

Current Affairs MONTHLY



MARCH 2022

**By
CivilsTap Himachal**



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

Prelims

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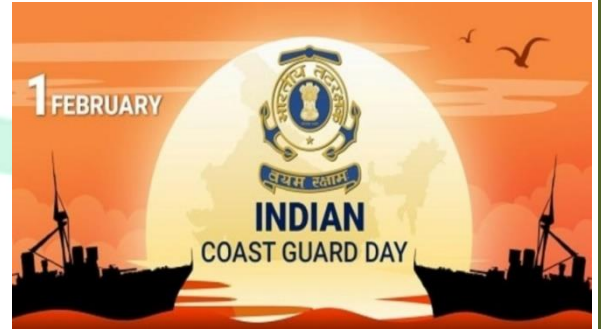
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NATIONAL NEWS

1.1. INDIAN COAST GUARD RAISING DAY.

Why in News

- Indian Coast Guard is celebrating its **46th Raising Day on 01 Feb 2022**
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has extended his best wishes to the Indian Coast Guard family on their Raising Day.
- As the fourth largest Coast Guard in the world, the Indian Coast Guard has played a significant role in securing the Indian Coasts and enforcing regulations in the Maritime Zones of India.



About the Indian Coast Guard

- The Indian Coast Guard was formally **established on 1 February 1977 by the Coast Guard Act, 1978** of the Parliament of India.
- The Indian Coast Guard is a maritime law enforcement and search and rescue agency of India with jurisdiction over its territorial waters including its contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone.

ICGS Kuthar

- The first Indian Coast Guard Ship ICGS Kuthar (Pennant No. 31) was transferred from the Indian Navy to the Indian Coast Guard in 1978.

1.2. IIT JODHPUR RESEARCHERS DEVELOP AI MODEL THAT CAN DETECT COVID-19 BY EXAMINING CHEST X-RAY.

Why in News

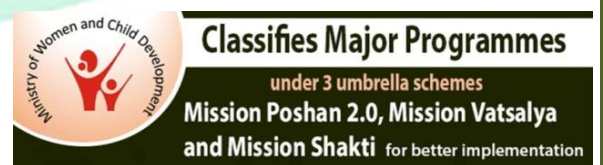
- Researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jodhpur have developed an Artificial Intelligence (AI) model that can detect COVID-19 by examining the chest X-ray of patients
- The AI-based solution can also be an alternative to the regular RT PCR tests conducted across the world and help in easing the rapidly growing pressure on governments to procure testing kits and set up processing centres.



1.3. UNION BUDGET 2022: MISSION SHAKTI TO POSHAN 2.0, REVAMPED SCHEMES FOR WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT.

Why in News

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has decided to classify all of its major programmes under three Umbrella Schemes– Mission Shakti, Mission Vatsalya and Mission POSHAN 2.0.
- All 3 Missions will be implemented during the 15th Finance Commission period 2021-22 to 2025-26.



About the Schemes

Mission Shakti

- Mission Shakti will consist of the schemes and policies for the empowerment and protection of women.
- Mission Shakti will cover schemes under two categories:
- **SAMBAL** - This category will include schemes such as One Stop Centre, Mahila Police Volunteer, Women's Helpline, Swadhar, Ujjawala among others.
- **SAMARTHYA** - This category will include schemes such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana among others.
- **Mission Vatsalya**
- Mission Vatsalya will be looking into child welfare services and child protection services all over the country.
- Schemes covered - Mission Vatsalya will include the Scheme for Child Protection Services, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

Saksham Anganwadi and Mission POSHAN 2.0 scheme

- This will include schemes such as **Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), Anganwadi Services, Poshan Abhiyan, Scheme for Adolescent Girls, National Creche Scheme** among others.
- **Mission Poshan 2.0** - The government will be merging the Poshan Abhiyan and supplementary nutrition programme to launch Mission Poshan 2.0.
- **Objective: Mission** - Poshan 2.0 will look into the ways and measures for strengthening the nutritional content, outreach, delivery, and outcomes.

1.4. 11TH MEETING OF INDIA-OMAN JOINT MILITARY COOPERATION COMMITTEE HELD IN DELHI.

Why in News

- Defence Secretary Secretary-General of the Ministry of Defence of Oman attended the 11th meeting of India-Oman Joint Military Cooperation Committee (JMCC) in New Delhi.
- The JMCC is the highest forum of engagement between India and Oman in the field of defence that evaluates and provides guidance to the overall framework of defence exchanges between the two sides.



About Joint Military Cooperation Committee

- The **Joint Military Cooperation Committee (JMCC)** is the apex body between the Defence Ministries of India and Oman to comprehensively review & guide all aspects of bilateral defence cooperation.

About Oman

- Capital – Muscat
- Currency – Rial



1.5. HOME DELIVERY OF MEDICINES UNDER SEHAT SCHEME TO BE ROLLED OUT IN DELHI.

Why in News

- The defence ministry will roll out the home delivery of medicines for veterans and serving military personnel in Delhi, seeking healthcare services under an online medical consultation platform.
- The home delivery of medicines under Services e-Health Assistance and Teleconsultation (SeHAT) will be started with the Base Hospital in Delhi Cantonment and the scheme would be extended to more and more stations in the future.
- It is a tri-services teleconsultation service designed for "all entitled personnel" and their families.



1.6. CHHATTISGARH BECOMES 35TH STATE/UT TO IMPLEMENT ONE NATION ONE RATION CARD (ONORC)

Why in news?

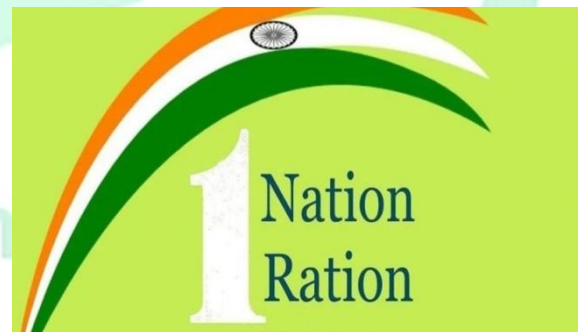
- The ONORC plan for nation-wide portability of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) ration cards has been enabled in the Chhattisgarh State from 2nd February 2022.
- With the integration of Chhattisgarh, the ONORC plan is now operational in **35 States/UTs** covering almost **96.8%** NFSA population (about **77 Crore** NFSA beneficiaries) in the country.

About ONORC

- ONORC is a technology driven distribution system which makes food security portable across the country and is very beneficial for migratory NFSA beneficiaries, who frequently change their place of dwelling in search of temporary employments, etc.
- This provides them with an option to get their entitled quota of foodgrains from any FPS of their choice, anywhere in the country, by using their same/existing ration card.
- It is also noteworthy that the families of the migratory beneficiaries back home can also avail the balance ration without any difficulty.

Salient Features of One Nation One Ration Card Scheme

- It is being implemented under the Integrated Management of PDS (IMPDS.)
- 65 crores beneficiaries are being covered under the ONORC scheme.
- 80 percent of beneficiaries registered under NFSA have been covered under the scheme.
- 81 crores beneficiaries are reported to get the benefits of this scheme once all states/UTs will be integrated under the scheme.



1.7. KHWAJA MOINUDDIN CHISHTI.

Why in news?

- The Prime Minister presented a Chadar which shall be offered at the Ajmer Sharif Dargah on the Urs of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti.

About Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti

- Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti was born in Sijistan (modern-day Sistan) in Iran in 1141-42 CE.

- He went on to Hajj, Mecca, and Medina after receiving Khilafat at the age of 52 from **Sheikh Usman Harawani**.
- Later, he started living and preaching in Ajmer.
- He was soon able to draw the local populace, poor people, peasants, and nobles from far and wide and even drew the attention of the Kings.
- The Dargah complex of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti was built in **Indo-Islamic style of architecture**.
- **A golden crown offered by Nawab Haider Ali Khan of Rampur** sits on top of it and a lotus adorns the dome.
- Moinuddin Hasan Chishti earned the name **Khwaja Garib Nawaz**, or **cherisher of the poor**.



1.8. TORGYA FESTIVAL CELEBRATED IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH 2022

Why in news?

- The three days long **Torgya Festival** of the **Monpa tribal community of Arunachal Pradesh** is celebrated at **Tawang Monastery, Arunachal Pradesh**.
- The main attraction of the festival is the ‘**Sha-na Cham**’, the ritual dance performed by monks to showcase the **Choe-Gyal Yap & Yum Tsa-Munde deity**.
- This year is the ‘**Dungyur Torgya**’ festival, which marks a special occasion as every 3rd year, the festival is organized on a broader level with the name **Dungyur Festival** during which Dalai Lama offers blessings (also known as **Tse-Boom**) to other lamas by sending **Feb Jum** which is a holy item to be used in rituals.



1.9. PUNJAB CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER UNVEILED ITS MASCOT NAMED ‘SHERA’

Why in news?

