

Current Affairs MONTHLY



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By
CivilsTap Himachal



**For HPAS & Other
Competitive
Exam in
Himachal Pradesh**

Prelims

+91 7814622609

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NATIONAL

1.1 IIT Madras recognised as Most Innovative Educational Institute in India for third consecutive year.

Why in news?

- IIT Madras has been Ranked #1 in the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements

About IIT Madras being recognized as the most Innovative Educational Institute

- It has been Ranked #1 in the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) launched by the Innovation Cell of the Ministry of Education, Government of India.
- IIT Madras is in the 'CFTIs (Centrally Funded Technical Institutions)/Central University/Institute of National Importance (Technical)' category.
- ARIIA 2021 has rankings for six categories of institutions - CFTIs (Centrally Funded Technical Institutions) /Central University/Institute of National Importance (Technical); State University and Deemed University (Govt & Govt aided)(technical); Government College/Institution (Govt and Govt Aided)(technical); University & Deemed University (Self-finance/private)(technical); Private college/Institute (self-finance/private)(technical); Institute of National Importance, Central University and CFIs (non-technical) and General (non-technical).

1.2 Jhansi railway station to be renamed as Veerangana Lakshmibai Railway Station.

Why in news?

- The Uttar Pradesh government recently issued a notification to rename Jhansi Railway Station as Veerangana Lakshmibai Railway Station.

About Veerangana Lakshmibai Railway Station

- The Uttar Pradesh government recently issued a notification to rename Jhansi Railway Station as Veerangana Lakshmibai Railway Station.

1.3 Karnataka government has become the first state to e-Rupi disbursement for scholarships of eligible students.

Why in news?

- The Karnataka government's e-Governance department has partnered with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and State Bank of India (SBI) for enabling and implementing 'e-RUPI', a cashless and contactless payment solution to students under its scholarship programme.

About Karnataka and e-Rupi

- e-RUPI will be used to ensure a leak-proof delivery of education fees of eligible students by paying digitally to the college or institute by the Karnataka government.
- The Karnataka government will get e-vouchers delivered to the mobiles of eligible students. The voucher code can be received on the feature phone also. The students will be able to redeem e-RUPI at the identified colleges or institutes for the intended purpose of fees payment, NPCI said in a release.
- For redeeming e-RUPI, the identified institutes will scan the QR code or SMS string displayed by the students using an application or POS machine, and this process will remove the requirement of any physical token delivery for the students to avail of the scholarship.

1.4 PM approves ex- gratia from Prime Ministers National Relief Fund (PMNRF) for the victims of stampede at Mata Vaishno Devi Bhawan.

Why in news?

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved an ex-gratia from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) for the victims of stampede at Mata Vaishno Devi Bhawan.

About Prime Ministers National Relief Fund (PMNRF)

- In pursuance of an appeal by the then Prime Minister, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in January, 1948, the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) was established with public contributions to assist displaced persons from Pakistan.
- The resources of the PMNRF are now utilized primarily to render immediate relief to families of those killed in natural calamities like floods, cyclones and earthquakes, etc. and to the victims of the major accidents and riots. Assistance from PMNRF is also rendered, to partially defray the expenses for medical treatment like heart surgeries, kidney transplantation, cancer treatment and acid attack etc.
- The fund consists entirely of public contributions and does not get any budgetary support. The corpus of the fund is invested in various forms with scheduled commercial banks and other agencies. Disbursements are made with the approval of the Prime Minister.
- PMNRF has not been constituted by the Parliament. The fund is recognized as a Trust under the Income Tax Act and the same is managed by Prime Minister or multiple delegates for national causes.
- PMNRF accepts only voluntary donations by individuals and institutions.

1.5 Govt approves 19th tranche of electoral bonds; sale open from January 1.

Why in news?

- Ahead of assembly elections in five states, the government recently approved issuance of the 19th tranche of electoral bonds which will be open for sale from January 1 to 10, 2022.

About electoral bonds

- An electoral bond is like a promissory note that can be bought by any Indian citizen or company incorporated in India from select branches of State Bank of India. The citizen or corporate can then donate the same to any eligible political party of his/her choice. The bonds are similar to bank notes that are payable to the bearer on demand and are free of interest. An individual or party will be allowed to purchase these bonds digitally or through cheque.
- The electoral bonds were introduced with the Finance Bill (2017). On January 29, 2018 the Narendra Modi-led NDA government notified the Electoral Bond Scheme 2018.
- The bonds are issued in multiples of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 100,000 and Rs 1 crore (the range of a bond is between Rs 1,000 to Rs 1 crore).
- These are available at some branches of SBI.
- The electoral bond is valid only for fifteen days.
- The electoral bonds will not bear the name of the donor. Thus, the political party might not be aware of the donor's identity.

When are the bonds available for purchase?

- The electoral bonds are available for purchase for 10 days in the beginning of every quarter. The first 10 days of January, April, July and October has been specified by the government for purchase of electoral bonds. An additional period of 30 days shall be specified by the government in the year of Lok Sabha elections.

1.6 Panel formed to prepare energy transition roadmap for India.

Why in news?

- The government is planning to draw up an energy transition roadmap for the oil NSE -0.05 % and gas sector that could prove to be a key step on India's path to net-zero emissions by 2070.

About the panel on energy transition

- The government of India has set up the Energy Transition Advisory Committee headed by former petroleum secretary **Tarun Kapoor**, to draft the strategy.
- The panel will include representatives of all public-sector oil and gas companies and will reach out to other stakeholders in the sector. The committee has until the middle of 2022 to recommend a roadmap for the sector's transition.
- As part of its efforts, the committee will review and take into consideration existing initiatives while developing an action plan.
- Before his appointment as petroleum secretary, Kapoor spent several years framing policies for the power and the renewable energy sectors and has been instrumental in pushing state-run oil companies to work toward a transition plan.

1.7 Semiconductor mission launched by IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.

Why in news?

- Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw launched the India Semiconductor Mission recently.

About India Semiconductor Mission

- The India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) is a specialised and independent business division within the Digital India Corporation.
- It has been set up with the aim to build a vibrant semiconductor and display ecosystem to enable India's emergence as a global hub for electronics manufacturing and design.
- The mission is authorised to negotiate with the applicants under the semiconductor fab scheme and the display fab scheme.
- This mission has been given the autonomy to decide the appropriate technology mix, applications, node generation, capacity, among others and propose the structure and quantum of fiscal support for the selected applicants. A fab is short for fabrication plant where raw silicon wafers are processed and turned into integrated circuits.

1.8 SEBI restructures its advisory committee on market data.

Why in news?

- Sebi has restructured its advisory committee on market data that recommends policy measures pertaining to areas like securities market data access and privacy.

About the restructured advisory committee

- Rejigging its market data advisory committee, **Sebi has said the panel will now be chaired by S Sahoo**, Professor at National Law University, Delhi and former chairperson, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), as per the latest information with the regulator.
- The 20-member committee was earlier headed by Madhabi Puri Buch, ex-whole-time member of Sebi.
- Apart from Sahoo, the panel has CEOs of stock exchanges and depositories, representatives of various stakeholders and senior officials of Sebi as members.
- The scope of the work of the committee includes identifying segment-wise data perimeters, data needs and gaps, recommending data privacy and data access regulations applicable to market data.

- It is responsible for recommending appropriate policy for access to securities market data.
- In addition, the committee recommends standardization of data definitions; data identification logic (usage of uniform codes for identifying and storing data - raw data and derived data) and data validation techniques (single source of truth, validation).

1.9 Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi (IGRUA) sets a new record of 19000 flying hours in 2021.

Why in news?

- Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Academy (IGRUA) sets a new record of 19000 flying hours in 2021.
- It is set to hit a target of 25000 flying hours in 2022 by inducting a record 121 cadets.

About IGRUA record

- Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Academy (IGRUA) was established by the Government of India in the year 1986 at Fursatganj Airfield, presently in the district of **Amethi in Uttar Pradesh**.
- IGRUA is an Autonomous Body established under the Societies Registration Act 1860 and is administered by a Governing Council under the Ex-officio Chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- In line with the spirit of its establishment, IGRUA followed the philosophy of dominance through interminable betterment, disciplined training and modern training infrastructure.
- IGRUA offers a training environment, superior to any other flying training institution in the country. There is no congruence in matters relating to fleet, maintenance, safety standards, ground training, flight training, aerodrome & training aids, instructors and last but not the least the trainees themselves. An all-India entrance examination, wombat aptitude test for the selection of trainees is conducted with the help of specialized software to verify psychomotor skills and finally an interview.

1.10 Pondicherry chosen as host of National Youth Festival.

Why in news?

- Pondicherry has been handpicked to host the 25th National Youth Festival, organised as part of the Azadi ki Amrit Mahotsav marking the 75th year of Independence, said Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports and Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur.

About 25th National Youth Festival

- Festival's tagline is Saksham Yuva, Shashvath Yuva (capable youth, powerful youth).
- Around 1000 youths from across the country will participate in the festival who will go back with memorable moments they can cherish.
- The NYF focuses on the life and ideals of Sri Aurobindo, Subramania Bharathi and Swami Vivekananda.

1.11 Centre Government forms 3-member committee to probe into PM Modi's security lapse in Punjab.

Why in news?

- The Centre announced that the committee to look into the lapses that led to the "exposure of the VVIP to grave security risk" will be led by **Sudhir Kumar Saxena**, secretary (security), Cabinet Secretariat.

About the Committee

- The ministry of home affairs recently constituted a three-member committee to probe into the serious lapses in the security arrangement during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Punjab's Ferozepur.

The ministry announced that the committee will be led by Sudhir Kumar Saxena, secretary (security), Cabinet Secretariat.

- The two other members are Balbir Singh, Joint Director, intelligence bureau, and S. Suresh, IG, special protection group (SPG).
- The committee is advised to submit the report at the earliest.
- Prime Minister Modi's scheduled visit to National Martyrs Memorial at Hussainiwala and a programme in Ferozepur got cancelled after his convoy was stuck on a flyover for 15-20 minutes. The home ministry stated that the convoy was stuck on a flyover around 30 kilometres away from the memorial of freedom fighters as the road was blocked by some protestors.

1.12 India's first open rock museum inaugurated in Hyderabad.

Why in news?

- Union Minister of State for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, Jitendra Singh, inaugurated India's first Open Rock Museum recently.

About the open rock museum

- The museum displays around 35 different varieties of rocks from different parts of India with ages ranging from 3.3 billion years to around 55 million years. These rocks also represent the deepest part of the Earth, up to 175 km of distance from the surface of the earth.
- 'Big Earth data' occupies the strategic high ground in the era of knowledge economies and India is fully exploiting this new frontier, contributing to the advancement of earth science.

1.13 PM announces 26th December as 'Veer Baal Diwas' to mark martyrdom of Sahibzada Zorawar Singh Ji and Sahibzada Fateh Singh Ji.

Why in news?

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi on the auspicious occasion of the Parkash Purab of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, has announced that starting this year, **26th December** shall be observed as '**Veer Baal Diwas**' to mark the martyrdom of Sahibzada Zorawar Singh Ji and Sahibzada Fateh Singh Ji.

About the announcement made by PM Modi

- This is a fitting tribute to the courage of the Sahibzades and their quest for justice. 'Veer Baal Diwas' will be on the same day Sahibzada Zorawar Singh Ji and Sahibzada Fateh Singh Ji attained martyrdom after being sealed alive in a wall. These two greats preferred death instead of deviating from the noble principles of Dharma.
- The bravery and ideals of Mata Gujri, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji and the 4 Sahibzades give strength to millions of people. They never bowed to injustice. They envisioned a world that is inclusive and harmonious. It is the need of the hour for more people to know about them.

1.14 Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas was recently celebrated.

Why in news?

- Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas was recently celebrated.

About Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas

- Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas is a day dedicated to the overseas Indian community and celebrated once every two years. This day is celebrated on January 09 by the people of India. The day has its roots from our 'Father of The Nation,' Mahatma Gandhi, who was the greatest Pravasi. He returned from South Africa in 1915 and led the Indian freedom movement. Therefore, marking this day, the Ministry of

External Affairs (MEA) has celebrated this day since 2003 from January 07-09 every year. This practice will bring together the Indians abroad to enrich knowledge, expertise, and skills to be shared in a common platform.

- This day came into effect in 2003, but in 2015 it was revised and was decided to be celebrated every two years. It was then a theme-based conference that was set up every year during the interim period.
- The conference invited various Indian communities abroad who are experts in their respective fields, policymakers, and stakeholders to come together and participate in the event.
- This day plays a significant role as the overseas Indian community gets a shared platform to get themselves engaged with the government and the native people of the land.

1.15 India's first heli-hub to be set up in Gurugram with many aviation facilities.

Why in news?

- Haryana Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala announced that Gurugram will get India's first heli-hub with all aviation facilities.

About the Heli-Hub

- The heli-hub is proposed to be built in Gurugram and would be near the metro facility along with easy connectivity to industrial areas like Noida and Bhiwadi.

Aviation facilities available

- All kinds of aviation facilities for helicopters such as heliport, hangars, maintenance of air taxis and chartered helicopters will be available. A draft proposal will be handed to the Aviation Ministry in a week's time.
- The main purpose of this heli-hub is to make the landing and take-off points for various helicopter services for the national capital.

1.16 World Hindi Day 2022 Celebrated on January 10.

Why in news?

- World Hindi Day is celebrated every year on January 10.

About World Hindi Day

- Vishwa Hindi Divas commemorates the anniversary of the first World Hindi Conference held in Nagpur on January 10, 1975. The conference was inaugurated by the then prime minister Indira Gandhi in Nagpur.
- Hindi is considered to be the mother language of India. It is the simplest source of expression of our nation. It is our heritage and the most widely spoken language in the country. The word Hindi originated from the Persian word Hind, meaning the land of the Indus River.
- Apart from India, the language is also spoken in Nepal, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Fiji, and Mauritius. Therefore, to promote the Hindi language all around the world, International Hindi Day or World Hindi Day is celebrated every year.

1.17 Tamil Nadu permits Jallikattu with 300 bull tamers, 150 spectators.

Why in news?

- The Tamil Nadu government recently issued an order permitting Jallikattu (traditional bull taming events) across the state during the Pongal festival next week adhering to Covid-19 protocols.

About Jallikattu

- Jallikattu is typically practised in the Indian state of **Tamil Nadu** as a part of **Pongal** celebrations on Mattu Pongal day, which occurs annually in January.

1.18 24th National Conference on e-Governance 2021 successfully concludes at Hyderabad.

Why in news?

- 24th National Conference on e-Governance 2021 recently concluded.

About 24th National Conference on e-Governance

- The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) and Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, in association with the State Government of Telangana organized the 24th Conference on e-Governance (NCeG) 2021 at Hyderabad, Telangana.
- The theme of this Conference is “**India’s Techade: Digital Governance in a Post Pandemic World**”.
- At the Valedictory Session, ‘Hyderabad Declaration’ on e-Governance was adopted
- The 24th NCeG represented a platform for constructive exchange of ideas on some of the latest technologies for promoting e-Governance.

1.19 National Human Trafficking Awareness Day 2022.

Why in news?

- National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is celebrated on January 11 of every year. It’s a day to create awareness about sexual slavery and human trafficking worldwide.

About National Human Trafficking Awareness Day

- National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is created to end these slaveries and make sure that every individual has their rights and make the world a safer place for all people.
- Now, nearly 20-30 million people were enslaved in the world, which is more than any time in human history.
- Slavery is recognized every day in the way of young women forced into prostitution; migrant workers are exploited in the workforce and children become soldiers.
- Hence National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is created to end these slaveries and make sure that every individual has their rights and make the world a safer place for all people.

1.20 Nation remembers former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri on his 56th death anniversary.

Why in news?

- January 11 marks the death anniversary of former Prime Minister **Lal Bahadur Shastri**, who passed away on this day in 1966, in Tashkent, in present day Uzbekistan

About Lal Bahadur Shastri

- As the country's second PM, Lal Bahadur Shastri held the chair from June 1964 till his untimely demise.
- The **nation's second Prime Minister**, who succeeded Jawaharlal Nehru, was known for his simplicity and honesty, and was posthumously honoured with the Bharat Ratna, becoming its first posthumous recipient.

1.21 First Colombo Security Conclave Virtual Workshop on Developing Regional Cyber Security Capabilities.

Why in news?

- First Colombo Security Conclave Virtual Workshop on Developing Regional Cyber Security Capabilities recently took place

About the conclave

- The first Colombo Security Conclave Virtual Workshop on “Developing Regional Cyber Security Capabilities on Defensive operations, Deep/Dark Web handling and Digital Forensics” was hosted by the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), Government of India in association with National Forensics Science University, Gandhinagar (Gujarat) and the Secretariat of the Colombo Security Conclave, over two days on 10-11 January 2022.
- Delegates from Member and Observer States of the of Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) including Sri Lanka, Maldives, India, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Bangladesh participated in the workshop.

1.22 S. Somanath appointed as 10th chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation.

Why in news?

- S Somanath was recently appointed the tenth chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

About S Somanath

- He will assume the charge as the Secretary of the Department of Space and the Chairman, Space Commission, upon the superannuation of K Sivan.
- Somanath, whose appointment will be for three years, is a seasoned scientist in system engineering of space launch vehicles.

1.23 University Grants Commission organises a webinar on “Cyber security empowerment of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)”.

Why in news?

- The Government of India has launched a 75-week long campaign Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav; to celebrate the achievements of the country and its people.
- The University Grants Commission (UGC) as part of this campaign is conducting a series of activities beginning with a sensitisation webinar on “Cyber security Empowerment of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)” an effort towards making cyber security more accessible, available, and adaptable for HEIs.

About the webinar

- The webinar discussed pertinent issues of cyber security with prioritizing its impact on HEIs and the necessary. The Webinar was the first step towards Cyber security empowerment of HEIs and provided an opportunity for sensitization and awareness on cyber security.

1.24 Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Launches Fisheries Startup Grand Challenge.

Why in news?

- The Department of Fisheries, Government of India in association with Startup India, Ministry of Commerce and Industry inaugurated the “**Fisheries Startup Grand Challenge**”.

About the challenge

- The challenge has been launched with an objective to provide a platform to start-ups within the country to showcase their innovative solutions within the Fisheries and Aquaculture sector.
- The event was graced by the presence of Shri Parshottam Rupala, Hon'ble Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and Dr. L. Murugan, Minister of State, Hon'ble Minister of State of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

1.25 Mamata Banerjee inaugurates Ganga Sagar Mela.

Why in news?

- The mela is held annually at Gangasagar in West Bengal and it kicked off this year recently. Considered as the biggest fair in the eastern part of India, the mela sees lakhs of devotees and sadhus every year.

1.26 Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that 16th January will be celebrated as National Start-Ups Day.

Why in news?

- In a symbolic boost to India's growing startup ecosystem, Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently announced that 16 January will be celebrated as National Startup Day.

About the National Start up day

- Interacting with over 150 startups during the Startup India Innovation Week organised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), the EV charging infrastructure, defence manufacturing, chip manufacturing offer and drone industry.
- The startups, categorised under six groups, gave presentations to the Prime Minister on six themes -- 'growing from roots', 'nudging the DNA', 'from local to global', 'technology of future', 'building champions in manufacturing' and 'sustainable development'.
- They shared ideas and inputs on various sectors including data collection mechanism in agriculture, making India a preferred agri-business hub, boosting healthcare through use of technology, tackling issue of mental health, promoting travel and tourism through innovations like virtual tours, ed-tech and job identification, space sector, among others.
- During the meeting, Modi also outlined the measures taken by the government to support startups in the country, including programmes like Startup India, removing problems of 'angel tax', simplification of tax procedure, arranging for government funding, allowing self-certification of nine labour and three environment laws and removal of more than 25 thousand compliances.

1.27 About 'Purple Revolution'.

Why in news?

- Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh says, "Purple Revolution" is Jammu & Kashmir's contribution to "Start-ups India", an initiative launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2016
- Aroma/lavender cultivation has become a popular option in farming for agricultural Start-up in J&K: Dr Jitendra Singh

About 'Purple Revolution'

- Briefing about the Aroma Mission launched by the Union Ministry of Science & Technology through the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), which has led to the well-known "Purple Revolution" in India, the Minister informed that the CSIR had, to begin with introduced high-value essential oil bearing lavender crop through its Jammu based laboratory, Indian Institute of Integrative Medicines

(IIIM) for cultivation in districts Doda, Kishtwar, Rajouri and later also in the other districts including Ramban, Pulwama, etc. In a brief span of time, aroma/lavender cultivation has become a popular option in farming for agricultural Start-up, he said.

1.28 PM Modi pays tributes to Tamil poet, philosopher Thiruvalluvar.

Why in news?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to the Tamil poet and philosopher Thiruvalluvar on Thiruvalluvar Day recently.

About Thiruvalluvar

- Thiruvalluvar is regarded as a cultural icon. His most popular work is a collection of couplets on politics, ethics, economy, and love, called "Thirukkuaaa".
- To honour his contribution, Thiruvalluvar Day is observed either on January 15 or 16 as a part of the Pongal celebrations.
- While a lot is not known about the life of Thiruvalluvar, it is believed that he used to live in the town of Mylapore, which in today's time is a neighbourhood in Chennai.

1.29 Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) launches 'Open Data Week'.

Why in news?

- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) recently announced the initiation of the Open Data Week to encourage adoption of open data and promote innovation across India's urban ecosystem.

About 'Open Data Week'

- Leading up to the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav - Smart Cities: Smart Urbanization' conference scheduled to be held in Surat, during February 2022, the Open Data Week is part of a series of pre-event initiatives being undertaken by MoHUA to promote awareness and use of open data. It will be conducted during the third week of January, i.e., from 17th January 2022 to 21st January 2022.
- The Event will see participation from all 100 Smart Cities that will be publishing high quality datasets and data blogs on the Smart Cities Open Data Portal. Presently, more than 3,800 datasets and more than 60 data stories are already available on the Portal to various stakeholders to analyse this data and uncover actionable insights.
- The Event aims to show the benefits of open data such as increased efficiency, transparency, a spur in innovation, and economic growth. It is divided into two segments – first, uploading of datasets, visualizations, APIs and data blogs on the Smart Cities Open Data Portal from 17th January 2022 to 20th January 2022 and second, celebration of a Data Day by all smart cities on 21st January 2022.
- The Data Day will take place nationally across all smart cities and will include talks, seminars, hackathons, demonstrations, and trainings on different data tracks identified by the cities. The Day will see engagement of people from different backgrounds including government agencies, private sector enterprises, scientific and academic institutions, businesses, start-ups, civil society etc. The idea is to provide a platform that offers ample opportunities on how to continue creating and promoting the use of data that addresses complex urban issues, such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Event has been designed to promote the use of and spread awareness about data. There are also many different groups of people and organisations who can benefit from the availability of quality data. New combinations of data can create new knowledge and insights, which can lead to whole new fields of application. This can help governments in solving some of the most common problems faced by the citizens of any city and replicating the successful ideas in other cities.

1.30 Government inaugurates India's first coal to methanol plant built by BHEL.

Why in news?

- Dr. M. N. Pandey dedicated BHEL's indigenously-developed, India's first Coal to Methanol Pilot Plant to the Nation as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

About India's first Coal to Methanol plant

- Union Minister for Heavy Industries Mahendra Nath Pandey recently dedicated India's first BHEL-built 'coal to methanol' (CTM) pilot plant to the nation, as part of the ongoing 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebrations.
- Pandey also inaugurated an exhibition on Products Developed under Aatmanirbhar Bharat' organised at Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited's (BHEL) Hyderabad unit.
- Pandey further said the capital goods industry is the backbone of the manufacturing sector as it provides critical inputs such as machinery and equipment to a broad set of user-industries.
- The 0.25 TPD (tonnes per day) capacity CTM pilot plant that has been indigenously designed, developed and installed by BHEL is currently producing methanol with purity of more than 99 per cent

1.31 Telangana to launch 'Mana Ooru-Mana Badi'

Why in news?

