military force in the world.
- ❖ The USA comes in 2nd place followed by Russia at 3rd place.
- ❖ India stands at number four.
- ❖ This study was released by defence website Military Direct.

## Volcano Bonds

- ❖ The Danish Red Cross has launched first of its kind catastrophe bond for the volcano-related disasters.
- ❖ This bond will enable the disaster relief agency to get the financial aid quickly to those who are suffering from the eruption of 10 volcanoes
- ❖ These are at Chile, Ecuador, Cameroon, Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala and Indonesia.

## Joint space mission

- ❖ India and France are working on third joint space mission.
- ❖ ISRO and the Space Agency of France CNES have undertaken two joint missions.
- ❖ The first one 'Megha Tropiques' was launched in the year 2011 and another one was 'Sara-Altika' launched in 2013.



### **Pabbi-Antiterror-2021 exercise**

- ❖ The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) will hold a joint anti-terrorism exercise this year.
- ❖ It was announced during the meeting of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

### **World Summit on Information Society Forum 2021**

- ❖ The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum 2021 represents one of the world's largest annual gathering of the 'ICT for development' community.
- ❖ It is co-organized by International Telecommunications Union (ITU), UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD.
- ❖ The telecom minister mentioned that under the flagship program BharatNet, nearly 6,00,000 villages are being connected through laying of more than 4,00,000 Km length of optical fiber cable and use of satellite communication services.
- ❖ Through submarine cable networks small and remote islands of Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep and other inaccessible areas are being connected with funding from Government.

### **Russia - 38 satellites for 18 countries**

- ❖ Russia has successfully put 38 satellites for 18 countries into orbit from Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.
- ❖ The Russian Space Agency, Roscosmos, published a video showing its Soyuz rocket was launched against the grey and cloudy skies.
- ❖ The rocket successfully placed the satellites from countries including Japan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Italy, Germany and Brazil.
- ❖ The launcher also launched "Challenge-1 satellite".
- ❖ Challenge-1 satellite is the first satellite completely made in Tunisia, created by Telnet Telecommunications group.

### **UN-sponsored ceasefire in Yemen**

- ❖ Saudi Arabia government has proposed UN-sponsored ceasefire in Yemen.
- ❖ Saudi is awaiting a response from the Houthi movement.
- ❖ This peace initiative is by Saudi Arabia.

- ❖ It is also highlighted that Saudi Arabia will keep supporting the government of Yemen in country's fight against Houthi rebels.
- ❖ The country hopes that Houthi rebels will accept the ceasefire proposal to negotiate peace consultations between Yemeni parties in a bid to reach out to a comprehensive and sustainable political settlement.

### Resolution against Sri Lanka's human rights record

- ❖ The UNHRC resolution adopted the resolution titled 'Promotion of Reconciliation Accountability and Human Rights in Sri Lanka'.
- ❖ The resolution was adopted after 22 out of 47 members voted in favour of it.
- ❖ 11 countries voted against the resolution.
- ❖ India was among the 14 countries that abstained from voting.



### Joint patrolling - India and Madagascar

- ❖ The navies of India and Madagascar undertook first joint patrolling of Madagascar's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- ❖ They also conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX).
- ❖ The first-ever joint patrol between navies reflects growing defence ties between two Indian Ocean neighbours aimed at common objective of ensuring maritime security in Indian Ocean Region.

## Indo-French Space Collaborations

- ❖ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and French space agency Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES) are working on their third joint satellite mission.
- ❖ ISRO and CNES have completed the feasibility study to realise the earth observation satellite mission with TRISHNA, thermal infrared imager.
- ❖ TRISHNA will monitor the water cycle to help in properly utilizing it.
- ❖ ARGOS of CNES will be integrated into ISRO's OCEANSAT-3 satellite.
- ❖ ARGOS is the global satellite-based data collection and location system.
- ❖ It is dedicated to studying and preserving the environment.

## First Ship Tunnel in Norway

- ❖ The Norwegian Coastal Administration has received the green signal to start working on the construction of the world's first tunnel.
- ❖ This is being built exclusively for ships.
- ❖ The tunnel is named as "Stad Ship Tunnel".
- ❖ It would be built under the mountainous Stadhavet peninsula in northwestern Norway.

### About the Tunnel:

- ❖ The 1.7 km tunnel will be able to handle ships of up to 16,000 tonnes.
- ❖ It gives ships a safer passage through the treacherous Stadhavet Sea.
- ❖ The construction would begin in 2022.



## International Intellectual Property Index

- ❖ India with a score of 38.40 has been ranked 40th out of 53 Global Economies in the 9th Edition of the 'International Intellectual Property (IIP) Index.



- ❖ This index titled 'Recovery through Ingenuity 2021' is released by US Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC).
- ❖ USA, UK & Germany topped the Index.
- ❖ The IIP Index released annually by GIPC evaluates the IP rights, patents, copyright policies, commercialization of IP assets and ratification of International Treaties of 53 Global economies.
- ❖ The report states that the overall global IP environment has improved in 2020, with 32 out of 53 Countries recording positive improvements in their score.

### **Miscarriage bereavement leave law**

- ❖ The Parliament of New Zealand passed the 'Miscarriage bereavement leave law'.
- ❖ This legislation provides mothers and their partners a "right to paid leave" after a miscarriage or stillbirth.
- ❖ New Zealand has become the second country, following India, across the world to pass such a legislation.
- ❖ It provides the employees three days leave after a pregnancy ends with a stillbirth.

### **Vladimir Putin until 2036**

- ❖ Russia's lower house of parliament, the State Duma approved a bill recently.
- ❖ The bill enables the incumbent President Vladimir Putin to run for two more terms starting 2024.
- ❖ The bill grants Putin the possibility of starting his presidency from scratch in 2024 and holding the office for two more terms until 2036.

### **Suez Canal issue**

- ❖ Global trade has been impacted after a container ship got stuck in the Suez Canal.
- ❖ Suez Canal is a 193-km waterway that is pivotal in connecting Europe and Asia.
- ❖ Located in Egypt, the artificial sea-level waterway was built between 1859 and 1869 linking the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea.
- ❖ The canal is one of the busiest waterways in the world.
- ❖ On March 23, due to weather obstructions a giant container ship, MV Ever Given, ended up getting stuck in one of the canal's narrow stretches.
- ❖ It was an en route from China to the Netherlands.

- ❖ Some countries have already seen a rise in oil prices after the blockage.
- ❖ Due to political, financial and technical problems the canal had been shut down five times before.
- ❖ Ever Given, which has blocked the Suez Canal for almost a week now, has been freed from the channel's shoreline.

### Alternative route for shipping while Suez Canal blocked

<p>— Using Suez Canal</p> <p>10,000 nautical miles (18,520km)</p> <p><b>25.5 days*</b></p>	<p>— Around Cape of Good Hope</p> <p>13,500 nautical miles (25,002km)</p> <p><b>34 days*</b></p>
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\*Based on ship's average speed of 16.43 knots



### Global Wind Report 2021

- ❖ Global Wind Report 2021 was published by the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC).
- ❖ The report warns that there is a need to install new wind power capacity three times faster by next decade.
- ❖ This warning is to achieve global climate targets & limit global warming to below 2°C above the pre-industrial levels.
- ❖ In the year 2020, 93 GW of new capacity were installed.
- ❖ It is a 53% year-on-year increase.
- ❖ But this is not sufficient to ensure that world will achieve net zero emission target by 2050.

### Findings

- ❖ As per this report, total global wind power capacity of 743GW is helping the globe to avoid over 1.1 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually.
- ❖ It is equal to annual carbon emissions of South America.
- ❖ Report warns that, the world needs to install a minimum of 280 GW of new wind energy per year.
- ❖ It underlines that, the Governments across the globe must work with 'climate emergency' approach to eliminate red tape and planning delays.
- ❖ Wind power is a cornerstone to achieve net zero emission target and power a green recovery.
- ❖ This is because wind power is cost-competitive and a resilient power source which is having most decarbonisation potential per MW.
- ❖ According to this report, technology innovations and economies of scale has quadrupled the global wind power market in size in past decade.
- ❖ Growth in 2020 was driven by installations on large scale in China and US which are the two largest wind power markets of world.
- ❖ Both the countries have over half of total wind power capacity.
- ❖ They accounted for 75% of new installations in 2020.

### **Bangabandhu-Bapu Museum**



- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina jointly inaugurated the 'Bangabandhu-Bapu Museum' at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Dhaka.
- ❖ The museum has a digital exhibition on India's Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi and Bangladesh's Father of the Nation 'Bangabandhu' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- ❖ The exhibition is dedicated to the lives of Gandhi and 'Bangabandhu'.



## **Mitali Express**

- ❖ A new passenger train called Mitali Express was inaugurated recently.
- ❖ It connects Dhaka and New Jalpaiguri in West Bengal on the Indian side.
- ❖ It was inaugurated jointly by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina.
- ❖ This is the third passenger train after Maitree Express (Dhaka-Kolkata) and Bandhan Express (Khulna-Kolkata) running between the two neighbouring countries.
- ❖ The new inter-country passenger train was launched on the occasion of 'Bangabandhu' Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth centenary and golden jubilee of Bangladesh's Independence.

## **World Development Report 2021**



- ❖ Recently, the World Bank has published the World Development Report 2021: Data for Better Lives.
- ❖ The World Development Report focuses on how data can improve the lives of poor people and advance development objectives, to ensure no one is left behind.
- ❖ It highlights the tremendous potential of the changing data landscape to improve the lives of poor people.
- ❖ At the same time, it was acknowledging its potential to open back doors that can harm individuals, businesses, and societies.
- ❖ Through this report, the World Bank aims to
  - support its client countries by identifying where public and private sector investments are the most critical
  - define a rich program for policy reform and technical assistance and
  - highlight areas in which global initiatives can help to convene and facilitate cross-border cooperation.



## **ECONOMY**

### **Currency and Finance Report**

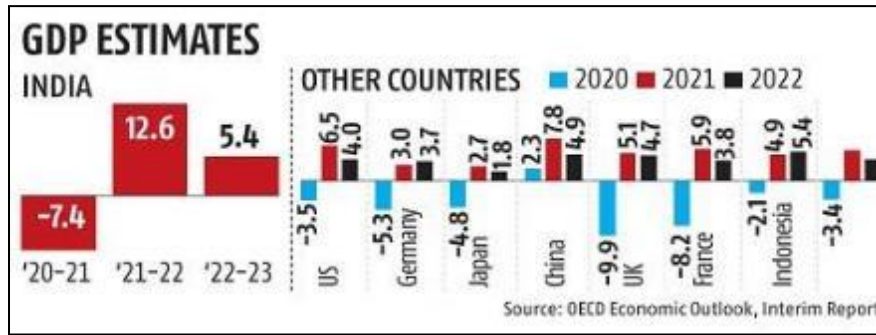
- ❖ This is released by RBI for the year of 2020-21.
- ❖ The theme of the Report is “Reviewing the Monetary Policy Framework”.
- ❖ As per report, an inflation target of 4 per cent with a +/-2 per cent tolerance band, is appropriate for the next five years.
- ❖ The report also recommends that roll the terms for the members in six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

### **First Overseas Fund**

- ❖ The State Bank of India (SBI) Mutual Funds has launched its first overseas offering.
- ❖ The fund titled SBI International Access — US Equity FOF is an open-ended fund of funds scheme investing in a mutual fund scheme/ETFs that invest in US markets, which are domiciled overseas.
- ❖ The scheme will invest 95-100 per cent of its net assets generally in Amundi Funds – US Pioneer Fund (including ETFs).
- ❖ That invest predominantly in the US markets.
- ❖ The customers interested in the scheme are required to invest at least Rs 5,000 for the first time.
- ❖ However, for additional purchase, the minimum application amount is Rs 1,000.
- ❖ There is no upper cap for the investment in this fund.

### **OECD interim ‘Economic Outlook’**

- ❖ The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development has raised the projection for India’s economic growth rate by 4.7 percentage points at 12.6 per cent for 2021-22.
- ❖ That would enable India to retain its earlier tag of the fastest growing large economy in the world.
- ❖ It, however, pegged economic growth rate to come down to 5.4 per cent in 2022-23.
- ❖ The Indian economy was officially projected to decline by 8 per cent in the current fiscal year.
- ❖ However, OECD believes that contraction would be less steep at 7.4 per cent.



### RBI removes PCA restrictions on IDBI Bank

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India has removed IDBI Bank from its enhanced regulatory supervision or Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework.
- ❖ As per published results for the quarter ending December 31, 2020, the bank is not in breach of the PCA parameters on regulatory capital, net NPA and leverage ratio.
- ❖ IDBI was placed under the PCA framework in May 2017 due to weak financial metrics.
- ❖ Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) is a framework under which financially weak and mismanaged banks are put under watch by the RBI.

### B2C e-commerce index 2020

- ❖ The UNCTAD B2C E-commerce Index measures an economy's preparedness to support online shopping.
- ❖ Switzerland is the highest ranked country in the index.
- ❖ India ranks 71 in UNCTAD B2C E-commerce Index 2020.