- **Chief Electoral Officer’s office of Punjab** unveiled its **election mascot, “Shera” (Lion)**.
- It **aims to increase voter awareness, participation and promote ethical voting** in the Punjab Assembly polls that is scheduled on 20 February 2022.
- The mascot “Shera”, depicts a lion. It represents the rich cultural heritage of Punjab.
- It is promoted under the **Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) project** of the Election Commission of India (ECI).
- SVEEP project was started in 2009, as the flagship program of the ECI for voter education.



1.10. HAR GHAR NAL SE JAL SCHEME.

Why in news?

- The Indian government has allocated Rs. 60,000 crore to the "Har Ghar Nal se Jal" scheme for the financial year 2022-2023.

About the scheme

- The Jal Jeevan Mission, which is implementing the Nal se Jal scheme, was launched in 2019.
- It is **aimed at providing tap water supply to all rural households and public institutions located in villages** such as schools, anganwadi centers, health centers, panchayat buildings, etc. At the time of launch, an estimated 3.23 crore (17%) households were reported to have tap water connections.
- The **central government is implementing the scheme in partnership with state governments**. It is aiming to complete full coverage in all states by 2024. The estimated outlay of the program is Rs. 3.60 lakh crore, of which the government's contribution is Rs. 2.08 lakh crore.
- The FM in her speech said that **8.7 crore households (nearly 45%)** have so far been covered under the scheme.
- Several states and union territories have **already achieved 100% coverage of tap water connections** under the scheme. These include **Goa, Telangana, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Puducherry, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, and Haryana**.

1.11. PUNAURA DHAM.

Why in news?

- On February 3, 2022, Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy told the Rajya Sabha that **Punaura Dham of Bihar** has been included in the **Ramayana circuit of the Swadesh Darshan scheme** and in the **PRASAD scheme**.

About Punaura Dham

- Maa Janaki Janmabhoomi Temple is located in Punaura Dham village of Sitamarhi district of Bihar, which is also known as Punaura Dham.
- It is worth mentioning that the **PRASAD scheme was launched in the year 2014-15 with the objective of improving the facilities and infrastructure at pilgrimage centers of all religions**.
- At the same time, **Swadesh Darshan Scheme was started in the year 2014-15 for the theme based Integrated development of tourist places** like Ramayana Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Jain Circuit etc.
- In **Bihar**, development of **Patna Sahib** under Prasad scheme and development of **Jain circuit** under Swadesh Darshan scheme, development of **Kanwariya circuit**, development of **Gandhi circuit**, **Ramayana circuit** and **Buddhist circuit** are included.



1.12. RAHUL GANDHI LAUNCHES RS 6,000 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME FOR LANDLESS AGRI LABOURERS IN CHHATTISGARH.

Why in news?

- Chhattisgarh became the **first State in the country** to launch a **financial assistance scheme –Rajiv Gandhi Bhumiheen Krishi Mazdoor Nyay Yojana, for the landless agri labourers**.
- The scheme provisions payment of **Rs 6,000 per year to landless agri labourers in three equal instalments**.
- It is expected to benefit 3.55 lakh agriculture labourers of the State.
- Gandhi handed a Rs 2,000 cheque to some of the beneficiaries and the remaining ones got the amount transferred to their bank accounts.



1.13. 2022 REPUBLIC DAY PARADE: UP BAGS BEST TABLEAU AWARD, MAHARASHTRA WINS IN POPULAR CHOICE CATEGORY.

Why in News

- The **Uttar Pradesh state tableau** was adjudged as the **best state tableau of Republic Day Parade 2022**.
- The UP tableau 2022 showed Kashi Vishwanath Dham's glorious history and achievements of the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme.
- **Maharashtra state tableau** was selected as the **best in the popular choice category**.
- The Maharashtra tableau depicted the five bio-diversity symbols of the state - state bird 'Hariyal', state animal 'Shekru' or the Indian giant squirrel, state tree 'Mango', state butterfly 'Blue Mormon' and state flower 'Jarul'.
- The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) was adjudged as the **best marching contingent among the CAPF**, while the **Indian Navy was selected as the best marching contingent among the Services**. The Indian Air Force contingent won in the popular choice category.
- The tableau of Ministry of Education and Ministry of Civil Aviation were declared as best tableau among Ministries.
- Every year, **the defence ministry announces the best tableau among states and ministries** and best marching contingent and the best cultural performance.
- A total of 21 tableaux had participated in Republic Day Parade 2022 from 12 states and nine ministries and government departments.



Uttar Pradesh selected as best state tableau of
Republic Day parade 2022
Maharashtra wins in popular choice category

1.14. PRADHAN MANTRI MATRU VANDANA YOJANA.

Why in news?

- Recently, the Government has clarified that **Aadhaar** of husbands is not mandatory under the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, PMMVY, to facilitate the inclusion of single mothers and abandoned mothers.

About PMMVY

- It is a **maternity benefit programme** being implemented in all districts of the country with effect from 1st January, 2017.
- It is a **centrally sponsored scheme** being executed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- **Cash benefits are provided to pregnant women** in their bank account directly to meet enhanced nutritional needs and partially compensate for wage loss.
- Implementation of the scheme is closely monitored by the central and state governments through the **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana - Common Application Software (PMMVY-CAS)**.
- PMMVY-CAS is a **web based software application** that enables tracking the status of each beneficiary under the scheme, resulting in **expedited, accountable and better grievance redressal**.
- Beneficiaries
- All **Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW&LM)**, excluding those who are in regular employment with the Central Government or the State Governments or PSUs or those who are in receipt of similar benefits under any law for the time being in force.
- All eligible Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers who have their pregnancy **on or after 1st January 2017** for the first child in the family.

Benefits

- **Beneficiaries receive a cash benefit of Rs. 5,000** in three installments on fulfilling the following conditions:
- Early registration of pregnancy
- Ante-natal check-up
- Registration of the birth of the child and completion of the first cycle of vaccination for the first living child of the family.
- The eligible beneficiaries also receive cash incentive under **Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)**. Thus, on an average, a woman gets Rs. 6,000.

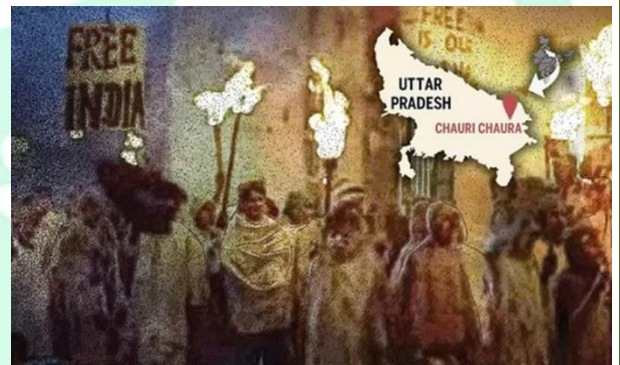
1.15. CENTENARY OF THE CHAURI CHAURA INCIDENT.

Why in news?

- Chauri Chaura incident is said to have given a new direction to the country's freedom struggle.
- Chauri Chaura is a town in Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh.

Chauri Chaura Incident:

- On 4th February, volunteers congregated in the town, and after the meeting, proceeded in a procession to the local police station, and to picket the nearby Mundera bazaar.
- The police **fired into the crowd killing some people and injuring many volunteers.**
- **In retaliation**, the crowd proceeded to set the police station on fire.
- Some of the policemen who tried to **escape were caught and battered to death.** A lot of police property, including weapons, was destroyed.
- Mahatma Gandhi **condemned the crime of the policemen's killing.** The volunteer groups in nearby villages were disbanded, and a **Chauri Chaura Support Fund** was set up to demonstrate "**genuine sympathy**" and seek atonement.
- Gandhi decided to **stop the Non-Cooperation Movement**, which he saw as having been tainted by unforgivable violence.



1.16. SRESHTA SCHEME: RESIDENTIAL EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS IN HIGH SCHOOLS IN TARGETED AREAS.

Why in news?

- Ministry of Education has joined hands with Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for SHRESTHA.

About the scheme

- It targets the meritorious students of Scheduled Caste. It will also help to control the drop out of students from courses 9 to 12.
- The scheme will provide **high quality residential schooling.**
- To implement the scheme, **NITI Aayog has recognized reputed non – public residential facilities in aspirational districts.**
- The government has estimated that the scheme implementation will require Rs 300 crores.
- The scheme is expected to help more than 24,800 students in next five years.

SRESHTA Scheme For SC Students



1.17. WEST BENGAL LAUNCH OPEN-AIR CLASSROOM PROGRAMME 'PARAY SHIKSHALAYA.

Why in news?


- **West Bengal government** has launched an open-air classroom programme **Paray Shikshalaya** (Neighbourhood Schools) for primary and pre-primary students.
- Under the scheme, **elementary education will be provided to students of class 1 to class 5**. The classes will be conducted on ground. The students will be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities.
- Mid – day meals will be provided.

Need for the scheme

- According to NITI Aayog, the dropout rate in primary level in 2010-11 was 6.61%.
- Also, after COVID, the number students coming to schools have decreased all over India.
- **The rural areas of West Bengal do not have optimal internet services**. In this condition, the open room classroom is the best way to bring in the primary school children.