- Telangana to launch 'Mana Ooru-Mana Badi' to strengthen government schools.

About 'Mana Ooru-Mana Badi'

- With focus on improving the existing infrastructure and the quality of education in government schools, the State government is all set to launch 'Mana Ooru-Mana Badi' programme soon across the State.
- The State Cabinet recently approved a budgetary allocation of Rs 7,289 crore to strengthen government schools in the State as part of the programme.

1.32 Indian Army unveils world's largest Khadi tricolour in Jaisalmer.

Why in news?

- On the occasion of 74th Army Day, the world's largest Khadi national flag was displayed on the highest hill near Jaisalmer military station.

About the largest flag

- The Indian Army recently unveiled a national flag of the size 225 ft by 150 ft near the Jaisalmer military station in Rajasthan.
- A whopping 4,500 metres of hand-spun and hand-woven Khadi cotton bunting was used to make the flag which covers a total area of 33,750 square feet.
- The flag weighs approximately 1,400 kg.
- The flag, which was made entirely of Khadi material, was hoisted on the occasion of Army Day.

1.33 PM greets NDRF team on their Raising Day.

Why in news?

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has greeted the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team on their Raising Day.

About National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)

- The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is an Indian specialized force constituted "for the purpose of special response to a threatening disaster situation or disaster" under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

- The "Apex Body for Disaster Management" in India is the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).
- The Chairman of the NDMA is the **Prime Minister**.
- The responsibility of managing disasters in India is that of the State Government.
- The 'Nodal Ministry' in the central government for management of natural disasters is the Ministry of Home Affairs (MH).

1.34 Nitin Gadkari inaugurates Madhavbaug's Power MAP, India's first Intelligent Chronic Disease Patients Habit Tracking System.

Why in news?

- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkar recently inaugurated Madhavbaug's (Vaidya Sane Ayurved Labs Ltd), Power MAP, in a ceremony that was held digitally.

About Power MAP

- Power MAP is a medical analytics application developed by Madhavbaug under the trusted leadership of their CEO, Dr Rohit Sane. The application is built for doctors to help them get necessary medical intelligence regarding a patient's clinical parameters to reverse their chronic diseases effectively.
- The Power MAP application integrates various medical services like pathology labs, dietitians, exercise experts, stress counsellors and other specialised consultants who follow a synergistic approach to support the doctor to help improve the health outcomes of patients - all at a click of a button.

1.35 MOU has been signed between International Financial Services Centers Authority (IFSCA) and Insurance Institute of India (III).

Why in news?

- The International Financial Services Centers Authority (IFSCA), with an objective of capacity building of professionals in the insurance sector in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs), has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Insurance Institute of India (III).

About the MOU/agreement

- The International Financial Services Centers Authority (IFSCA), with an objective of capacity building of professionals in the insurance sector in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs), has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Insurance Institute of India (III).
- The Insurance Institute of India (III) is involved in devising and continuously upgrading the curriculums and imparting the training programs for the professionals in the insurance industry in India and abroad, to meet the needs of the ever-dynamic insurance sector. The certification by the institute is recognized by the insurance industry, regulators, and other internationally reputed insurance education providers. The Institute is also the member of the Institute of Global Insurance Education (IGIE).

The key areas of MOU are as follows:

- (i) III would undertake study to make changes to the academic curriculum in meeting the current needs of the insurance industry participants in IFSCA with the view to introduce certificate courses and professional examinations.
- (ii) III would be working on fulfilling the medium- and long-term capacity building requirements of insurance professionals resulting into deepening of insurance business activities in the IFSCA.
- (iii) III would jointly with IFSCA conduct seminars/ workshops/ conferences to pool knowledge of professional workforce for the insurance industry at the infrastructure and facilities available with III for academic activities.

- (iv) IIL would promote research topics/ subjects relating to working of IFSCA to the students enrolling for doctoral studies under its agreement with the University of Mumbai.
- (v) On the request of IFSCA, IIL would nominate its faculties for training and research on global insurance reinsurance laws and regulations of major financial hubs.
- IFSCA's regulatory framework for insurance requires periodic professional examinations and training. IIL would design and conduct such examinations and training for professional in IFSC which would aid in having skilled talent in IFSC eco-system.

1.36 50th Statehood Day of Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya.

Why in News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, greeted the people of Manipur, Meghalaya, and Tripura on their statehood day and praised them for their "vibrant contributions" to the country's development.
- The three States were formed on this day 50 years back in 1972 with the enactment of North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971.

Historical Importance

- The princely states of Manipur and Tripura were first merged with India in 1949. They were upgraded as union territories in 1956 till the next upgradation as full-fledged state on January 21, 1972.
- Meghalaya on the other hand was created as an autonomous state within assam in 1970.

1.37 National Mission on Use of Biomass.

Why in News

- Power Secretary reviews status of Biomass utilization in Thermal Power Plants in the country: SAMARTH (Sustainable Agrarian Mission on use of Agro Residue in Thermal Power Plants)

About the Mission

- Union Power Secretary chaired the second meeting of Steering Committee for SAMARTH i.e., National Mission on Use of Biomass in coal based thermal Power Plants
- He reviewed the status of bio-mass co-firing and progress of the actions being taken to promote the co-firing in the thermal power plants in the meeting.
- In order to reduce stubble burning and to reduce carbon footprint of Thermal Power Plants while increasing the income of farmers, Government of India has taken various proactive step with the establishment of National Mission on Use of Biomass in Thermal Power Plants.
- The agro-residue/biomass earlier considered as a waste product has now begun to produce zero-carbon electricity for the citizens of the country.
- In turn farmers are getting additional income by selling the stubble/ biomass for conversion into torrefied/non-torrefied biomass pellets.
- For overall monitoring of the Mission and to facilitate the Mission on inter-ministerial issues/ constraints, a Steering Committee under the chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Power (MoP) has been constituted.
- Ministry of Power's policy on "Biomass Utilisation for Power Generation through Co-firing in Coal based Power Plants" issued in October 2021 mandates all thermal power plants in the country to use 5 to 10% biomass along with coal for power production. The policy has started showing promising results.

1.38 Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated new circuit house near Somnath Temple.

Why in news?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently virtually inaugurated a new circuit house which has built been near the iconic Somnath Temple in his home state of Gujarat.

About the new circuit house

- The new circuit house has been built at a cost of ₹30 crore. According to the Prime Minister's Office, the need for a new circuit house was felt as the existing one is far away from the famous temple.
- In a release, the government said that it is equipped with top class facilities, including VIP and deluxe rooms, and suites, conference room and auditorium hall.
- The landscaping has been done in such a manner that sea view is available from every room, the release further said.

1.39 Vice President Venkaiah Naidu calls for increasing indigenous production of crude oil.

Why in News

- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu called for increasing indigenous production of crude oil through strong R&D efforts to ensure energy security of the country. He was delivering the convocation address at the first convocation ceremony of the Indian Institute of Petroleum and Energy (IIPPE), in **Visakhapatnam**.

Why it is Important

- Highlighting 'Atma Nirbharta' (self-reliance), Vice President said there should be more focus on increasing domestic exploration of petroleum, harnessing the full potential of renewable sources and aiming for excellence and innovation in the energy industry.
- India is the world's third largest consumer of crude oil and yet import-dependent for more than 80 percent of its needs.
- He underlined the importance of increasing production, not only to save foreign exchange but also to ensure energy security.
- He noted various policy reforms of the government such as the Hydrocarbon Exploration Licensing Policy (HELP) aimed at increasing exploration in new sedimentary basins.
- IIPPE is a dedicated university for petroleum research and was recognized as an Institution of National Importance in 2017 through an Act of Parliament.

1.40 Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's grand statue to be installed at India Gate.

Why in News

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has announced that a grand statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose will be installed at India Gate.

Why it is Important

- Ahead of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's 125th birth anniversary, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that his statue will be installed at India Gate.
- Until the installation is completed, a hologram of Netaji will be projected at the site of the statue.
- The statue will be installed under the grand canopy near which the Amar Jawan Jyothi flickers in remembrance of India's martyrs.
- The eternal flame, which has not been extinguished for 50 years, as it will be merged with the flame at the National War Memorial.

1.41 Government of India launches portal to share key performance indicators of coal sector.

Why in News

- In order to share Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to the Coal Sector a portal "Koyla Darpan" has been launched by Dr. Anil Kumar Jain, Secretary, Ministry of Coal.

Features of the Portal

- The portal has the following KPIs –
 1. Coal/Lignite Production
 2. Coal/Lignite Offtake
 3. Exploration Data
 4. Central Sector Schemes
 5. Status of Coal Stock in Thermal Power Plants
 6. Infrastructure Projects
 7. Allocation of Blocks (CMSP/MMDR)
 8. Monitoring of Major Coal Mines (CIL)
 9. Coal Price

1.42 India emerges as largest exporters of cucumber and gherkins in the world.

Why in News

- India has exported cucumber and gherkins to the tune of 1,23,846 Metric Tonnes with a value of USD 114 million during April-October, 2021 and emerged as largest exporters of cucumber and gherkins.

Why it is Important

- India has crossed the USD 200 million mark of export of agricultural processed product, pickling cucumber, which is globally referred as gherkins or cornichons.
- Gherkins are exported under two categories -- cucumbers and gherkins, which are prepared and preserved by vinegar or acetic acid and cucumbers and gherkins, which are provisionally preserved.
- Gherkin cultivation, processing and exports started in India during the early 1990s with a modest beginning in **Karnataka** and later extended to the neighbouring states of **Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana**. Nearly 15% production of the world's gherkin requirement is grown in India.
- Gherkins is currently exported to more than 20 countries, with major destinations being North America, European countries and Oceanic countries such as USA, France, Germany, Australia, Spain, South Korea, Canada, Japan, Belgium, Russia, China, Sri Lanka and Israel.

How was it made possible?

- Following directions of the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, the **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)** undertook a series of initiatives in infrastructure development, product promotion in the global market and adherence to food safety management system in processing units.

About APEDA –

- The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) was established by the Government of India under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act, 1985.
- It functions under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**. The Authority has its headquarters in New Delhi.
- APEDA is mandated with the responsibility of export promotion and development of the scheduled products viz. fruits, vegetables and their products; meat and meat products; poultry and poultry products; dairy products; confectionery, biscuits and bakery products; honey, jaggery and sugar products; cocoa and its products, chocolates of all kinds; alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages; cereal

and cereal products; groundnuts, peanuts and walnuts, pickles, papads and chutneys; guar gum; floriculture and floriculture products; herbal and medicinal plants.

1.43 Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Awards.

Why in News

- To recognise and honour the invaluable contribution and selfless service rendered by individuals and organisations in India in the field of Disaster Management, Government of India has instituted an annual award known as Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar.
- For the year 2022, **(i) Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management (in the Institutional category) and (ii) Professor Vinod Sharma (in the Individual category)** have been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for their excellent work in Disaster Management.

Why it is Important

- The award is announced every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.
- In case the winner being an institution, it shall receive a certificate and a cash prize of Rs. 51 lakhs. This cash prize shall be utilised by the winning institution for Disaster Management related activities only.
- In case of the winner being an individual, winner shall receive a certificate and a cash prize of Rs. 5 lakhs.

About the awardees

- Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management (GIDM), established in 2012, the Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management (GIDM) has been working to enhance the disaster risk reduction (DRR) capacity of Gujarat. Through a series of strategically designed capacity building programs, GIDM has trained more than 12,000 professionals on diverse issues concerning multi-hazard risk management and reduction during the pandemic.
- Professor Vinod Sharma, a senior professor at the Indian Institute of Public Administration and Vice-Chairman of the Sikkim State Disaster Management Authority, was the founder coordinator of the National Centre of Disaster Management, now known as the National Institute of Disaster Management

1.44 Ministry of Culture to organize Rangoli Utsav 'Umang' on National Girl Child Day.

Why in News

- Ministry of Culture is organizing a rangoli making event 'Umang Rangoli Utsav' on 24th January 2022. The day is celebrated as 'National Girl Child Day' every year and to commemorate the day this year, a nationwide event celebrating the Girl Child is being organized under Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations.

About The Event

- In the event, it is proposed that the participating teams will make Rangoli decorations for about one kilometer of length on the roads and squares that have been named after the female freedom fighters or the female role models of the country.
- The Rangoli decorations are being done at more than 50 locations across the country. It will be a great opportunity to celebrate the 'Girl Child Day' and 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' through this event.

1.45 Abide With Me, the Christian hymn dropped from Beating Retreat ceremony of Republic day Celebrations.

Why in news?

- The government has dropped Abide With Me, a hymn that has been a fixture in the Beating Retreat ceremony since 1950.
- The ceremony will end with Sare Jahan Se Accha by the Buglers.

About the song

- The hymn written by Henry Francis Lyte, is set to the tune of Eventide by William Henry Monk.

Significance

- Abide With Me was one of Mahatma Gandhi's personal favourites.
- At Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, the ashram bhajanavali — the first and probably the only cross-religion hymnal anywhere — with the bhajans 'Vaishnav Jan Toh' and the well-known Ram Dhun by Tulsidas, 'Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram' in it, Abide With Me, along with Lead Kindly Light, was put together under Gandhi's watch.

1.46 Supreme Court seeks govt. response on creation of Independent Indian Environment Service.

Why in News

- The Supreme Court sought the government's response on the creation of an independent Indian Environment Service in the "All India Service cadre".
- T.S.R. Subramanian Committee report of 2014 had recommended it

About the Report

- The Committee, constituted by the Environment Ministry, in its report on November 18, 2014, had categorically recorded that the necessary institutional framework needs to be created, building on the existing systems, to meet future ecological demands, and ecological imbalance

1.47 One District One Product (ODOP) initiative of Centre churning big success stories in J & K, North East, Uttar Pradesh.

Why in News

- As a major boost to Centre and State collaboration in promoting products under the One District One Product (ODOP) Initiative – a State Conference was held recently organised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- It aims to boost the economy of the region district by district through encouraging indigenous and specialised products of each district.
- The programme providing loans to local production units, artisans and farmers.

Why it is Important

- The ODOP Initiative's work in Jammu & Kashmir especially its successes in trade facilitation for walnuts and apples was discussed. The ODOP initiative's facilitation of Jammu & Kashmir's representation at the Dubai Expo 2020 and successful buyer-seller meets as well as focused trade discussions conducted therein were also highlighted.
- The state of Uttar Pradesh was also able to bring attention to the remarkable success of the UP ODOP Model wherein artisans and producers from all districts of the state have been promoted and assisted under One District One Product (ODOP).

- Tripura outlined a roadmap for 'Promoting remote districts and boosting local economy'. This included a discussion on the successful collaboration between the State Govt and the ODOP Team thus far, and the next steps that would be taken to promote product development and exports from all the 8 districts of Tripura.
- Some key examples referred to included design trainings for Molela artisans in Rajsamand District, Rajasthan; skill trainings for Muga Silk weavers from Kamrup, Assam, sustained year-year trade facilitation of Lakadong Turmeric from West Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya and the promotion of ODOP products from across districts and categories at international events such as the Dubai Expo 2020.

1.48 Ministry of Defence organises series of eight webinars in the run up to the Def-expo 2022.

Why in News

- Ministry of Defence is hosting the 12th edition of prestigious biennial defence exhibition Def Expo 2022 from 10th to 13th Mar 2022 at Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- This mega defence International Exhibition is focussing on Land, Air, Naval, Internal Homeland security and electronic systems.

Why it is Important

- The event provides a unique opportunity for firms within the defence industry to showcase their capabilities, products & services to the targeted audience of Industry leaders and business decision makers.
- Government of India with policy initiative of 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' believes that India has tremendous potential to become a leading supplier of complete defence solutions to many of its friendly nations.
- Theme for Defexpo 2022 is "India-The Emerging Defence Manufacturing Hub".

1.49 Health Minister of India launched Revamped Central Government Health Scheme Website and Mobile App MyCGHS.

Why in News

- Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare digitally launched the revamped CGHS (Central Government Health Scheme) website and mobile app, "MyCGHS", today in the presence of Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar, Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare.

Why it is Important

- This website linked with a mobile app is an important and timely step towards catering to India's increasing digital penetration.
- The website has several updated features which shall hugely benefit more than 40 lakhs beneficiaries (both in-service and retired personnel) with real-time information from the convenience of their homes."
- The basket of services is enlarged with the revamped website. With the newly provided feature of tele-consultation, CGHS beneficiaries can seek expert advice directly through teleconsultation.
- With these improved facilities, CGHS aims to further increase its outreach to beneficiaries with ease of providing various facilities.

1.50 Padma Awards 2022: 128 recipients named for civilian honours.

Why in News

- Government of India announced Padma Awards for the year 2022 which have been announced on the occasion of Republic Day, 2022.

About Padma Awards

- The Awards are given in three categories: Padma Vibhushan (for exceptional and distinguished service), Padma Bhushan (distinguished service of higher order) and Padma Shri (distinguished service).
- The award seeks to recognize achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved.
- **The Padma Awards are conferred on the recommendations made by the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year.** The nomination process is open to the public. Even self-nomination can be made.
- The Government of India instituted two civilian awards-Bharat Ratna & Padma Vibhushan in 1954. The latter had three classes namely Pahela Varg, Dusra Varg and Tisra Varg.
- These were subsequently renamed as Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri vide Presidential Notification issued on January 8, 1955.
- Padma Awards were announced every year except for brief interruption(s) during the years 1978 and 1979 and 1993 to 1997.
- **They are given for distinguished and exceptional achievements/service in the following fields –**
 - Art
 - Social work
 - Literature and Education
 - Public Affairs
 - Science & Engineering
 - Trade & Industry
 - Medicine
 - Civil Service
 - Sports
 - .Others

Link of list of Padma Awardees 2022 - <https://www.padmaawards.gov.in/padmaawardees2022.pdf>

1.51 World Bank Approves USD 125 million Loan to West Bengal for Social Protection Services.

Why in news?

- The World Bank has approved a loan of USD 125 million (around Rs 1,000 crore) to the government of West Bengal (WB) for Inclusive Social Protection' operations.
- It will strengthen the capability of this state to expand coverage and access to social assistance and targeted service for poor and vulnerable groups of the state.

About the Loan Agreement

- Under the agreement, The WB government runs more than 400 programmes which provide social assistance, protection, care services and jobs through an umbrella platform, 'Joy Bangla', the state's unified delivery system.
- Another initiative named 'Duare Sarkar', the programme which offers several government schemes benefits at the doorstep.

- The funding will also help in improving the monitoring of doorstep benefit delivery.

About West Bengal:

- Chief Minister – Mamta Banerjee
- Governor – Jagdeep Dhankhar
- National Parks – Gorumara National Park, Sundarban National Park, Jaldapara National Park Wildlife

1.52 Union Budget 2022-23 to be presented on 1st February, 2022 in Paperless form.**Why in News**

- The Union Budget 2022-23 is to be presented by the Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman on 1st February, 2022 in Paperless form.
- To mark the final stage of the Union Budget making process, sweets were provided to the core staff due to undergo “lock-in” at their workplaces, instead of a customary Halwa ceremony every year.
- The Union Budget of 2021-22 was delivered in paperless form for the first time.
- A “**Union Budget Mobile App**” was also launched for hassle-free access of Budget documents.

Some interesting facts associated with the Union Budget**1947: First Union Budget**

- The first Union Budget of independent India was presented by RK Shanmukham Chetty on November 26, 1947, just three months after the end of British rule.

First United-India Budget

- In 1949-50, John Mathai succeeded Shanmukham Chetty as the finance minister and presented the first united-India budget, including the financial statements for former princely states.

Maximum Union Budgets By A Minister

- Former finance minister Morarji Desai presented the Budget a record 10 times, between 1959 and 1969.

First Woman to Present Union Budget

- Indira Gandhi was the first woman finance minister to present the Union Budget in 1970. The then prime minister also held the finance portfolio.

Printing of Budget in Hindi

- Until 1955, the Union Budget was printed in English. The Congress then decided to print the Budget documents both in Hindi and English.

Printing of Budget

- The printing of the budget documents was initially done at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. But after some of the documents were leaked in 1950, the government shifted the printing to a press at Minto Road, New Delhi. In 1980, the printing was moved to a government press in North Block.

Merging of Railway Budget

- The Railway Budget used to be presented separately, a day before the presentation of the Union Budget. In 2017, the Narendra Modi government merged it with the Union Budget.

Longest Budget Speech

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's 2020 Budget speech lasted two hours and 40 minutes, which is considered a record.

Change in Time of Budget Presentation

- Following British tradition, the Union Budget in India used to be presented at 5 pm. The slot was changed to 11 am in 1999 during the tenure of then finance minister Jaswant Singh.

'Bahi Khata' Replaces Briefcase

- In 2019, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman carried a 'bahi khata' (ledger) with the National Emblem printed on it to Parliament, in a departure from the standard practice of carrying a briefcase. Incidentally, the word Budget comes from French bougette, which means leather briefcase.

Paperless Budget

- In 2020, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman read out her budget speech from a tablet. This was a first for a Union Budget, though Andhra Pradesh and Assam had started the practice in 2018. Many considered it a move by the minister to adapt to changing times and adjust to new technologies.

Change in Date

- Continuing with the colonial-era practice, the Union Budget used to be presented on the last working day of February. It was in 2017 when the tradition was changed. Then finance minister Arun Jaitley announced February 1 as the date for presentation of Union Budget thenceforth.

1.53 PM pays tributes to Lala Lajpat Rai on his Jayanti.

Why In News

- Lala Lajpat Rai's birth anniversary is celebrated on 28th of January every year.

About the Lala Lajpat Rai

- He was born on 28th January, 1865 in a small village named Dhudike in Punjab's Moga district.
- Lala Lajpat Rai was one of the greatest freedom fighters of India.
- He was also called 'Punjab Kesari' and 'Lion of Punjab'.
- Was influenced by Swami Dayananda Saraswati and joined the Arya Samaj in Lahore.
- Along with Bipin Chandra Pal and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, he formed the Lal-Bal-Pal trio of extremist leaders.
- He was also involved with the Hindu Mahasabha.

Political

- He joined the Indian National Congress (INC) and participated in many political agitations in Punjab.
- For his political agitation, he was deported to Burma without trial in 1907 but returned after a few months because of lack of evidence.
- He founded the Home Rule League of America in 1917 in New York. In the USA, he worked to get moral support for the Indian independence movement from the international community.
- He was also elected President of the All India Trade Union Congress.
- He supported the non-cooperation movement of Gandhi at the Nagpur session of the Congress in 1920.
- He protested against the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre that followed.
- He was elected deputy leader of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1926.
- In 1928, he moved a resolution in the assembly refusing cooperation with the Simon Commission since the Commission had no Indian members.

Social

- He founded Hindu Relief movement in 1897 to provide help to the famine-stricken people and thus preventing them falling into the clutches of the missionaries.
- He founded the Servants of People Society in 1921.

Literary

- His important literary works include Young India, England's Debt to India, Evolution of Japan, India's Will to Freedom, Message of the Bhagavad Gita, Political Future of India, Problem of National Education in India, The Depressed Classes, and the travelogue 'United States of America'.

Institutional

- He founded several institutions and organizations such as Hisar Bar Council, Hisar Arya Samaj, Hisar Congress, National DAV Managing Committee.
- He was the editor of the Arya Gazette, which he had founded.
- He co-founded the Punjab National Bank in 1894.

Death

- In 1928, he was leading a silent protest against the Simon Commission in Lahore when he was brutally lathi-charged by Superintendent of Police, James Scott. He died of injuries sustained a few weeks later.

1.54 Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs celebrates International Customs Day, 2022 on January 26.

Why in news?

- January 26 marks the celebration of International Customs Day (ICD) all across the world with the United Nations as the host.
- It is an annual event that is meant to acknowledge and appreciate the role that customs officials and agencies play in ensuring the smooth flow of goods across the world borders.

