



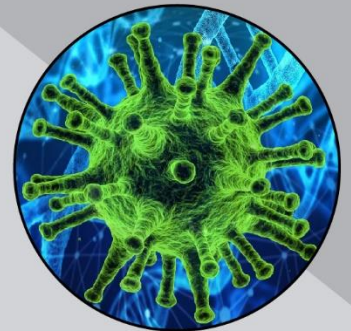
CivilsTap Himachal



# Current Affairs MONTHLY August 2021

By CivilsTap Himachal

For HPAS & Other  
Competitive Exam  
in Himachal Pradesh



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## Contents

<b>NATIONAL NEWS</b> .....	<b>10</b>
1.1 ATTORNEY GENERAL OF INDIA .....	10
1.2 PM FORMALIZATION OF MICRO FOOD PROCESSING ENTERPRISES SCHEME .....	10
1.3 ZEN GARDEN - KAIZEN ACADEMY .....	11
1.4 NATRAX-HIGH SPEED TRACK .....	11
1.5 NATIONAL DOCTORS' DAY 2021 .....	12
1.6 6TH ANNIVERSARY OF DIGITAL INDIA ABHIYAN .....	12
1.7 INDIA'S OLDEST RUNNING NEWSPAPER, MUMBAI SAMACHAR, TURNS 200 .....	12
1.8 PUSHKAR SINGH DHAMI TO BE NEXT CHIEF MINISTER OF UTTARAKHAND .....	13
1.9 NIPUN BHARAT INITIATIVE .....	13
1.10 COWIN GLOBAL CONCLAVE – HIGHLIGHTS .....	14
1.11 MINISTER LAUNCHES “MATSYA SETU” APP FOR FISHERMEN .....	14
1.12 GOVT CREATES ‘MINISTRY OF CO-OPERATION’ .....	15
1.13 J&K ENDS 149-YEAR-OLD DARBAR MOVE TRADITION .....	15
1.14 NITIN GADKARI BECOMES “BRAND AMBASSADOR” OF KHADI PRAKRITK PAINT .....	15
1.15 TOURISM MINISTRY SIGNS MOU WITH YATRA TO STRENGTHEN HOSPITALITY, TOURISM INDUSTRY .....	16
1.16 INDIAN SOLDIERS IN ITALY: WORLD WAR II .....	16
1.17 MINISTRY OF DEFENCE IMPLEMENTS SPARSH SYSTEM .....	17
1.18 INDIA'S FIRST MOVABLE FRESHWATER TUNNEL AQUARIUM INSTALLED AT BENGALURU STATION .....	17
1.19 DBT-NIBMG CREATES WORLD'S 1ST DATABASE OF ORAL CANCER VARIANTS .....	17
1.20 LADAKH: 1ST UT TO ACHIEVE 100% FIRST DOSE COVERAGE .....	18
1.21 KESARIA BUDDHA STUPA: BIHAR .....	18
1.22 NITIN GADKARI INAUGURATES INDIA'S FIRST PRIVATE LNG FACILITY PLANT AT NAGPUR .....	19
1.23 KONGU NADU .....	19
1.24 INDIA'S FIRST 5-STAR HOTEL ATOP RAILWAY TRACK IN GANDHINAGAR .....	20
1.25 NTPC TO SET UP INDIA'S LARGEST SOLAR PARK AT RANN OF KUTCH .....	20
1.26 PIYUSH GOYAL APPOINTED LEADER OF HOUSE IN RAJYA SABHA .....	21
1.27 LADAKH SIGNS MOU WITH SIKKIM TO TURN UT ORGANIC BY 2025 .....	21
1.28 ‘SCHOOL INNOVATION AMBASSADOR TRAINING PROGRAM’ LAUNCHED .....	21
1.29 JURISDICTION OF KRISHNA & GODAVARI RIVER BOARDS NOTIFIED .....	22
1.30 PM INAUGURATES THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND CONVENTION CENTRE – RUDRAKSH IN VARANASI .....	22
1.31 PRIME MINISTER INAUGURATES AND DEDICATES PRASHAD PROJECTS IN VARANASI .....	23
1.32 WHY DO YOU NEED THE ‘COLONIAL LAW’ OF SEDITION, CJI ASKS THE GOVT .....	23

1.33	TRIBAL AFFAIRS MINISTRY LAUNCHES 'COVID TEEKA SANG SURAKSHIT VAN, DHAN AND UDDYAM' .....	24
1.34	6 <sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF SKILL INDIA MISSION ADDRESSED BY PM MODI .....	24
1.35	RAJNATH SINGH LAUNCHES AI-BASED GRIEVANCE ANALYSIS APP "CPGRAMS" .....	25
1.36	COVID VACCINATION CAMPAIGN FOR PREGNANT WOMEN IN KERALA, "MATHRUKAVACHAM" .....	25
1.37	'BONALU' FESTIVITIES TO BEGIN IN TELANGANA.....	25
1.38	INDIA'S FIRST POD TAXI TO OPERATE BETWEEN NOIDA AIRPORT AND FILM CITY.....	26
1.39	TRIPURA TO PROMOTE COMMERCIAL CULTIVATION OF AGAR.....	26
1.40	MAHARASHTRA TO ISSUE CERTIFICATES USING BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY .....	27
1.41	PERUMKULAM IS KERALA'S FIRST 'BOOK VILLAGE' .....	27
1.42	UNESCO: HISTORIC URBAN LANDSCAPE PROJECT LAUNCHED FOR GWALIOR, ORCHHA .....	28
1.43	STUDY: 46.2% INDIANS REPORT POOR QUALITY OF LIFE .....	28
1.44	ADARSH SMARAK SCHEME .....	29
1.45	SC JUNKS PART OF 97TH AMENDMENT .....	29
1.46	INDIA GETS ITS 39TH WORLD HERITAGE SITE: RUDRESWARA TEMPLE IN TELANGANA.....	30
1.47	NITI AAYOG AND IEA LAUNCH 'RENEWABLES INTEGRATION IN INDIA 2021' .....	31
1.48	THE GAON BURAS .....	32
1.49	ASADHA POORNIMA DHAMMA CHAKRA DAY.....	32
1.50	HARAPPAN CITY OF DHOLAVIRA INSCRIBED IN UNESCO'S WORLD HERITAGE LIST .....	32
1.51	GOVERNMENT TO SETUP CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR ANIMATION, VISUAL EFFECTS, GAMING AND COMICS .....	33
1.52	BASAVARAJ BOMMAI: 23RD CHIEF MINISTER OF KARNATAKA .....	34
1.53	INDIA'S OLDEST STUDENT BHAGEERATHI AMMA PASSES AWAY AT 107 .....	35
1.54	IPS OFFICER NASIR KAMAL APPOINTED DG OF BUREAU OF CIVIL AVIATION SECURITY .....	35
1.55	LOK SABHA PASSES INSOLVENCY AND BANKRUPTCY CODE (AMENDMENT) BILL 2021 .....	35
1.56	'RAJA MIRCHA' FROM NAGALAND EXPORTED TO LONDON .....	36
1.57	INTEL, EDUCATION MINISTRY, CBSE LAUNCH 'AI FOR ALL' DRIVE .....	36
1.58	MOSJE: 'SAMAJIK ADHIKARITA SHIVIR' HELD IN MP .....	37
1.59	'KRISHIKARNA' PROJECT OF KERALA .....	38
1.60	LANDMARK DECISION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IN MEDICAL EDUCATION.....	38
1.61	AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING COMPLEXES SCHEME UNDER ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT PACKAGE.....	39
<b>National News: Practice MCQs .....</b>		<b>41</b>
<b>INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.....</b>		<b>49</b>
2.1	BAIHETAN DAM: WORLD'S SECOND BIGGEST HYDROPOWER DAM.....	49
2.2	INDIA JOINS G20-OECD TAX FRAMEWORK DEAL .....	49
2.3	US MILITARY LEAVES BAGRAM AIR BASE IN AFGHANISTAN .....	49
2.4	CHINA IS CERTIFIED MALARIA-FREE BY WHO.....	50
2.5	7TH INDIAN OCEAN NAVAL SYMPOSIUM CONCLUDES IN FRANCE.....	50



2.6	INDIAN-AMERICAN SIRISHA BANDLA SET TO FLY INTO SPACE.....	51
2.7	WORLD’S TALLEST SANDCASTLE BUILT IN DENMARK .....	51
2.8	KOREAN AIR WINS AIR TRANSPORT WORLD’S AIRLINE OF THE YEAR AWARD .....	52
2.9	US APPROVES BLUE ORIGIN FOR HUMAN SPACE TRAVEL .....	52
2.10	NEPAL, INDIA SIGN DEAL FOR LOWER ARUN HYDROPOWER PROJECT .....	52
2.11	NPCI EXTENDS BHIM UPI TO BHUTAN.....	53
2.12	WORLD YOUTH SKILLS DAY CELEBRATED ON 15 JULY.....	53
2.13	CHINA BEGINS CONSTRUCTION OF WORLD’S 1ST COMMERCIAL SMALL MODULAR REACTOR.....	54
2.14	SINGAPORE UNVEILS ONE OF THE WORLD’S BIGGEST FLOATING SOLAR PANEL FARMS.....	54
2.15	NEW ZEALAND CHAIRS SPECIAL APEC MEETING.....	54
2.16	FIT FOR 55 PACKAGE: EU .....	55
2.17	INDIA, SRI LANKA AND MALDIVES HOLD VIRTUAL TRILATERAL EXERCISE TTX-2021 .....	55
2.18	WORLD DAY FOR INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE .....	56
2.19	NEW PM OF NEPAL: SHER BAHADUR DEUBA WINS VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.....	56
2.20	US, AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN TO FORM QUAD GROUP.....	57
2.21	INDIA CHAIRS BRICS CONTACT GROUP ON ECONOMIC AND TRADE ISSUES .....	57
2.22	SAUDI ARABIA ENDS MALE GUARDIAN REQUIREMENT FOR WOMEN ATTENDING HAJ .....	58
2.23	SCIENCE EXPLORATION DAY .....	58
2.24	WORLD’S FIRST 3D-PRINTED STEEL BRIDGE OPENED IN AMSTERDAM .....	59
2.25	WORLD FRAGILE X DAY.....	59
2.26	WHO REPORT ON DROWNING PREVENTION IN ASIA-PACIFIC.....	60
2.27	UNESCAP’S GLOBAL SURVEY ON DIGITAL AND SUSTAINABLE TRADE FACILITATION .....	60
2.28	UN ADOPTS FIRST-EVER RESOLUTION ON VISION .....	61
2.29	WORLD HEPATITIS DAY 2021: THEME, HISTORY, AND SIGNIFICANCE .....	62
2.30	SWEDEN JOINS INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE .....	62
2.31	MALAYSIA REGISTERS WORLD’S FIRST AFFORDABLE NEW DRUG FOR HEPATITIS C .....	63
2.32	ALASKA EARTHQUAKE: PARTS OF ALASKA UNDER TSUNAMI WARNING AFTER 8.2 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE STRIKES.....	63
<b>International Affairs: Practice MCQs.....</b>		<b>64</b>
<b>SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY .....</b>		<b>68</b>
3.1	EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY TO HIRE FIRST DISABLED ASTRONAUT.....	68
3.2	LAMBDA VARIANT OF COVID-19 .....	68
3.3	IIT MADRAS, SONY TO COLLABORATE ON HACKATHON .....	68
3.4	RARE SUPERLUMINOUS SUPERNOVA SHINING WITH BORROWED ENERGY SOURCE SPOTTED .....	69
3.5	WHAT IS A BITCOIN HARDWARE WALLET? .....	69
3.6	NASA’S VIPER MISSION TO MAP WATER, OTHER RESOURCES ON MOON IN 2023 .....	70
3.7	ISRO SUCCESSFULLY CONDUCTS 3RD TEST ON VIKAS ENGINE FOR GAGANYAAN PROGRAM .....	70

3.8	COVIHOME: IIT-H DEVELOPS AFFORDABLE COVID-19 TESTING KIT .....	70
3.9	COVID-19: HERE'S EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT 'CYTOMEGALOVIRUS' .....	71
3.10	FIRST CASE OF MONKEYPOX DETECTED IN TEXAS .....	71
3.11	PEGASUS SPYWARE USED TO 'SNOOP' ON INDIAN JOURNALISTS, ACTIVISTS.....	72
3.12	DRDO DEVELOPS HIGH-STRENGTH BETA TITANIUM ALLOY.....	72
3.13	IOC TO BUILD INDIA'S FIRST GREEN HYDROGEN PLANT AT MATHURA .....	73
3.14	NASA'S NEW SPACECRAFT: NEA SCOUT .....	73
3.15	IIT-MADRAS DEVELOPS AI ALGORITHM CALLED 'NBDRIVER'.....	74
3.16	IIT ROPAR DEVELOPS FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND OXYGEN RATIONING DEVICE 'AMLEX' .....	74
3.17	JEFF BEZOS LAUNCHES TO SPACE ABOARD NEW SHEPARD ROCKET SHIP.....	75
3.18	WHAT IS H5N1 AVIAN INFLUENZA, ITS SYMPTOMS, AND HOW FATAL CAN IT BE?.....	75
3.19	DVARA E-DAIRY PARTNERS WITH IFFCO TOKIO GENERAL INSURANCE FOR AI-LED TAG.....	76
3.20	I-STEM ENTERS PHASE-II.....	76
3.21	NOROVIRUS OUTBREAK IN UK: WHAT IS NOROVIRUS? HOW DOES IT SPREAD? HOW TO PREVENT IT?..	77
3.22	ALPHABET TO LAUNCH A NEW ROBOTICS COMPANY- INTRINSIC .....	78
3.23	COVID BEEP-INDIA'S FIRST PHYSIOLOGICAL PARAMETERS MONITORING SYSTEM.....	78
3.24	JAWAHAR NAVODAYA VIDYALAYA STUDENTS DETECT ASTEROIDS UNDER KHAGOLSHALA ASTEROID SEARCH CAMPAIGN 2021 .....	79
3.25	MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES LAUNCHES ESSDP (EARTH SYSTEM SCIENCE DATA PORTAL) .....	80
3.26	COVID-19: NEPAL CONFIRMS CASES OF KAPPA MUTANT OF DELTA VARIANT.....	80
3.27	WORLD'S LARGEST STAR SAPPHIRE CLUSTER WORTH UP TO \$100 MILLION ACCIDENTALLY FOUND IN SRI LANKA	81
3.28	CARNIVAC-COV .....	81
3.29	"VARIANTS OF CONCERN" (V O C):.....	82
3.30	PROJECT PYRASOL .....	82
3.31	MAYFLOWER 400: FIRST ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SHIP.....	83
3.32	PARKER SOLAR PROBE: DETECTED RADIO SIGNAL FROM VENUS.....	83
3.33	MILLISECOND PULSARS DISCOVERED.....	83
3.34	NASA'S "CREW-2 MISSION" LAUNCHED:.....	84
3.35	COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY (CT) SCAN .....	84
3.36	"TIANHE" – CHINESE SPACE STATION CORE MODULE:.....	84
3.37	VINCOV-19.....	85
3.38	2DG- DRDO'S ANTI-COVID DRUG .....	85
3.39	MUCORMYCOSIS .....	85
3.40	NASA'S "OSIRIS-REX MISSION" TO BEGIN RETURN FROM "ASTEROID BENNU":.....	86
3.41	SPACEX: "DOGE-1 MISSION TO THE MOON":.....	86
3.42	AMPHOTERICIN B .....	86
3.43	First private astronaut mission- Ax-1.....	86

3.44	African swine fever:.....	87
3.45	Notified Diseases:.....	87
3.46	Simorgh Supercomputer:.....	87
3.47	DIPCOVAN.....	87
3.48	White Fungus:.....	88
3.49	VIPER Rover:.....	88
3.50	Internet Explorer to retire in June 2022:.....	88
3.51	ASPERGILLOSIS FUNGAL INFECTION.....	88
3.52	YELLOW FUNGUS.....	89
3.53	OPERATION SAMUDRASETU II.....	89
3.54	“PYTHON-5” AIR-TO-AIR MISSILE:.....	89
3.55	DDOS ATTACK.....	89
3.56	IRON DOME OF ISRAEL.....	90
3.57	INS RAJPUT.....	90
3.58	DEFENCE MINISTER LAUNCHES SEHAT OPD PORTAL:.....	90
3.59	NSA COMMISSIONED VESSEL SAJAG.....	90
<b>Science &amp; Technology: Practice MCQs:.....</b>		<b>91</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENT.....</b>		<b>95</b>
4.1	BARNADI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY: ASSAM.....	95
4.2	RESEARCHERS DISCOVERED BLACK-BELLIED CORAL SNAKE IN FORESTS OF UTTARAKHAND.....	95
4.3	NEW JUMPING SPIDER SPECIES NAMED AFTER 26/11 MARTYR TUKARAM OMBLE.....	95
4.4	TROPICAL STORM ELSA NEARS CUBA.....	96
4.5	MELTING OF ARCTIC'S 'LAST ICE AREA'.....	96
4.6	VEMBANAD LAKE: KERALA.....	97
4.7	BLACK PANTHER SPOTTED IN NAVEGAON-NAGZIRA TIGER RESERVE.....	97
4.8	NASA'S ICESAT-2 DISCOVERS ANTARCTIC MELTWATER LAKES.....	98
4.9	CHINA: GIANT PANDAS ARE VULNERABLE, NOT ENDANGERED NOW.....	99
4.10	WWF-UNEP REPORT ON HUMAN-WILDLIFE COEXISTENCE.....	99
4.11	HIMALAYAN YAKS SET TO BE INSURED.....	100
4.12	A PROPOSED ELEPHANT RESERVE IN CHHATTISGARH AND ITS REDUCED AREA.....	100
4.13	THE GENOME OF A SALT-SECRETING MANGROVE SPECIES DECODED BY DBT-ILS.....	101
4.14	INDIA'S FIRST CRYPTOGAMIC GARDEN INAUGURATED IN UTTARAKHAND.....	101
4.15	INDIAN SCIENTISTS DISCOVER NEW PLANT SPECIES IN ANTARCTICA.....	102
4.16	TIGER CORRIDOR IN RAJASTHAN.....	102
4.17	AMIT SHAH LAUNCHES GREEN SOHRA AFFORESTATION CAMPAIGN AT SOHRA (CHERRAPUNJI).....	103
4.18	SINGAPORE'S SUNSEAP TO BUILD WORLD'S LARGEST FLOATING SOLAR FARM IN INDONESIA.....	103

4.19	KANDLA BECOMES FIRST GREEN SEZ.....	104
4.20	EARTH OVERSHOOT DAY, 2021 .....	105
4.21	14 TIGER RESERVES IN INDIA HAVE ACCREDITATION OF GLOBAL CONSERVATION STANDARDS.....	105
4.22	INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY 2021 .....	106
4.23	INDIA'S LEOPARD COUNT JUMPS 63% IN JUST 4 YEARS .....	107
<b>Environment: Practice MCQs:.....</b>		<b>107</b>
<b>REPORTS .....</b>		<b>111</b>
5.1	ILO REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT WORKERS .....	111
5.2	GLOBAL CYBERSECURITY INDEX: ITU .....	111
5.3	INDIA RANKED 20TH IN GLOBAL STARTUP ECOSYSTEM INDEX 2021 .....	112
5.4	UDISE+ 2019-20 REPORT .....	112
5.5	DROP IN OPEN DEFECATION: WASH REPORT.....	113
5.6	YOUTH AND FOOD SYSTEM .....	114
5.7	STATE OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN THE WORLD 2021 REPORT .....	115
5.8	OECD-FAO OUTLOOK REPORT ON PULSES .....	116
5.9	OXFAM REPORT: INDIA'S UNEQUAL HEALTHCARE STORY .....	116
<b>Report: Practice MCQs.....</b>		<b>117</b>
<b>SPORTS.....</b>		<b>119</b>
6.1	DEEPIKA KUMARI WINS GOLD MEDAL AT ARCHERY WORLD CUP STAGE 3.....	119
6.2	12-YEAR-OLD ABHIMANYU MISHRA BECOMES YOUNGEST GRANDMASTER .....	119
6.3	MAANA PATEL- FIRST INDIAN FEMALE SWIMMER TO QUALIFY TOKYO 2020 OLYMPICS .....	119
6.4	INDIAN SHOOTER RAHI SARNOBAT WINS GOLD AT ISSF WORLD CUP SHOOTING.....	120
6.5	INDIAN WRESTLER SUMIT MALIK GETS TWO-YEAR BAN FOR DOPING.....	120
6.6	MARIYAPPAN THANGAVELU NAMED FLAG-BEARER FOR TOKYO PARALYMPICS .....	120
6.7	MC MARY KOM & MANPREET SINGH NAMED FLAG BEARERS AT TOKYO OLYMPICS.....	120
6.8	NORWAY'S KARSTEN WARHOLM BREAKS MEN'S 400 METRES HURDLES WORLD RECORD .....	121
6.9	SAMIR BANERJEE WINS WIMBLEDON JUNIOR MEN'S TITLE.....	121
6.10	ARGENTINA BEATS BRAZIL TO LIFT COPA AMERICA 2021.....	121
6.11	EURO 2020 FINAL: ITALY BEAT ENGLAND ON PENALTIES .....	121
6.12	INDIA TO SEND 228 CONTINGENT TO TOKYO OLYMPICS.....	122
6.13	LEWIS HAMILTON WINS FORMULA ONE BRITISH GRAND PRIX .....	122
6.14	VISWANATHAN ANAND WINS SPARKASSEN TROPH .....	123
6.15	INDIAN BOXERS WIN IN CADET WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP .....	123
6.16	SANDESH JHINGAN NAMED AIFF MEN'S FOOTBALLER OF YEAR .....	124
6.17	MADHYA PRADESH PARA SHOOTER RUBINA FRANCIS BAGS GOLD AT PERU EVENT .....	124
6.18	FOUR NEW SPORTS IN TOKYO OLYMPIC .....	124

6.19	13-YEAR-OLD SKATER NISHIYA- JAPAN'S YOUNGEST GOLD MEDALLIST.....	125
6.20	MIRABAI CHANU WINS HISTORIC SILVER, OPENS INDIA'S MEDAL TALLY .....	125
6.21	VANTIKA AGARWAL WINS NATIONAL WOMEN ONLINE CHESS TITLE .....	126
6.22	NANDU NATEKAR, INDIAN BADMINTON LEGEND, PASSES AWAY At 88 .....	126
6.23	NGANGOM BALA DEVI NAMED AIFF 'WOMEN'S FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR' 2020-21 .....	127
<b>Report: Practice MCQs :</b> .....		<b>127</b>
<b>AWARDS</b> .....		<b>130</b>
7.1	JOURNALIST P SAINATH WINS JAPAN'S FUKUOKA GRAND PRIZE .....	130
7.2	'DECODING SHANKAR', WINS AT TORONTO INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL .....	130
7.3	ODIA POET RAJENDRA KISHORE PANDA BAGS KUVEMPU RASHTRIYA PURASKAR.....	130
7.4	INVEST INDIA WON THE MOST INNOVATIVE INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCY 2021 AWARD .....	130
7.5	KAUSHIK BASU AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS HUMBOLDT RESEARCH AWARD .....	131
7.6	SYED OSMAN AZHAR MAQSUSI WON COMMONWEALTH POINTS OF LIGHT AWARD .....	131
7.7	CHIEF HYDROGRAPHER VINAY BADHWAR CONFERRED WITH ALEXANDER DALRYMPLE AWARD .....	131
7.8	PRAMOD BHAGAT NAMED DIFFERENTLY ABLED SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR 2019.....	132
<b>Awards: Practice MCQs:</b> .....		<b>132</b>
<b>DEFENCE</b> .....		<b>134</b>
8.1	AGNI-P (PRIME).....	134
8.2	RAFAEL UNVEILS SEA BREAKER AIR MISSILE WITH 300 KM RANGE .....	134
8.3	INDIA'S 1 INDIGENOUS DRONE DEFENCE DOME 'INDRAJAAL' DEVELOPED BY GRENE ROBOTICS.....	134
8.4	INS TABAR CONDUCTS MILITARY EXERCISE WITH ITALIAN NAVY .....	135
8.5	ARMY INDUCTS 10M BRIDGING SYSTEM DEVELOPED BY DRDO.....	135
8.6	RUSSIA TEST-FIRES S-500 AIR DEFENCE MISSILE SYSTEMS.....	136
8.7	INDIAN NAVY EXERCISE WITH UK'S ROYAL NAVY CARRIER STRIKE GROUP .....	136
8.8	INS TALWAR PARTICIPATES IN EXERCISE CUTLASS EXPRESS 202 .....	136
8.9	RAJNATH SINGH FLAGS-IN INDIAN ARMY'S SKIING EXPEDITION "ARMEX-21" .....	137
8.10	12TH EDITION OF EXERCISE INDRA NAVY.....	137
<b>Defence: Practice MCQs</b> .....		<b>138</b>
<b>ECONOMY</b> .....		<b>140</b>
9.1	AGRI MINISTRY LAUNCHES CROP INSURANCE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN.....	140
9.2	SHOPSY: FLIPKART'S NEW APP FOR ONLINE BUSINESS.....	140
9.3	HDFC BANK LAUNCHES 'SALAAM DIL SEY' INITIATIVE.....	141
9.4	INDIA RECORDS CURRENT ACCOUNT SURPLUS OF 0.9% IN FY21 .....	141
9.5	RBI CHANGES G-SEC AUCTION METHODOLOGY .....	141
9.6	INDIAN OVERSEAS BANK BECOMES THE SECOND MOST-VALUED PUBLIC LENDER .....	142
9.7	PROJECT BOLD: KVIC.....	142



9.8	ANTI-METHANOGENIC FEED SUPPLEMENT: HARIT DHARA .....	142
9.9	EXPORTS OF GI CERTIFIED BHALIA WHEAT FROM GUJARAT BEGINS.....	143
9.10	DPIIT SETS UP 9-MEMBER PANEL TO CURB DIGITAL MONOPOLIES.....	143
9.11	AMAZON LAUNCHES ITS FIRST DIGITAL KENDRA IN INDIA IN GUJARAT .....	144
9.12	GOI SETS UP 25-MEMBER DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL FOR CEMENT INDUSTRY .....	144
9.13	GIS-BASED INDIA INDUSTRIAL LAND BANK (IILB) - KEY FACTS .....	144
9.14	RBI ASKS BANKS TO STOP LIBOR SOON .....	145
9.15	NATIONAL ASSET RECONSTRUCTION COMPANY- KEY FACTS .....	145
9.16	UK EXPORTS APPLE TO INDIA- 1ST TIME IN 50 YEARS.....	146
9.17	G-SECS: RBI UNVEILS RETAIL DIRECT SCHEME .....	146
9.18	INDIA'S FIRST 'GRAIN ATM' OPEN IN GURUGRAM.....	147
9.19	INDIA'S FIRST MONK FRUIT CULTIVATION BEGINS IN KULLU, H.P .....	147
<b>Economy: Practice MCQs: .....</b>		<b>148</b>

CivilsTap Hlmachal

### 1.1 ATTORNEY GENERAL OF INDIA

#### WHY IN NEWS?

The central government has extended the term of K.K. Venugopal as Attorney General (AG) for one more year.

- This is the second time the Centre has extended his tenure. Venugopal received his first extension of term in 2020.
- Venugopal was appointed the 15th AG of India in 2017. He succeeded Mukul Rohatgi who was AG from 2014-2017.
- He would be in command of the government's legal defence in several sensitive cases pending in the Supreme Court, which includes the challenge to the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution and the Citizenship Amendment Act.

#### About:

- The Attorney General (AG) of India is a part of the Union Executive. AG is the highest law officer in the country.
- Article 76 of the Constitution provides for the office of AG of India.

#### Appointment and Eligibility:

- AG is appointed by the President on the advice of the government.
- S/he must be a person who is qualified to be appointed a judge of the Supreme Court, i.e. s/he must be a citizen of India and must have been a judge of some high court for five years or an advocate of some high court for ten years or an eminent jurist, in the opinion of the President.

**Term of the Office:** Not fixed by the Constitution.

**Removal:** Procedures and grounds for the removal of AG are not stated in the Constitution. S/he holds office during the pleasure of the President (may be removed by the President at any time).

### 1.2 PM FORMALIZATION OF MICRO FOOD PROCESSING ENTERPRISES SCHEME

#### WHY IN NEWS?

The Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme, launched under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, completed its one year on 29th June.

- The PMFME Scheme is currently being implemented in 35 States and Union Territories (UTs).

#### Nodal Ministry:

Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI).

#### Features:

##### One District One Product (ODOP) Approach:

- The States would identify food products for districts keeping in view the existing clusters and availability of raw material.

- The ODOP could be a perishable produce based or cereal based or a food item widely produced in an area. E.g. mango, potato, pickle, millet based products, fisheries, poultry, etc.

#### **Other Focus Areas:**

- Waste to wealth products, minor forest products and Aspirational Districts.
- Capacity building and research: Academic and research institutions under MoFPI along with State Level Technical Institutions would be provided support for training of units, product development, appropriate packaging and machinery for micro units.

### **1.3 ZEN GARDEN - KAIZEN ACADEMY**

#### **• WHY IN NEWS?**

Recently, Indian Prime Minister virtually inaugurated a Japanese 'Zen Garden - Kaizen Academy' at the Ahmedabad Management Association (AMA) in Gujarat.

#### **About:**

- It is a joint endeavour of the Japan Information and Study Centre at the AMA and the Indo-Japan Friendship Association (IJFA), Gujarat. It is supported by the Hyogo International Association (HIA) Japan.
- It has traditional Japanese elements such as Red Bridge Guzei, Shoji Interior, Glory of Tori, a 3D art mural, fusion Chabutaro, Taki waterfall, Tsukubai basin and Kimono scroll.
- It will propagate Japan's work culture in India and increase business interactions between Japan and India.
- Zen is a Japanese school of Mahayana Buddhism emphasizing the value of meditation and intuition rather than ritual worship or study of scriptures. Zen in Japan is meditation in India.
- Kaizen translates to 'change for the better' or 'continuous improvement'. Kaizen is a Japanese business philosophy that focuses on gradually improving productivity by involving all employees and by making the work environment more efficient.

### **1.4 NATRAX-HIGH SPEED TRACK**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Recently, the Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises inaugurated NATRAX- the High Speed Track in Pithampur, Indore (Madhya Pradesh).

#### **About:**

- It is one of the state-of-the-art automotive testing and certification centre under National Automotive Testing and Research and development (R&D) Infrastructure Project (NATRIP),
- NATRIP is the largest and most significant initiative in the automotive sector which comprises representatives from the Government of India, a number of State Governments and Indian Automotive Industry.
- It is a flagship project of the Ministry of Heavy Industries.
- It aims to create a state of the art testing, validation and R&D infrastructure in the country.

- It is a world class 11.3 km High Speed Track. The track is the longest in Asia and the fifth-largest in the world.
- It is developed in an area of 1000 acres of land.
- It has multiple test capabilities like measurements of maximum speed, acceleration, constant speed fuel consumption, emission tests through real road driving simulation, high speed handling and stability evaluation during manoeuvres such as lane change, high speed durability testing, etc. and is a Centre of excellence for Vehicle Dynamics.

## 1.5 NATIONAL DOCTORS' DAY 2021

### WHY IN NEWS?

Indian Medical Association (IMA) observed the National Doctors' Day on July 1 every year.

### ABOUT:

- This day is observed to honour birth and death anniversary Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy who was a great physician and second chief minister of West Bengal.
- He was born on July 1, 1882 and died at the age of 80 on same date (July 1) in 1962.
- This day shows gratitude to doctors who have selflessly aided people in time of need and tirelessly worked for health of their patients.
- This year, India paid tribute to those doctors who ensured that India did not succumb to challenges that Covid-19 brought.

### About Doctor's Day

Doctor's Day is not only celebrated in India but across different countries. However, the date varies. In United States Doctor's Day is celebrated on March 30 while in Cuba it is observed on December 3. Iran celebrates it on August 23.

## 1.6 6TH ANNIVERSARY OF DIGITAL INDIA ABHIYAN

### WHY IN NEWS?

6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Digital India Abhiyan was observed on July 1. On the occasion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with beneficiaries of various schemes.

### ABOUT:

- Beneficiaries shared their experiences about how adopting digital methods have made their lives easier.
- PM highlighted that, principles of 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance' is the need of hour in order to bridge gap between system and facilities.
- According to PM, digital India means opportunity for all, facility for all, and participation of all. It means a transparent & a non-discriminatory system an attack on corruption.

## 1.7 INDIA'S OLDEST RUNNING NEWSPAPER, MUMBAI SAMACHAR, TURNS 200

### WHY IN NEWS?



- On July 1, India's oldest running newspaper, Mumbai Samachar, will enter its 200th year. The Gujarati newspaper, with its office located in an iconic red building at Horniman Circle in Mumbai's Fort area, was first published in 1822.
- It was founded by a Parsi scholar Fardoonji Murazban, who had experimented with various other publishing options before landing on this successful print run.
- Formerly called Bombay Samachar, in Gujarati, the paper has always run as Mumbai na Samachar. It started as a weekly edition, primarily covering the movement of goods across the sea and other business news, such as the sale of property, and passed through several hands until bankruptcy turned it over to the Cama family in 1933.

## **1.8 PUSHKAR SINGH DHAMI TO BE NEXT CHIEF MINISTER OF UTTARAKHAND**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Pushkar Singh Dhama will be the next chief minister of Uttarakhand. He will be the youngest CM of Uttarakhand. 45-year-old Pushkar Singh Dhama, an MLA from the Khatima constituency in Udham Singh Nagar district.
- He will replace Tirath Singh Rawat, who resigned from the post. Dhama was elected by the state leaders during the legislature party meeting in Dehradun

## **1.9 NIPUN BHARAT INITIATIVE**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Union government is set to launch a new scheme called "NIPUN Bharat Initiative". It will be launched to improve numeracy, foundational reading, and understanding for early-stage students.

### **About 'NIPUN Bharat Mission'**

- NIPUN stands for "National Initiative for Proficiency in reading with Understanding and Numeracy".
- This scheme would provide an enabling environment in a bid to ensure universal acquisition of foundational literacy and numeracy.
- It will ensure that every child achieves desired learning competencies in reading, writing, and numeracy by end of Grade 3, by the year 2026-27.
- This initiative will be a part of school education programme, Samagra Shiksha.

### **Which is the implementing agency?**

NIPUN Bharat initiative will be implemented by school education department of Union government. In order to implement it, a five-tier implementation mechanism will be set up at national, state, district, block, and school levels across all states and Union territories.

### **Why this scheme was launched?**

Foundational learning has been a drawback in Indian schools. As per Annual Status of Education Report (Aser) findings, for successive year's bulk of Indian students pursuing elementary education in schools cannot even read, understand or do basic arithmetic. Thus, this initiative was launched to tackle this issue. This scheme is in line with new education policy

## 1.10 COWIN GLOBAL CONCLAVE – HIGHLIGHTS

### WHY IN NEWS?

CoWIN Global Conclave will be held on July 5, 2021. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is all set to share his thoughts at CoWIN Global Conclave

#### About:

- India will be offering CoWIN platform as digital public good to other countries run their COVID-19 vaccination drives.
- Around 50 countries like Mexico, Canada, Nigeria, Uganda and Panama have shown interest in adopting CoWIN.
- Prime minister has thus directed officials to create an open-source version of platform and provide it to any country that wants it for free.

#### About CoWIN Global Conclave

- It is a joint initiative by Union ministries of health, external affairs and the NHA.
- This virtual conclave will be inaugurated by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan.
- It will witness participation from health & technology experts who will represent countries from worldwide.
- Conclave will be organised with the aim of sharing India's experience with respect to universal vaccination in order to fight COVID-19 through Co-WIN

## 1.11 MINISTER LAUNCHES "MATSYA SETU" APP FOR FISHERMEN

### WHY IN NEWS?

Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Giriraj Singh launched Online Course Mobile App "Matsya Setu" for fishermen.

#### About Matsya Setu App

- Matsya Setu app was developed by ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA), Bhubaneswar.
- Funding support was provided by National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad.
- This app comprises of species-wise or subject-wise self-learning online course modules.
- On the app, renowned aquaculture experts will explain basic concepts and practical demonstrations regarding breeding, seed production and grow-out culture of commercially important fishes such as carp, murrel, catfish, scampi, ornamental fish and pearl farming.

#### Why this app was launched?

This online course app was launched with the aim of disseminating latest freshwater aquaculture technologies for aqua farmers across India.

#### Importance of Fisheries in India

India is the second major producer of fish through aquaculture across the world. it is also the 4th largest exporter of fish worldwide because it contributes 7.7% in global fish production. Fish exports accounts for 10% of total exports from India and about 20% of agriculture exports, as of 2017-18.

Fisheries and aquaculture production contribute about 1% to India's GDP and 5% to agricultural GDP. This sector provided employment to 28 million people in India

### **1.12 GOVT CREATES 'MINISTRY OF CO-OPERATION'**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi led government announced for creation of a new "Ministry of Cooperation" on July 6, 2021 ahead of cabinet reshuffle.

#### **About:**

- Ministry will provide a separate administrative, legal and policy framework to strengthen cooperative movement in India.
- Ministry has been created to realise the vision of 'Sahkar se Samridhhi' (Prosperity through cooperatives).
- Ministry will work to streamline processes for ease of doing business for cooperatives and enable development of multi-state cooperatives.
- With the creation of this ministry, there will now be a total of 41 central government ministries.

### **1.13 J&K ENDS 149-YEAR-OLD DARBAR MOVE TRADITION**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- The LG Manoj Sinha formally put an end to a 149-year-old biannual tradition of shifting offices between summer capital Srinagar and winter capital Jammu. The administration served notice to employees to vacate the 'Darbar Move' related accommodations in three weeks in Jammu and Srinagar.
- Administration cancelled the residential accommodation of "darbar move" employees in Jammu and Srinagar, implying the employees will remain stationed in either Jammu or Kashmir.
- Dogra monarch Maharaja Gulab Singh is believed to have started the tradition of shifting the capital in 1872. The tradition was continued after 1947 by J&K's political class, as it acted as a major bridge and a space for interaction between two diverse linguistic and cultural groups of Kashmir and Jammu regions.