Mayukh Sengupta

CONNECTING WITH KIDS

| | |
|---|---|
| 60,52,682 Students to benefit |  |
| 50,159 Primary schools to be covered | |
| 15,599 Sishu Siksha Kendra to be involved | |
| 1.8 Primary teachers to help in the initiative | |
| 21,000 Para-teacher part of the programme | |
| 38,000 Academic supervisors to be involved | Minister Bratya Basu launches the project on Monday |
| Objectives | |
| ▶ Enhance learning ability | ▶ Enable joyful assembly, develop logical reasoning and social bonding |
| ▶ Focus on mathematics, reading, writing, creativity and imagination skills | |



1.18. 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL CROPS RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR THE SEMI-ARID TROPICS (ICRISAT).

Why in news?

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has inaugurated the **50th Anniversary celebrations** of the **International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)** in Patancheru, Hyderabad.
- During the occasion, PM also inaugurated two research facilities of ICRISAT, which were **Climate Change Research Facility on Plant Protection** and **Rapid Generation Advancement Facility**.
- These two facilities are dedicated to the smallholder farmers of Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.
- Prime Minister also unveiled a specially designed logo of ICRISAT and launched a commemorative stamp issued on the occasion.



About International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics

- ICRISAT is a **non-profit, non-political public international research organization** that conducts agricultural research for development in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa with a wide array of partners throughout the world.
- ICRISAT has been awarded the **2021 Africa Food Prize**, for work that has improved food security across 13 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.
- ICRISAT headquarters are located in **Hyderabad**.
- ICRISAT was **founded by M. S. Swaminathan, C. Fred Bentley and Ralph Cummings in 1972**.

1.19. AGE-OLD KANCHOOTH FESTIVAL CELEBRATED IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR.

Why in news?

- The age-old festival is celebrated by Hindus, mainly Nag followers, who believe that **on this day of Gouri tritiya, Lord Shiva and goddess Parvati got married** and the latter insisted on a throne made of snow as her wedding gift.
- Thus, snow during the festival is considered a good omen.
- The festival is celebrated with **religious fervor across the Chenab Valley** in Jammu and Kashmir.
- During the **three-day long festival**, married women go in the neighbourhood to offer 'Thel' (respect) to one and all irrespective of religion, creed and caste, age and gender and get in return their blessing -- 'Suhagan Bho' (wish your husband a long life).



1.20. RAILWAY PROTECTION FORCE LAUNCHES NATIONWIDE “AAHT OPERATION” TO CURB HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

Why in news?

- Indian Railway Protection Force has launched a nationwide operation to curb human trafficking.
- As part of “**Operation AAHT**”, special teams will be deployed on all long-distance trains/routes with a focus on rescuing victims, particularly women and children, from the clutches of traffickers.
- The Railways, which operate about 21,000 trains across the country daily, is the most reliable mode of transportation for the traffickers who often moved their victims on long-distance trains.
- The RPF that rescued more than 2,000 women and children between 2017-21 from the clutches of traffickers intensified the crackdown on human trafficking with the increasing number of cases. The **National Crime Records Bureau** registers about 2,200 cases of Human Trafficking cases on an average each year.



1.21. INDIA PRESS FREEDOM REPORT 2021 RELEASED.

Why in news?

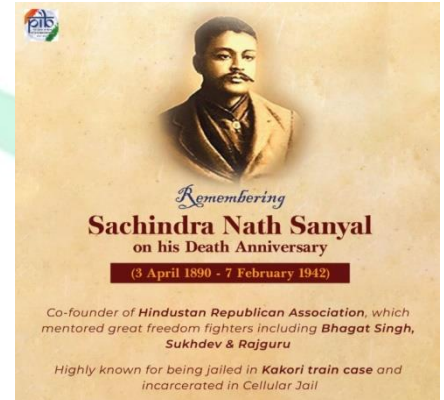
- The **India Press Freedom Report 2021** was recently released by the **Rights and Risks Analysis Group**.
- According to the report, **13 media houses and newspapers were targeted** in the country, **108 journalists were attacked**, and **6 journalists were killed**.
- 24 journalists were attacked physically, obstructed, threatened, and harassed for doing their work. All these attacks were made by public officials. This includes police attacks as well. 17 of these attacks were police attacks. 44 FIRs were registered against journalists in 2021. Of this 21 were registered under Section 153 of IPC.
- The highest number of journalists or media organisations targeted was in J&K (25), followed by Uttar Pradesh (23), Madhya Pradesh (16), Tripura (15), Delhi (8), Bihar (6), Assam (5), Haryana and Maharashtra (4 each), Goa and Manipur (3 each), Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal (2 each), and Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Kerala (1 each).



1.22. NATION REMEMBERS REVOLUTIONARY SACHINDRA NATH SANYAL ON HIS 80TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY.

Why in news?

- The Nation is remembering Revolutionary Sachindra Nath Sanyal on his 80th death anniversary today.
- He was the **founder of the Hindustan Republican Association** also known as Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. It was created **to carry out armed resistance against the British Empire** in India.
- Sachindra Nath Sanyal was a **mentor for revolutionaries like Chandrasekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh**. He **along with Rashbehari Bose attacked Viceroy Hardinge** and injured him while he was entering new capital of Delhi.
- Sanyal was **closely involved in the plans for the Ghadar Conspiracy**. He was sentenced to life for his involvement in the conspiracy and was imprisoned at Cellular Jail.
- He was also **jailed by the British for his involvement in Kakori Conspiracy**.
- Sachindra Nath Sanyal passed away in Gorakhpur Jail on 7th February 1942.



1.23. NATIONAL ROPEWAYS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME – “PARVATMALA” ANNOUNCED.

Why in news?

- Recently, the Union Finance Minister in the **Union Budget for 2022-23** announced **National Ropeways Development Programme – “Parvatmala”** to improve connectivity in hilly areas.

About the scheme

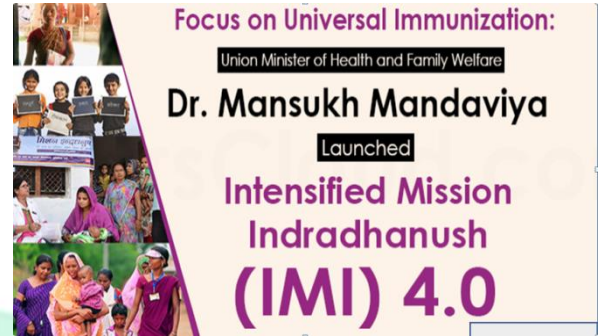
- The scheme will be taken up on **PPP (Public Private Partnership)** mode, which will be a **preferred ecologically sustainable alternative in place of conventional roads** in difficult hilly areas.
- The idea is **to improve connectivity and convenience for commuters, besides promoting tourism**.
- This may also cover congested urban areas, where conventional mass transit systems are not feasible.
- The scheme is **being presently started in regions like Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Jammu & Kashmir and the other North Eastern states**.
- The Finance Minister announced that contracts for 8 ropeway projects for a length of 60 km would be awarded in 2022-23.
- The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MORTH)** will have responsibility for development of ropeway and alternative mobility solutions technology, as well as construction, research, and policy in this area.
- In February 2021, the **Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules 1961** was amended, which enabled the MORTH to also look after the development of Ropeways and Alternate Mobility Solutions.
- The move will give a boost to the sector by setting up a regulatory regime.
- The MORTH has so far been responsible for development of Highways and regulating the road transport sector across the country.



1.24. HEALTH MINISTRY LAUNCHES INTENSIFIED MISSION INDRADHANUSH 4.0 FOR IMMUNISATION.

Why in news?

- Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Monday virtually launched the **Intensified Mission Indradhanush 4.0** that **aims to protect children and pregnant women from life-threatening diseases**.
- The government is **implementing the largest inoculation drive globally** where annually over **3 crore pregnant women** and **2.6 crore children** are covered through the Universal Immunisation Programme.
- **Intensified Mission Indradhanush 4.0 will have three rounds and will be conducted in 416 districts** (including 75 districts identified for Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav) across 33 States/UTs in the country.
- In the **first round (Feb-April 2022), 11 states will conduct IMI 4.0**. These are Assam, Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura and Chhattisgarh.
- The **others (22 states) will conduct the rounds from April to May 2022**. These states/UTs include Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, Bihar, Puducherry, Delhi, Punjab, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Telangana, Jharkhand, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, A & N Islands.
- The minister said the **mission will ensure that the routine immunization services will reach the unvaccinated and partially vaccinated children and pregnant women** of the country.
- With the aim to increase the full immunisation coverage, **Mission Indradhanush was launched in December 2014 to cover the partially and unvaccinated pregnant women and children in pockets of low immunization coverage, high-risk and hard-to-reach areas** and protect them from vaccine-preventable diseases.
- Total of **12 vaccine-preventable diseases are covered against which free immunization** is provided:
- Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Measles, Rubella, severe form of Childhood Tuberculosis, Hepatitis, Meningitis, Pneumonia caused by Hemophilus Influenza type B, Rotavirus diarrhea, Pneumococcal Pneumonia and Japanese Encephalitis.