Theme

- The theme chosen by World Customs Organisation (WCO) for International Customs Day (ICD) is '**Scaling up Customs Digital Transformation by Embracing a Data Culture and Building a Data Ecosystem**'.

NATIONAL

1.55 Air India returns to Tata home after 69 yrs.

Why In News

- The Air India strategic disinvestment transaction has been completed with Government.
- The Share Purchase Agreement (SPA) was signed on 25 October, 2021. Thereafter, Strategic Partner (Tata Pvt Ltd), Air India and the Government worked towards satisfying a set of conditions precedent defined in the SPA including approvals from anti-trust bodies, regulators, lenders, third parties, etc.

About Air India

- It was founded as Tata Airlines (division of Tata Sons Ltd) in **1932 by J R D Tata**.
- In July 1946 it became a Public Ltd Company with the name of Air India.
- 49% of the stake in Air India was acquired by the Government of India in 1948 (with an option to purchase an additional 2%)
- **The government nationalized the carrier in 1953 and passed the Air Corporations Act 1953**, which provided the monopoly rights to Air India and its associates.
- In 2007 the decision to merge Air India with Indian Airlines to form NACIL (National Aviation Company of India Ltd) was taken.

1.56 India's first woman Rafale pilot Shivangi Singh takes part in R-Day parade.

Why In News

- The country's first woman Rafale fighter jet pilot Shivangi Singh was part of the Indian Air Force tableau at the Republic Day parade recently. She is only the second woman fighter jet pilot to be part of the IAF tableau.
- Last year, Flight Lieutenant Bhawna Kanth became the first female fighter jet pilot to be part of the IAF tableau.

About Indian Air Force Tableau

- The IAF tableau was based on the theme — **'Indian Air Force transforming for the future'**.
- Scaled down models of Rafale fighter jet, indigenously developed light combat helicopter (LCH) and 3D surveillance radar Aslesha MK-1 were part of the Tableau.
- It also featured a scaled down model of MiG-21 aircraft that played a major role in the 1971 war in which India defeated Pakistan, leading to the creation of Bangladesh, as well as a model of India's first indigenously developed aircraft Gnat.

1.57 Kerala gets its first ever scientific bird atlas.

About Kerala Bird Atlas (KBA)

- The KBA has been prepared based on systematic surveys held twice over 60 days a year during the wet (July to September) and dry (January to March) seasons between 2015 and 2020.
- It was conducted as a citizen science-driven exercise with the participation of over 1,000 volunteers of the birdwatching community.
- The KBA accounts for nearly three lakh records of 361 species, including 94 very rare species, 103 rare species, 110 common species, 44 very common species, and 10 most abundant species.
- It was found that the species count was higher during the dry season than in the wet season while species richness and evenness were higher in the northern and central districts than in the southern districts.

1.58 India 1st Graphene research centre will be established in Kerala.

Why in News?

- The India Innovation Centre for Graphene (IICG) will be established in Thrissur, Kerala, as part of a joint venture between Centre for Materials for Electronics Technology (Pune), Digital University Kerala (DUK), Tata Steel Limited and other industries.
- A first-of-its-kind centre for studying graphene and developing its newer applications as suitable for industries has recently been approved by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

Why Graphene Research?

- The newest centre aims at promoting and performing R&D on graphene as per the industry requirements.
- Being a good conductor of electricity and highly flexible, this two-dimensional form of crystalline carbon has enormous number of applications ranging from electronic wearable devices, biomedical devices, sensors, fuel cells, semiconductors, field emission displays, nanoelectrodes for inexpensive organic electronic devices such as organic photovoltaics (OPVs), liquid-crystal devices (LCDs), organic light-emitting diodes (OLEDs), supercapacitors, fuel cells and batteries.
- Nicknamed as wonder material, graphene coatings prevent corrosion in factories and industries, which face annual losses up to worth Rs 50,000 crore, a study on uses of graphene coatings by IIT-Bombay.

1.59 J&K Police Bags Highest 115 Police Medals For Gallantry.

Why In News?

- According to the list released by the Union Home Ministry, among the states, Union Territories (UTs), and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), J&K has bagged the maximum 115 police medals.
- Jammu and Kashmir Police has bagged 115 Police Medals for Gallantry (PMG), out of a total of 189 awarded this year. They more than doubled their last year's tally of 52 PMGs.
- J&K Police won awards for conducting several counter-insurgency operations in 2019-20. Police personnel from Jammu and Kashmir have been awarded 115 Police Medals for Gallantry, the highest number from any police force this year, followed by CRPF with 30, Chhattisgarh Police with 10, Odisha Police with nine, and Maharashtra Police with seven.

1.60 Prime Minister Narendra Modi launches Pandit Jasraj Cultural Foundation, calls for globalization of Indian Music.

Why In News

- On the Birth Anniversary of legendary classical vocalist Late Pandit Jasraj, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Pandit Jasraj Cultural Foundation.

About Pandit jasraj

- Pandit Jasraj was born on January 28, 1930, in a village Pili Mandori in Haryana to a notable classical singer Pandit Motiram.
- Pandit Jasraj was associated with Mewati gharana of music.
- He is known for his unconventional mixing of khayal with elements of bhakti rasa, employing harkats and murkis that were traditionally used in light classical music.
- He also performed semi-classical old musical forms such as the **Haveli sangeet**.
- Haveli Sangeet are performances are held in temples and the compositions are sung in praise of Lord Krishna.
- He created a unique form of jugalbandi called **Jasrangi**, in which a male and a female singer sing different ragas in their respective scales to merge their individual displays into one unified performance.
- The International Astronomical Union (IAU) named an asteroid after him, formally known as 2006 VP32, as **Panditjasraj**.
- Pandit Jasraj died on August 17, 2020, at his home in New Jersey, USA, due to cardiac arrest.

Pandit Jasraj: Awards and Recognitions

- In 1975, he received **Padma Shri**, fourth highest civilian award in India.
- In 1987, **Sangeet Natak Akademi Award**, highest Indian recognition to the practising artists.
- In 1990, he received **Padma Bhushan**, third-highest civilian award in India.
- In 2000, he was conferred **Padma Vibhushan**, second highest civilian award in India.

1.61 The racial profiling of the Chakmas and Hajongs.

Why in News

- Recently, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in its order directed **Ministry of Home Affairs** and **Arunachal Pradesh Government** to submit action taken report within six weeks against alleged racial profiling and relocation of the Chakmas and Hajongs from the State.

- Members of the two communities have allegedly been victims of hate crime, police atrocities and denial of rights and beneficiary programmes.

Background

- In a judgment in 1996, the Court had stated that the “life and personal liberty of every Chakma residing within the State shall be protected”.
- In 2015, the Supreme Court directed the State to grant them citizenship, but this had not yet been implemented.
- In light of these orders and given that most of the Chakma/Hajong community members were born in the State and have been living peacefully, the Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister’s announcement, in August 2021, that they would be relocated outside the State and that steps would be taken for a “census” of the communities was clearly unwarranted.
- After that Chakma Development Foundation of India (CDFI) requested urgent intervention of the NHRC against racial profiling of 65,000 Chakma and Hajong tribals of Arunachal Pradesh through illegal census which was scheduled to commence from 31st December, 2021 for their deportation / expulsion/ relocation from the State.

Other key Facts

- Mizoram and Tripura have a sizeable population of the Buddhist Chakmas while the Hindu Hajongs mostly inhabit the Garo Hills of Meghalaya and adjoining areas of Assam.
- The Chakmas and Hajongs of Arunachal Pradesh are migrants from the Chittagong Hill Tracts of erstwhile East Pakistan, now Bangladesh

1.62 Andhra Pradesh government has created 13 new districts.

Why in News

- The Andhra Pradesh government has given a green signal for the creation of 13 new districts in the state.

Key Facts

- With this the total number of districts in the state will go up to 26.
- Andhra government has formed the new districts based on Parliamentary constituencies.
- The reorganisation of the districts is being done under the Section 3 of the Andhra Pradesh Districts (Formation) Act, 1974.

1.63 National Commission for Women (NCW) Foundation Day.

Why in News

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addressed to the **30th National Commission for Women (NCW) Foundation Day** programme.
- The theme of the programme is ‘**She The Change Maker**’, aimed at celebrating the achievements of women in different fields.
- Union Minister for Women and Child Development **Smriti Irani** will also be present on the occasion.

About the Event

- The State Commissions for Women, Department of Women and Child Development in State Governments, University and College teaching faculty and students, voluntary organisations, women entrepreneurs and business associations will be a part of the event.

About the National Commission for Women

- The National Commission for Women (NCW) is the statutory body of the Government of India established on 31 January 1992 under the **National Commission for Women Act, 1990**.
- The first head of the commission was **Jayanti Patnaik**.

Function of National Commission for Women

- Advising the government on all policy matters affecting women.
- Review the Constitutional and Legal safeguards for women.
- Recommend remedial legislative measures.
- Facilitate redressal of grievance

1.64 74th Martyrs' Day: Death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.**Why In News**

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his Punya Tithi on Martyrs' Day.
- Martyr's Day or **Shaheed Diwas** is observed every year on January 30 in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi.
- Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated at Birla House by Nathuram Godse on 30th January, 1948.

Significance

- On this day, the President, Vice-President, Prime Minister, Defence Minister, and the three service chiefs (Army, Air Force, and Navy) come together to lay floral wreaths at the Samadhi of Mahatma Gandhi in **Raj Ghat**, New Delhi.

1.65 Parliament launches Digital Sansad App to make live proceedings accessible to citizens.**Why in News**

- Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has launched the official mobile application of the Parliament named '**Digital Sansad App**'.
- The digital sansad app was launched to make it easier for people to follow proceedings in Parliament and their lawmakers.
- IT offers a 360-degree view of legislative activities and services for members.
- The app will help people in accessing archival data related to all Lok Sabhas. People would also be able to access speeches, debates, etc.
- IT contains information on budget speeches since 1947 as well as House discussions from 12th Lok Sabha to 17th Lok Sabha.

PRACTISE MCQS

1. Which of the following has been Ranked #1 in the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) 2021 launched by the Innovation Cell of the Ministry of Education, Government of India?

- A. BITS Pilani
- B. IIT Madras
- C. Vellore Institute of Technology
- D. NIT Trichy

Answer: B

2. Which of the following railway stations has recently been renamed as Veerangana Lakshmibai Railway Station?

- A. Jhansi railway station
- B. Vijayawada railway Station
- C. Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus
- D. Udagamandalam railway station

Answer: A

3. Consider the following statements about Karnataka and e-RUPI:

1. The Karnataka government's e-Governance department has partnered with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and State Bank of India (SBI) for enabling and implementing 'e-RUPI'.
2. e-RUPI will be used to ensure a leak-proof delivery of education fees of eligible students by paying digitally to the college or institute by the Karnataka government.

Which of the statements given is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

4. With reference to the Prime Ministers National Relief Fund (PMNRF), consider the following statements:

1. The resources of the PMNRF are utilized primarily to render immediate relief to families of those killed in natural calamities like floods, cyclones and earthquakes, etc. and to the victims of the major accidents and riots.
2. The fund consists entirely of public contributions and does not get any budgetary support.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

5. With reference to electoral bonds, consider the following statements:

1. An electoral bond is like a promissory note that can be bought by any Indian citizen or company incorporated in India from select branches of State Bank of India.
2. The electoral bonds will also bear the name of the donor.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: A

6. The Government of India has set up the Energy Transition Advisory Committee headed by whom among the following?

- A. Tarun Kapoor

- B. Usha Thorat
- C. M B Lal
- D. V K Paul

Answer: A

7. With reference to the recently launched India Semiconductor Mission in India, consider the following statements:

1. The India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) is a specialised and independent business division within the Digital India Corporation.
2. It has been set up with the aim to build a vibrant semiconductor and display ecosystem to enable India's emergence as a global hub for electronics manufacturing and design.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

8. SEBI has restructured its advisory committee on market data under who among the following?

- A. Supratim Bandhopadhyay
- B. Subhash Chandra Kunthia
- C. J. Satyanarayana
- D. S. Sahoo

Answer: D

9. Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Academy (IGRUA) is located in which of the following districts of India?

- A. Amethi
- B. Hisar
- C. Pune
- D. Jamnagar

Answer: A

10. With reference to 25th National Youth Festival, consider the following statements:

1. Goa has been chosen as host of National Youth Festival.
2. Festival's tagline is Saksham Yuva, Shashvath Yuva (capable youth, powerful youth).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

11. Centre has formed a 3-member committee to probe into PM Modi's security lapse in Punjab under whom among the following?

- A. Ajeet Wasant
- B. Ajay Kumar
- C. Jalaji Srivastava
- D. Sudhir Kumar Saxena

Answer: D

12. India's first open rock museum has been inaugurated in which of the following places?

- A. Hyderabad
- B. Ahmedabad
- C. Bangalore
- D. New Delhi

Answer: A

13. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced which of the following days as the 'Veer Baal Diwas' to mark martyrdom of Sahibzada Zorawar Singh Ji and Sahibzada Fateh Singh Ji?

- A. December 24
- B. December 25
- C. December 26
- D. December 27

Answer: C

14. Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas is a day dedicated to whom among the following?

- A. Army personnel
- B. Member countries of International Solar Alliance
- C. Overseas Indian community
- D. Indian freedom struggle fighters

Answer: C

15. India's first heli-hub to be set up in which of the following cities of India?

- A. Gurugram
- B. Surat
- C. Bangalore
- D. Chennai

Answer: A

16. World Hindi Day is celebrated every year on which of the following days?

- A. 10th January
- B. 11th January
- C. 12th January
- D. 13th January

Answer: A

17. With reference to the Jallikattu festival, consider the following statements:

- 1. It is typically practised in the Indian state of Kerala.
- 2. It is a part of Pongal celebrations on Mattu Pongal day, which occurs annually in January.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

18. With reference to the 24th National Conference on e-Governance, consider the following statements:

- 1. It was organised in Hyderabad.
- 2. The theme of this Conference was "India's Techade: Digital Governance in a Post Pandemic World".

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

19. National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is observed on which of the following days?

- A. January 11
- B. February 11
- C. March 11
- D. April 11

Answer: A

20. Who among the following was India's second Prime Minister?

- A. H.D. Deve Gowda
- B. Lal Bahadur Shastri
- C. Charan Singh
- D. Vishwanath Pratap Singh

Answer: B

21. Consider the following statements about First Colombo Security Conclave Virtual Workshop on Developing Regional Cyber Security Capabilities:

- 1. It was hosted by the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), Government of India in association with National Forensics Science University, Gandhinagar (Gujarat).
- 2. Delegates from Member and Observer States of the of Colombo Security Conclave (CSC) including Sri Lanka, Maldives, India, Mauritius,

Seychelles, and Bangladesh participated in the workshop.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

22. Who among the following has been appointed as the tenth chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation?

- A. Shubha Tole
- B. Aditi Pant
- C. Darshan Ranganathan
- D. S Somanath

Answer: D

23. With reference to the recently organised webinar on “Cyber security empowerment of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)”, consider the following statements:

- 1. It has been organised by NITI Aayog.
- 2. The Webinar was the first step towards Cyber security empowerment of HEIs and provided an opportunity for sensitization and awareness on cyber security.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

24. With reference to the Fisheries Startup Grand Challenge, consider the following statements:

- 1. The Department of Fisheries, Government of India in association with Startup India, Ministry

of Commerce and Industry inaugurated the “Fisheries Startup Grand Challenge”.

- 2. The challenge has been launched with an objective to provide a platform to start-ups within the country to showcase their innovative solutions within the Fisheries and Aquaculture sector.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

25. Ganga Sagar Mela has recently been inaugurated in which of the following states?

- A. West Bengal
- B. Bihar
- C. Uttar Pradesh
- D. Uttarakhand

Answer: A

26. Which of the following has been decided as the National Start up day?

- A. January 15
- B. January 16
- C. January 17
- D. January 18

Answer: B

27. ‘Purple Mission’ and Aroma Mission are related to which of the following?

- A. Lavender
- B. Wheat
- C. Rose
- D. Rice

Answer: A

28. Who was Thiruvalluvar?

- A. A Mughal painter

- B. Gujarati poet and philosopher
- C. Assamese painter
- D. Tamil poet and philosopher

Answer: D

29. With reference to the 'Open Data Week', consider the following statements:

1. Its initiation has been announced by NITI Aayog.
2. It will encourage adoption of open data and promote innovation across India's urban ecosystem.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

30. Consider the following statements:

1. Union Minister for Heavy Industries Mahendra Nath Pandey recently dedicated India's first BHEL-built 'coal to methanol' (CTM) pilot plant to the nation.
2. 'Coal to methanol' (CTM) pilot plant is a part of the ongoing 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebrations.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

31. With reference to 'Mana Ooru-Mana Badi', consider the following statements:

1. It has been launched by the Government of Karnataka.
2. It has been launched to strengthen government schools.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

32. On the occasion of 74th Army Day, the world's largest Khadi national flag was displayed on the highest hill near which of the following places?

- A. Leh
- B. Jaisalmer
- C. Kerala
- D. Nagaland

Answer: B

33. With respect to the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), consider the following statements:

1. It was constituted under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.
2. Its chairman is the President of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: A

34. Consider the following statements about Power MAP:

1. Power MAP is a medical analytics application developed by Madhavbaug.
2. The Power MAP application integrates various medical services like pathology labs, dietitians, exercise experts, stress counsellors and other specialised consultants who follow a synergistic approach to support the doctor to help improve

the health outcomes of patients - all at a click of a button.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

35. Which of the following are key areas of MOU between the International Financial Services Centers Authority (IFSCA) with the Insurance Institute of India (III)?

- 1. III would undertake study to make changes to the academic curriculum in meeting the current needs of the insurance industry participants in IFSCA with the view to introduce certificate courses and professional examinations.
- 2. III would be working on fulfilling the medium- and long-term capacity building requirements of insurance professionals resulting into deepening of insurance business activities in the IFSCA.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

36. Which of the following states got statehood on January 21, 1972?

- A. Manipur and Tripura
- B. Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland.
- C. Sikkim and Odisha
- D. Tamil Nadu and Kerala

Answer: A

37. Union Power Secretary chaired the second meeting of Steering Committee for SAMARTH. SAMARTH is related to which of the following?

- A. Thermal Plants
- B. Soil acidification
- C. Regulation of Regional Rural Banks
- D. Textile industry

Answer: A

38. A new circuit house which has built been near the iconic Somnath Temple is located in which of the following states of India?

- A. Orissa
- B. Gujarat
- C. Assam
- D. Rajasthan

Answer: B

39. In which of the following city, Indian Institute of Petroleum and Energy (IIPE) is located?

- A. Bombay
- B. Vishakhapatnam
- C. Hyderabad
- D. Chennai

Answer: B

40. With reference to Subhash Chandra Bose's 125th birth anniversary, consider the following statement:

- 1. A grand statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose will be installed at India Gate.
- 2. Until the installation is completed, a hologram of Netaji will be projected at the site of the statue.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

41. Which of the following Statements is/are correct about Koyla Darpan?

1. It is a portal to share key performance indicators of coal sector.
2. It has been launched by Secretary, Ministry of Coal.

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

42. Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) of India functions under which of the following ministries?

- A. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
- B. Ministry of Rural Development
- C. Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- D. Ministry of Home Affairs

Answer: C

43. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct about the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar?

1. Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management (in the Institutional category) and (ii) Professor Vinod Sharma (in the Individual category) have been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for their excellent work in Disaster Management for the year 2022.
2. The award is announced every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

44. Which of the following day is celebrated as National Girl Child Day?

- A. 24th January
- B. 23rd January
- C. 11th October
- D. 8th March

Answer: A

45. With reference to Beating Retreat ceremony of Republic day Celebrations, consider the following statements:

1. Abide With Me, the Christian hymn has been dropped from Beating Retreat ceremony
2. The ceremony will end with Sare Jahan Se Accha by the Buglers.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

46. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct about All India Services-

1. The Lok Sabha being the directly elected house has overriding power over the Rajya Sabha for the establishment of an all India service.
2. The T.S.R. Subramanian Committee had recommended the creation of a new All India Service pertaining to the aspects of environment & ecology.
3. Currently there are three such services, including the Indian Forest Service.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below-

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only

D. 1 only

Answer: B

47. With reference to the One District One Product Scheme, consider the following statements:

1. It aims to boost the economy of the region district by district through encouraging indigenous and specialised products of each district.
2. The programme providing loans to local production units, artisans and farmers.

Which of the following statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 Nor 2

Answer: C

48. Which of the following city will host the 12th edition of prestigious biennial defence exhibition Def Expo 2022?

- A. Surat
- B. Ahmedabad
- C. Lucknow
- D. Gandhinagar

Answer: D

49. With reference to the revamped Central Government Health Scheme and Mobile App MyCGHS, consider the following statements:

1. It will benefit more than 40 lakhs beneficiaries (both in-service and retired personnel) with real-time information from the convenience of their homes.
2. All the CGHS beneficiaries can seek expert advice directly through teleconsultation.
3. It was launched by Prime Minister of India.

Which of the following statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only

B. 2 and 3 only

C. 1 and 3 only

D. All of the above

Answer: A

50. Which of the following statement(s) is/are not true about Padma Awards?

1. They were not given during the years 1978 and 1979 and 1993 to 1997.
2. They are conferred on the recommendations made by the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister.
3. Government of India announced Padma Awards 2022 on the occasion of Republic Day.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. None of the Above

Answer - D

51. Which of the following International Organisation recently approved a loan of USD 125 million to the West Bengal Government to support Social Protection Service?

- A. UNESCO
- B. Asian Infrastructure Investment bank
- C. Asian Development Bank
- D. World Bank

Answer: D

52. Which of the following Mobile app was recently launched by Government of India for free digital access of Budget documents?

- A. Union Budget Mobile App
- B. Central Budget Mobile App
- C. Complete Budget Mobile App
- D. None of the Above

Answer - A

53. With reference to Lala Lajpat Rai, which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?

1. He was born on 28th January, 1865 in a small village named Dhudike in Punjab's Moga district.
2. He was also called 'Punjab Kesari' and 'Lion of Punjab'.
3. He founded the Servants of People Society in 1921

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. All of the Above

Answer: D

54. International Customs Day (ICD) is observed every year on which of the following dates?

- A. 26 January
- B. 25 January
- C. 23 January
- D. 24 January

Answer: A

55. With reference to Air India, which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?

1. It was founded as Tata Airlines in 1934 by J R D Tata.
2. The government nationalized the carrier in 1956 and passed the Air Corporations Act 1956, which provided the monopoly rights to Air India and its associates.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: D

56. Who among the following is the first woman Rafale pilot of India?

- A. Shivangi Singh
- B. Sunita kamte
- C. Divya Gupta
- D. None Of the Above

Answer: A

57. Which state has got the first scientific bird atlas recently?

- A. Kerala
- B. Maharashtra
- C. Manipur
- D. West Bengal

Answer: A

58. First Graphene research centre of India will be established in which of the following state?

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

Answer: B

59. Which of the following Ministry gives Police Medals For Gallantry?

- A. Union home ministry
- B. Union Defence ministry
- C. Union Finance ministry
- D. None of the Above

Answer: A

60. With reference to Pandit Jasraj, which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?

1. He was awarded with Padma Vibhushan in the year 2000.
2. The International Astronomical Union (IAU) named an asteroid after him, formally known as 2006 VP32, as Pandit Jasraj.
3. He was associated with Mewati gharana of music.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. All of the above

Answer: D

61. With reference to Chakmas and Hajongs communities, Consider the following statements:

1. The Chakmas and Hajongs are tribes found in the state of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and adjoining areas of Assam.
2. The Chakmas and Hajongs of Arunachal Pradesh are migrants from the Chittagong Hill Tracts of erstwhile East Pakistan, now Bangladesh.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

62. Which of the following state government has recently created 13 new districts?

- A. Andhra Pradesh
- B. Maharashtra

- C. Manipur
- D. West Bengal

Answer: A

63. The National Commission for Women (NCW) was established on 31 January 1992 under which of the following Act?

- A. National Commission for Women Act, 1992
- B. National Commission for Women Act, 1991
- C. National Commission for Women Act, 1990
- D. National Commission for Women Act, 1989

Answer: C

64. When is the Martyr's Day Observed in India every Year?

- A. 30th January
- B. 31th January
- C. 29th January
- D. 28th January

Answer: A

65. Which of the following app has been launched to make live proceedings of Parliament accessible to citizens?

- A. Digital Sansad App
- B. Digital Parliament App
- C. Digital Lok Sabha App
- D. Digital Raj Sabha App

Answer: A

INTERNATIONAL

1.66 The New Development Bank (NDB) established by BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) in 2015 has admitted Egypt as a new member.