**Top 10 economies in the UNCTAD B2C E-commerce Index 2020**

2020 Rank	Economy	Share of individuals using the Internet (2019 or latest)	Share of individuals with an account (15+, 2017)	Secure Internet servers (normalized, 2019)	UPU postal reliability score (2019 or latest)	2020 Index value)	Index value change (2018-19 data)	Rank 2019
1	Switzerland	97	98	92	97	95.9	0.6	2
2	Netherlands	96	100	94	93	95.8	0.1	1
3	Denmark	97	100	100	81	94.5	0.1	6
4	Singapore	89	98	94	97	94.4	-0.3	3
5	United Kingdom	96	96	84	98	93.6	0.1	4
6	Germany	93	99	90	91	93.4	-0.1	9
7	Finland	95	100	88	91	93.4	-0.1	5
8	Ireland	88	95	92	98	93.4	0.7	7
9	Norway	98	100	84	88	92.6	-0.1	8
10	China, Hong Kong SAR	92	95	88	92	91.8	0.3	14

### Global Survey of Chief Executive Officers

- ❖ The findings are part of leading consultancy PwC's 24th Annual Global CEO Survey.
- ❖ India has emerged as the fifth most attractive growth destination
- ❖ The United States is the number one market.
- ❖ China is at the second spot.
- ❖ Germany and United Kingdom captured 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Spots respectively.

### India's First Libor Alternative Rate Deal

- ❖ The State Bank of India and Indian Oil Corporation Limited inked the first SOFR (Secured Overnight Financing Rate) linked External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) deal.
- ❖ It replaces the London Inter-Bank Offered Rate (LIBOR).
- ❖ The London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) is a benchmark interest rate at which major global banks lend to one another in the international interbank market for short-term loans.

#### Note:

- ❖ This deal is the first SOFR linked ECB deal in India.

### India in world's top 10 nations by market value

- ❖ Indian stocks have gained the most across the world's top 10 nations by market value in the fiscal year 2021-2022.
- ❖ This has underscored the strength of rally which was not affected by the covid-induced economic uncertainties.





- ❖ The data is provided by Bloomberg.
- ❖ The data highlights that, India's aggregate market capitalization has reached to 88% in dollar terms in the current fiscal.
- ❖ This was recorded as the sharpest increase in the aggregate market capitalization since the financial year 2011.

### **Shymala Gopinath committee**

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had set up a standing external advisory committee.
- ❖ This will evaluate applications for universal banks and small finance banks (SFBs).
- ❖ The committee has five members, with former RBI deputy governor Shyamala Gopinath as the chairperson.
- ❖ The panel will have a tenure of three years.
- ❖ According to guidelines, applications for universal banks and SFBs will first be evaluated by the RBI to ensure prima facie eligibility of the applicants.
- ❖ After that the newly formed committee will evaluate the applications.

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **Silver Antimony Telluride**

- ❖ Scientists at the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, have found a new material, Silver Antimony Telluride ( $\text{AgSbTe}_2$ ).
- ❖ It is a nanomaterial compound synthesised from Silver, Antimony and Tellurium.
- ❖ It can help in tapping waste heat produced by all kinds of domestic and industrial appliances.
- ❖ Basically, the material will exploit the benefits of thermo-electric effect.
- ❖ The thermo-electric effect involves the process by which heat is transformed to electrical energy.
- ❖ Typically, not more than 15 to 20% of the waste heat can be utilised.

## PSLV-C51

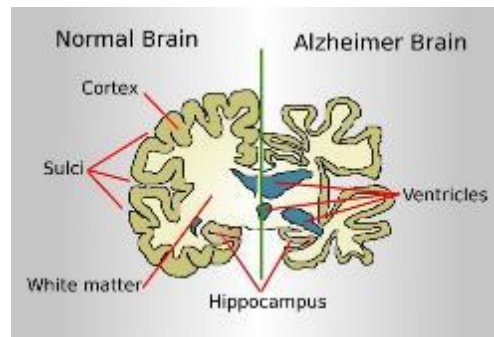
- ❖ The 53<sup>rd</sup> mission of PSLV (PSLV-C51) launched Amazonia-1 of Brazil as primary satellite and 18 co-passenger payloads.
- ❖ For the first time, a Brazilian satellite was launched by an Indian rocket from Sriharikota.
- ❖ This also marked Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) first launch of 2021.
- ❖ These co-passenger satellites also include Satish Dhawan Sat (SD SAT) from Chennai based Space Kidz India (SKI).
- ❖ A photo of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been engraved on the top panel of this spacecraft.
- ❖ It is also sending up "Bhagavad Gita" in SD (secured digital) card.
- ❖ Amazonia-1 is also the first dedicated commercial mission of Bengaluru-headquartered ISRO's commercial arm New Space India Limited (NSIL).



## Drug for Alzheimer's treatment

- ❖ The scientists have designed a set of novel small molecules that could disrupt the mechanism.
- ❖ Through it, the neurons become dysfunctional in Alzheimer's disease.

- ❖ They are from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR).
- ❖ The molecule (molecule TGR63) could reduce the toxicity of Amyloid Beta ( $A\beta$ ) toxicity.
- ❖ It is a potential drug candidate to halt or cure the leading cause of dementia (70-80%) worldwide.
- ❖ Alzheimer's disease is an irreversible, progressive brain disorder.
- ❖ It slowly destroys memory and thinking skills and, eventually, the ability to carry out the simplest tasks.



### **First Arctic-monitoring Satellite**

- ❖ Russia has successfully launched its first satellite to monitor the Arctic's climate and environment.
- ❖ A Soyuz-2.1b carrier rocket with the "Arktika-M" satellite on board blasted off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.
- ❖ The Arktika-M will provide round-the-clock continuous monitoring of the northern territory of Russia and the seas of the Arctic Ocean.
- ❖ The satellite will be able to transmit overview images of the Earth's northern polar region and the adjacent areas at least every 15-30 minutes.
- ❖ This satellite will help to collect information to solve operational meteorology and hydrology problems, and monitoring the climate and environment in the Arctic region.

### **SFDR Technology**

- ❖ The Defence Research and Development Organisation has successfully tested a flight demonstration based on Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet technology (SFDR).
- ❖ It is tested in the Integrated Test Range in Odisha's Chandipur.
- ❖ The SFDR technology will help DRDO with the technological advantage to develop long-range air-to-air missiles.



### Ramjet

- ❖ A ramjet is a form of air-breathing jet engine that uses the vehicle's forward motion to compress incoming air for combustion without a rotating compressor.
- ❖ Ramjets work most efficiently at supersonic speeds but they are not efficient at hypersonic speeds.

### **Aries-Devasthal Faint Object Spectrograph**

- ❖ Indian scientists have indigenously designed and developed a low-cost optical spectrograph.
- ❖ The optical spectrograph named as Aries-Devasthal Faint Object Spectrograph & Camera (ADFOSC), indigenously designed and developed by Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), Nainital.
- ❖ The spectrograph is the largest of its kind among the existing astronomical spectrographs in the country.
- ❖ It has been successfully commissioned on the 3.6 m Devasthal Optical Telescope (DOT).
- ❖ DOT is the largest telescope in the country and in Asia.
- ❖ This can locate sources of faint light from distant quasars and galaxies.
- ❖ The sources are very young universe, regions around supermassive black-holes, around the galaxies and cosmic explosions.

### **Sindhu Netra satellite**

- ❖ It was launched aboard Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) PSLV-C51 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ It was developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- ❖ It will boost India's surveillance capabilities to monitor activities of both military warships and merchant shipping in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- ❖ It will also help in carrying out surveillance in specific areas such as the South China Sea or near the Gulf of Aden and the African coast.

### **Technology and Innovation Report 2020**

- ❖ The report examines the likelihood of frontier technologies widening existing inequalities and creating new ones.
- ❖ It also addresses the national and international policies, instruments and institutional reforms that are needed to create a more equal world of opportunity for all, leaving no one behind.

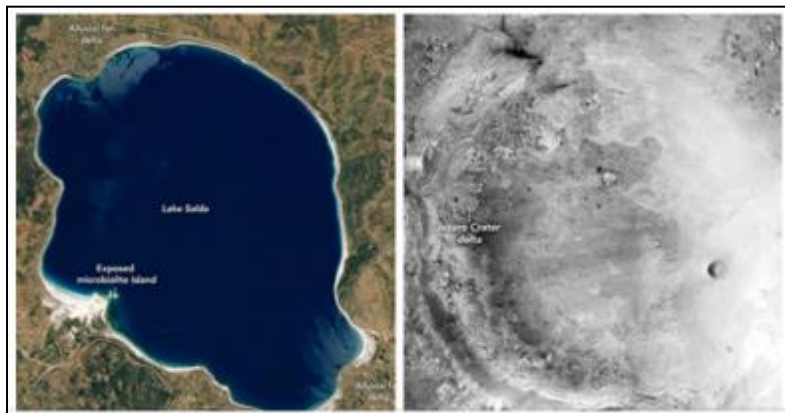


- ❖ The report was released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.
- ❖ India was the biggest ‘overperformer’ in frontier technologies than the country's per capita Gross Domestic Products would suggest.

	Country	Overperformance (positions)
1	India	65
2	Philippines	57
3	Ukraine	47
4	Viet Nam	45
5	China	40
6	Jordan	34
7	Brazil	33
8	Republic of Moldova	33
9	South Africa	29
10	Tunisia	29

### Mars on Earth

- ❖ NASA says the minerals and rock deposits at Salda are the nearest match on earth to those around the Jezero Crater.
- ❖ Jezero Crater is the place where the spacecraft (Perseverance) landed.
- ❖ It is also believed that Jezero Crater have once been flooded with water.
- ❖ The rocks along the shoreline of Lake Salda in Turkey were formed by microbes that trap minerals and sediments in the water which was once a major life form on Earth.

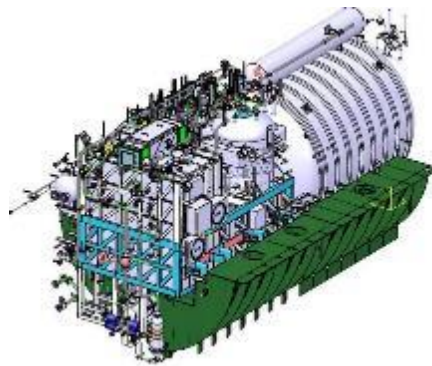


- ❖ NASA's Perseverance rover, now housed in Mars, will investigate whether there are microbialites in Jezero Crater.

- ❖ It will also compare sediments collected from Lake Salda with fossilised remains at Mars.
- ❖ This will help to understand the differences between the Mars sediments and Lake Salda.

### **AIP Technology**

- ❖ The Defence Research and Development Organisation has demonstrated an Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) system recently.
- ❖ The design was tested on land in Mumbai.
- ❖ This will allow Indian Navy submarines to operate for up to two weeks without having to surface to recharge its batteries.
- ❖ The development of AIP technology is a major boost for the Atma Nirbhar Bharat campaign.
- ❖ US, France, China, UK and Russia are the only countries to have this key technology.
- ❖ The DRDO's AIP technology is based on a Phosphoric Acid Fuel Cell.
- ❖ The last two Kalvari class submarines will be powered by it.



### **Earth's Hidden Layer**

- ❖ The Scientists have recently detected the signs of a hidden structure inside the core of Planet Earth.
- ❖ As per the long-standing narrative, there exists four layers namely
  - crust,
  - mantle,
  - outer core and
  - inner core.



- ❖ But this sign has the potential to change the long-standing narrative of what lies at centre of Earth.
- ❖ The recently detected layer is being termed as the fifth layer.
- ❖ The scientists have also spotted reportedly some changes in the structure of iron within the inner core.
- ❖ These changes suggests that a new 'boundary line' is stretching for about 650 kilometres from centre of the Earth.

## **DUSTLIK II**

- ❖ The India - Uzbekistan joint military exercise DUSTLIK II commenced in Foreign Training Node Chaubatia, Ranikhet in Uttarakhand.
- ❖ This is the Second Edition of annual bilateral joint exercise of both armies.
- ❖ 45 Soldiers each from Uzbekistan and Indian Army are participating in the exercise.
- ❖ The first edition of the joint military exercise had taken place in Tashkent in November 2019.
- ❖ The focus of DUSTLIK II would be aimed at carrying out joint counter-terror operations in a mountainous rural and urban scenario.

## **ISRO NISAR with NASA**

- ❖ NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR) is a joint collaboration for a dual-frequency L and S-band SAR for earth observation.
- ❖ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has completed development of a Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR).
- ❖ It is capable of producing extremely high-resolution images for a joint earth observation satellite mission with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).
- ❖ "NISAR will be the first satellite mission to use two different radar frequencies (L-band and S-band) to measure changes in our planet's surface less than a centimetre across.
- ❖ NASA and Bengaluru-headquartered ISRO signed a partnership on 2014, to collaborate on and launch NISAR.
- ❖ NASA is providing the mission's L-band SAR, a high-rate communication subsystem for science data, GPS receivers, a solid-state recorder and payload data subsystem.
- ❖ ISRO is providing the spacecraft bus, the S-band radar, the launch vehicle and associated launch services for the mission.