1.25. SEVERAL VIOLATIONS FOUND IN ORGANIC PRODUCE CERTIFICATION PROCESS BY AGRICULTURAL AND PROCESSED FOOD PRODUCTS EXPORT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (APEDA).

Why in news?

- A ruling by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) suspending the accreditation and penalising a firm certifying organic produce for violation of national regulations in the certification process has brought to light several violations in the system.
- APEDA, while suspending the accreditation of Hyderabad-based certifying firm, has pointed to some serious lacuna in the organic certification process.
- Violations include farmers being certified without being informed, use of urea, along with complaints from importing nations.

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 passed by the Parliament in December, 1985.
- **Following functions** have been assigned to the Authority.
- Development of industries relating to the scheduled products for export by way of providing financial assistance or otherwise for undertaking surveys and feasibility studies, participation in enquiry capital through joint ventures and other reliefs and subsidy schemes;
- Registration of persons as exporters of the scheduled products on payment of such fees as may be prescribed;

- **Fixing of standards and specifications for the scheduled products** for the purpose of exports;
- **Carrying out inspection of meat and meat products** in slaughter houses, processing plants, storage premises, conveyances or other places where such products are kept or handled for the purpose of ensuring the quality of such products;
- **Improving of packaging of the Scheduled products;**
- **Improving of marketing of the Scheduled products** outside India etc.
- APEDA is mandated with the responsibility of export promotion and development of the following scheduled products:
- 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 etc.



1.26. NITI AAYOG ANNOUNCES SUSTAINABLE ACCESS TO MARKETS AND RESOURCES FOR INNOVATIVE DELIVERY OF HEALTHCARE (SAMRIDH) INITIATIVE.

Why in news?

- Sustainable Access to Markets and Resources for Innovative Delivery of Healthcare (SAMRIDH) initiative was **announced by 'Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) of NITI Aayog in association with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).**

About SAMRIDH Initiative

- This new partnership will **improve access to quality and affordable healthcare for vulnerable populations** across tier-2 and tier-3 cities, as well as rural and tribal regions.
- USAID, IPE Global, and stakeholders from Indian government, private sector and academia developed the innovative SAMRIDH blended finance facility in 2020, for **combining philanthropic and public funds with commercial capital**, in a bid **to create and rapidly scale market-based health solutions.**
- This partnership will enhance SAMRIDH's efforts for reaching vulnerable populations and leveraging expertise of AIM in innovation and entrepreneurship.
- **AIM and SAMRIDH will leverage public sector resources and philanthropic capital** for offsetting barriers for **commercial investments across small and medium health enterprises** for investing in and scale healthcare solutions.
- This collaboration will also focus on innovations across healthcare landscape with a common goal to mount an effective response towards ongoing third wave of COVID-19.
- It will also build health system preparedness for future health emergencies and infectious disease outbreaks.

Significance of SAMRIDH initiative

- SAMRIDH initiative will **help in strengthening India's health systems with sustainable business innovations and solutions.**
- This collaboration will also share the commitment of Atal Innovation Mission and USAID for leveraging innovative financing solutions in order to unlock greater investment in healthcare services.



1.27. AKSHAY KUMAR NAMED AS BRAND AMBASSADOR OF UTTARAKHAND 2022.

Why in news?

- Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, **Pushkar Singh Dhami** has appointed Bollywood actor **Akshay Kumar** as the brand ambassador of **Uttarakhand ahead of the 2022 Assembly Elections**.
- In 2017, Akshay Kumar was appointed as Uttarakhand’s brand ambassador for **‘Swachhata Abhiyan’**.
- Akshay Kumar, is a Canadian-Indian actor, a film producer who has acted in more than 100 films.



1.28. NITI AAYOG ANNOUNCES 5 MOST IMPROVED ASPIRATIONAL DISTRICTS IN AGRICULTURE, WATER RESOURCES SECTOR.

Why in news?

- NITI Aayog has announced the five most improved aspirational districts in the Agriculture and Water Resources sector for December 2021. **Malkangiri in Odisha** tops the list.
- It is followed by Chhatarpur in Madhya Pradesh and Baramulla in Jammu and Kashmir. Ramgarh in Jharkhand and Begusarai in Bihar also feature in the list. This is as per NITI Aayog’s Delta Rankings.

About Aspirational District Programme

- **115 districts from across 28 states** have been chosen. They constitute about **20% of the population of India** and **cover about 8,600-gram Panchayats**.
- The progress under the programme is tracked through the data collected on a real-time basis. A dashboard has been created by the NITI Ayog to track the real-time progress. This, in turn, enhances accountability and transparency.
- Statistics have been collected on **49 indicators on 5 core dimensions** (education, financial inclusion, agriculture and water resources, skill development and basic infrastructure) in order to provide an initial benchmark for the programme.
- The **focus**, under the programme, is on the socio-economic outputs.
- The programme is a positive shift towards cooperative federalism, as the districts and the states have a greater voice in their development.
- The broad strategy of the programme follows **3Cs: Convergence, Collaboration, Competition**



1.29. J&K SIGNS PACT WITH NEW ZEALAND TO TRANSFORM SHEEP FARMING SECTOR.

Why in news?

- Jammu and Kashmir government has signed a pact with New Zealand for transforming sheep farming sector.
- The objective of the agreement will be to improve farmers' remuneration, transfer of technology in research and development and marketing and value addition of J&K sheep products.
- The agreement was signed between the two sides virtually in the presence of LG Manoj Sinha and Navin Choudhary, principal secretary of agriculture production and farmers welfare department animal.



1.30. GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TO CONTINUE RASHTRIYA YUVA SASHAKTIKARAN KARYAKRAM SCHEME FOR ANOTHER 5 YEARS.

Why in news?

- The **Central Government of India** has decided to continue the scheme of “**Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram (RYSK)**” for another **5 years** from 2021 -22 to 2025-26 with an outlay of **Rs. 2,710.65 crore**.

Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram (RYSK)

- The Scheme Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram (RYSK) is an ongoing Central Sector Scheme.
- It aims to develop the personality and leadership qualities of the youth and to engage them in nation-building activities.
- Beneficiaries of this scheme are the youth in the age group of 15 to 29 years (according to the definition of ‘youth’ in the National Youth Policy, 2014).
- The budget allocation of the scheme RYSK for the year 2020-21 is Rs.486.48 Crores.
- It is an umbrella scheme with 7 sub-schemes under scheme RYSK are:
 1. Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan.
 2. National Youth Corps.
 3. National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development.
 4. International Cooperation.
 5. Youth Hostels.
 6. Assistance to Scouting and Guiding Organisations.
 7. National Young Leaders Programme.



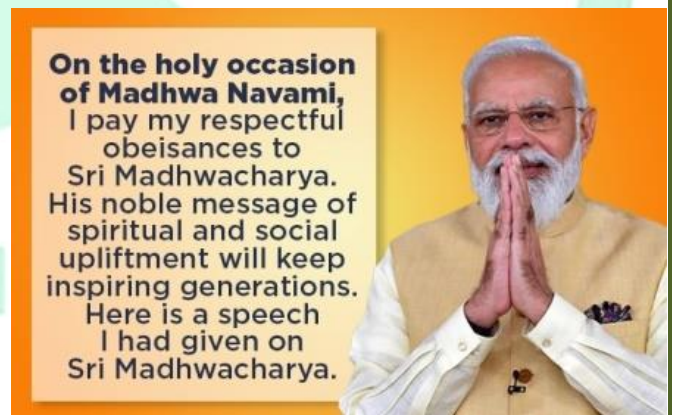
1.31. PRIME MINISTER PAYS HIS OBEISANCE TO SRI MADHWACHARYA ON MADHWA NAVMI.

Why in news?

- The PM paid his obeisances to Sri Madhwacharya on the occasion of Madhwa Navami.

About Sri Madhawacharya

- He is regarded as an **incarnation of wind-god Vayu** and was born in year 1238 AD in Kanara district of Karnataka.
- He was a **great exponent of the Dvaita School of philosophy**.
- According to his philosophy, the Supreme Being is Vishnu.
- He, argued that a body of canonical texts called ‘Vedanta’ or ‘end of veda’ taught the fundamental difference between the individual self or atman and the ultimate reality, Brahman.
- He wrote 37 works in Sanskrit, mostly commentaries on Hindu sacred writings and treatises on his own theological system and philosophy.
- He insisted that knowledge is relative, not absolute.