### **1.14 NITIN GADKARI BECOMES "BRAND AMBASSADOR" OF KHADI PRAKRITK PAINT**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways & MSME, Nitin Gadkari, virtually inaugurated India's first and only paint made from cow dung, under the brand name 'Khadi Prakritk Paint'.
- In addition to this, the minister also declared himself as the "Brand Ambassador" of paint, to promote it across the country and encourage young entrepreneurs to take up the manufacturing of cow dung paint.

- The Khadi Prakritk Paint automated manufacturing plant has been set up on the campus of Kumarappa National Handmade Paper Institute (KNHPI), Jaipur, which is a unit of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).

### **1.15 TOURISM MINISTRY SIGNS MOU WITH YATRA TO STRENGTHEN HOSPITALITY, TOURISM INDUSTRY**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- The tourism ministry signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Yatra to strengthen and enable the tourism and hospitality industry.
- The event was organised under an arrangement between the Ministry of Tourism and the Quality Council of India (QCI), where the MoU for the Tourism Ministry Yatra tie-up was signed.
- While the MoU is meant to mainly strengthen tourism, it also takes into consideration and provides support for accommodation units.
- The MoU outlines that both parties signing the document would participate in encouraging the accommodation units to self-certify themselves on the System for Assessment, Awareness & Training for the Hospitality Industry (SAATHI) on the Online Travel Agency Platform (OTA).
- Earlier this year, the Ministry of Tourism had also signed an MoU with ClearTrip and Ease My Trip. There has been an ongoing effort by the ministry to strengthen the tourism sector in India while extending support to accommodation units.
- The accommodation units registered on **NIDHI** and **SAATHI** on the OTA platform are to be provided extended visibility with the signing of this MoU. SAATHI is an initiative by the Ministry of Tourism in partnership with the Quality Council of India.

### **1.16 INDIAN SOLDIERS IN ITALY: WORLD WAR II**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The Indian Chief of Army Staff (COAS) will inaugurate an Indian Army Memorial in the Cassino town of Italy during an official visit to the U.K. and Italy.

- The memorial commemorates over 3,100 Commonwealth servicemen who took part in the effort to liberate Italy in World War II (1939-1945).
- 900 Indian soldiers were also commemorated on this memorial.

#### **About:**

- Three infantry divisions of the Indian Army took part in the Italian campaign. These were the 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Indian Divisions.
- The first one to land in the country was the 8 Indian Infantry Division that saw action in Iraq and Iran when the British invaded these countries in 1941.
- The second one arrived was the 4 Indian Division that came to Italy from North Africa in December 1943. In 1944, it was deployed in Cassino.



- The third, which is the 10 Indian Divisions, was formed in 1941 in Ahmednagar and moved to Italy in 1944.
- Men from the Punjab, and Indian plains, coped with the extremely hostile conditions experienced in Italy.
- Even the Gurkhas from Nepal struggled with the heavy and persistent rain, and freezing nights in the Italian mountains.
- All three Divisions performed well in the Italian Campaign and were highly respected by the Allied and Axis commanders alike.

### **1.17 MINISTRY OF DEFENCE IMPLEMENTS SPARSH SYSTEM**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Ministry of Defence has implemented SPARSH (System for Pension Administration Raksha), an integrated system for automation of sanction and disbursement of defence pension.
- This web-based system processes pension claims and credits pension directly into the bank accounts of defence pensioners without relying on any external intermediary.
- A Pensioner Portal is available for pensioners to view their pension-related information, access services and register complaints for redressal of grievances, if any, relating to their pension matters.
- SPARSH envisages the establishment of Service Centres to provide last-mile connectivity to pensioners who may be unable to directly access the SPARSH portal for any reason.
- In addition to several offices of the Defence Accounts Department, which are already functioning as Service Centres for pensioners, the two largest banks dealing with defence pensioners – State Bank of India (SBI) and Punjab National Bank (PNB) – have been co-opted as Service Centres.

### **1.18 INDIA'S FIRST MOVABLE FRESHWATER TUNNEL AQUARIUM INSTALLED AT BENGALURU STATION**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Krantivira Sangolli Rayanna Railway Station also known as Bengaluru City Railway Station has become the first railway station in India with a movable freshwater tunnel aquarium.
- The state-of-the-art aquarium has been jointly opened by the Indian Railway Stations Development Cooperation Limited (IRSDC) in collaboration with the HNi Aquatic Kingdom.
- The Aquatic Kingdom aquarium is based on the concept of the Amazon River and is 12-feet long. The entrance of the station now gives a glimpse into marine life, with a beautiful dolphin humbly greeting visitors with a slight bow and a smile. A 3D selfie area, 20 feet of glass periphery are also some attractive features of the new facility

### **1.19 DBT-NIBMG CREATES WORLD'S 1ST DATABASE OF ORAL CANCER VARIANTS**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Department of Biotechnology (DBT) & National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (NIBMG) has created a first of its kind database of genomic variation in oral cancer. NIBMG made this database accessible to public. Database is being called as dbGENVOC.

#### **About dbGENVOC**

- It is a free resource and a browsable online database of genomic Variants of Oral Cancer. First release of dbGENVOC comprises of
  1. 24 million somatic and germline variants which have been derived from whole exome sequences of 100 oral cancer patients & whole genome sequences of 5 oral cancer patients.
  2. Somatic variation data from 220 patient samples were collected from USA and analyzed by TCGA-HNSCC project.
  3. Variants were identified by community approved best practice protocol and were annotated with the help of multiple analytic pipelines.
- dbGENVOC is a catalogue of genomic variants as well as a built-in search engine. It allows a reasonable extent of statistical and bioinformatic analysis to be carried out such as identification of variants in associated altered pathways in oral cancer.
- It will be updated annually with variation data of new oral cancer patients from India southeast Asia.
- It will support advances in oral cancer research.

#### **1.20 LADAKH: 1ST UT TO ACHIEVE 100% FIRST DOSE COVERAGE**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Ladakh has become first Union Territory to vaccinate all residents and guest population; comprising of migrant labourers, hotel workers and Nepalese citizens earning their livelihood in the territory; with first dose of Covid-19 jab.

##### **ABOUT:**

- In spite of Ladakh's low population, this is no mean feat because of region's challenging terrain, extreme weather and isolated centres of population. Many of the population are in fact difficult to access.
- As per data, total of 89,404 people from all eligible age groups have been administered with first dose of Covid vaccine.
- Second dose has been administered to 60,936 people.
- Vaccination was done in less than three months after third phase of vaccination started in India.
- About 6,821 Nepalese citizens living in UT were administered the vaccine.

#### **1.21 KESARIA BUDDHA STUPA: BIHAR**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The world-famous Kesaria Buddha stupa in east Champaran district of Bihar is waterlogged following floods in some parts of the district.

- The ASI (Archaeological Survey of India) has declared it a protected monument of national importance.

**About:**

- The stupa is said to be the tallest and the largest Buddhist stupa in the world.
- It is located in Kesariya, at a distance of 110 kilometers from Patna, in the East Champaran district of Bihar.
- It has a circumference of almost 400 feet and stands at a height of about 104 feet.

**History:**

- The first construction of the Stupa is dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE. The original Kesaria stupa probably dates to the time of Ashoka (circa 250 BCE), as the remains of a capital of a Pillar of Ashoka were discovered there.
- The current stupa dates to the Gupta Dynasty between 200 AD and 750 AD and may have been associated with the 4th century ruler Raja Chakravarti.
- The stupa mound may even have been inaugurated during the Buddha's time, as it corresponds in many respects to the description of the stupa erected by the Licchavis of Vaishali to house the alms bowl the Buddha has given them.
- In ancient times, Kesaria was under the rule of the Mauryas and the Licchavis.
- Two great foreign travelers, Faxian (Fahien) and Xuan Zang (Hsuan Tsang), had visited this place in ancient times and have left interesting and informative accounts of their travels.
- The discovery of gold coins bearing the seal of the famous emperor Kanishka of the Kushan dynasty (AD 30 to AD 375) goes on to further establish the ancient heritage of Kesaria.

### **1.22 NITIN GADKARI INAUGURATES INDIA'S FIRST PRIVATE LNG FACILITY PLANT AT NAGPUR**

**WHY IN NEWS?**

- The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, inaugurated India's first private Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facility plant at Nagpur in Maharashtra. The plant has been set up on Kamptee Road near Nagpur Jabalpur Highway, by Baidyanath Ayurvedic Group, the makers of Ayurvedic medicines.
- Once operational, this LNG filling station in Nagpur will be the first such facility to operate on a commercial basis. LNG is a clean, pollution-free and cost-effective liquid fuel, which is also easy to store and reduces logistics costs.

### **1.23 KONGU NADU**

**WHY IN NEWS?**

A list of new Union Cabinet ministers issued in Tamil Nadu has triggered a debate in political circles, by referring to 'Kongu Nadu', the informal name for a region in the western part of the state.

**Kongu Nadu**

- 'Kongu Nadu' is neither a place with a PIN code nor a name given formally to any region. It is a commonly used name for part of western Tamil Nadu.
- In Tamil literature, it was referred to as one of the five regions of ancient Tamil Nadu. There were mentions of 'Kongu Nadu' in Sangam literature as a separate territory.
- In the present state of Tamil Nadu, the term is informally used to refer to a region that includes the districts of Nilgiris, Coimbatore, Tirupur, Erode, Karur, Namakkal and Salem, as well as Oddanchatram and Vedasandur in Dindigul district, and Pappireddipatti in Dharmapuri district.
- The name derives from Kongu Vellala Gounder, an OBC community with a significant presence in these districts.
- Unlike Telangana or Uttarakhand, there has never been a demand or discussions about a separate Kongu Nadu in the modern political history of Tamil Nadu.

#### **1.24 INDIA'S FIRST 5-STAR HOTEL ATOP RAILWAY TRACK IN GANDHINAGAR**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is going to virtually inaugurate a newly-built five-star hotel on the top of redeveloped Gandhinagar railway station on July 16, 2021.

##### **About Hotel Project**

- Luxury hotel atop the railway station is having 318 rooms. It will be operated by a private entity. Hotel is spread across 7,400 square meters. It was built at a cost of Rs 790 crore.
- The hotel will be used to host national and international guests attending seminars and conferences at Mahatma Mandir, which is a convention centre located opposite to the property.
- 5-star hotel building has been over railway tracks and is one of the tallest buildings in Gandhinagar. It has the height of 76.99 metres with three towers of 9-11-11 floors. Building has been arranged in triquetra shape symbolizing 'Trinity form'.

#### **1.25 NTPC TO SET UP INDIA'S LARGEST SOLAR PARK AT RANN OF KUTCH**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

State-run NTPC Ltd is to set up India's largest solar park at Rann of Kutch in Gujarat.

##### **About:**

- This solar park will have the capacity of 4.75 gigawatt (GW).
- It will be set up in Rann of Kutch in Gujarat from where NTPC will also generate green hydrogen on commercial scale.
- NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd got the go-ahead from ministry of new and renewable energy (MNRE) for this project under "ultra-mega renewable energy power parks (UMREPP) scheme".
- NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd has also signed pact with Union territory of Ladakh to set up green hydrogen mobility project in region.



## 1.26 PIYUSH GOYAL APPOINTED LEADER OF HOUSE IN RAJYA SABHA

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Union Minister **Piyush Goyal** has been appointed as the **Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha**. His appointment is effective from July 06, 2021. He will succeed **Thawar Chand Gahlot**, who has taken charge as the Governor of Karnataka.
- Mr. Goyal, a two-time Rajya Sabha MP, is currently the deputy leader of the NDA as well as the Union Minister in the Cabinet.
- He is serving as the Union Minister of Textiles, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. The Leader of the House is responsible for organizing government meetings and business in the House.

## 1.27 LADAKH SIGNS MOU WITH SIKKIM TO TURN UT ORGANIC BY 2025

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The union territory of Ladakh organic, the administration of Ladakh, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Sikkim State Organic Certification Agency (SOCCA).
- A tripartite MOU has been signed between Ladakh and SSOCA regarding the implementation of Prampragat Krishi Vikas Yojana and Mission Organic Development Initiative (MODI) in the Ladakh region with the aim to convert Ladakh into organic by 2025.
- The main objective of this MOU is to get the organic certification after a tie-up with the Government of India.

## 1.28 'SCHOOL INNOVATION AMBASSADOR TRAINING PROGRAM' LAUNCHED

### WHY IN NEWS?

Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan and tribal affairs minister Arjun Munda jointly launched 'School Innovation Ambassador Training Program' on July 16, 2021.

- This scheme was launched for 50,000 school teachers.
- It will be implemented from July 20.

### Who designed the programme?

School Innovation Ambassador Training Programme was designed by innovation cell of education ministry and All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) for school teachers for first time.

### School Innovation Ambassador Training Program

- This Programme will provide training to teachers from Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)- affiliated schools including Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, Kendriya Vidyalayas, and Eklaya Residential Model Schools in India.
- Similar programme is run by AICTE for teachers in higher education.
- Teachers will be trained in online mode only for duration of two months.
- Training will be provided in five modules to encourage innovation and creativity among school students.

- Five modules include- entrepreneurship, innovation, intellectual property rights, product development, design thinking and idea generation etc.
- 40 trainers have been tasked with the work to train teachers.

## **1.29 JURISDICTION OF KRISHNA & GODAVARI RIVER BOARDS NOTIFIED**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Central Government has notified jurisdiction of Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) & Godavari River Management Boards (GRMB), Seven years after their constitution under Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act.

### **About:**

- With the constitution of boards, Centre transferred operation of all projects, including generation of hydel power, in two river basins in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to them. It will be in effective from October 14, 2021.
- Notification was issued by Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS).
- Notification brought 35 projects in Krishna basin and 71 in Godavari basin, under purview of boards.
- It empowered the boards to operate headworks of barrages, dams, reservoirs, part of canal network, regulating structures, transmission lines and power houses at projects.
- A.P. and Telangana will deposit Rs 200 crore each to bank account of KRMB within sixty days of publication of notification in order to enable boards to discharge its functions effectively.

### **Signification of notification**

This notification by Ministry of Jal Shakti is significant in light of escalation of dispute between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana with respect to project works and hydel generation at three reservoirs namely, Srisaillam, Nagarjuna sagar and Pulichintala.

### **Dispute between Andhra and Telangana**

Andhra has been demanding notification for boards' purview for long while Telangana has been opposing it claiming that handing over operation of projects without providing clarity on states' share of water will be meaningless.

## **1.30 PM INAUGURATES THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND CONVENTION CENTRE – RUDRAKSH IN VARANASI**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The Prime Minister has inaugurated the International Cooperation and Convention Centre – Rudraksh in Varanasi.

### **About Rudraksh:**

- Rudraksh is an international cooperation and convention centre that will offer a glimpse of the cultural richness of Varanasi.
- The centre has been built with the assistance from Japan International Cooperation Agency.

- Purpose: The centre has been developed with the objective to dedicate an ideal platform for social and cultural interactions between people and strengthen the city's competitiveness by developing the tourism sector.
- Moreover, the centre is also ideal for holding international conferences, exhibitions and music concerts and other events.
- Further, at the centre as many as 108 Rudraksha have been installed at this convention centre and its roof is shaped like a Shiva Linga.

### **1.31 PRIME MINISTER INAUGURATES AND DEDICATES PRASHAD PROJECTS IN VARANASI**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The Prime Minister has inaugurated the Tourism Facilitation Centre and operation of Cruise Boat in Varanasi. These projects have been developed under the PRASHAD Scheme.

#### **About the PRASHAD Scheme:**

- The National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in the year 2014-15.
- Purpose: It is a Central Sector Scheme launched with the objective of integrated development of identified pilgrimage and heritage destinations.

#### **Objectives of the Scheme:**

- To enhance tourism attractiveness in a sustainable manner.
- To harness pilgrimage tourism so that it directly affects and multiplies employment generation and economic development.
- Furthermore, to promote local art and culture, handicraft and cuisines, etc.
- To develop world-class infrastructure in religious destinations.

### **1.32 WHY DO YOU NEED THE 'COLONIAL LAW' OF SEDITION, CJI ASKS THE GOVT.**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The Supreme Court has questioned the Central government whether the provision of Sedition under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was still needed after 75 years of independence.

#### **What was the case?**

- A petition was filed in the Supreme Court challenging the constitutionality of the offense of sedition under Section 124A of Indian Penal Code (IPC).
- The petitioner stated that Section 124A should be struck down as it was in violation of Article 14 (equality before law), 19(1)(a) (freedom of speech and expression), and 21 (protection of life and personal liberty).

#### **What has the Apex Court said?**

- Firstly, the Supreme Court asked the Centre on why a colonial law such as sedition which was used against Mahatma Gandhi and Bal Gangadhar Tilak remained in the law book 75 years after Independence.

- Secondly, the court said that the sedition law was prone to misuse by the government. The use of sedition is like giving a saw to the carpenter to cut a piece of wood, and he uses it to cut the entire forest itself.
- Thirdly, the court wondered why the government which had repealed a number of pre-colonial laws was not looking into the sedition law.
- Fourthly, the court cited the example of Section 66A of the IT Act, under which thousands of cases were being registered despite the fact that the provision was struck down. Hence, there is rampant misuse of provisions without any accountability.
- Lastly, the court said that if we see the conviction rate under Section 124A, it is very low.
- According to the data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), cases of sedition have shown a rise in 2019, but only 3% of the sedition cases resulted in convictions.

### **1.33 TRIBAL AFFAIRS MINISTRY LAUNCHES 'COVID TEEKA SANG SURAKSHIT VAN, DHAN AND UDDYAM'**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Arjun Munda, Minister of Tribal Affairs on July 15, 2021, launched the 'COVID Teeka Sang Surakshit Van, Dhan and Uddyam' nationwide campaign in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF to accelerate COVID-19 vaccination of 10.5 crores tribal people in India.
- Munda launched the COVID-19 campaign via a conference link-up with field camps in Mandla, Madhya Pradesh, and Bastar, Chhattisgarh. Rajat Bansal, District Collector, Bastar, and Harshika Singh, District Collector, Mandla, shared about preparation levels for vaccination in respective districts.
- UNICEF India Representative, Dr Yasmin Haque said, "COVID-19 has exacerbated issues of access to sanitation, nutrition, and health services in the tribal areas making the people more vulnerable

#### **About:**

- The campaign will be leveraging 45,000 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVK) of the Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED). The campaign is expected to declare Van Dhan Vikas Kendras and villages in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh as COVID-19 free and related restrictions.

### **1.34 6<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF SKILL INDIA MISSION ADDRESSED BY PM MODI**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has addressed the nation on July 15, 2021, on the occasion of World Youth Skills Day 2021 and the 6th anniversary of the Skill India Mission.
- In his address, Prime Minister highlighted "Skill development of the youth of new generation is a national need and a huge foundation for self-reliant India".

- According to PM, under Skill India Mission, 1.25 crore youth have been trained till date. Skill India Mission initiative was launched by Government to train over 40 crore Indians in different jobs related to the industry.
- Under this mission, the government seeks to create an empowered workforce by 2022 with the help of several schemes and training courses.

### **1.35 RAJNATH SINGH LAUNCHES AI-BASED GRIEVANCE ANALYSIS APP “CPGRAMS”**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has launched a mobile application, called CPGRAMS to lodge grievances using artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning tools.
- The Raksha Mantri was briefed that this AI-powered application will automatically handle and analyse the complaints of the people and would reduce human intervention, save time and bring more transparency to their disposal.
- This is the first AI-based system developed to improve grievance redressal in the Government.
- The AI tool developed as part of the initiative has the capability to understand the content of the complaint based on the contents therein.
- As a result, it can identify repeat complaints or spam automatically. Based on the meaning of the complaint, it can categorise complaints of different categories even when keywords normally used for such search are not present in the complaint.

### **1.36 COVID VACCINATION CAMPAIGN FOR PREGNANT WOMEN IN KERALA, “MATHRUKAVACHAM”**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- The Kerala government’s campaign ‘Mathrukavacham’ to vaccinate all the pregnant women in the state against COVID-19 infection was inaugurated at the district level recently.
- Spot registrations for vaccination of pregnant women would be carried out at various government hospitals.
- Pregnant women can receive the COVID vaccine at any time during their pregnancy. The special vaccination drive comes as a strong defence to protect pregnant women.
- Vaccination will be made available in all district hospitals as part of the model program. In the beginning, the covid vaccine will be given to 100 pregnant women through spot registration.
- The State Health Ministry assured that in the coming days, covid vaccination for more pregnant women will be made accessible in all hospitals, depending on the availability of the vaccine.

### **1.37 ‘BONALU’ FESTIVITIES TO BEGIN IN TELANGANA**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**



- 'Bonalu' is a traditional folk festival celebrated every year in the Telugu month of Ashadham (falling in June/July), in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, and some other parts of Telangana state.
- The Bonalu festival was declared a 'state festival' by the K Chandrasekhar Rao-led government after the state's formation back in 2014.
- The Bonalu festival involves scores of devotees offering the traditional 'bonam' (derived from Bhojanam, meaning meals) to the goddess Mahankali at 25 temples across the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad.

### **1.38 INDIA'S FIRST POD TAXI TO OPERATE BETWEEN NOIDA AIRPORT AND FILM CITY**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Indian Port Rail and Ropeway Corporation Ltd (IPRCL) have prepared a Detailed Project Report or DPR for the pod taxi service between Noida Airport at Jewar and Film City.
- There are plans to run a driverless taxi between the two destinations. This will cost about Rs 862 crore, according to the detailed project report (DPR) submitted to the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (Yeida). This is a 14 km stretch. This will be India's first pod taxi service.
- Pod taxis can accommodate four to six passengers per car. This important project will provide smooth connectivity to residential and industrial areas falling between film city and the Noida International Airport. As per the DPR, the corridor will pass through various sectors such as 21, 28, 29, 30 and 32, among others, falling under the Yeida region.

### **1.39 TRIPURA TO PROMOTE COMMERCIAL CULTIVATION OF AGAR**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The government of Tripura has taken initiatives to promote commercial cultivation of Agar trees and has set a target of achieving Rs 2,000 crore business from this sector in the coming three years.

#### **ABOUT:**

- Tripura government has plans to export 1,500 kg of Agar oil and 75,000 kg of Agar chips in the year 2021-22.
- Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb had met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday and apprised him about the potential of Agar trees.
- Tripura government has launched a draft named Tripura Agar Wood Policy 2021 and a target has been set up of doubling the plantation by the year 2025. Currently, there are over 50 lakh agar trees in the state.
- Chief Minister of Tripura had also requested PM Modi for fixing a quota on Agarwood exportation and its products.

#### **About Agar Trees**

Agar (*Aquilaria malaccensis*) is an evergreen tree that grows in abundance in the state of Tripura. The state's forest department has said that this species has a huge potential of creating an

economic revolution in the state after bamboo, rubber and other major forestry crops. Due to low input cost for its growth and management and its intercropping adaptation could make agar a cash crop.

The government of Tripura is contemplating in bringing a detailed policy for the promotion of Agar tree plantation, development and sustainable harvesting of the Agarwood-based Industry.

#### **1.40 MAHARASHTRA TO ISSUE CERTIFICATES USING BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Maharashtra will be the first state in the country to issue educational documents using blockchain technology. Forgery of documents is a serious concern for various educational and other institutions.
- Many steps are being taken to avoid forgery along with verification of documents. Maharashtra State Board of Skill Development has decided to issue blockchain-based certificates to students.

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- The Kunariya village of Kutch district in Gujarat has come out with a unique idea of holding Balika Panchayat.
- The first-ever elections of this Balika Panchayat were successfully. Inspired by the TV series, Balika Vadhu, the Kunariya village in Kutch district today held elections for the unique Balika Panchayat, which aims to develop leadership qualities in the girls for Future Panchayat polls.
- Young females aged between 10 to 21 years contested elections for this unique Panchayat which will take up issues pertaining to adolescent girls and women in the village.
- This Panchayat will be run by the girls and for the girls.
- The separate sitting arrangements will be given to these girls and they will be given to use the budget of gender sensitivity.
- This unique step by a small village like Kunariya aligns with PM's vision of enhancing young women's participation in the political process.

#### **1.41 PERUMKULAM IS KERALA'S FIRST 'BOOK VILLAGE'**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Perumkulam, in Kollam District, has been bestowed with the title Kerala's first 'Book Village'. This claim to fame results from years of concerted efforts aimed at encouraging the habit of reading.
- Perumkulam is a small village in Kulakkada near Kottarakkara in Kollam district. Bapuji Smaraka Grandhasala', a library in the village is at the forefront in this effort of making it the first book village of the State.

- The library inculcates passion towards reading by setting up bookshelves, or 'Book Nests' placed at different corners of the village. Anybody can take books from the book nests, read them, and keep them back.

#### **1.42 UNESCO: HISTORIC URBAN LANDSCAPE PROJECT LAUNCHED FOR GWALIOR, ORCHHA**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

In the state of Madhya Pradesh, the cities of Orchha and Gwalior have been selected by UNESCO under its 'Historic Urban Landscape Project.' This project was started in the year 2011.

##### **About:**

- UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscape project for the cities of Orchha and Gwalior was launched through video conferencing by Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chouhan.
- Six cities of South Asia, including Indian cities of Varanasi and Ajmer are already involved in this project. Gwalior and Orchha have been included as the 7th and 8th cities of South Asia.
- UNESCO will prepare the management and development of these cities.
- This project will help in boosting the tourism of the state of Madhya Pradesh. Along with this additional employment opportunities will be created.
- These cities will be jointly developed by UNESCO, the Government of India and the state of Madhya Pradesh by putting primary focus on their cultural and historical improvement.
- By implementing this project of UNESCO, full care of the history, culture, traditions, nature as well as heritage of the cities will be sustainably developed.

##### **About Historic Urban Landscape Project**

This project of UNESCO was started in the year 2011 with the primary aim of well-planned and all inclusive development of the fast-growing historical cities around the world, while keeping in mind to preserve the heritage and the culture.

#### **1.43 STUDY: 46.2% INDIANS REPORT POOR QUALITY OF LIFE**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

A study conducted by Danone India, a French packaged foods and beverages company, along with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), has gauged the standard of psychological and physical, social relationships, and environment among more than 2,700 adults in India. It came up with the report that 46.2% Indians report a poor quality of life.

##### **Indicators of the survey**

- The findings were based on four aspects— psychological health, physical health, environment and social relationships.
- Those who were surveyed were categorized into either having a good or a poor Quality of Life. Between May and June 2021, the survey was conducted by Ipsos in Kolkata, Delhi, Lucknow, Mumbai, Indore, Chennai, Hyderabad and Patna.

- This study covered women and men belonging to the age group of 30 to 50 years across different socio-economic class.

#### **Finding of the report**

- This report has revealed that nearly one out of every two Indian adults have reported a poor quality of life. That is 46.2% Indians.
- The city of Kolkata has recorded the highest percentage of adults (65%) with a poor Quality of Life score.
- Kolkata was followed by Chennai (49.8%), Delhi (48.5%), Patna (46.2%), Hyderabad (44.4%), Lucknow (40%) and Indore (39.2%).
- The city of Mumbai had the highest percentage of adults (68%) who recorded having a good quality of life
- Women scored less than for men in the aspect of physical health due to a lower level of physical activity among women.
- The survey also showed how the scores vary based on one's age, gender, work and socio-economic status.

#### **1.44 ADARSH SMARAK SCHEME**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Recently, the fort at Gandikota was identified for development under the Centrally-sponsored 'Adopt a Heritage' programme. Further, 3 monuments – Nagarjuna Konda in Guntur district, the Buddhist remains at Salihundam in Srikakulam district and the Veerabhadra temple at Lepakshi in Anantapur district have been identified for development under 'Adarsh Smarak' scheme.

##### **About:**

**Ministry:** Ministry of Culture

- The scheme was launched in 2014 for providing improved visitor amenities, especially for the physically challenged, besides cleanliness, drinking water, and interpretation centres, cafeteria, souvenir shop, wi-fi, garbage disposal etc.

##### **Objectives:**

- To make the monument accessible to differently-abled.
- To make monument visitor friendly.
- Furthermore, to implement Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.
- Also, to upgrade/provide washrooms, drinking water, signages, cafeteria, and wi-fi facilities.
- To provide interpretation and audio-video centers.
- To streamline wastewater and garbage disposal and a rainwater harvesting system.
- Lastly, to provide safety and protection

#### **1.45 SC JUNKS PART OF 97TH AMENDMENT**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The Supreme Court has knocked down portions of a constitutional amendment that limited states' exclusive control over cooperative organizations.

#### **About:**

Part IXB, added to the Constitution in 2012 by the 97th Amendment, outlined the rules for operating cooperative organizations.

- The amendment's provisions, which were passed by Parliament without being ratified by state legislatures as needed by the Constitution, established the number of directors a society should have their tenure and even the essential eminent domain powers.
- The decision could be noteworthy in light of concerns expressed by states that the new Central Ministry of Cooperation would disempower them.

#### **What were the court's observations?**

The court concluded that cooperative societies fall under the "exclusive legislative jurisdiction" of the state legislature. The Supreme Court, on the other hand, stated that the Centre has authority over multi-State cooperative groups.

- Firstly, the court held that under Entry 32 of the State List and Part IX B has "seriously and considerably harm the State legislature's "exclusive legislative jurisdiction" over their cooperative sector.
- In fact, the court noted that Article 243ZI specifies that a state may only enact legislation concerning the incorporation, regulation, and dissolution of a society if it complies with the provisions of Part IXB of the 97th Constitution Amendment.
- Secondly, parliament, as the recipient of limited power, can only exercise it in conformity with the procedural and substantive constraints set forth in the Indian Constitution.
- Thirdly, the parts of Part IXB of the Amendment dealing with "Multi-State Cooperative Societies" were not struck down by the court due to a lack of ratification. When it comes to Multi-State Co-operative Societies (MSCS) with objectives that are not limited to a single state, the Union of India's legislative power is included in Entry 44 List I. (Union List).
- Part IXB of the Constitution is deemed to be in effect only in so far as it relates to multi-State cooperative societies inside the several States and in the Union Territories.
- There is no doubt that our Constitution has been described as quasi-federal in that, in terms of legislative powers, the States have exclusive power to legislate on topics reserved exclusively to them within their own sphere.
- Though an amendment to the Constitution is the exercise of constituent power, which differs from ordinary legislative power, such constituent power does not convert Parliament into an original constituent assembly.

#### **1.46 INDIA GETS ITS 39TH WORLD HERITAGE SITE: RUDRESWARA TEMPLE IN TELANGANA**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**



Rudreswara Temple which is located at Palampet, Mulugu district, in the state of Telangana has been inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage list. On 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 this decision was taken at the 44<sup>th</sup> session of UNESCO's World Heritage Committee. Ramappa temple was proposed by the government of India as its sole nomination for UNESCO World Heritage.

#### **About Rudreswara temple**

- In 1213 AD, during the rule of the Kakatiya Empire, the Rudreswara temple was constructed.
- This temple was constructed by Kakatiya king Ganapati Deva's general Recharla Rudra.
- Ramalingeswara Swamy is the presiding deity of this temple.
- This temple is also known as Ramappa temple, named so after the sculptor who, for 40 years, executed the work in the temple.
- The temple complexes built during the reign of Kakatiyas have a distinct style, decoration and technology.
- The Ramappa Temple is an exhibition of this unique style and hence, it stands as a testimonial to the creative genius of the Kakatiyans.
- On 6 feet high star-shaped platform stands the Ramappa Temple with pillars, ceilings and wall decorated with complex carvings that attest to the unique skill of the Kakatiyan sculptors.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the year 2020s World Heritage Committee (WHC) meeting of the UNESCO could not be conducted and hence, the nominations for 2020 and 2021 were discussed via online meetings. These meetings are currently underway. There are 21 Members in the World Heritage Committee with the current Chair of the Committee being China.

#### **1.47 NITI AAYOG AND IEA LAUNCH 'RENEWABLES INTEGRATION IN INDIA 2021'**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The International Energy Agency (IEA) in association with NITI Aayog has released a report titled "Renewables Integration in India 2021".

##### **About Renewables Integration in India 2021 Report:**

##### **India's Demand for Energy:**

- India is the third largest energy-consuming country in the world.
- Also, India has made significant progress towards its universal electrification target for residential users. 100 million people gained electricity access in 2018 alone.
- Per capita electricity consumption across the 28 Indian states and eight union territories is still around a third of the world average and is expected to continue increasing.

##### **Renewable Energy Penetration in India:**

- Renewable energy penetration is highly variable by the state in India.
- The share of solar and wind in India's ten renewables-rich states (Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Punjab, and Kerala) is significantly higher than the national average of 8.2%.

- Solar and wind account for around 29% of annual electricity generation in Karnataka, 20% in Rajasthan, 18% in Tamil Nadu, and 14% in Gujarat

#### 1.48 THE GAON BURAS

##### WHY IN NEWS?

Recently, the Assam Cabinet announced that Gaon Buras, village-level functionaries of the district administration, will be called 'Gaon Pradhans'.

- The government has reasoned that a number of young men (and women) become Gaon Buras, and thus, the word 'Bura' (meaning old in Assamese) is no longer appropriate.

##### About:

- Gaon Buras are the village headmen. They are the eyes, nose, and ear of the district administration at the village level.
- There are about 6,000 Gaon Buras in Assam. Women 'Gaon Buras' are not very common and they take over, if their husbands die.

#### 1.49 ASADHA POORNIMA DHAMMA CHAKRA DAY

##### WHY IN NEWS?

Recently, India in partnership with International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) celebrated Asadha Poornima Dhamma Chakra Day 2021.

- The day is also observed as Guru Poornima by both Buddhists and Hindus as a day to mark reverence to their Gurus.

##### About:

- It commemorates Buddha's first sermon to his first five ascetic disciples. He gave his first knowledge to the world after attaining enlightenment.
- The day marks the establishment of the Sangha, on a full-moon day of the month of Asadha, in the Indian Sun calendar at the 'Deer Park', R̥ṣipatana in the current day Sarnath, near Varanasi, India.
- It is also known as Esala Poya in Sri Lanka and Asanha Bucha in Thailand.
- It is the second most sacred day for Buddhists after the Buddha Poornima or Vesak.
- This teaching of Dhamma Chakka- PavattanaSutta (Pali) or Dharma chakra Pravartana Sutra (Sanskrit) is also known as the First Turning of Wheels of Dharma and comprises the Four Noble Truths and Noble Eightfold Path.
  - **Four Noble Truths:**
- Suffering (dukkha) is the essence of the world.
- Every suffering has a cause – Samudya.
- Suffering could be extinguished – Nirodha.
- It can be achieved by following the Atthanga Magga (Eightfold Path)

#### 1.50 HARAPPAN CITY OF DHOLAVIRA INSCRIBED IN UNESCO'S WORLD HERITAGE LIST

##### WHY IN NEWS?

Dholavira the Harappan city which is located in the Kutch district of Gujarat has been named as the 40th Indian site inscribed in UNESCO's World Heritage list. Dholavira is the first Indus Valley Civilisation site in India that has been included in the list.

**About:**

- The decision to induct this site in the covet list was taken at the 44th UNESCO World Heritage Committee session in Fuzhou, China.
- On 25th July, another Indian site, the Ramappa Temple in Telangana, was added to the list.
- After Rani ki Vav, the walled city area of Ahmedabad and Champaner, Dholavira becomes the fourth site from the state of Gujarat to be added to this list by UNESCO.
- Dholavira is one of South Asia's most well-preserved urban settlements.

**About Dholavira**

This city was discovered in the year 1968, and it is located on the Khadir Island in Great Rann of Kutch (GRK) of Kutch district in the state of Gujarat. The city of Dholavira is spread over 22 hectares and it is Indus Valley Civilisation's fifth largest archaeological site. This city dates back to approximately 3000 BC and it is believed that the city was occupied till 1500 BC. Its name is taken from the Dholavira village located on the Indo-Pakistan border. Locally this site is known as Kotda Timba (the fort mound).

This site is divided into three parts. They are the middle town, the citadel and the lower town. The citadel has detailed structures of fortification. Excavation by the Archaeological Survey of India on this site has revealed that the city houses were constructed using lime stones and all of them were connected to a sewage network. Tanks to store fresh or rainwater has also been found. Copper smelter remains have been found but there no mortal human remains recovered from this site. During excavation ornamental beads, Red earthenware and microlithic tools were also found.

**1.51 GOVERNMENT TO SETUP CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR ANIMATION, VISUAL EFFECTS, GAMING AND COMICS**

**WHY IN NEWS?**

Government of India has announced they it will set up a Centre of Excellence for Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics. This decision has been taken to create a globally acclaimed talent pool in the country so as to cater to the Indian as well as the global industry.

**About:**

- This Centre of Excellence will be set up in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.
- This announcement was made in the Rajya Sabha by Anurag Thakur, the Minister of Information and Broadcasting.
- Film and Television Institute of India and Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute and have offered courses on VFX and Animation with the aim to support skilled manpower in these sectors.

- In India, the Media and Entertainment sector is one of the fastest and largest growing sectors and focus should be given on this sector so that they can produce an internationally acclaimed talent pool.
- To attract more foreign investments, Film Bazaar is organised by the National Film Development Corporation every year at the International Film Festival of India, Goa.
- Film Bazaar is the largest South Asian Film Market and it attracts lots of investors globally by encouraging financial and creative collaboration between the International and South Asian Film communities.
- With 15 countries, India has audio-visual co-production treaties.
- The Gaming industry is one of the biggest industries in the world and it earns a lot every year. Hence, the government has plans to set up a talent pool in India that can churn out international level talents and attract foreign investments.

### **Centre of Excellence**

It is a shared facility, team or an entity that helps in research, development, support, training, etc on different areas.

### **1.52 BASAVARAJ BOMMAI: 23RD CHIEF MINISTER OF KARNATAKA**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

BJP leader Basavaraj S Bommai has been selected as the 23rd chief minister of Karnataka and will take his oath on 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2021.