### **Indigenours torpedo - Shynea**

- ❖ The maiden flight trials of the indigenously developed 'Advanced Light Torpedo (TAL) Shyena' was conducted successfully.
- ❖ It was fired from Indian Navy's Ilyushin Il-38 Patrol Aircraft.
- ❖ TAL Sheyna is an anti-submarine torpedo developed by the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL).
- ❖ NSTL is a lab of the Defence Research & Development Organisation.
- ❖ The trial was the first of its kind in India.
- ❖ 'TAL Shyena' was fired from a fixed-wing aircraft.

### **Fugaku Supercomputer**

- ❖ The Japanese scientific research institute called RIKEN and Fujitsu started developing the "Fugaku" six years ago.
- ❖ It is the world's most powerful supercomputers.
- ❖ Fugaku has been named after an alternative name for Mount Fuji.
- ❖ This supercomputer has been developed with the aim of making the device core of the computing infrastructure of Japan.

### **Hydrogen from Brown Coal**

- ❖ A Japanese-Australian venture has started producing hydrogen from brown coal.
- ❖ The project aims to show that liquefied hydrogen can be produced commercially and can be safely exported overseas.
- ❖ The initial plan is to create the first international supply chain for liquefied hydrogen.
- ❖ Brown coal is considered the lowest rank of coal due to its relatively low energy content.

### **Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine**

- ❖ The World Health Organization (WHO) issued emergency use authorization for Johnson & Johnson's coronavirus vaccine
- ❖ Johnson & Johnson's coronavirus vaccine is the first single-dose vaccine to be listed by the WHO.
- ❖ This vaccine needs to be stored at -20 degrees.
- ❖ The WHO had earlier listed the Pfizer/BioNTech, AstraZeneca-SK Bio and Serum Institute of India vaccines for emergency use.

### **RH-560**

- ❖ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched the sounding rocket called RH-560.
- ❖ It was launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) Sriharikota Range (SHAR).
- ❖ The rocket was launched in order to study “attitudinal variations” in the neutral winds and plasma dynamics.
- ❖ The sounding rockets are one or two-stage solid propellant rockets.
- ❖ These rockets are used to probe the upper atmospheric regions and conduct the space research.

### **Russia deploys Giant Space Telescope**

- ❖ Russian scientists have deployed a giant telescope in Lake Baikal in southern Siberia.
- ❖ It is to search for the tiniest known particles in the universe.
- ❖ The telescope, Baikal-Gigaton Volume Detector, is designed to search for neutrinos.
- ❖ Neutrinos are nearly massless subatomic particles with no electrical charge.
- ❖ Lake Baikal is the deepest and the largest freshwater lake on Earth.

### **INS Dhruv**

- ❖ India Navy is set to commission INS Dhruv to track satellites, strategic missiles and map the Indian Ocean bed.
- ❖ It has been built by Hindustan Shipyard Ltd at its Visakhapatnam facility.
- ❖ It has been developed with the help of the DRDO and Indian Navy with India’s Strategic Force Command and National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO).





- ❖ India will be the only country outside the P-5 – the US, the UK, China, Russia and France – to have this capability.
- ❖ It will act as a major force multiplier to India's ocean surveillance capabilities.

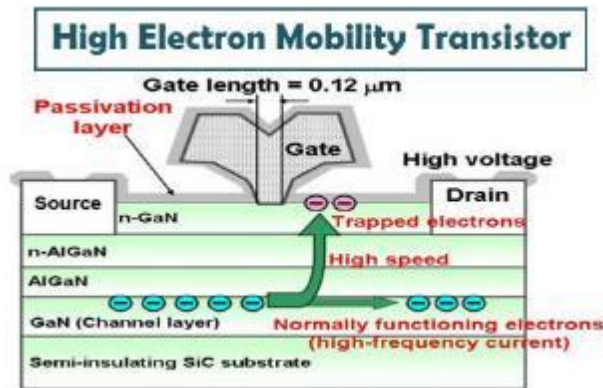
### **Efficient Removal of Heavy Metals**

- ❖ The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi has developed a reusable fibrous membrane filter using a biopolymer-based material.
- ❖ That helps to separate out the heavy metals from water samples.
- ❖ These membranes contain adsorbents (materials that attract and hold the metals) that has large amount of a biopolymer, Chitosan.
- ❖ Chitosan derived from crab shells that are mixed with a synthetic polymer, Nylon.
- ❖ Normally, the fibres used to make regular cartridge filter-assemblies are processed by a method called melt blowing.
- ❖ But the IIT Mandi has used a process called “solution blowing”.
- ❖ Solution blowing produces fibres that are nanometres in diameter.
- ❖ That increases their surface area tremendously and results in better adsorption of heavy metals.

### **High Electron Mobility Transistors (HEMTs)**

- ❖ The Indian scientists have developed a highly reliable HEMT from gallium nitride (GaN).
- ❖ This is the first-ever indigenous HEMT device.
- ❖ It is useful in electric cars, locomotives, power transmission and other areas requiring high voltage and high-frequency switching.
- ❖ It will also make India self-reliant in power transistor technology.
- ❖ This would reduce the cost of importing such stable and efficient transistors required in power electronics.
- ❖ It is a normally OFF device.
- ❖ It can switch currents up to 4A and operates at 600 V.
- ❖ HEMTs are used in integrated circuits as digital on-off switches.
- ❖ HEMT transistors are able to operate at higher frequencies than ordinary transistors, up to millimetre wave frequencies.
- ❖ HEMTs are used in high-frequency products such as cell phones, satellite television receivers, voltage converters, and radar equipment.

- ❖ They are widely used in satellite receivers, in low power amplifiers and in the defence industry.



### Radar Surveys of Himalayan Glaciers

- ❖ India has planned to conduct the airborne radar surveys in order to estimate the thickness of Himalayan glaciers.
- ❖ The pilot study will be conducted in the Lahaul – Spiti basin of the Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ This proposal was initiated by the “National Centre for Polar & Ocean Research (NCPOR)” under the Ministry of Earth Sciences”.
- ❖ India is one of the most vulnerable country for extreme weather events.
- ❖ It has been ranked at the 20<sup>th</sup> position on Climate Risk Index (CRI).

### India’s First Free-Space Quantum Communication

- ❖ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully demonstrated free-space Quantum Communication over a distance of 300 metres.
- ❖ This is a first-of-its-kind initiative.
- ❖ The demonstration has included live videoconferencing using quantum-key-encrypted signals.
- ❖ This is a major milestone achievement for unconditionally secured satellite data communication using quantum technologies.
- ❖ This is demonstrated at Space Applications Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad, between two line-of-sight buildings within the campus.
- ❖ The experiment was performed at night, in order to ensure that there is no interference of the direct sunlight.
- ❖ The experiment is a major breakthrough towards ISRO’s goal of demonstrating Satellite Based Quantum Communication.



## ENVIRONMENT

### State of Environment Report – 2021

- ❖ Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has released the State of Environment Report - 2021.
- ❖ It is an annual publication by CSE along with Down To Earth.
- ❖ It covers aspects such as forests, wildlife, agriculture, rural development, water and sanitation, and climate change.

### Highlights

- ❖ 375 million children (from new born to 14-year-olds) have a long-lasting impact ranging from being underweight, stunting, and increased child mortality.
- ❖ Out of the 500 million children forced out of school globally, India accounts for more than 50%.
- ❖ 115 million additional people might get pushed into extreme poverty and most of them live in South Asia.
- ❖ India's air, water, and land have become more polluted between 2009 and 2018.
- ❖ Tarapur in Maharashtra has emerged as the most polluted cluster.
- ❖ India ranks 117 among 192 nations in terms of sustainable development.
- ❖ It is behind all South Asian nations except Pakistan.
- ❖ Five best performing states in achieving SDGs: Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana.
- ❖ Five worst-performing states in achieving SDGs: Bihar, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, and Uttar Pradesh.

### New Alpine Plant Species

- ❖ A group of scientists discovered a new species of alpine plant in the Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The details were published in Biodiversitas: Journal of Biological Diversity.
- ❖ The new species of plant belongs to the family of Himalayan sunflower.
- ❖ It has been named as *Cremanthodium indicum*.
- ❖ This species of plant generally flowers from July to August.
- ❖ It is endemic to the Penga-Teng Tso Lake of Tawang district.
- ❖ As per the IUCN Guideline, this alpine plant species has been listed as critically endangered.



## 5 New Species of Shrub Frogs

- ❖ Five new species of shrub frogs have been discovered from the Western Ghats by researchers from India and the US.
- ❖ Western Ghats are one of the globally recognised biodiversity hotspots.
- ❖ The frogs belong to the Old-World tree frog family Rhacophoridae.
- ❖ These were discovered by researchers from University of Delhi and Kerala Forest Research Institute and University of Minnesota.
- ❖ This research is part of a long comprehensive study on the Shrub frogs (genus Raorchestes) of the Western Ghats, carried out over a period of nearly 10 years.
- ❖ The findings are published in PeerJ.
- ❖ The five new species are known as,
  - Raorchestes drutaahu,
  - Raorchestes kakkayamensis,
  - Raorchestes keirasabinae,
  - Raorchestes sanjappai,
  - and Raorchestes vellikkannan.
- ❖ All these species are found in the State of Kerala in southern Western Ghats.

## Himalayan Serow Spotted in Assam

- ❖ A Himalayan mammal "Himalayan Serow" has been spotted for the very first time in Assam.
- ❖ The Himalayan serow as resembling a cross between a goat, a donkey, a cow, and a pig.
- ❖ The Himalayan serow has now been categorised as 'vulnerable' in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- ❖ It is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.





### **First Platypus sanctuary**

- ❖ Australia is set to open the world's first platypus sanctuary.
- ❖ It is to be setup in order to help the native species from going extinct.
- ❖ The duck-billed platypus, a species unique to Australia, is facing extinction due to bush fires and drought linked to the climate crisis.
- ❖ The refuge will be the first of its kind around the world.
- ❖ It will have the capacity to house 65 at a time.
- ❖ The facility will be built at Taronga's Western Plains Zoo by 2022.

### **First dolphin research centre**

- ❖ India's and Asia's first National Dolphin Research Centre will come up on the bank of the Ganges in the premises of Patna University.
- ❖ The dolphin is a highly endangered species under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- ❖ It was declared the National Aquatic Animal in 2009.
- ❖ The gangetic dolphin is one of the four freshwater dolphins' species in the world.
- ❖ Other three species are said to be found in,
  - Yangtze River,
  - Indus River and
  - Amazon River.
- ❖ The presence of dolphins in the Ganga gives a sign of a healthy ecosystem because dolphins live at least in 5 ft to 8 ft deep water.

### **Exotic Earthworm**

- ❖ An exotic and highly invasive earthworm — *Amyntas alexandri* of the Megascolecidae family — has been collected and reported for the first time from Karnataka.
- ❖ Its original home is believed to be Southeast Asia.

### **Fishing Cat survey**

- ❖ The first-ever survey of the fishing cats in and around the Chilika lake in Odisha started.
- ❖ Fishing cats are elusive nocturnal mammals.

- ❖ They are generally found in the marshy wetlands of northern and eastern India and on the mangroves of the east coast.
- ❖ Chilika Lake is a brackish water lagoon.
- ❖ The lake is located at the mouth of the Daya River flowing into the Bay of Bengal.
- ❖ It is Asia's largest and world's second-largest lagoon after the New Caledonian barrier reef.
- ❖ The lake is the largest wintering ground for migratory waterfowl found anywhere on the Indian subcontinent.
- ❖ In 1981, Chilika Lake became the first Indian wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.
- ❖ The major attraction at the Chilika lake is Irrawaddy dolphins.



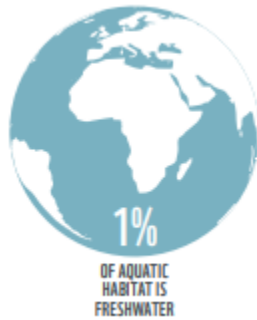
### **Dinosaurs' fossils in Argentina**

- ❖ The Researchers have announced the discovery of fossils of Dinosaurs that lived 140 million years ago.
- ❖ The incomplete skeletal remains of the dinosaur were discovered south of Neuquen city in Argentina.
- ❖ The researchers stated that the fossils represent a dinosaur species named Ninjatitan zapatai.
- ❖ They identified Ninjatitan as a Titanosaur.
- ❖ Titanosaurs were a diverse group of long-necked plant-eating dinosaurs that walked on four pillar-like legs.

### **World's Forgotten Fishes Report**

- ❖ It was a recent report published by 16 global conservation organizations which includes the WWF and Global Wildlife Conservation.
- ❖ According to this, nearly a third of all freshwater fish are threatened with extinction.

- ❖ The report, World's Forgotten Fishes, stated that freshwater fish provide main source of protein to 200 million people across Asia, Africa and South America.
- ❖ The industry provides jobs and livelihoods to 60 million people, more than half of whom are women.
- ❖ In total, jobs in freshwater fisheries account for between 2.5 and 6 per cent of the global agricultural workforce.