Why in news?

- India recently welcomed Egypt's entry as the fourth new member of the New Development Bank (NDB) that was established by the BRICS countries six years ago.

About addition of new members into NDB

- NDB's Board of Governors authorized the Bank to conduct formal negotiations with prospective members in late 2020. After a round of successful negotiations, NDB started expanding its membership in September 2021 with the admission of Bangladesh, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Uruguay.
- Egypt is the fourth new member admitted into NDB, further expanding the Bank's global outreach. Egypt is one of the world's fastest-growing countries, a major economy in the African continent and the Middle East region as well as a key player in development finance institutions.

1.67 World's Longest Metro Line Opens in Shanghai, China.

Why in news?

- With the latest inclusion of metro lines, the total length of Shanghai's metro network will extend to 831 km, continuing to be the longest in the world.

About the Metro line in Shanghai

- With the latest inclusion of metro lines, the city will have 20 metro lines with 508 stations.
- According to the metro official, the new line will connect a few of the popular areas of Shanghai including Jiading, Putuo, Jing'an, Huangpu districts and Pudong New.
- Apart from connecting some of the vital places of the city, the authorities also informed that the new metro station will provide convenient connectivity to the city's most renowned tourist attractions and landmarks downtown, including Jing'an Temple and Lujiazui.

1.68 Development of Trincomalee oil tank farm.

Why in news?

- Recently, Sri Lanka's Energy Minister Udaya Gammanpila announced that the Indian Oil Subsidiary Lanka IOC would be given 49% stake in the joint development of the Trincomalee Oil Tank farm, with Ceylon Petroleum Corporation keeping 51%.

About the development

- The CPC has formed a special purpose company, Trinco Petroleum Terminals Ltd, and it is expected to get Cabinet approval this week.
- While the two sides will jointly refurbish 61 of the 99 tanks at the farm, 24 will be developed by CPC and 14 by LIOC. This arrangement is for the next 50 years.
- The next step is three formal agreements: two between CPC and LIOC — one for the joint development and the other for the 24 tanks to CPC — and the third between the Sri Lankan government and LIOC.

1.69 France removes European Union flag from Arc de Triomphe.

Why in news?

- French authorities took down a temporary installation of the European Union flag from the Arc de Triomphe monument in Paris recently, after rightwing opponents of President Emmanuel Macron accused him of “erasing” French identity.

About the flag

- The giant blue flag was raised in place of a French flag on New Year’s Eve to mark France’s turn at the rotating presidency of the EU Council.

1.70 India's TS Tirumurti assumes new chair of UN Counter-Terrorism Committee.

Why in news?

- TS Tirumurti, India's permanent representative to the United Nations was named the new Chair of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC)

About TS Tirumurti

- Prior to taking up his current position as Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, in May 2020, Tirumurti served as Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, handling the Economic Relations portfolio (which included, inter alia, the Gulf and the Arab World, Africa, and India's Development Partnership), according to UNSC statement.

1.71 World Braille Day observed on 4th January.

Why in news?

- Every year on January 04, World Braille Day is observed to raise the importance of Braille, which serves as a communication medium for blind and partially sighted people.

About the Braille Day

- This day is marked as the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, who was the inventor of Braille, born on January 04, 1809, in France.
- The day was first initiated by the United Nations General Assembly, which acts as Braille Literacy month in the year 2019. The event is celebrated throughout the month of January to bring up the importance of Braille and Braille Literacy.

1.72 Kazakhstan's Government resigns as fuel protests rage.

Why in news?

- Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev accepted the government's resignation recently after a fuel price increase in the oil-producing Central Asian country triggered protests in which nearly 100 police were injured.

About the incident

- Police used tear gas and stun grenades to drive hundreds of protesters out of the main square in Almaty, the former Soviet republic's biggest city.
- Clashes resumed after the Cabinet resigned.
- Atameken, Kazakhstan's business lobby group, said its members were reporting cases of attacks on banks, stores and restaurants.
- Kazakhstan is a tightly controlled country which cultivates an image of political stability, helping it attract hundreds of billions of dollars of foreign investment in its oil and metals industries over three decades of independence.

1.73 Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) names Al-Ghais as Secretary general.

Why in news?

- Al-Ghais has been named as the secretary general of OPEC

About Al-Ghais

- Al-Ghais, who was Kuwait's OPEC governor from 2017 to June 2021, serves as a deputy managing director of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC).
- His decades of experience in the industry includes stints in Beijing and London for the state oil corporation.

1.74 Poet Maya Angelou becomes first Black woman to appear on US coin.

Why in news?

- The US Mint has begun shipping the first coins with Maya Angelou's likeness on the American quarter, a 25-cent piece. She is the first Black woman to appear on a US coin.

About Poet Maya Angelou

- Angelou, author of "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," will also be the first figure commemorated through the American Women Quarters Program, which was signed into law in January 2021.
- Each 2022 quarter is designed to reflect the breadth and depth of accomplishments being celebrated throughout this historic coin program. Maya Angelou, featured on the reverse of this first coin in the series, used words to inspire and uplift.

1.75 POWERGRID and Africa50 in Joint Development Agreement, to pioneer Africa's first transmission PPP project in Kenya.

Why in news?

- Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has signed a Joint Development Agreement with Africa50, the pan-African infrastructure investment platform to continue to develop the Kenya Transmission Project on a public-private partnership basis.

About the project

- The project entails the development, financing, construction, and operation of the 400kV Lessos – Loosuk and 220kV Kisumu – Musaga transmission lines under a public-private partnership (PPP) framework. Once completed, the project will be the first Independent Power Transmission (IPT) in Kenya and will set a reference point in Africa as the first financing of transmission lines on a PPP basis. This Project will also improve both the supply and reliability of power transmission in Western Kenya and further create a demonstration effect to help increase private sector investments into the expansion of Africa's power transmission networks, which is critical to bridging the continent's electricity access gap.
- In this development partnership, POWERGRID, one of the world's leading electric transmission utility companies will provide technical and operational know-how to the project, while Africa50 will bring its project development and finance expertise and will act as a bridge between the Kenyan government and private investors.
- The signing of this agreement underscores POWERGRID and Africa50's commitment to continue to dedicate resources to accelerate development activities on the project until financial close.

1.76 Alikhan Smailov named Kazakhstan's Prime Minister.

Why in news?

- Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev nominated Alikhan Smailov for prime minister recently, and the lower house of parliament swiftly voted him in during a session broadcast live on state television.

About Alikhan Smailov

- Alikhan Smailov, 49, served as first deputy prime minister in the previous cabinet which Tokayev dismissed last week amid violent unrest in the oil-rich Central Asian nation.
- Kazakh security forces have detained 9,900 people over the unrest, Kazakhstan's interior ministry said.

1.77 Man gets genetically-modified pig heart in world-first transplant.

Why in news?

- A US man has become the first person in the world to get a heart transplant from a genetically-modified pig.

About the transplant

- David Bennett, 57, has got the transplant
- Doctors at the University of Maryland Medical Centre were granted a special dispensation by the US medical regulator to carry out the procedure, on the basis that Mr Bennett - who has terminal heart disease - would otherwise have died.

1.78 WHO recommends two new drugs, Baricitinib and Sotrovimab to treat COVID-19.

Why in news?

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended two drugs, baricitinib and sotrovimab, for treatment of Covid-19.

About the drugs

- **Baricitinib**, which is also used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, has been “strongly recommended” for patients with severe or critical Covid-19 in combination with corticosteroids. It is part of a class of drugs called Janus kinase (JAK) inhibitors that suppress the overstimulation of the immune system. It is an oral drug, and provides an alternative to other arthritis drugs called Interleukin-6 receptor blockers, recommended by WHO in July 2021.
- **Sotrovimab**, developed by GlaxoSmithKline with US partner Vir Biotechnology Inc, is an investigational monoclonal antibody for use in treating conditions caused by coronavirus. The WHO has conditionally recommended its use for treating mild or moderate Covid-19 in patients who are at high risk of hospitalisation. These include patients who are older, are immunocompromised, and have underlying conditions like diabetes, hypertension and obesity, and are unvaccinated. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) too has approved an emergency use authorization (EUA) for the therapy for the treatment of mild to moderate Covid-19 in patients above 12 years.

1.79 Black Diamond from Space 'Enigma' Expected to Fetch \$6.8 Mn at London Auctions.

Why in news?

- A 555.55-carat black diamond, which is believed to have emerged from an asteroid colliding with Earth has been put up for sale by auction house Sotheby's Dubai.

About Enigma

- Dubbed as a treasure from interstellar space, the diamond is named "The Enigma" for which bidding will start from February 3 till February 9.
- This black diamond was listed in the 2006 Guinness Book of World Records as the largest cut diamond in the world.

1.80 Nusantara has been selected as the new capital of Indonesia.

Why in news?

- The capital of Indonesia is being shifted from Jakarta to East Kalimantan, and will be called **Nusantara**.

About the news

- Indonesia passed a bill replacing its capital Jakarta with East Kalimantan, situated to the east of Borneo Island. The new capital city of the country will be called Nusantara.
- Plans to relocate the government from Jakarta – a bustling metropolis of 10 million people that suffers from chronic congestion, floods, pollution, and is sinking because of over-extraction of groundwater – have been floated by multiple presidents, but none have made it this far.

1.81 The Davos Agenda 2022 brings together world leaders to address the state of the world.

Why in news?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the World Economic Forum's Davos Agenda via video conferencing.

About the address

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Davos Agenda where he said that India has given the entire world a "bouquet of hope". "The bouquet contains - trust towards democracy, technology to empower 21st century and talent & temperament of us Indians," he said.
- The WEF's annual meeting, which has been taking place in the Swiss ski resort town of Davos for 50 years now, could not take place in 2021 due to the Coronavirus pandemic and has been deferred till early summer this year.
- However, the virtual summit 'Davos Agenda' summit would be held for the second consecutive year on the dates originally scheduled for the physical annual meeting.

1.82 A Green Partnership: India & Denmark to work on green fuels including green hydrogen.

Why in News

- The Joint Committee of both India & Denmark discussed countries' national strategic priorities and developments in Science, Technology, and Innovation relations and taking rapid strides towards sustainability goals, especially on green fuels including green hydrogen.

About Green Strategic Partnership

- The Green Strategic Partnership significantly expands and strengthens bilateral relations and cooperation between India and Denmark, which established diplomatic relations more than 70 years ago and trade relations 400 years ago.
- The committee emphasized on the importance of developing bilateral collaboration on mission-driven research, innovation, and technology development, such as climate and green transition, energy, water, waste, food, and so on, as agreed by the two Prime Ministers when they adopted the Green Strategic Partnership – Action Plan 2020-2025.

- The collaboration represents the two countries' commitment to meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and contributing to the global climate crisis' mitigation by focusing on the implementation of the Paris Agreement.

1.83 Prajakta Koli becomes UNDP India's first youth climate champion.

Why in News?

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India named famous Indian Youtuber and actor Prajakta Koli as India's first ever 'Youth Climate Champion'.
- The title has been conferred to her following her contribution towards mental health, women's rights and girl child education through various global social campaigns.
- About Prajakta Koli:
- Prajakta Koli is known by her YouTube Channel Mostlysane, is an Indian YouTuber and actress who makes comedy videos. Her videos are focused mostly on relatable and observational comedy related to daily life situations.
- She has appeared in the short film Khayali Pulao and starred in the web show Mismatched.
- She joined Google.org to aid grants to non-profits addressing economic inequities faced by women and girls along with other famous youth icons including Shakira, Amanda Gorman, Naomi Osaka.

1.84 World Economic Forum's Virtual Davos Agenda Summit 2022.

Why in news?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Davos Agenda virtually and stated about COVID-19, Environment change, cryptocurrency and other reforms and initiatives taken by the Indian government for ease of doing business.
- The theme of the event is "The State of the World."

Important Facts Mentioned by PM Modi:

- India constitutes 70 percent of the global population, but it takes up power commission of only 5 percent.
- In December 2021 alone, more than 4.4 billion transactions have been done through UPI (Unified Payments Interface) in India.
- India is the world's 3rd largest pharma producer.
- More than 50 lakh software developers are working in India. Currently, India has the 3rd largest number of Unicorns in the world. More than 10 thousand start-ups have been registered in the last 6 months.
- He introduced the 'P3 (Pro-Planet People) movement' that underlines India's climate change commitments.
- He recalled the idea of 'Mission L.I.F.E (Lifestyle for Environment)', which was introduced by him at the COP26 (26th Conference of Parties) climate summit in 2021.

1.85 'Anxiety' voted children's word of the year for 2021.

Why in News

- Children have chosen 'anxiety' as their word of the year for 2021, according to new research from Oxford University Press (OUP). In comparison, teachers have chosen 'resilience'.

- OUP has drawn its results from the analysis of the evolution of children’s language, and how they use it to reflect their emotions and experiences, for over a decade now.
- It also drew from the largest children’s English language corpus in the world, the Oxford Children’s Corpus.

1.86 India-Central Asia Virtual Summit.

Why In News

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi hosted the first India-Central Asia Summit in virtual format on 27 January 2022.
- The virtual summit saw the participation of the five presidents — Kazakhstan’s **Kassym-Jomart Tokayev**, Uzbekistan’s **Shavkat Mirziyoyev**, **Emomali Rahmon** of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan’s **Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow** and **Sadyr Japarov** of Kyrgyz Republic.
- This first India-Central Asia coincided with the 30th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Central Asian countries.

Why it is Important?

- Two days after China held a virtual summit with Central Asian countries, India too stepped in and Prime Minister Narendra Modi pitched for “an integrated approach for regional connectivity and cooperation for the next 30 years.
- The Leaders agreed to institutionalize the Summit mechanism by deciding to hold it every 2 years and also agreed on regular meetings of Foreign Ministers, Trade Ministers, Culture Ministers and Secretaries of the Security Council to prepare the groundwork for the Summit meetings.
- **An India-Central Asia Secretariat in New Delhi** would be set up to support the new mechanism.
- Prime Minister Modi also discussed the evolving situation in Afghanistan with the Central Asian leaders. The leaders reiterated their strong support for a peaceful, secure and stable Afghanistan with a truly representative and inclusive government.

1.87 Brand Finance 2022 Global 500 Report: Apple retains title of world's most valuable brand.

Why In News

- Apple has retained its position as the most valuable brand in 2022 as well, according to the Brand Finance 2022 Global 500 report. Following Apple, Amazon and Google have been named among the top-three most valuable brands in the year.
- The brand valuation of Apple was recorded at \$355.1 billion in 2022, which is an increase of 35% from last year.
- This is the highest brand value ever recorded in the Brand Finance Global 500 ranking history.

Other key facts

- The Indian conglomerate Tata Group has emerged as the most valuable brand from India and also in South Asia.
- It is the only brand from the country in the top 100. The Global Rank of Tata Group 78. The brand value of Tata Group is US\$23.9 billion.
- TikTok (18th) has been named the world’s fastest-growing brand in the list. Its brand value increased from US\$18.7 billion in 2021 to US\$59.0 billion in 2022.

- Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has become the second most valuable brand in the IT services sector globally, While Infosys got third spot, Wipro (7th), HCL (8th), Tech Mahindra (15th) and LTI (22nd).
- Tech remained the most valuable industry in the list in terms of sector. This was followed by Retail, Banking, Media and Telecoms in top 5 respectively.

1.88 India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2022 approved at 2nd ASEAN Digital Ministers (ADGMIN) meeting.

Why In News

- The 2nd ASEAN Digital Ministers (ADGMIN) meeting with India held on a virtual platform.
- Shri Devusinh Chauhan, Minister of State for Communications (MoSC) and Admiral Tin Aung San, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Myanmar co-chaired the meeting.
- The ADGMIN is an annual meeting of Telecom Ministers of 10 ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) countries - **Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam** and **dialogue partner countries - Australia, Canada, China, EU, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russia, UK and US.**
- The meeting discussed and deliberated various matters relevant to strengthening regional digital cooperation in the spirit of digital inclusion and integration.

Why it is Important

- Shri Devusinh Chauhan emphasized that Information and Communication Technologies enable and strengthen democratic systems and institutions through enhanced engagement between citizens and the state.
- Use of Information and communications technology (ICT) promote free speech, human rights and the free flow of information besides expanding citizens' opportunities to participate in decision-making process and have potential to transform lives of people living in rural areas.
- The Digital Work Plan 2022 includes system for combating the use of stolen and counterfeit mobile handsets, Wi-Fi Access network interface for nationwide public internet, the capacity building and knowledge sharing in emerging areas in the field of Information and Communication Technologies such as Internet of Things (IoT), 5G, Advanced Satellite Communication, Cyber Forensics, etc. The ongoing and proposed projects in ICTs, will strengthen collaboration between India and ASEAN by leveraging complementary strengths of each other.

About ASEAN

- Headquarter – Jakarta , Indonesia
- Founded – 8th august 1967, Bangkok , Thailand
- Founders – Narciso Ramos, Abdul Razak Hussein, S. Rajaratnam, Adam malik, Thanat khoman.

1.89 Largest Canal lock in the world unveils in Netherlands.

Why in news?

- Dutch King Willen-Alexander opened the largest lock in the world opened with the click of a mouse.
- The 500-meter (1,640-foot) long and 70-meter-wide lock in **Ijmuiden**, a small port town connecting the North Sea Canal to the port of Amsterdam.
- The huge infrastructure project began in 2016.

Benefits

- It was designed to allow large modern cargo ships to reach the port of Amsterdam.
- The structure is also deep enough that ships no longer have to wait for a favorable water level to enter the canal.
- The new lock will not only benefit the economy, but thanks to the technical expertise involved, sea level rise and salt water inflow have also been taken into account,”

1.90 Sergio Mattarella re-elected as president of Italy.

Why In News

- Mattarella, 80, agrees to serve a second seven-year term after political parties fail to find an acceptable alternative.
- He had long ruled out remaining in office, but with the country’s political stability at risk, he changed his mind in the face of appeals from parliamentary leaders who met him at the presidential palace earlier in the day.



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PRACTISE MCQS

1. The New Development Bank (NDB) established by BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) in 2015 has admitted which of the following as a new member?

- A. Oman
- B. Azerbaijan
- C. Egypt
- D. Sri Lanka

Answer: C

2. World's Longest Metro line has recently opened in which of the following countries?

- A. Japan
- B. China
- C. Iran
- D. Azerbaijan

Answer: B

3. Trincomalee oil tank farm is located in which of the following countries?

- A. Oman
- B. Israel
- C. Bangladesh
- D. Sri Lanka

Answer: D

4. The monument Arc de Triomphe is located in which of the following countries?

- A. France
- B. Switzerland
- C. Sweden
- D. Austria

Answer: A

5. Who among the following has assumed new chair of UN Counter-Terrorism Committee?

- A. Nirupama Rao
- B. Jyotinder Nath Dixit
- C. Venu Rajamony
- D. TS Tirumurti

Answer: D

6. The World Braille Day is observed on which of the following days?

- A. 1st January
- B. 2nd January

- C. 3rd January
- D. 4th January

Answer: D

7. Recently, Government of which of the following country has resigned as fuel protests raged?

- A. Uzbekistan
- B. Kazakhstan
- C. Oman
- D. Bahrain

Answer: B

8. Who among the following has been named as the secretary general of OPEC recently?

- A. Rebecca Sta Maria
- B. Wang Wenbin
- C. Nayef Falah Mubarak Al-Hajraf
- D. Al-Ghais

Answer: D

9. Who has become first Black woman to appear on US coin?

- A. Fannie Lou Hamer
- B. Condoleezza Rice
- C. Shirley Chisholm
- D. Poet Maya Angelou

Answer: D

10. Consider the following statements about POWERGRID and Africa50 in Joint Development Agreement:

1. Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has signed a Joint Development Agreement with Africa50, the pan-African infrastructure investment platform to continue to develop the Kenya Transmission Project on a public-private partnership basis.
2. The project entails the development, financing, construction, and operation of the 400kV Lessos – Loosuk and 220kV Kisumu – Musaga transmission lines under a public-private partnership (PPP) framework.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

11. Alikhan Smailov has been named as the Prime Minister of which of the following countries?

- A. Iran
- B. Uzbekistan
- C. Kazakhstan
- D. Turkmenistan

Answer: C

12. In which of the following country's a man got genetically-modified pig heart in worlds-first transplant?

- A. USA
- B. Israel
- C. Japan
- D. Mexico

Answer: A

13. The World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended two drugs, baricitinib and sotrovimab, for treatment of which of the following?

- A. Covid19
- B. Leprosy
- C. Cancer
- D. Dengue

Answer: A

14. What is 'The Enigma' which was recently seen in news?

- A. Black diamond
- B. A new covid-19 Variant
- C. Surface to air missile by China
- D. Newly discovered exoplanet

Answer: A

15. Nusantara has been selected as the new capital of which of the following countries?

- A. Indonesia
- B. Myanmar
- C. Malaysia
- D. Laos

Answer: A

16. The Davos Agenda 2022 is associated with which of the following bodies?

- A. International Labour Organisation
- B. World Bank
- C. Shanghai Cooperation Organization
- D. World Economic Forum

Answer: D

17. With which of the following countries has India recently discussed national strategic priorities and developments in Science, Technology, and Innovation relations and taking rapid strides towards sustainability goals, especially on green fuels including green hydrogen?

- A. Australia
- B. Sweden
- C. Japan
- D. Denmark

Answer: D

18. Which of the following famous Indian YouTuber has been appointed by UNDP India as its 1st ever 'Youth Climate Champion'?

- A. Bhuvan Bam
- B. Prajakta Koli
- C. Carryminati
- D. Sandeep Maheshwari

Answer: B

19. With reference to 'Davos Agenda summit 2022' & PM Narendra Modi's address, consider the following statements:

1. The theme of the event is The State of the World.
2. India is the world's 5rd largest pharma producer.
3. India has the 4th largest number of Unicorns in the world.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 2 and 3 only

Answer: A

20. Which of the following has been selected as the "Children's Word of the Year 2021" by Oxford University Press?

- A. Resilience
- B. Anxiety
- C. Vaccine
- D. Challenging

Answer: B

21. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct about India-Central Asia Virtual Summit 2022?

1. The leaders of all participant countries agreed to institutionalize the Summit mechanism by deciding to hold it every 2 years.
2. An India-Central Asia Secretariat in New Delhi would be set up to support the new mechanism.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

22. Which of the following Brand retained the title of world's most valuable brand according to the Brand Finance 2022 Global 500 Report?

- A. Apple
- B. Amazon
- C. Google
- D. TCS

Answer: A

23. Which among the following is not the Member of ASEAN?

- A. India
- B. Indonesia
- C. Cambodia
- D. Philippines

Answer: A

24. The world's largest canal lock has recently been unveiled in which of the following country?

- A. Switzerland
- B. Netherlands
- C. Australia
- D. Germany

Answer: B

25. Who is has been re-elected as President of Italy to a second seven-year term?

- A. Sergio Mattarella
- B. Markle Sijog
- C. Mariana Sergi
- D. None of the Above

Answer: A

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1.91 China develops Artificial Intelligence 'prosecutor' that can press charges with '97% accuracy'.

Why in news?

- China has been making rapid advancements in the technology field. And now, Chinese scientists have claimed that they have developed a machine that can charge people with crime using artificial intelligence. This is the world's first such machine.