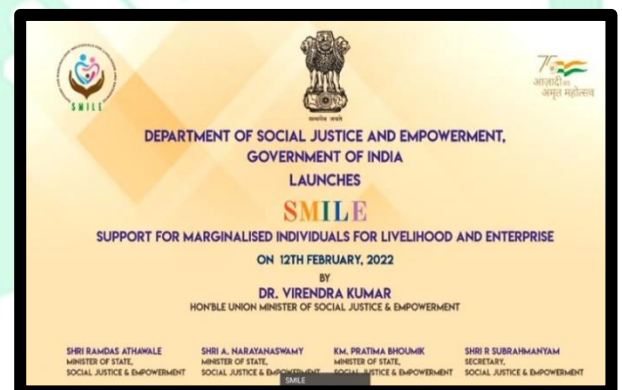
1.32. SUPPORT FOR MARGINALISED INDIVIDUALS FOR LIVELIHOOD AND ENTERPRISE (SMILE) SCHEME LAUNCHED.

Why in news?

- Department of Social Justice & Empowerment launched the “SMILE: Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise” scheme on February 12, 2022, in New Delhi.

About SMILE Scheme

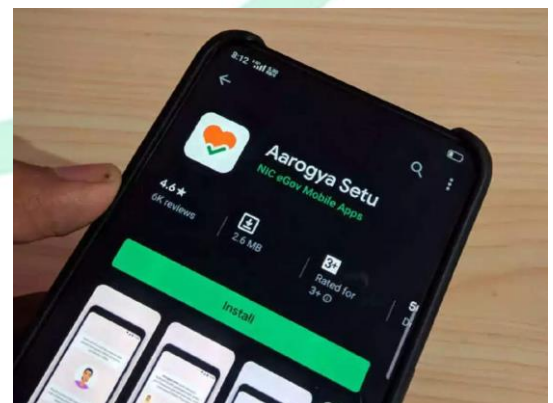
- SMILE is a Central Sector scheme. It was launched by Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment. The scheme has been designed for providing welfare measures to Transgender community and people engaged in begging.
- The scheme comprises of two sub-schemes namely,
 - Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons.
 - Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of Begging.
- **Objectives of the scheme-** SMILE scheme seeks to strengthen and expands the reach of Rights that give necessary legal protection and secured life to targeted group. It keeps in mind the social security required through multiple dimensions of identity, education, medical care, shelter, and occupational opportunities.
- Ministry has allocated Rs. 365 Crore for the scheme for the financial year 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- **Components of ‘Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons’**
- It includes:
 - Scholarships for Transgender Students studying in IX and till post-graduation to complete their education.
 - Skill Development and Livelihood under PM-DAKSH scheme
 - Composite Medical Health package in convergence with PM-JAY to support Gender-Reaffirmation surgeries through selected hospitals
 - Shelter Homes ‘Garima Greh’, where all the basis facilities (food, clothing, medical support) recreational facilities and skill development opportunities, will be provided.
 - Transgender Protection Cell will be set up in each state for monitoring cases of offences and ensuring timely registration, investigation and prosecution.
- **Components of ‘Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of Begging’**
 - Survey and Identification of beneficiaries by Implementing Agencies.
 - Outreach work will be done for mobilising the persons engaged in begging to avail services available in Shelter Homes.
 - Shelter homes will facilitate education for children engaged in the act of Begging.



1.33. THE NATIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY (NHA) ANNOUNCES INTEGRATION OF AYUSHMAN BHARAT DIGITAL MISSION WITH AAROGYA SETU APP.

Why in news?

- The National Health Authority on Friday announced the **integration** of its **flagship Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission** with the **Aarogya Setu** app, allowing users to create the **14-digit unique Ayushman Bharat Health Account** numbers from the app.
- This integration takes the benefits of the Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) number to the Aarogya Setu user base.
- People can use their ABHA number **to link their existing and new medical records**, including **doctor prescriptions, lab reports and hospital records** and also share those with health professionals and health service providers.



- **Aarogya Setu** app has a **huge active user base** and is already being used for COVID-19 related **contact tracing** to check risk factors, vaccine booking, certificate download and status check, among other things. This integration with ABDM will add another feature of generating ABHA numbers for the app users.

1.34. GOVERNMENT APPROVES CONTINUATION OF MODERNIZATION OF STATE POLICE FORCES SCHEME.

Why in news?

- The Government has approved the continuation of the **Scheme of Modernization of State Police Forces (MPF Scheme)** for five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26. Total Central financial outlay for five years is **Rs. 26,275 crores**.
- The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) since 1969-70.
- The objective of the scheme is to gradually **reduce the dependence of the State Governments on the Army and the Central Armed Police Forces** to control internal security and law and order situations by equipping the State Police Forces adequately and strengthening their training infrastructure.
- The **focus of the scheme is to build cutting edge level police infrastructure** by the construction of secure police stations, training centres, police housing (residential), equipping the police stations with the required mobility, modern weaponry, communication equipment and forensic set-up etc.



1.35. NITIN GADKARI INAUGURATES LONG RAIL-CUM-ROAD BRIDGE OVER RIVER GANGA IN BIHAR.

Why in news?

- The Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, **Nitin Gadkari** and Bihar Chief Minister **Nitish Kumar** jointly inaugurated the 14.5-kilometre long '**Rail-cum-Road-Bridge**' in Bihar.
- The much-awaited bridge is constructed over the River Ganga on **NH 333B** in Bihar's Munger region. The cost of the '**Rail-cum-Road-Bridge**' project is **Rs 696 crore**.
- The new bridge will reduce travel time, give a boost to tourism, agriculture as well as generate employment opportunities.



1.36. JAISALMER DESERT FESTIVAL BEGINS IN RAJASTHAN.

Why in news?

- The world-famous **Jaisalmer Desert Festival** is also known as **Maru Mahotsav of the Golden City** began at **Pokaran**.
- The **four-day-long festival** started with colourful grand procession followed by Miss Pokaran and Mister Pokran competitions.
- Tourism department of Rajasthan associating with district administration is organising Maru Mahotsav this time after two years break due to spread of covid pandemic.



- Four days long festival comprises of **various tourist-attracting competitions** including **Turban tying, Panihari Matka, Mehandi** and **mandana competitions**. Camel Safari and Camel beautification shows are also scheduled to be organized.
- Festival will conclude with **Horse race, Camel dance** and **attractive firework display** on 16th of February.

1.37. RANI ABBAKKA CHOWTA- THE UNSUNG WOMEN HEROES.

Why in news?

- Government had released a pictorial book on India's Women Unsung Heroes of Freedom Struggle as part of Azadi ka Mahotsav which narrates the tales of valor of Rani Abbakka.

About Rani Abbakka Chowta

- Rani Abbakka Chowta was the first Tuluva Queen of Ullal.
- She fought the Portuguese in latter half of the 16th century. The queen belonged to the Chowta dynasty, who ruled over parts of coastal Karnataka (Tulu Nadu).
- Capital of the dynasty was Puttige. The port town of Ullal was their subsidiary capital.
- Ullal was strategically placed because of which, the Portuguese made several attempts to capture it. But the queen repulsed their attacks for over four decades. She came to be known as **Abhaya Rani**, because of her bravery.



1.38. RIVER DEVIKA PROJECT TO BE COMPLETED SOON.

Why in news?

- River Devika rejuvenation Project is expected to be completed by June 2022.
- Devika project as North India's first ever river rejuvenation Project on the lines of Namami Ganga, will offer a unique destination both to the pilgrim tourists as well as recreation tourists.
- The project included the construction of three sewage treatment plants of 8 MLD, 4 MLD and 1.6 MLD capacity, sewerage network of 129.27 km, development of two cremation ghats, protection fencing and landscaping, small hydropower plants and three solar power plants.

About River Devika

- Devika River **originates from the hilly Suddha Mahadev temple in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir** and flows down towards **western Punjab** (now in Pakistan) where it **merges with the Ravi River**.
- Devika River also holds great religious significance as it is revered by Hindus as the sister of river Ganga.



1.39. UNDER-TRIALS COMPRISE 75% OF INDIA'S PRISON POPULATION, MOST IN A DECADE.

Why in news?

- As per India Justice report, the number of under trials in prisons rose sharply in 2020 even as the number of convicts fell, resulting in under trials accounting for over three-fourths (75%) of all those in jail, the highest proportion in at least a decade.
- The **highest increase** in the **proportion of undertrials was in Punjab**, where it jumped from 66% in 2019 to 85% in 2020 followed by Haryana, where it jumped from 64% to 82% and MP where it went from 54% to almost 70%. Chhattisgarh saw an over 10% increase in the proportion of under trials.
- An undertrial is an unconvicted prisoner who is on trial in a court of law.

- Reasons for increase in number of undertrials- low population to judge ratio, delayed investigation, shortage of public prosecutors, most undertrials being poor, illiterate and belonging to marginalised communities etc.
- Measures taken-
 - Establishment of **Fast track Courts**.
 - **E-prisons project** to introduce efficiency in prison management.
 - **Model Prison Manual 2016** provides information about legal services available to prison inmates.
 - **Fast and Secured Transmission of Electronic Records (FASTER) Scheme** by Supreme Court on bail orders.
 - Free legal services to undertrials by NALSA.



1.40. SAUBHAGYA SCHEME: RAJASTHAN TOPS SOLAR ELECTRIFICATION SCHEME.

Why in news?