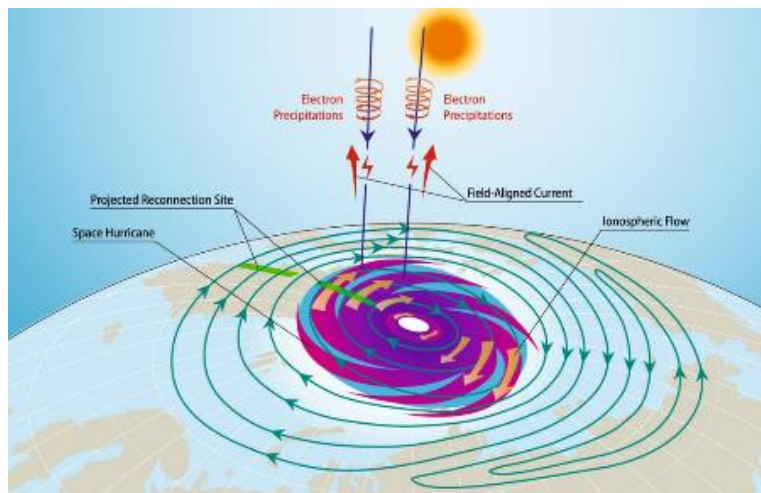


### **Olive Ridley Turtles at Gahirmatha Beach**

- ❖ The Olive Ridley turtles have returned to their nesting site at Gahirmatha beach in Kendrapara district, Odisha.
- ❖ This place is considered world's largest known rookery of these species, to lay eggs.
- ❖ This phenomenon is called 'arribada' (Spanish term).
- ❖ "Arribada" describes the unique natural heritage of millions of these marine species converging on the nesting ground for laying eggs.
- ❖ An Olive Ridley turtle usually lays about 120 to 150 eggs from which hatchlings emerge after about 45 to 50 days.

### **Space hurricane**

- ❖ The Scientists have confirmed the existence of space hurricanes high above the north pole
- ❖ The Scientists from China discovered this for first time ever.
- ❖ Previously, it was believed, space hurricanes were a theoretical phenomenon.
- ❖ A space hurricane is a form of environmental phenomenon where instead of wind and rain, charged electrons and plasma make up the majority of the storm.



### **Genome Mapping in Indian Ocean**

- ❖ In the Indian Ocean, the National Institute of Oceanography will launch the first-of-its-kind project of Genome Mapping.
- ❖ Its objective is to gather samples of genome mapping of microorganisms in the Indian Ocean.

- ❖ It is also necessary to understand the biochemistry and the response of the Ocean to climate change, nutrient stress and increasing pollution.
- ❖ Benefits are:
  - It will help in understanding ecosystem.
  - It will understand factors causing change.
  - It will help in identifying Mineral Concentration.
- ❖ Indian Ocean covers about 20% of the Earth's water surface.
- ❖ It is the third largest water body in the world.

### **Fire in Shetrunjay Hills**

- ❖ Fire broke out in the Shetrunjay Hills reserve forest area of Gujarat.
- ❖ The forest area is the habitat of Asiatic lions in the Bhavnagar territorial forest division.
- ❖ Shetrunjaya hills are,
  - located in Palitana city of Bhavnagar district in Gujarat.
  - located on the banks of river Shetrunji.
  - considered as a sacred hill by Jains.

### **Asia Environmental Enforcement Award 2020**

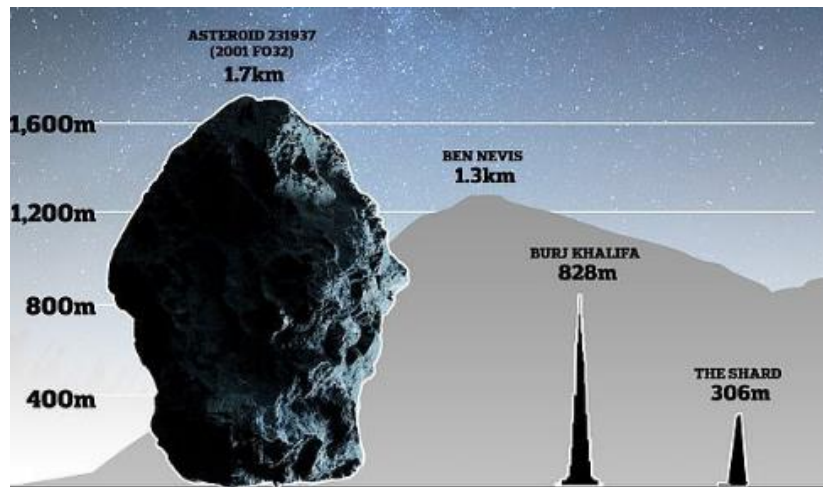
- ❖ The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) has received the Asia Environmental Enforcement Award 2020.
- ❖ It was awarded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- ❖ Earlier, the Bureau had received the award in 2018 under the same category.



- ❖ It is a statutory body constituted under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- ❖ In a first for India, a female forest officer from Odisha, Sasmita Lenka has been felicitated with United Nation's Asia Environmental Enforcement Award.

### **Asteroid 2001 FO32**

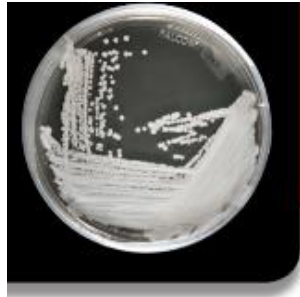
- ❖ Asteroid 2001 FO32 is the largest asteroid passed by Earth in 2021.
- ❖ It was discovered 20 years ago by Lincoln Near-Earth Asteroid Research (LINEAR) program in Socorro, New Mexico in 2001.
- ❖ When it is at its closest to Earth, it is at a distance of 2 million km (Equal to 5¼ times the distance from Earth to the Moon).
- ❖ So, it has been designated as a “potentially hazardous asteroid”.



### **Candida Auris**

- ❖ The Researchers found Candida Auris on remote beaches of Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- ❖ They also held that they can potentially bring next pandemic.
- ❖ Candida Auris, a multidrug-resistant fungus, has become a 'superbug' as it is able to resist main anti-fungal treatments.
- ❖ C. Auris survives on the skin before entering the body through wounds.
- ❖ Once in the bloodstream, it causes severe illness.
- ❖ It can lead to sepsis - a condition that kills up to 11 million people a year globally.
- ❖ C. auris spreads from one patient to another in hospitals.
- ❖ It is targeting people with weakened immune systems.




- ❖ It spreads through contact with contaminated environmental surfaces or equipment.
- ❖ It is difficult to identify with standard lab methods.



***Candida auris:***  
**A drug-resistant germ that spreads in healthcare facilities**

*Candida auris* (also called *C. auris*) is a fungus that causes serious infections. Patients with *C. auris* infection, their family members and other close contacts, public health officials, laboratory staff, and healthcare workers can all help stop it from spreading.

**Why is *Candida auris* a problem?**

-  **It causes serious infections.** *C. auris* can cause bloodstream infections and even death, particularly in hospital and nursing home patients with serious medical problems. More than 1 in 3 patients with invasive *C. auris* infection (for example, an infection that affects the blood, heart, or brain) die.
-  **It's often resistant to medicines.** Antifungal medicines commonly used to treat *Candida* infections often don't work for *Candida auris*. Some *C. auris* infections have been resistant to all three types of antifungal medicines.
-  **It's becoming more common.** Although *C. auris* was just discovered in 2009, it has spread quickly and caused infections in more than a dozen countries.

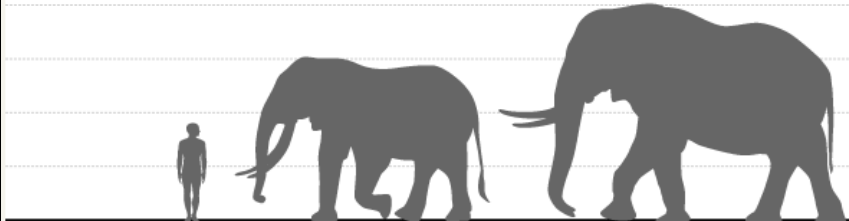
### **Population declines of the African forest and savanna elephant**

- ❖ The African forest elephant is now listed as critically endangered.
- ❖ The African savanna elephant is now listed as endangered.
- ❖ It is by the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species.
- ❖ The two species were previously listed as vulnerable.
- ❖ They were previously considered as a single species on the Red List.
- ❖ They are now being assessed separately due to the emergence of new genetic evidence, according to the IUCN.
- ❖ In addition, the populations rarely intersect, as the forest elephants live in the tropical forests of Central Africa.
- ❖ The savanna elephants prefer the open country in Sub-Saharan Africa, which includes grasslands and deserts.
- ❖ The number of African elephants decreased by more than 86% over 31 years.
- ❖ The African savanna elephant populations fell by at least 60% over the last 50 years, according to the ICUN.



- ❖ About 415,000 elephants of both species combined are left on the continent.
- ❖ Poaching for ivory and loss of habitat as it is converted primarily to agricultural land use are blamed for the sharp declines.
- ❖ These have been occurring since 2008.

New calculations of the timing of and spacing between pregnancies in African forest elephants highlight the need for them to be recognized as a distinct species.



NAME	FOREST ELEPHANT <i>Loxodonta cyclotis</i>	SAVANNAH ELEPHANT <i>Loxodonta africana</i>
LOCATION	West and central Africa	Eastern and southern Africa
HEIGHT	2.4–3 metres	3–4 metres
WEIGHT	2–5 tonnes	4–7 tonnes
FIRST PREGNANCY	23 years	12 years
TIME BETWEEN PREGNANCIES	5–6 years	3–4 years
POPULATION DOUBLING TIME	60 years	20 years

### **New red algal seaweed species**

- ❖ Two new red algal seaweed species have been discovered along India’s coastline.
- ❖ These can be a potential raw material for those involved in jelly and ice cream production.
- ❖ A group of marine botanists have traced these native seaweed species along the coasts of Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu and in Gujarat and Daman Diu.
- ❖ Both varieties, *Hypnea indica* and *Hypnea Bullata* were discovered in Kanyakumari.
- ❖ The fine and hairy algae *Hypnea indica* was discovered in Shivrajpur and Somnath Pathan in Gujarat.
- ❖ *Hypnea Bullata* grew along the coastline of Daman and Diu.
- ❖ It is the first time red algal species of sea weeds have been discovered along the Indian coasts.



## STATES

### **Kushinagar Airport**

- ❖ The under-construction Kushinagar Airport in Uttar Pradesh has received the clearances to operate international flights.
- ❖ This was approved by aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).
- ❖ Once operational, Kushinagar airport will become the third functional international facility in the state.
- ❖ Currently, the two international airports functional in Uttar Pradesh are:
  - Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport at Lucknow and
  - Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport at Varanasi.

### **Mumbai Undersea Tunnel**

- ❖ The undersea tunnels will be built as a part of the Mumbai Coastal Road Project.
- ❖ It comprises the land-filled roads on the areas that are reclaimed from the sea, tunnels, bridges.
- ❖ The Coastal Road project is an under construction 22.2-kilometre freeway.
- ❖ That would run along Mumbai's western coastline connecting Marine Lines in the south to Kandivali in the north.
- ❖ It is the first undersea road tunnel in the country.
- ❖ It will pass through the Arabian Sea near Girgaon Chowpatty.

### **First epigraphical reference to Krishnadeva raya's death**

- ❖ Officials from Archaeological Survey of India discovered the first epigraphical reference to the death of Krishnadevaraya Nayaka.
- ❖ He was the third ruler from Tuluva dynasty.
- ❖ He was the emperor of Vijayanagara empire during 1509-1529.
- ❖ The inscription was found near Gopalkrishna temple at Honnenahalli of Tumkur district, Karnataka.
- ❖ As per this inscription, Krishnadevaraya died on October 17, 1529.
- ❖ He was one of the greatest emperors of India ruled from the South.



### **Anantapur, Nellore receive PM Kisan Award**

- ❖ Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar presented the prestigious Prime Minister's Kisan National Award to Nellore Collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu.
- ❖ The district was ranked first in resolving grievances received under PM Kisan portal.
- ❖ The award was presented during the second anniversary of the PM-Kisan Yojana in New Delhi.
- ❖ Also, Anantapur was bagged the award for achieving 99.6% physical verification of beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi.

### **Centralized AC railway terminal**

- ❖ India's first centralised AC railway terminal is built in Bangalore.
- ❖ It is named after Bharat Ratna Sir M Visvesvaraya.
- ❖ This is Bengaluru's third railway terminal in Baiyappanahalli area.

### **India's first integrated Machine tool park**

- ❖ India's first integrated machine tool park is named as Tumakuru Machine Tool Park.
- ❖ It is built in Karnataka.
- ❖ The park is developed under the scheme of Enhancement of Competitiveness in Indian Capital Goods Sector (ECICGS), jointly by the state government and the Department of Heavy Industries, Government of India.
- ❖ The Indian Machine Tools Manufacturers Association has provided the technical assistance to this.