About 'AI prosecutor' by China

- The artificial intelligence 'prosecutor' received training for five years – from 2015 to 2020 – during which it went through 17,000 cases. The Chinese researchers claimed that it was able to identify and press charges for common crimes.
- The AI “prosecutor” can charge people with over 97 per cent accuracy, the researchers further claimed, adding that it works on verbal description.
- The machine was built and tested by the Shanghai Pudong People's Procuratorate, the country's largest and busiest district prosecution office.
- It can also identify “dissent” against the state.
- It can press charges based on 1,000 human-generated case description texts.

1.92 Russia test-fires new hypersonic Tsirkon missiles from frigate, submarine.

Why in news?

- Russia test-fired around 10 new Tsirkon (Zircon) hypersonic cruise missiles from a frigate and two more from a submarine.
- Russian President Vladimir Putin has lauded the weapon as part of a new generation of unrivalled arms systems.

1.93 South Korea to develop technology for artificial sun 'KSTAR' by 2026.

Why in news?

- The South Korean government is planning to develop a technology for Korea's first artificial sun 'KSTAR' to maintain 100 million degrees for 300 seconds by 2026.

About 'KSTAR'

- The Korean government is planning to develop a technology for Korea's first artificial sun 'KSTAR' to maintain 100 million degrees for 300 seconds by 2026. The 300 seconds is the minimum time required for the commercialization of nuclear fusion technology.
- The Ministry of Science and ICT announced recently that it held the 16th National Fusion Committee at the Korea Institute of Fusion Energy and finalize the '4th basic plan of nuclear fusion energy development (2022-2026)'. The science ministry sets goals and directions of its policies for nuclear fusion energy development every 5 years.
- According to the plan, it will continue to improve operating technology in the field of KSTAR experiments, which are showing great results such as maintaining 100 million degrees of ultra-high temperature plasma (for 30 seconds in 2021), and will develop technology to maintain the temperature for 300 seconds by 2026.

- The nuclear fusion is the basic principle that the artificial sun generates light and heat. The government is aiming to produce power such as electricity by artificially implementing this principle on Earth with KSTAR.

1.94 Rajnath Singh Inaugurates Kalpana Chawla Centre for Research In Space Science And Technology At Chandigarh University.

Why in news?

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday inaugurated the Kalpana Chawla Centre for Research in Space Science & Technology at Chandigarh University and said that it is an important step towards strengthening the space sector of the country.

About the centre

- The new research centre at Chandigarh University has been established with the objective of training students in space science.
- He also launched a Scholarship Scheme, worth Rs 10 crore, for the wards of Defence Personnel of the three Services.

1.95 Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC) releases 'Code of Practice for securing consumer Internet of Things (IoT)'.

Why in news?

- In order to secure Consumer Internet of Things (IoT) devices, Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC), under Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications, has released a report "Code of Practice for Securing Consumer Internet of Things (IoT)" as a baseline requirement aligned with global standards and best practices.

About 'Code of Practice for securing consumer Internet of Things (IoT)'

- These guidelines will help in securing consumer IoT devices & ecosystem as well as managing vulnerabilities. This report is intended for use by IoT device manufacturers, Service providers/ system integrators and application developers etc.
- Internet of Things (IoT) is one of the fastest emerging technology across the globe, providing enormous beneficial opportunities for society, industry, and consumers. It is being used to create smart infrastructure in various verticals such as Power, Automotive, Safety & Surveillance, Remote Health Management, Agriculture, Smart Homes and Smart Cities etc, using connected devices. IoT is benefitted by recent advances in several technologies such as sensors, communication technologies (Cellular and non-cellular), AI/ ML, Cloud / Edge computing etc.
- As per the projections, there may be 26.4 billion IoT devices in service globally by 2026. Out of this approximately 20% will be on cellular technologies. Ratio of Consumer and Enterprise IoT devices may be 45% : 55%.

1.96 Launch of Smart cities and Academia Towards Action & Research (SAAR).

Why in news?

- As part of the Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav (AKAM) celebrations across the country, the Smart Cities Mission, MoHUA has launched "Smart cities and Academia Towards Action & Research (SAAR)" program, a joint initiative of MoHUA, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and leading Indian academic institutions of the country.

About Smart cities and Academia Towards Action & Research (SAAR)

- Under the program, 15 premier architecture & planning institutes of the country will be working with Smart Cities to document landmark projects undertaken by the Smart Cities Mission.
- The documents will capture the learnings from best practices, provide opportunities for engagement on urban development projects to students, and enable real-time information flow between urban practitioners and academia.

SAAR Process Flow:

- MoHUA and NIUA will facilitate linkages between the Institutions and Smart Cities for specific landmark projects that are to be documented under the program. The Institutes will document the outcomes of these projects, on how they are impacting the lives of urban citizens. Team of students, mentors from these premier institutions will be visiting these 47 smart cities to understand/document these projects in the month of January/February, 2022.
- The workflow of the compendium being prepared by SAAR will include field Investigation, data analysis & documentation, national research methodology workshop for the participating students, peer review of first draft, final submission by research students to their respective institutions, institutional submission of research to NIUA, and leading to the launch of compendium of 75 urban projects by June 2022.

1.97 New Covid-19 variant 'IHU' discovered in France, has more mutations than Omicron.**Why in news?**

- Scientists in France have identified a new strain of coronavirus with more mutations than the Omicron variant.

About the new variant

- Named IHU, the B.1.640.2 variant was discovered by the academics at institute IHU Mediterranee Infection.
- According to the researchers, the new variant contains 46 mutations – even more than Omicron.

1.98 Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) to organize Startup India Innovation Week.**Why in news?**

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry is set to organize the Startup India Innovation Week from January 10th to 16th 2022.

About Startup India Innovation Week

- This week-long virtual innovation celebration aims to commemorate the 75th year of India's independence 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' and is designed to showcase the spread and depth of entrepreneurship across India.
- Startup India Innovation Week will have sessions ranging from topics such as Enhancing Market Access Opportunities, Discussions with Industry leaders, Best Practices by States, Capacity Building of Enablers, Reverse Pitching by Incubators, Technology Exhibitions, Corporate Connects and more.
- The programme is expected to bring together top policy makers, industry, academia, investors, startups, and all ecosystem enablers from across the globe.

1.99 A star with a heartbeat & without a magnetic field discovered.

Why in news?

- A group of Indian and international scientists have spotted a peculiar binary star that shows heartbeat but no pulsations contrary to the norm of binary stars of sporting both heartbeats as well as pulsations. This star is called **HD73619 in Praesepe (M44)**, located in the Cancer constellation, one of the closest open star clusters to the Earth.

About star with a heartbeat and without a magnetic field

- A total of about 180 heartbeat stars are known to date. The name 'Heartbeat' stems from the resemblance of the path of the star to an electrocardiogram of the human heart. These are the binary star systems where each star travels in a highly elliptical orbit around the common centre of mass, and the distance between the two stars varies drastically as they orbit each other. When the stars are at closest passage of binary systems, a sudden increase in integrated brightness with amplitude of the order of several parts-per-thousand (ppt) is observed. As the components move apart, the light variation falls and finally becomes flat, indicating that combined flux is reduced, resulting in alternating peaks and troughs in their light curves. The pulsational activity of such stars is due to the oscillations in the component stars when they are at their closest approach.
- A team of 33 scientists, led by Dr. Santosh Joshi from Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), an autonomous institution under the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Govt of India, carried out analysis of photometric and high-resolution spectroscopic observations of HD73619 obtained using 8 ground-based telescopes located in different parts of the globe. They have found that HD73619 is the first member of heartbeat systems in binary chemically peculiar stars that does not show any pulsational/vibrational activity at their closest approach.

1.100 Made-in-India test kit to detect Omicron gets ICMR nod.

Why in news?

- India's home-grown testing kit OmiSure, developed by the Tata Medical and Diagnostics (Tata MD) to identify the Omicron variant of Covid-19 in samples taken from the nose and throat, was approved by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) recently.

About OmiSure

- Apart from identifying the B.1.1.529 (Omicron) variant, the kit can also detect any other circulating SARS-CoV-2 variants.
- The company said the unique test design developed by scientists at Tata MD is a single tube, fully multiplexed test (provisional patent application filed). Therefore, it has two checks in place for Omicron detection without compromising the ability to detect other SARS-CoV-2 variants.
- The kit evaluated in partnership with the ICMR reported 100 per cent sensitivity and 99.25 per cent specificity for detection of variants of SARS-CoV-2, including Omicron.
- OmiSure is the first test to use a combination of two S-gene viral targets to identify Omicron. The first target is based on S-gene dropout or S-gene target failure (SGTF) and the second target is based on S-gene mutation amplification (SGMA).
- The kit developed by a team headed by Bengaluru-based Dr V Ravi, former head of neurovirology, NIMHANS, and currently head of R&D, Tata MD, is listed on the ICMR website as the only kit approved specifically for Omicron detection.

1.101 Resumption of Television Audience Measurement Ratings for 'News Genre' by BARC.

Why in news?

- In the spirit of the TRP Committee Report and Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI's) recommendation, Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) has undertaken revision in its processes, protocols, oversight mechanism and initiated changes in governance structure etc. The reconstitution of the Board and the Technical Committee to allow for the induction of Independent Members have also been initiated by BARC. A permanent Oversight Committee has also been formed. The access protocols for data have been revamped and tightened.

About Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC)

- Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) India is a **Joint Industry Body** founded by stakeholder bodies that represent Broadcasters, Advertisers, and Advertising and Media Agencies.
- Built upon a robust and future-ready technology backbone, BARC India owns and manages a transparent, accurate, and inclusive TV audience measurement system.
- Apart from the currency products to the TV industry, BARC India also provides a suite of Insight products designed for Broadcasters, Advertisers and Agencies.
- The Big Data and Insights generated by BARC India powers efficient media spends and content decisions in a highly dynamic and growing television sector.

1.102 Scientists discover giant gaseous planet almost three times larger than Jupiter called TOI-2180 b.

Why in News

- A new Jupiter-like planet that is around 379 light years away from Earth has been discovered through NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS).
- NASA launched TESS in 2018 on an all-sky survey mission to help discover exoplanets around nearby bright stars.

About Planet

- Citizen scientist Tom Jacobs of Bellevue, Washington (United States-US) has discovered a new gaseous planet called 'TOI-2180 b' from NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite, or TESS.
- It is almost three times more massive than Jupiter but has the same diameter
- The finding was published in the Astronomical Journal.

PRACTICE MCQS

1. Consider the following statements about recently developed 'AI prosecutor':

1. It has been developed by the United States of America.
2. The AI "prosecutor" can charge people with over 97 per cent accuracy, the researchers further claimed, adding that it works on verbal description.

Which of the statements given is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only

- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

2. The Korean government is planning to develop a technology for Korea's first artificial sun 'KSTAR' to maintain 100 million degrees for 300 seconds by which of the following years?

- A. 2023
- B. 2024
- C. 2025
- D. 2026

Answer: D

3. Which of the following countries has recently test-fired around 10 new Tsirkon (Zircon) hypersonic cruise missiles?

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

Answer: A

4. Rajnath Singh inaugurated Kalpana Chawla Centre for Research In Space Science And Technology at which of the following location?

- A. Chandigarh University
- B. Sharda University
- C. Vellore Institute of Technology
- D. AMITY University

Answer: A

5. With reference to the 'Code of Practice for securing consumer Internet of Things (IoT)', consider the following statements:

- 1. These have been released by NITI Aayog.
- 2. These guidelines will help in securing consumer IoT devices & ecosystem as well as managing vulnerabilities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

6. With reference to the recently launched Smart cities and Academia Towards Action & Research (SAAR) program, consider the following statements:

1. It is a joint initiative of MoHUA, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and leading Indian academic institutions of the country.
2. Under the program, 15 premier architecture & planning institutes of the country will be working with Smart Cities to document landmark projects undertaken by the Smart Cities Mission.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

7. New Covid-19 variant 'IHU' has recently been discovered in which of the following countries?

- A. Mexico
- B. France
- C. Spain
- D. Oman

Answer: B

8. With reference to the 'Startup India Innovation Week', consider the following statements:

1. It will be organised by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
2. It aims to commemorate the 75th year of India's independence 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' and is designed to showcase the spread and depth of entrepreneurship across India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

9. What is HD73619 in Praesepe (M44), recently seen in news?

- A. A tracker id for tigers
- B. A star
- C. A missile by China
- D. None of the above

Answer: B

10. With reference to India's home-grown testing kit OmiSure, consider the following statements:

1. It has been developed by the Tata Medical and Diagnostics (Tata MD) to identify the Omicron variant of Covid-19.

2. Apart from identifying the B.1.1.529 (Omicron) variant, the kit can also detect any other circulating SARS-CoV-2 variants.

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

11. With reference to Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC), consider the following statements:

- 1. Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) India is a Joint Industry Body founded by stakeholder bodies that represent Broadcasters, Advertisers, and Advertising and Media Agencies.
- 2. Built upon a robust and future-ready technology backbone, BARC India owns and manages a transparent, accurate, and inclusive TV audience measurement system.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

12. Which of the following Journals published about the Jupiter-like gaseous Exoplanet TOI-2180 b?

- A. Astronomical Journal
- B. Astrophysical Journal
- C. Planetary and Space Science
- D. Earth and planetary Science

Answer: A

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PERSON IN NEWS

1.103 Anupam Ray to be India's new Permanent Representative at UN Conference on Disarmament.

Why in news?

- Senior diplomat Anupam Ray has been appointed as India's next permanent representative to the UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said recently.
- Mr. Ray, a 1994-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, is currently serving as a joint secretary in the MEA's headquarters in Delhi.
- Ray will replace Pankaj Sharma. Sharma, a 1991 batch Indian Foreign Service officer, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Mexico.

1.104 Director General Virender Singh Pathania takes charge as 24th Indian Coast Guard Chief.

Why in news?

- Director General Virender Singh Pathania took over as the 24th Chief of the Indian Coast Guard recently.

About General VS Pathania

- A qualified helicopter pilot, the top official of India's Coast Guard has held several key roles afloat and ashore in a career spanning 36 years.
- The Flag Officer has commanded all classes of Coast Guard ships such as Inshore Patrol Vessel 'Ranijindan', Offshore Patrol Vessel 'Vigraha' and Advanced Offshore Patrol Vessel 'Sarang'.
- An alumnus of the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington and National Defence College, New Delhi, he also holds a Master's Degree in Defence & Strategic Studies from the University of Madras. In addition to this, he has undergone a specialization in Search and Rescue and port operations with the US Coast Guard.
- Director General Pathania is also recipient of President's Tatrakshak Medal for Distinguished service, Tatrakshak Medal for gallantry and Director General Indian Coast Guard Commendation.

1.105 Union home Secretary releases manuals for campaign against cyber crimes.

Why in news?

- Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla recently released a set of manuals and a newsletter of the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) as part of a campaign to check cybercrimes.

About the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre

- The manuals and the newsletter prepared by the Cyber and Information Security Division (CIS) of the Union home ministry are 'Cyber Hygiene for Cyber Space – Dos and Don'ts – Basic Manual', 'Cyber Hygiene for Cyber Space – Dos and Don'ts – Advanced Manual' and the quarterly newsletter 'Cyber Pravah'.
- The manuals are part of a focused awareness campaign for prevention of cyber-crimes and to inculcate cyber hygiene in rural areas, industrial bodies, and the general public.

- 'CyberPravah' covers introduction to I4C, various activities of I4C in two quarters (from April-June, 2021 and July-September, 2021), cybercrime trends and patterns, statistics, facilities created by I4C, platforms for reporting and addressing cyber-crimes to make all stakeholders aware, and to provide assistance in the area of cyber-crime prevention, detection and investigation.
- It also aims to create awareness about recent developments in the field of cyber-crimes and cyber-crime terminology.
- The I4C was set up under the CIS division in 2018 as an agency for coordinating at the central level and to support states and union territories by providing a common framework in their fight against cybercrimes.
- The I4C is spreading mass awareness through various social media handles in the name of 'CyberDost' by providing cyber safety tips at frequent intervals for the public.

1.106 Dharmendra Pradhan launched a 100-day reading campaign 'Padhe Bharat'.

Why in news?

- Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched a 100-day reading campaign 'Padhe Bharat' recently.

About 'Padhe Bharat'

- The launch of the 100 Days Reading Campaign is in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 which lays emphasis on the promotion of joyful reading culture for children by ensuring the availability of age-appropriate reading books for children in local/mother tongue/regional/tribal language.
- The Minister while launching the campaign has underlined the importance of reading that children need to develop to ensure continuous and lifelong learning. He also reinforced that the habit of reading, if inculcated at an early age, helps in brain development and enhances imagination and provide a conducive learning environment for children.
- Padhe Bharat campaign will focus on children studying in Balvatika to Grade 8. The reading campaign will be organized for 100 days (14 weeks) starting from January 1, 2022, to April 10, 2022. The reading campaign aims to have the participation of all stakeholders at the national and state level including children, teachers, parents, community, educational administrators etc. One activity per week per group has been designed with the focus on making reading enjoyable and build a lifelong association with the joy of reading. This campaign has also been aligned with the vision and goals of the foundational Literacy and Numeracy mission.
- The 100 days reading campaign will also focus on Indian languages including mother tongue/local/regional languages.
- Hence, 100 days Reading Campaign is envisaged to support and encourage students, along with their schools, teachers, parents, and communities, in every possible way and encourage children to read for a joyful learning experience.

1.107 Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh launches theme of National Science Day (NSD) 2022: Integrated Approach in S&T for Sustainable Future.

Why in news?

- Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said recently that the different Science Ministries and Departments in Govt of India have been asked to take up joint projects on common themes instead of working in Silos.

The Minister said this while launching the theme of National Science Day (NSD) 2022 '**Integrated Approach in S&T for Sustainable Future**' recently.

About the theme

- Dr Jitendra Singh said that NSD Theme has been chosen for the purpose of raising public appreciation of the scientific issues involved and added that celebrations of important scientific days should not remain a one-day event and there is a need to build upon this on a regular basis.

1.108 Pt. Birju Maharaj passes away.

Why in news?

- Pt Birju Maharaj, storyteller who blurred gender norms to become one of the foremost masters of Kathak, passes away at 83

About Kathak

- Kathak is one of the eight major forms of Indian classical dance.
- The origin of Kathak is traditionally attributed to the traveling bards in the of ancient northern India known as Kathakars or storytellers.

1.109 Vinodanand jha Appointed as chairperson of Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) Adjudicating Authority.

Why in News

- The Union Finance Ministry appointed Vinodanand Jha, a 1983-batch retired IRS officer as the chairperson of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) Adjudicating Authority, New Delhi.

About Adjudicating Authority

- The Adjudicating Authority, under the PMLA, 2002 will safeguard the interests of the accused against violence. It functions within the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.
- It is a three-member Authority (one each from the fields of 'Law', 'Administration' and 'Finance or accountancy') that is mandated to adjudicate the cases of attachment of assets orders issued under the PMLA, 2002.
- It can also order for further continuity, seizure or release of assets depending on the investigation.

1.110 Government of India appoints Dr V Anantha Nageswaran as Chief Economic Advisor.

Why In News

- The appointment comes two days before the presentation of the Economic Survey on January 31. The Union Budget for 2022-23 will be presented on February 1.
- Economist Nageswaran has been an author, teacher and consultant and has taught at several business schools and institutes of management.
- Former CEA **KV Subramanian's** three-year term ended in December 2021, several names were shortlisted for the position, including Pami Dua, Professor, Delhi School of Economics; Poonam Gupta, Director General, National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER); and, Principal Economic Adviser Sanjeev Sanyal.

Function of Chief Economic Advisor

- The Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) advises the Government of India on matters related to finance, commerce, trade, economy. The CEA reports directly to the Minister of Finance. The CEA heads the Economic Division under the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA).
- The Economic Division examines domestic and international economic trends. It undertakes research studies focusing on economic policies and management of the economy. Based on the research it provides advice to the Government of India.
- The Office of the Economic Advisor (OEA) is an attached office of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.



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PRACTICE MCQS

1. Who among the following is going to be India's new permanent representative at UN Conference on Disarmament?

- A. Anupam Ray
- B. Syed Akbaruddin
- C. Nirupama Menon Rao
- D. Jyotinder Nath Dixit

Answer: A

2. Who among the following recently took over as the 24th Chief of the Indian Coast Guard?

- A. Anand Prakash Badola
- B. Krishnaswamy Natrajan
- C. Rajendra Singh
- D. Virender Singh Pathania

Answer: D

3. Consider the following statements about recently released set of manuals and a newsletter of the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C):

- 1. The manuals and the newsletter prepared by the Cyber and Information Security Division (CIS) of the Union home ministry are 'Cyber Hygiene for Cyber Space – Dos and Don'ts – Basic Manual', 'Cyber Hygiene for Cyber Space – Dos and Don'ts – Advanced Manual' and the quarterly newsletter 'Cyber Pravah'.
- 2. The manuals are part of a focused awareness campaign for prevention of cyber-crimes and to inculcate cyber hygiene in rural areas, industrial bodies, and the general public.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

4. Consider the following statements about a recently launched reading campaign 'Padhe Bharat':

- 1. The launch of the 100 Days Reading Campaign is in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- 2. The reading campaign aims to have the participation of all stakeholders at the national and state level including children, teachers, parents, community, educational administrators etc.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2

D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

5. Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh has recently launched which of the following as theme of National Science Day (NSD) 2022?

- A. Science and its approach towards environment
- B. Multiple approaches to a scientific life
- C. Man, Science and their integrated approach
- D. Integrated Approach in S&T for Sustainable Future

Answer: D

6. Pt Birju Maharaj recently passed away at 83. He was a storyteller who blurred gender norms to become one of the foremost masters of which of the following?

- A. Bharatnatyam
- B. Odissi
- C. Kathak
- D. Kuchipudi

Answer: C

7. Who among the following has been appointed as the chairperson of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) Adjudicating Authority?

- A. Samir Gupta
- B. Varinder Singh
- C. Rajiv kumar
- D. Vinodanand Jha

Answer: D

8. Who among the following has been appointed as Chief Economic Advisor (CEC) of India?

- A. KV Subramanian
- B. Poonam Gupta
- C. Pami Dua
- D. Dr V Anantha Nageswaran

Answer: D

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ENVIRONMENT

1.111 Assam awaits Centre's clearance for 35-km long elevated road via Kaziranga National Park.

Why in news?

- The Assam government is awaiting clearance from the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways for a 35-km long elevated road project through the Kaziranga National Park.
- The Rs 6,000-crore road will run over nine animal corridors and an existing national highway. The basic idea behind the project is to ensure the safety of the animals.

About Kaziranga National Park

- Kaziranga National Park lies partly in Golaghat District and partly in Nagaon District of Assam.
- It is the oldest park in Assam covers an area of 430 Sq kms along the river Brahmaputra on the North and the Karbi Anglong hills on the South.
- Kaziranga National Park a world heritage site is famous for the Great Indian one horned rhinoceros, the landscape of Kaziranga is of sheer forest, tall elephant grass, rugged reeds, marshes & shallow pools.
- It has been declared as National Park in 1974.
- Kaziranga National Park is one of the last areas in eastern India undisturbed by a human presence. It is inhabited by the world's largest population of one-horned rhinoceroses, as well as many mammals, including tigers, elephants, panthers and bears, and thousands of birds.

1.112 Odisha radio-tagged Rescued Indian Pangolin.

Why in news?

- The Odisha Forest and Environment Department has completed its first-ever radio-tagging of the Indian pangolin in an attempt to standardise the rehabilitation protocol for the animal in the State.

About Indian Pangolin


- Indian Pangolin is widely distributed in India, except the arid region, high Himalayas and the North-East. It can be found at elevation up to 2500 m.
- The species also occurs in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.