- Under the Saubhagya scheme, **Rajasthan** has the maximum number of households electrified through the solar-based standalone system. In hill states of **Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim** and the Union Territory of **Jammu and Kashmir** had nil beneficiaries under the initiative. Under the Saubhagya Scheme, **2.817 crore households** were electrified up to March 31 last year, including 4.16 lakh through solar-based standalone systems.
- Under the Saubhagya scheme, as many as **1,23,682 households** were electrified through the solar-based standalone system in **Rajasthan**, followed by **Chhattisgarh (65,373)**, **Uttar Pradesh (53,234)**, **Assam (50,754)**, **Bihar (39,100)**, **Maharashtra (30,538)**, **Odisha (13,735)**, **Madhya Pradesh (12,651)**, **Power Minister R K Singh told the Lok Sabha.**



About Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana –“Saubhagya”

- SAUBHAGYA is one of the largest household electrification drives in the world. SAUBHAGYA was announced by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 25th September 2017.
- Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana –“**Saubhagya**” is a scheme to ensure electrification of all willing households in the country in rural as well as urban areas.
- The objective of the ‘Saubhagya’ is **to provide energy access to all by last mile connectivity and electricity connections to all remaining un-electrified households** in rural as well as urban areas to achieve universal household electrification in the country.
- The **beneficiaries for free electricity connections would be identified using Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011 data.**
- However, un-electrified households not covered under the SECC data would also be provided electricity connections under the scheme on payment of Rs. 500 which shall be recovered by DISCOMs in 10 instalments through electricity bill.
- The **solar power packs of 200 to 300 Wp** with **battery bank for un-electrified households located in remote and inaccessible areas**, comprises of **Five LED lights, One DC fan, One DC power plug**. It also includes the Repair and Maintenance (R&M) for 5 years.
- For easy and accelerated implementation of the Scheme, modern technology shall be used for household survey by using Mobile App.
- Beneficiaries shall be identified and their application for electricity connection along with applicant photograph and identity proof shall be registered on spot. The **Gram Panchayat/Public institutions in the rural areas may be authorised to collect application forms along with complete documentation,**

distribute bills and collect revenue in consultation with the Panchayat Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies.

- The **Rural Electrification Corporation Limited (REC)** will remain the nodal agency for the operationalisation of the scheme throughout the country.

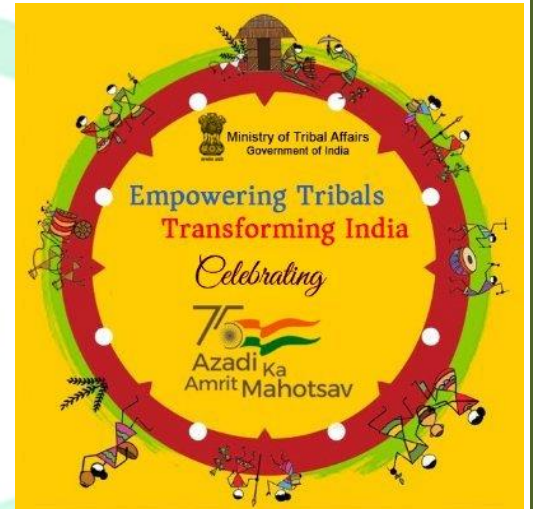
1.41. MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS HAS SANCTIONED 2.26 CRORES RUPEES FOR MEDA RAM JATHARA.

Why in news?

- Recently, Ministry of Tribal Affairs has sanctioned 2.26 Crores rupees for **Meda ram Jathara**.

About Medaram Jathara

- It is the **second-largest fair** of India, after the Kumbh Mela.
- It is celebrated by the **tribal community of Telangana** for four days.
- It is **biennially celebrated** and **organized by the Koyas tribes** in collaboration with Telangana government
- It is a festival with **no Vedic or Brahmanic influence**.
- **Jampanna Vagu River** (a tributary to river Godavari) is worshiped as one of the parts of rituals.
- It **assists the tribals to preserve** their unique **tribal traditions, culture and heritage**.



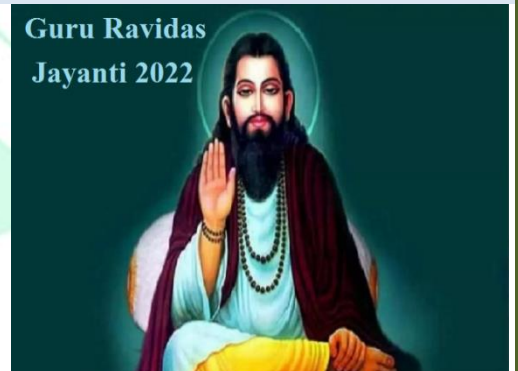
1.42. GURU RAVIDAS JAYANTI WAS OBSERVED ON FEBRUARY 16.

Why in news?

- Guru Ravidas Jayanti was observed on February 16, 2022, in the honour of birthday of Guru Ravidas.
- This festival is celebrated with joviality in North India, specifically in Punjab.
- The day marks the birthday of Indian mystic poet-saint, Ravidas and is celebrated on Magh Purnima.

About Guru Ravidas

- Guru Ravidas or Bhagat Ravidas was a renowned saint, who is remembered for his contribution to Bhakti movement. He was **contemporary to saint Kabir**.
- Guru Ravidas was born in Seer Goverdhanpur village in Uttar Pradesh in an underprivileged family.
- He was **an advocate of human rights** and a progressive thinker who spread the **message of equality** by means of his poems and teachings based on spirituality.
- **His written verses are included** in Sikh scriptures "**Guru Granth Sahib**".
- **Meera Bai**, who was an eminent personality in Hindu spiritualism, **recognised Guru Ravidas as her spiritual guide**.
- He is considered as the founder of 21st-century Ravidassia religion.



1.43. GOVERNMENT SANCTIONS CONSTRUCTION OF 60,000 HOMES UNDER PMAY (U).

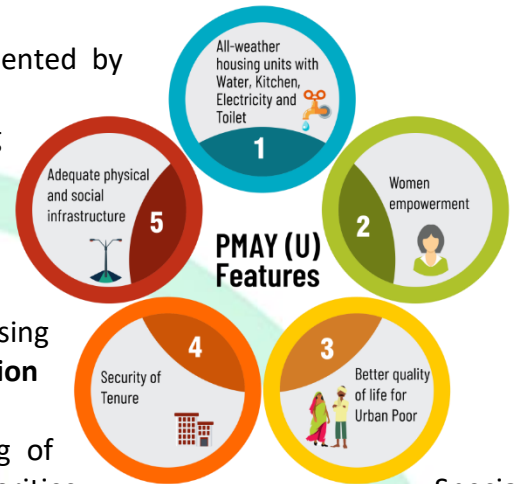
Why in news?

- Project proposals for the construction of over 60,000 houses were approved across the states of **Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Rajasthan** under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) recently.

- The total number of sanctioned houses under PMAY(U) stands at 114.07 lakh, of which around 93.25 lakh have been grounded for construction and around 54.78 lakh have been delivered to the beneficiaries.
- The total investment under the PMAY(U) stands at ₹7.52 lakh crore, with ₹1.87 lakh crore central assistance out of which ₹1.21 lakh crore has already been released.

About Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)

- It is a flagship Mission of Government of India being implemented by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**.
- It was launched on 25th June 2015 and addresses urban housing shortage among the **EWS/LIG and MIG categories** including the slum dwellers by ensuring a **pucca house to all eligible urban households** by the year 2022, when Nation completes 75 years of its Independence.
- PMAY(U) adopts a demand driven approach wherein the Housing shortage is decided **based on demand assessment by States/Union Territories**.
- **Coverage:** The **Mission covers** the entire urban area consisting of Statutory Towns, Notified Planning Areas, Development Authorities, Area Development Authorities, Industrial Development Authorities or any such authority under State legislation which is entrusted with the functions of urban planning & regulations.



Special

1.44. MINISTRY OF EDUCATION LAUNCHES' NEW INDIA LITERACY PROGRAMME, A NEW SCHEME OF ADULT EDUCATION.

Why in news?

- The union government recently approved a new scheme "New India Literacy Programme" during the fiscal years 2022-2027 to cover all the aspects of adult education and also to align with national education policy 2020.

About the scheme

- Even after Saakshar Bharat programme was implemented during 2009-10 to 2017-18, it is estimated that 18.12 crore adults are still non-literate.
- **Objective** of the scheme is to cover all aspects of Adult Education which include foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) as other components necessary for a citizen of 21st century such as:
 - Critical life skills, Vocational skills development, Basic education and Continuing education.
- It aligns with National Education Policy 2020 and from now on term "Education For All" will be used in place of "Adult Education"
- Launched for FYs 2022-27, target for FLN is 5 crore learners @ 1.00 crore per year by using "Online Teaching, Learning and Assessment System (OTLAS)".
- Key features
 - FLN will be imparted to all non-literates in the age group of 15 years and above.
 - Priority will be given to Girls and women, SC/ST/OBC/Minorities, Persons with Special Needs (Divyangjans), Marginalized/ Nomadic/ construction workers/ laborers/etc.
 - Focus areas: Aspirational districts, districts with literacy rates less than National/State average, districts with female literacy rates less than 60%.
 - Outlay: Rs.1037.90 crore (Central share of Rs.700 crore and State share of Rs.337.90 crore).