- ❖ The park is located at Vasanthanarasapura which is around 90 km from Bengaluru.

### **Haryana reserves jobs for locals in the private sector**

- ❖ Haryana Governor Satyadeo Narain Arya has given assent to the Bill providing 75% reservation in the private sector to job seekers from the state.
- ❖ The Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Bill, 2020 provides quota for local people in private sector jobs that offer a salary of less than ₹50,000 a month.
- ❖ Only 10 per cent of the recruitment by a company needs to be from the district in which it is located.
- ❖ The rest of the quota can be filled from other districts in the state.
- ❖ The quota will initially be applicable for 10 years, according to the Bill.
- ❖ The Bill covers private companies, societies, trusts and partnership firms in the state.
- ❖ It provides for training to eligible local candidates when qualified people are not available.

### **Night Safari**

- ❖ Madhya Pradesh introduced night safaris in three of the national parks in the state.
- ❖ The night safaris are expected to boost the tourism sector of the state.
- ❖ The three national parks are
  - Bandhavgarh National Park,
  - Kanha National Park and
  - Pench National Park.

### **Transgender Community Desk**

- ❖ The Cyberabad Police has launched India's first-ever Transgender Community Desk at the Gachibowli Police Station in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- ❖ This desk is the first-of-its-kind gender-inclusive community policing initiative in the country.
- ❖ Earlier in April 15th 2014, the Supreme Court recognised the transgender community as a third gender along with male and female.



### **First Gender budget**

- ❖ Andhra Pradesh could be the first state in India to incorporate a concept called 'Gender Budget' in its annual Budget for the Financial Year 2021-22
- ❖ It is aimed to provide better service to women.
- ❖ The gender budget list outs the expenditure for women welfare under various schemes of the state.

### **Xcelerator Bengaluru**

- ❖ Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa unveiled 'Xcelerator Bengaluru' initiative recently.
- ❖ The 'Xcelerator Bengaluru' initiative will help 50,000 women entrepreneurs across the state to grow their business over the next 3 years.
- ❖ Xcelerator Bengaluru was jointly developed by,
  - Global Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship (GAME),
  - Ubuntu Consortium and
  - Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI).

### **First forest healing centre**

- ❖ The First Forest Healing centre of the country was inaugurated near Ranikhet in Kalika, Uttarakhand.
- ❖ The forest healing centre has been developed by the Research Wing of Uttarakhand Forest Department.
- ❖ This centre would involve in many activities like forest walking, tree-hugging, forest meditation and sky gazing.

### **First Milk ATM in Kashmir**

- ❖ A milk ATM was installed in Pulwama town of South Kashmir by a local businessman.
- ❖ It was set up with the help of the animal husbandry department.
- ❖ The government helped the local entrepreneur to set up the machine under the Integrated Dairy Development Scheme.
- ❖ The machine will help locals in the town to get quality milk at their will like any other money ATM.



### **1% concession in stamp duty**

- ❖ The Maharashtra government's budget for 2021-22 offered one per cent concession in stamp duty if property is transferred in a woman's or women's name.
- ❖ In case of a joint ownership, the concession in stamp duty would not be given if there is a man as a joint owner with the woman i.e. “Both should be women”.

### **First world skill centre**

- ❖ India's first World Skill Centre was inaugurated in Bhubaneswar.
- ❖ World Skill Centre is being established under the Odisha Skill Development Project assisted by the Asian Development Bank with ITE Education Services, Singapore as a knowledge partner.
- ❖ World Skill Centre will act as the Centre for Industry Partnership and landing point for industries in Odisha for their employment needs.

### **Kalanamak Rice Festival**

- ❖ The Uttar Pradesh government organised “Kalanamak Rice Festival” in the Siddharth Nagar district, Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ The Kala Namak Rice is grown in this region.
- ❖ The rice is a geographical indication (GI) tagged rice.

### **Supreme Court and Maharashtra Local Body reservation**

- ❖ The Supreme Court held that reservation for Other Backward Classes in Maharashtra's local bodies should not exceed the aggregate 50% of the total seats reserved in favour of SCs/STs/OBCs taken together.
- ❖ This direction is being issued in exercise of plenary power under Article 142 of the Constitution of India to do complete justice.
- ❖ It held that the reservation for other backward classes is only “statutory”, unlike the “constitutional” reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

### **First dedicated express cargo terminal**

- ❖ The Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru now has India's first dedicated Express Cargo Terminal exclusively for export and import of international couriers.
- ❖ It is developed by Bangalore International Airport Limited.
- ❖ This new facility will enhance the cargo processing capability by 1,50,000 Metric Tonnes.



### **Project RE-HAB**

- ❖ A pilot project RE-HAB has been launched in Chelur village in Kodagu, Karnataka.
- ❖ Reducing Elephant-Human Attacks using Bees is abbreviated as RE-HAB.
- ❖ It involves installing bee boxes along the periphery of the Nagarahole National Park and Tiger Reserve.
- ❖ This helps to mitigate human-elephant conflict.
- ❖ Project RE-HAB is a sub-mission of the KVIC's National Honey Mission.

### **SAAMAR Campaign**

- ❖ The Jharkhand government announced the launch of SAAMAR (Strategic Action for Alleviation of Malnutrition and Anaemia Reduction) campaign.
- ❖ It is to tackle malnutrition in the state.
- ❖ It has been launched with a 1000 days target.

### **Ethanol Production Promotion Policy, 2021**

- ❖ Bihar Cabinet has approved this policy.
- ❖ It became the 1st Indian State to have an ethanol promotion policy.
- ❖ The policy allows the extraction of ethanol from maize.
- ❖ Earlier it was restricted to sugarcane.
- ❖ So far, the government of India has granted permission for ethanol production from B-heavy molasses, C-heavy molasses, grains unfit for human consumption, sugarcane juice, sugar, sugar syrup, surplus rice and maize.

### **Jewel Shops by Karnataka**

- ❖ The Karnataka State government is planning to open jewellery retail outlets.
- ❖ It aims to promote the yellow metal with 'Brand Karnataka' image.
- ❖ It also plans to sell gold coins with the State emblem, Gandaberunda (mythical two-headed bird).
- ❖ Karnataka is the only State in the country that produces gold.
- ❖ The government is planning to modernise the Hutti Gold Mines.
- ❖ The state is also planning to rename Hutti Gold Mines Ltd as Karnataka State (Hutti) Gold Mines Ltd.



- ❖ The State government is planning to set up a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) exclusively for jewellery in Kalyana region for the overall development of the region.

### **UPFPO Shakthi Portal**

- ❖ Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched UPFPO Shakthi Portal recently.
- ❖ This was launched as part of Kisan Kalyan Mission at an event in Gorakhpur.
- ❖ The portal is the first of its kind in the country.
- ❖ It is aimed at benefitting the farmers at the grassroots level.
- ❖ The Farmer Producer Organization-centric (FPO-centric) portal will bring farmers, producer groups, traders and the agriculture and other allied departments of the UP government on one platform.

### **First Govt Run Animal Ambulance Network**

- ❖ The state government of the Andhra Pradesh has decided to set up “India’s first government-run ambulance network” for animals.
- ❖ This decision was taken in order to further boost the animal husbandry and veterinary sector in the state.
- ❖ The Animal Husbandry Department was directed to set up one Mobile Ambulance Veterinary Clinic at each of the assembly constituency.

### **Kurnool Airport inaugurated in Andhra Pradesh**

- ❖ Union Minister for Civil Aviation Hardeep Singh Puri and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy inaugurated Kurnool Airport at Orvakal in Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ Kurnool is the sixth airport in Andhra Pradesh to become functional after Kadapa, Visakhapatnam, Tirupati, Rajahmundry and Vijayawada.
- ❖ The flight operations at Kurnool airport will commence under the Regional Connectivity Scheme – Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN).
- ❖ Direct flight operations to Bengaluru, Vishakhapatnam and Chennai will bring the region closer to the major hubs in South India.
- ❖ These routes were approved by MoCA under the UDAN-4 bid process in 2020.

### **Kurnool**

- ❖ Kurnool is the judicial capital of Andhra Pradesh.





- ❖ The city of Kurnool lies on the banks of Tungabhadra river.
- ❖ The Nallamalas mountain range runs parallel to it.

### **World's first mobile water from air kiosk**

- ❖ Maithri Aquatech has set up the 'World's First Mobile Water from Air Kiosk and Water Knowledge Centre' with the use of its 'MEGHDOOT solution' in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ Maithri Aquatech is a startup, formed under the initiative 'Make in India'
- ❖ MEGHDOOT means 'Messenger of the Sky'.
- ❖ This initiative is supported by GVMC (Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation) and project SEWAH (Sustainable Enterprises for Water and Health).

#### **MEGHDOOT solution**

- ❖ It is the only atmospheric water generator approved by the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- ❖ By using this technology, kiosk will provide clean, mineral-enriched potable water by harvesting the moisture in the air.
- ❖ That air is independent of the existing groundwater and surface water resources.
- ❖ It is an environmentally friendly and capable of producing 100% microbe-free potable water on a sustainable basis.
- ❖ It is capable of generating over 1 million litres of water every single day.
- ❖ The water generated meets the WHO (World Health Organization) as well as Indian Standards of potable water.

#### **Note**

- ❖ The kiosk will also act as a Water Knowledge Resource Centre by creating awareness to local communities and nearby schools on the benefits of good water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) practices.

### **UP tops in digital payments in country**

- ❖ Uttar Pradesh has set a record in the number of digital transactions.
- ❖ These transactions were facilitated through various modes like mobile banking, Unified Payment Gateway (UPI) App, internet banking, debit card etc.
- ❖ Also Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has identified two districts as the 'digital districts' in Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ Those two districts are Siddhartha Nagar and Firozabad.



## **PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS**

### **NASA's Mars 2020 mission**

- ❖ Swati Mohan, Indian-American led NASA's operation Perseverance Rover landing on Mars.
- ❖ Her family emigrated from India to America.
- ❖ The landing marks the third visit to Mars in just over a week.
- ❖ Two spacecraft from the United Arab Emirates and China swung into orbit around Mars in previous week.

### **30<sup>th</sup> Bihari Puraskar for 2020**

- ❖ The Bihari Puraskar is one of the three literary awards instituted by the KK Birla Foundation in 1991.
- ❖ Mohankrishna Bohara will be awarded the 30th Bihari Puraskar Award for his critical work 'Taslima: Sangharsh aur Sahitya'.
- ❖ The book was published in 2016.
- ❖ The award is named after the famous poet Bihari.
- ❖ The award is given every year for an outstanding work published in the last 10 years by a Rajasthani author in Hindi or Rajasthani.

### **2020 Ibrahim Prize**

- ❖ Mahamadou Issoufou, the incumbent President of Niger, has won the "2020 Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership".
- ❖ He is the sixth winner of the Ibrahim Prize since it was introduced in 2006.
- ❖ The 69-year-old Issoufou is stepping down as president of Niger in April 2021, after serving two terms in office.
- ❖ He first took office in 2011 and was then re-elected in 2016.

### **Deepika Padukone joins WEF list**

- ❖ Actor Deepika Padukone made it to the list of the Young Global Leaders.
- ❖ It was compiled by the World Economic Forum.
- ❖ The list also includes several Indian citizens and India-origin persons.
- ❖ The Forum of Young Global Leaders was founded in 2005 by Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the WEF.

### **Chairman of panel of external auditors of UN - Girish Chandra Murmu**

- ❖ The Comptroller and Auditor General of India, Girish Chandra Murmu, has been appointed as chairman of the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations for the second time in a row for 2021.
- ❖ The UN General Assembly in 1959 established the Panel of External Auditors.

#### **Note:**

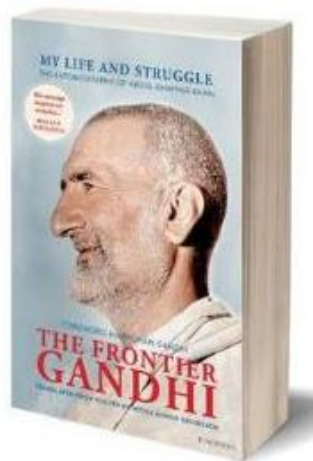
- ❖ Girish Chandra Murmu was the first Lt Governor of Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir in October 2019 after its formation under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019.
- ❖ Presently, he is the External Auditor of the United Nations' Specialized Agencies like
  - World Health Organization (WHO) (2020- 2023),
  - Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) (2020- 2025) and
  - Inter-Parliamentary Union (2020-2022).

### **Global women excellence award**

- ❖ Telangana governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan was conferred with the Top-20 Global Women of Excellence-2021 award (9th Edition).
- ❖ It was given through virtual mode from Illinois, United States.
- ❖ Vice President of the USA Kamala Harris, was also one among the recipients.

### **Frontier Gandhi's autobiography in English**

- ❖ The autobiography of freedom fighter Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was first published in Pashto language in 1983.