Indian pangolin

Key Facts

A *Common Name*
Indian pangolin

Aa *Scientific Name*
Manis crassicaudata

 *Length*
Head and body : 60-70 cm

 *Weight*
9- 18 kg

 *Population*
Not Assessed

 *Status*
Listed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and as Endangered on IUCN Red List.

1.113 Border Roads Organisation breaks record at Zoji La battling extreme weather conditions.

Why in news?

- For the first time BRO has kept the formidable Zoji mountain pass (altitude 11,649 ft) open beyond 31st December.

About BRO breaking the record

- BRO's frontline Projects Beacon and Vijayak have been working round the clock in extreme weather conditions to keep the logistic supply line open to the Union Territory of Ladakh.
- BRO Karmyogis have kept their detachments functional with great determination and induction of New Equipment helped BRO in achieving this unparalleled feat.
- The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has raised its benchmark of excellence yet again by extending access of the formidable Zojila at an altitude of 11,649 ft, that links the Union Territory of Ladakh with the rest of the country. For the first time Zoji mountain pass remained open beyond 31st December.

1.114 Cabinet approves MoU between India and Nepal for construction of bridge over Mahakali River at Dharchula (India) – Dharchula (Nepal).

Why in news?

- The Union Cabinet, has recently approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Nepal for construction of bridge over Mahakali River at Dharchula (India)- Dharchula (Nepal).

About the MoU

- With the signing of MoU, diplomatic relation between the two countries will further improve.

Background:

- As close neighbours, India and Nepal share unique ties of friendship and cooperation characterized by an open border and deep-rooted people-to-people contacts of kinship and culture. Both India and Nepal have been working together on different regional forums i.e. SAARC, BIMSTEC as well as global fora.

1.115 Large number of migratory birds observed at Chilika Lake.

Why in news?

- Over 10.74 Lakh Migratory Birds Including Mongolian Gull Flock visited Odisha's Chilika Lake.

About Chilika Lake

- Chilika Lake, Asia's largest brackish water lagoon, witnessed over 10.74 lakh birds, including uncommon Mongolian gull, visiting the waterbody in Odisha this winter, according to a census report released recently.
- Spread over Puri, Ganjam and Khorda districts, Chilika Lake covers an area of around 1,100 sq km.
- However, compared to around 11.40 lakh birds of 190 species last year, 10,74,173 winged guests of 183 species to the lake were counted during the exercise.

1.116 An international team of researchers has now reported a new tropical tree from the Ebo Forest in Cameroon.

Why in news?

- An international team of researchers has now reported a new tropical tree from the Ebo Forest in Cameroon and named it after American actor and conservationist Leonardo DiCaprio.

- The tree was assessed as 'critically endangered', as its habitat remains unprotected and faces threats from logging, conversion to plantations, and mining.
- The tree, named **Uvariopsis dicaprio**, is four metres tall, with 15 cm long leaves, and bears bunches of large, glossy, bright yellow-green flowers on its trunk. The tree is endemic to the Ebo forest and is so far only known from the lower submontane forest which has an elevation of 850 metres. The area of occupation of *U. dicaprio* is estimated as 4 sq. km.
- With the recognition of *U. dicaprio*, 20 species of *Uvariopsis* are now accepted and the highest species diversity is found in Cameroon.

1.117 Turkmenistan to close Darvaza Gas Crater also known as the 'Gateway to Hell'.

Why in news?

- **Turkmenistan** President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov has ordered experts to find a way to extinguish a fire in a huge natural gas crater, the **Darvaza gas** crater also known as the '**Gateway to Hell**'.

1.118 India's oldest sloth bear dies at Van Vihar National Park.

Why in news?

- India's oldest sloth bear, named Gulabo, died at the age of 40 at the Van Vihar National Park and Zoo in Bhopal.

About the sloth bear

- The female sloth bear died after attaining the age of 40. Gulabo was one of the star attractions in the park. She was the oldest sloth bear in the country.
- The female bear was rescued from a Madaari or street performer in May 2006 at the age of 25 years.
- An autopsy determined the cause of death as a failure of internal organs due to old age. Gulabo was cremated by staffers of the park as per the norms.

1.119 Spectacular landscape changes detected in Gujarat's Kachchh region due to major earthquakes in recent geological past.

Why in news?

- Major earthquake events in last 30,000 years resulted in spectacular changes in landscape of the Katrol Hill Fault in the Kachchh region in Gujarat, a study conducted on sediment samples revealed.

About the landscape changes

- These surprising geological facts about the seismic history of the fault in the recent geological past necessitate a revised seismic hazard assessment and mitigation strategies in Kachchh Basin, owing to its close proximity to industrial corridor and major settlements, including Bhuj city.
- Earthquakes are one of the natural hazards that geologists are still grappling with its complex nature. The complexity is attributed to its widespread occurrence through space and time. Seismicity in Kachchh region is highly complex as it is characterized by multiple seismic sources in the form of several East-West trending fault lines, which release continuously accumulating tectonic stresses at intervals producing earthquakes. Real-time monitoring of earthquakes since the occurrence of devastating 2001 Bhuj earthquake indicate that most of the faults in the region, viz., Kachchh Mainland Fault (KMF), South Wagad Fault (SWF), Gedi Fault (GF), and Island Belt Fault (IBF) are seismically active. However, seismic activity along other faults like the Katrol Hill Fault (KHF) are not apparent, thus

making the task of seismic hazard estimation and mitigation in the region a scientifically complex process.

1.120 Collarwali, the tigress breathes her last.

Why in news?

- Madhya Pradesh's Pench tiger reserve loses its 'Supermom' tigress. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests PCCF said prima facie, it seemed that the tigress died due to old age.

About Pench tiger reserve

- In the heart of India, Madhya Pradesh, Pench National Park is located in the districts of Seoni and Chhindwara. Named after the pristine River Pence which flows through the park, Pench National Park is one of the most popular wildlife reserves in India.
- The park also has its mention in the famous story of 1894, 'The Jungle Book', penned down by the renowned English Author Rudyard Kipling.
- The story was worldwide applauded, and hence, the national park became one of the popular national parks in the world in the 1970s and also a prominent tourist attraction in India.
- Sprawls over a massive area of 758 sq km, including the core area, Pench National Park has a rich wildlife which proffers visitors an opportunity to indulge into one of the finest wildlife experiences in India.

1.121 United Nations World Food Programme and Odisha to bolster food security of small farmers by boosting climate resilience.

Why in News

- The impact of climate change disproportionately affects the livelihoods and food security of small and marginal farmers. WFP and the Department of Agriculture will collaborate on strengthening adaptation to climate variability and management of food systems.

Why is it Important?

- Climate advisories will be tailored to enable smallholder farmers to adapt to the impact of climate change.
- Smallholder farmers, who constitute 90 percent of farming communities in Odisha, will be able to select the right farming and livelihood options to improve their food security and incomes.

1.122 Coimbatore's Vellalore Lake is now a butterfly hotspot.

Why in News

- The green zone along the 90- acre Vellalore Lake, with native trees and flowers, draws more than 80 species.
- A miyawaki forest canopy with towering native trees and a dense belt of flowering plants has turned the city's Vellalore Lake into a butterfly hotspot.
- Blue Mormons, the fourth largest butterfly of India and State butterfly of Maharashtra, have been sighted in great numbers.
- A beautiful bluish-green butterfly called the common banded peacock, as like medus brown, chocolate albatross, and bamboo tree brown buzzed around the nectaring plants at the lake much to the excitement of butterfly enthusiasts.

PRACTICE MCQS

1. Which of the following National Parks are located in Assam?

1. Namdapha National Park
2. Manas National Park
3. Kaziranga National Park
4. Khangchendzonga National Park

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 2 and 4 only

Answer: B

2. With reference to Indian Pangolin, consider the following statements:

1. Indian Pangolin is widely distributed in India, except the arid region, high Himalayas and the North-East.
2. Its IUCN status is Critically endangered.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: A

3. Zoji La pass is located in which of the following UTs/states of India?

- A. Ladakh
- B. Himachal Pradesh
- C. Sikkim
- D. Arunachal Pradesh

Answer: A

4. Cabinet has recently approved MoU between India and which of the following countries for construction of a bridge over Mahakali River?

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

Answer: A

5. With reference to the Chilika Lake, consider the following statements:

1. It is Asia's largest brackish water lagoon.
2. It is located in the state of Telangana

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: A

6. The tree, named *Uvariopsis dicaprio* has recently been discovered from which of the following countries?

- A. Cameroon
- B. France
- C. Indonesia
- D. Spain

Answer: A

7. Which of the following country has decided to close Darvaza gas crater also known as the 'Gateway to Hell'?

- A. Uzbekistan
- B. Afghanistan
- C. Turkmenistan
- D. Azerbaijan

Answer: C

8. Van Vihar National Park is in which of the following states of India?

- A. Rajasthan
- B. Madhya Pradesh
- C. Karnataka
- D. Assam

Answer: B

9. 'Katrol Hill Fault' is located in which of the following states of India?

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

Answer: A

10. Pench Tiger Reserve is located in which of the following states of India?

- A. Madhya Pradesh
- B. Gujarat
- C. Assam
- D. Tamil Nadu

Answer: A

11. Where is the headquarter of United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP) located?

- A. Rome
- B. Geneva
- C. Paris
- D. New York

Answer: A

12. Vellalore Lake has become a butterfly hotspot. Where is this lake situated?

- A. Tamil Nadu
- B. Maharashtra
- C. Manipur
- D. West Bengal

Answer: A

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ECONOMY

1.123 World Bank retains India's economic growth forecast at 8.3% for 2021-22.

Why in news?

- The World Bank has retained India's economic growth forecast for the current fiscal at 8.3 per cent as the recovery is yet to become broad-based.

About India's economic growth

- As per the first advanced estimates of the national income released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) last week, the economy is projected to grow at 9.2 per cent in 2021-22, surpassing pre-COVID level in actual terms, mainly on account of improved performance, especially in farm, mining and manufacturing sectors.

1.124 Foreign contribution regulation Act (FCRA).

Why in News

- The Supreme Court asked 6,000-odd NGOs to go back to the government for redressal of their grievances on non-renewal of their Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) registration.
- NGO Global Peace Initiative had petitioned the court that the NGOs should be allowed to continue receiving and utilising foreign funds until the pandemic is over.

Background

- The registration of thousands of NGOs was up for renewal in 2020-21. The Ministry had declined to renew the FCRA registration of 179 NGOs, while 5,789 associations did not apply for a renewal before the December 31 deadline.
- After the exercise, the number of active FCRA-registered NGOs is down from 22,762 to 16,907.

Why Registration approval cancelled?

- The government reserves the right to cancel the FCRA registration of any NGO if it finds it to be in violation of the Act.
- Registration can be cancelled if an inquiry finds a false statement in the application.
- It can also be cancelled if "in the opinion of the Central Government, it is necessary in the public interest to cancel the certificate".
- Registrations are also cancelled when an audit finds irregularities in the finances of an NGO in terms of misutilisation of foreign funds.

How FCRA regulates NGO funding?

- FCRA regulates foreign donations and ensures that such contributions do not adversely affect the internal security of the country.
- The Act, first enacted in 1976 was amended in the year 2010 and then 2020.
- Section 5 of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 gives the Union government "unchecked and unbridled powers" to declare an organisation as being one of political nature and deny it access to funds from sources abroad.
- FCRA is implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Recent changes in FCRA

- Earlier, as per the FCRA 2010, only applicants such as directors who sought permission to receive foreign funds were required to make such a declaration.
- It has been made mandatory for office bearers and key functionaries and members to certify that they have not been “prosecuted or convicted” for “conversion” from one faith to another and for creating “communal tension and disharmony”.
- The Centre has amended in 2020 the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act and made Aadhaar a mandatory identification document for all the office-bearers, directors and other key functionaries of an NGO or an association eligible to receive foreign donations.
- The public servant and corporation owned or controlled by the government are among the list of entities who are not eligible to receive foreign donations.
- It also says that not more than 20% of the total foreign funds received could be defrayed for administrative expenses. Earlier the limit was 50%.

Who Cannot Receive Foreign Contribution?

- A host of entities are barred from receiving foreign funds, including **election candidates**, those connected with a **registered newspaper, judges, government servants or employees** of any entity controlled or owned by the government and **members of any legislature**.
- Political parties and their office bearers, too, are prohibited from receiving foreign funds.

About FCRA

- Government of India enacted the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) in the year 1976 with an objective of regulating the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution.
- The legislation aims to regulate the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contribution or foreign hospitality by certain individuals or associations or companies.
- It aims to prohibit funding for any activities detrimental to the national interest and for matters connected therewith.
- The act was majorly modified in 2010 with several amendments because many NGOs were found using illegal use of foreign funding.

PRACTISE MCQS

1. The World Bank has retained India's economic growth forecast for the current fiscal at:

- A. 8.3 per cent
- B. 8.5 per cent
- C. 8.7 per cent
- D. 8.9 per cent

Answer: A

2. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct about the 'Foreign Contribution Regulation Act'?

- 1. The public servant and corporation owned or controlled by the government are not eligible to receive foreign donations.
- 2. The amendment has also limited the utilisation of foreign funds at 20% for administrative expenses of the total foreign funds received.

Select the correct codes from below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

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DEFENCE

1.125 India joins Quad partners, Japan and South Korea for Sea Dragon exercise.

Why in news?

- **Sea Dragon** is a US-led multi-national exercise designed to practice and discuss Anti-submarine warfare tactics to operate together in response to traditional and non-traditional maritime security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.

About Sea Dragon exercise

- India and its partners in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad along with Canada and South Korea are participating in the multinational exercise Sea Dragon at Guam in the Western Pacific.
- The exercise, primarily focused on anti-submarine warfare (ASW) training, will involve more than 270 hours of in-flight training and activities ranging from tracking simulated targets to tracking a US Navy submarine. Each event will be graded and the country scoring the highest points will receive the Dragon Belt award.
- The wargame, being held at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam, includes contingents from the Indian Navy, the US Navy, Royal Australian Air Force, Royal Canadian Air Force, Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force and the South Korean Navy.
- Two P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft of the US Navy are participating in the drill. During classroom training sessions, pilots and flight officers from all the countries will build plans and discuss tactics incorporating the capabilities and equipment of their nations.

1.126 Iran displays missiles amid nuclear talks with world powers.

Why in news?

- Iran displayed three ballistic missiles at an outdoor prayer esplanade in central Tehran recently as talks in Vienna aimed at reviving Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers flounder.

About the missiles

- The missiles - known as **Dezful, Qiam and Zolfaghar** - have official ranges of up to 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) and are already-known models.
- Diplomats from countries that remain in the 2015 nuclear deal - Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China - are working with Tehran to revive the accord, which had sought to limit Iran's nuclear ambitions in exchange for lifting of economic sanctions.

1.127 Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) tests final deliverable configuration of Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile.

Why in news?

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) recently successfully flight tested the final deliverable configuration of the Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM).

About Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile

- The indigenously developed anti-tank missile is a low weight, 'fire and forget' missile and is launched from a man portable launcher, integrated with thermal sight.
- During the test, which was conducted at a range in Southern India, the missile impacted the designated target with precision and destroyed it. The final impact event was captured on camera. The purpose of

this particular test was to prove the consistent performance for the missile system at its minimum range.

1.128 Naval variant of BrahMos supersonic missile test-fired from INS Visakhapatnam.

Why in news?

- An extended range sea-to-sea variant of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile was successfully test-fired by India from the Indian Navy's newly commissioned INS Visakhapatnam recently, the Defence Research and Development Organisation said.

About sea-to-sea variant of the BrahMos

- BrahMos, deployed by the Navy on its warships first in 2005, has the capability to hit sea-based targets beyond radar horizon.
- Advanced sea to sea variant of BrahMos Supersonic Cruise missile was tested from INS Visakhapatnam recently. Missile hit the designated target ship precisely.
- The Navy too said the launch was an achievement. Successful test-firing of the extended-range BrahMos Supersonic Cruise missile from INS Visakhapatnam, Indian Navy's newest indigenously-built guided missile destroyer, represents a twin achievement: Certifies the accuracy of the ship's combat system and armament complex. Validates a new capability the missile provides the Navy and the Nation.

1.129 The 74th Indian Army Day was celebrated in India .

Why in news?

- The 74th Indian Army Day was celebrated in India on 15 January 2022

About the Indian Army Day

- This day is a matter of great pride for every Indian, as we pay our respects to the daredevils of our country and salute them for the sacrifices, they make each day for the country.
- The Indian Army Day is celebrated to honour each soldier in the armed forces of our country for their selfless service.
- Every year, it is celebrated at all army command offices across the country, and the Headquarters in New Delhi. However, in the light of COVID-19 pandemic and the surge due to Omicron variant, the 2022 celebrations shall be muted.

Indian Army Day 2022: History and Significance

- While the Indian Army was officially established on 1 April 1895 under the British rule, the first Indian to head the forces was Lieutenant General KM Cariappa, who was appointed to the post on 15 January 1949.
- Ever since then, 15 January has become an important day for the history of India as it was the first time an Indian soldier took the reigns of the armed forces of the nation.
- The Indian Army Day is a celebration of not only our brave soldiers, but also the transfer of power from the British rule to India. That is why each year, it is celebrated in all army command headquarters with great gusto and pride.

1.130 Raksha Pension Shikayat Nivaran Portal launched.

Why in news?

- Raksha Pension Shikayat Nivaran Portal launched coinciding with Veterans' Day to redress pension grievances of ESM

About the portal

- Ministry of Defence (MoD) has launched three new initiatives for the welfare of ex-servicemen and their families on the occasion of Armed Forces Veterans' Day which is celebrated on 14th January every year. In a series of tweets, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh announced that the Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (DESW) has allotted Rs 320 crore to Armed Forces Flag Day Fund (AFFDF) to clear all backlog of pending applications for welfare schemes especially Education & Marriage grants for widows/dependent children of the veterans. This will benefit over 1,66,000 wards/widows of Ex-Servicemen (ESMs).
- The DESW also launched a dedicated Raksha Pension Shikayat Nivaran Portal designed to speedily redress pension, including family pension-related grievances of ESM and their dependents. The portal will enable processing of grievances quickly by the DESW.
- Through the portal, an SMS and e-mail will be forwarded to the applicants on their registered mobile number and e-mail, intimating confirmation of registration of grievance and for tracking its status. Applicants can also provide feedback for the purpose of improving quality of redressal of grievances.

1.131 India gets first BrahMos order worth \$374 mn from Philippines.

Why in news

- Recently, India got first BrahMos order worth \$374 mn from Philippines

About the contract

- The contract is for purchase of shore-based anti-ship variant of the missile from India
- BrahMos, the supersonic cruise missile system jointly made by India and Russia, has been selected by the Philippines under a \$374.96 million deal, making it the first export order for the missile.
- The contract is for purchase of shore-based anti-ship variant of the missile from India. Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand are other South-East Asian countries that have shown interest in the system. BrahMos is capable of being launched from land, sea, undersea and air against surface and sea-based targets.
- The range of the missile was capped at 290 km as per Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) regulations. India entered the MTCR regime in June 2016 allowing extension in range beyond 300 km. India has already deployed a sizeable number of the BrahMos missiles in several strategic locations along the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh.

1.132 Indian Navy and Russian navy conduct PASSEX Exercise.

Why in news?

- Indian Navy's indigenously designed and built guided missile destroyer, INS Kochi, exercised with Russian Federation Navy's RFS Admiral Tributs recently in the Arabian Sea.

About the exercise

- The exercise showcased cohesiveness and interoperability between the two navies and included tactical manoeuvres, cross-deck helicopter operations and seamanship activities.

1.133 Israel Successfully tests Arrow 3 Anti-ballistic missile system.

Why in news?

- Boaz Levy, the president and CEO of the Israel Aerospace Industries, which manufactures the Arrow 3, said the breakthroughs were principally in the area of "algorithms," the ways in which the systems detect incoming threats and calculate launch trajectories for interceptors.

About Arrow 3

- The test was performed at a test site in **central Israel**, and led by **Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI)**.
- It was developed in a joint project between the Defense Ministry's Missile Defense Organization and the **American Missile Defense Agency**.
- The Arrow 3 was first tested successfully in **February 2018**.

1.134 Western Naval Command conducts Joint maritime Exercise Paschim Lehar (XPL-2022).

About the Exercise

- The exercise was conducted over a duration of 20 days with an objective to validate operational plans of the Western Naval Command and enhance Inter-Service synergy among the Indian Navy, IAF, Indian Army and Coast Guard.
- The Western Naval Command (HQ- Mumbai) is one of the three command-level formations of the Indian Navy.
- The other two are Eastern Naval Command (HQ- Visakhapatnam) and Southern Naval Command (HQ- Kochi).

1.135 Iran, Russia and China begin Naval drill CHIRU-2022.

Why in News

- The Russian, Chinese and Iranian navies conduct naval exercises CHIRU-2022 in the **Gulf of Oman**.

About Exercise

- The purpose of this drill is to strengthen security and its foundations in the region, and to expand multilateral cooperation between the three countries to jointly support world peace, maritime security and create a maritime community with a common future
- The maritime drills conducted in the northern parts of the Indian Ocean aimed at deepening practical cooperation among the navies of the three countries.
- The drills will include various tactical exercises such as rescuing a burning vessel, releasing a hijacked vessel, and shooting at air targets at night.

1.136 Decommissioned INS Khukri to be converted into museum.

Why In News?

- INS Khukri, the lead ship of the Indian Navy's Khukri class missile corvettes which was decommissioned in December 2021, was handed over to the Diu administration to be converted into a museum.
- NS Khukri (P49), was the first indigenously built missile corvette of the Indian Navy.
- The ship is planned to be developed as a full-scale museum.

1.137 North Korea tests long-range missile.

Why In News

- North Korea conducted its longest-range missile test since 2017, after Japan and South Korea reported a suspected ballistic missile had been launched into the sea from the country's east coast.

- The Japanese and South Korean militaries said the missile was launched on a lofted trajectory, apparently to avoid the territorial spaces of neighbours, and reached a maximum altitude of 2,000 km and travelled 800 km before landing in the sea.
- The flight details suggest the North tested its longest-range ballistic missile since 2017, when it twice flew intermediate-range ballistic missiles over Japan and, separately, three intercontinental ballistic missiles that demonstrated the potential to reach deep into the American homeland.

North Korea Statement

- North Korea confirmed it had tested **two long-range cruise missiles** .

About Missile's

Ballistic missile –

- Ballistic missile, a rocket-propelled self-guided strategic-weapons system that follows a **ballistic** trajectory to deliver a payload from its launch site to a predetermined target.
- **Ballistic** missiles can carry conventional high **explosives** as well as **chemical, biological,** or **nuclear** munitions.
- They can be launched from aircraft, ships, and **submarines** in addition to land-based **silos** and mobile platforms.

Intercontinental ballistic missile

- ICBM, in full Intercontinental ballistic missile, Land-based, nuclear-armed ballistic missile with a range of more than 3,500 miles (5,600 km).
- Only the United States, Russia, and China field land-based missiles of this range.
- The first ICBMs were deployed by the Soviet Union in 1958; the United States followed the next year and China some 20 years later.