#### **About:**

- Basavaraj Bommai was selected by the BJP as BS Yediyurappa's successor who had resigned from the post on Monday.
- Basavaraj Bommai met ex-chief minister BS Yediyurappa as well as central observer of BJP Dharmendra Pradhan in Bengaluru before taking his oath.
- Basavaraj Bommai was BS Yediyurappa's home minister and was among the top contenders for post of the state's chief minister.
- During the legislature meeting of BJP, BS Yediyurappa proposed Bommai's name for the post and it was seconded by Karjol Ashok Eshwarappa and all the other BJP MLAs.
- BJP has planned on having three deputy chief ministers in Karnataka's new government. Govind Karjol, R Ashoka and Sriramalu are the ones who will most likely be appointed.
- Karnataka so far had 22 Chief Ministers but only three of them were able to complete their full term.

#### **About Basavaraj Bommai**

In the year 2008, Basavaraj Bommai joined the BJP and since then he has rose in the ranks of the party. Previously, he had held the water resources portfolio. By profession, he is an engineer and with the Tata Group he had started his career. From Shiggaon located in the Haveri district of Karnataka, he is a two-time MLC and three-time MLA.

### **1.53 INDIA'S OLDEST STUDENT BHAGEERATHI AMMA PASSES AWAY AT 107**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Bhageerathi Amma, the oldest woman in India to take the equivalency exams, has passed away due to age-related ailments. She was 107-years-old.
- Amma, who hailed from the Kollam district of Kerala, decided to continue her education at the age of 105.
- Amma had quit formal education in class three, when she was 9 years old. The centenarian was felicitated with the prestigious Nari Shakti Puraskar by the central government for her exceptional contribution towards women's empowerment.

### **1.54 IPS OFFICER NASIR KAMAL APPOINTED DG OF BUREAU OF CIVIL AVIATION SECURITY**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Senior IPS officer Nasir Kamal has been appointed the Director-General of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS). He is a 1986-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved Kamal's appointment to the post of Director General in BCAS for a tenure up to his superannuation on July 31, 2022.

### **1.55 LOK SABHA PASSES INSOLVENCY AND BANKRUPTCY CODE (AMENDMENT) BILL 2021**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

On 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2021, Lok Sabha has passed the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill 2021. This Bill replaces the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 which was implemented on 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2021.

#### **About:**

- Insolvency is a situation where a company or an individual are unable to pay their debt.
- The government has notified that the threshold of a default which does not exceed Rs 1 crore for the initiation of a pre-packaged resolution process remains unchanged.
- On 4th April, 2021, government amended the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016 by putting forward an ordinance that provides for pre-packaged resolution process for the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) when the Parliament is not in session.
- The pre pack is merely an informal way of providing a corporate rescue plan for which approval from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) will be sought.
- Under this ordinance, a pre-packaged insolvency resolution process (PIRP) was established that provides an alternate MSME insolvency resolution process.

#### **What is pre-packed insolvency resolution mechanism?**

Pre-packed insolvency resolution mechanism is a procedure in which a resolution arrangement is decided upon between the lender and the debtor before approaching the NCLT for receiving an approval. Under this pre-pack framework, a debtor will initiate and participate in the resolution



proceedings in tandem with the lender. This is done through an informal process that helps in avoiding costly and lengthy court procedures.

### **Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP)**

As stated in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), under the existing corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP), a maximum number of 270 days is provided for the resolution process to be completed. To take control of the administration a resolution professional (RP) is appointed and the promoters have to step down. The appointed RP then manages the resolution and bidding process, which generally takes several months. Under the new pre-pack scheme, the time limit for the resolution will be reduced and the participants will get 90 days to submit resolution plans and NCLT will approve them in another 30 days.

### **Rule for MSME**

An MSME not having met its Rs 10 lakh payment obligation, could either initiate a pre-pack bankruptcy resolution scheme on its own with the approval of the lenders or the lenders who are representing the 66% debt of the business could themselves initiate the process.

## **1.56 'RAJA MIRCHA' FROM NAGALAND EXPORTED TO LONDON**

### **Why in news?**

Raja Mircha, also known as Naga King Chilli, was exported to London from Nagaland. This the first time Raja Mirch is being exported from the state of Nagaland that too during the the Covid-19 pandemic along with a drought-like situation in Nagaland.

### **Key Points**

- In the year 2008 Raja Mircha received Geographical Indication certification.
- Raja Mirch is among the top five hottest chillies in the world based on Scoville Heat Units.
- It has a distinct flavour as well as aroma.
- Nagaland State Agricultural Marketing Board and Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) have come together to coordinate the export which has been sourced from the Peren district of Nagaland.

### **About Scoville Heat Units**

Scoville Heat Units is the measurement that is done to measure hotness of a pepper or a hot sauce. It is generally done by checking the number of times capsaicin needs to be dissolved in water filled with sugar. The number of Scoville Heat Units (SHU) in hot sauce or a pepper indicates the amount of capsaicin present in the pepper or the hot sauce. The higher the rating the hotter is the pepper.

## **1.57 INTEL, EDUCATION MINISTRY, CBSE LAUNCH 'AI FOR ALL' DRIVE**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Intel has collaborated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Ministry of Education to announce the launch of the 'AI for All' initiative. This initiative has been launched with the aim of creating a basic understanding of artificial intelligence (AI) for everyone in the country.

### **About:**

- Emerging technologies such as AI plays a crucial role for economic growth.
- NITI Aayog's National Strategy for AI focuses on leveraging AI for inclusive growth and also to develop AI solutions for the various societal needs.
- The National Education Policy 2020 of India also emphasizes in preparing the students of the country for an AI driven economy.
- India is striving to build a digital-ready foundation, and to achieve this it is essential to focus on demystifying AI so that it can be used by a broader section of the population and will also help them to understand about how AI can impact their lives in a positive manner.

### **About AI for All**

Intel's AI for All is a 4-hour, learning program. It can be accessed by all and is as much applicable to a student as to a stay-at-home parent or a professional in any field and even a senior citizen of the country. This program of Intel aims to introduce Artificial Intelligence, its usage and function, to 1 million citizens in the first year of the program. This 4-hour program is divided into two sections: AI Appreciation (2.5 hours) and AI Awareness (1.5 hours).

### **AI Awareness**

The segment on AI Awareness provides an elementary understanding of AI, misconceptions about AI and the potential of application of AI.

### **AI Appreciation**

The AI Appreciation segment will help the learners understand the domains of AI as well as the impact it has across the various industries.

This program is available in 11 vernacular languages. The content has also been made compatible with various talkback applications so that it can also be accessed by visually impaired people

### **1.58 MOSJE: 'SAMAJIK ADHIKARITA SHIVIR' HELD IN MP**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

On 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2021 a 'Samajik Adhikarita Shivar' for the distribution of assistive devices and aids to 'Divyangjan' will be distributed in Madhya Pradesh.

#### **About:**

- Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) along with District Administration Chhindwara and ALIMCO will organize this 'shivar' under the ADIP Scheme of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- This 'shivar' will be organized in Chhindwara which is located in the state of Madhya Pradesh.
- In view of the COVID 19 pandemic, a total of 8,291 assistive devices and assistive devices worth Rs 4.32 crore will be distributed to 4146 Divyangjan's at the Block/Panchayat level for free.
- The opening ceremony will feature the virtual presence of the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shri Shivraj Singh Chauhan.
- Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Dr. Virendra Kumar, will host this function.

## **About Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**

MoSJE is a ministry of the Government of India. It is responsible for the well-being, social justice and empowerment of socially disadvantaged and marginalized groups, including other backward classes (OBC), scheduled castes (SC), transgender and LGBTQ people, the disabled, the elderly and drug abuse victims. Dr. Virendra Kumar is the current minister of this department.

### **1.59 'KRISHIKARNA' PROJECT OF KERALA**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Mini polyhouse which is a kind of greenhouse will be built under the "Krishikarna" project, launched in Kerala, a joint initiative of the National Society for Agricultural Horticulture (SAHS), the Sustainability Foundation and Qore3 Innovations.

#### **About:**

- Although SAHS, a government-recognized cooperative, is involved in promoting agricultural and gardening practices, the Sustainability Foundation, a non-governmental organization based in Thiruvananthapuram, promotes sustainable development.
- Qore3 Innovations is a start-up company that claims to provide "end-to-end support" for farms.
- Under Krishikarna, a small polyhouse will be built on a 2.5 cent land.
- The total estimated cost of each plastic house is Rs 2,35,000.
- Aneesh N Raj won Kerala's Best Hi-Tech Farmer Award and is also an agronomist of Qore3 who is implementing Krishikarna's innovations.
- Unprecedented climate changes have had a negative impact on Kerala's agriculture. Hence, it is necessary to promote high-tech agricultural practices so that farmers can farm all year
- Qore3 has established more than 30 projects successful high-tech farms in Kerala.

#### **Plan of this project**

The plan is to plant Long beans, tomatoes, salad cucumbers, bell peppers, bell peppers, and green leafy vegetables at the mini polyhouses which will be constructed. Krishikarna covers greenhouses, fish and vegetables and mushroom farming. Work on the lands of those farmers who have signed up for this project has already begun, and seeds can be sown within a few weeks

### **1.60 LANDMARK DECISION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA IN MEDICAL EDUCATION**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The Central Government has announced that it will provide 27% reservation for OBCs and 10% reservation for the economically weaker section (EWS). It will be provided under the All India Quota (AIQ) scheme for undergraduate and postgraduate medical/dental courses in state medical and dental colleges from 2021-22.

#### **About All India Quota (AIQ) Scheme:**

- The All India Quota (AIQ) Scheme was introduced in 1986 under the direction of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

- Purpose: It provides for domicile-free merit-based opportunities to students from any State to aspire to study in a good medical college located in another State.
- All India Quota consisted of 15% of total available UG seats and 50% of total available PG seats in government medical colleges.
- Initially, there was no reservation in the AIQ Scheme up to 2007. In 2007, the Supreme Court introduced a reservation of 15% for SCs and 7.5% for STs in the AIQ Scheme.
- Moreover, when the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act became effective in 2007 providing for uniform 27% reservation to OBCs, the same was implemented in all the Central Educational Institutions.
- However, this was not extended to the AIQ seats of State medical and dental colleges. This has been done now.

**Significance of this decision:**

- OBC and EWS students from across the country will now be able to take advantage of this reservation in the AIQ scheme to compete for seats in any state.
- Moreover, being a central scheme, the central list of OBCs shall be used for this reservation.

**1.61 AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING COMPLEXES SCHEME UNDER ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT PACKAGE**

**WHY IN NEWS?**

Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs have informed that about 88,236 govt-funded vacant houses are available. They can be converted into Affordable Rental Housing Complexes under the Affordable Rental Housing Complexes Scheme.

**About Affordable Rental Housing Complexes Scheme:**

- Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs) is a Sub-scheme under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana- Urban (PMAY-U) to provide affordable rental housing to urban migrants/ poor close to their workplace.

**Objectives:**

- To address the vision of ‘AtmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan’ significantly by creating a sustainable ecosystem of affordable rental housing solutions for urban migrants/poor.
- To achieve the overall objective of “Housing for All” encompassing the need for affordable rental housing for urban migrants/poor.
- Also, to create a conducive environment by incentivizing Public/Private Entities to leverage investment in rental housing.

**Duration:**

- ARHCs to be considered till PMAY (U) Mission period, i.e. March 2022.

**Beneficiaries:**

- Beneficiaries for ARHCs will be varied groups of urban migrants/ poor from EWS/ LIG categories including industrial & construction workers, migrants working with market/ trade

associations, educational/ health institutions, hospitality sector, long-term tourists/ visitors, students, etc.

**Implementation Strategy:** The ARHCs will be built through a two-pronged strategy: –

- Strategy-1: Utilizing existing Government funded vacant houses to convert into ARHCs through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) or by Public Agencies.
- Strategy-2: Construction, Operation & Maintenance of ARHCs by Public/ Private Entities on their own available vacant land.





## National News: Practice MCQs

**QUESTION 1:** Who is the current Attorney

General of India?

A. K K Venugopal

B. Mukul Rohatgi

C. Tushar Mehta

D. none of the above

**QUESTION 2:** Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of

Micro food processing Enterprises

(PMFME) Scheme is under the ambit of

which ministry?

A. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare

B. Ministry of Consumer affairs, Food and Public Distribution

C. Ministry of Food Processing Industries

D. Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

**QUESTION 3:** PM recently launched a

Japanese 'Zen Garden - Kaizen

Academy' at -

A. Hyderabad

B. Mumbai

C. New Delhi

D. Ahmedabad

**QUESTION 4:** NATRAX- the longest High Speed

testing Track of Asia was recently

inaugurated in-

A. Indore

B. Bhopal

C. Mumbai

D. Agra

**QUESTION 5:** National Doctor's Day is

celebrated every year on-

A. June 1

B. June 30

C. July 1

D. July 31

**QUESTION 6:** Digital India Programme comes

under the ambit of which ministry?

A. Ministry of Science and Technology

B. Ministry of Education

C. Ministry of Home Affairs

D. Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

**QUESTION 7:** India's oldest running

newspaper, Mumbai Samachar, has

recently entered its 200<sup>th</sup> year. It is published in which language?

A. English

B. Hindi

C. Marathi

D. Gujarati

**QUESTION 8:** Who is slated to be the next

chief minister of Uttarakhand?

A. Pushkar Singh Dhami

B. Madaan Kaushik

C. Tirath Singh Rawat

D. none of the above

**QUESTION 9:** NIPUN Bharat initiative is aimed

to improve-

A. early school learning

B. skill development

C. MSME sector efficiency

D. none of the above

**QUESTION 10:** CoWIN Global Conclave is a joint initiative of -

- A. Ministries of Health and External Affairs, National Health Authority
- B. Ministries of Women and Child Development and External Affairs, National Health Authority
- C. Ministries of Health and Electronic and IT, National Health Authority
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 11:** Matsya Setu app. launched recently, aims to help-

- A. fisherman
- B. poultry farmers
- C. Asha workers
- D. lactating mothers and pregnant women

**QUESTION 12:** What is the name of a recently constituted new ministry by the government in July 2021?

- A. Ministry of Divyang jan
- B. Ministry of Scheduled castes
- C. Ministry of Education
- D. Ministry of Cooperation

**QUESTION 13:** The tradition of shifting the capital between Jammu and Srinagar is believed to have started in-

- A. 1857
- B. 1872
- C. 1900
- D. 1947

**QUESTION 14:** Who has recently become the brand ambassador of 'Khadi Prakritk Paint', India's first and only paint made from cow dung?

- A. Narendra Modi
- B. Nitin Gadkari
- C. Amit Shah
- D. Baba Ramdev

**QUESTION 15:** SAATHI initiative, seen recently in news, is associated with-

- A. MSMEs
- B. sanitation
- C. health
- D. tourism

**QUESTION 16:** Recently an Indian Army Memorial commemorating over 3,100 Commonwealth servicemen who took part in World War 2 was inaugurated in-

- A. Italy
- B. France
- C. Ethiopia
- D. United Kingdom

**QUESTION 17:** SPARSH system of Ministry of Defence is related with-

- A. weapon technology
- B. global positioning system
- C. pension disbursement
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 18:** Which railway station in India has become the first with a movable freshwater tunnel aquarium?

- A. Mumbai

- B. Madras
- C. Kolkata
- D. Bengaluru

**QUESTION 19:** dbGENVOC, seen recently in news, is-

- A. database of genomic Variants of Oral Cancer
- B. noise pollution standards
- C. silent generator system
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 20:** Which union territory has recently become the first to achieve 100% first dose coverage for Covid-19 vaccination?

- A. Puducherry
- B. Ladakh
- C. Chandigarh
- D. Lakshadweep

**QUESTION 21:** The World-famous Kesaria Buddha Stupa is found in-

- A. Bihar
- B. Jharkhand
- C. Uttar Pradesh
- D. Madhya Pradesh

**QUESTION 22:** India's first private Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facility plant has been set up at-

- A. Delhi
- B. Nagpur
- C. Mumbai
- D. Varanasi

**QUESTION 23:** Kongu Nadu, is local name given to a region, which is currently part of-

- A. Karnataka
- B. Kerala
- C. Andhra Pradesh
- D. Tamil Nadu

**QUESTION 24:** India's first 5-star Hotel atop a railway station has been inaugurated in-

- A. New Delhi
- B. Mumbai
- C. Gandhinagar
- D. Ahmedabad

**QUESTION 25:** National Thermal Power Corporation is about to set up India's largest solar park at -

- A. Jaisalmer
- B. Jodhpur
- C. Rann of Kutch
- D. Daman

**QUESTION 26:** Who has been recently appointed as the Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha?

- A. Piyush Goyal
- B. Anil Vij
- C. Prakash Javadekar
- D. Ravi Shankar Prasad

**QUESTION 27:** Which state/UT has recently signed a MoU with Sikkim to turn itself organic by 2025?

- A. Puducherry
- B. Manipur

C. Kerala

D. Ladakh

**QUESTION 28:** The School Innovation Ambassador Training Program is aimed at improvement of-

A. Primary students

B. Senior secondary students

C. Teachers

D. District Education officers

**QUESTION 29:** Pulichintala multipurpose project is built across which river?

A. Mahanadi

B. Godavari

C. Krishna

D. Kaveri

**QUESTION 30:** The International Cooperation and Convention Centre – Rudraksh has been recently set up at-

A. Varanasi

B. Gaya

C. Gandhinagar

D. Haridwar

**QUESTION 31:** Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) comes under the ambit of -

A. Ministry of Tourism

B. Ministry of Culture

C. Ministry of Home Affairs

D. Ministry of Rural Development

**QUESTION 32:** Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), seen repeatedly in news is associated with-

A. defamation

B. sedition

C. LGBT rights

D. curfew/assembly of 4 or more people

**QUESTION 33:** After the recent cabinet reshuffle, who is presently the tribal minister of India?

A. Renuka Singh Saruta

B. Jual Oram

C. Arjun Munda

D. none of the above

**QUESTION 34:** Skill India Mission was launched by NDA government in-

A. 2014

B. 2015

C. 2016

D. 2017

**QUESTION 35:** CPGRAMS is an initiative of-

A. Ministry of Home Affairs

B. Ministry of Personnel, Grievances and Pensions

C. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare

D. Ministry of Consumer Affairs

**QUESTION 36:** Which state has started 'Mathrukavacham' campaign, aimed at encouraging covid vaccination for pregnant women?

A. Tamil Nadu

B. Telangana

C. Andhra Pradesh

D. Kerala

**QUESTION 37:** Bonalu, is a famous festival of-

- A. Assam
- B. Telangana
- C. Kerala
- D. Manipur

**QUESTION 38:** India's first pod Taxi has been recently proposed to run in which state?

- A. Lucknow
- B. Mumbai
- C. Pune
- D. Noida

**QUESTION 39:** Which state recently launched a draft of Agarwood policy 2021 for promoting commercial cultivation of Agar trees?

- A. Jharkhand
- B. Tripura
- C. Manipur
- D. West Bengal

**QUESTION 40:** Which state will be the first state in the country to issue educational documents using blockchain technology?

- A. Maharashtra
- B. Punjab
- C. Kerala
- D. Tamil Nadu

**QUESTION 41:** Recently heard in news, Balika Panchayat was successfully held at Kunariya village in \_\_\_\_\_ state.

- A. Chhattisgarh
- B. Maharashtra
- C. Madhya Pradesh

D. Gujarat

**QUESTION 42:** Perumkulam has been recently bestowed with the title of first 'Book Village' of which state?

- A. Kerala
- B. Tamil Nadu
- C. Karnataka
- D. Andhra Pradesh

**QUESTION 43:** Recently UNESCO has added Orchha under its Historic Urban Landscape Project. This city is situated in-

- A. Gujarat
- B. Maharashtra
- C. Punjab
- D. Madhya Pradesh

**QUESTION 44:** A study conducted by Danone India, along with Confederation of Indian Industry on quality of life, declared which city as one with highest percentage of adults with *poor* quality of life?

- A. Delhi
- B. Patna
- C. Mumbai
- D. Kolkata

**QUESTION 45:** The Adarsh Smarak Scheme comes under the ambit of-

- A. Ministry of Culture
- B. Ministry of Tourism
- C. Ministry of Education
- D. Ministry of Home Affairs

**QUESTION 46:** The 97<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act added which part to the constitution?

- A. Part IXB
- B. Part IXA
- C. Part IX
- D. Part X

**QUESTION 47:** India recently got its 39<sup>th</sup> World Heritage site that is Rudreswara Temple. It is situated in-

- A. Karnataka
- B. Telangana
- C. Tamil Nadu
- D. Kerala

**QUESTION 48:** 'Renewables Integration in India 2021' report has been recently released by-

- A. International Energy Agency and Bureau of Energy Efficiency
- B. NITI Ayog and International Energy Agency
- C. International Energy Agency and Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
- D. Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and Bureau of Energy Efficiency

**QUESTION 49:** The village level functionaries of district administration of which state were called Gaon Buras?

- A. Assam
- B. Manipur
- C. Nagaland
- D. Meghalaya

**QUESTION 50:** Gautam Buddha gave his first sermon at-

- A. Bodhgaya
- B. Kushinagar
- C. Lumbini
- D. Sarnath

**QUESTION 51:** The Harappan site of Dholavira is located in which state?

- A. Madhya Pradesh
- B. Haryana
- C. Punjab
- D. Gujarat

**QUESTION 52:** The International Film Festival of India is held every year in which state?

- A. Goa
- B. Maharashtra
- C. Gujarat
- D. Delhi

**QUESTION 53:** Who has been recently appointed as the Chief Minister of Karnataka?

- A. Laxman Savadi
- B. Aravind Bellad
- C. Basavaraj Bommai
- D. Jagdish Shettar

**QUESTION 54:** India's oldest student Bhageerathi Amma passes away recently. She belonged to which state?

- A. Kerala
- B. Karnataka
- C. Tamil Nadu
- D. Telangana



**QUESTION 55:** Who has been appointed as Director-General of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security?

- A. Nasir Kamal
- B. Rakesh Asthana
- C. Rashmi R Das
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 56:** A situation where a company or an individual are unable to pay their debt is called-

- A. bankruptcy
- B. insolvency
- C. liquidation
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 57:** Raja Mirchi, which was exported to London recently, is found in which state?

- A. Manipur
- B. Nagaland
- C. Tripura
- D. Mizoram

**QUESTION 58:** 'AI for All' initiative with the aim of creating a basic understanding of artificial intelligence (AI) for everyone in the country, has been launched by CBSE and which tech. giant?

- A. Intel
- B. Infosys
- C. HCL
- D. Microsoft

**QUESTION 59:** A 'Samajik Adhikarita Shivir' was held recently in Madhya Pradesh by

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. It is aimed to assist-

- A. destitute women
- B. orphans
- C. old age population
- D. people with disabilities

**QUESTION 60:** "Krishikarna" project, associated with building mini-polyhouses, is launched in which state?

- A. Punjab
- B. Kerala
- C. Karnataka
- D. Tamil Nadu

**QUESTION 61:** The All India Quota (AIQ) Scheme was introduced in which year?

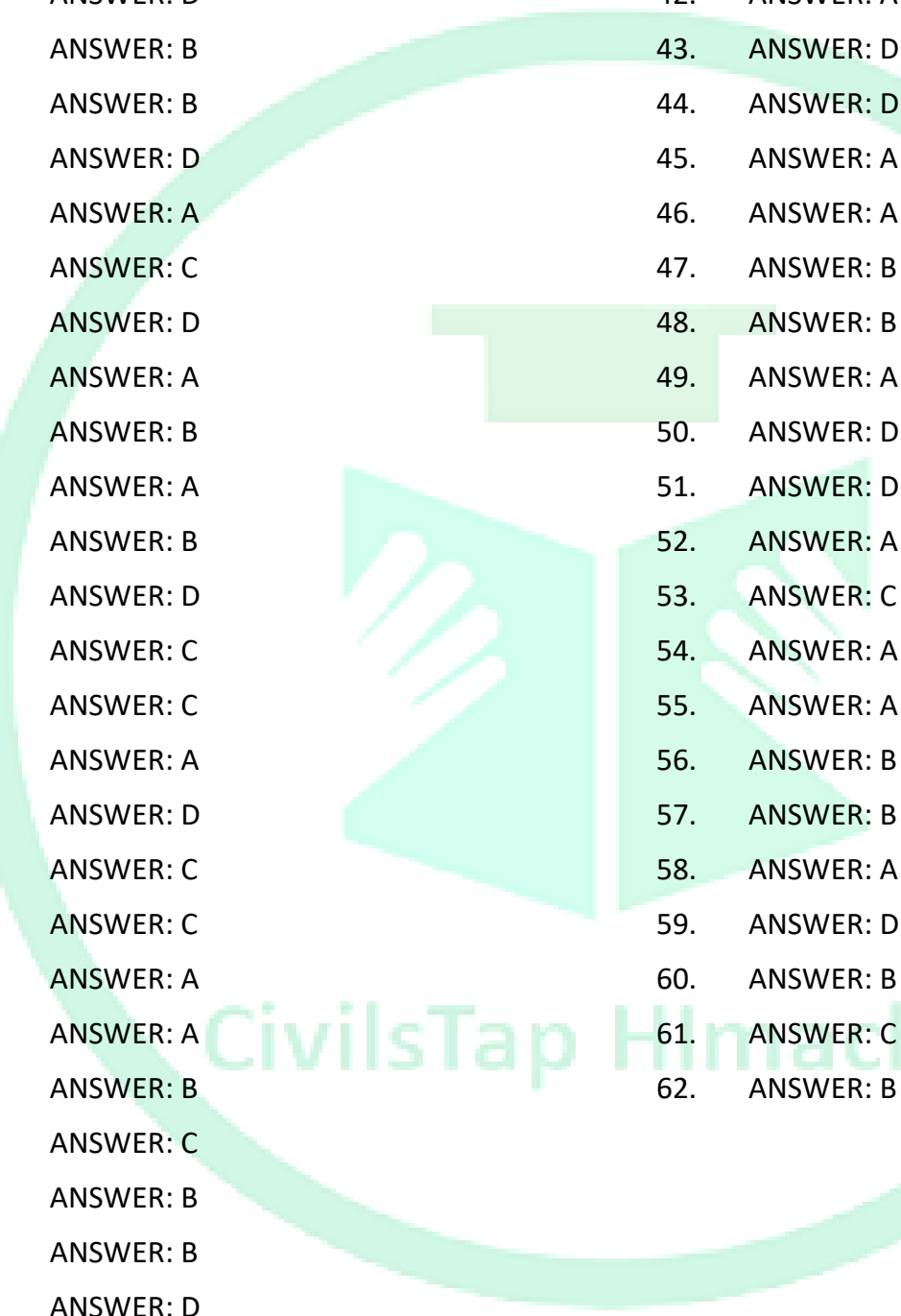
- A. 1978
- B. 1984
- C. 1986
- D. 2007

**QUESTION 62:** Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs) is a Sub-scheme under-

- A. Smart Cities scheme
- B. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana- Urban
- C. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana- Rural
- D. none of the above

**Answer Key:**

1. ANSWER: A
2. ANSWER: C
3. ANSWER: D
4. ANSWER: A
5. ANSWER: C
6. ANSWER: D

- 
7. ANSWER: D  
8. ANSWER: A  
9. ANSWER: A  
10. ANSWER: A  
11. ANSWER: A  
12. ANSWER: D  
13. ANSWER: B  
14. ANSWER: B  
15. ANSWER: D  
16. ANSWER: A  
17. ANSWER: C  
18. ANSWER: D  
19. ANSWER: A  
20. ANSWER: B  
21. ANSWER: A  
22. ANSWER: B  
23. ANSWER: D  
24. ANSWER: C  
25. ANSWER: C  
26. ANSWER: A  
27. ANSWER: D  
28. ANSWER: C  
29. ANSWER: C  
30. ANSWER: A  
31. ANSWER: A  
32. ANSWER: B  
33. ANSWER: C  
34. ANSWER: B  
35. ANSWER: B  
36. ANSWER: D  
37. ANSWER: B  
38. ANSWER: D  
39. ANSWER: B  
40. ANSWER: A  
41. ANSWER: D  
42. ANSWER: A  
43. ANSWER: D  
44. ANSWER: D  
45. ANSWER: A  
46. ANSWER: A  
47. ANSWER: B  
48. ANSWER: B  
49. ANSWER: A  
50. ANSWER: D  
51. ANSWER: D  
52. ANSWER: A  
53. ANSWER: C  
54. ANSWER: A  
55. ANSWER: A  
56. ANSWER: B  
57. ANSWER: B  
58. ANSWER: A  
59. ANSWER: D  
60. ANSWER: B  
61. ANSWER: C  
62. ANSWER: B

### 2.1 BAIHETAN DAM: WORLD'S SECOND BIGGEST HYDROPOWER DAM

#### WHY IN NEWS?

Recently, China has put into operation the Baihetan Dam, world's Second Biggest Hydropower Dam.

- The Three Gorges Dam is the largest hydropower dam in the world and is also along China's Yangtze River. It began operations in 2003

#### About the Dam:

- It is on the Jinsha River, a tributary of the Yangtze (the longest river in Asia).
- It has been built with a total installed capacity of 16,000 megawatts.
- It will eventually be able to generate enough electricity each day once to meet the power needs of 5, 00,000 people for an entire year.

### 2.2 INDIA JOINS G20-OECD TAX FRAMEWORK DEAL

#### WHY IN NEWS?

India and majority members of OECD and G20 Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion & Profit Shifting adopted a high-level statement that outlines a consensus solution in a bid to address tax challenges that are arising from digitalisation of economy.

#### About:

- This proposed solution comprises of two components:
  1. First pillar is about reallocation of additional profit share to market jurisdictions and
  2. Second pillar comprises of minimum tax and subject to tax rules.
- However, some significant issues like share of profit allocation and scope of subject to tax rules are open and need to be addressed.
- Technical details of proposal will be worked out soon and a consensus agreement will come by October 2021.

#### How will it impact India?

Pillar I of OECD and G20 two-pillar solutions of addressing tax challenge seeks to show a special purpose nexus rule and profit allocation formula to reallocate a part of super normal profits of largest and most profitable and multinational groups in market countries like India and China. The outcome will have quantitative benefits on India as it will ensure that India gets its fair share of corporate tax on earnings from market it provides to MNEs. Pillar II is the most significant step towards the race to bottom. Global Min tax rule will ensure that countries like India gets massive market for MNEs without providing tax safe harbor. This development has the potential to significantly contain practice of treaty shopping.

### 2.3 US MILITARY LEAVES BAGRAM AIR BASE IN AFGHANISTAN

#### WHY IN NEWS?

United States military has left Afghanistan's Bagram airfield after nearly two decades.

#### About:

- Bagram airfield was the site of several military encounters and an epicenter of US 'war on terror' in Afghanistan in the backdrop of 9/11 terror attacks.
- Bagram airfield has now been handed over to Afghan National Security and Defense Force.
- This airbase has been the site of US military's war against Taliban and al-Qaida terrorist outfits.
- It remained staffed by 455th Air Expeditionary Wing of US Force.
- It has been used as a base by rotating units of US Army, Navy, and Marine Corps also used the airfield as a base.

- **Background**

US president Joe Biden had promised for withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan completely by September 11. Current withdrawal of 2,500-3,500 US troops from Bagram airbase is an indication of the follow-up on that promise. Now, United States harbours around 6,500 troops in Afghanistan to protect American embassy in Kabul. However, they have not yet divulged when last US soldier will leave Afghanistan for security reasons.

- **Bagram Airfield**

It is also known as Bagram Air Base and is located near ancient city of Bagram. It was largest U.S. military base in Afghanistan. Its distance from Parwan Province is 11 kilometres. It has a single runway which is capable of handling large military aircraft including Lockheed Martin C-5 Galaxy and Antonov An-225. It was staffed 455th Air Expeditionary Wing of U.S. Air Force.

## **2.4 CHINA IS CERTIFIED MALARIA-FREE BY WHO**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Following a 70-year effort, China has been awarded a malaria-free certification from WHO – a notable feat for a country that reported 30 million cases of the disease annually in the 1940s.
- China is the first country in the WHO Western Pacific Region to be awarded a malaria-free certification in more than 3 decades. Other countries in the region that have achieved this status include Australia (1981), Singapore (1982) and Brunei Darussalam (1987).
- Globally, 40 countries and territories have been granted a malaria-free certification from WHO – including, most recently, El Salvador (2021), Algeria (2019), Argentina (2019), Paraguay (2018) and Uzbekistan (2018)

## **2.5 7TH INDIAN OCEAN NAVAL SYMPOSIUM CONCLUDES IN FRANCE**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- The 7th edition of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), concluded in France on July 01, 2021. The biennial event was hosted by the French Navy at La Réunion from 28 June to 01 July 2021.

- From India, Admiral Karambir Singh, Chief of the Naval Staff, Indian Navy, participated in the inaugural session of the event virtually. France is the current chair of the Symposium, which assumed the Chairmanship on 29 June 2021 for two-year tenure.
- The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) is a series of biennial meetings, held between the littoral states of the Indian Ocean region, to enhance maritime cooperation among Navies of the member states, by providing an open and inclusive forum for discussion of regionally relevant maritime issues such as maritime security cooperation, discuss regional maritime issues, and promote friendly relationships.
- The first such symposium was held in 2008 with India as host.
- The chairmanship and location of the Symposium rotates between the various member states.

## 2.6 INDIAN-AMERICAN SIRISHA BANDLA SET TO FLY INTO SPACE

### WHY IN NEWS?

- India-origin woman Sirisha Bandla will travel to the edge of the space aboard 'VSS Unity' of Virgin Galactic, which is scheduled to fly off on July 11 from New Mexico. This is significant as she will be the third woman of Indian origin to go to space after Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams.
- Bandla, the vice-president of government affairs at Virgin Galactic in Washington DC, will travel alongside his boss and the group's founder, billionaire Richard Branson and four others in the company's spaceflight.

## 2.7 WORLD'S TALLEST SANDCASTLE BUILT IN DENMARK

### WHY IN NEWS?

World's tallest sandcastle was built in Denmark. It has established new Guinness World Record of 21.16 metres. Denmark's new sandcastle is 3.5 meter taller than earlier record of 17.66-meter set by Germany in 2019.

#### About Denmark's Sandcastle

Sandcastle is built in the shape of a triangle in order to avoid collapse like many others have. A wooden structure has been built around the sandcastle to allow artist to carve incredible figures in sand. It is a highly decorated monument in small seaside village of Blokhus. It was made up of 4860 tonnes of sand and is reminiscent of a pyramid.

#### Blokhus Village

This village is located in Jammerbugt Municipality of North Jutland in Denmark. This village is a popular beach town accounting for around 1 million visitors every year. It was originally named Hune Hvarre. In 1600s there were barely any trees this village. So, timber was imported from Norway. In order to store timber, locals constructed some houses out it. These houses are called as 'block houses' after which village has been given Danish name Blokhus

## **2.8 KOREAN AIR WINS AIR TRANSPORT WORLD'S AIRLINE OF THE YEAR AWARD**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Korean Air has been announced the winner of one of the most prestigious honours in the aviation industry: Air Transport World's (ATW) 2021 Airline of the Year. This year's award is even more meaningful to Korean Air, as the global industry has been suffering from the unprecedented crisis caused by COVID-19.
- The company's excellent leadership, its ability to remain operationally profitable through the industry's worst-ever crisis, its strong commitment to health safety customer service excellence, and its remarkable relationship with employees."
- The judges also noted the airline's "transformational strategic deal to incorporate Asiana and create a larger, more global flagship carrier. Korean Air plans to continue to strengthen its position in the global aviation industry and aims to become one of the world's top 10 airlines after successfully acquiring and integrating Asiana Airlines.

## **2.9 US APPROVES BLUE ORIGIN FOR HUMAN SPACE TRAVEL**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has approved "Blue Origin license" in order to carry humans on New Shepard launch system into space.

### **Key Points**

- Former Amazon.com Chief Executive, Jeff Bezos, is to fly to space on July 20 through Blue Origin's maiden crewed voyage.
- Blue Origin is authorized to carry humans while FAA license is valid through August.
- Blue Origin is approved to conduct these missions from its Launch Site One facility in Texas.
- This flight is coming after space-tourism rival Virgin Galactic successfully sent its crew to the edge of space.

## **2.10 NEPAL, INDIA SIGN DEAL FOR LOWER ARUN HYDROPOWER PROJECT**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Nepal has inked a USD 1.3 billion deal with Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) of India to develop a 679-megawatt hydropower project in eastern Nepal.

### **About:**

- This will be the second mega venture in Nepal, undertaken by India.
- It is the single largest foreign investment project.
- It is based on 2017 cost estimates.
- To develop the project, a memorandum of understanding was signed by Chief Executive Officer of Investment Board of Nepal Sushil Bhatta and Chairman & Managing Director of SJVN Nand Lal Sharma in Kathmandu.



- This hydropower project will be developed under build, own, operate and transfer (BOOT) model.

## **2.11 NPCI EXTENDS BHIM UPI TO BHUTAN**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Bhutan has become first country to adopt Unified Payment Interface (UPI) standards of India for its quick response (QR) code.

### **About:**

- Bhutan after Singapore has become the second country to have BHIM-UPI acceptance at merchant locations.
- International wing of the National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) called NPCI International Payments Ltd. (NIPL) announced partnership with Royal Monetary Authority (RMA) of Bhutan to implement BHIM UPI QR-based payments in Bhutan.
- Bhutan will also become the only country to issue & accept RuPay cards and accept BHIM-UPI.

### **Significance of the move**

BHIM-UPI is a significant achievement of India in area of fintech. During covid-19 induced lockdown, BHIM-UPI became an effective mechanism of payment. In 2020-21, it processed 22 billion financial transactions of worth rupee 41 lakh crore. In the line, this partnership among NPCI and RMA, is going to benefit 200,000 tourists from India who travel to Bhutan every year.