- ❖ It is now translated by former Pakistani civil servant and author Imitiaz Ahmad Sahibzada.
- ❖ The book is titled as 'The Frontier Gandhi: My Life and Struggle'.
- ❖ This is the “first time” that Khan’s autobiography is available in English.
- ❖ Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan is known as Bacha Khan or Badshah Khan.

### **King Bhumipol world soil day 2020 award**

- ❖ Bhopal-based Indian Institute of Soil Science of the India Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has been awarded the prestigious King Bhumibol World Soil Day 2020 Award.
- ❖ The award was conferred by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Rome.
- ❖ The prestigious global award was conferred to the ICAR for its commitment to raising awareness of the importance of healthy soils.

### **Grammy Awards 2021**

Award Category	Winner	Artist Name
Record of the Year	Everything I Wanted	Billie Eilish
Album of the Year	Folklore	Taylor Swift
Song of the Year	I Can't Breathe	Dernst Emile II, H.E.R., and Tiara Thomas, songwriters (H.E.R.)
Best New Artist	Megan Thee Stallion	
Best Pop Solo Performance	Watermelon Sugar	Harry Styles
Best Pop Vocal Album	Future Nostalgia	Dua Lipa
Best Pop Duo/Group Performance	Rain on Me	Lady Gaga with Ariana Grande
Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album	American Standard	James Taylor
Best Dance Recording	10%	Kaytranada featuring Kali Uchis
Best Dance/Electronic Album	Bubba	Kaytranada
Best Contemporary Instrumental Album	Live at the Royal Albert Hall	Snarky Puppy
Best Rock Album	The New Abnorm	The Strokes
Best Rock Performance	Shameika	Fiona Apple

- ❖ The 63rd annual Grammy Awards were presented at the Los Angeles Convention Centre at the USA.
- ❖ Billie Eilis became the first solo artist to win the record of the year award at Grammys for two years in a row.
- ❖ Beyonce created history by becoming the most-awarded woman in the history of Grammys with 28 wins.

- ❖ Beyonce picked up four awards during this year's ceremony,
  - Two for 'Savage' along with rapper Megan Thee Stallion,
  - One for her own 'Black Parade' and
  - Another for 'Blown Skin Girl'.
- ❖ Taylor Swift became the first woman to win the album of the year award three times.
- ❖ This achievement was made after winning the honour for her eighth album 'Folklore'.

### **Tomar king Anangpal II**



- ❖ The government has recently formed a committee to popularise the legacy of 11th-century Tomar king, Anangpal II.
- ❖ Anangpal II was belonged to the Tomar dynasty.
- ❖ They ruled parts of present-day Delhi and Haryana between the 8th and 12th centuries.
- ❖ Anangpal Tomar II was succeeded by his grandson Prithviraj Chauhan.
- ❖ Chauhan was defeated by the Ghurid forces in the Battle of Tarain (present-day Haryana).
- ❖ After that war the Delhi Sultanate was established in 1192.
- ❖ The Tomar dynasty shifted its capital in the 8th century, to Dhillikapuri (Delhi) during the reign of Anangpal II.
- ❖ He gave Delhi its present name.

## **Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2020**

- ❖ The Ministry of the culture of the government of India has conferred the Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2020 on the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- ❖ The prize for the year 2019 was conferred on Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said of Oman.
- ❖ Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the first President and also became the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, later.
- ❖ He is called as the “Father of the Nation” or “Mujib”.
- ❖ He was assassinated on August 15, 1975.
- ❖ It is an International Gandhi Peace Prize given by the Government of India.
- ❖ This award was launched in the year 1995 on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of Mohandas Gandhi.
- ❖ The award is open to all the persons regardless of their race, nationality, gender or creed.



## **SERB Women Excellence Award**

- ❖ Hyderabad based National Institute of Animal Biotechnology (NIAB) scientist Sonu Gandhi won the SERB Women Excellence Award.
- ❖ She recently developed a smart nanodevice for the detection of Rheumatoid arthritis (RA), cardiovascular disease (CVD), and Japanese encephalitis (JE).
- ❖ The award was instituted by the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), Department of Science and Technology (DST)
- ❖ It recognizes and rewards outstanding research achievements of young women scientists in Science and Engineering.



### **Methylobacterium ajmalii**

- ❖ The University of Hyderabad along with researchers from NASA have discovered a new bacterial species in International Space Station (ISS).
- ❖ The discovered bacteria belong to the family Methylobacteriaceae.
- ❖ The name given was Methylobacterium ajmalii.
- ❖ They have named it after an Indian biodiversity scientist Seyed Ajmal Khan.
- ❖ Seyed Ajmal Khan is a professor at the Annamalai University in Tamil Nadu.

### **Vyas Samman - 2020**

- ❖ Prof. Sharad Pagare will be conferred with the prestigious Vyas Samman - 2020.
- ❖ He will be awarded the 31st Vyas Samman for his novel "Patliputru Ki Samragi".
- ❖ The Vyas Samman is started in 1991.
- ❖ It is given by KK Birla Foundation.
- ❖ It is given for an outstanding literary work in Hindi authored by an Indian citizen published during the last 10 years.
- ❖ It carries an award of four lakh rupees along with a citation and plaque.

### **Maharashtra Bhushan award**

- ❖ Asha Bhosle wins 2020 Maharashtra Bhushan award of the Maharashtra Government
- ❖ The Maharashtra Government said that the legendary singer Asha Bhosle has been selected for Maharashtra Bhushan award.
- ❖ It is the state government's highest honour.
- ❖ A committee chaired by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray decided to select Bhosle for the award for the year 2020.
- ❖ It is given in fields of Literature, Art, Sport, and Science, Social Work, Journalism, Public Administration and Health Services.

### **EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2020**

- ❖ Marico chairman Harsh C. Mariwala was named the EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2020.
- ❖ He will represent the country at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year Award in June.
- ❖ Marico is one of the largest and most recognisable FMCG (Fast-moving consumer goods) companies in the country.



- ❖ It owns brands such as Parachute and Saffola.

### **Laxmipriya Mohapatra**

- ❖ Noted Odissi dancer Laxmipriya Mohapatra passed away recently.
- ❖ She was the wife of legendary classical dancer Kelucharan Mohapatra.
- ❖ She started her dancing career at the Annapurna Theatre in Puri in 1947.
- ❖ She has also acted in four Odia movies.

### **Lt Gen Pinto (retd)**

- ❖ Lieutenant General WAG Pinto (Retd) has passed away in Pune at the age of 97.
- ❖ He was a military hero who led an infantry division to a legendary victory in the 1971 India-Pakistan War.
- ❖ He led the 54 Infantry Division in the Battle of Basantar in the war.
- ❖ That time he coined the slogan “bash on regardless”.

## **SPORTS**

### **400 Test wickets**

- ❖ Ravichandran Ashwin became the fastest Indian bowler to pick 400 Test wickets in terms of matches.
- ❖ He reached the milestone in his 77th Test.
- ❖ Muralitharan got there in just 72 matches.
- ❖ Other Indians to have picked more than 400 wickets are Anil Kumble (619), Kapil Dev (434) and Harbhajan Singh (417)

### **QUICKEST TO 400 TEST WICKETS**

Bowler	For	Tests	Time Taken
Muralitharan	SL	72	9 yrs 137 days
<b>R Ashwin</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>9 yrs 110 days</b>
R Hadlee	NZ	80	17 yrs 0 days
D Steyn	SA	80	10 yrs 225 days
R Herath	SL	84	18 yrs 6 days
A Kumble	Ind	85	14 yrs 58 days



### Third batsman to hit 6 sixes

- ❖ Kieron Pollard became the third batsman in the history of international cricket to hit six 6s in an over.
- ❖ Kieron Pollard hit 6 sixes in Sri Lanka's Akila Dananjaya's over in a T20I in Antigua.
- ❖ The former South Africa opener Herschelle Gibbs achieved the feat first - in a World Cup 2007 match against the Netherlands.
- ❖ Pollard is the only 2nd batsman after Yuvraj Singh to achieve the feat in T20Is.

<b>SIX SIXES IN AN OVER</b>		
<b>IN INTERNATIONAL CRICKET</b>		
<b>BATSMAN</b>	<b>BOWLER</b>	<b>TOURNAMENT</b>
<b>Herschelle Gibbs</b> (South Africa)	<b>Daan van Bunge</b> (Netherlands)	2007 ODI World Cup
<b>Yuvraj Singh</b> (India)	<b>Stuart Broad</b> (England)	2007 T20 World Cup
<b>Kieron Pollard</b> (West Indies)	<b>Akila Dananjaya</b> (Sri Lanka)	2021 West Indies vs Sri Lanka bilateral T20 series (first match)

### 10000 international runs

- ❖ Mithali Raj on became the first Indian woman to score 10,000 runs in international cricket across all formats.
- ❖ Mithali achieved the milestone during India vs South Africa third ODI in Lucknow.
- ❖ Mithali became only the second women's cricketer to achieve the feat.
- ❖ England's Charlotte Edwards was the first female cricketer to reach the milestone.

### First cricketer to score 3000 runs

- ❖ Virat Kohli became the first cricketer to score 3000 runs in T20 Internationals.
- ❖ This was achieved in the match against England at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.
- ❖ Kohli is also the leading run-scorer in the Indian Premier League with 5878 runs.

### **Khelo India Scheme extended to 2025-26**

- ❖ Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has decided to extend the Khelo India scheme from 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- ❖ The Ministry has furnished an Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) memorandum to the Ministry of Finance for extension/continuation of the Khelo India Scheme from 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- ❖ The first Khelo India Games were held in 2018.

### **Girl Gang track**

- ❖ Girl Gang is a track by New Zealand singer Gin Wigmore.
- ❖ It has been announced as the official song of the 2022 ICC Women's World Cup.
- ❖ The tournament is set to be hosted in New Zealand from March 4, 2022 to April 3, 2022.
- ❖ Originally it was scheduled to be held from February 6, 2021 to March 7, 2021.
- ❖ It was postponed by a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Shooting World Cup**

- ❖ India won gold medals in both the women's and men's Trap Team events at the ISSF World Cup.
- ❖ The Indian trio of Shreyasi Singh, Manisha Keer and Rajeshwari Kumari won the gold medal in the women's Trap Team event.
- ❖ In the men's Trap Team event, Kynan Chenai, Prithviraj Tondaiman and Lakshay beat the Slovakian team.
- ❖ India topped the medals tally with a whopping 30 medals in total.
- ❖ Next best was the USA with a total of eight medals.

<b>INDIA TOPS MEDAL TALLY</b>					
ISSF Shooting World Cup (Delhi)					
		<b>Gold</b>	<b>Silver</b>	<b>Bronze</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	 IND	15	9	6	30
2	 USA	4	3	1	8
3	 ITA	2	0	2	4
4	 DEN	2	0	1	3
5	 POL	1	3	3	7

### Prithviraj Tondaiman

- ❖ Tamil Nadu shooter Prithviraj Tondaiman helped India to win gold in the men's trap team event on the final day of the ISSF World Cup in New Delhi.
- ❖ He was teamed up with Kynan Chenai and Lakshay Sheoran.

## **IMPORTANT DAYS**

### **ZERO discrimination Day – March 1**

- ❖ Zero discrimination Day is commemorated on March 1 every year by the United Nations and other international institutions.
- ❖ The day intends to eradicate mental boundaries like sex, gender, race, age, income class, ethnicity and religion.
- ❖ Zero Discrimination Day 2021 aims at ending inequalities, discrimination existing in the world, especially after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.



### History

- ❖ The day was first observed in 2014.
- ❖ It was launched by Michel Sidibe, the executive director of UNAIDS.
- ❖ The day aims to create global solidarity towards ending all forms of discrimination.
- ❖ The day is particularly noted by organizations like UNAIDS that combat discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS.

### **World Civil Defence Day - March 1**

- ❖ This day was integrated by the International Civil Defence Organisation in 1990.
- ❖ The Day symbolizes honour and prestige and signifies the importance of civil protection.



- ❖ The theme of the year 2021 is 'Civil Defence and the first aider in every home'.

### International Civil Defence Organisation

- ❖ The International Civil Defence Organisation is an intergovernmental organisation.
- ❖ It contributes to the development and safety of citizens while safeguarding infrastructure and the surroundings.
- ❖ It has a total of 59 member states.

### **International Yoga festival**

- ❖ The International Yoga Festival was inaugurated by the Agriculture Minister of Uttarakhand Subodh Uniyal, head of Akhil Bharatiya Akhada Parishad, Narendra Giri and Patanjali Yogpeeth chairman Acharya Balakrishna in Rishikesh.
- ❖ It was inaugurated on 1<sup>st</sup> March.
- ❖ It is a seven-day International Yoga Festival.
- ❖ The festival is being jointly organised by Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board and Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam.

### **Land Ports Authority of India's 9<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day**

- ❖ The Land Ports Authority of India celebrated its 9<sup>th</sup> Foundation Day on March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- ❖ It is head quartered at New Delhi.
- ❖ The Land Ports Authority of India is a statutory body working under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ❖ It is responsible for creating, upgrading, maintaining and managing border infrastructure in India.
- ❖ It manages several Integrated Check Posts all across Borders of India.