PRACTISE MCQS

1. With reference to the Sea Dragon exercise, consider the following statements:

1. It is a US-led multi-national exercise designed to practice and discuss Anti-submarine warfare tactics to operate together in response to traditional and non-traditional maritime security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.
2. India and its partners in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad along with Canada and South Korea are participating in the multinational exercise Sea Dragon at Guam in the Western Pacific.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

2. The missiles known as Dezful, Qiam and Zolfaghar belong to which of the following countries?

- A. Iran
- B. South Korea

- C. Japan
- D. China

Answer: A

3. With reference to Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM), Consider the following statements:

1. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) recently successfully flight tested the final deliverable configuration of the Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM).
2. The indigenously developed anti-tank missile is a low weight, 'fire and forget' missile and is launched from a man portable launcher, integrated with thermal sight.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

4. Recently, advanced Sea to sea variant of BrahMos Supersonic Cruise missile was tested from which of the following?

- A. INS Vishakhapatnam
- B. INS Kolkata
- C. INS Rana
- D. INS Delhi

Answer: A

5. Recently which Indian Army Day was celebrated in India on 15 January 2022?

- A. 71st
- B. 72nd
- C. 73rd
- D. 74th

Answer: D

6. With respect to the Raksha Pension Shikayat Nivaran Portal, consider the following statements:

1. It has been launched by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
2. It has been designed to speedily redress pension, including family pension-related grievances of ESM and their dependents.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2

D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

7. India got first BrahMos order worth \$374 mn from which of the following countries?

- A. Philippines
- B. Japan
- C. Sri Lanka
- D. Bhutan

Answer: A

8. With reference to Indian Navy passex with Russian navy, consider the following statements:

- 1. Indian Navy's indigenously designed and built guided missile destroyer, INS Kochi, exercised with Russian Federation Navy's RFS Admiral Tributs recently in the Arabian Sea.
- 2. The exercise showcased cohesiveness and interoperability between the two navies and included tactical manoeuvres, cross-deck helicopter operations and seamanship activities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

9. With reference to Arrow 3 anti-ballistic missile system, consider the following statements:

- 1. Israel Aerospace Industries is the manufacturer of the Arrow 3 anti-ballistic missile.
- 2. The Arrow 3 was first tested successfully in February 2017.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: A

10. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct about Exercise 'Paschim Lehar'?

- 1. It is a joint drill between Indian Navy, Indian Air Force (IAF), Indian Army and Coast Guard.
- 2. The exercise was conducted under the aegis of Western Naval Command.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2

D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

11. Russia, China and which country recently conducted joint naval exercise CHIRU-2022?

- A. Iran
- B. India
- C. Bangladesh
- D. None of the above

Answer: A

12. With reference to INS Khukri, which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?

- 1. It was the first indigenously built missile corvette of the Indian Navy.
- 2. It was decommissioned in December 2021.
- 3. It will be developed as a full-scale museum.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. All of the Above

Answer: D

13. With reference to Intercontinental ballistic missile, which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?

- 1. The first Intercontinental ballistic missile was deployed by the Soviet Union in 1958
- 2. It has a range of more than 3,500 miles (5,600 km).

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C



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REPORTS

1.138 #BahaneChhodoTaxBachao campaign launched.

Why in news?

- SBI General Insurance launched #BahaneChhodoTaxBachao campaign

About the campaign

- SBI General Insurance's campaign has a humorous tone to bring out the barriers people have for not buying or procrastinating to buy health insurance
- SBI General Insurance has announced the launch of a campaign to increase awareness of Indians around the need to buy health insurance to save tax.
- The campaign #BahaneChhodoTaxBachao will also underline other benefits of opting for health insurance.

1.139 Cabinet clears Rs 12,031 crore plan for 2nd green energy corridor.

Why in news?

- In order to accelerate the penetration of renewable energy in the states, the Union Cabinet recently approved the **second phase of the Green Energy Corridor (GEC)**. The projects in this phase would be set up in seven states to expedite the transmission of renewable energy.

About Green Energy Corridor (GEC)

- GEC is an alternative transmission system for renewable energy (RE) power projects. During the first phase of GEC, inter-state transmission projects were constructed by state-owned Power Grid Corporation of India (PGCIL) and some projects were awarded to private players through competitive bidding.
- The second phase will aim to add approximately 10,750 circuit kilometres (ckm) of transmission lines and approx. 27,500 Mega Volt-Amperes (MVA) transformation capacity of substations. The cost of the current phase is estimated at Rs 12,031.33 crore and Central Financial Assistance (CFA) of 33 percent of the project cost i.e. Rs 3,970.34 crore.

1.140 Henley Passport Index for the year 2022 released.

Why in news?

- London-based global citizenship and residence advisory firm Henley & Partners has released the Henley Passport Index for the year 2022, based on exclusive data provided by the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

About the report

- According to the latest report, even as the world continues to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan and Singapore top the list of being the most powerful passport in the world for the year 2022. The visa-free score of both these countries is at 192.
- Afghanistan (rank 111) and Iraq (rank 110) continue to be in the 'worst passports to hold' category having a visa-free score of 26 and 28 respectively.
- According to the report, Japanese citizens can travel to as many as 192 countries visa-free or visa-on-arrival access destinations around the world. Singapore is tied in the first place (with a score of 192) and South Korea ties with Germany in second place (with a score of 190).

- Countries like Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain are tied at the third position with regard to the most powerful passports in the world with a visa-free score of 189.
- India has improved its ranks and is currently placed at 83rd position from the earlier 90th position in the most powerful passport report with a visa-free score of 60.
- USA and the United Kingdom have risen one ranking to be placed at sixth position.
- **India has improved its ranks and is currently placed at 83rd** in the most powerful passport report with a visa-free score of 60.

1.141 Forest Survey report 2021 released.

Why in news?

- Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav released the 'India State of Forest Report 2021' prepared by the Forest Survey of India (FSI) which has been mandated to assess the forest and tree resources of the country.

About the 'India State of Forest Report 2021'

MAJOR FINDINGS

- The total forest and tree cover of the country is 80.9 million hectare which is 24.62 percent of the geographical area of the country. As compared to the assessment of 2019, there is an increase of 2,261 sq km in the total forest and tree cover of the country. Out of this, the increase in the forest cover has been observed as 1,540 sq km and that in tree cover is 721 sq km.
- Increase in forest cover has been observed in open forest followed by very dense forest. **Top three states showing increase in forest cover** are Andhra Pradesh (647 sq km) followed by Telangana (632 sq km) and Odisha (537 sq km).
- **Area-wise** Madhya Pradesh has the largest forest cover in the country followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra. In terms of **forest cover as percentage of total geographical area**, the top five States are Mizoram (84.53%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.33%), Meghalaya (76.00%), Manipur (74.34%) and Nagaland (73.90%).
- 17 States/UT's have above 33 percent of the geographical area under forest cover. Out of these states and UT's, five states/UTs namely Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya have more than 75 percent forest cover while 12 states/UTs namely Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Goa, Kerala, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Assam, Odisha, have forest cover between 33 percent to 75 percent.
- **Total mangrove cover in the country** is 4,992 sq km. An increase of 17 sq km in mangrove cover has been observed as compared to the previous assessment of 2019. **Top three states showing mangrove cover increase** are Odisha (8 sq km) followed by Maharashtra (4 sq km) and Karnataka (3 sq km).
- Total carbon stock in country's forest is estimated to be 7,204 million tonnes and there is an increase of 79.4 million tonnes in the carbon stock of country as compared to the last assessment of 2019. The annual increase in the carbon stock is 39.7 million tonnes.

1.142 Minister of State for Education Subhas Sarkar Launches Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar.

Why in news?

- Minister of State for Education Subhas Sarkar recently launched the Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar (SVP) 2021 – 2022.

About Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar

- The SVP 2021-22 is open to all categories of schools i.e., government, government aided and private schools in both rural and urban areas.
- The schools will be assessed through an online portal and mobile app in six sub-categories- Water, Sanitation, Hand Washing with soap, Operation and Maintenance, Behaviour Change and Capacity Building and the newly added category on Covid-19 preparedness and response and the system will generate the overall score and rating automatically.
- The schools can apply till March 2022 to apply for the awards. Schools will be awarded at the district, state and national level. A total of 40 schools will be selected for awards this year under the overall category.
- The Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar was first instituted in 2016-17.

1.143 Railways launched 'Mission Amanat' For Passengers to find out lost belongings.

Why in news?

- The Western Railway said the RPF has recovered goods worth Rs 2.58 crore belonging to a total of 1,317 railway passengers during the year 2021.

About Mission Amanat

- Every year while travelling, thousands of rail passengers lose their belongings in trains and recovering those lost items is a challenging task for all. But no worries now. The Western Railway has come to the rescue of the passengers and has launched a new service called Mission Amanat.
- In this new service, the Western Railway said that the Railway Protection Force (RPF) will locate the lost luggage of railway passengers and upload a photo and description of the belongings on the website. And then the passengers can then identify and retrieve their luggage.

1.144 Wealth of richest 98 same as bottom 552 million, says Oxfam Report.

Why in news?

- Recently, the 'Inequality Kills' report was released.

About the report

- India's richest families saw their wealth reach a record high in 2021, even as 84 per cent of Indian households saw an income decline amid the pandemic, according to a report from non-profit Oxfam India titled 'Inequality Kills'.
- It said the richest 98 Indians own the same wealth as the bottom 552 million people.

1.145 Global Unemployment to reach 207 million in 2022: ILO report.

Why in News

- The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has released its World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2022 (WESO Trends) report. This report warns of a slow and uncertain recovery, as the pandemic continues to have a significant impact on global labour markets

About the Report

- In the WESO 2022, ILO has downgraded its forecast for labour market recovery in 2022.
- The global unemployment level in 2022 is estimated at 207 million, compared to 186 million in 2019.
- Total working hours globally in 2022 is projected to be 2% below the pre-pandemic level, and that is equivalent to the loss of 52 million full-time jobs.
- The global labour force participation rate in 2022 is projected to remain 1.2 percentage points below that of 2019 before the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic began.

- In 2022 around 40 million people will no longer be participating in the global labour force.
- ILO states that there can be no real recovery from this pandemic without a broad-based labour market recovery.

1.146 4th Asia Ministerial Conference on tiger conservation.

Why in News

- Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav delivers India's statement at the Fourth Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation.
- Shri Bhupender Yadav congratulated the Government of Malaysia and Global Tiger Forum (GTF) for organizing the 4th Asia Ministerial Conference on tiger conservation and appreciated the efforts of the Government of Malaysia in creating a role model for mitigation measures with respect to linear infrastructure in tiger habitat

Key facts

- A "Pre-Tiger Summit" meeting was held at New Delhi in 2010, wherein the draft declaration on tiger conservation for Global Tiger Summit was finalised.
- India has achieved the remarkable feat of doubling the tiger population in 2018 itself, 4 years ahead of the targeted year 2022.

1.147 India ranks 85th in Transparency International's corruption index 2021.

About the Transparency International's corruption index

- **Transparency International** has released the **Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2021**.
- The index, which ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector **corruption**.
- In 2020 India was ranked **86th**.
- The results are given on a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.
- The ranking has been topped jointly by three countries- **Denmark, Finland and New Zealand**.

About Transparency International

- Transparency International is an international non-governmental organisation founded in 1993 based in Berlin, Germany.
- Its non-profit purpose is to take action to combat global Corruption with civil societal anticorruption measures and to prevent criminal activities arising from corruption.

PRACTISE MCQS

1. With reference to #BahaneChhodoTaxBachao campaign, consider the following statements:

1. It has been launched by NITI Aayog.
2. It aims at increasing awareness of Indians around the need to buy health insurance to save tax.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

2. Recently, Cabinet cleared Rs 12,031 crore plan for which phase of green energy corridor?

- A. 1st
- B. 2nd
- C. 3rd
- D. 4th

Answer: B

3. As per Henley Passport Index for the year 2022, India's rank is:

- A. 82
- B. 83
- C. 84
- D. 85

Answer: B

4. With reference to the 'India State of Forest Report 2021', consider the following statements:

1. Top three states showing increase in forest cover are Madhya Pradesh followed by Telangana and Odisha.
2. Top three states showing mangrove cover increase are Odisha followed by Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

5. With reference to the Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar 2021-22, Consider the following statements:

1. The SVP 2021-22 is open to all categories of schools i.e. government, government aided and private schools in both rural and urban areas.

2. The schools will be assessed through an online portal and mobile app in six sub-categories- Water, Sanitation, Hand Washing with soap, Operation and Maintenance, Behaviour Change and Capacity Building and the newly added category on Covid-19 preparedness and response.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

6. With reference to the recently launched 'Mission Amanat', Consider the following statements:

- 1. It has been launched by the Ministry of Defence.
- 2. It will help locate the lost luggage of railway passengers and upload a photo and description of the belongings on the website.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

7. 'Inequality Kills' Report has been released by which of the following?

- A. Oxfam International
- B. Amnesty International
- C. Reporters Without Borders
- D. International Labour Organisation

Answer: A

8. With reference to World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2022 (WESO Trends) report, Consider the following statements:

- 1. It was released by UNICEF.
- 2. It has downgraded its forecast for labour market recovery in 2022.
- 3. The global unemployment level in 2022 is estimated at 207 million, compared to 186 million in 2019.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only

D. All of the above

Answer: B

9. Which of the following country recently conducted the 4th Asia Ministerial Conference (AMC) on Tiger Conservation?

- A. South Korea
- B. Bangladesh
- C. India
- D. Malaysia

Answer: D

10. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct about Transparency International's Corruption Index 2021?

- 1. India's rank in the Corruption Perception Index report for 2020 was 86th.
- 2. Denmark, Finland and New Zealand has topped the index in 2021.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

CivilsTap Hlmachal

SPORTS

1.148 India Beat Sri Lanka to Win U-19 Asia Cup.

Why in news?

- BCCI president Sourav Ganguly, and secretary Jay Shah lauded the India cricket team for winning the Under-19 Asia Cup title recently.

About India Winning the U-19 Asia Cup

- A disciplined bowling effort followed by Raghuvanshi's half-century has helped India clinch their eighth U19 Asia Cup title at the Dubai International Stadium.
- Ravi Kumar, Rajvardhan Hangargekar and Raj Bawa picked a wicket each to mount some early pressure on the islanders. Kaushal Tambe piled further misery on the islanders, picking two wickets in his first three overs of the day. Vicky Ostwal also left his mark, picking three wickets including two in a single over. It was Angkrish Raghuvanshi towards the end, who notched up a half-century to seal the win for India.
- The rain-marred final was reduced to 38 overs after a two-hour interruption. In eight editions of the U-19 Asia Cup, India have now won it eight times, which includes a shared trophy in 2012. The team also owns the record of having never lost a final.

1.149 Teenager Bharath Subramaniyam becomes India's 73rd Chess Grandmaster.

Why in news?

- Fourteen-year-old Bharath Subramaniyam recently became India's 73rd chess Grandmaster, after completing his third and final GM norm at Vergani Cup Open in Italy.

About Bharath Subramaniyam

- Subramaniyam scored 6.5 points from nine rounds along with four others to finish seventh overall in the event. He secured his third GM norm here and also touched the requisite 2,500 (Elo) mark.
- Notably, to become a GM, a player has to secure three GM norms and cross the live rating of 2,500 Elo points.
- The All-India Chess Federation (AICF) also congratulated the teenager on his fe

1.150 Lakshya Sen beats world champion Loh Kean Yew in final, wins Indian Open 2021.

Why in news?

- Lakshya Sen beat Singaporean world champion Loh Kean Yew in a thrilling final 24-22, 21-17 to become the first Indian to win the men's singles title on tournament debut.

About Lakshya Sen

- Lakshya Sen became the first Indian to win an Indian Open men's singles title on debut in the tournament as he beat reigning world champion Loh Kean Yew 24-22, 21-17 in a thrilling final in New Delhi. Lakshya beat the Singaporean, who had defeated Kidambi Srikanth in December to win a surprise World Championship title, in a match that lasted 54 minutes.
- This is Lakshya's first Super 500 title on the BWF tour. He had earlier won bronze in the 2021 World Championships after losing to Srikanth in the semi-final.
- Lakshya had raced to a 16-10 lead in the first game before Loh managed to fight back and even level proceedings at 19-19. The pair then exchanged match points before Lakshya ran out 24-22 victory.

The second game was close fought until but Lakshya won two consecutive points after leading 19-17 to win

the match and the championship.

1.151 The Best FIFA Football Awards 2021 announced.

Why in news?

- The Best FIFA Football Awards 2021 ceremony was held virtually in Zurich, Switzerland to crown best players for excellent achievement in football.

About Best FIFA Football Awards 2021

- Poland/Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski and Spain midfielder Alexia Putellas were awarded the Best FIFA Players in men's and women's football respectively.
- Lewandowski won the Best FIFA Men's Player Award for the second straight year, after getting the first one in 2020.

Category	Winner
Best FIFA Men's Player	Robert Lewandowski (Bayern Munich, Poland)
Best FIFA Women's Player	Alexia Putellas (Barcelona, Spain)
Best FIFA Men's Goalkeeper	Édouard Mendy (Chelsea, Senegal)
Best FIFA Women's Goalkeeper	Christiane Endler (Paris Saint-Germain and Lyon, Chile)
Best FIFA Men's Coach	Thomas Tuchel (Chelsea, Germany)
Best FIFA Women's Coach	Emma Hayes (Chelsea, England)
FIFA Fair Play Award	Denmark national football team and medical staff
FIFA Special Award for an Outstanding Career Achievement	Christine Sinclair (Female) & Cristiano Ronaldo (Male)

1.152 P.V. Sindhu wins Syed Modi International badminton title.

Why in News

- India shuttler and two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu recently won the women's singles title at the Syed Modi International badminton tournament.
- Sindhu defeated Malvika Bansod 21-13, 21-16 in the summit clash. The final lasted just 35 minutes.
- Former World champion Sindhu's second Syed Modi title after having annexed the BWF World Tour Super 300 event in 2017.
- Earlier, the men's singles final of the Syed Modi India International 2022 was declared a 'No Match'.

1.153 India's first para-badminton academy launched in Lucknow.

Why in news?

- The centre has been launched by Dronacharya awardee and Head national coach of Indian para-badminton team, Gaurav Khanna, along with Ageas Federal Life Insurance.

- The state-of-the-art, high-performance centre with advanced equipment and facilities in Lucknow aims to improve India's medal chances at the 2024 Paralympics.

1.154 Hockey Women's Asia Cup 2022: India beat China 2-0 to bag bronze medal.

Why in news?

- India defeated China 2-0 in the third-place play-off to return home with a bronze medal from the Women's Hockey Asia Cup in Muscat (Oman).
- The Indians left behind the disappointment of their semifinal defeat to South Korea and controlled the proceedings in the first two quarters, scoring two goals in the process, to go into half time with a 2-0 lead against China.
- Sharmila Devi and Gurjit Kaur were the goal scorers.

1.155 Australian Tennis Open 2022: Rafael Nadal and Ashleigh Barty Lifts title.

Why In News

- **Rafael Nadal** (Spain) win a titanic five-set duel with Daniil Medvedev and claim a record 21st Grand Slam men's title in the Australian Open final.
- **Ashleigh Barty** became the first Australian to win her home Grand Slam Women's title in 44 years, beat American Danielle Collins in straight sets.

Other Winners

- Men's doubles - Nick Kyrgios and Thanasi Kokkinakis
- Women's doubles - Barbora Krejčíková and Katerina Siniakova
- Mixed doubles - Kristina Mladenovic and Ivan Dodig

About Australian Open

- The Australian Open is a **tennis** tournament held annually at **Melbourne Park** in **Melbourne**, Australia.
- The tournament is the first of the four **Grand Slam** tennis events held each year, preceding the **French Open**, **Wimbledon**, and the **US Open**.
- It features men's and women's singles; men's, women's, and mixed doubles; junior's championships; and wheelchair, legends, and exhibition events.
- Before 1988, it was played on **grass courts**, but since then three types of **hard-court** surfaces have been used: green-coloured **Rebound Ace** up to 2007, blue **Plexicushion** from 2008 to 2019, and blue **GreenSet** since 2020.
- First held in 1905 as the Australasian championships, the Australian Open has grown to become one of the biggest sporting events in the **Southern Hemisphere**.

PRACTISE MCQS

1. Which of the following countries has recently won the U-19 Asia Cup title at the Dubai International Stadium?

- A. India
- B. Sri Lanka
- C. Afghanistan
- D. Bangladesh

Answer: A

2. Who among the following has become India's 73rd Chess Grandmaster?

- A. Parimarjan Negi
- B. Krishnan Sasikiran
- C. Pentala Harikrishna
- D. Bharath Subramaniyam

Answer: D

3. Who among the following has become the first Indian to win an Indian Open men's singles title on debut in the tournament?

- A. Pullela Gopichand
- B. Jwala Gutta
- C. Lakshya Sen
- D. None of the above

Answer: C

4. Which player has won the Best FIFA Men's Player of the year 2021?

- A. Robert Lewandowski
- B. Neymar
- C. Cristiano Ronaldo
- D. Karim Benzema

Answer: A

5. Which of the following player Syed Modi International badminton Women title?

- A. Malvika Bansod
- B. Saina Nehwal
- C. P.V. Sindhu
- D. Tasnim Mir

Answer: C

6. India's first para-badminton academy has been set up in which of the following city?

- A. Kanpur

- B. Pune
- C. Hyderabad
- D. Lucknow

Answer: D

7. Which of the following Women Hockey Team Won bronze Medal In women's Asia cup 2022?

- A. South korea
- B. China
- C. India
- D. Japan

Answer: C

8. With reference to Australian Tennis Open 2022, which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?

- 1. Rafael Nadal and Ashleigh Barty lifted Men and Women title respectively.
- 2. Nick Kyrgios and Thanasi Kokkinakis won Men's doubles Title.
- 3. Barbora Krejčíková and Katerina Siniakova won Women's doubles Title.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. All of the Above

Answer: D

CivilsTap Hlmachal

AWARDS

1.156 Union Jal Shakti Minister Announces 3rd National Water Awards.

Why in news?

- Union Minister of Jal Shakti Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat announced 3rd National Water Awards-2020.

About the awards

- In the Best State category, **Uttar Pradesh** has been awarded first prize, followed by **Rajasthan** and **Tamil Nadu**.
- The first National Water Award was launched by the Jal Shakti Ministry in 2018. National Water Awards have provided a good opportunity to start-ups as well as leading organizations to engage and deliberate with senior policymakers on how to adopt the best water resources management practices in India.

1.157 Kerala Arts & Crafts Village wins international Award.

Why in news?

- The Kerala Arts and Crafts Village near Kovalam has won 2021 International Craft Award for the best craft village of the year.

About Kerala Arts & Crafts Village

- The Kerala Arts and Crafts Village is an institution established by the Uralungal Labour Contract Co-operative Society for the state tourism department.

1.158 Bal Puraskar winners to be awarded with digital certificates on January 24.

Why in news?

- Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar is given as recognition to children residing in India, above the age of 5 years and not exceeding 18 years with exceptional abilities and outstanding achievement in 6 fields of Innovation, Scholastic achievements, Sports, Arts & Culture, Social Service and Bravery, which deserve recognition.
- Each awardee is given a medal, a cash prize of Rs. 1,00,000/- and a certificate.
- These Awards are conferred by Hon'ble President in a ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhawan.

1.159 Netaji Award 2022 given to Ex - Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Why in news?

- On 23rd January 2022, on the occasion of the 125th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Netaji Research Bureau, has honoured Shinzo Abe with the Netaji Award 2022.

About the Award

- The Consul General of Japan received the award on behalf of Shinzo Abe at the event held in Elgin Road residence of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.
- In 2021, Shinzo Abe was honoured by the Government of India with the Padma Vibhushan for Public Affairs.

About Japan

- Prime Minister - Fumio Kishida
- Capital – Tokyo
- Currency - Yen

1.160 Indian film Koozhangal wins best film award at Dhaka International Film Festival.

Why in News

- Indian movie titled Koozhangal (Tamil) directed by P S Vinothraj has won the best film award in the Asian Film Competition category at the 20th Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF) 2022 in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 15th to 23rd January 2022.

Other Awards

- The best actor award was given to Jayasurya for Movie Sunny –directed by Ranjith Sankar.
- Indian Film, Semkhor (Dimasa language), directed by Assamese actor Aimee Baruah, has won the Special Audience Award.
- The best feature film award was given to Maryam Bahrololumi-directed film Shahrbanoo (Lady from the City) from Iran in the Women film maker's section.

About DIFF

- The 20th DIFF 2022 was organised by the Rainbow Film Society established in 1977.
- The 9-day long festival featured 225 films drawn from 70 countries.