1.45. PASUVULA PANDUGA CATTLE FESTIVAL.

Why in news?

- During the recently held Pasuvula Panduga cattle festival, many people were reportedly injured.

About the festival

- Pasuvula Panduga is a cattle festival that is observed annually during Kanuma (3rd day of the Sankranti Festival), to appease the gods for improving and protecting livestock.
- This festival is held in the Rangampet village of Andhra Pradesh.
- Before the start of this event, the cows and bulls are colourfully decorated with trophies being attached to the horns. After that, the animals are forced to go through the narrow road leading to the fields, with villagers on either side.
- The purpose of this sport is to snatch the trophies from the horns of the cattle as it runs via the snaky path of the village. At times money ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs 50,000 is also tied to the horns with a winner takes it all policy. Organizers provide all the prizes that are attached to the horns of the cattle.



1.46. FEBRUARY 15 TO BE COMMEMORATED AS BIHAR SHAHID DIWAS.

Why in news?

- Recently, Chief Minister of Bihar Nitish Kumar announced that, February 15 would now be commemorated as “Shahid Diwas”.
- February 15 would be commemorated as Shahid Diwas, in the honour of 34 freedom fighters who were killed by police 90 years ago, in Tarapur town in Munger district of Bihar.
- These freedom fighters had never got their due, even though this was the biggest massacre carried out by the British police after Jallianwala Bagh in 1919 in Amritsar.



About Tarapur Massacre

- This incident took place on February 15, 1932, when a group of young freedom fighters had planned to hoist “Indian national flag” at Thana Bhavan in Tarapur.
- Police were not aware of their plan but several officers were present at the spot. During this, police carried out a brutal lathi charge on them. Despite the lathi charge, one of the freedom fighters (Gopal Singh) succeeded in raising the flag at Thana Bhavan.
- A strong crowd of 4,000 pelted the police with stones, in which an officer of civil administration was injured. In response, police opened indiscriminate fire on the crowd. Around 75 rounds were fired, after which 34 bodies were found at the spot.

1.47. GOVERNMENT APPROVES THE CONTINUATION OF THE RASHTRIYA UCHCHATAR SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (RUSA).

Why in news?

- Ministry of Education has approved the continuation of the RUSA scheme till March 31, 2026.

About Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)

- It is a centrally sponsored scheme, launched in 2013.
- Seeks to provide strategic funding to eligible state higher educational institutions.
- Under the new phase, RUSA aims to reach out to unnerved, underserved areas; remote and rural areas; LWE (left-wing extremism) areas; aspirational districts, tier-2 cities, etc.

- New Phase is designed to implement some of the recommendations of National Education Policy 2020.
- It will support state governments for gender inclusion, equity initiatives, ICT, enhancing employability through vocationalisation and skill upgradation.
- Grants will be provided to strengthen both accredited and non-accredited universities and colleges for undertaking various activities including teaching-learning in Indian languages.



Rashtriya
Uchchatar
Shiksha
Abhiyan

1.48. CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ JAYANTI IS CELEBRATED ON FEBRUARY 19.

Why in news?

- Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti is observed annually on February 19. This year, the **392nd birth anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the great Maratha warrior, was celebrated on February 19, 2022.**



About Chhatrapati Shivaji

- Shivaji Maharaj was born on February 19, 1630, in Shivneri Fort, near the city of Junnar, present-day Pune district. **Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti was first celebrated by Mahatma Jyotirao Phule in 1870.**
- **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was the first Chhatrapati and founder of the Maratha Empire.** He had re-established Hindavi Swarajya, self-rule of the Hindu people.
- He is considered as the greatest Maratha ruler who carved an enclave from the declining Adilshahi sultanate of Bijapur, which became the start of the Maratha Empire.
- **He seized the Torna fort at the young age of 16 years** and by 17 years, he had seized the Raigad and Kondana forts. He is popularly known as Shivaji Bhosale and was a member of the Bhonsle Maratha clan.
- His efforts and contributions in reviving the Maratha empire amid the Mughal rule in India, including his fued with Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, are well documented in India.

1.49. OPERATION NANHE FARISHTE OF RAILWAY PROTECTION FORCE.

Why in news?

- Under **“Operation Nanhe Farishte”**, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) have rescued more than 1,000 kids from Railway stations across India, in the month of January, 2022.
- The RPF is entrusted with providing safety to passengers. It saved 1,045 children who were found alone or were abandoned at the railway stations.
- Out of all, 701 were boys and 344 were girls.
- According to the RPF, many children are kidnapped from railway stations every year. They are later exploited and trafficked.

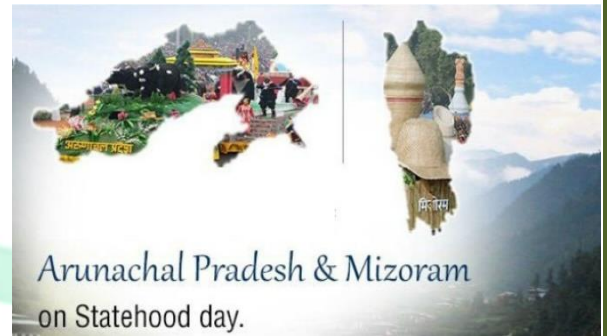


1.50. MIZORAM AND ARUNACHAL PRADESH FOUNDATION DAY: 20 FEBRUARY.

Why in news?

- Northern States **Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh** celebrate their Foundation Day on **February 20, since 1987.**

- Arunachal Pradesh is the extreme eastern part of the country, which is also known as the 'land of the rising sun'.
- The state at the edge of the Himalayas is proud to be called the land of dawn and lit mountains. Arunachal Pradesh became the 24th state of India.
- Mizoram was declared as a separate UT in 1972 under the Northeast Areas (Reorganisation) Act, 1971.
- It became the 23rd state of India after the 53rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution, 1986. Mizoram, as well as the state of Arunachal Pradesh, came into existence on 20 February 1987.



1.51. 150TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF SIDDHANTA PRABHUPADA.

Why in news?

- Recently, President inaugurated the three-year long celebrations of the 150th Birth anniversary of Siddhanta Prabhupada.



About Siddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad

- He was the founder of Gaudiya Math and Mission in Puri.
- Gaudiya Math is a monastic organisation to spread Gaudiya Vaishnavism, the philosophy of the medieval Vaishnava saint Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.
- Chaitanya was a 15th Century Bhakti Saint who promoted worship of Lord Krishna as the Supreme Soul.
- Ideals propounded: **Determination, Devotion to a life free of material attachment and Service to Humanity.**

1.52. ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA (ECI) RESTORES MAXIMUM LIMIT ON STAR CAMPAIGNERS.

Why in news?

- Citing decline in COVID-19 cases, ECI has restored the number of star campaigners a party can field for campaigning in the ongoing polls in five states.
- Star campaigners are nominated by political parties to campaign in a given set of constituencies for a specified duration.
- List of star campaigners must be communicated to Chief Electoral Officer and ECI within a week from the election notification date under section 77(1) of Representation of People Act (RPA), 1951.
- A recognised political party can have 40 Star campaigners and an unrecognised (but registered) political party can have 20.
- There is **no law that defines who can be a star campaigner. Expenditure incurred on campaigning by such notified star campaigners is exempt from being added to the election expenditure of a candidate.**
- However, **this only applies when a star campaigner limits oneself to a general campaign for the political party one represents.**
- **If a candidate or his/her election agent shares stage with a star campaigner at a rally, then the entire expenditure on that rally, other than the travel expenses of star campaigner, is added to candidate's expenses.**



1.53. ASSAM BECOMES FIRST STATE TO LAUNCH NIGHT NAVIGATION MOBILE APPLICATION IN RIVERS.

Why in news?

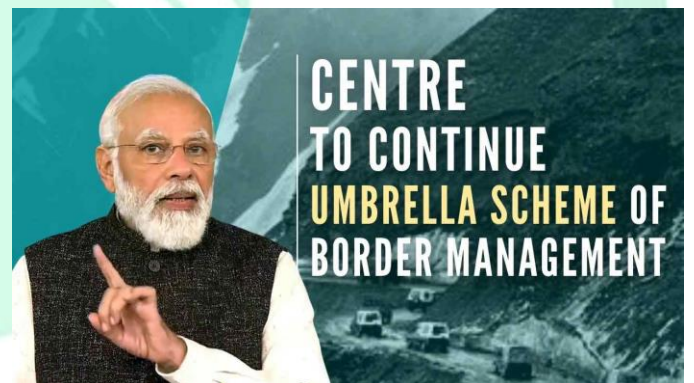
- Chief Minister (CM) of Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma launched India's first Night Navigation mobile application (app) for **ferry services** on the **Brahmaputra River in Guwahati, Assam**.
- It was developed by the State Transport Department in association with K Raju, the principal scientist of Indian Institute of Technology Madras.
- Highlights:
- The first night journey of the IWT (Inland Water Transport) ferry between Guwahati and North Guwahati was started on 19 February 2022.
- The CM also launched ten Aadhar-based contactless services of the State Transport Department to make public service delivery time efficient and budget friendly.
- The CM also launched an e-ticketing system for Dhubri and Silchar ferry services.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also signed between the Common Service Centres (CSCs) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and State Transport Department to provide online services at the panchayat level.