### **45<sup>th</sup> Civil Accounts Day - March 1**

- ❖ The Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS) observes the "Civil Accounts Day" every year on March 01.
- ❖ The year 2021 marks the 45<sup>th</sup> Civil Accounts Day celebrations.
- ❖ ICAS is one of the Civil Services of India, under the Department of Expenditure, Union Ministry of Finance.



### ICAS

- ❖ The Union Government initiated a major reform in Public Financial Management in 1976.
- ❖ The Audit and Accounts functions were separated by relieving the Comptroller and Auditor General of his responsibility of preparation of Union Government accounts.
- ❖ Consequently, the Indian Civil Accounts Service was established.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Jan Aushadhi Diwas Celebrations**

- ❖ The Third Jan Aushadhi Diwas celebrations began on 1<sup>st</sup> March.
- ❖ It will go on till 7<sup>th</sup> of March.
- ❖ Jan Aushadhi Kendra conducted Health Check-up Camps across the country.
- ❖ The health check-up activities include Sugar level check-up, blood Pressure check-up, free doctor consultation and free medicine distribution.
- ❖ Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI), the implementing agency of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) is celebrating 3<sup>rd</sup> Janaushadhi Diwas on 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.
- ❖ The theme for the year 2021 is “Seva bhi – Rozgar bhi”.
- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana is a noble initiative by Department of Pharmaceuticals, Government of India.
- ❖ It is now making an impact on masses in its endeavour to provide quality medicines at an affordable price.

### **Women’s History Month - 2021**

- ❖ Women’s history month is celebrated every year in March (March 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>).
- ❖ The main aim of this month is to honour the vital role of women in history and celebrate their diverse achievements and stories.
- ❖ It is observed annually in the month of March in the United States since 1987.

### **World Wildlife Day – March 03**

- ❖ World Wildlife Day is observed annually on March 3 to celebrate and raise awareness of the world’s flora and fauna.
- ❖ The day is about raising awareness about wildlife and educating yourself and others about the diversity and importance of flora and fauna across the world.

- ❖ This year's theme for World Wildlife Day is "Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet".
- ❖ On December 20, 2013, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 3rd March as UN World Wildlife Day to celebrate and raise awareness about animals and plants on our planet.



### **World Hearing Day – March 03**

- ❖ The day is held each year to raise awareness on how to prevent deafness and hearing loss and promote ear and hearing care across the world.
- ❖ The WHO organizes this annual World Hearing Day event.



- ❖ Theme for this year is 'Hearing Care for ALL! Screen, Rehabilitate, Communicate'.



- ❖ World Hearing Day 2021 will mark the launch of the first-ever World Report on Hearing.
- ❖ As per this report, it has been estimated that by 2050, one in four people will have a hearing problem.

### **National Safety Day - March 04**

- ❖ National Safety Day was observed for the first time in 1972.
- ❖ It is observed every year to commemorate the foundation of the National Safety Council.
- ❖ It is observed to propagate and create awareness among the general public about the various safety measures and hygienic measures that people need to inculcate in their lifestyle.
- ❖ This year's theme is 'Sadak Suraksha (Road Safety).'

#### **National Safety Council**

- ❖ It was set up by the Government of India, Ministry of Labour and Employment on 4 March 1965.
- ❖ It is setup to generate and develop a voluntary movement on Safety, Health, and Environment.
- ❖ It is an autonomous body.

### **National Security Day - March 04**

- ❖ In India, March 04 is celebrated as National Security Day (Rastriya Suraksha Diwas) every year, in the honour of the Indian Security Forces.
- ❖ The day aims to show gratitude to all the security forces, including policemen, para-military forces, commandos, guards, army officers, and other persons involved in security.
- ❖ March 04 also marks the day when the National Security Council (NSC) of India was established, in 1966.
- ❖ The first National Security Day was held in 1972.

#### **National Security Council**

- ❖ The Security Council looks into the economic, political and strategic security concerns of India.
- ❖ It was established in 1998 by the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- ❖ NSC was setup by the Ministry of Labour under the Government of India.

## **Chabahar Day**

- ❖ India will commemorate 'Chabahar Day' on March 4 on the margins of the Maritime India Summit-2021.
- ❖ It is being held from March 2 to 4.
- ❖ Ministers from Afghanistan, Armenia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Uzbekistan will participate in the event.

## **Chabahar port**

- ❖ India and Iran had signed an agreement in 2018 to develop the Chabahar Port, located in the Gulf of Oman in south-eastern Iran.
- ❖ Chabahar is the only Iranian port with direct access to the Indian Ocean.
- ❖ The port is a key connectivity project that is aimed at boosting trade ties between India, Iran, and Afghanistan.



## **Jan Aushadhi Diwas – March 7**

- ❖ The day aims to create awareness and providing thrust to the use of generic medicines.
- ❖ The first Jan Aushadhi Diwas was celebrated on 7th of March 2019.
- ❖ 1st March to 7th March is celebrated as 'Janaushadhi Week' across the nation with the theme of "Jan Aushadhi – Seva Bhi, Rozgar Bhi".
- ❖ Janaushadhi Kendras is the world's biggest retail pharma chain.
- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana initiative aims at providing quality medicines at an affordable price to the general public.



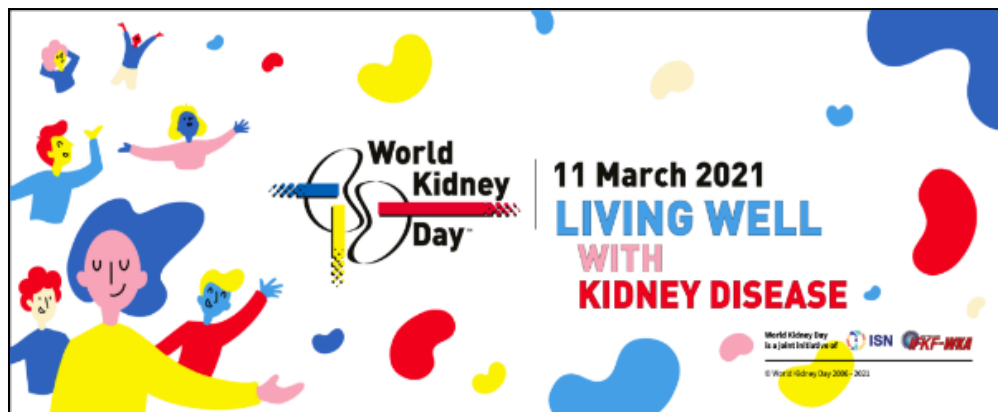


### **International Women's Day – March 8**

- ❖ This year's theme is "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world".
- ❖ The United Nations began celebrating International Women's Day in the International Women's Year, 1975.
- ❖ In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly invited member states to proclaim March 8 as the UN Day for women's rights and world peace.

### **World Kidney Day - March 11**

- ❖ World Kidney Day is a global campaign aimed at raising awareness of the importance of our kidneys.
- ❖ World Kidney Day is a joint initiative of the International Society of Nephrology (ISN) and the International Federation of Kidney Foundations (IFKF).
- ❖ World Kidney Day was started in 2006.
- ❖ This year the theme of this day is "Living Well with Kidney Disease".





### **CISF raising day - March 10**

- ❖ CISF (Central Industrial Security Force) Raising Day is observed every year on March 10.
- ❖ The day was created for better protection and security of industrial undertakings in the country.
- ❖ The CISF is known to provide security cover to 300 industrial units, government infrastructure projects, and facilities and establishments located all over the country.
- ❖ CISF Raising Day was created in 1969 with a strength of 2,800 personnel to provide security cover to PSUs (Public Sector Undertakings).
- ❖ Subsequently, the CISF was made into an armed force of India by another Act of the Parliament passed on 15 June 1983.

### **CISF**

- ❖ CISF is one of six paramilitary forces in the country.
- ❖ It is a Central Armed Police Force in India.
- ❖ It functions under the Union Home Ministry.
- ❖ Its headquarters is at New Delhi.

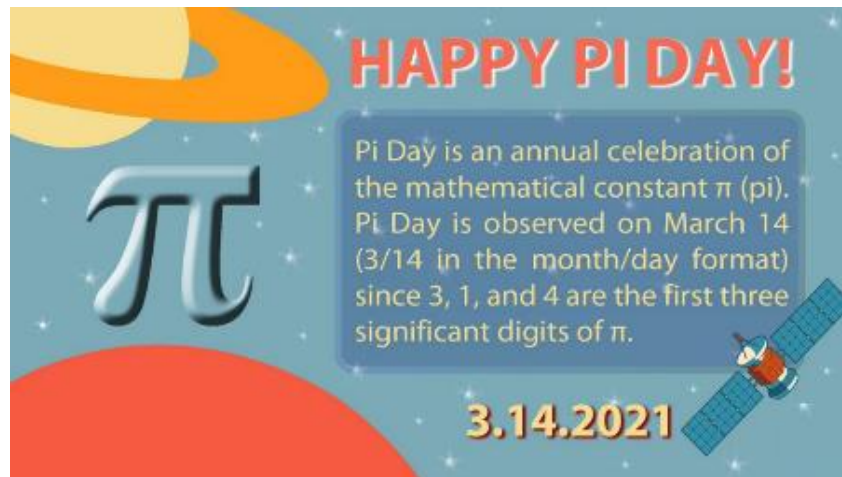
### **World Glaucoma Week 2021**

- ❖ Glaucoma is the second most common cause of blindness worldwide.
- ❖ World Glaucoma Week is a global joint initiative between the World Glaucoma Association and the World Glaucoma Patient Network.
- ❖ The goal is to alert everyone to have regular eye (and optic nerve) checks in order to detect glaucoma as early as possible.
- ❖ World Glaucoma Day is observed every year on March 12.
- ❖ Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of irreversible blindness.
- ❖ But with early treatment, the damage may get limited and sight may be saved.

### **Pi Day – March 14**

- ❖ Pi is the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter.
- ❖ The value of Pi is 3.14 and the initial of the number is 3.
- ❖ Thus, it is observed in March as it is the third month in the annual calendar.
- ❖ The symbol of Pi was discovered by William Jones in the year 1706.

- ❖ The value of the Pi was first calculated by Mathematician, Archimedes of Syracuse.
- ❖ UNESCO started observing Pi Day as 'International Day of Mathematics' from the year 2019.
- ❖ Pi Approximation Day is observed on July 22 (22/7 in the day/month format).



### **World Consumer Rights Day – March 15**

- ❖ The 2021 theme is "Tackle Plastic Pollution".
- ❖ The history of World Consumer Rights Day starts with the USA President John F Kennedy.
- ❖ On March 15, 1962, he sent a special message to the US Congress to address the consumer rights issue.
- ❖ He was the first world leader to do so.
- ❖ The first World Consumer Rights Day was observed on 15 March 1983.



### **International Day of Action for Rivers - March 14**

- ❖ This year, it is the 24th edition of the International Day of Action for Rivers.
- ❖ It is a day dedicated to save, celebrate and make people around us aware about our life-giving source of water.
- ❖ Theme of the year 2021 is 'Rights of Rivers'.

### **National Vaccination Day - March 16**

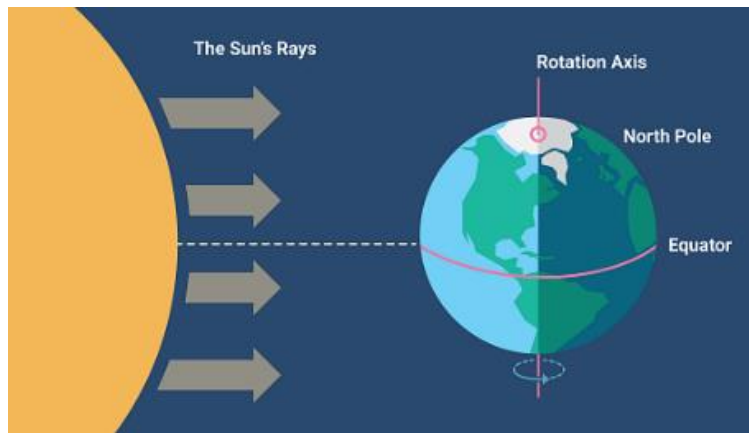
- ❖ The National Vaccination Day is celebrated every year on March 16 in India.
- ❖ It is also called the National Immunization Day.
- ❖ This day is to convey the importance of vaccination to the entire nation.
- ❖ The day was first observed in the year 1995.
- ❖ It was in 1995 India started the Pulse Polio Programme.
- ❖ The first dose of Oral Polio Vaccine was given.



### **The Spring Equinox - March 20**

- ❖ The Spring Equinox is also known as "Vernal Equinox".
- ❖ In the year 2021, it will fall on March 20, 2021.
- ❖ March 20 is the most common date for the Spring Equinox.
- ❖ However, it can occur on any date between 19 to 21 March.
- ❖ March 20 is considered as the first day of the spring as per the astronomical calculation of the seasons.
- ❖ The date is based on the two equinoxes and solstices.

- ❖ The astronomical spring will end on June 21, 2021 which is called as the summer solstice.