About Bangladesh

- Capital – Dhaka
- Prime minister – Sheikh Hasina
- Currency – Takka

PRACTISE MCQS

1. **With reference to the 3rd National Water Awards-2020, consider the following statements:**

1. In the Best State category, Madhya Pradesh has been awarded first prize, followed by Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.
2. The first National Water Award was launched by the Jal Shakti Ministry in 2018.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

2. **The Arts and Crafts Village of which of the following state has won 2021 International Craft Award for the best craft village of the year?**

- Kerala
- Assam
- Gujarat
- Madhya Pradesh

Answer: A

3. **With reference to Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar, consider the following statements:**

1. These awards are given above the age of 5 years and not exceeding 18 years.
2. These awards are conferred by Hon'ble President.
3. Each awardee is given a medal, a cash prize of Rs. 2,00,000/- and a certificate.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 2 and 3 only
- 1 and 3 only
- All of the above

Answer: A

4. **Who among the following has been honoured with the Netaji Award for 2022 by Netaji Research Bureau?**

- Fumio Kishida
- Shinzo Abe
- Yoshihiko Noda
- None of the Above

Answer: B

5. Which of the following Indian Movie has won the best film award under the Asian Film category at the 20th Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF) 2022?

- A. Mayar Jonjal
- B. Sunny
- C. Koozhangal
- D. None of the Above

Answer: C



HIMACHAL PRADESH CURRENT AFFAIR

1.161 Manali winter carnival to focus on social issues.

Why in news?

- With the advent of New Year, Manali will be hosting the Winter Carnival from January 2 to 6.
- The annual fest is organised to attract tourists to Kullu and Manali during the off-season, promote folk culture and provide a platform to local artistes and those from other states.
- In order to expand it, the then Chief Minister Prem Kumar Dhumal gave the Winter Carnival the status of a state-level festival in 1999 while it became a national event in 2011.
- **The main purpose of the carnival in 1970s was to promote winter sports.**
- **Harnam Singh, the then director of the mountaineering institute in Manali, played an important role in starting this event.**

1.162 Shoolini University in top band of Atal rankings.

Why in news?

- The Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences, Solan, has been placed in the highest band of excellent category in the Atal Rankings of Institutions on Innovations and Achievements.
- The rankings were announced recently by the Union Education Ministry. It evaluates institutions of higher learning annually for their performances with regard to innovations and achievements.
- As many as 36 of 1,200 universities in the country have found a place in this band. Shoolini University is among the top five in the northern region and the only one from Himachal.

1.163 AIIMS telemedicine facility for Lahaul-Spiti residents.

Why in news?

- A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between AIIMS, Bilaspur, and the Lahaul-Spiti administration today for better health facilities to people of the district through the integrated telemedicine platform. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Centre at PGI, Chandigarh, will also be involved in it.
- “The tribal district is not only the largest in the state, but geographical and climatic difficulties also remain a major hindrance in providing better healthcare to the people. In such a situation, the agreement will be a great relief for the people. The agreement is based on important components like telemedicine, diagnostic and patient care.”

1.164 Himachal Pradesh first flower mandi comes up at Parwanoo.

Why in news?

- The state’s first flower mandi has been set up at the Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) marketing yard, Parwanoo, to facilitate the growers from Solan, Sirmaur, Shimla and Mandi districts.
- The mandi is located on the Kalka-Shimla expressway at Parwanoo.
- The agro-climatic conditions offer apt opportunities for the development of floriculture to serve the internal off-season market

1.165 Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) to supply steel to HPSIDC.

Why in news?

- Himachal Pradesh State Industrial Development Corporation Ltd (HPSIDC) today signed an MoU with Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) for the supply of steel requirements.
- The MoU was signed in the presence of Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, who also launched the UNNATI portal and mobile app of the HPSIDC. He also launched the website of the HPSIDC, which will ensure timely project updates to the people at all levels, besides helping in avoiding missing deadlines and keeping workflows tools in one place.

1.166 'Maha Nati' wows tourists at Winter Carnival in Manali.

Why in news?

- Bright sun after a couple of days of inclement weather brightened the festive mood on the concluding day of the five-day long national Winter Carnival at Manali today.
- The 'maha nati' on the Mall road by hundreds of women of Mahila Mandals of the left bank of the Beas attired in local dresses was the centre of attraction for the tourists and locals.

1.167 Himachal: Baddi police feted for 'Third Eye' project.

Why in news?

- The Third Eye, an evidence-based policing with CCTV surveillance matrix in the Baddi-Barotiwala-Nalagarh (BBN) industrial hub, had helped reduce crime by 30 per cent, said DGP Sanjay Kundu.
- Former Baddi SP Rohit Malpani (now SP, cyber crime), under whose supervision the project was implemented, received the National e-Governance Silver Award from Dr Jitender Singh, Minister of State, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, at Hyderabad today, during the 24th national conference on e-Governance.
- The project was implemented under the public-private partnership, in coordination with the industries in BBN area, without seeking any financial assistance from the government, he said.
- As many as 2,038 CCTV cameras were installed in Baddi district. "Besides initiatives such as geotagging of CCTVs on Google Maps, and surveillance through vehicle-mounted cameras, a cyber lab facilitating CCTV footage analysis was also renovated,"

1.168 Safeguarding Himalayan biodiversity Herculean task.

Why in news?

- To protect highly endangered species, ranging from the elusive endangered pheasant western tragopan to the musk deer and the Himalayan tahr in the Great Himalayan National Park, a Unesco World Heritage site in the north-west Himalayas, is a Herculean task for a forest official
- Park authorities fear for their vulnerability to poaching from human settlements in the buffer zone known as an eco-zone.
- The Great Himalayan National Park is spread over 90,540 hectares. It comprises the upper mountain glacial and snow melt water sources of several rivers, and the catchments of water supplies that are vital to millions of downstream users.

1.169 Asian development bank funded project for Kutlehar farmers.

Why in news?

- Drip irrigation and electric wire fencing will be The HP Sub-Tropical Horticulture, Irrigation and Value Addition (HP SHIVA) project will be implemented on 5,000 kanals of land in Kutlehar where farmers have either stopped cultivating due to wild animals or where horticulture is not in practice.
- A sum of Rs 1,000 crores, funded by the Asian Development Bank, will be spent in the first phase of the project, which will begin in 2023 and culminate in 2029.
- The project aims at giving a boost to the plantation of sub-tropical fruits like orange, litchi, pomegranate and guava in lower regions of the state.

1.170 Ropeway project cleared, soon Kasauli from Jabli in 20 mins.

Why in news?

- With an about 4-km ropeway connecting Jabli with Kasauli in Solan district of Himachal getting an all-clear from the authorities concerned, tourists as well as locals can hope of traversing between the two points in a mere 20 minutes.
- The eco-friendly transportation mode will have the twin advantage of easing traffic snarls as well as saving fuel to promote cleaner environment.
- It will also provide speedier access to Kasauli, the world-famous town frequented by 5,000 to 7,500 tourists on a daily basis during peak season. The project is to be completed at a cost of Rs 206 crore.
- The Ropeways and Rapid Transport System Development Corporation (RTDC), which is executing the project, has prepared a preliminary report and tenders are likely to be floated shortly.
- "Its lower terminal point will be situated at Mohal Bhat ka Gaon at Jabli on the Parwanoo-Dharampur section of National Highway-5. The upper terminal point has been identified near the Public Works Department Circuit House in Kasauli," he said.

1.171 Work on PGI satellite centre in Una to begin in April.

Why in news?

- The satellite centre is one of the biggest projects to come up in Una district. It will involve an investment of Rs 450 crore—Rs 283 crore to be spent on buildings, and the remaining on equipment for the centre.
- The construction of the PGI satellite centre in Una district is expected to start in April. The PGI, Chandigarh, is in the process of finalising the drawings of the building of the satellite centre.

1.172 Himachal Pradesh CM inaugurates heliport.

Why in news?

- Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur inaugurated a heliport, constructed at a cost of Rs 18 crore, near the Sanjauli-Dhalli bypass.
- The Centre has provided Rs 12.13 crore for the construction of this project under the Himalayan Circuit of the Swadesh Darshan programme and Rs 6 crore under UDAN-2.
- Heliports are also being constructed at Baddi, Rampur and Mandi under the Udaan-2 scheme of Government of India.
- The state government will soon send a proposal for construction of new heliports at Reckong Peo, Chamba, Dalhousie, Jhanjeli, Jawalaji etc to the Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation to give a fillip to tourism activities in these areas.

1.173 Vijay Paul reappointed as CACP chief.

Why in news?

- Agribusiness management expert Vijay Paul Sharma of Una has been reappointed the chairman of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- He is an alumnus of Palampur Agriculture University and has served as the CACP Chairman from June 2016 to May 2021.
- The Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), set up in 1965, is a decentralized agency of the Government of India (GoI).
- The CACP is an expert body that recommends the MSPs of the Kharif and Rabi crops to the **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**.

1.174 Himachal women win National Kabaddi tournament in Tirupati.

Why in news?

- The five-day National Kabaddi Invitation Championship tournament concluded at Indira Maidan.
- Deswal Kabaddi Academy- Delhi men's team and the women's team from Himachal Pradesh have emerged as the winners of the tournament.
- The final match between the women's Kabaddi teams between Sahasra Seema Bal (SSB) and Himachal Pradesh's (HP) team ended with the latter comfortably managing a 16 point lead against the former (40-24).

1.175 Snow Festival will start from today in Himachal's Lahaul.

Why in news?

- Cultural festivities and sports competitions will not be part of the Snow Festival at Lahaul due to the resurgence of Covid.
- The festival will start with rituals at Trilokinath Temple.
- The fair, which started last year and lasted for 75 days, will be celebrated in a subdued way this time due to Covid.
- The 'festival of festivals' was celebrated by linking various rituals, fairs and events of the valley to showcase the distinctive culture of the tribal region.
- Traditional festivals like Halda, Udang, Fagli, Losar, Kuns, Zukaru, Gochi, Poona, Yor, Yeti, Buchhang, Dala and Teshu will be celebrated by the local masses in their houses.

1.176 Himachal nod to major incentives under Swarnim sports policy.

Why in news?

- To give a major fillip to sports promotion, Himachal govt announced major incentives in Swarnim Khel State Sports Policy 2020, which will replace the sports policy was framed in 2001.

About Swarnim sports policy

- The policy lays emphasis on sports promotion by developing, maintaining and optimally utilising high quality sports infrastructure.
- The policy aims at encouraging public private participation in creating sports infrastructure and coordinating with educational institutions for promotion of sports and providing the best of facilities for training and support to sports persons for participation and excellence in national and international championships with high standards of ethics.

- This policy introducing scientific research in training for long term sports development and recognize and honour talent in sports and reward young women and men who have achieved excellence in sports.

1.177 Himachal Pradesh Cabinet approves new Energy Policy 2021.

Why in news?

- The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet, presided over by Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, gave nod to Swaran Jayanti Energy Policy -- 2021 that envisaged clean and green.

About the Energy policy 2021

- It added additional 10,000 MW of green energy through hydro, solar and other green energy sources by 2030 and expeditious development of green energy sources.
- It also lays stress on renewal energy sources viz. solar, wind, biomass and other non-conventional energy sources.
- This policy aims four-pronged strategy by way of participation of the state, joint, Central and private sectors,

1.178 For road to Leh, BRO to build tunnel under Shinkula Pass.

Why in news?

- The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) will construct a tunnel beneath the Shinkula Pass to provide road connectivity to Leh from the Manali side. At present, there is only one route to Leh from Manali via the Baralacha Pass for the Army and civilians, which remains closed for months during the winter every year due to heavy snowfall. Due to a heavy flow of tourists on the Manali-Leh highway, the need for a bypass to ease traffic congestion between Manali and Keylong is being felt. To resolve the issue, the BRO will construct a double-lane bypass from Nehru Kund towards the tunnel beyond Manali.

All-weather connectivity the target

- Ever since the face-off with China in Galwan valley, the Centre is keen to explore the possibility of all-weather connectivity to Leh from Manali side, especially for military purpose.
- The Shinkula Pass receives heavy snowfall, blocking traffic movement on the under-construction Darcha-Padum highway.
- The highway will be connected at Nimmu from Padum ahead at the Kargil-Leh highway to provide connectivity to Leh via the Keylong-Darcha-Shinku La-Padum-Nimnu highway.

1.179 Himachal CM opens women's national ice hockey tourney at Kaza.

Why in news?

- Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur inaugurated the 9th Women National Ice Hockey Championship at Kaza today. It is for the first time that the competition is being held in the state. Ice hockey is one of the most popular winter sports.

About the tournament

- The government has announced a high-altitude sports centre in Kaza at a cost of Rs 16 crore. Skate Boots have been provided by the Department of Youth Services and Sports for training players at a cost of Rs 27 lakh and ice rinks have been developed by the administration on a small scale in Lidang, Sagnam, Losar, Tabo and Hikmi,

1.180 Road alignment proposals for bridge over Gobind Sagar lake.

Why in news?

- Two road alignment proposals for the construction of a road bridge over the Gobind Sagar lake between Lathiani and Bihru in Una district and the spots for the two ends of the 840-metre bridge have been finalised.
- The bridge will reduce the distance between Una and Hamirpur districts by about 20 km and also allow road access to people living in villages around the reservoir, who now use boats as means of transport..
- According to the highways authorities, the bridge will be built in two parts, the first 440-metre part to be supported by cables and the remaining carried on pillars.
- Meanwhile, the government, through the Kutlehar Tourism Development Society, has proposed to set up a tourism hub near Bihru on the banks of the reservoir. The facilities like adventure water sports, angling, bird watching and nature trekking are also proposed.

1.181 Phytochemicals in Himalayan plant found to inhibit SARS-CoV-2 infection.

- Researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mandi and the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) have identified phytochemicals in the petals of a Himalayan plant that could potentially be used to treat COVID-19 infection.
- The research found that phytochemical-rich petals of *Rhododendron arboreum* found in the Himalayan region, locally called “Buransh” show antiviral activity and fight against the virus.
- The findings of the research team have been recently published in the journal *Biomolecular Structure and Dynamics*.

1.182 Halda fest celebrated in Lahaul-Spiti valleys.

Why in news?

- Traditional Halda festival was celebrated with great fervour in Lahaul-Spiti in which residents of the Gahar valley, Chandra valley and Pattan valley took part. The residents sang songs and danced together. These days entire region of Lahaul and Spiti is covered under thick blanket of snow.
- Halda festival started on January 13 at Gahar valley, which ended at Patan valley on January 17. In the rest of the villages in the district, the Halda festival will continue till the end of January.
- The residents said as Diwali was celebrated all over India, this festival was celebrated in Pattan, Chandra and Gahar valleys around the second and third week of January.
- “To celebrate the event, pencil cedar branches are cut into strips and tied together into bundles to make a torch called Halda. Halda is lit in a house where villagers gather to perform the rituals,” they said. The residents enjoy by celebrating the festival collectively in which each family of the village ensures active participation.

1.183 Job quota, cash awards go up as new sports policy unveiled.

Why in news?

- The Minister for Sports, Youth Affairs and Forests, Rakesh Pathania, unveiled the new sports policy of the state.
- Quota for sportspersons in government jobs increased from 2% to 3%
- Winners of gold medal in Olympics, Paralympics to get Rs3 cr, silver Rs2 cr
- Those qualifying, participating in Olympics, Paralympics to get Rs15 lakh
- Super specialised sports academies with residential facilities at district level

1.184 Atal Medical & Research University (AMRU), Nerchowk, and the Indian Institute of Technology, Mandi sign MoU between advancement of research and education activities in medical sciences.

Why in news?

- “There will be mutual coordination between scientists and teaching faculty members of the institutions.
- They will visit each other to encourage and promote educational activities. Scientific information and new research will be shared on mutual basis.
- Workshops would be organised and educational initiatives taken jointly

1.185 Himachal CM inaugurates Dharamsala-McLeodganj ropeway project.

Why in news?

- Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur inaugurated and laid foundation stones of 17 development projects worth Rs 283.19 crore at Dharamsala in Kangra district on Wednesday.
- The projects include inauguration of Dharamsala Skyway (Dharamsala ropeway) constructed at a cost of Rs 207 crores.
- The Dharamsala Ropeway would connect Dharamsala with McLeodganj. It has the hourly capacity of carrying 1,000 persons and would reach Dharamsala to McLeodganj in five minutes.
- The length of the ropeway is 1.8 km. The ropeway has 10 towers and 2 stations at Dharamsala and McLeodganj.

1.186 Haryana, HP ink deal to build Adi Badri Dam, revive Saraswati river.

Why in News

- Himachal Pradesh (HP) and Haryana signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the construction of a Adi Badri dam on 77 acres in HP near the Adi Badri area of Yamunanagar, Haryana for the revival of the Saraswati river.
- Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (HPPCL) would be the executing agency for the Adi Badri dam and its related infrastructure
- The entire funding of the Project would be arranged by the Haryana Government.

About Saraswati River:

- The report from satellite claimed that the Saraswati originated at Adi Badri, an archaeological site which is located around 40 km away from Yamunanagar town of Haryana, at the foothills of the Shivalik mountains, near the Somb river.
- The Saraswati river existed more than 5,000 years ago, but disappeared underground because of earthquakes and other geographical developments.

Research on Existence of Saraswati river:

- The team was set up at the Kurukshetra University for conducting research on Saraswati River which has proved its presence through satellite images
- The Haryana Saraswati Heritage Development Board has also been established to develop 5 riverfronts on the rejuvenated Saraswati river namely at Pipli (near Sabarmati river, Gujarat), Pehowa,

Bilaspur, Dosarka (on Panchkula-Yamunanagar road) and the Theh Polar (near Saraswati-Sindhu Civilisation archaeological site).

About Adi Badri Dam:

- The Adi Badri Dam will be constructed at the starting point of the Adi Badri river in Haryana for the continuous flow of water with a notified area of 200 Kilometre (km) from Adi Badri to Ghaggar river via Kaithal.



PRACTISE MCQS

1. Manali Winter Carnival 2021 to focus on which of the following Issue ?

- A. Social issues
- B. Education
- C. Health
- D. Environment

Answer: A

2. The Shoolini University of Biotechnology and Management Sciences IS Situated in which of the following city?

- A. Solan
- B. Shimla
- C. Hamirpur
- D. Dharmshala

Answer: A

3. AIIMS Telemedicine facility will be started for which of the following district of Himachal Pradesh?

- A. Lahaul-Spiti
- B. Shimla
- C. Mandi
- D. Solan

Answer: A

4. Himachal Pradesh first flower mandi will be started in which of the following place ?

- A. Baddi
- B. Mandi
- C. Shimla
- D. Parwanoo

Answer - D

5. Himachal Pradesh State Industrial Development Corporation Ltd (HPSIDC) today signed an MoU with which of the following company for the supply of steel requirements?

- A. Tata steel Ltd
- B. JSW Steel Ltd
- C. Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL)
- D. Essar Steel India Ltd.

Answer: C

6. Five day long winter Carnival is celebrated in which of the following city of Himacal pradesh ?

- A. Shimla

- B. Kullu
- C. Kangra
- D. Lahaul spiti

Answer: B

7. Which of the following city police Awarded for 'Third Eye' project in 24th national conference on e-Governance at Hyderabad?

- A. Solan
- B. Baddi
- C. Mandi
- D. Dharmshala

Answer: B

8. Himalayan tahr in the Great Himalayan National Park, a Unesco World Heritage site is located in which of the following district of Himachal Pradesh?

- A. Solan
- B. Kangra
- C. Kullu
- D. Shimla

Answer: C

9. Which of the following international bank funded project for Kulehar farmers in Himachal Pradesh?

- A. Asian development bank
- B. World bank
- C. New development bank
- D. International monetary fund

Answer: A

10. Ropeway project from Kasauli from Jabli will be executed by which company ?

- A. The Ropeways and Rapid Transport System Development Corporation (RTDC)
- B. The himachal ropeways tourism private ltd
- C. The ropeway and rapid transport corporation ltd
- D. All of the above

Answer: A

11. PGI satellite centre will be set up in which of the following city?

- A. Una
- B. Hamirpur
- C. Mandi
- D. Solan

Answer: A

12. Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur inaugurated a heliport in which of the following location?

- A. Sanjauli-Dhalli bypass
- B. Reckong Peo
- C. Chamba
- D. Dalhousie

Answer: A

13. Which of the following body that recommends the MSPs of the notified Kharif and Rabi crops to the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)?

- A. Ministry of agriculture
- B. Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)
- C. Ministry of finance
- D. State government

Answer: B

14. Which of the following women team win National Kabaddi tourney held in Tirupati?

- A. Delhi
- B. SSB
- C. Himachal
- D. Haryana

Answer: C

15. Halda, Udang, Fagli, Losar, Poona, Yor, Yeti, and Teslu are celebrated in which of the following state?

- A. Sikkim
- B. Arunachal Pradesh
- C. Himachal Pradesh
- D. Assam

Answer: C

16. With reference to Swarnim Khel State Sports Policy 2020 of Himachal Pradesh, consider the following statements:

1. It lays emphasis on sports promotion by developing, maintaining and optimally utilising high quality sports infrastructure.
2. It introduce the scientific research in training for long term sports development and recognize and honour talent in sports and reward young women and men who have achieved excellence in sports.

Which of the above statement is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2

- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

17. With reference to Energy Policy 2021 of himachal pradesh, consider the following statement :

1. It added additional 10,000 MW of green energy through hydro, solar and other green energy sources by 2040.
2. This policy aims four-pronged strategy by way of participation of the state, joint, Central and private sectors.

Which of the above statement is/are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: B

18. With respect to the project Shinkula Pass tunnel , consider the following statements:

1. The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) will construct a tunnel beneath the Shinkula Pass.
2. It will provide road connectivity to Leh from the Manali side.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

19. Which of the following place will host the 9th Women National Ice Hockey Championship?

- A. Kufri
- B. Lahaul spiti
- C. Kaza
- D. Manali

Answer: C

20. With reference to the Gobind Sagar Lake , consider the following statements:

1. It is a reservoir situated in Una and Bilaspur districts of Himachal Pradesh.
2. It is formed by the Bhakra Dam.
3. The reservoir is on the river Sutlej and is named in honour of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh guru.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 3 only
- D. All of the above

Answer: D

21. Which of the following journal published the findings of phytochemicals in the petals of a Himalayan plant that could potentially be used to treat COVID-19 infection ?

- A. Biomolecular Structure and Dynamics.
- B. The Journal of Science and Medicine
- C. Social Science & Medicine
- D. None of the above

Answer: A

22. With reference to 'Halda fest', consider the following statements:

- 1. It is celebrated in Lahaul-Spiti in which residents of the Gahar valley, Chandra valley and Pattan valley took part.
- 2. Halda festival is celebrated in Pattan, Chandra and Gahar valleys around the second and third week of January.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

23. With reference to New Sports Policy of Himachal Pradesh, Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?

- 1. Quota for sportspersons in government jobs increased from 2% to 4%.
- 2. Winners of gold medal in Olympics, Paralympics to get Rs4 cr, silver Rs2 cr.
- 3. Those qualifying, participating in Olympics, Paralympics to get Rs15 lakh.

Select the correct codes from below -

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 3 only
- D. All of the above

Answer - C

24. Which of the following organisation signed with Indian Institute of Technology, Mandi, for advancement of research and education activities in medical sciences?

- A. PGIMER Chandigarh
- B. Atal Medical & Research University (AMRU), Nerchowk
- C. Shoolini University, Solan
- D. None of the above

Answer: B

25. With reference to 'Dharamshala Skyway', consider the following statements:

- 1. It is a 1.8-km ropeway from Dharamshala to Mcleodganj in Kangra district.
- 2. It has been developed under as a public-private partnership project by Dharamshala Ropeway Limited, Himachal Pradesh tourism and civil aviation department.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: C

26. The Government of Himachal Pradesh and Haryana have signed an MoU for construction of Adi Badri dam for the revival of which of the following river?

- A. Beas
- B. Ganga
- C. Saraswati
- D. Sindhu

Answer: C

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