## **2.12 WORLD YOUTH SKILLS DAY CELEBRATED ON 15 JULY**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- United Nations celebrates World Youth Skills Day globally on 15 July every year. The day is celebrated as an opportunity for young people, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, and public and private sector stakeholders to acknowledge as well as celebrate the importance of equipping young people with skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship.
- The theme of World Youth Skills Day 2020 is “Reimagining Youth Skills Post-Pandemic”.
- In 2014, the United Nations General Assembly declared 15 July as World Youth Skills Day, to celebrate the strategic importance of equipping young people with skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship.

## **UAE becomes 1st Gulf nation to open embassy in Israel**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- The United Arab Emirates has become the first Gulf nation to open an embassy in Israel, nearly a year after both countries signed an agreement to normalise diplomatic ties. The new mission is located in Tel Aviv Stock Exchange building.

- The ceremony was attended by new Israeli President Isaac Herzog. UAE Ambassador Mohammad Mahmoud Al Khajah officially presented his credentials at the beginning of March.

### **2.13 CHINA BEGINS CONSTRUCTION OF WORLD'S 1ST COMMERCIAL SMALL MODULAR REACTOR**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- China has officially begun the construction of the world's first commercial modular small reactor 'Linglong One' at the Changjiang Nuclear Power Plant in the country's Hainan Province.
- The project is based on China National Nuclear Corporation's (CNNC's Linglong One (ACP100) technology.
- The multi-purpose, 125 MWe SMR is a pressurised water reactor designed for electricity generation, urban heating, urban cooling, industrial steam production, or seawater desalination.
- CNNC began the development of the Linglong One in 2010, and it was the first SMR project to pass an independent safety assessment by International Atomic Energy Agency experts in 2016.
- Its integrated pressurised water reactor (PWR) design was completed in 2014 and it was identified as a 'key project' in China's 12th Five-Year Plan.
- The design, which has 57 fuel assemblies and integral steam generators, was developed from the larger ACP1000 PWR. It incorporates passive safety features and could be installed underground.

### **2.14 SINGAPORE UNVEILS ONE OF THE WORLD'S BIGGEST FLOATING SOLAR PANEL FARMS**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Singapore has unveiled one of the world's largest floating solar panel farms. The project is part of efforts by the country to meet a goal of quadrupling its solar energy production by 2025 to help tackle climate change.
- Located on a reservoir in western Singapore, the 60 megawatt-peak solar photovoltaic farm has been built by a wholly-owned subsidiary of Sembcorp Industries. Spanning an area equivalent to 45 football fields and producing enough electricity to power the island's five water treatment plants.
- The electricity generated from the one lakh 22 thousand solar panels on the 45-hectare site should make Singapore one of the few countries in the world to have a water treatment system fully powered by sustainable energy.
- The solar farm could help to reduce carbon emissions by about 32 kilotonnes annually, comparable to taking 7,000 cars off the roads.

### **2.15 NEW ZEALAND CHAIRS SPECIAL APEC MEETING**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

New Zealand chaired special virtual meeting of Asia-Pacific trade group called “Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)”.

**ABOUT:**

- During the meeting world leaders highlighted that, extensive COVID-19 immunization is a global public good and accelerating access to vaccines is essential in order to overcome health emergency.
- Leaders of APEC grouping vowed for redoubling efforts to expand vaccine manufacture and supply.

**Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)**

APEC is a forum comprising of 21 Asia-Pacific economies. Member economies of APEC are home to 2.7 billion people and accounts for over half of global GDP. Member’s accounts for more than 70 percent of Australia’s total trade in goods & services. APEC was founded by Australia in 1989. It was established to encourage growing & prosperous regional economy by – trade & investment liberalisation & facilitation across the border, reducing costs of cross-border trade, economic & technical cooperation, exchanging best practice on trade & investment etc.

**Member Nations of APEC**

India is not a member of APEC. Its member nations include- Australia, Brunei, Chile, China, Canada, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, Mexico, Peru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Russia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Chinese Taipei, Vietnam and United States.

**2.16 FIT FOR 55 PACKAGE: EU**

**WHY IN NEWS?**

Recently, the European Union (EU) released a new climate proposal, the Fit for 55 packages.

- The EU in December 2020 submitted a revised Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement.

**ABOUT:**

- The new package attempts to deliver the NDC and carbon neutrality goal through proposed changes that would impact the economy, society and industry, as well as ensure a fair, competitive and green transition by 2030 and beyond.
- Climate neutrality is achieved when a country’s emissions are balanced by absorptions and removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. It is also expressed as a state of net-zero emissions.
- It claims to achieve a balance between “regulatory policies” and market-based carbon pricing to avoid the pitfalls of each

**2.17 INDIA, SRI LANKA AND MALDIVES HOLD VIRTUAL TRILATERAL EXERCISE TTX-2021**

**WHY IN NEWS?**

- Top defence officials from India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives participated in a virtual trilateral table top exercise “TTX-2021”. The exercise focused on maritime crimes like curbing narcotics and assistance in maritime search and rescue in the region.
- The two-day exercise, TTX-2021 aimed at enhancing mutual understanding and exchange of best practices procedures for countering common transnational crime was coordinated by the Maritime Warfare Centre, Mumbai.
- TTX-2021 exemplifies the deep trilateral engagement between India-Maldives-Sri Lanka which has strengthened immensely in the maritime domain over the past years.
- Interaction between the three neighbouring countries in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has also grown significantly in recent years, in consonance with India’s policy of ‘Neighbourhood First’ and vision of ‘Security and Growth for all in the Region (SAGAR).

## 2.18 WORLD DAY FOR INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The World Day for International Justice, (also known as Day of International Criminal Justice or International Justice Day), is celebrated globally on July 17 to support and recognize the work of the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- The day marks the anniversary of the adoption of the Rome Statute on July 17, 1998, the treaty that created the International Criminal Court. It came about when 120 states adopted a statute in Rome.
- It was known as the **Rome Statute** of the International Criminal Court, All the countries that agreed to adopt the statute were accepting the jurisdiction of the ICC.

## 2.19 NEW PM OF NEPAL: SHER BAHADUR DEUBA WINS VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

### WHY IN NEWS?

The new Prime Minister of Nepal, Sher Bahadur Deuba won a vote of confidence in the country’s Parliament days after the Supreme Court had reinstated the legislature which was dissolved in May.

### ABOUT:

- Sher Bahadur Deuba has previously held the office four times and has won 165 votes (136 votes required) with 83 votes going against him.
- In the month of July, the Supreme Court ordered Deuba should replace K.P. Sharma Oli.
- Deuba faces the immediate task of controlling the spread of COVID-19 and procuring vaccines for the citizens of Nepal.
- Less than 4% of the country’s population (Total population is 30 million) have been fully vaccinated against the virus.
- As the government scrambles to procure shots more than 1.3 million people are awaiting a second dose.

### Promises of the new Prime Minister

- In the coming three months the new government of Nepal has pledged to vaccinate a third of its populations and full vaccination by April, 2022.

## **2.20 US, AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN TO FORM QUAD GROUP**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

United States of America, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan, have made a principle agreement to establish a new quadrilateral diplomatic platform with the primary aim to enhance regional connectivity. This QUAD group was announced by the administration of Biden.

### **ABOUT:**

- A new quadrilateral group is being formed by the USA, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan amid the escalating violence in Afghanistan due to the pull out of US troops from the country.
- According to the administration of President Biden, this new QUAD group's primary focuses will be on enhancing the regional connectivity and the country of Afghanistan.
- The US state department has said that the parties have recognised this opportunity to open flourishing inter regional trade routes; the parties also intend to cooperate among themselves to build transit links, expand trade and strengthen business ties.

### **QUAD group meetings**

- The four nations have agreed to meet in the coming few months to chalk out the various modalities of this QUAD cooperation with mutual consensus.

## **2.21 INDIA CHAIRS BRICS CONTACT GROUP ON ECONOMIC AND TRADE ISSUES**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

From 12 to 14 July, 2021 the BRICS meeting on Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues (CGETI) was held.

### **About:**

- During the three day CGETI meeting, the BRICS members deliberated on the proposals which were circulated by India. These proposals were mainly for increasing and strengthening the intra-BRICS trade and cooperation was said by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

### **Proposals made by India**

#### **The proposals put forward by India are**

- Cooperation of BRICS regarding Multilateral Trading System.
- A framework to ensure Consumer Protection in E-Commerce.
- For SPS/TBT measures, Non-Tariff Measures resolution mechanism.
- Working Mechanism on Phytosanitary and Sanitary.
- A Framework of BRICS regarding Cooperation in the Professional Services.

### **Outcome of the meeting**

All the BRICS Members have agreed upon India's proposals and seeks to finalise them before the BRICS Trade Ministers' meeting, on 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2021 and will be chaired by Piyush Goyal, Indian Commerce and Industry Minister.

The members also agreed to three more of India's proposals which were put forward to strengthen economy and trade.

From 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2021 have virtual sellers and buyers meet and a BRICS trade fair.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2021 a MSME round-table will be held.

Two workshops on Services Trade Statistics to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> July, and 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2021

## **2.22 SAUDI ARABIA ENDS MALE GUARDIAN REQUIREMENT FOR WOMEN ATTENDING HAJJ**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- According to the Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, Saudi Arabia, women can now register for the annual Hajj pilgrimage without a male guardian (marham).
- In registration guidelines of Hajj for domestic pilgrims, the ministry highlights, women do not need to require a male guardian to register and could do registration along with other women.
- Women wishing to perform Hajj will have to register individually. India had announced the same rule in 2017 when the Modi government declared that women could go on Hajj without a male companion. Muslim women were exempted from mahram and also from the lottery system.
- It is an annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, which is considered as holiest city for Muslims. Hajj is a mandatory religious duty for Muslims which is must to carry at least once in their lifetime by all adult Muslims.

## **2.23 SCIENCE EXPLORATION DAY**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Science Exploration Day (also called Moon Day) is marked every year on 20 July. It was on this day in 1969 that Neil Armstrong and Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin became the first humans to land on the Moon's surface.
- The origins of Space Exploration Day date back to man first walking on the moon, with the day itself first observed to commemorate this historic event during events held in the early 1970s.
- Neil Armstrong was the first man to set foot on the moon's surface. The Armstrong- Aldrin duo spent 21.5 hours on the surface of the moon out of which they spent 2.5 hours outside of their capsules.
- To commemorate their achievement, the day was declared a holiday in 1984 by the then President of the United States, Ronald Reagan.



## 2.24 WORLD'S FIRST 3D-PRINTED STEEL BRIDGE OPENED IN AMSTERDAM

### WHY IN NEWS?

Amsterdam, has unveiled the world's first 3D-printed steel pedestrian bridge. This project has been opened on the Oudezijds Achterburgwal canal in the city of Amsterdam. The opening ceremony of this bridge was attended by the Queen of the Netherlands, Máxima.

### About the 3D-printed steel bridge

- The length of the bridge is nearly 40 feet.
- It is a 6-ton stainless steel structure.
- This bridge has been constructed by MX3D an Amsterdam based 3D metal printing company.
- The entire printing process, with the help of four robots, took just six months.
- The bridge has been designed by the Joris Laarman Lab and was first unveiled during the Dutch Design Week in the year 2018.
- After several load-testing rounds were carried out in 2019 there were plans to install the structure in early 2020. However, the ongoing site preparation work at the canal delayed the bridge's installation.

### Tenure of the bridge

The stainless steel structure has been named the MX3D Smart Bridge and it will remain in place for minimum of two years while the previous footbridge which was spread over the canal undergoes renovation. During its two-year tenure this bridge will act as a living laboratory and its performance will be analyzed and monitored in real time by researchers from the Alan Turing Institute's Data-Centric Engineering Programme, Imperial College London and the University of Cambridge.

## 2.25 WORLD FRAGILE X DAY

### WHY IN NEWS?

22<sup>nd</sup> July is organised as World Fragile X Awareness Day. On this day various landmarks and monuments are illuminated by various communities globally.

### About World Fragile X Day

- World Fragile X Day celebrates the families who have been impacted by Fragile X and highlights the progress of cure finding research.
- On World Fragile X Day monuments and landmarks across the globe are illuminated.
- World Fragile X Day began with FRAXA Research Foundation joining hands with the various communities around the world to raise Fragile X awareness while making progress toward effective treatments and a cure.

### About Fragile X

- Fragile X syndrome (FXS) is genetic disease inherited from the parents to their children that causes developmental and intellectual disabilities.
- **Martin-Bell syndrome** is another name of Fragile X Syndrome.

- Among boys, the most common hereditary mental disability disease is the FXS and 1 in 4,000 boys are affected.
- It's less common in girls with 1 in every 8,000 being affected.
- People suffering from FXS usually experience developmental and learning problems.
- This disease is a chronic condition and only some people who are suffering from FXS are able to live independently

## **2.26 WHO REPORT ON DROWNING PREVENTION IN ASIA-PACIFIC**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

WHO on 23<sup>rd</sup> July launched its first Regional Status Report on Drowning Prevention in the South-East Asia and Western Pacific regions. This report said that nearly two-thirds of all global deaths due to drowning occur in the Asia Pacific region.

About:

- Drowning is the third leading cause of unintentional injury and death worldwide and it accounts for 7% of all injury-related deaths.
- This report by WHO states that Middle and low income countries account for more than 90% of all the unintentional drowning deaths in the world. Also over 50% of the world's total drowning occurs in the Western Pacific and South-East Asia regions.
- In 48 of the 85 countries which have data on drowning, it is among the top five causes of death for children who are under the 15 years of age.
- Drowning accounts for 75% of all deaths during flood disasters. Many countries in the South-East Asia and Western Pacific regions are vulnerable to this form of disaster.
- These reports provide knowhow's related to status of water safety and drowning prevention in each of the regions.
- This report shows a clear picture of the problems and the efforts that are underway address drowning related morbidity and mortality.
- In the year 2019, more than 1,44,000 people had drowned in the Asia Pacific region which accounts for 61% of all global drowning deaths.
- Around 70,000 and 74,000 deaths in the WHO South-East Asia and Western Pacific regions respectively occurred due to drowning. Of the 70,000 drowning related deaths more than 33% were among children who were aged less than 15 years.
- On an average, men were more likely to drown than women.

## **2.27 UNESCAP'S GLOBAL SURVEY ON DIGITAL AND SUSTAINABLE TRADE FACILITATION**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

In United Nation's Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific's (UNESCAP) latest Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, India has scored 90.32%.

### **India's performance in the survey**

- Having evaluated 143 economies globally, this year's Survey has highlighted India's significant score improvement on all 5 key indicators.
- Transparency is 100% in 2021 (It was 93.33% in 2019)
- Formalities has been recorded at 95.83% in 2021 (It was 87.5% in 2019)
- Institutional Arrangement and Cooperation is 88.89% in 2021 (It was 66.67% in 2019)
- In 2021 Paperless Trade is 96.3% (It was 81.48% in 2019)
- Cross-Border Paperless Trade in 2021 is 66.67% (In 2019 it was 55.56%)
- Comparing to the South and South West Asia region (63.12%) and Asia Pacific region (65.85%) India has performed the best.
- This survey has found that the overall score of India is greater than many OECD countries which include UK, France, Norway, Canada and Finland etc.
- The survey shows that India's overall score is better than the European Union's average score.
- For the Transparency index India has achieved a 100% score
- In the Women in trade component India has achieved 66%.

#### **About the survey**

This survey is conducted by UNESCAP **every two years**. The current survey for the year 2021 includes an assessment of 58 trade facilitation measures which has been covered by the Trade Facilitation Agreement of WTO. This Survey finds out whether or not the trade facilitation measures have the desired impact and also helps in drawing comparison amongst the countries

### **2.28 UN ADOPTS FIRST-EVER RESOLUTION ON VISION**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The first-ever resolution on vision has been approved the United Nations general assembly. The UN called upon its 193 member countries so that they ensure access to eye care for each of their individual citizens. Following this resolution will contribute towards the global effort of helping about 1.1 billion people who are suffering from vision impairment and lack eye services by the year 2030.

#### **About:**

- The resolution named "Vision for Everyone" has been sponsored by Antigua, Bangladesh and Ireland, and co-sponsored by more than 100 countries.
- Under this resolution UN has asked the member countries to institute a government approach towards eye care.
- UN has also called upon donors and financial institutions to provide financing for developing countries so that they can address the impact of loss of vision on social and economic development.
- The resolution states that global eye care needs are going to increase substantially as by the year 2050 half of the global population is expected to be suffering from vision impairment.

- More than 90% of the 1.1 billion people globally who are suffering from loss of vision live in low or middle income group of countries.
- 55% of all blind people are girls and women.
- Better access to services related to eye care can increase the per capita household spending by around 88%.
- Better access to eye care related service is essential to achieve the goals of UN for the year 2030 of ending hunger and poverty, ensuring quality education and healthy living and reducing inequality.

### **Who introduced the resolution?**

UN Ambassador of Bangladesh, Rabab Fatima, introduced this resolution, calling this resolution to be long-overdue of the recognition of the pivotal role that healthy vision plays in human life and helps in sustainable development.

## **2.29 WORLD HEPATITIS DAY 2021: THEME, HISTORY, AND SIGNIFICANCE**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Every year on July 28, World Hepatitis Day (WHD) is observed to raise awareness about viral hepatitis.

As per World Health Organization (WHO), viral hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver that can cause severe liver disease and hepatocellular cancer. Every 30 seconds, a person dies due to hepatitis illness, added WHO.

On World Hepatitis Day 2021, WHO will host a Global Talk Show to provide a platform for global, national, and regional leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders for discussing action plans to eliminate hepatitis by 2030

### **World Hepatitis Day 2021: Theme**

‘Hepatitis can’t wait’ is the theme of World Hepatitis Day 2021.

- This year, the theme ‘Hepatitis can’t wait’ aims at highlighting the urgent efforts required to eliminate hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.
- As per WHO, with a person dying every 30 seconds due to a hepatitis-related illness, even with the on-going COVID-19 crisis, we cannot wait to act to eliminate hepatitis

## **2.30 SWEDEN JOINS INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Sweden has ratified the framework agreement for the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and is now a member of the global platform, which is an initiative of India aimed at promoting renewable energy and sustainable development.
- Sweden hopes to bring its expertise and its experience in renewable energy and clean energy technologies to discussions in the ISA to contribute to meeting the challenges related to climate change.

- In April 2018, Prime Minister Modi visited Stockholm during which both sides agreed to further deepen innovation partnership for a sustainable future.
- The ISA has been conceived as an action-oriented, member-driven, collaborative platform to increase the availability of solar energy technologies to enhance energy security and sustainable development.

### **2.31 MALAYSIA REGISTERS WORLD'S FIRST AFFORDABLE NEW DRUG FOR HEPATITIS C**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

World's first affordable as well as effective new drug for hepatitis C has been registered by Malaysia. This new drug offers hope for accessible treatment to the millions of people around the world who are suffering from this disease.

#### **About:**

- Hepatitis C has very few early symptoms, hence, making it very hard to diagnose and is said to be a silent killer.
- The drug which has been named ravidasvir has been approved for use along with an existing drug named sofosbuvir, in the month of June.
- This approval came five years after the Malaysian government had partnered with Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) to develop the drug.
- According to the World Health Organization, around 71 million people globally are thought to be living with Hepatitis C which is a blood-borne virus that is one of the leading causes of liver cancer and can lead to cirrhosis.
- Hepatitis C has no vaccine.
- Hepatitis C medicines are very costly and are sometimes out of reach of the sufferers from the lower and middle income group countries.

#### **Clinical trials**

Clinical trials were conducted in Thailand and Malaysia. 300 people joined the clinical trial. One patient who was suffering from this disease, three months after he began the treatment, showed no trace of the virus. The ravidasvir plus sofosbuvir trial reports were published in the journal Lancet in the month of April. The reports showed that the drug combination is highly effective and cures patients in 97% of the cases.

#### **Conclusion**

Cheaper treatment of this disease is going to help the sufferers and the countries are also being encouraged to conduct more testing for hepatitis. The WHO plans to eliminate this disease by reducing new infections by 90% and deaths by 65 % by the year 2030

### **2.32 ALASKA EARTHQUAKE: PARTS OF ALASKA UNDER TSUNAMI WARNING AFTER 8.2 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE STRIKES**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

An 8.2 magnitude earthquake struck off the Alaskan Peninsula. As per the United States Geological Survey, it has prompted a Tsunami warning in parts of Alaska.

### Alaska earthquake: History

- In March 1964, Alaska was hit by a 9.2 magnitude earthquake, which was the strongest ever recorded in North America.
- It had devastated Anchorage and had unleashed a Tsunami that had slammed the Gulf of Alaska, the US West Coast. More than 250 people were killed by the tsunami and the quake.
- A 7.5 magnitude earthquake had also caused the tsunami waves on the Southern Coast in Alaska in October 2020; however, no casualties were reported.

### International Affairs: Practice MCQs

**QUESTION 1:** Baihetan Dam, world's second Biggest Hydropower Dam, is situated in-

- A. China
- B. Japan
- C. Denmark
- D. USA

**QUESTION 2:** What does the acronym B.E.P.S, with respect to economics, stands for?

- A. Basic Execution Plan System
- B. Business Entry Point Steps
- C. Base Erosion and Profit Shifting
- D. None of the above

**QUESTION 3:** Bagram Air Force station, seen in news recently, is situated in-

- A. Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
- B. Afghanistan
- C. Turkmenistan
- D. Iran

**QUESTION 4:** Which of India's neighbour has been recently certified Malaria-free by World Health Organisation?

- A. Nepal
- B. Bhutan
- C. China
- D. Myanmar

**QUESTION 5:** The recent meeting in 2021 of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) was hosted by-

- A. Myanmar
- B. India
- C. France
- D. Sri Lanka

**QUESTION 6:** India-origin woman Sirisha Bandla, is set to fly to space in private spaceflight of-

- A. Bigelow Aerospace
- B. Blue Origins
- C. SpaceX
- D. Virgin Galactic

**QUESTION 7:** The world's tallest sandcastle has been recently built in-

- A. Iceland
- B. Norway
- C. Sweden
- D. Denmark

**QUESTION 8:** Air Transport World's (ATW) 2021 Airline of the Year award has been won by-

- A. Air Singapore
- B. Korean Air
- C. Etihad Airlines



D. Lufthansa Airlines

**QUESTION 9:** Who is the founder of Blue origin space company?

- A. Elon Musk
- B. Jeff Bezos
- C. Richard Branson
- D. Burt Raton

**QUESTION 10:** Arun Hydro-power Project is an international project of India's collaboration with-

- A. Nepal
- B. Bhutan
- C. Myanmar
- D. Bangladesh

**QUESTION 11:** Which of India's immediate neighbour country has recently accepted BHIM-UPI payment standards?

- A. Nepal
- B. Bhutan
- C. Sri Lanka
- D. Myanmar

**QUESTION 12:** World Youth Skills day is celebrated every year on -

- A. July 15th
- B. July 14th
- C. July 13th
- D. July 12th

**QUESTION 13:** Which country has become the first Gulf nation to open an embassy in Israel?

- A. Saudi Arabia
- B. Oman
- C. Kuwait
- D. UAE

**QUESTION 14:** China's Linglong One, seen recently in news, is a-

- A. moon lander project.

B. nuclear power plant.

C. satellite constellation for internet.

D. mars lander.

**QUESTION 15:** Which country has recently unveiled a 60MW, one of the world's largest floating solar panel farms?

- A. China
- B. USA
- C. Singapore
- D. South Korea

**QUESTION 16:** Which of the following is not a member of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)?

- A. India
- B. Brunei
- C. Australia
- D. Philippines

**QUESTION 17:** The Fit for 55 package released by European Union is associated with-

- A. tax coverage
- B. digital transaction
- C. geriatric (senior age related) healthcare
- D. climate change

**QUESTION 18:** Recently a virtual trilateral exercise TTX-2021 on maritime security was hosted by India. The other two nations were-

- A. Myanmar and Maldives
- B. Sri Lanka and Bangladesh
- C. Sri Lanka and Maldives
- D. Maldives and Madagascar

**QUESTION 19:** World Day for International Justice is celebrated every year on-

- A. July 14
- B. July 15
- C. July 16

D. July 17

**QUESTION 20:** Who has been elected as new Prime minister of Nepal?

- A. Pushpa Kamal Dahal
- B. K P Sharma Oli
- C. Sher Bahadur Deuba
- D. Arzu Rana Deuba

**QUESTION 21:** USA has proposed a new QUAD grouping for Afghanistan. Its members include, other than USA, Afghanistan-

- A. Pakistan and Tajikistan
- B. Iraq and Pakistan
- C. Iran and Pakistan
- D. Pakistan and Uzbekistan

**QUESTION 22:** BRICS meeting on Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues (CGETI) held recently, was chaired by-

- A. Brazil
- B. Russia
- C. India
- D. China

**QUESTION 23:** Which country has recently ended the practice of male guardian requirement for women attending haj?

- A. UAE
- B. Saudi Arabia
- C. Indonesia
- D. Pakistan

**QUESTION 24:** When is the Science Exploration Day celebrated every year?

- A. July 17
- B. July 18
- C. July 19
- D. July 20

**QUESTION 25:** World's first 3D-printed steel pedestrian bridge has been unveiled in-

- A. Beijing

B. Amsterdam

C. London

D. Paris

**QUESTION 26:** World Fragile X Awareness day is organised every year on-

- A. July 21
- B. July 22
- C. July 23
- D. July 24

**QUESTION 27:** The first Regional Status Report on Drowning Prevention in the South-East Asia and Western Pacific regions was recently released by-

- A. UNESCO
- B. Red Cross society
- C. World Health Organisation
- D. Salvation Army

**QUESTION 28:** United Nation's Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific's (UNESCAP) Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation is conducted every-

- A. six months
- B. year
- C. 2 years
- D. 5 years

**QUESTION 29:** UN has recently adopted First-ever Resolution on Vision. It was sponsored by-

- A. USA, China and India
- B. Afghanistan, Yemen and Japan
- C. Antigua, Bangladesh and Ireland
- D. Antigua, Pakistan and Bangladesh

**QUESTION 30:** World Hepatitis Day is observed every year on-

- A. July 25
- B. July 26

C. July 27

D. July 28

**QUESTION 31:** Which Scandinavian country has recently joined the International Solar Alliance?

A. Sweden

B. Norway

C. Denmark

D. Finland

**QUESTION 32:** World's first affordable as well as effective new drug for hepatitis C, Ravidasvir, has been registered by which country?

A. Bangladesh

B. India

C. Malaysia

D. Indonesia

**QUESTION 33:** Recently in 8.2 magnitude earthquake struck off the Alaskan Peninsula in the-

A. Atlantic Ocean

B. Arctic Ocean

C. Pacific Ocean

D. Antarctic Ocean

9. ANSWER: B

10. ANSWER: A

11. ANSWER: B

12. ANSWER: A

13. ANSWER: D

14. ANSWER: B

15. ANSWER: C

16. ANSWER: A

17. ANSWER: D

18. ANSWER: C

19. ANSWER: D

20. ANSWER: C

21. ANSWER: D

22. ANSWER: C

23. ANSWER: B

24. ANSWER: D

25. ANSWER: B

26. ANSWER: B

27. ANSWER: C

28. ANSWER: C

29. ANSWER: C

30. ANSWER: D

31. ANSWER: A

32. ANSWER: C

33. ANSWER: C

**Answer Key:**

1. ANSWER: A

1. ANSWER: A

2. ANSWER: C

3. ANSWER: B

4. ANSWER: C

5. ANSWER: C

6. ANSWER: D

7. ANSWER: D

8. ANSWER: B

### 3.1 EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY TO HIRE FIRST DISABLED ASTRONAUT

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- The European Space Agency will hire and launch the world's first physically disabled astronaut. It received 22000 applicants for this recruitment call. ESA is developing technologies for para-astronaut. It will give a message to the world that 'Space is for everyone'.
- European Space Agency is facing tough competition from private players and other space agencies for launching commercial satellites. Amazon founder Bezos will become the first man to go into space on his own rocket in July 2021.

### 3.2 LAMBDA VARIANT OF COVID-19

#### WHY IN NEWS?

After the cases of Delta Variant of Covid-19 continuously rising, a new variant called Lambda Variant (LV) is emerging as a new threat.

- Lambda Variant is dominant in Peru; India has not yet reported any case of LV.

#### About:

- The strain was first identified in Peru in December 2020. Lambda is the dominant variant in the South American country with 81% samples found to be carrying it.
- Until recently, it was largely concentrated in a handful of South American countries, including Ecuador and Argentina, but since April it has been detected in more than 25 Countries.
- Previously known by its Formal Scientific Name C.37, the World Health Organisation (WHO) designated this variant seventh and the newest Variant of Interest (VOI).
- Another four have been designated as 'variants of concern'.

### 3.3 IIT MADRAS, SONY TO COLLABORATE ON HACKATHON

#### WHY IN NEWS?

Indian Institute of Technology-Madras and Sony India Software Centre have proposed to host a hackathon called Samvedan 2021.

- Under the hackathon, contestants will be asked to develop solutions for societal problems in India.
- Participants of IITM-PTF's (IIT-Madras Pravartak Technologies Foundation) 'Sensing Solutions for Bharat' will use Internet of Things sensor board.
- Competition will be based on Sony Semiconductor Solutions Corporation's presence board.
- Registration for the competition commenced on July 1.
- Registration is open to all Indian nationals.

#### Winners of competition

Winners of the competition will be eligible for entrepreneurial support from IITM-PTF. This competition is also open to industry personnel and academics.

## **About competition**

Sony will use its leading-edge technology in solving India's problems. Under the competition, each team will have a maximum of three members. Challenge will be held in three stages. A total of 75 ideas would be selected for quarter-finals. 25 will make it to semi-finals. Out of 25, seven finalists will be selected. Each finalist will receive prizes worth ₹3 lakh. Sony Semiconductor Solutions Corporation will provide a free presence board to each quarter-finalist.

### **3.4 RARE SUPERLUMINOUS SUPERNOVA SHINING WITH BORROWED ENERGY SOURCE SPOTTED** **WHY IN NEWS?**

Indian researchers have spotted a rare superluminous supernova that shines with the energy borrowed from an exotic type of neutron star with an ultra-powerful magnetic field.

#### **What is Superluminous Supernova?**

- A super-luminous supernova is a type of stellar explosion with a luminosity 10 or more times higher than that of standard supernovae.
- A supernova is the explosion of a star. It is the largest explosion that takes place in space.
- Superluminous supernova is generally rare because they originate from very massive stars (minimum mass limit is more than 25 times that of the Sun) and the number distribution of such massive stars in our galaxy or in nearby galaxies is small.

### **3.5 WHAT IS A BITCOIN HARDWARE WALLET?**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Square's hardware head, Jesse Dorogusker, announced recently that company is going to start building a hardware wallet and accompanying service for cryptocurrency, Bitcoin. This decision was taken in a bid to bring crypto coin into mainstream.

#### **What is Hardware Wallet?**

Hardware wallet is a special type of cryptocurrency storage which maintains and secures private crypto keys of users in hardware device. This wallet is known for providing security and utility when users interact with blockchains. It allows users to work on multiple blockchains simultaneously. This is translated as utility factor because users can manage Bitcoin, Ethereum & Alt. Coins, Lumens etc on a single device.

#### **How data can be accessed?**

On the hardware wallet, everything is backed up and accessible with a recovery phrase or with password or key. The hardware is in form of a small, portable, plug-in device which allows users to access cryptocurrency from anywhere.

#### **How cryptocurrency is stored?**

Cryptocurrency is not stored in the hardware of wallet itself. But it is stored in blockchains. Wallet allows users to access in a portable fashion. It is more like a credit card which can access account from any ATM or swiping platform

### **3.6 NASA'S VIPER MISSION TO MAP WATER, OTHER RESOURCES ON MOON IN 2023**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

NASA has announced the launch of the Volatiles Investigating Polar Exploration Rover(VIPER) Mission in 2023.

#### **About VIPER Mission:**

- VIPER Mission is a mobile robot to be launched by NASA in the year 2023.
- It will be the first resource mapping mission on any other celestial body.
- Celestial Body is any natural body outside the Earth's atmosphere. Easy examples are the Moon, Sun, and the other planets of our solar system.

#### **Objectives of the Mission:**

- To get a closer view of the Moon's South Pole
- To evaluate the concentration of water as well as other potential resources on its surface
- To understand if it is possible for human life to sustain there, by using locally available resources.

#### **Significance of the Mission:**

- VIPER will directly analyze water ice on the surface and subsurface of the Moon at varying depths and temperature conditions within four main soil environments.
- The data VIPER transmits back to Earth will be used to create resource maps helping scientists determine the location and concentration of water ice on the Moon.
- These findings will inform future landing sites under the Artemis Mission by helping to determine locations where water and other resources can be harvested to sustain humans over extended stays

### **3.7 ISRO SUCCESSFULLY CONDUCTS 3RD TEST ON VIKAS ENGINE FOR GAGANYAAN PROGRAM**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully conducted the third long-duration hot test of the liquid propellant Vikas Engine for the core L110 liquid stage of the human-rated GSLV Mk III vehicle, as part of the engine qualification requirements for the Gaganyaan Programme.
- The engine was fired for duration of 240 seconds at the engine test facility of ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri in Tamil Nadu. The performance of the engine met the test objectives and the engine parameters were closely matching with the predictions during the entire duration of the test.

### **3.8 COVIHOME: IIT-H DEVELOPS AFFORDABLE COVID-19 TESTING KIT**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Researchers at Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad have developed India's First Rapid Electronic and Artificial Intelligence-powered COVID-19 test called COVIHOME. This test can be performed at an affordable cost at home.



About:

- Test kit can produce results within 30 minutes for symptomatic as well as asymptomatic patients.
- This test does not require RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction) test.
- A patent for this kit has been filed and researchers are waiting for industry partners for Transfer of Technology (ToT) to produce kits at mass level.

### **3.9 COVID-19: HERE'S EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT 'CYTOMEGALOVIRUS'**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Sporadic cases of cytomegalovirus (CMV) are being reported from Delhi, Pune, Bengaluru, making it the latest post-covid complication.

#### **What is Cytomegalovirus (CMV)?**

- Cytomegalovirus (CMV) is also known as Human Herpes virus 5 (HHV-5). It is a common herpes virus that often causes natural infections in childhood and remains asymptomatic in patients with normal immunity.
- Once infected, the virus is retained in the body for life. Most people don't realise that they have been infected by CMV because it rarely causes problems in healthy people.
- The symptoms usually surface only when carriers become immuno-compromised, such as those suffering from cancer, AIDS, or those who have recently had transplants.

#### **Symptoms of CMV:**

- The symptoms of CMV range from fever and fatigue to severe symptoms involving the eyes, brain or other internal organs.
- These symptoms include gastrointestinal bleeding (blood in stools), diarrhea, swollen glands, mouth ulcers, inflamed liver, and inflammation of the brain (encephalitis).

#### **How is CMV transmitted?**

- CMV spreads between humans via contact with someone who has the disease. Transmission happens through sexual contact and bodily fluids such as urine, blood, saliva, tears, and feces.
- Expecting mothers who develop an active CMV infection during pregnancy can pass on the virus to their babies, which is known as congenital CMV. Children born with it may or may not show symptoms.

### **3.10 FIRST CASE OF MONKEYPOX DETECTED IN TEXAS**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), First case of rare human monkeypox was detected in Texas.

- Monkeypox was detected in a US. resident, who recently travelled from Nigeria to US.
- Though it is a rare viral illness but currently is not a reason for alarm and threat to public.

- As per laboratory testing at CDC, patient is infected with strain of monkeypox which is commonly found in parts of West Africa, including Nigeria.
- Infections with this strain of monkeypox are fatal among 1 in 100 people.
- Prior to this case, there have been six reported monkeypox cases in travellers returning from Nigeria in United Kingdom, Israel, and Singapore.

#### **About Monkeypox**

- Monkeypox is a rare but potentially serious viral illness which starts with flu-like illness & swelling of lymph nodes and progresses to a widespread rash on face & body.
- Most infections last 2-4 weeks.
- It shares same family of viruses as smallpox, but causes milder infection.

### **3.11 PEGASUS SPYWARE USED TO 'SNOOP' ON INDIAN JOURNALISTS, ACTIVISTS**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

According to a report, Pegasus spyware may have been used to conduct surveillance on about 300 Indians including two Cabinet ministers' three opposition leaders, a Constitutional authority, government officials, scientists and about 40 journalists.

#### **ABOUT:**

- It is a spyware created by NSO Group, an Israeli cybersecurity firm founded in 2010.
- Pegasus spyware can hack any iOS or Android device and steal a variety of data from the infected device.
- It works by sending an exploit link and if the target user clicks on the link, the malware or the code that allows the surveillance is installed on the user's phone.
- Once Pegasus is installed, the attacker has complete access to the target user's phone.

### **3.12 DRDO DEVELOPS HIGH-STRENGTH BETA TITANIUM ALLOY**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

A high strength titanium alloy has been developed by India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). This alloy has been developed for applications in aerospace structural forgings.

#### **About the Titanium alloy**

The titanium alloys are unique due to their ductility, higher strength, fracture toughness and fatigue which make them beneficial for various aircraft structural applications.

Also this alloy has relatively lower lifetime cost due to its superior corrosion resistance in comparison to steels, which makes it very beneficial for aircraft structural applications.

DRDO has said that this alloy can be used in various ways that include slat and flap tracks, landing gears and drop link in landing gear etc.

Over 15 steel components that can be replaced in the near future with this alloy have been identified by The Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA).

#### **Composition of the alloy**

This high strength alloy, Ti-10V-2Fe-3Al, contains Iron, Vanadium, and Aluminium. Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory (DMRL) has developed this high strength Titanium alloy. The first component that was forged successfully by the ADA at HAL, with the DMRL's involvement and duly certified for airworthiness was the landing gear drop link. This alloy's excellent high strength-to-weight ratio forgeability has facilitated the manufacturing of the intricate components which are necessary in aerospace applications

### **3.13 IOC TO BUILD INDIA'S FIRST GREEN HYDROGEN PLANT AT MATHURA**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

IOC, India's largest oil firm will build the country's first 'green hydrogen' plant at its refinery in Mathura. This decision has been undertaken with the view of preparing for a future to cater to the growing demands cleaner forms of energy.