### **Global Recycling Day – March 18**

- ❖ It was first observed on 2018.
- ❖ It is to create awareness among the masses about the rapid pace at which our natural resources are being used.
- ❖ The day also promotes the concept and practice of recycling.
- ❖ In 2021, the theme of Global Recycling Day is “Celebrating Our Recycling Heroes”.
- ❖ The recyclable products also known as the 'Seventh Resource'.
- ❖ It saves over 700 million tonnes in CO2 emissions.
- ❖ This is projected to increase to one billion tonnes by 2030.



### **Ordnance Factories' Day – March 18**

- ❖ The production of India's oldest Ordnance Factory was started in 18th of March, 1802.
- ❖ It is at Cossipore of Kolkata.
- ❖ OFB is the 37th largest defence equipment manufacturer in the world, 2nd largest in Asia, and the largest in India.
- ❖ OFB is referred to as the “Fourth Arm of Defence” and the “Force Behind the Armed Forces” of India.
- ❖ OFB is functioning under the Department of Defence Production of Ministry of Defence.
- ❖ The Indian Ordnance Factories supplies products to all three Indian Armed Forces. ie the Indian Army, Indian Navy, and Indian Air force.
- ❖ OFB was founded in 1775.
- ❖ Its Headquarters is at Kolkata.

### **World Sleep Day – March 19**

- ❖ It is observed annually on March 19.
- ❖ This year's theme will be 'Regular Sleep, Healthy Future'.

### **World Sparrow Day – March 20**

- ❖ It is a day to raise awareness and protect the common house sparrows.
- ❖ It is an international initiative by the Nature Forever Society of India in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France).
- ❖ The Nature Forever Society was started by Mohammed Dilawar, an Indian conservationist.
- ❖ He started his work helping the house sparrow in Nashik.
- ❖ The theme for World Sparrow Day 2021 is “I Love Sparrows.”
- ❖ In 2010, the first World Sparrow Day was observed.





### **International Happiness Day – March 20**

- ❖ Since 2013, the United Nations has celebrated the International Day of Happiness.
- ❖ Happiness is closely linked to the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs of the UN.
- ❖ The UN in 2015 launched 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
- ❖ Bhutan in 1971 talked about Gross National Happiness.
- ❖ This year, the theme of this day is "Happiness for all, forever."
- ❖ The 2021 International Day of Happiness campaign theme is 'Keep Calm. Stay Wise. Be Kind'.

### **UN French Language Day – March 20**

- ❖ The event was established by UN's Department of Public Information in 2010.
- ❖ It is to celebrate multilingualism and cultural diversity.
- ❖ It also aims to promote equal use of all six official languages of the United Nations.
- ❖ These are Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.
- ❖ The days are as follows
  - Arabic (18 December)
  - Chinese (20 April)
  - English (23 April)
  - French (20 March)
  - Russian (6 June)
  - Spanish (23 April)
- ❖ In 2020 the Portuguese language was added as UN Portuguese Language Day on 5th May.

### **Nowruz – March 20**

- ❖ It is the Iranian New Year also known as the Persian New Year.
- ❖ Nowruz marks the first day of spring and is celebrated on the day of the astronomical vernal equinox.
- ❖ In India, the Parsi community celebrate Nowruz with full fervour.
- ❖ The Delhi sultan Balban introduced this festival in India.
- ❖ Later on, Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb abolished the celebration of Nauroz.

### **World Puppetry Day – March 21**

- ❖ The idea came from the puppet theatre artist Javad Zolfaghari from Iran.
- ❖ The Jim Henson Company of the USA has remained a leader in family entertainment for over 60 years and is recognized as an innovator in puppetry.
- ❖ Puppetry is a form of theatre or performance that involves the manipulation of puppets – inanimate objects.

### **World Oral Health Day – March 21**

- ❖ The theme for the next three years, 2021-2023 is “Be Proud Of Your Mouth”.
- ❖ It is an initiative of FDI World Dental Federation.

### **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination – March 21**

- ❖ In 1966, the United Nations General Assembly called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination.
- ❖ On that day, in 1960, police opened fire at a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa, against the apartheid pass laws.
- ❖ This year, the theme for this day is "Youth standing up against racism."

### **World Down Syndrome Day (WSDS) - March 21**

- ❖ It was declared by the United Nations General Assembly in 2011.
- ❖ The 21st day of March (the 3rd month of the year) was selected to signify the uniqueness of the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome
- ❖ Down syndrome is a genetic disorder caused by the presence of all or part of a third copy of chromosome 21.

### **World Poetry Day – March 21**

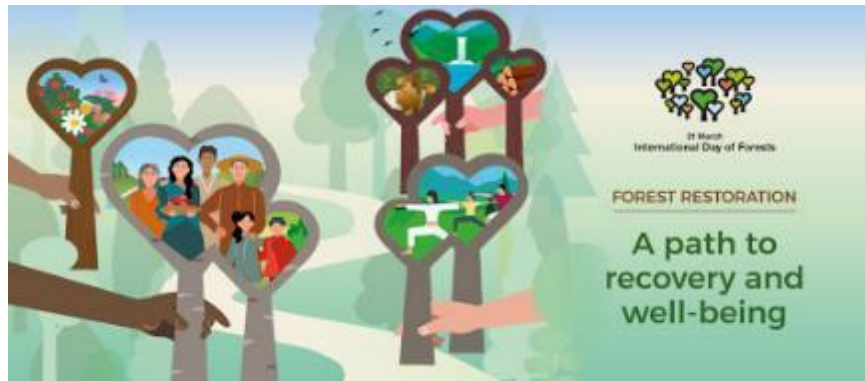




- ❖ It was declared by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in 1999.
- ❖ It is with the aim of supporting linguistic diversity through poetic expression and increasing the opportunity for endangered languages to be heard.

### **International Day of Forests (IDF) - March 21**

- ❖ It was observed for the first time in 2013.
- ❖ The theme for 2021 is "Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being".
- ❖ The organizers are the United Nations Forum on Forests and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
- ❖ This year's theme fits into the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), a call for the protection and revival of ecosystems around the world.
- ❖ The International Year of Forests is established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2011.



### **Bihar Day - March 22**

- ❖ It was marking the formation of the state of Bihar.
- ❖ It was on this day when the British carved out the state from Bengal in 1912.

### **World Water Day – March 22**

- ❖ The first World Water Day, designated by the United Nations, was in 1993.
- ❖ UN-Water is the convener for World Water Day
- ❖ The UN World Water Development Report (WWDR) is released each year around World Water Day.
- ❖ The day is used to advocate for the sustainable management of freshwater resources.

- ❖ The theme for 2021 was "Valuing Water" and "a conversation about what water means to you".
- ❖ The theme of each day focuses on topics relevant to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), which is in line with the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 6.



### **World Meteorological Day – March 23**

- ❖ It is observed as a celebration of the establishment of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).
- ❖ The World Meteorological Day has been observed on March 23 each year since 1961.
- ❖ The WMO came into existence on March 23, 1950.



- ❖ The theme for this year is 'The Ocean, our climate and weather'.
- ❖ It is in conjunction with the launch of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable (2021-30).

- ❖ The International Meteorological Organization was established at the first International Meteorological Congress in Vienna, Austria, in 1873.
- ❖ The International Meteorological Organization became the World Meteorological Organization on March 23, 1950.

## **World Tuberculosis Day – March 24**

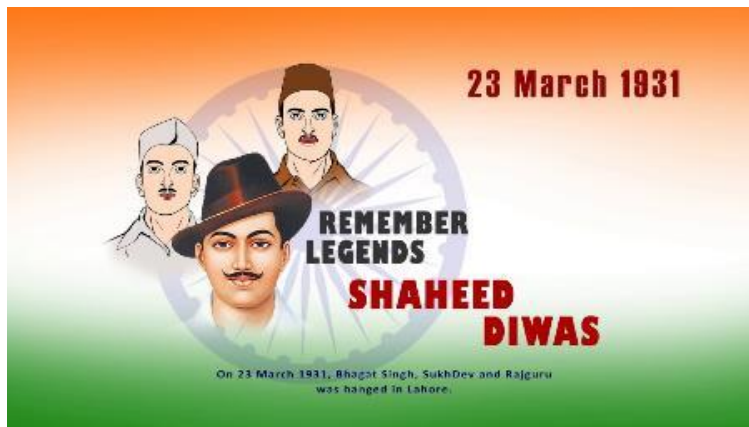


- ❖ 24 March commemorates the day in 1882 when Dr Robert announced that he had discovered the cause of tuberculosis, the TB bacillus.
- ❖ The theme of World TB Day 2021 - 'The Clock is Ticking'.
- ❖ Tuberculosis is one of the biggest health issues in India.
- ❖ It is caused by a bacterium called Mycobacterium tuberculosis.
- ❖ These bacteria attack the lung, kidney, spine, and brain.
- ❖ In 2020 the Indian government announced to eliminate TB from the country by 2025 through its National TB Elimination Program.
- ❖ Nikshay Poshan Yojana is a government scheme in India to provide 500 rupees per month for tuberculosis patients to buy food.
- ❖ It is one of eleven official global public health campaigns marked by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- ❖ These are
  - World Health Day,
  - World Chagas Disease Day,
  - World Blood Donor Day,
  - World Antimicrobial Awareness Week,

- World Immunization Week,
- World Malaria Day,
- World No Tobacco Day,
- World Hepatitis Day,
- World Patient Safety Day,
- World AIDS Day.

### **Shaheed Diwas - March 23**

- ❖ On March 23, the three freedom fighters - Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru and Sukhdev Thapar were hanged to death by Britishers.
- ❖ March 23 is observed as 'Shaheed Diwas' to pay tribute to this trio.
- ❖ They were hanged for killing British police officer J.P. Saunders.
- ❖ The trio wanted to avenge the death of Lala Lajpat Rai.



### **International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members - March 25**

- ❖ The International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members is marked each year on the anniversary of the abduction of Alec Collett.
- ❖ He is a former journalist who was working for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.
- ❖ He was abducted by armed gunman in 1985.
- ❖ His body was finally found in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley in 2009.
- ❖ This is a day to mobilize action, demand justice and strengthen our resolve to protect UN staff and peacekeepers, as well as our colleagues in the non-governmental community and the press.

## **International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade - March 25**

- ❖ The International Day is observed to offer opportunity to honour and remember those who suffered and died at the hands of the brutal slavery system.
- ❖ The International Day also aims to raise awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudice today.
- ❖ In order to permanently honour the victims, a memorial has been erected at United Nations Headquarters in New York.



## **World Theatre Day - March 27**

- ❖ The World Theatre Day is celebrated annually by ITI centers and the international theatre community.
- ❖ It is celebrated to raise the importance of theatre arts, how they played an important role in the field of entertainment, and the changes that theatre brings in life.



- ❖ World Theatre Day was initiated in 1961 by the International Theatre Institute ITI.

## **The Earth Hour 2021 - March 27**

- ❖ Every year, the Earth Hour is celebrated worldwide on the last Saturday of March month.
- ❖ This is to show support for the fight against climate change and commitment towards a better planet.
- ❖ The Earth Hour 2021 theme will focus on “Climate Change to Save Earth.”
- ❖ The Day is a worldwide movement organized by the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).
- ❖ It encourages individuals, communities, corporates, and households to turn off their lights for one hour, from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m.
- ❖ It was started as a lights-off event in Sydney, Australia, in 2007.



## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Plea against river linking project**

- ❖ TN CM Edappadi Palaniswami laid the foundation stone for the 262-km Cauvery vellaru - Vaigai – Gundar river interlinking project.
- ❖ Now the Karnataka Government has decided to approach the Supreme Court challenging Tamilnadu’s new scheme.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu is trying to utilise the surplus 45 Tmc ft of water.
- ❖ But as per Karnataka govt, this project is not in accordance with the Interstate River Water Disputes Act, 1956.

- ❖ According to that Act, the surplus water should also be adjudicated and the tribunal has to decide on it.



### **Australia's oldest Aboriginal rock art**

- ❖ A kangaroo painting was identified in Australia with the help of some ancient wasps.
- ❖ The kangaroo painting was created over 17,000 years ago by the Aboriginal community artists.
- ❖ The painting was identified as Australia's oldest intact rock art.
- ❖ The painting is a two-metre-long artwork.
- ❖ This artwork was painted in an early naturalistic style.
- ❖ The team discovered around 27 mud wasp nests along 16 different paintings from across the eight rock shelters.





### **State of School Feeding Worldwide 2020**

- ❖ The United Nations World Food Programmes (WFP) has released its report titled “The State of School Feeding Worldwide”.
- ❖ It provides an analysis of the State of School Feeding Worldwide in 2020.
- ❖ It was first published by WFP in 2013.
- ❖ The 2020 version seeks to analyse the direction and scale of change between 2013 and 2020.
- ❖ It provides an update on advances in evidence and understanding of school feeding programmes.
- ❖ When the pandemic was at its peak around April 2020, 199 countries had closed their schools.
- ❖ Due to this, 370 million children were suddenly deprived of nutritious meal of the day.