#### **About:**

- This project will be the India's first ever green hydrogen unit.
- Earlier, 'grey hydrogen' production projects have been announced making use of fossil fuels such as natural gas.
- Several hydrogen production units are being planned to be set up by IOC.
- With Hydrogen fuel cell powered buses are plying on the road it will be essential to set up hydrogen power plants.

#### **Types of Hydrogen Plants**

- Hydrogen is the latest buzz as it is a clean fuel but manufacturing it causes carbon by-products and it is energy-intensive.
- Through the process of coal gasification brown hydrogen is created while this process throws off carbon waste.
- Blue hydrogen uses carbon capture.
- The ultimate clean hydrogen resource is green hydrogen production and it uses renewable energy to create the hydrogen fuel.
- Hydrogen is also said to be a fuel for the future.

### **3.14 NASA'S NEW SPACECRAFT: NEA SCOUT**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Recently, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has announced that its new spacecraft, named Near-Earth Asteroid Scout or NEA Scout, has completed all required tests and has been safely tucked inside the Space Launch System (SLS) rocket.

#### **About NEA Scout:**

- Near-Earth Asteroid Scout, or NEA Scout, is a miniaturized spacecraft, known as a CubeSat, developed under NASA's Advanced Exploration Systems (AES) Program.

- AES pioneers new approaches for rapidly developing prototype systems, demonstrating key capabilities, and validating operational concepts for future human missions beyond low-Earth orbit.
- Its main mission is to fly by and collect data from a near-Earth asteroid.
  - It will take about two years to cruise to the asteroid and will be about 93 million miles away from Earth during the asteroid encounter.
- It will also be America's first interplanetary mission using special solar sail propulsion.
  - So far, spacecraft have been using solar energy to power them and execute critical functions.
  - This will be the first time that a spacecraft uses it as wind to generate thrust and move forward.
- It is one of several payloads that will hitch a ride on Artemis I, which is expected to be launched in November, 2021.
  - Artemis I will be an uncrewed testflight of the Orion spacecraft and SLS rocket.
  - It is the first in a series of increasingly complex missions that will enable human exploration to the Moon and Mars.
- NEA Scout launches to the Moon in 2021 with a fleet of other small satellites aboard Artemis 1.
  - At the Moon, NEA Scout will deploy its 86-square-meter solar sail and slowly spiral out of lunar orbit.
  - It will travel to a near-Earth asteroid and perform a slow fly-by, capturing up-close images of the surface.

### **3.15 IIT-MADRAS DEVELOPS AI ALGORITHM CALLED 'NBDRIVER**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Indian Institute of Technology Madras Researchers has developed an Artificial Intelligence-based Mathematical Model called 'NBDriver' to identify cancer-causing alterations in cells.
- The algorithm uses a relatively unexplored technique of leveraging DNA composition to pinpoint genetic alterations responsible for cancer progression, which is difficult using present methodologies.
- Understanding the underlying mechanism of these alterations will help identify the most appropriate treatment strategy for a patient in an approach known as 'precision oncology'.

### **3.16 IIT ROPAR DEVELOPS FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND OXYGEN RATIONING DEVICE 'AMLEX'**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar has developed a first-of-its-kind Oxygen Rationing Device called AMLEX, to save the oxygen which otherwise gets wasted unnecessarily, and in turn, increase the life of medical oxygen cylinders three folds.

- The device will supply a required volume of oxygen to the patient during inhalation and will trip when the patient exhales carbon dioxide.
- “AMLEX”, on the other hand, was a system developed specifically for oxygen cylinders synchronising the flow of oxygen with inhalation and exhalation of the patient, thus conserving a large amount of oxygen in the reservoir for a long-lasting operation.
- As “AMLEX” supplies a required volume of oxygen to the patient during inhalation and trips when the patient exhales CO<sub>2</sub>, it saves the flow of oxygen at that time.

### **3.17 JEFF BEZOS LAUNCHES TO SPACE ABOARD NEW SHEPARD ROCKET SHIP**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Billionaire Jeff Bezos has made a short journey to space, in the first crewed flight of his rocket ship, New Shepard. He was accompanied by Mark Bezos, his brother, Wally Funk, an 82-year-old pioneer of the space race, and an 18-year-old student.
- They travelled in a capsule with the biggest windows flown in space, offering stunning views of the Earth. On this flight was the oldest person who has been to space, Wally Funk and the youngest, student Oliver Daemen.
- When the capsule touched back down after the 10-minute, 10-second flight, Jeff Bezos exclaimed: “Best day ever!”
- New Shepard, built by Bezos’ company Blue Origin, is designed to serve the burgeoning market for space tourism.

### **3.18 WHAT IS H5N1 AVIAN INFLUENZA, ITS SYMPTOMS, AND HOW FATAL CAN IT BE?**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

An 11-year-old boy in Delhi died of H5N1 avian influenza. This is the first recorded death due to the bird flu in India in 2021.

#### **About Bird Flu:**

- Bird flu or avian influenza is a disease caused by avian influenza Type A viruses found naturally in wild birds worldwide.
- The virus can infect domestic poultry including chickens, ducks, turkeys and there have been reports of H5N1 infection among pigs, cats, and even tigers in Thailand zoos.

#### **Types:**

- Avian Influenza type a viruses are classified based on two proteins on their surfaces – Hemagglutinin (HA) and Neuraminidase (NA).
- There are about 18 HA subtypes and 11 NA subtypes. Several combinations of these two proteins are possible e.g., H5N1, H7N2, H9N6, H17N10 among others.

#### **Symptoms:**

- Symptoms of avian influenza include – Fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, nausea, abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting, severe respiratory illness, and Neurologic changes.
- Infection in Humans:

- There have been reports of avian and swine influenza infections in humans including A(H1N1), A(H1N2), A(H5N1), A(H7N9) among others.
- The first report of human H5N1 infection was in 1997. Moreover, the infection is deadly as it has a high mortality rate of about 60%.

### **3.19 DVARA E-DAIRY PARTNERS WITH IFFCO TOKIO GENERAL INSURANCE FOR AI-LED TAG**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Dvara E-Dairy Solutions, a portfolio company of Dvara Holdings has launched an artificial intelligence (AI) led digital tag 'Surabhi e-Tag' to identify cattle based on muzzle identity.
- This will be used for cattle insurance products offered in partnership with IFFCO Tokio General Insurance.
- Muzzle images of the cattle are collected through the Surabhi mobile application and stored in hi-resolution images as a unique digital identity.
- The artificial intelligence-driven mobile application of Dvara E-Dairy captures muzzle images with the mobile phone, compares the cattle's unique digital identity stored in a secured cloud server and retrieves the results in less than 60 seconds.
- Conventional methods like polyurethane ear tags (PU ear tags) can be easily tampered with and are prone to duplication and fraud.
- Also, Injectable Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags are considered expensive and require specialized skills.
- On the other hand, muzzle printing or nose printing is a unique identifier because it perceives patchy traits on the muzzle of cattle, just like human fingerprints.

### **3.20 I-STEM ENTERS PHASE-II**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The Indian Science Technology and Engineering facilities Map (I-STEM) project has been accorded an extension for five years, until 2026 and enters its second phase with added features.

#### **About:**

- I-STEM is a National Web portal for sharing R&D (Research and Development) facilities.
- The portal facilitates researchers to access slots for the use of equipment, as well as to share the details of the outcomes, such as, patents, publications and technologies.

#### **Launch:**

- Launched in January 2020. It is an initiative of Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India under the aegis of Prime Minister Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC) mission.
- PM-STIAC: It is an overarching Council that facilitates the Principal Scientific Adviser's Office to assess the status in specific science and technology domains, comprehend challenges in hand, formulate specific interventions, develop a futuristic roadmap and advise the Prime Minister accordingly.



**Goal:**

- The goal of I-STEM is to strengthen the R&D ecosystem of the country by **connecting researchers with resources**.
- Promoting technologies and scientific equipment development indigenously, and providing necessary supplies and support to researchers by enabling them an access to existing publicly funded R&D facilities in the country through the I-STEM web portal.

**Phase-II:**

- The portal will host indigenous technology products listed through a digital catalogue. It will also host and provide access to selected R&D (Research and Development) software required to undertake research projects by students and scientists.
- The portal will also provide a platform for the various City Knowledge and Innovation Clusters to enhance effective use of R&D infrastructure through leveraging collaboration and partnership built on a shared STI (Science Technology and Innovation) ecosystem.
- New phase will be designed as a dynamic digital platform that will provide a boost to research and innovation especially for 2 tier and 3 tier cities and also for the emerging start-up ecosystem.

**3.21 NOROVIRUS OUTBREAK IN UK: WHAT IS NOROVIRUS? HOW DOES IT SPREAD? HOW TO PREVENT IT?****WHY IN NEWS?**

The Public Health England (PHE) on July 16, 2021, showed that England is witnessing an increase in the number of cases of the vomiting bug Norovirus from the end of May to July.

In routine surveillance, it was revealed that the outbreak of the virus has mostly been in nursery and childcare facilities. Around 154 outbreaks of Norovirus have been reported in the past 5 weeks

**What is Norovirus?**

- Norovirus is known as the winter vomiting bug. Norovirus is described as a very contagious virus that causes sudden onset of vomiting and diarrhea.

People of any age group can contract the virus. The virus is easily transmitted through direct contact with infected individuals or surfaces. However, the infection passes in few days.

**What are the symptoms of Norovirus?**

- The symptoms of Norovirus emerge within 24-48 hours of getting infected.
- Sudden nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- High temperature,
- Abdominal pain
- Sore limbs

**How does Norovirus spread?**

- Norovirus is highly contagious. One can get infected with Norovirus:
- Direct contact with someone infected or sick with Norovirus
- Touching surfaces or objects contaminated with the virus then touching your mouth
- Consuming contaminated water or food

#### **How to prevent the spread of Norovirus?**

- Washing hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and water.
- Wash all contaminated clothes or beddings with soap or detergent.
- If infected, avoid cooking meals until 48 hours after recovering from infection.
- Disinfect the exposed areas with bleach-based cleaner and hot water. Also wipe clean objects such as telephones, toilets, door handles, taps, and other exposed areas

### **3.22 ALPHABET TO LAUNCH A NEW ROBOTICS COMPANY- INTRINSIC**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Alphabet, the parent company of Google, has announced of the launch of a new company that will be solely focused on software developing for robots. The company has been named Intrinsic.

#### **About:**

- Intrinsic, the new robotic firm has been announced after years of work within “X”, the subsidiary of Alphabet which mainly functions as an incubator for all entrepreneurial and innovative ideas by putting together talents from the tech industry.
- Wing, Waymo, Google Watch and Google Glass are some other companies that came out of X
- Wendy Tan White has been appointed as the CEO of Intrinsic.
- The company has been testing software’s in real-time mechanics that uses various techniques like deep learning, automated perception, motion planning, reinforcement learning, force control and simulation.
- Intrinsic’s blog post doesn’t mention about the current workings of the company but it did list a range of industries that Intrinsic is looking into entering such as electronics, automotive and health care industries

### **3.23 COVID BEEP-INDIA’S FIRST PHYSIOLOGICAL PARAMETERS MONITORING SYSTEM**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh has said that the Government is taking various steps to undertake the large scale production of COVID BEEP.

- COVID BEEP is the country’s first cost effective indigenously made wireless physiological parameters monitoring system for the patients who are suffering from COVID-19.
- COVID BEEP has been developed by the ESIC Medical College Hyderabad in association with the Department of Atomic Energy and Electronics Corporation of India Ltd. (ECIL).
- 40 COVID-BEEPs were supplied to the Government hospitals in Hyderabad for feedback and deployment.

- Further, another 100 are being prepared to be dispatched by mid-August, 2021.
- A proposal has been submitted to the Ministry of Labour & Employment for the large scale deployment of COVID BEEPS.

### **COVID BEEP**

COVID BEEP which stands for 'Continuous Oxygenation & Vital Information Detection Biomed ECIL ESIC Pod' first cost effective indigenously made wireless physiological parameters monitoring system for the patients who are suffering from COVID-19. COVID BEEP has been developed by the ESIC Medical College Hyderabad in association with the Department of Atomic Energy and Electronics Corporation of India Ltd. (ECIL)

COVID BEEP's latest version has-

#### **NIBP monitoring**

Aged people who are affected have the highest COVID-19 death rates and hence, NIBP monitoring is necessary.

#### **ECG monitoring**

The drugs which are being used such as prophylaxis or Hydroxychloroquine and Azithromycin etc have effects on the patient's heart and hence, it is important for the ECG monitoring.

#### **The Respiratory Rate**

COVID BEEP calculates the respiratory rate by the Bio Impedance method.

COVID BEEP will help in reducing of transmission and will help in saving resources like PPE kits, etc.

### **3.24 JAWAHAR NAVODAYA VIDYALAYA STUDENTS DETECT ASTEROIDS UNDER KHAGOLSHALA ASTEROID SEARCH CAMPAIGN 2021**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya students have detected Eight Asteroids as part of the Khagolshala Asteroid Search Campaign 2021.

#### **About Khagolshala Asteroid Search Campaign:**

- Khagolshala Asteroid Search Campaign (KASC) is an initiative of the Office of Principal Scientific Adviser, Government of India, and SPACE Foundation.
- The campaign is the India chapter of an international student research program that has got students involved in the search for asteroids.
- Under the campaign, high-quality astronomical data sets are distributed to students through the PANSTARRS telescope for analysis and identification of asteroids.
- The students then analyze the data using software, which then leads to potential discoveries.
- These observations feed into the Near-Earth Object (NEO) data being compiled by NASA and the Jet Propulsion Lab (JPL).
- As part of the campaign, Space India has established Khagolshala Astronomy and Space Education Labs (ASELs) across 20 Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas till date.

#### **About Asteroids:**

- Asteroids are small, rocky objects that orbit the Sun. Although asteroids orbit the Sun-like planets, they are much smaller than planets.
- There are lots of asteroids in our solar system. Most of them live in the main asteroid belt—a region between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter.

#### **About PANSTARRS Telescope:**

- Panoramic Survey Telescope and Rapid Response System (Pan-STARRS) is a telescope located in Hawaii, US.
- The telescope consists of astronomical cameras, telescopes and a computing facility that is surveying the sky for moving or variable objects on a continual basis. It is also producing accurate astrometry and photometry of already-detected objects.

#### **About SPACE Foundation:**

- SPACE Foundation was established in 2001. It aims to popularize science and inculcate scientific temperament among the masses, especially students in India.

### **3.25 MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES LAUNCHES ESSDP (EARTH SYSTEM SCIENCE DATA PORTAL)**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) launched Earth System Science Data Portal (ESSDP)

#### **About:**

- Dr Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General of World Meteorological Organization (WMO), gave a lecture during this event.
- A report on 'WMO, Disasters, Climate and COP-26' was discussed along with the issues relating to climate change.

#### **ESSDP (Earth System Science Data Portal)**

Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of the Ministry of Earth Sciences launched the MoES-ESSDP (Earth System Science Data Portal). It is an integrated digital web portal of the MoES institutes. This web portal will make the data regarding the various themes of earth system science available for public usage. This is available at <https://incois.gov.in/essdp> and it has been developed by using the latest technological tools. This portal has been aligned with the initiative, Digital India, of the Government of India which aims to transform India into a digitally empowered economy and society. This portal will facilitate in the retrieval and search of science data on earth system such as ocean, atmosphere, geosciences, poles, and seismology for benefit of the society.

### **3.26 COVID-19: NEPAL CONFIRMS CASES OF KAPPA MUTANT OF DELTA VARIANT**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Nepal's Ministry of Health and Population on July 27, 2021, confirmed the detection of the mutant Kappa variant (B.1.617.1) of COVID-19's Delta variant. Nepal had already confirmed the presence of Alpha and Delta variants in the country.

#### **What is Kappa variant (B.1.617.1)?**

- The Kappa (B.1.617.1) and Delta (B.1.617.2) variants are the mutants of the B.1.617 variant that was earlier commonly referred to as the Double Mutant or 'Indian variant'.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has identified the Kappa variant as Variant of Interest (VoI).

#### **Why were the COVID-19 variants labelled?**

- In order to end the linkage of the variants with origin countries, the World Health Organization (WHO) named these variants after the letters of the Greek alphabet.
- As per WHO, the new naming system aims at making the discussion of variants as simple, easy to say, and remember as possible.

#### **Naming of different COVID-19 variants**

- The UK variant (B.1.1.7) was named Alpha, the South Africa variant (B.1.351) was named Beta, and the Brazil variant (P.1) was named Gamma.

### **3.27 WORLD'S LARGEST STAR SAPPHIRE CLUSTER WORTH UP TO \$100 MILLION ACCIDENTALLY FOUND IN SRI LANKA**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The world's largest star sapphire cluster has been found by accident in a backyard in Sri Lanka. The newly found rock is named the 'Serendipity Sapphire'.

#### **Discovery of largest star sapphire:**

During the cleaning process of the cluster, a few stones fell out and were found to be of high-quality star sapphires, a pale blue in color.

The experts, however, have warned that though the specimen found has a high carat value of 2.5 million, it is a probability that all the stones inside the found cluster may not be of high quality.

A renowned gemologist, Dr. Gamini Zoysa, said that he has never seen such a large specimen before and that this was probably formed before 400 million years ago.

#### **What will happen to the newfound Star Sapphire Cluster?**

The official of the National Gem and Jewellery Authority of Sri Lanka said that it is a special Star Sapphire specimen, probably the biggest in the world.

Given the size and the value of the Sapphire, it might be of interest to private collectors or museums.

#### **About Star Sapphire:**

A Star Sapphire is a type of sapphire that exhibits a star-like phenomenon called asterism.

- **Cultivation:** It is suitable for cultivation in the states of Assam, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and North-Eastern states.

### **3.28 CARNIVAC-COV**

- Russia recently produced the first batch of COVID-19 vaccines for animals. The name of the vaccine is **Carnivac-Cov**. The World Health Organisation recently confirmed the possibility for transmission of viruses between humans and viruses.

- It was produced by **Roselkhoznadzor**, a federal service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance in Russia.
- The Russian scientists believe that the use of the vaccine will help to prevent virus mutations.
- The results of the vaccine trials say that it has a good immunogenic effect.
- COVID-19 mainly spreads through human-to-human transmission. However, there is evidence of human to animal transmission. This is possible mainly because it is a zoonotic virus.

### 3.29 “VARIANTS OF CONCERN” (V O C):

- The **Variants of concern (VOC)** together with widespread relaxation of COVID-19 appropriate behaviour resulted in the 2nd wave of Covid-19 in India.
- The term variant of concern (VOC) is a category assigned to a newly emerged variant of a virus with an increased ability of transmission.

Properties of VOC: The VOC is characterized by three sinister properties:

- **Increased Transmission Efficiency:** In many countries, including India the VOC, by virtue of increased transmissibility, has started off a new wave(s) of epidemic transmission.
- **Virulence:** It is the ability to cause severe/life-threatening disease. The UK variant has the worst virulence. The South Africa and Brazil variants do not seem to have higher virulence.
- **Immune to antibodies** generated by previous vaccination or infection: Most vaccines were made using antigens made from the D614G variant. However, these vaccines show low efficacy on the South African, Brazil and UK variants. Hence, reinfection can occur in spite of immunity provided by earlier D614G infection or vaccination.

#### SARS Cov-2 Variants:

- Alpha: B.1.1.7 (UK)
- Beta: B.1.351 (South Africa)
- Gamma: P.1 (Brazil)
- Delta: B.1.617.2 (India)

Note: The original pandemic virus (founder variant) was **Wu.Hu.1 (Wuhan virus)**. In a few months, variant **D614G** emerged and became globally dominant.

### 3.30 PROJECT PYRASOL

- **CSIR-Central Leather Research Institute (CLRI), Chennai** has inaugurated the Integrated Solar Dryer and Pyrolysis pilot project. These projects focus on urban waste management. The project is also part of the Indo-German project ‘Pyrasol’.

#### About Project Pyrasol:

- Project Pyrasol is a part of **the Indo-German Science & Technology Centre (IGSTC) flagship programme 2+2 Project.**
- **Aim:** To transform urban organic waste into biochar (charcoal produced by pyrolysis) and energy in smart cities. Pyrolysis is a process of chemically decomposing organic materials at



elevated temperatures in the absence of oxygen. The process typically occurs at temperatures above 430 °C (800 °F) and under pressure. It simultaneously involves the change of physical phase and chemical composition of organic material. Pyrolysis is an irreversible process.

- **Awarded to:** The project was awarded to CSIR-CLRI by the Indo-German Science & Technology Centre.
- **Significance:** The project will lead to technology development for the joint processing of Fibrous Organic Waste (FOW) and Sewage Sludge (SS) of Indian smart cities. These FOW and SS will get converted into hygienic and highly valuable biochar. Apart from that, the joint processing will also perform associated energy recovery, carbon sequestration and environmental improvement.

### 3.31 MAYFLOWER 400: FIRST ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SHIP

- **Mayflower 400** is the world's first Artificial Intelligence ship.
- It is **15m long and weighs 9 tonnes**. It is basically a trimaran that navigates with complete autonomy. The ship is covered with solar panels.
- The ship is to study marine pollution and analyze plastics in water. The voyage is important because more than 80% of the underwater world remains unexplored.
- It has been taught on how to avoid collisions. Thus, the ship can correct itself. It has been trained with hundreds of hours of audio data. The training will help the ship to detect the presence of marine animals and thereby provide information about the population distribution of these animals in the ocean.
- Sophisticated cameras and radars will act as the eyes and ears of the ship. There are six cameras on the ship.
- The research team is to monitor the ship twenty-four hours from England.
- It is capable of self-activating a hydrophone that can listen to whales.
- After the launch, Mayflower will become the first unmanned vehicle to cross the Atlantic Ocean.

### 3.32 PARKER SOLAR PROBE: DETECTED RADIO SIGNAL FROM VENUS

- The NASA Spacecraft **Parker Solar Probe** has discovered a natural radio signal from **Venus**. These signals were detected when the space probe flew over the upper atmosphere of Venus.

#### **Parker Solar Probe**

- It was launched in **2018** to study the outer corona of the sun. It is to reach 9.86 solar radii, that is, 6.9 million kilometers from the centre of the sun by 2025.

### 3.33 MILLISECOND PULSARS DISCOVERED

- A group of astronomers has discovered 8 millisecond pulsars located within dense clusters of stars, known as "**globular clusters**," using **South Africa's MeerKAT radio telescope**.

- **Millisecond pulsars** are neutron stars, the most compact star known, that spin up to 700 times per second.
- **Millisecond pulsars** are extremely compact stars mainly made up of neutrons and are amongst the most extreme objects in the universe.

### 3.34 NASA'S "CREW-2 MISSION" LAUNCHED:

- US launched **4 astronauts to the International Space Station (ISS)** as part of collaboration between **NASA and SpaceX** under the Commercial Crew Program. The mission is called **Crew-2 Mission**.
- **Crew-2 Mission** is the second crew rotation of the SpaceX Crew Dragon and the first with international partners.
- The mission carried four astronauts to ISS. Among them, two are from NASA and two are from the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and the European Space Agency (ESA).
- The central focus of the mission will be to continue research on a series of Tissue Chips in Space studies.
- Tissue Chips are small models of human organs that contain multiple cell types that behave similarly to the human body organs.
- According to NASA, these chips can potentially speed up the process of identifying safe and effective drugs and vaccines.
- Scientists can use these tissue chips in space to study diseases that affect specific human organs, which would take months or years to develop on Earth.

### 3.35 COMPUTED TOMOGRAPHY (CT) SCAN

- **CT scans** have been in the news since some Covid positive patients with mild to moderate Covid symptoms, as well as those with negative RT-PCR results who have Covid symptoms, have requested the test.
- CTS are also known as **Computed Tomography Scan**.
- It's a non-invasive medical imaging procedure used in radiology to obtain accurate images of the body for diagnosis.
- CT scanners calculate X-ray attenuation by various tissues within the body using a revolving x-ray tube and a row of detectors in the gantry.
- The tomographic (cross-sectional) images (virtual "slices") of a body are created using multiple X-ray measurements taken from various angles, which are then processed on a computer using reconstruction algorithms.
- Because of the negative effects of ionizing radiation, its use is often limited.

### 3.36 "TIANHE" – CHINESE SPACE STATION CORE MODULE:

- China has launched the main module of its first permanent space station named **Tianhe**, or the "Heavenly Harmony" module.

- Tianhe is the core module of China's permanent space station. Tiangong Space Station is its name.
- The module was launched into space aboard a Long March 5B rocket from the Wenchang Launch Center in China.

#### **About Tiangong Space Station:**

- It is a planned Chinese Permanent space station to be placed in Low Earth orbit.
- The Space Station roughly will have one-fifth the mass of the International Space Station. Also, it will be the size of the decommissioned Russian Mir space station.
- The operations of the station will be controlled by the Beijing Aerospace Command and Control Center in China.

#### **3.37 VINCOV-19**

- The CSIR Center for Cellular and Molecular Biology has developed **VINCOV-19**, which may be the first specific drug for the treatment of COVID-19, which contains therapeutic antibodies.
- The VINCOV-19 is a series of antibodies collected from horses after they were given inactivated Coronavirus injections.
- It works better when given early in the infection.

#### **3.38 2DG- DRDO'S ANTI-COVID DRUG**

- The Drugs Controller General of India recently approved an oral drug to treat COVID-19 called the **2-DG**.
- The 2-DG was developed by the **Defense Research Development Organization** for Emergency Use.
- 2-DG is **2-Deoxy – D – Glucose**.
- It was developed in collaboration with Dr Reddy's Laboratories.
- The drug ensures faster recovery of hospitalised patients and will reduce supplemental oxygen dependence during clinical trials.

#### **3.39 MUCORMYCOSIS**

- A number of Covid-19 patients are developing a serious fungal infection known as **Mucormycosis also called black fungus**.
- It is a serious but rare fungal infection caused by a group of molds called mucormycetes, which is abundant in the environment.
- It mainly affects people who have health problems or take medicines that lower the body's ability to fight germs and sickness.
- **Transmission:** It occurs through inhalation, inoculation, or ingestion of spores from the environment.
- **Mucormycosis does not** spread between people or between people and animals.

### 3.40 NASA'S "OSIRIS-REX MISSION" TO BEGIN RETURN FROM "ASTEROID BENNU":

- **NASA's OSIRIS-REx Mission** will depart from asteroid **Bennu** and start its two-year-long journey back to Earth.

#### **OSIRIS-REx Mission:**

- OSIRIS-REx stands for **Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security, Regolith Explorer**.
- The mission was launched in **2016**. It was the first U.S. mission to successfully collect a sample from an asteroid.
- **Aim:** To travel to a near-Earth asteroid named Bennu and bring a small sample back to Earth for study.
- **Asteroid Bennu:** Asteroid Bennu is named after an Egyptian deity. It is as tall as the Empire State Building. It is located about 200 million miles away from the Earth. The asteroid was discovered by a team from the NASA-funded Lincoln Near-Earth Asteroid Research team in 1999.

### 3.41 SPACEX: "DOGE-1 MISSION TO THE MOON":

- SpaceX is to launch **DOGE-1**, a satellite that is completely funded with crypto currency. Days earlier Musk did mention DOGE crypto currencies in a TV show he was hosting.

#### **About DOGE-1**

- It is the first ever commercial payload to be paid with Dogecoin.
- The satellite weighs 40 kilograms.
- The satellite is to be launched in 2022.
- The DOGE-1 is a payload of Geometric Energy Corporation. The company is to obtain lunar spatial intelligence from cameras and sensors with integrated computational and communication systems.
- DOGE-1 is to be launched in Falcon 9.

### 3.42 AMPHOTERICIN B

- **A severe shortage of amphotericin, an anti-fungal injection**, and other anti-fungal drugs used to treat mucormycosis is causing patients further problems. Mucormycosis is a life-threatening infection that occurs in around 30% of diabetics after Covid-19.
- The injection of **Amphotericin B** is used to treat severe and potentially fatal fungal infections.
- It belongs to the antifungal drug class.
- It functions by inhibiting the growth of infection-causing fungi.
- It's usually injected into a vein.
- Amphotericin B was isolated from *Streptomyces nodosus* in 1955, and it was first used in medicine in 1958.

### 3.43 FIRST PRIVATE ASTRONAUT MISSION- Ax-1

- NASA recently signed an agreement with Axiom space.

- Under the agreement, **Axiom** is to send its astronauts to the International Space Station. This is the first private astronaut mission to the space station. The mission has been named as **Ax-1**.
- The Axiom astronauts will spend eight days in the space station. They will conduct activities to coordinate with the space station on the ground. This is like a testing or learning project. Also, Axiom will purchase crew supplies, orbit resources, cargo delivery to space and storage from NASA.

#### 3.44 AFRICAN SWINE FEVER:

- The African swine fever has struck **Meghalaya**. Earlier, it had struck **Mizoram**.

##### About African swine fever

- It was first detected in Africa in the **1920s**.
- There is no cure to the disease and thus the only way to stop the disease from spreading is by culling the animals.
- It is not a threat to human beings. This is because the disease spreads from animal to animal.

#### 3.45 NOTIFIED DISEASES:

- The **Black Fungus disease** has been declared as notified disease in Haryana. This means that the Government Authorities have to be informed about each case of Black Fungus Disease.
- Notified diseases are also called Notifiable diseases. It is any disease whose occurrence has to be reported to the Government by law.
- WHO on Notifiable Diseases: The WHO International Health Regulations, 1969 has made disease reporting mandatory. This will help WHO in its global surveillance and advisory role. Currently the list is limited only to three main disease namely yellow fever, cholera and plague. And of course COVID-19.

#### 3.46 SIMORGH SUPERCOMPUTER:

- Iran recently launched its supercomputer called Simorgh. This supercomputer is hundred times more powerful than the previous Iranian supercomputers.
- The Supercomputer has been named after the phoenix-like bird called the Simurgh.
- The Simorgh Supercomputer was developed by the Amirkabir University of Technology in Tehran, the capital of Iran.
- It is located at the Iranian High Performance Computing Research Centre.
- The performance capacity of the simorgh Supercomputer is 0.56 petaflops. It is to reach 1 petaflops in two months. In its subsequent levels it is to reach a speed of 10 petaflops.
- It comprises 42 racks in an area of 250 square metres. In future this is to be upgraded to 400 square metres.

#### 3.47 DIPCOVAN

- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation** have developed an antibody detection kit for the early screening of COVID-19.

- The Defence Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences, a lab of DRDO, in association with Delhi based firm Vanguard Diagnostics Pvt Ltd, has developed DIPCOVAN, the DIPS-VDx COVID 19 IgG Antibody Microwell ELISA for sero surveillance.

**About:**

- The kit can detect the spike as well as the nucleocapsid (S and N) proteins of the SARS-CoV-2 virus with a high sensitivity of 97% and specificity of 99%.
- DIPCOVAN aims for the qualitative detection of IgG antibodies in human serum or plasma, targeting the SARS-CoV-2 related antigens.

**3.48 WHITE FUNGUS:**

- New Cases of **White Fungus** from Covid-19 patients have been reported in states such as Bihar and others.
- White Fungus is also known as **Candidiasis**. It is a type of fungal infection caused by a yeast (a type of fungus) called Candida.
- Candida normally lives on the skin and inside the body in places such as the mouth, throat, gut without causing any problems.
- However, candida can cause infections if it grows out of control or if it enters deep into the body (for example, the bloodstream or internal organs like the kidney, heart, or brain).
- **Symptoms:** Symptoms of white fungus vary depending on the area affected. Most infections result in minimal complications such as redness, itching, and discomfort. However, complications may be severe or even fatal if left untreated in certain populations.
- COVID-19 patients on oxygen support can inhale these fungal spores if their ventilators and oxygen support equipment is not sanitised properly.

**3.49 VIPER ROVER:**

- Recently, **US space agency NASA** has announced plans to send its first mobile robot to the Moon in 2023. Mobile robot will search for ice and other resources on and below the surface of the moon. This mission is an example showing “robotic science mission” and “human exploration” go hand in hand.

**3.50 INTERNET EXPLORER TO RETIRE IN JUNE 2022:**

- Microsoft recently announced that the Internet Explorer 11 desktop browser will be retired on June 15, 2022, for some versions of Windows 10. However, Internet Explorer-based websites and applications will continue to work on new Microsoft Edge (Internet Explorer) mode till 2029.

**3.51 ASPERGILLOSIS FUNGAL INFECTION**

- Amid the country’s battle against covid-19 pandemic and increasing cases of mucormycosis, Doctors in Ghaziabad, Mumbai and Gujarat have reported cases of new disease called ‘aspergillosis’.



- Aspergillosis is a fungal infection, fungal growth or allergic reaction caused due to Aspergillus fungus. The fungus is found indoors as well as outdoors. It lives on decaying vegetation or dead leaves. This fungal infection is not as deadly as black fungus but it can turn fatal too.

### 3.52 YELLOW FUNGUS

- After black and white fungus, the recent case of yellow fungus has become a cause for concern.
- Yellow fungus, also called **mucor septic**, initially develops by the presence of moulds (a type of fungi) in the environment.
- It may be present with unnecessary fatigue, rashes, burning sensation on skin etc.
- Humidity levels below 30-40% can promote the growth of fungus.
- It may not start from the lungs but it invades internal organs of the body and affects the entire functioning.

### 3.53 OPERATION SAMUDRASETU II

- The Indian Navy recently launched **Operation SamudraSetu II**. The operation will aid in fulfilling oxygen requirements of the country.
- Under the operation, warships have been deployed to carry liquid oxygen filled cryogenic containers.
- Two ships **INS Talwar and INS Kolkata** have been diverted for this operation.
- **INS Airavat** is to enter Singapore to embark liquid oxygen tanks.
- **INS Jalashwa** will also be diverted to the mission.
- The other ships deployed in **Trikand, Kochi and Tabar** will also be diverted to join the national effort.
- The **INS Shardul** from the Southern Naval Command has been readied to join the operation.

### 3.54 "PYTHON-5" AIR-TO-AIR MISSILE:

- Indigenously developed **Tejas Aircraft** has been cleared to carry fifth-generation **Python-5 air-to-air missile** as part of its weapons package.
- **Python-5** is a fifth-generation air-to-air missile (AAM) manufactured by Israeli Rafael Advanced Defence Systems.
- The Python-5 Missile was first used in the 2006 Lebanon war. During the war, it destroyed two Iran-made UAVs.

### 3.55 DDOS ATTACK

- The **Belgian Government** sites were recently knocked offline due to a DDoS attack. Several government sites and Internet Service Providers of the public sector of the country were hit hard by DDoS.
- **DDoS is Distributed Denial of Service**. It is a cyber threat that seeks to disrupt the normal traffic of a targeted server. This is done by controlling a network of malware infected devices.

- This is like an unexpected traffic jam arriving at a destination.

### **3.56 IRON DOME OF ISRAEL**

- On May 11, 2021, a video showing rockets fired by Hamas in Gaza targeting Israel can be seen being intercepted or blocked by the Israeli Iron Dome Air defence system. To the viewer, it appears that the rockets were hitting an invisible shield.

#### **What is Iron Dome?**

- It is an air defence system.
- It neutralizes any missiles or rockets.
- It is a short-range ground air-to-air defence system.
- It is used to counter rockets, mortars, aircraft, helicopters, mortars artillery and unmanned vehicles.

### **3.57 INS RAJPUT**

- The first destroyer of the Indian Navy, INS Rajput, will be decommissioned on May 21. It was commissioned on 04 May 1980. After rendering service for 41 years, it will be decommissioned at the Naval Dockyard of Visakhapatnam.
- INS Rajput was built by Russia in the 61 Communards Shipyard. Its Original Russian name was 'Nadezhny'.
- INS Rajput served for both Western and Eastern Fleets and its first commanding officer was Capt GulabMohanlalHiranandani. It is the 1st Indian Naval Ship to be associated with an Indian Army regiment – the Rajput Regiment. It participated in many operations including Operation Aman, Operation Pawan, Operation Cactus, etc.

### **3.58 DEFENCE MINISTER LAUNCHES SEHAT OPD PORTAL:**

- Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh, has launched 'Services e-Health Assistance & Tele-consultation (SeHAT) OPD Portal.

#### **About SeHAT Portal:**

- Portal has been launched to provide telemedicine services in Armed Forces, further strengthening the commitment of governments towards e-governance and digital India. Through this OPD, serving defence personnel from Army, Air force, Navy and ex- service personnel can get teleconsultations from specialists' doctors in Armed forces. OPD will provide benefits to around four crore people and family members of defence personnel.

### **3.59 NSA COMMISSIONED VESSEL SAJAG**

- National Security Advisor (NSA), Ajit Doval, has commissioned Indian Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Vessel **Sajag**. It was a nation dedicated to safeguard maritime interests.
- Offshore Patrol Vessel, Sajag has been constructed by Goa Shipyard Limited, which was commended by NSA for indigenously developing ships for Maritime Armed forces with state-of-the-art machinery, latest technology sensors and equipment.

## Science & Technology: Practice MCQs:

**QUESTION 1:** Which space agency has started process to hire first disabled astronaut?

- A. European Space Agency
- B. Indian Space and Research Organisation
- C. Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency
- D. National Aeronautics and Space Administration

**QUESTION 2:** The Lambda variant of Covid-19 was first identified in-

- A. Argentina
- B. Bolivia
- C. Peru
- D. Columbia

**QUESTION 3:** A hackathon called Samvedan 2021, will be hosted jointly by Sony India and-

- A. IIT Kozikhode
- B. IIT Madras
- C. IIT Bombay
- D. IIT Delhi

**QUESTION 4:** A super-luminous supernova is a type of stellar explosion with a luminosity ----- higher than that of normal supernovae.

- A. 3-5 times
- B. 10 or more times
- C. 200 times
- D. 1000 times

**QUESTION 5:** Which of the following is not a crypto-currency?

- A. Ethereum
- B. Ripple
- C. Bitcoin
- D. Apple

**QUESTION 6:** NASA's Viper Mission is a proposed resource mapping mission to be sent on-

- A. Mars
- B. Moon
- C. Jupiter
- D. Asteroid Bennu

**QUESTION 7:** Recently successful trials of Vikas engine were conducted. This project is crucial for-

- A. Tejas aircraft
- B. Prithvi missile
- C. Gaganyaan
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 8:** India's First Rapid Electronic and Artificial Intelligence-powered COVID-19 test called COVIHOME has been developed by-

- A. IIT- Delhi
- B. IIT- Ropar
- C. IIT- Bombay
- D. IIT- Hyderabad

**QUESTION 9:** The common name for Cytomegalovirus (CMV), occurring as a post-covid complication recently, is-

- A. measles
- B. herpes
- C. roseola
- D. Fifth disease

**QUESTION 10:** Recently first case of Monkeypox was discovered in USA. It is a \_\_\_\_\_ disease.

- A. bacterial
- B. viral
- C. protozoan
- D. fungal

**QUESTION 11:** Recently a spyware has been allegedly used to spy on indian journalists. Its name is-

- A. Petya
- B. Stuxnet
- C. Pegasus
- D. mSpy

**QUESTION 12:** Which of the following is/are favourable properties of titanium alloys?

- A. fracture toughness
- B. higher strength
- C. ductility
- D. all of the above

**QUESTION 13:** India's first 'green hydrogen' plant is proposed to be built in-

- A. Dehradun
- B. Kurukshetra
- C. Bathinda
- D. Mathura

**QUESTION 14:** NASA's NEA Scout has been tested and developed to study-

- A. venus
- B. mars
- C. asteroids
- D. Saturn rings

**QUESTION 15:** IIT-Madras researchers has developed an Artificial Intelligence-based Mathematical Model called 'NBDriver' for-

- A. covid case tracking
- B. identifying cancer causing alterations
- C. weather forecasting
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 16:** Recently a first-of-its-kind Oxygen Rationing Device for medical oxygen cylinders called AMLEX has been developed by-

- A. IIT Bombay
- B. IIT Madras
- C. IIT Ropar
- D. IIT Delhi

**QUESTION 17:** The "New Shephard" rocket system is developed by which private space firm?

- A. Bigelow Aerospace
- B. SpaceX
- C. Virgin Galactic
- D. Blue Origin

**QUESTION 18:** The first ever case of human H5N1 infection was reported in-

- A. 1983
- B. 1987
- C. 1993
- D. 1997

**QUESTION 19:** An artificial intelligence (AI) led digital tag 'Surabhi e-Tag' has been recently in news. It is supposed to be used for-

- A. cattle insurance
- B. flood control
- C. covid tracking
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 20:** Indian Science Technology and Engineering facilities Map (I-STEM) project is associated with-

- A. Research and development facilities
- B. help ISRO find young scientists
- C. educating young children
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 21:** Which country has recently reported outbreak of Norovirus, the winter vomiting bug?

- A. Pakistan
- B. USA

C. England

D. Japan

**QUESTION 22:** What is the name of parent company of Google?

A. Alfa romeo

B. Numerics

C. Alphabet

D. G technologies

**QUESTION 23:** India's first Physiological Parameters Monitoring System is called-

A. COVID BEEP

B. COVID TRACK

C. COVID SIGNAL

D. none of the above

**QUESTION 24:** Panoramic Survey Telescope and Rapid Response System (Pan-STARRS) telescope is situated in-

A. Chile

B. Paris

C. Lhasa

D. Hawaii

**QUESTION 25:** Earth System Science Data Portal has been launched by-

A. Ministry of Earth Sciences

B. Ministry of Rural Development

C. Indian Space Research Organisation

D. Ministry of Mining

**QUESTION 26:** Which Himalayan neighbour of India has recently reported presence of Kappa mutant of Delta variant of Covid?

A. Nepal

B. Bhutan

C. Tibet

D. none of the above

**QUESTION 27:** World's largest star sapphire cluster rock named 'Serendipity Sapphire' has been found in-

A. Myanmar

B. Alaska

C. Sri Lanka

D. Maldives

**Answer Key:**

1. ANSWER: A

2. ANSWER: C

3. ANSWER: B

4. ANSWER: B

5. ANSWER: D

6. ANSWER: B

7. ANSWER: C

8. ANSWER: D

9. ANSWER: B

10. ANSWER: B

11. ANSWER: C

12. ANSWER: D

13. ANSWER: D

14. ANSWER: C

15. ANSWER: B

16. ANSWER: C

17. ANSWER: D

18. ANSWER: D

19. ANSWER: A

20. ANSWER: A

21. ANSWER: C

22. ANSWER: C

23. ANSWER: A

27. ANSWER: C

24. ANSWER: D

25. ANSWER: A

26. ANSWER: A





## ENVIRONMENT

### 4.1 BARNADI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY: ASSAM

#### WHY IN NEWS?

Recently, the World Wide Fund for Nature-India (WWF) found a few tigers inhabiting the Barnadi Wildlife Sanctuary in Assam.

- It is one of the smallest WS (Wildlife Sanctuary) of Assam and covers an area of 26.22 sq. km.

#### Location:

- Barnadi Wildlife Sanctuary (BWS) is located in northern Assam's Baksa and Udalguri districts bordering Bhutan.
- The Sanctuary is bordered by the Barnadi River and Nalapara river to the west and east respectively.

#### Legal Status:

- It was affirmed as the WS in 1980 by the Government of Assam.
- Barnadi was established specifically to protect the Pygmy Hog (*Sus salvanius*) and Hispid Hare (*Caprolagus hispidus*).

#### Biodiversity:

- This is important for threatened species such as the Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*), Tiger (*Panthera tigris*) and Gaur *Bos frontalis*.
- About 60% of the BWS is reported to be grassland; most of it is now grassy woodland.
- The main Forest types are Tropical Moist Deciduous along the northern edge of the Sanctuary, and mixed scrub and grassland in the southern part with few trees.

### 4.2 RESEARCHERS DISCOVERED BLACK-BELLIED CORAL SNAKE IN FORESTS OF UTTARAKHAND

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- Researchers have discovered Black-bellied Coral snakes in the forests of Uttarakhand for the first time in history. The snake is related to the Elapidae family and *Sinomicrurus* genus. Its scientific name is *S. nigriventer*.
- It was found in the Bhadraj Block of Benog Wildlife Sanctuary (BWS) in the Mussoorie Forest Division. There are currently 107 species of coral snakes in the world. In India, only seven coral snake species are found.
- As per the report of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare on the management of snakebite, there are more than 2000 species of snakes in the world. About 300 of these species are found in India, of which 52 are venomous.
- India's venomous snakes belong to three families 'Elapidae', 'Viperidae' and Hydrophidae' (sea snakes).

### 4.3 NEW JUMPING SPIDER SPECIES NAMED AFTER 26/11 MARTYR TUKARAM OMBLE

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- A group of scientists who discovered two new species of jumping spiders from the Thane-Kalyan region named one of them after the brave police constable Tukaram Omble who lost his life in the 26/11 terror attacks.
- The species is called 'Icius Tukarami.'
- The paper citing the discovery of the new species was published in the Russian science journal Anthropoda Selecta by scientists Dhruv A. Prajapati, John Caleb, Somnath B. Kumbhar and Rajesh Sanap

#### **4.4 TROPICAL STORM ELSA NEARS CUBA**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Tropical Storm Elsa strengthened on July 3, 2021 and its center approached south-central Cuba.

##### **About:**

- Caribbean Island government issued hurricane warnings in provinces of Cienfuegos and Matanzas.
- According to U.S. National Hurricane Center (NHC) forecast, Tropical Storm Elsa would strengthen more before moving over Cuba.
- As per data of NHC, maximum sustained winds were near 100 km per hour with higher gusts.

##### **About Hurricane Elsa**

Elsa is an active tropical cyclone which is affecting and threatening portions of Caribbean and South-eastern United States. It is the fifth named storm and first hurricane of Atlantic hurricane season 2021. On June 29, Elsa was first monitored by National Hurricane Center (NHC) as a tropical wave. It was then designated as Potential Tropical Cyclone. As the storm showed better-defined low-level circulation, cyclone was upgraded to tropical depression and later, to Tropical Storm Elsa. Storm Elsa was upgraded to Category 1 hurricane. It is the strongest July hurricane in eastern Caribbean Sea after Hurricane Emily in 2005. It is also the fastest-moving Atlantic tropical cyclone.

#### **4.5 MELTING OF ARCTIC'S 'LAST ICE AREA'**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The 'Last Ice Area' (LIA), located in the Arctic's Ice north of Greenland, has started melting earlier than what the scientists had expected.

##### **About Last Ice Area:**

- This region is located north of Greenland and Ellesmere Island in the Canadian territory of Nunavut.
- This area was believed to be strong enough to withstand global warming.
- The total disappearance of summer ice in the Arctic was estimated by the year 2040, however the 'Last Ice Area' was the exception.
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF)-Canada was believed to be the first to call this area the 'Last Ice Area'.

## 4.6 VEMBANAD LAKE: KERALA

### WHY IN NEWS?

Kerala houseboats in Vembanad Lake are about to begin soon amid a robust vaccination drive.

#### About:

- Vembanad Lake is also known as Vembanad Kayal, Vembanad Kol, Punnamada Lake (in Kuttanad) and Kochi Lake (in Kochi).
- Spanning several districts of Kerala and covering a territory of more than 2033.02 km<sup>2</sup>.
- The lake has its source in four rivers, Meenachil, Achankovil, Pampa and Manimala
- It is separated from the Arabian Sea by a narrow barrier island and is a popular backwater stretch in Kerala.
- Vallam Kali (i.e Nehru Trophy Boat Race) is a Snake Boat Race held every year in the month of August in Vembanad Lake.
- In 2002, it was included in the list of wetlands of international importance, as defined by the Ramsar Convention.
- It is the second-largest Ramsar site in India only after the Sundarbans in West Bengal.
- The Government of India has identified the Vembanad wetland under the National Wetlands Conservation Programme.
- The Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary is located on the east coast of the lake.
- In 2019, Willingdon Island, a seaport located in the city of Kochi, was carved out of Vembanad Lake.
- One of the most outstanding features of this lake is the 1252 m long saltwater barrier, Thanneermukkom, which was built to stop saltwater intrusion into Kuttanad.

## 4.7 BLACK PANTHER SPOTTED IN NAVEGAON-NAGZIRA TIGER RESERVE

### WHY IN NEWS?

Recently, a rare Melanistic Leopard (commonly known as Black Panther) has been recorded in Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR) of Maharashtra.



#### About:

- Leopards (*Panthera Pardus*) are either light colored (pale yellow to deep gold or tawny) with black rosettes or with black fur.

- The melanistic leopards, which are either all-black or very dark in coloration, are known as black panthers. It is a color variant of spotted Indian leopards, reported from densely forested areas of south India

**Habitat:**

- They are mainly in Southwestern China, Burma, Nepal, Southern India, Indonesia, and the southern part of Malaysia.
- In India they can be spotted in the states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra etc.

**Threats:**

- Habitat loss.
- Collision with vehicles.
- Diseases.
- Human encroachment.
- Poaching.

**Protection Status:**

- IUCN Red List: Vulnerable.
- CITES: Appendix I.
- Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I

#### **4.8 NASA'S ICESAT-2 DISCOVERS ANTARCTIC MELTWATER LAKES**

**WHY IN NEWS?**

American Space Agency, NASA's ICESat-2 discovered Antarctic Meltwater Lakes recently.

**ABOUT:**

Glaciologist Helen Amanda Fricker had made an astonishing discovery in 2007 and found that, a whole hidden network of interconnected lake is found beneath thick Antarctic ice-shelves. She found that, these lakes actively fill and drain. Presence of meltwater beneath ice sheets was known, but such network of an active water system was a breakthrough. She had used data from NASA's ICESat. This satellite used laser pulses to measure elevation data for ice, clouds & land.

**How ICESat-2 was used to map lakes?**

ICESat-2 is the successor of ICESat. It was launched by NASA in 2018. This new satellite can gather elevation data with higher precision. Using data from ICESat 2, Fricker has now discovered two new subglacial meltwater lakes under glacial ice of Antarctica. Network of Lakes were mapped high precision.

**Significance of the mapping**

These maps will help scientists understand water system in Antarctica. They would be able to figure out how these glacial lakes contribute to ocean water. Using these critical measurements scientists would explain & predict appearance & disappearance of Antarctic lakes. For instance, an enormous lake had disappeared in just three days in Amery Ice shelves of Antarctica. So, scientists can calculate how this is caused by global warming and how these lakes will affect movement of

Antarctic glaciers. During this movement, ice sheets suffer cracking, crevassing etc which can be measured using space lasers.

#### **4.9 CHINA: GIANT PANDAS ARE VULNERABLE, NOT ENDANGERED NOW**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Chinese conservation officials have announced that, Chinese giant Panda is no longer an endangered species.

##### **ABOUT:**

- Status of giant panda has been updated to “vulnerable”.
- There are now 1,800 giant pandas living in wild.
- Number increased due to the China’s devotion in maintaining nature reserves and other conservation initiatives during recent years.
- Number of other species like Siberian tigers, Asian elephants, and crested ibises have also increased gradually.

##### **IUCN Status of Giant Panda**

Giant panda was considered “vulnerable” for five years. International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) removed giant pandas the list of endangered species in 2016. This decision was challenged by Chinese officials then.

##### **Giant panda**

This bear, also known as panda bear, is native to South Central China. Bear is characterised by its bold black-and-white coat and rotund body. Giant panda name is used to distinguish it from red panda. They belong to order Carnivora, but are also folivore. Bamboo shoots and leaves making more than 99% of their diet. They occasionally eat other grasses, wild tubers, or even meat in form of birds, carrion or rodents. They also eat (in captivity) honey, eggs, fish, yams, oranges, bananas or shrub leaves along with specially prepared food.

#### **4.10 WWF-UNEP REPORT ON HUMAN-WILDLIFE COEXISTENCE**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and UN Environment Programme (UNEP) recently released its report titled “A future for all – the need for human-wildlife coexistence”.

##### **ABOUT:**

- As per report, human-animal conflict is one of the main threats for long-term survival of world’s most iconic species.
- Conflict-related deaths affect more than 75 per cent of world’s wild cat species.
- It also affects polar bears, Mediterranean monk seals and large herbivores like elephants.
- Global wildlife populations have decreased by 68 per cent since 1970 because of conflicts.

What does report highlights about India?

- In India, human-elephant conflict resulted into killing of 500 elephants and 2361 people during 2014-2015 and 2018-2019.

- India is going to be most-affected by human-wildlife conflict because of having world's second-largest human population and large populations of tigers, Asiatic Lions, Asian elephants, one-horned rhinos etc.

- **Way forward**

Human-animal conflict cannot be eradicated completely. However, a well-planned and integrated approaches can be adopted in order to reduce conflicts. It can also lead to a form of coexistence between humans and animals

#### **4.11 HIMALAYAN YAKS SET TO BE INSURED**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

National Research Centre on Yak (NRCY) at Dirang in Arunachal Pradesh has partnered with National Insurance Company Ltd. to insure high-altitude yak.

##### **What are the concerns?**

High-altitude yaks are feeling the climate change heat in Himalayan belt. Climate change and inexplicable changes in weather pattern have been reported from yak rearing areas across India. As a result, countrywide population yak has been decreasing at an alarming rate. In 2019, about 500 yaks died in single spell of heavy rainfall in northern Sikkim. That caused a heavy financial burden on owners. As per a report, number of yaks in India has declined by 24.7% between 2012 and 2019.

##### **How Insurance policy will help?**

- Insurance policy will shield yak owners against risks posed by weather calamities, in-transit mishaps, diseases, riots, surgical operations and strikes. Thus, this policy will provide financial security to Yak rearing communities in Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh.
- Under the insurance policy, owners will have to get their yaks ear-tagged and provide proper description to get their animals insured.
- Owners will require to submit completed claim form, death certificate from veterinary practitioner, post-mortem report and ear tag in order to get the claim.
- There will be a 15-day waiting period to claim this amount. Thus, death of an animal due to any disease within 15 days from commencement of risk is not payable.

##### **Yak population in India**

Total yak population in India is 58,000. Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir have 26,000 Yaks, followed by 24,000 in Arunachal Pradesh, 5,000 in Sikkim and 2,000 in Himachal Pradesh. Some 1,000 Yaks are there in West Bengal and Uttarakhand.

#### **4.12 A PROPOSED ELEPHANT RESERVE IN CHHATTISGARH AND ITS REDUCED AREA**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The proposed Lemru Elephant Reserve in Chhattisgarh has been in the pipeline for 20 years. However, the reserve has become the subject of yet another controversy.

##### **ABOUT LEMRU ELEPHANT RESERVE:**



- The reserve is located in the Korba district of Chhattisgarh.
- The reserve is aiming at reducing human-animal conflict and destruction of property in addition to providing a permanent habitat to the elephants.
- Earlier, the state government notified the reserve (Conservation Reserve) in October 2020 under Section 36A of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 (WLPA).
- Section 36A has a special provision that gives the Union government a say in the process of notification in case the land to be notified as conservation reserve has areas belonging to the Centre.
- Elephant reserves are not recognised under the WLPA.

#### **4.13 THE GENOME OF A SALT-SECRETING MANGROVE SPECIES DECODED BY DBT-ILS**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Scientists have completed the genome sequencing of one of the highly salt-tolerant mangrove species, named *Avicennia marina*.

##### **About *Avicennia marina*:**

- *Avicennia marina* is also called Banhi in Odia. It is one of the most prominent mangroves species found in all mangrove formations in India.
- Features: It is a salt-secreting and extraordinarily salt-tolerant mangrove species that grows optimally in 75% seawater and tolerates >250% seawater.
- Significance: It is among the rare plant species which can excrete 40% of the salt through the salt glands in the leaves, besides its extraordinary capacity to exclude salt entry to the roots.

##### **Significance of Genome Sequencing of this mangrove species:**

- Agriculture productivity globally is affected due to abiotic stress factors such as limited water availability and salinisation of soil and water.
- The non-availability of water is a significant challenge to crop production in dry-land areas, accounting for 40% of the world's total land area.
- Salinity is prevalent in 900 million hectares globally and is estimated to cause an annual loss of \$27 billion. An estimated 6.73 million ha in India is affected by salinity.
- Hence, the genomic sequencing of *Avicennia marina* will help researchers in developing drought and salinity tolerant crop varieties of the coastal region of the country.

#### **4.14 INDIA'S FIRST CRYPTOGAMIC GARDEN INAUGURATED IN UTTARAKHAND**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- India's first cryptogamic garden, with around 50 different species grown, has been inaugurated in Deoban area of Dehradun in Uttarakhand.
- The garden is situated at a height of 9,000 feet and is spread over an area of three acres. Located in the district's Chakrata town, the garden was inaugurated by social activist Anoop Nautiyal.

- **Cryptogamae** means “hidden reproduction” referring to the fact that no seed, no flowers are produced. Thus, **cryptogams represent the non-seed bearing plants.**
- Algae, bryophytes (moss, liverworts), lichens, ferns and fungi are the best-known groups of cryptogams that require moist conditions to survive

#### 4.15 INDIAN SCIENTISTS DISCOVER NEW PLANT SPECIES IN ANTARCTICA

##### WHY IN NEWS?

A team of Indian scientists has discovered a new plant species in Antarctica named *Bryum Bharatiensis*.

##### About *Bryum Bharatiensis*:

- *Bryum bharatiensis* is a species of moss. It was discovered by a team of researchers from the Central University of Punjab.
- Mosses are small, non-vascular flowerless plants in the taxonomic division Bryophyta. They are distributed throughout the world except in salt water and are commonly found in moist shady locations.
- Named after: The species has been named after Bharati, the Indian research station in Antarctica. The station itself was named after the Hindu goddess Bharati.

#### 4.16 TIGER CORRIDOR IN RAJASTHAN

##### WHY IN NEWS?

The Rajasthan government will develop a tiger corridor connecting the newly proposed ‘Ramgarh Tiger Reserve’, Ranthambore Tiger Reserve and Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve.

- Sariska Tiger Reserve is another Tiger reserve in Rajasthan.

##### About the Animal Corridor:

- Wildlife or animal corridors are meant to ensure safe passage for animals between two isolated habitats.
- In wildlife parlance, corridors are mainly of two types: functional and structural.
- Functional corridors are defined in terms of functionality from the perspective of the animal (basically areas where there has been recorded movement of wildlife).
- Structural corridors are contiguous strips of forested areas and structurally connect the otherwise fragmented blocks of the landscape.
- When structural corridors are affected by human anthropogenic activities, functional corridors automatically widen because of animal use.
- In 2019, the National Tiger Conservation Authority in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India published a document, mapping out 32 major corridors across the country, management interventions for which are operationalized through a Tiger Conservation Plan.
- The states are required to submit a Tiger Conservation Plan under section 38V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

##### Other Protected Areas in Rajasthan:

- Desert National Park, Jaisalmer
- Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur
- Sajjangarh wildlife sanctuary, Udaipur
- National Chambal Sanctuary (on tri-junction of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh).

#### **4.17 AMIT SHAH LAUNCHES GREEN SOHRA AFFORESTATION CAMPAIGN AT SOHRA (CHERRAPUNJI)**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The Green Sohra Afforestation Campaign at Sohra (Cherrapunji) was launched by Home Minister Amit Shah. “Evergreen Northeast”, was the slogan given for this campaign highlighting the importance of tree plantation and afforestation. This campaign will be run by the Assam Rifles and the Meghalaya.

- At Cherrapunji, Amit Shah launched two important development projects before arriving in Guwahati.
- Green Sohra Afforestation Campaign and also inaugurated Greater Sohra Water Supply Scheme were launched by the minister.
- ‘Evergreen Northeast’ was used to highlight the importance of afforestation and tree plantation in the state.
- Cherrapunji (locally it is known as Sohra) used to receive rainfalls throughout the year, but this has gone down due to the indiscriminate harvesting that has been done in the area under the name of development.
- The Greater Sohra Water Supply Scheme was also inaugurated by the minister.

##### **About Green Sohra Afforestation Campaign**

For the plantation drive, Assam Rifles will adopt the entire locality of Cherrapunji. 80% and above of the total land areas of this region has been prepared for the plantation of long lifespan trees and the remaining areas would be used for nurseries, ornamental plants and animal feed. Eco-tourism would also benefit the locals of the state.

##### **About Greater Sohra Water Supply Scheme**

Under the Jal Jeevan Mission initiative, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region and the state government have decided to provide pure drinking water to every household through taps. Providing clean drinking water to the families, some living in the remote areas of the state is a challenge that will be fulfilled.

#### **4.18 SINGAPORE’S SUNSEAP TO BUILD WORLD’S LARGEST FLOATING SOLAR FARM IN INDONESIA**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Sunseap Group's floating solar farm will be located on the Duriangkang Reservoir in Batam Island, Indonesia spanning around 1,600 hectares. It will be the largest solar floating farm in the world.

##### **About:**

Sunseap Group in Singapore has announced that it plans to spend \$2 billion to build the world's largest floating solar farm and the energy storage system in Batam, a neighboring Indonesian city, which will double its renewable power generation capacity.

Sunseap in a statement mentioned that the floating photovoltaic system is expected to have a capacity of 2.2 gigawatt-peak (GWp).

The Co-founder and Chief Executive of Sunseap, Frank Phuan said that this single project will double the group's entire portfolio. More importantly, it will build Sunseap's capability towards hyper-scale solar and energy storage projects.

A Memorandum of Understanding was also signed for the project between Singapore's Sunseap Group and Batam Indonesia Free Zone Authority, Badan Pengusahaan Batam (BP Batam).

#### **Floating solar systems: Significance**

Sunseap's Frank Phuan said that the floating solar systems will go a long way to address the land constraints that the urbanized parts of Southeast Asia face in tapping renewable energy.

Phuan further added that the hyper-scale project can also pave the way for similar green energy projects in south-east Asia.

The expansion of the floating solar projects will present an interesting new front in a race to meet the demand for zero-emissions electricity supply for Singapore.

#### **Location of the world's largest floating solar farm:**

The floating solar farm will be located on the Duriangkang Reservoir in Batam Island, Indonesia spanning around 1,600 hectares. It will be the largest solar floating farm in the world.

The reservoir serves as a source of freshwater to Batam Island, which sits just 20 km from Singapore.

The placement of the farm on the reservoir will also have an additional benefit of reducing evaporation. At the same time, the proximity of water will also allow the solar farm to operate at lower temperatures as well as improve overall efficiency

#### **4.19 KANDLA BECOMES FIRST GREEN SEZ**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Kandla Special Economic Zone (KASEZ) has become the first Green SEZ after it received the IGBC Green Cities Platinum Rating for Existing Cities.

##### **About Kandla Special Economic Zone (KASEZ) as First Green SEZ:**

- **Kandla has become the first green industrial city** in India. It has received a platinum rating after a rigorous audit and inspections conducted by Indian Green Building Council (IGBC).
- **This has been possible because** KASEZ has managed to grow 68 species of trees and attract 28 varieties of birds on a piece of land that was once a salt pan with almost no vegetation.

##### **Initiatives taken by Kandla SEZ to become First Green SEZ:**

- Firstly, Kandla has halted the growth of salt pan beyond Kandla. This was done by planting trees, which helped reduce salinity and improved the quality of topsoil.

- Secondly, it has built water harvesting systems. Due to this, the water became less saline and the growth of the trees improved.
- Thirdly, KASEZ is a hub of the used clothing recycling industry. There is a lot of cloth waste which is generated by this industry. The industry was finding it difficult to dispose of them in landfill sites. So, they took this cloth waste and used it for mulching during tree plantation.
- Mulching is the process of covering the open surface of the ground by a layer of some external material.
- Lastly, KASEZ also used plastic waste to line the artificial water bodies created inside the area to prevent water seepage and mix with the saline water.

#### **4.20 EARTH OVERSHOOT DAY, 2021**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

According to the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), humanity has again used up all biological resources that our planet regenerates during the entire year by 29<sup>th</sup> July, 2021.

- Humanity currently uses 74% more than what the planet's ecosystems can regenerate — or 1.7 Earths.
- From Earth Overshoot Day until the end of the year, humanity operates on ecological deficit spending.

##### **About:**

- The day marks the date when humanity's demand for ecological resources (fish and forests, for instance) and services in a given year exceeds what the Earth can regenerate in that year.
- The concept of Earth Overshoot Day was first conceived by Andrew Simms of the UK think tank New Economics Foundation, which partnered with Global Footprint Network in 2006 to launch the first global Earth Overshoot Day campaign.
- Global Footprint Network is an international non-profit organization founded in the year 2003. Its key strategy has been to make available robust Ecological Footprint data.
- The Ecological Footprint is a metric that comprehensively compares human demand on nature against nature's capacity to regenerate.
- Earth Overshoot Day is computed by dividing the planet's bio capacity (the amount of ecological resources Earth is able to generate that year), by humanity's Ecological Footprint (humanity's demand for that year), and multiplying by 365, the number of days in a year:  

$$\text{Earth's Bio capacity} / \text{Humanity's Ecological Footprint} \times 365 = \text{Earth Overshoot Day}$$

#### **4.21 14 TIGER RESERVES IN INDIA HAVE ACCREDITATION OF GLOBAL CONSERVATION STANDARDS**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

India's 14 Tiger Reserves have received the Global Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS) accreditation.

##### **The 14 tiger reserves are**

- Orang, Manas and Kaziranga in Assam

- Kanha, Panna and Satpura in MP
- Pench in Maharashtra
- Valmiki Tiger Reserve in Bihar
- Dudhwa in UP
- Sunderbans in West Bengal
- Parambikulam in Kerala
- Bandipur Tiger Reserve of Karnataka
- Annamalai and Mudumalai Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu.

### **Global Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS) accreditation**

CA|TS is a conservation tool which is accepted globally. This tool sets best standards and practices to manage the tiger population of the world and encourages their assessments for benchmarking of progress. It is being implemented in around 125 sites in seven tiger range countries. India has the highest number of 94 sites, out of which assessment of 20 tiger reserves were completed this year. Currently, the country has 51 tiger reserves which are spread across 18 states.

### **4.22 INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY 2021**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

29<sup>th</sup> July, 2021, International Tiger Day which is also known as World Tiger Day is observed annually.

#### **About:**

- This day is observed to create and spread awareness about the dangers faced by the tiger population of the world.
- It is very important to focus on the conservation of tigers as they play an important role in maintaining and protecting a balanced ecosystem.
- World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) states that since tigers are the top predators, they play a very important role in maintaining the planet's ecosystems harmony.
- By preying on the herbivore population, tigers have helped to keep the balance between the forest vegetation and the animals.

#### **History of International Tiger Day**

In the year 2010, in Russia, the first World Tiger Day was observed at the Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit. A total of thirteen countries with tiger range banded together and decided upon a global goal to double wild tiger's population by the year 2022.

#### **Significance of International Tiger Day**

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) says that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were around 1,00,000 tigers. In the year 2010, it was observed that the number has drastically reduced to 3,200. Therefore, it is very important to save the tiger population of the world. Hence, the International Tiger Day plays an important role by creating and spreading awareness and works for the conservation of tigers.

#### **Tiger Population in India**



According to the All India Tiger Estimation Report of 2018 the tiger population in India is 2967.

#### 4.23 INDIA'S LEOPARD COUNT JUMPS 63% IN JUST 4 YEARS

##### WHY IN NEWS?

The Environment Minister has recently released the report 'Status of Leopards, Co-predators and Megaherbivores-2018'. The report points out that India's official leopard count increased 63 percent from 2014-2018.

##### About:

- The Environment Minister has recently released the report 'Status of Leopards, Co-predators and Megaherbivores-2018'. The report points out that India's official leopard count increased 63 percent from 2014-2018.

##### Key findings of the report:

- The report mentions that in 2014, the number of leopards in India was 7,910. The number of leopards in 2018 rose to 12,852. This is a 63 percent increase in leopard count.

##### Why separate leopard census is necessary?

One could not 'piggyback leopard surveys on tiger surveys, because there were vast areas where the distributions of the two species did not overlap.

##### About Indian Leopard or Common Leopard:

- The Indian leopard (*Panthera pardus fusca*) is a leopard subspecies widely distributed on the Indian subcontinent. These are the smallest of the big cats, known for their ability to adapt to a variety of habitats.
- Vegetation: In India, the leopard is found in all forest types, from tropical rainforests to temperate deciduous and alpine coniferous forests. It is also found in dry scrubs and grasslands, the only exception being desert and the mangroves of Sundarbans.
- Distribution: Its range stretches from the Indus river in the west, the Himalayas in the north, and all the way to the lower course of the Brahmaputra in the east.
- Conservation Status:
  - IUCN Red List: Vulnerable
  - Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I
  - CITES: Appendix I

#### Environment: Practice MCQs:

**QUESTION 1:** Barnadi Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in which state?

- A. Assam
- B. West Bengal
- C. Tripura

D. Meghalaya

**QUESTION 2:** Benog Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in which state?

- A. Manipur
- B. Himachal Pradesh

- C. Tripura
- D. Uttarakhand

**QUESTION 3:** A recently discovered new species of \_\_\_\_\_ has been named after the brave police constable Tukaram Omble who lost his life in the 26/11 terror attacks.

- A. frog
- B. snake
- C. spider
- D. fish

**QUESTION 4:** Tropical Storm Elsa has been recently seen active in-

- A. Atlantic Ocean
- B. Pacific Ocean
- C. Bay of Bengal
- D. Arabian Sea

**QUESTION 5:** The 'Last Ice Area', seen recently in news, is located in-

- A. Tibet plateau
- B. Antarctica
- C. Pacific ocean
- D. Arctic ocean

**QUESTION 6:** Vembanad Lake, the second-largest Ramsar site in India, is located in-

- A. Andhra Pradesh
- B. Kerala
- C. Tamil Nadu
- D. Odisha

**QUESTION 7:** Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve is situated in which state?

- A. Karnataka
- B. Maharashtra
- C. Telangana
- D. West Bengal

**QUESTION 8:** ICESat satellite system for earth observation, is a system by-

- A. NASA
- B. ISRO
- C. European Space Agency
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 9:** Conservation status of Giant Panda has been recently upgraded to-

- A. least concern
- B. critically endangered
- C. endangered
- D. vulnerable

**QUESTION 10:** Recently a 'Report on Human-wildlife coexistence' has been jointly released by UNEP and

- A. IUCN
- B. WWF
- C. PETA
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 11:** Largest population of Himalyan Yak is found in-

- A. Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh
- B. Arunachal Pradesh

C. Himachal Pradesh

D. Sikkim

**QUESTION 12:** The proposed Lemru Elephant Reserve is situated in which state?

A. Chattisgarh

B. Assam

C. Maharashtra

D. Karnataka

**QUESTION 13:** Avicennia marina, of which, the complete genome sequencing was done by scientists recently, is a species of-

A. mosquito

B. sea weed

C. jellyfish

D. mangroves

**QUESTION 14:** India's first cryptogamic garden, with around 50 different species grown, has been inaugurated in-

A. Dehradun

B. Shimla

C. Mysore

D. Mussoorie

**QUESTION 15:** Indian scientists have discovered a new species of \_\_\_\_\_ in Antarctica named Bryum Bharatiensis.

A. krills

B. fish

C. penguins

D. moss

**QUESTION 16:** Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve is situated in-

A. Rajasthan

B. Maharashtra

C. Madhya Pradesh

D. Jharkhand

**QUESTION 17:** Which famous and one of the wettest places in India is also known as Sohra?

A. Mawsyram

B. Chinna Kallar

C. Cherrapunji

D. none of the above

**QUESTION 18:** Batam Island, where the largest solar floating farm in the world is proposed to be constructed, is under jurisdiction of which country?

A. Malaysia

B. Brunei

C. Singapore

D. Indonesia

**QUESTION 19:** Which Special Economic Zone (SEZ) has become the first green SEZ in India?

A. Kandla

B. Chennai

C. Noida

D. Falta

**QUESTION 20:** In 2021, the earth overshoot day was calculated to fall on-

- A. July 24th
- B. July 26th
- C. July 27th
- D. July 29th

- 6. ANSWER: B
- 7. ANSWER: B
- 8. ANSWER: A
- 9. ANSWER: D

**QUESTION 21:** Bandipur Tiger Reserve is situated in-

- A. Karnataka
- B. Tamil Nadu
- C. Assam
- D. Maharashtra

- 10. ANSWER: B
- 11. ANSWER: A
- 12. ANSWER: A
- 13. ANSWER: D
- 14. ANSWER: A
- 15. ANSWER: D

**QUESTION 22:** International/World Tiger Day is celebrated every year on-

- A. July 26th
- B. July 27th
- C. July 28th
- D. July 29th

- 16. ANSWER: A
- 17. ANSWER: C
- 18. ANSWER: D
- 19. ANSWER: A
- 20. ANSWER: D
- 21. ANSWER: A
- 22. ANSWER: D
- 23. ANSWER: D

**QUESTION 23:** The IUCN categorises Indian Leopard as \_\_\_\_\_ species.

- A. least concern
- B. critically endangered
- C. endangered
- D. vulnerable

**Answer Key:**

- 1. ANSWER: A
- 2. ANSWER: D
- 3. ANSWER: C
- 4. ANSWER: A
- 5. ANSWER: D

## REPORTS

### 5.1 ILO REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT WORKERS

#### WHY IN NEWS?

International Labour Organisation (ILO) published its report on International Migrant Workers. Report was published amid COVID-19 pandemic and increased global industrialisation that has impacted world's economy by shift in workers crossing borders to look for employment.

#### Key findings of report

- As per ILO report, number of international migrant workers has increased to 169 million globally. It has increased by 3% since 2017.
- Share of youth migrant workers (aged 15-24) has also increased by almost 2% (accounting to 3.2 million) since 2017.
- COVID-19 pandemic has exposed baseless situation of international migrant workers because number has increased from 164 to 169 million.
- As per report, migrant workers' situation has intensified their vulnerabilities, especially for women migrant workers amidst the covid-19 pandemic.
- Women are over-represented in low-paid and low-skilled jobs.
- Women migrant workers have restricted access to social protection and fewer options are available for support services.
- Because of high youth employment rates, share of youth among international migrant workers has increased to 10 percent in 2019 from 8.3 per cent in 2017.
- Europe, Central Asia and America host 63.3 per cent of all migrant workers.
- Migrant workers accounted for about 59 per cent of the world's international migrant population in 2017. But factors like economic inequalities and seeking employment have contributed towards rising labour migration.

### 5.2 GLOBAL CYBERSECURITY INDEX: ITU

#### WHY IN NEWS?

Recently, India has ranked tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) in Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2020 by ITU (International Telecommunication Union) by moving up 37 places.

- The affirmation came just ahead of the sixth anniversary of Digital India on 1<sup>st</sup> July.

#### Top Ranking:

- The US topped (1<sup>st</sup>), followed by the UK (United Kingdom) and Saudi Arabia tied on the second position together.
- Estonia was ranked third (3<sup>rd</sup>) in the index.

#### Results for India:

- India scored a total of 97.5 points from a possible maximum of 100 points, to make it to the tenth position worldwide in the GCI 2020.
- India secured the fourth position in the Asia Pacific region.

- India is emerging as a global IT superpower, asserting its digital sovereignty with firm measures to safeguard data privacy and online rights of citizens.
- The result shows substantial overall improvement and strengthening under all parameters of the cyber security domain.

### 5.3 INDIA RANKED 20TH IN GLOBAL STARTUP ECOSYSTEM INDEX 2021

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- India stands at the 20th spot among the top 100 countries that have been ranked in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2021 by Startup Blink. The country was in the 17th spot in 2019, after which it slid six spots down and stood at 23 in 2020.
- According to the report, India needs to better its infrastructure and Internet speed in order to further strengthen its start-up ecosystem.
- India currently has 43 of its cities listed in the top 1000, globally, with Bengaluru(10th), New Delhi (14th) and Mumbai (16th) in the top 20.
- Like last year, the US, the UK, Israel, Canada and Germany are in the top five spots this year too and continue their lead.

### 5.4 UDISE+ 2019-20 REPORT

#### WHY IN NEWS?

Recently, the Union Education Minister released the Report on United Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2019-20 for School Education in India.

#### About:

#### Total Students:

- In 2019-20, total students in school education from pre-primary to higher secondary have crossed 26.45 crore. This is higher by 42.3 lakh compared to 2018-19.

#### Gross Enrolment Ratio:

- Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at all levels of school education has improved in 2019-20 compared to 2018-19.
  - Upper Primary Level increased to 89.7% from 87.7%.
  - Elementary Level increased to 97.8% from 96.1%.
  - Secondary Level increased to 77.9% from 76.9%.
  - Higher Secondary Level increased to 51.4% from 50.1%.
- GER is the number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education.

#### Pupil Teacher Ratio:

- In 2019-20, 96.87 lakh teachers were engaged in school education. This is higher by about 2.57 lakh compared to 2018-19.
- The Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) has improved at all levels of school education.



### **Enrolment of Divyang Students:**

- Enrolment of Divyang students has increased by 6.52% over 2018-19.

### **Enrolment of Girls:**

- In 2019-20, enrolment of girls from primary to higher secondary is more than 12.08 crore. This is an increase by 14.08 lakh compared to 2018-19.

### **Gender Parity Index:**

- Between 2012-13 and 2019-20, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) at both Secondary and Higher Secondary levels have improved.
- GPI in primary, secondary and tertiary education is the ratio of the number of female students enrolled at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education to the number of male students in each level.
- Improvement of GPI has been most pronounced at the higher secondary level, which has gone up to 1.04 in 2019-20 from 0.97 in 2012-13.

### **Facilities at Schools:**

- Electricity: More than 80% of schools in India in 2019-20 had functional electricity. This is an improvement of more than 6% over the previous year 2018-19.
- Computers: The number of schools having functional computers increased to 5.2 lakh in 2019-20 from 4.7 lakh in 2018-19.
- Internet: The number of schools having internet facilities increased to 3.36 lakh in 2019-20 from 2.9 lakh in 2018-19.
- Hand Wash Facility: More than 90% of schools in India had hand wash facilities in 2019-20. This is a major improvement as this percentage was only 36.3% in 2012-13.
- Medical Check-Ups: More than 82% of schools conducted medical check-ups of students in 2019-20, an increase of more than 4% compared to the previous year 2018-19.

## **5.5 DROP IN OPEN DEFECATION: WASH REPORT**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

According to a new report by the Wash Institute (a global non-profit organisation), India was responsible for the largest drop in open defecation since 2015, in terms of absolute numbers.

- Universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) to achieve the United Nations-mandated Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 was also emphasised.

### **WASH**

- WASH is an acronym that stands for the interrelated areas of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) WASH Strategy 2018-25 has been developed in response to Member State Resolution (WHA 64.4) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG 3: Good Health and Well Being, SDG 6: Clean Water And Sanitation).

- It is a component of WHO's 13th General Programme of Work 2019–2023 which aims to contribute to the health of three billion through multisectoral actions like better emergency preparedness and response; and one billion with Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
- It also takes on board the need for progressive realization of the human rights to safe drinking-water and sanitation, adopted by the UN General Assembly in July 2010.

## 5.6 YOUTH AND FOOD SYSTEM

### WHY IN NEWS?

A new UN report on youth and agriculture underscores the urgent need to make agri-food systems more appealing to young people to secure the future of global food security and nutrition.

- The report 'Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems' is prepared and shared to the UN by the **Committee on World Food Security (CFS)**.
- CFS is an inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together on food security and nutrition for all. The CFS is hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN).

### ABOUT:

#### Youth in Numbers:

- Youth aged between 15 and 24 years accounted for 16% of the world's population in 2019.
- Young people were concentrated in Asia, Central and Southern Asia with 361 million youth and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia with 307 million youth, followed by sub-Saharan Africa (211 million youth).
- The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that 440 million youth from the African continent would enter the labour market between 2015 and 2030.

#### Key Findings:

- Food systems are the largest employer: Particularly in the developing countries, yet they often do not provide decent and meaningful work or adequate livelihood opportunities, nor maintain a balance between the needs and rights of different generations.
- Food systems are a complex web of activities involving production, processing, handling, preparation, storage, distribution, marketing, access, purchase, consumption, food loss and waste, as well as the outputs of these activities, including social, economic and environmental outcomes.
- More Employment Opportunities: Covid-19 has affected labour markets around the world, hurting employment prospects for the youth more than those belonging to other age groups. Globally, employment among the youth fell 8.7% in 2020 compared with 3.7% for adults.
- Agri-food systems, if made more appealing and equitable to youth, are a large, untapped reservoir of employment opportunities.
- Importance of Focusing on Developing Countries: As almost 88% of the world's 1.2 billion youth live, particularly in Africa, where over 70% of youth subsist on USD 2 per day or less.

- Achieving Sustainable Development Goals: The youth engagement and employment in sustainable agri-food systems is simultaneously a goal to be realized and a means for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and of economic well-being.
- Youth are on the front lines to build the food systems of the future, while also bearing significant risks from climate change, social and economic inequities, and political marginalization.

## 5.7 STATE OF FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN THE WORLD 2021 REPORT

### WHY IN NEWS?

Key findings of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s latest State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021 report

- The FAO report has quoted a study done in 63 low- and middle-income countries covering a population of 3.5 billion on changes in the income of people. It has extrapolated its impact on choice of diets.

### Key findings

- Dip in people's affordability of healthy food: There is a significant dip in people's affordability for healthy food due to a loss in income. The pandemic led to an additional 141 million people being unable to afford a healthy diet in the countries studied.
- Loss of income & rise in food prices: The primary reason for a dip in affordability is the loss of income. But food price rise has made the situation more acute. By the end of 2020, global consumer food prices were the highest in six years. In the first four months of 2021, they continued to rise.
- Healthy diet costs more: Cost of a healthy diet was 60% more than a diet that just meets "requirements for essential nutrients" and almost five times as much as a diet that just meets "the minimum dietary energy needs through a starchy staple".
- Lack of access to adequate and healthy food: In 2020, some 2.37 billion people couldn't access adequate food, an increase of 320 million people in comparison to the 2019 figure. More people in 2020 were unable to afford a healthy diet in comparison to 2019.
- Severe food insecurity: Nearly 12% of the global population faced severe levels of food insecurity or they ran out of food and in worst situations, must have a day without food. In 2020, the rise in the food insecure population was more than the combined number of the last five years.
- Increased hunger levels: The overall decline in food intake has also increased hunger levels in 2020, making the primary Sustainable Development Goal of ending hunger by 2030 impossible now. Between 720 and 811 million people in the world endured hunger in 2020. In comparison to 2019, there were an additional 161 million people who faced hunger.
- Undernourishment: The increase in the number of undernourished was more than five times greater than the highest increase in undernourishment in the last two

decades. Undernourishment due to the pandemic has impacted children the most, also a global goal to fix by 2030.

- In 2020, 149 million children (under five years of age) will grow up stunted or too short for their age. Some 45 million children have been wasted, or do not have the right weight for their height.

## **5.8 OECD-FAO OUTLOOK REPORT ON PULSES**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) & Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) have published “OECD-FAO Outlook report 2021-2030” recently making interesting reading insofar as major crops are concerned. The latest report covers pulses and a few other non-major crops under ‘other products’ category.

### **ABOUT:**

- India is central to any projection in global pulses because it is by far world’s largest producer, processor, importer and consumer of the protein-rich legume.
- However, this year report on pulses betrays a broad and superficial view on pulses.

### **Key Findings of report**

- As per report, global pulses supply will increase by 22 million tonnes (mt) of which half of supply expected to come from Asia, particularly India by 2030.
- Additional 6.6 mt will be produced as a result of introduction of high-yielding hybrid seeds, supported mechanisation, minimum support price regime and procurement system.
- World pulses trade has grown to 17 mt (from 13 mt) in the last ten years and is estimated to reach only 19 mt by 2030 because of India’s efforts to become self-sufficient in pulses.
- Pulses import by India is expected to reach a steady rate of 2030 and expected to reach 5 mt.

## **5.9 OXFAM REPORT: INDIA’S UNEQUAL HEALTHCARE STORY**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The Oxfam report which is named ‘Inequality Report 2021: India’s Unequal Healthcare Story’ was released on Tuesday. This report talks about how India’s focus on supporting private healthcare while low spending on public healthcare systems has led to inequalities in accessing healthcare, especially during the ongoing pandemic.

### **About:**

- The States which are attempting to reduce the existing healthcare inequalities with higher expenditure on health had lower confirmed cases of Covid-19 compared to the other states.
- The report states that the states such as Telangana, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan, that for the past few years have been reducing inequalities, especially healthcare inequalities between the general category and SC and ST populations, have less COVID-19 confirmed cases. On the other hand states, such as Assam, Bihar and Goa that have had higher GDP expenditure on health have higher Covid recovery rates.

- The Oxfam report has marked the state of Kerala as a success story in the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The report stated that the people in the higher income brackets and those with access to health infrastructure had less visits to hospitals and Covid centres than those who belongs to the lower income groups (LIG). People in the LIG faced more discrimination regarding the access of COVID-19 related medicines and healthcare.
- This report also points out the country's digital divide which has been ignored while administering the vaccine which is causing a vaccine inequality between the income groups as well as general and SC, ST categories.
- There have also been inequalities on the basis of gender. Men are better off than women.
- Also the urban population fared better than the rural population which has been measured on various health indicators.
- Between 2004 and 2017 the per hospitalisation case medical expenditure has tripled making it very difficult for the poorer and rural households. The urban households depended on their savings while the rural households depended mostly on loans and borrowings.
- Less than one third of the country's household is covered by an insurance scheme of the Government.
- The out-of-pocket health expenditure of 64.2% in India is higher than the world average which stands at 18.2%. Exorbitant healthcare prices have forced many to incur debts and to their assets.
- Literacy rates among the different social categories also affect their healthcare access.
- Though there has been improvement in child immunisation still the rate of immunisation of girls continues to be below that of the male child.
- Children residing in urban areas have better access to immunization than those in rural areas. There is also disparity in child immunization between the income groups in the country.

#### About Oxfam

- Oxfam was founded in the year in the year 1942 and it's headquarter is located in Nairobi, Kenya. It is a confederate of several charitable organizations that works on global poverty.

### Report: Practice MCQs

**QUESTION 1:** As per recent ILO report on International Migrant Workers, the number of international migrant workers has increased by \_\_\_\_% since 2017.

A. 3

B. 13  
C. 24  
D. 12

**QUESTION 2:** India's rank in Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2020 by ITU

(International Telecommunication Union) is-

- A. 1st
- B. 10th
- C. 37th
- D. 23rd

**QUESTION 3:** India got \_\_\_\_\_rank in the Global Startup Ecosystem Index 2021.

- A. 5th
- B. 10th
- C. 15th
- D. 20th

**QUESTION 4:** UDISE+ report, released recently, is associated with-

- A. urbanisation levels in the country
- B. infrastructure facilitation for differently-abled population
- C. education
- D. open defecation

**QUESTION 5:** WASH is an acronym that stands for-

- A. Water, Sanitation and Health
- B. Wealth, Stability and Health
- C. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 6:** The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) is an inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together on food security and nutrition for all. It is hosted by-

- A. World Meteorological Organisation
- B. UNESCO
- C. Food and Agriculture Organisation
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 7:** State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021 report is published by-

- A. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- B. Food and Agriculture Organisation
- C. Amnesty International
- D. The Hunger Project

**QUESTION 8:** Which country is the largest producer of pulses in the world?

- A. Mongolia
- B. India
- C. Afghanistan
- D. Pakistan

**QUESTION 9:** Inequality Report 2021: India's Unequal Healthcare Story, has been released by-

- A. CRY- child rights and you
- B. Oxfam
- C. Smile foundation
- D. NITI ayog

**Answer:**

1. ANSWER: A
2. ANSWER: B
3. ANSWER: D
4. ANSWER: C
5. ANSWER: C
6. ANSWER: C
7. ANSWER: B
8. ANSWER: B
9. ANSWER: B



### 6.1 DEEPIKA KUMARI WINS GOLD MEDAL AT ARCHERY WORLD CUP STAGE 3

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- The ace Indian archer Deepika Kumari, created a new world record as she claimed three back-to-back gold medals in a single day, during the Archery World Cup Stage 3, held in Paris.
- The Ranchi daughter claimed gold in each of women's recurve individual, team and mixed pair events. India topped the medals tally with four gold medals. The fourth gold medal came by Abhishek Verma, from men's individual event in the compound section.

### 6.2 12-YEAR-OLD ABHIMANYU MISHRA BECOMES YOUNGEST GRANDMASTER

#### WHY IN NEWS?

Abhimanyu Mishra has become the youngest ever Grandmaster on June 30, 2021.

#### ABOUT:

- He achieved this title at just 12 years, four months and 25 days.
- He leaved behind the record of Russian Grand Master Sergey Karjakin. Sergey had completed his GM title in 2002 at the age of 12 years and seven months.
- Abhimanyu scored his third and final norm by defeating Leon Mendonca of India in penultimate round of Vezerkepzo GM tournament at Budapest.
- Abhimanyu was born in New-Jersey and has broken 19-year-old record.
- He achieved this feat at April Vezerkepzo tournament and May 2021 tournament.

### 6.3 MAANA PATEL- FIRST INDIAN FEMALE SWIMMER TO QUALIFY TOKYO 2020 OLYMPICS

#### WHY IN NEWS?

Maana Patel has become the first female and only the third swimmer from India to qualify Tokyo Olympics 2021 ticket.

#### About:

- Maana Patel joins Srihari Nataraj and Sajan Prakash to have qualified for the Olympics.
- She is a 21-year-old backstroke swimmer from Ahmedabad who have won gold medals in 50 metre backstroke and 200 metre backstroke at National Games.
- She also won gold in 100 metre backstroke at 60th National School Games (2015) and broke the national record in backstroke.
- She was selected for Olympic Gold Quest in 2015 making it the first time a swimmer was roped in.
- In 2018, she secured three gold medals at 72nd Senior National Aquatic Championships.

#### Maana Patel

- She was born on March 18, 2000. She is an Indian backstroke swimmer from Ahmedabad, Gujarat. She started at the age of seven. At 13, she clocked 2:23.41s in 200m backstroke at 40th Junior National Aquatics Championship in Hyderabad. In 2019, she won six medals (1 gold, 4 silvers, 1 bronze) at 10th Asian Age-group Championships, Bangalore. She has won 11 international, 61 national and 75 state level medals; as of 2016.

## **6.4 INDIAN SHOOTER RAHI SARNOBAT WINS GOLD AT ISSF WORLD CUP SHOOTING**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- India's Rahi Sarnobat clinched the gold medal in the women's 25m pistol event at the ISSF shooting World Cup. She is the first Indian to win one silver and two bronze medals in the ongoing tournament.
- She scored 591 out of a maximum of 600 in the qualifying stage. France's Mathilde Lamolle won a silver medal in the final. Russian Vitalina Batsarashkina won the bronze medal. Indian shooter Manu Bhaker finished at 7 positions.
- This is the last competition before the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. ISSF World Cup 2021 is being held in Osijek, Croatia.

## **6.5 INDIAN WRESTLER SUMIT MALIK GETS TWO-YEAR BAN FOR DOPING**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Indian wrestler Sumit Malik was banned for two years by the sport's world governing body UWW after his B sample also returned positive for a prohibited stimulant. The 28-year-old has one week to decide if he would accept the sanction or challenge it.
- He was handed a provisional suspension last month for failing a dope test during the World Olympic Qualifier event in Sofia, where he had qualified for the Tokyo Games in the 125 kg category.

## **6.6 MARIYAPPAN THANGAVELU NAMED FLAG-BEARER FOR TOKYO PARALYMPICS**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Top para high-jumper Mariyappan Thangavelu was named the flag-bearer of the Indian contingent in the Tokyo Paralympics, which begins on August 24.
- Thangavelu, who is defending the T-42 gold he had won in the 2016 Rio Paralympics during the August 24 to September 5 showpiece in Tokyo, was picked for the honour by the executive committee of the national body.
- The 25-year-old Thangavelu, who was conferred with the Khel Ratna, the country's highest sporting award, last year is one of the 24 para-athletes picked by the selection committee for the Tokyo Paralympics.
- Thangavelu, who hails from Salem district in Tamil Nadu, suffered a permanent disability at the age of five when a bus crushed his right leg below the knee.

## **6.7 MC MARY KOM & MANPREET SINGH NAMED FLAG BEARERS AT TOKYO OLYMPICS**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Boxer M.C. Mary Kom and men's hockey team skipper Manpreet Singh have been named for flag bearers at Tokyo Olympics from India.

### **About:**

- Both of them will be flag bearers for India at opening ceremony of Tokyo Olympics which is scheduled to get underway on July 23, 2021.
- Wrestler Bajrang Punia will be flag bearer at closing ceremony on August 8, 2021.

- This decision was communicated by Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to Organising Committee of Olympics Games.
- In 2016 games in Rio De Janeiro, India's lone individual Olympic gold-medallist Abhinav Bindra was the flag bearer at the opening ceremony
- Gender parity

In order to bring equality and parity among gender, International Olympic Committee had made provisions for flag bearers, at the executive board meeting, from both genders at the opening ceremony. IOC Executive Board also decided that, there should be at least one female and one male athlete in each of 206 teams and IOC Refugee Olympic Team which are participating at Games of the Olympiad.

### **6.8 NORWAY'S KARSTEN WARHOLM BREAKS MEN'S 400 METRES HURDLES WORLD RECORD**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Karsten Warholm, a 25-year-old athlete from Norway, broke the long-standing world record in the 400m hurdles during the Bislett Games. Earlier the record was held by American hurdler Kevin Young for 29 years.
- His mark of 46.78 seconds was set at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, Spain, which was finally broken with an official time of 46.70 seconds by Warholm.

### **6.9 SAMIR BANERJEE WINS WIMBLEDON JUNIOR MEN'S TITLE**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Indian-American Samir Banerjee has won the Wimbledon Junior Men's title at Number 1 Court. He defeated Victor Lilov of America by 7-5, 6-3 in the Junior Men's finals to lift the trophy at All England Club.
- For the first time since 2014, and only the second time since 1977, there was an all-American conclusion to the boys' singles event. Notably, both 17-year-olds were unseeded for The Championships.

### **6.10 ARGENTINA BEATS BRAZIL TO LIFT COPA AMERICA 2021**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Lionel Messi-led Argentina beat Neymar's Brazil 1-0 to win the Copa America final match, held at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro. With this win, Lionel Messi has secured his first major international trophy.
- The 2021 Copa America was the 47th edition of the annual international men's football championship organised by South America's football ruling body CONMEBOL.
- Earlier the tournament was scheduled to be held in July 2020 but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was the first time since 1991 that no guest nation took part in the tournament.

### **6.11 EURO 2020 FINAL: ITALY BEAT ENGLAND ON PENALTIES**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- The European Championship final pits England and Italy against each other. Italy won 3-2 on penalties. Italy, one of the most decorated teams in the world, has ended a few years of trophy drought.
- England, on the other hand, we're in uncharted territory. They haven't even reached a final since 1966. Italy has already reached the final twice in recent years — in 2000 and 2012 — whereas England hasn't got close until now. Italy's Goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma named player of UEFA EURO 2020.

## **6.12 INDIA TO SEND 228 CONTINGENT TO TOKYO OLYMPICS**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

India is all set to sending a 228-strong contingent to Tokyo Olympics, including 119 athletes

#### **About:**

- Of 119 athletes, 67 are male and 52 female participants.
- 119 athletes from 22 states will represent 130 crore Indians in 18 sport disciplines.
- India is fighting for 85 medal events.
- It will be largest ever contingent of athletes from India at Olympics.
- The first contingent for Tokyo will leave on July 17 comprising of 90 athletes and officials.

### **2020 Summer Olympics**

This international multi-sports event, branded as Tokyo 2020, is scheduled to be held from July 23 to August 8, 2021 in Tokyo, Japan. Earlier, it was scheduled to take place in 2020 but event was postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, event is going to be held largely behind closed doors. No spectators have been permitted under state of emergency. This event retains Tokyo 2020 name even though it has been rescheduled for 2021, for marketing & branding purposes.

## **6.13 LEWIS HAMILTON WINS FORMULA ONE BRITISH GRAND PRIX**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Lewis Hamilton of United Kingdom has won the Formula One British Grand Prix at Silverstone for a record eighth time. This was the 99th win of Hamilton's career who has also won the world championship seven times.

#### **Result of the race**

1. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)
2. Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)
3. Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)

#### **Key Points**

- On the opening lap of the British Grand Prix held on Sunday Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen, were involved in a high speed collision as Hamilton tried to overtake the Verstappen. Hamilton's front-left wheel touched Verstappen's back-right tire. Due to this Verstappen spun off the track and crashed into the barriers. Later, Verstappen was seen walking away from his crashed car.

- Due to the collision, Hamilton was given a time penalty but in a dramatic conclusion to the race he overtook Ferrari's Charles Leclerc to secure his eighth British GP victory.

#### **ABOUT:**

The British Grand Prix is a motor race which is organised in the United Kingdom. This race is organised by the Royal Automobile Club. It was first held in the year 1926; since the year 1948 the British Grand Prix has been held annually and every year since 1950 it has been a round of the FIA Formula One World Championship.

#### **6.14 VISWANATHAN ANAND WINS SPARKASSEN TROPH**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Viswanathan Anand defeated Vladimir Kramnik to win the Sparkassen Trophy at Dortmund. Anand needed only a draw in the final game of the No-Castling Chess event, and he got it in 40 moves.
- Kramnik, who conceived this variant of chess with the intention of making the game less predictable and more dynamic, however, was forced to draw the game by giving perpetual checks. Anand was just one move away from putting a second queen on the board.

#### **6.15 INDIAN BOXERS WIN IN CADET WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2021, young wrestlers from India Priya and Tannu became the latest world champions at the Cadet World Championship.

##### **About:**

- Tannu en route to the 43kg title did not concede even a single point. She won three out of her four bouts by fall. This includes the final match against Valeryia Mikitsich of Belarus.
- Priya won the title in the 73kg category with a 5-0 win over Kseniya Patapovich of Belarus.
- Sagar Jaglan (80kg) and Aman Gulia (48kg) won titles in men's freestyle competition and this propelled the Indian team to the Team championship title which India won for the first time.
- Varsha, another participant from India, won the bronze medal in the 65kg category with a victory by fall against Duygu Gen of Turkey.
- India finished on top with 147 points, ahead of USA (143) and Russia (140).
- On Saturday, Komal will also be in contention for world title in the 46kg category final after having defeated ' Sviatlana Katenka of Belarus. She will be up against Ruzanna Mammadova of Azerbaijan.
- Harshita (69kg) and Nitika (61kg) lost their semi-final bouts and will not fight for the bronze medals in their respective categories.

##### **About Cadet World Championship**

The Cadet World Championship is an annual event for Freestyle, Greco-Roman, and Women wrestlers. The best in the world who are aged 16 and 17 years compete in this tournament. This year the tournament is being hosted in **Budapest, Hungary**. The next tournament will be held in Rome, Italy in the year 2022.

## **6.16 SANDESH JHINGAN NAMED AIFF MEN'S FOOTBALLER OF YEAR**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Senior India defender, Sandesh Jhingan was named the AIFF men's Footballer of the Year 2020-21 season.
- It is the first time that the towering central defender has received the AIFF Player of the Year award, having won the Emerging Player of the Year Award in 2014.
- While midfielder Suresh Singh Wangjam was picked as the Emerging Player for the year award for 2020-21.
- The 20-year-old Suresh, who made his Blue Tigers debut earlier this year against Oman, was part of the Indian side that competed at the FIFA U-17 World Cup in 2017.

## **6.17 MADHYA PRADESH PARA SHOOTER RUBINA FRANCIS BAGS GOLD AT PERU EVENT**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Madhya Pradesh shooter, Rubina Francis has set a world record at the ongoing Para Sport Cup in Peru.
- She has won gold in the 10-meter air pistol para-event for women. Scoring 238.1 points, she went past the world record of Aysegul Pehlivanlar of Turkey. This win also secured her the quota for India at the Tokyo Summer Paralympics 2020.
- Over the years, she has earned more than 15 medals from national and international events.
- Presently, Rubina is training under the guidance of Jaspal Rana, former shooter and coach of the Junior Indian Pistol Shooting Team.

## **6.18 FOUR NEW SPORTS IN TOKYO OLYMPIC**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Four new sports have been introduced in the Tokyo Olympics. They are karate, skateboarding, surfing and sport climbing.

#### **Karate**

Martial art, since the 1970s, has been a candidate for Olympic inclusion but the organizers never agreed to accept this sport until the Tokyo Games presented the perfect opportunity to showcase this sport from its homeland.

The three days of competition will be held at Nippon Budokan and will feature talented kumite competitors in three weight divisions. Due to its resurgent popularity in televisions and movies, viewers are hoping to enjoy this sport.

#### **Skateboarding**

Skateboard's debut was done by the organizers to attract the young audiences. The audiences will be able to see high-flying stunts and tricks. The competitors are between 12 to 47 years.

#### **Surfing**

There will be at least three days of competition spread over an eight-day period. The events will mostly be determined on the day based on surf conditions. Since the year 1995, the International



Surfing Association has been lobbying for the inclusion of this sport, and it makes a debut in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

### **Sport climbing**

In recent years climbing has reached new heights and hence it makes its debut in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic. In the lead discipline, Climbers scale a 15-meter wall which is filled with variety of holds. Bouldering involves dynamic movements and in the Speed category a race to the top is held between the participants.

## **6.19 13-YEAR-OLD SKATER NISHIYA- JAPAN'S YOUNGEST GOLD MEDALLIST**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

13 years old Japanese skateboarder Momiji Nishiya won the gold medal at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. She became one of the youngest gold medalists ever at the Olympic Games.

### **About:**

- Nishiya won the gold on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2021 in the women's street competition which debuted for the first time in Tokyo 2020 Olympics.
- Yuto Horigome of Japan won the men's competition on 25th July, 2021. This makes Japan the gold medal holder in both the categories.
- Nishiya landed her tricks perfectly to beat out Brazil's Rayssa Leal, also just 13 years of age.
- Over 50% of the women participating in the final competition were in their teens.
- Funa Nakayama of Japan, who clinched the bronze medal, is 16 years of age.
- Both Leal and Nishiya are the youngest ever medalists for their respective countries of Brazil and Japan.

### **Who is the youngest gold medalist?**

Marjorie Gestring, of USA is the youngest gold medal winner of the Olympics. At the 1936 Berlin Games she dominated the women's diving competition. During that time she was only 13 years and 268 days old.

### **Conclusion**

The participants told that they wish to see even more participants in the women's category in the future Olympic Games

## **6.20 MIRABAI CHANU WINS HISTORIC SILVER, OPENS INDIA'S MEDAL TALLY**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Weightlifter Mirabai Chanu bagged a silver medal in the women's 49-kg category at the Tokyo Olympics 2020 on July 24, 2021.

In four successful attempts, 26-year-old Chanu lifted a total of 202-kg, 115-kg in clean and jerk and 87-kg in snatch. With this win, Chanu has now become the second Indian weightlifter to win an Olympic medal. Karnam Malleswari had won the bronze medal in the 69-kg category at the 2000 Sydney Games when the weightlifting sport was first opened to women.

## 6.21 VANTIKA AGARWAL WINS NATIONAL WOMEN ONLINE CHESS TITLE

### WHY IN NEWS?

Delhi youngster Vantika Agarwal has won the National women online chess title. From 11 rounds she scored 9.5 points.

#### About:

- With 9 points Arpita Mukherjee of West Bengal took the second spot.
- Tamil Nadu's Sreeja Seshadri with 8.5 points took the third spot in this competition.
- Maharashtra's Soumya Swaminathan and Tamil Nadu's R Vaishali of finished fourth and fifth respectively.
- This tournament saw past champions Bhakti Kulkarni, Tania Sachdev, and Padmini Rout as well as seasoned names like Soumya Swaminathan, Mary Ann Gomes and Esha Karavade but it was the youngster Vantika Agarwal who surprised everybody and came out on top.

#### Junior Open Section

In Junior Open section, Tamil Nadu's VS Raahul won the first position with 9.5 point. International Master Bharath Subrahmaniam finished second with 9 points and Grandmaster P Iniyan who had recently represented the country at the World Cup finished third.

#### Conclusion

Due to the pandemic over-the-board events were not held and the All India Chess Federation has decided that they consider this online event's performance for the selection of players who will represent India in the Asian individual championship and other various events.

## 6.22 NANDU NATEKAR, INDIAN BADMINTON LEGEND, PASSES AWAY AT 88

### WHY IN NEWS?

Legendary badminton player of India, Nandu Natekar passed away on July 28, 2021, at the age of 88. He was the first Indian to win an International Title in 1956.

#### Nandu Natekar: Achievements of former World No. 3

- In a career spanning 15 years, Nandu Natekar won over 100 National and International titles for India.
- Nandu Natekar, in his famed career, had made it to the quarter-finals of the prestigious All England Championships in 1954.
- He won the men's singles championship in the Selangor International Tournament in Kuala Lumpur in 1956. Natekar's victory was also the first international victory by an Indian Badminton player.
- Nandu Natekar won the Men's Double National Championship a total of 6 times, the Men's Singles Championship a total of 6 times, and the Mixed Doubles National Championship a total of 5 times.
- Nandu Natekar recorded 12 wins out of 16 singles matches and 8 out of 16 in Doubles as part of the Indian Team at the Thomas Cup between 1951 and 1963.
- He also had the distinction of leading India in the tournament in 1959, 1961, and 1963.
- Natekar had also represented India at the 1956 Commonwealth Games in Jamaica.

### Recipient of first Arjuna Award:

- Nandu Natekar was the recipient of the first Arjuna Award which was instituted in 1961 for outstanding performance in sports and games.
- He was also voted the most popular sportsperson of India in 1961.

### 6.23 NGANGOM BALA DEVI NAMED AIFF 'WOMEN'S FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR' 2020-21 WHY IN NEWS?

- Indian Women's National Team Forward, Ngangom Bala Devi has been named as the All India Football Federation (AIFF) Women's Footballer of the Year 2020-21. Bala currently plays for Rangers Women's FC in Scotland.
- She made her debut for the team in February 2020 and created history as she scored her first competitive goal for the side in December last year. She is the first Indian woman footballer to sign a professional contract with an overseas club in Europe.
- Bala was a part of the Manipur U19 team that took part in the Under-19 Women's Championship in Assam in 2002, where she was declared the best player. She has also represented the Manipur Senior Women's Football Team in the India women's football championship.

### Report: Practice MCQs :

**QUESTION 1:** Which female Indian archer won 3 Gold medals at Archery World Cup Stage 3, held in Paris?

- A. Dola Bannerjee
- B. Ankita Bhakat
- C. Deepika Kumari
- D. Rimil Buriuly

**QUESTION 2:** Who now holds the record of being youngest ever Grandmaster in Chess?

- A. Sergey Karjakin
- B. Leon Mendonca
- C. Abhimanyu Mishra
- D. None of the above

**QUESTION 3:** Maana Patel has become the first female and only the third swimmer from India to qualify for Tokyo Olympics.

She belongs to-

- A. Gujarat
- B. Maharashtra

C. Delhi

D. Daman

**QUESTION 4:** Who clinched the gold medal in the women's 25m pistol event at the ISSF shooting World Cup?

- A. Manu Bhaker
- B. Rahi Sarnobat
- C. Ganemat Sekhon
- D. Anisa Sayyed

**QUESTION 5:** Sumit Malik, a Tokyo qualified participant has been recently banned for doping. He plays which sport?

- A. Hockey
- B. Power lifting
- C. Basketball
- D. Wrestling

**QUESTION 6:** Who will be the flag-bearer of the Indian contingent in the Tokyo Paralympics?

- A. Ajeet Singh

B. Nishad Kumar

C. Ram Pal

D. Mariyappan Thangavelu

**QUESTION 7:** Who has been named as flag bearer of Indian contingent for closing ceremony of Tokyo Olympics?

A. Manpreet Singh

B. Abhinav Bindra

C. Mary Kom

D. Bajrang Punia

**QUESTION 8:** Karsten Warholm, who recently broke the world record in the 400m hurdles, belongs to which country?

A. Norway

B. Jamaica

C. Denmark

D. USA

**QUESTION 9:** Who has won the Wimbledon Junior Men's title recently?

A. Victor Lillov

B. Samir Banerjee

C. Pedro Dias

D. Jack Jones

**QUESTION 10:** Which country has won the 2021 Copa America football championship?

A. Costa Rica

B. Paraguay

C. Brazil

D. Argentina

**QUESTION 11:** Which team won the European Championship 2020?

A. Italy

B. England

C. Croatia

D. Germany

**QUESTION 12:** What is total number of athletes taking part in Tokyo Olympics as part of Indian contingent?

A. 228

B. 238

C. 119

D. 129

**QUESTION 13:** Who has won the Formula One British Grand Prix at Silverstone-

A. Lewis Hamilton

B. Valtteri Bottas

C. Charles Leclerc

D. none of the above

**QUESTION 14:** Who has recently won the Sparkassen chess Trophy?

A. Vladimir Kramnik

B. Vishwanathan Anand

C. Mateusz Bartel

D. none of the above

**Question 15:** The Cadet World Championship 2021 was recently hosted by-

A. Hungary

B. Italy

C. France

D. Slovakia

**QUESTION 16:** Who has recently been named AIFF men's Footballer of Year 2020-21?

A. Gurpreet Sandhu

B. Suresh Singh Wangjam

C. Sandesh Jhingan

D. Subrata pal

**QUESTION 17:** Rubina Francis has set a world record in 10m air pistol event at the ongoing Para Sport Cup in Peru. To which state does she belong?

A. Kerala

B. Tamil Nadu

- C. Delhi
- D. Madhya Pradesh

**QUESTION 18:** Four new sports have been introduced in Tokyo Olympics. Which of the following is not one of them?

- A. Karate
- B. Judo
- C. Surfing
- D. Sport climbing

**QUESTION 19:** Who is the youngest ever individual gold medal winner of the Olympics?

- A. Yuto Horigome
- B. Momiji Nishiya
- C. Marjorie Gestring
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 20:** India's weightlifter Mirabai Chanu bagged a silver medal in which segment?

- A. 49 kg
- B. 55 kg
- C. 59 kg
- D. 64 kg

**QUESTION 21:** Who has won the National Women Online Chess Title?

- A. Soumya Swaminathan
- B. R Vaishali
- C. Vantika Agarwal
- D. Arpita Mukherjee

**QUESTION 22:** Nandu Natekar, who passed away recently, was associated with which sport?

- A. Tennis
- B. Badminton
- C. Kabaddi
- D. Cricket

**QUESTION 23:** Who has been named AIFF 'Women's Footballer of the Year' 2020-21?

- A. Maymol Rocky
- B. Ngangom Bala Devi
- C. Aditi Chauhan
- D. Dalima Chibber

### Answer Key

1. ANSWER: C
2. ANSWER: C
3. ANSWER: A
4. ANSWER: B
5. ANSWER: D
6. ANSWER: D
7. ANSWER: D
8. ANSWER: A
9. ANSWER: B
10. ANSWER: D
11. ANSWER: A
12. ANSWER: C
13. ANSWER: A
14. ANSWER: B
15. ANSWER: A
16. ANSWER: C
17. ANSWER: D
18. ANSWER: B
19. ANSWER: C
20. ANSWER: A
21. ANSWER: C
22. ANSWER: B
23. ANSWER: B

## AWARDS

### 7.1 JOURNALIST P SAINATH WINS JAPAN'S FUKUOKA GRAND PRIZE

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- Journalist Palagummi Sainath has been awarded the Fukuoka Grand Prize for 2021. He is a committed journalist who has continued to investigate impoverished farming villages in India and captured the reality of the lifestyle of the residents in such areas.
- The award, established by Japan's Fukuoka city and the Fukuoka City International Foundation, is given to individuals and organisations for their work in preserving Asian culture. Besides the Grand Prize, there are two more award categories, academics and culture.
- The Academics Prize was given to Professor Kishimoto Mio, a historian from Japan who specialises in the socio-economic history of China in the Ming-Qing period. Thailand-based writer and filmmaker Prabda Yoon received the Arts and Culture Award.

### 7.2 'DECODING SHANKAR', WINS AT TORONTO INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- Freelance filmmaker Deepti Pillay Sivan's most touted documentary, "Decoding Shankar" about the life and career of the celebrated musician Shankar Mahadevan, recently won the Best Film Award in the Documentary section (Best Biographical) at the Toronto International Women Film Festival, 2021.
- The 52-minute docu-film released a few years ago is a sketch of the life of the prolific musician focusing on how he balances his career as a singer, music composer, and teacher. The film gives interesting tidbits about his family life and shares interesting moments about his passion for cooking.

### 7.3 ODISIA POET RAJENDRA KISHORE PANDA BAGS KUVEMPU RASHTRIYA PURASKAR

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Kuvempu Rashtriya Puraskar, the national award instituted in memory of late poet laureate Kuvempu, has been awarded to renowned Odia poet Dr. Rajendra Kishore Panda for the year 2020.
- The prestigious award carries a cash award of Rs 5 lakh, a silver medal, and a citation. Founded in 1992, Rashtrakavi Kuvempu Trust instituted this national annual literary award in 2013 in the name of Kuvempu to recognize litterateurs who had contributed in any language recognized by the Constitution of India.

### 7.4 INVEST INDIA WON THE MOST INNOVATIVE INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCY 2021 AWARD

#### WHY IN NEWS?



- Invest India has been awarded the world's most innovative Investment Promotion Agency 2021 by OCO Global. OCO Global is a leading authority on foreign investment and offers a range of economic development services, products, and unique company assessment tools.
- Invest India, set up in 2009, is a non-profit venture under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

## **7.5 KAUSHIK BASU AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS HUMBOLDT RESEARCH AWARD**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Indian economist Kaushik Basu has been awarded the Humboldt Research Award for Economics. The award was conferred on him by Professor Dr Hans-Bernd Schäfer of Bucerius Law School in Hamburg, Germany.
- A former chief economist of the World Bank, Basu is currently a professor of Economics at Cornell University. He also served as the Government of India's chief economic advisor from 2009 to 2012. Basu is also a recipient of the Padma Bhushan, the third-highest civilian award in India.
- The prestigious award is sponsored by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and awarded to as many as 100 recipients each year.
- The Humboldt Research Award honours scientists and economists from across the world for their work. The award entails prize money of 60,000 euros and an offer to carry out research projects at a scientific institution in Germany for up to 12 months.

## **7.6 SYED OSMAN AZHAR MAQSUSI WON COMMONWEALTH POINTS OF LIGHT AWARD**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Hyderabad's hunger activist Syed Osman Azhar Maqsusi, who has been feeding thousands of people every day as part of his food drive 'Hunger Has No Religion' was awarded a top UK award recently.
- In order to honour Maqsusi's efforts, he was conferred with the Commonwealth Points of Light award for his drive that helps to feed 1,500 people on a daily basis. The award is for those 'outstanding individuals who are making a change in their community.'

## **7.7 CHIEF HYDROGRAPHER VINAY BADHWAR CONFERRED WITH ALEXANDER DALRYMPLE AWARD**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Chief Hydrographer of India Vice Admiral Vinay Badhwar. Was conferred with the prestigious Alexander Dalrymple award by the British Government. The award recognizes Badhwar's work in the areas of hydrography and nautical cartography.

Vice Admiral Vinay Badhwar received the award from British High Commissioner Alex Ellis at a brief ceremony.

### **About Alexander Dalrymple Award:**

The prestigious Alexander Dalrymple Award has been named after the first hydrographer of the Admiralty.

The award was instituted in 2006

## 7.8 PRAMOD BHAGAT NAMED DIFFERENTLY ABLED SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR 2019

### WHY IN NEWS?

- World No. 1 para shuttler Pramod Bhagat was named Differently Abled Sportsman of the Year at Indian Sports Honour for 2019. The delay in the announcement was due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Indian Sports Honours are awards given annually by the RPSG Group in association with the Virat Kohli Foundation to outstanding sports personalities of India. The awards were founded in 2017.
- Bhagat, who won two gold medals and a bronze at the Dubai Para-Badminton Tournament this year, will be participating in singles and mixed doubles events at the Paralympics which opens in Tokyo from August 24.

### Awards: Practice MCQs:

**QUESTION 1:** Which Indian Journalist has won Japan's Fukuoka Grand Prize 2021?

- A. Ravish Kumar
- B. Sagarika Ghose
- C. Swapan Dasgupta
- D. P Sainath

**QUESTION 2:** 'Decoding Shankar', recently won the Best Film Award in the Documentary section at the Toronto International Women Film Festival, 2021. It is directed by-

- A. Zoya Akhtar
- B. Mira Nair
- C. Deepti Pillay Sivan
- D. Deepa Mehta

**QUESTION 3:** Rajendra Kishore Panda, who won the recent Kuvempu Rashtriya Puraskar, is a/an\_\_\_\_\_ poet.

- A. assamese
- B. odia
- C. marathi

D. tamil

**QUESTION 4:** Which organisation has been awarded the world's most innovative Investment Promotion Agency 2021 by OCO Global?

- A. Invest India
- B. Investment Promotion Agency of Qatar
- C. Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (Apex-Brasil)
- D. China Investment Promotion Agency

**QUESTION 5:** Who has been recently awarded the Humboldt Research Award for Economics?

- A. Jagdish Bhagwati
- B. Bimal Jalan
- C. Kaushik Basu
- D. Arvind Panagariya

**QUESTION 6:** Who has been awarded Commonwealth Points of Light award?

- A. Sharad Pagare

B. Martha Koome

D. none of the above

C. Syed Osman Azhar Maqsusi

D. K K Shaileja

**QUESTION 7:** Who is the Chief Hydrographer of India?

A. Ravneet Singh

B. Vinay Badhwar

C. Pramod Sharma

D. none of the above

**Answer Key**

1. ANSWER: D

2. ANSWER: C

3. ANSWER: B

4. ANSWER: A

5. ANSWER: C

6. ANSWER: C

7. ANSWER: B

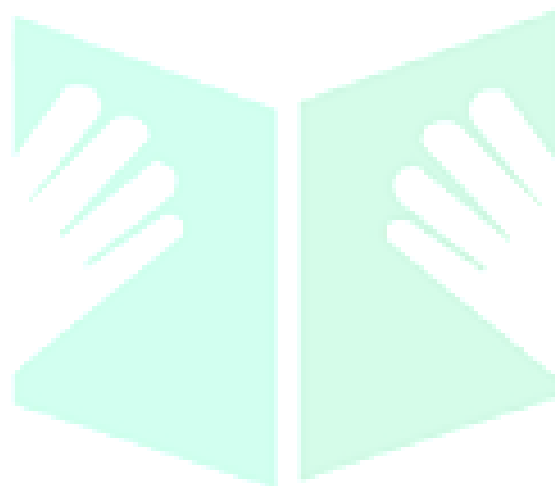
8. ANSWER: B

**QUESTION 8:** Who has been named Differently Abled Sportsman of the Year 2019?

A. Arunima Sinha

B. Pramod Bhagat

C. Major D P Singh



CivilsTap Hlmachal

### 8.1 AGNI-P (PRIME)

#### WHY IN NEWS?

Recently, a new generation nuclear capable ballistic missile Agni-P (Prime) was successfully test-fired by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam island off the coast of Odisha, Balasore.

#### About:

- Agni-P is a new generation advanced variant of the Agni class (under IGMDP - Integrated Guided Missile Development Program).
- It is a canisterised missile with range capability between 1,000 and 2,000 km.
- Canisterisation of missiles reduces the time required to launch the missile while improving its storage and mobility.
- Many advanced technologies including composites, propulsion systems, innovative guidance and control mechanisms and state-of-the-art navigation systems have been introduced. The Agni-P missile would further strengthen India's credible deterrence capabilities.
- In comparison to other Agni class missiles, Agni-P has improved parameters including manoeuvring and accuracy.

### 8.2 RAFAEL UNVEILS SEA BREAKER AI MISSILE WITH 300 KM RANGE

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- Israeli defence electronics company Rafael Advanced Defense Systems has unveiled Sea Breaker, a 5th generation long-range, autonomous, precision-guided missile system, which can precisely target sea and land targets up to a range of 300 kilometres.
- Sea Breaker features an advanced imaging infra-red seeker, which can engage stationary or moving targets in a diverse range of land and marine environments.
- Sea Breaker can be launched from naval platforms, varying in size, and from fast attack missile boats to corvettes and frigates.
- The land version is a central part of the shore defence, based on Rafael's highly mobile SPYDER launchers. The battery architecture supports standalone launchers, or operation as an integrated solution, with a command and control unit (CCU) and various sensors, based on customer requirements.

### 8.3 INDIA'S 1 INDIGENOUS DRONE DEFENCE DOME 'INDRAJAAL' DEVELOPED BY GRENE ROBOTICS

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- India's 1st indigenous drone defence dome 'Indrajaal' has been developed by Hyderabad-based Grene Robotics.
- As per the company, the drone defence dome – 'Indrajaal' is capable of autonomously protecting an area of 1000-2000 sq km against aerial threats. It protects the area by

assessing and acting on aerial threats such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and Low-Radar Cross Section (RCS) targets.

- The company said that cutting-edge technologies such as UAVs, Smart Swarms, etc. have been for the first time used in India to drop explosives next to the Mi-17 hangar at Jammu Air Base.

#### **8.4 INS TABAR CONDUCTS MILITARY EXERCISE WITH ITALIAN NAVY**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Indian Naval Ship (INS) Tabar recently participated in military exercises with frontline frigate of Italian Navy.

##### **About:**

- INS Tabar joined Italian Navy and entered Port of Naples on July 3 as part of ongoing deployment in Mediterranean.
- Commanding officer Captain Mahesh Mangipudi called on senior officers of Prefect of Naples Authority, regional Italian navy headquarters and coast guard headquarters during the stay.
- While returning, Tabar also undertook a Maritime Partnership Exercise with ITS Antonio Marcegaglia in Tyrrhenian Sea on July 4 & 5.
- This exercise covered several naval operations such as air defence procedures, communication drills, replenishment at sea, and cross deck helo operations by day and night.
- Exercise was mutually beneficial for enhancing interoperability and consolidating combined operations against maritime threats.

##### **INS Tabar**

It is the third of Talwar-class frigate in Indian Navy. It was commissioned on April 19, 2004 in Kaliningrad, Russia. It is a vessel in Talwar class and is armed with supersonic BrahMos anti-ship cruise missiles. It is also equipped with Barak 1 missiles. Captain Manav Sehgal is the current Commanding Officer (CO) of Tabar. Vessel is assigned to Indian Navy's Western Naval Command which is headquartered in Mumbai. It is a well-equipped warship which can easily handle air, surface, and sub-surface missions. It can also defend herself operating either independently on maritime missions or by supporting larger naval task force. Its surface-to-air weapons systems include one single-rail MS-196 launcher. Launcher has the capability to launch long range Shtil-1 surface-to-air missile. It also carry eight Igla-1E portable air defence missiles for short-range threats.

#### **8.5 ARMY INDUCTS 10M BRIDGING SYSTEM DEVELOPED BY DRDO**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- The Army inducted the first production lot of 12 Short Span Bridging System (SSBS)-10m, designed and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in association with Larsen & Toubro Limited, the production agency.
- The SSBS-10m plays a crucial role of bridging the gaps up to 9.5m as a single span providing a 4m wide, fully decked roadway, ensuring faster movement of the troops.

- The project involved the development of two prototypes of 5m SSBS on Tatra 6×6 chassis and another two prototypes of 10m SSBS on Tatra 8×8 re-engineered chassis.
- This bridging system is compatible with the Sarvatra bridging system (75 m), where the last span required covering gaps less than 9.5 m.
- The DRDO has developed a range of bridges for the Army that have already been inducted.

## **8.6 RUSSIA TEST-FIRES S-500 AIR DEFENCE MISSILE SYSTEMS**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Russia announced that it had successfully test-fired S-500 its new air defence missile systems at a southern training range of the country and had successfully hit a high-speed ballistic target.

### **S-500 air defence missile systems**

Russia announced that the S-500 is the most advanced anti-missile system in the world and is expected to have a range of 600km. This missile system is also capable of countering attacks from the space. This missile system was test fired in the Kapustin Yar training ground and live fire exercises were conducted. The missiles successfully hit a high-speed ballistic target. After tests are successfully completed the first S-500 systems which are also named the Triumfator-M and Prometheus will be placed at an air defence unit outside the city of Moscow.

### **Development of the S-500 air defence missile system**

The development of this missile system is years behind schedule. The military had earlier announced that the army would begin receiving the first S-500 systems in the year 2020. Almaz-Anty, the maker of the systems announced in April that it was nearing completion

## **8.7 INDIAN NAVY EXERCISE WITH UK'S ROYAL NAVY CARRIER STRIKE GROUP**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The Indian Navy took part in a bilateral Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the UK Royal Navy Carrier Strike Group (CSG)-21 in the Bay of Bengal.

### **Passage Exercise (PASSEX):**

- Passage Exercise will take place between the two navies to ensure that the navies are able to communicate and cooperate in times of war or humanitarian relief.
- The Indian Navy had conducted similar passing exercises with the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force, French Navy, and US Navy among others.

### **India-UK PASSEX Exercise:**

- This is the maiden PASSEX exercise between the Indian Navy and the UK Royal Navy.
- The exercise was designed to hone the two navies' ability to operate together in the maritime domain

## **8.8 INS TALWAR PARTICIPATES IN EXERCISE CUTLASS EXPRESS 202**

### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Indian Naval Ship Talwar is participating in Exercise Cutlass Express 2021, being conducted from 26 July 2021 to 06 August 2021 along the East Coast of Africa.



- The exercise is an annual maritime exercise conducted to promote national and regional maritime security in East Africa and the Western Indian Ocean.
- The exercise focuses on East Africa's coastal regions and is designed to assess and improve combined maritime law enforcement capacity, promote national and regional security and increase interoperability between the regional navies.
- As part of the exercise, the Indian Navy, together with other partners, shall undertake the training of contingents from various participating countries in various fields across the spectrum of maritime security operations.
- Information sharing and information flow between various partner countries with respect to maritime domain awareness is also a key focus of the exercise and participation of India's Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) would contribute to achieving the same.

### **8.9 RAJNATH SINGH FLAGS-IN INDIAN ARMY'S SKIING EXPEDITION "ARMEX-21"**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has flagged in the Indian Army's skiing expedition that was conducted in the Himalayan mountain ranges between March 10 and July 6.
- The expedition, called ARMEX-21, was flagged off at Karakoram Pass in Ladakh on March 10 and culminated at Malari in Uttarakhand on July 6 covering 1,660 km in 119 days.
- The ARMEX-21 was conducted in the mountain ranges of the Himalayan region to promote the adventure activity in the country and the Indian Army,".
- During the expedition, the team travelled through several passes at a height of 5,000-6,500 meters and through glaciers, valleys and rivers.

### **8.10 12TH EDITION OF EXERCISE INDRA NAVY**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the military exercise INDRA NAVY was held in the Baltic Sea. It is a biennial bilateral maritime exercise that is conducted between the Indian Navy and Russian Navy.

#### **About:**

- It was initiated in the year 2003.
- This exercise further strengthens the long-term strategic relationship between the navies of the two countries.
- This exercise was undertaken as INS Tabar's visit to St Petersburg in Russia to participate in the Russian Navy's 325th Navy Day celebrations.
- INDRA NAVY has matured over the years with an increase in scope, the complexity of operations and level of participation.
- The primary aim of this year's exercise was to further strengthen the inter-operability which has been built up by the Navies of both the countries and also to enhance procedures and understandings of various maritime operations.

- This edition of the exercise includes diverse and wide-ranging activities which have been stretched across the broad spectrum of maritime operations.

### Representation by the countries

INS Tabar represented the India Navy whilst the Russian Federation Navy was represented by Corvettes RFS Odintsovo and RFS Zelyony Dol of the Baltic Fleet.

### Conclusion

The exercise was conducted over two days and various fleet operations such as underway replenishment drills, boarding drills, anti-air firings, helicopter ops, and seamanship evolutions. This exercise will further strengthen inter-operability, mutual confidence and will also enable the sharing of best practices between the Navies of both the countries.

## Defence: Practice MCQs

**QUESTION 1:** The range of newly tested Agni-

P missile is approximately-

- A. 300-500 km
- B. 1000-2000 km
- C. 3000-5000 km
- D. >5000 km

**QUESTION 2:** Sea Breaker, seen recently in news is-

- A. a missile system
- B. marine plastic removal system
- C. tsunami buoy system
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 3:** Indraajal, seen recently in news is a \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. light combat aircraft
- B. tank
- C. naval frigate
- D. drone defence system

**QUESTION 4:** INS Tabar, which recently took part in naval exercise with Italian navy, is a/an-

- A. patrol vehicle
- B. frigate
- C. submarine
- D. aircraft carrier

**QUESTION 5:** Short Span Bridging System

(SSBS)-10m, recently inducted by the Indian Army, has been developed by-

- A. Border Roads Organisation
- B. Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
- C. Defence Planning Committee
- D. Defence Research and Development Organisation

**QUESTION 6:** The S500 air defence system is developed by-

- A. Israel
- B. USA
- C. China
- D. Russia

**QUESTION 7:** The recent PASSEX naval exercise between Indian and UK navy was conducted in-

- A. North Sea
- B. Strait of Gibraltar
- C. Bay of Bengal
- D. Arabian Sea

**QUESTION 8:** The naval exercise Cutlass Express 2021 is being conducted along/in

- A. Mediterranean sea

- B. Black sea
- C. east African coast
- D. Gulf Bay

**QUESTION 9:** Recently the defence minister flagged "ARMEX-21". It is a -

- A. skiing expedition
- B. sea faring mission
- C. defence exhibition
- D. none of the above

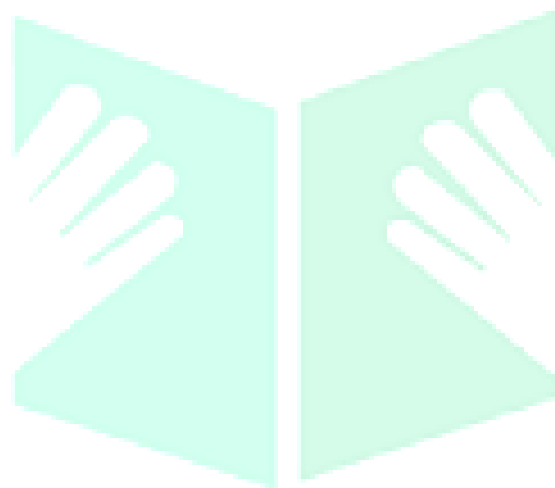
**QUESTION 10:** INDRA NAVY defence exercise is conducted between navies of India and \_\_\_\_\_-

- A. Australia
- B. Russia
- C. USA

D. Sri Lanka

**ANSWER:**

1. ANSWER: B
2. ANSWER: A
3. ANSWER: D
4. ANSWER: B
5. ANSWER: D
6. ANSWER: D
7. ANSWER: C
8. ANSWER: C
9. ANSWER: A
10. ANSWER: B



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### 9.1 AGRI MINISTRY LAUNCHES CROP INSURANCE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

#### WHY IN NEWS?

Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister, Narendra Singh Tomar, has launched the Crop Insurance Awareness Campaign for Fasal Bima Yojana. It was launched during Crop Insurance Week.

#### ABOUT:

- Fasal Bima Yojana was launched with the aim of providing security cover to each farmer.
- Minister also announced that, this scheme has achieved milestone of 95 thousand crore of claims paid to farmers.
- According to minister, state governments and insurance companies played an important role in implementing this Scheme.
- In last four years, premium of 17 thousand crore rupees was deposited by farmers, against which about 95 thousand crore rupees have been provided as claims.
- On the occasion, he also flagged off IEC vans. These vans would continue to engage farmers on Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana throughout crop insurance week.

#### Aim of the campaign

This campaign aims to bring stories of beneficiary farmers through videos and photo stories on social media. Stories of those farmers would be shared who have not only benefited from this scheme but helped entire farming community through their thought-leadership

### 9.2 SHOPSY: FLIPKART'S NEW APP FOR ONLINE BUSINESS

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- This app was launched to app to help individuals start online businesses without any investment. It also deepens e-commerce penetration across non-metros.
- Once the users will register on this app, they will be able to share catalogues of 15 crore products which are offered by Flipkart sellers.
- Products will be ranging across categories like beauty, fashion, mobiles, electronics & home and others with potential customers through popular social media & messaging apps.
- Users can register on this app with their phone numbers and start their online entrepreneurial journey.
- Shopsy users can share catalogues with potential customers through popular social media and messaging apps.
- They can also place orders on their behalf and earn commissions on each transaction.
- Commission percentage will vary based on the category of products being ordered.

#### Aim of the app

With the Shopsy app, Flipkart aims to enable over 25 million online entrepreneurs on the back of digital commerce by 2023. On the platform they can set up their business as long as they have

access to people that trust them. It also aims to provide digital commerce consumers access to products by simplifying process by interacting with trusted person.

### 9.3 HDFC BANK LAUNCHES 'SALAAM DIL SEY' INITIATIVE

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- HDFC Bank launched a SalaamDilSey initiative to show gratitude to doctors for their tireless service during the pandemic, to pay tribute to doctors across the country.
- SalaamDilSey encourages one and all to take a moment to acknowledge and celebrate the contribution of doctors and provides a platform to show their gratitude to doctors, who are bravely fighting the pandemic, at the risk of their own lives.
- As part of this initiative, the bank has created a web platform [www.salaamdilsey.com](http://www.salaamdilsey.com) wherein the general public can logon on to the microsite and share the thank you message for doctors who can be immediately shared via e-mail, social media, and WhatsApp.

### 9.4 INDIA RECORDS CURRENT ACCOUNT SURPLUS OF 0.9% IN FY21

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- According to the data released by the Reserve Bank of India, India reported a current account surplus of 0.9% of GDP in FY 21. In FY 20 there was a current account deficit of 0.9%.
- The reason for the Current Account Surplus in FY21 is a sharp contraction in the trade deficit to US\$ 102.2 billion from US\$ 157.5 billion in 2019-20. India has seen a Current account surplus for the first time in 17 years.

### 9.5 RBI CHANGES G-SEC AUCTION METHODOLOGY

#### WHY IN NEWS?

Reserve Bank of India (RBI), while reviewing market conditions and market borrowing program of government, has decided that benchmark securities of 2-year tenor, 3-year tenor, 5-year tenor, 10-year tenor & 14-year tenor and Floating Rate Bonds (FRBs) will be issued using uniform price auction method. However, for benchmark securities of 30-year and 40-year, auction will continue to be multiple price-based auction.

#### 1. What is Government Security?

G-sec is a tradable instrument which is issued by Central Government or State Governments. It acknowledges Government's debt obligation. G-Secs are of two types:

2. **Short Term**– They are usually called treasury bills. They have original maturities of less than one year. It is issued in three tenors viz., 91-day, 182-day and 364-day.
3. **Long Term**– They are usually called Government bonds or dated securities having original maturity of one year and more.

#### 4. Who issues these securities?

In India, Treasury bills and bonds or dated securities are issued by central government while State Governments issue only bonds or dated securities. Bonds issued by State governments are called as State Development Loans (SDLs).

## 5. Risk Associated with G-Secs

G-Secs carries no risk of default. Thus, they are also called as “risk-free gilt-edged” instruments. Gilt-edged securities are high-grade investment bonds which are offered by governments and large corporations to borrow funds.

## 9.6 INDIAN OVERSEAS BANK BECOMES THE SECOND MOST-VALUED PUBLIC LENDER

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) has become the second most-valued listed public sector bank (PSB) with a market capitalisation of over Rs 50,000 crore. As Street discounts privatisation of the state-owned lender, its shares have appreciated nearly 80 per cent on the BSE in the past one month.
- IOB stood with an m-cap of Rs 51,887 crore, pushing Punjab National Bank (Rs 46,411 crore) and Bank Of Baroda (Rs 44,112 crore) to third and fourth position, respectively, as per data available on BSE.
- In the past month, the market price of IOB has zoomed 57 per cent, as compared to a 4 per cent decline in PNB and a 5 per cent gain in BOB share price. The bank plans to come out of the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework by focusing on recovery, low-cost deposits, and less capital consuming advances.

## 9.7 PROJECT BOLD: KVIC

### WHY IN NEWS?

Recently, the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) launched a project named Bamboo Oasis on Lands in Drought (BOLD) from the village NichlaMandwa in Udaipur, Rajasthan

### About:

- Under the project 5000 saplings of special bamboo species – *Bambusa Tulda* and *Bambusa Polymorpha* from Assam – have been planted over 16 acres of vacant arid Gram Panchayat land of village NichlaMandwa.
- KVIC has thus created a world record of planting the highest number of bamboo saplings on a single day at one location.
- It is the first of its kind exercise in India. It seeks to create bamboo-based green patches in arid and semi-arid land zones.
- It has been launched as part of KVIC’s “Khadi Bamboo Festival” to celebrate 75 years of independence “Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav”.

## 9.8 ANTI-METHANOGENIC FEED SUPPLEMENT: HARIT DHARA

### WHY IN NEWS?

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed an anti-methanogenic feed supplement ‘Harit Dhara’ (HD), which can cut down cattle methane emissions by 17-20% and can also result in higher milk production.

### About:



- HD decreases the population of protozoa microbes in the rumen, responsible for hydrogen production and making it available to the archaea (structure similar to bacteria) for reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> to methane.
- It has been made from tannin-rich plant-based sources. Tropical plants containing tannins, bitter and astringent chemical compounds, are known to suppress or remove protozoa from the rumen.
- Fermentation after using HD will help produce more propionic acid, which provides more energy for lactose (milk sugar) production and body weight gain.
- This leads to economic benefits for farmers.

## 9.9 EXPORTS OF GI CERTIFIED BHALIA WHEAT FROM GUJARAT BEGINS

### WHY IN NEWS?

First shipment of Geographical Indication (GI) certified Bhalia variety of wheat was exported to Kenya and Sri Lanka from Gujarat, giving a boost to wheat exports.

### About Bhalia Variety of Wheat

- GI certified wheat has high protein content and has sweet taste.
- It is grown mostly across Bhal region of Gujarat. It is also grown in Ahmedabad, Kheda, Anand, Bhavnagar, Bhavnagar and Bharuch districts.
- This unique characteristic of wheat variety is grown in rainfed condition without irrigation and cultivated across two lakh hectares of agricultural land in Gujarat.
- Bhalia variety of wheat received GI certification in July, 2011.
- Registered proprietor of GI certification is Anand Agricultural University in Gujarat.

### Wheat Export

In 2020-21, wheat exports from India witnessed a significant growth of 808 %. Export of wheat increased from Rs 444 crore to Rs 4034 crore in fiscal year 2020-2021. Wheat exports increased by 778% to \$ 549 million in 2020-21 in US dollar terms. India exported wheat to seven new countries like Yemen, Indonesia, Philippines, Bhutan, Iran, Cambodia and Myanmar during 2020-21.

### Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

GI is an insignia on products with unique geographical origin and evolution over centuries because of its special quality or reputed attributes. GI tag marks authenticity. It also ensures that registered authorized users or those residing inside geographic territory are allowed to use popular product names. Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999 governs the GI Tag. It is issued by Geographical Indications Registry, Chennai.

## 9.10 DPIIT SETS UP 9-MEMBER PANEL TO CURB DIGITAL MONOPOLIES

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Central Government has formed a nine-member panel for the development of an Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), designed to curb digital monopolies.

- This ONDC project is initiated by the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and will be implemented by the Quality Council of India (QCI).
- The nine-member committee of ONDC will advise the Government of India on measures needed to digitise the entire value chain, standardise operations, promote inclusion of suppliers, derive efficiencies in logistics and enhance value for consumers, among other things.

### **9.11 AMAZON LAUNCHES ITS FIRST DIGITAL KENDRA IN INDIA IN GUJARAT**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- Amazon has launched its first Digital Kendra in India in Surat, Gujarat. Amazon Digital Kendra was inaugurated by Vijay Rupani, Chief Minister of Gujarat.
- Digital Kendras of Amazon are centres that will provide micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) the opportunity to learn about the benefits of e-commerce.
- MSMEs can visit the Amazon Digital Kendra and avail of third party services including training on the benefits of eCommerce, GST and taxation support, shipping and logistics support, cataloguing assistance and digital marketing services.
- The company has focused on enabling sellers to reach customers across India and globally, and has made significant investments in technology, logistics, delivery infrastructure and digitising payments that collectively helped more customers and businesses to come online.

### **9.12 GOI SETS UP 25-MEMBER DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL FOR CEMENT INDUSTRY**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- The central government has set up a 25-member development council for the cement industry under Dalmia Bharat Group CMD, Puneet Dalmia.
- The council will suggest ways to eliminate waste, obtain maximum production, improve quality, reduce costs and promote standardization of products. Dalmia is the chairman of the council.
- Its members include Shree Cement Ltd MD HM Bangur, The India Cements Ltd Executive President Rakesh Singh; Birla Corporation Limited CEO Pracheta Majumdar; J.K. Cement Ltd Deputy Managing Director Madhavkrishna Singhania, and JSW Cement Ltd CEO Nilesh Narwekar

### **9.13 GIS-BASED INDIA INDUSTRIAL LAND BANK (IILB) - KEY FACTS**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

According to Ministry of Commerce & Industry, India Industrial Land Bank will achieve pan-India integration by December 2021.

#### **ABOUT:**

- India Industrial Land Bank system (IILB) has been integrated with industry-based GIS systems of 17 states.

- System was integrated so that details can be updated on portal in a real-time basis.

### **India Industrial Land Bank (IILB)**

IILB is a GIS-based portal and acts as one-stop repository of all industrial infrastructure-related information. Land Bank System was developed by Integrating Industrial Information System (IIS) with state GIS (Geographic Information System). It currently comprises of 4,000 industrial parks mapped over an area of 5.5 lakh hectares of land. This portal serves as a decision support system for investors who scout for land remotely.

#### **What information's are shared on portal?**

Information regarding connectivity, infrastructure, natural resources & terrain are shared through this portal. Portal also share plot-level information regarding vacant plots, line of activity, and contact details. Portal also provide information on drainage, forest raw material heat and multilayer of connectivity.

### **9.14 RBI ASKS BANKS TO STOP LIBOR SOON**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued an advisory to banks and other financial institutions to be prepared for year-end transition from London Interbank Offered Rate (Libor).

#### **Transition from Libor**

Global transition from Libor became necessary because banks were manipulating rate in 2007-08. Following the incident, investigation was led by Financial Services Authority (FSA) of Britain.

#### **Highlights**

- India's exposure to borrowings linked to benchmark is estimated to be around \$331 billion.
- RBI asked banks and other financial institutions to incorporate robust fall-back clauses before cessation date, in all financial contracts where maturity is after announced cessation date of benchmark.
- It asked banks to ensure that new contracts entered into before December 31 but mature after cessation date include fall-back clauses.
- Banks are also encouraged to cease using Mumbai Interbank Forward Outright Rate (Mifor).

### **9.15 NATIONAL ASSET RECONSTRUCTION COMPANY- KEY FACTS**

#### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARC) has finally become a legal entity registered with the Registrar of Companies (RoC) Mumbai.

#### **Key Points**

- NARC is also called as bad bank is finally here in India. It is considered as a one-stop solution for banking systems stressed assets menace.
- Under the first phase, 22 stressed accounts amounting to Rs 89,000 cr has been identified to transfer to NARC.

- With this, Rs 2 lakh cr worth of bad loans accounts will be transferred to newly incorporated bad bank.
- SBI is expected to transfer bad loans worth Rs 20,000cr.
- PNB will transfer about Rs 8,000cr stressed assets while,
- Union Bank of India will transfer about Rs 7,800cr NPAs to NARCL.

#### **About NARC**

- NARC was incorporated on July 7, 2021.
- It has an authorised capital of Rs 100 cr and paid-up capital of Rs 74.6cr.
- Sixteen banks, 12 state-owned and 4 private banks will invest in NARCL.
- Canara Bank will be sole sponsor of NARL with 12% stake.
- SBI is going to be second-largest shareholder with 9.9%.
- NARC will be headed by stressed assets expert from SBI named Padmakumar Madhvani as Managing Director.
- NARC is having a public sector character.

#### **9.16 UK EXPORTS APPLE TO INDIA- 1ST TIME IN 50 YEARS**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

United Kingdom exported apple to India for the first time in 50 years.

##### **ABOUT:**

- Export of apple was welcomed by UK Secretary of State for International Trade Liz Truss, as a sign of strengthened trade partnership between the UK and India.
- Apples were exported under the Enhanced Trade Partnership, which was agreed by Prime Ministers of both the countries in May 2021. Enhanced Trade Partnership is considered as predecessor of Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA).
- Later, Truss and Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal formally signed the agreement, setting the goal of doubling bilateral trade between the United Kingdom and India by 2030.

#### **9.17 G-SECS: RBI UNVEILS RETAIL DIRECT SCHEME**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced the launch of the RBI Retail Direct scheme.

##### **About RBI Retail Direct Scheme:**

- RBI Retail Direct Scheme is a one-stop solution to facilitate investment in government securities (G-secs) by individual investors.
- Under the scheme, retail investors (individuals) will have the facility to open and maintain the 'Retail Direct Gilt Account' (RDG Account) with the RBI.
- A gilt Account means an account opened and maintained for holding Government securities.
- This RDG account can be opened through an online portal provided for the purpose of the scheme.

- The online portal will then allow the registered users access to primary issuance of G-secs and access to NDS-OM (Negotiated Dealing System — Order Matching (NDS-OM)).

#### **What are Government Securities (G-secs)?**

- A Government Security (G-Sec) is a tradable instrument issued by the Central Government or the State Governments. It acknowledges the Government's debt obligation.
- Such securities are short-term (usually called treasury bills, with original maturities of less than one year) or long-term (usually called Government bonds or dated securities with an original maturity of one year or more).
- In India, the Central Government issues both, treasury bills and bonds or dated securities. While the State Governments issue only bonds or dated securities which are called the State Development Loans (SDLs)

#### **9.18 INDIA'S FIRST 'GRAIN ATM' OPEN IN GURUGRAM**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

- The country's first 'Grain ATM' has been set up as a pilot project in Gurugram, Haryana. It is an automatic machine, which works just like a bank ATM.
- This machine has been installed under the 'World Food Programme' of the United Nations (UN), and is called the 'Automated, Multi Commodity, Grain Dispensing Machine'.
- This automatic machine is equipped with the biometric system with a touch screen, where the beneficiary will have to enter the Aadhaar or ration card unique number.
- On biometric authentication, the foodgrain prescribed by the government to the beneficiaries will be automatically filled in the bags installed under the machine.
- Three types of grains — wheat, rice and millet — can be distributed through this machine. At present, the distribution of wheat has been started from the 'Grain ATM' machine installed at Farrukhnagar.

#### **9.19 INDIA'S FIRST MONK FRUIT CULTIVATION BEGINS IN KULLU, H.P**

##### **WHY IN NEWS?**

Cultivation of 'monk fruit' from China has started in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh. The fruit was introduced for field trials in Himachal Pradesh by Palampur-based Council of Scientific Research and Industrial Technology-Institute of Himalayan Bio-resource Technology (CSIR-IHBT).

##### **ABOUT:**

- Monk fruit is known for its properties as non-caloric natural sweetener.
- Field trials have begun three years after CSIR-IHBT imported its seeds from China and grew it in house.
- Fifty seedlings of fruit were planted in fields of a farmer from Raison village for field trials and a 'Material Transfer Agreement' was signed with the farmer.
- Economic benefits of new crop are estimated to be between Rs 3 lakh to Rs 3.5 lakh per hectare.

- Flowering pattern, pollination behaviour and fruit setting time were also documented in order to draw complete life-cycle of monk fruit in agro-climatic conditions of the region

### **Economy: Practice MCQs:**

**QUESTION 1:** Recently, the Crop insurance

Awareness Campaign was launched by-

- A. Ministry of Rural Development
- B. Ministry of Finance
- C. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare
- D. Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority

A. central government

B. state governments

C. both

D. RBI

**QUESTION 2:** A new app, Shopsy, to deepen E-commerce penetration across non metro cities, has been launched by which company?

- A. Amazon
- B. Flipkart
- C. Myntra
- D. Jiomart

**QUESTION 3:** HDFC Bank launched a Salaam Dil Sey initiative to show gratitude to-

- A. Doctors
- B. soldiers
- C. sanitary workers
- D. politicians

**QUESTION 4:** According to the recent figures released by the RBI, India reported a current account surplus of \_\_\_\_\_ of GDP in FY 21.

- A. 0.9%
- B. 1.9%
- C. 3.9%
- D. 6%

**QUESTION 5:** The short term government securities called treasury bills are issued by-

**QUESTION 6:** Which bank has recently become the second most-valued listed public sector bank?

- A. Bank of Baroda
- B. Punjab National Bank
- C. Indian Overseas Bank
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 7:** Project BOLD of Khadi and Village Industries Commission is associated with-

- A. MSME development
- B. tribal development
- C. women empowerment
- D. bamboo plantation

**QUESTION 8:** Harit Dhara, developed by Indian Council of Agricultural Research recently, is a/an -

- A. animal feed supplement
- B. milk brand
- C. new variety of paddy
- D. none of the above

**QUESTION 9:** The Bhalia variety of wheat is geographical indication wheat crop of which state?

- A. Gujarat
- B. Punjab
- C. Madhya Pradesh
- D. Rajasthan



**QUESTION 10:** An Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), designed to curb digital monopolies has been initiated by-

- A. Reserve Bank of India
- B. Securities and Exchange Board of India
- C. Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade
- D. Competition Commission of India

**QUESTION 11:** Amazon has launched its first Digital Kendra in India in-

- A. Surat
- B. Delhi
- C. Ahmedabad
- D. Mumbai

**QUESTION 12:** A 25-member development council for the cement industry has been setup by government under-

- A. Azim Premji
- B. Puneet Dalmia
- C. Shiv Nadar
- D. Dilip Singhvi

**QUESTION 13:** India Industrial Land Bank system, which acts as one-stop repository of all industrial infrastructure-related information, has information about \_\_\_\_\_ industrial parks.

- A. 40
- B. 400
- C. 4000
- D. 40000

**QUESTION 14:** In Economic terms, LIBOR stands for-

- A. Lisbon Interbank Offered Rate
- B. London Interbank Offered Rate
- C. Los Angeles Interbank Offered Rate

D. none of the above

**QUESTION 15:** Which bank will be sole sponsor of the newly incorporated National Asset Reconstruction Company?

- A. HDFC Bank
- B. ICICI Bank
- C. State Bank of India
- D. Canara Bank

**QUESTION 16:** Which commodity recently has become the first to be exported to India from UK in 50 years?

- A. Apples
- B. Oranges
- C. Grapes
- D. Olives

**QUESTION 17:** RBI Retail Direct Scheme is a one-stop solution to facilitate investment in government securities (G-secs) by \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. local governments
- B. banks
- C. individual investors
- D. foreign companies

**QUESTION 18:** India's first Grain ATM has been recently set up in-

- A. Amritsar
- B. Chandigarh
- C. Gurugram
- D. Fatehabad

**QUESTION 19:** India's first monk fruit cultivation has recently been started in-

- A. Solan
- B. Palampur
- C. Kullu
- D. Kangra

**ANSWER:**

1. ANSWER: C
2. ANSWER: B
3. ANSWER: A
4. ANSWER: A
5. ANSWER: A
6. ANSWER: C
7. ANSWER: D
8. ANSWER: A
9. ANSWER: A

10. ANSWER: C
11. ANSWER: A
12. ANSWER: B
13. ANSWER: C
14. ANSWER: B
15. ANSWER: D
16. ANSWER: A
17. ANSWER: C
18. ANSWER: C
19. ANSWER: C



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