1.54. GOVERNMENT APPROVES CONTINUATION OF BORDER INFRASTRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT SCHEME.

Why in news?

- The Central Government has approved the continuation of the **Central Sector Umbrella Scheme** of 'Border Infrastructure and Management (BIM)' over the 15th Finance Commission Cycle from 2021-22 to 2025-26, at a cost of Rs 13,020 crore.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is responsible for the implementation of BIM.
- This continuation will **strengthen the border infrastructure** for improving border management, policing and guarding the borders.
- The BIM scheme will **help in the creation of infrastructure** such as construction of border fence, border flood lights, technological solutions, border roads and Border Outposts (BOPS)/Company Operating Bases (COBs) to secure the Indian borders with Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar.
- India's border with Pakistan is 3,323 km long, including about 775 km of the Line of Control (LoC). The length of the border is 4,096 km with Bangladesh, 3,488 km with China, 1,751 km with Nepal, 699 km with Bhutan, 1,643 km with Myanmar.
- In pursuance of Group of Ministers recommendations on Border Management, the Department of Border Management was created in the Ministry of Home Affairs in January, 2004.



1.55. BYANJANA DWADASHI FESTIVAL.

Why in news?

- The festival of **Byanjana Dwadashi** ended recently in Odisha's temple town of Puri.
- It is celebrated by **adherents of Vaishnavism**, the largest sect within Hinduism, which considers **Vishnu and his incarnations such as Krishna** as the Supreme Godhead.

- The festival celebrates a **variety of food (Byanjana in Odia)** on the 12th day (Dwadashi) of the **Sukla Paksha or waxing phase of the moon** in the month of Margashira (mid-December to mid-January).
- Vaishnavites, through this festival, commemorate an episode of the **Mahabharata where Yashoda observes that her son Krishna is pale and weak.**
- It is believed that on this day Mother Yasoda used to prepare hundreds of dishes for Lord Krishna.
- This episode was re-enacted in the Vaishnava mutts of Puri by the medieval seer and mystic, **Chaitanya Mahaprabhu** after he reached Puri around 500 years ago.
- This tradition of celebrating varieties of **traditional food and sharing them has been going on since then** and is prevalent in the Vaishnava mutts of not only Puri and other parts of Odisha, but throughout the country.
- **The special feature of Byanjan Dwadashi at Gourbihar mutt is that every year more items are added to the menu.**



1.56. KARAKATTAM OR KUMBAKKALI DANCE.

Why in news?

- Kerala Nattukala Kshema Sabha has demanded that Karakattam (known as Kumbakkali in certain parts) be recognised as agricultural art form of Kerala.
- Karakattam is an ancient folk dance of Tamil Nadu performed in praise of the rain goddess Mariamman. It's performed in different parts of Kerala as well.
- It is performed at festivals, roadshows and primarily at Mariamman festivals.
- It involves balancing a large number of pots of decreasing size on the head of the dancers while dancing and expressing theme of the dance.
- Mariamman pooja is held in the month of Medam after Makarakkoythu (harvest season) in Kerala.



1.57. GOVERNMENT APPROVES THE CONTINUATION OF THE CENTRAL SECTOR NATIONAL MEANS-CUM-MERIT SCHOLARSHIP (NMMSS).

Why in news?

- The Ministry of Education (MoE) has approved the continuation of the Central Sector National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship (NMMSS) over the 15th Finance Commission cycle for 5 years (2021-22 to 2025-26),
- It intends to provide scholarships to 14.76 lakh students with financial outlay of Rs. 1827.00 crore that holds minor changes in eligibility criteria such as increasing income ceiling.
- **Objective** - To award economically weaker students who are meritorious in order to reduce drop-outs at the 8th grade and to encourage them to continue their education at a secondary stage.
- The **income ceiling** under the eligibility criteria for the scholarship has been changed from Rs.1.5 lakh per annum **to Rs.3.5 lakh per annum** and the renewal criteria under the scheme were also revised.
- **Eligibility:**
- The student must have a minimum of 55 % marks or equivalent grade in Class VII examination for appearing in the selection test for award of scholarship (relax able by 5% for SC and ST students).
- The student should be studying as a regular student in Government, Government-aided and local body schools.
- **Scholarship amount:**

- The students are selected for the scholarship through an exam conducted by the state and Union Territory (UT) government.
- Every year, 1 lakh fresh scholarships of Rs. 12,000 per annum (Fts.1000 per month) per student will be provided for students in Class 9, with the possibility of continuation/renewal in Classes 10 to 12, for study at state-government, government-aided, and local body institutions.
- **Funding:**
- This is the central sector scheme (CSS) with 100% funding by the central government
- The students will receive the scholarship directly into their bank account through electronic transfer via the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) in Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mode.



NMMS Scheme -National Means cum Merit Scholarship Scheme (NMMSS)

1.58. UPPER BHADRA PROJECT GIVEN THE NATIONAL PROJECT STATUS.

Why in news?

- Karnataka Chief Minister has announced that the 'Upper Bhadra Project' has been given the national project status by the central government's high-powered committee which becomes the first project in Karnataka to get the status.
- This change in status will enable Karnataka to receive Rs 12,500 crore grants from the centre and could transform central Karnataka from being water-scarce to water-rich.
- The foundation stone for the Upper Bhadra project was laid in 2008 to make Karnataka water-rich by utilising the excess water available in Krishna and Cauvery basins effectively.
- At present, water is flowing to Vani Vilas Sagar Dam, which has made the region water-rich.

About Upper Bhadra Project

- Upper Bhadra Project is a major lift irrigation scheme under implementation in the central region of Karnataka State which is being undertaken by 'Visvesvaraya Jala Nigam Limited'.
- Objective - To provide a sustainable irrigation facility in the Kharif season and to recharge the groundwater table with fewer chemical contaminants like fluoride.
- The project received administrative approval in 2003 at an estimated cost of Rs. 2,813 crore.
- The project is designed to irrigate 2.25 lakh hectares in Chitradurga, Davangere, Tumakuru, and parts of Chikkamagaluru
- In the 1st stage of the project water will be lifted from Tunga to Bhadra and in the 2nd stage lifting of water will be from Bhadra reservoir, providing it to tunnel near Ajjampura through gravity canal in Tungabhadra sub-basin of Krishna basin



1.59. ASSAM TO LAUNCH 4 YEAR MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME "PROJECT AROHAN" TO HONE STUDENT'S SKILLS.

Why in news?

- The government of Assam is set to launch a 4-year mentorship programme - "Project Arohan" - to mentor the students of Assam and to hone their skills.



- Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister(CM) of Assam, met with Anita Rajan, Chief Executive officer CEO) of Tata STRIVE, the skill development initiative of Tata Trusts, to seek cooperation for Project Arohan.

1.60. KHAJURAHO FESTIVAL.

Why in news?

- It is organized annually by the Government of **Madhya Pradesh** at Khajuraho.
- It is centered on Indian classical dance styles and famous artists of the country and the world give their dance performances during the festival.
- This **festival began in 1975**.
- Khajuraho is known for the temples built during the **Chandella dynasty**, which reached its apogee between 950 and 1050.
- Temples belong to Hinduism and Jainism and have been recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites.



1.61. 3RD ANNIVERSARY OF PRADHAN MANTRI KISAN SAMMAN NIDHI.

Why in news?

- 24th February 2022, marks the 3rd anniversary of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme. It was launched on 24th February in 2019 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.
- It is **100% Funded by the central government** under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoAFW).
- Objective - To provide income support to all landholding farmer's families irrespective of the land size in order to meet their expenses related to agriculture and domestic needs.

About PM-KISAN scheme

- Under the Scheme, Farmers will receive an amount of **Rs.6000 per year in 3 equal instalments of Rs.2000 directly into their bank accounts**.
- Initially, the Scheme provided income support to all families of Small and Marginal Farmers having cultivable land up to 2 hectares which was then expanded to cover farmers irrespective of the size of their landholdings.
- **Budget Allocation 2022-23:** Government of India (GoI) has allocated Rs 68,000 Crore for the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) in the Union Budget 2022-23, which is just 4.6 per cent higher than the Budget Estimates of Rs 65,000 crore for 2021-22 and only 0.74 per cent higher than the revised estimates of Rs 67,500 crore for the current financial year (FY22).



1.62. 'NIKARSHAN SADAN' DREDGING MUSEUM INAUGURATE IN VISAKHAPATNAM.

Why in news?

- Recently the union minister for Ports, Shipping & Waterways and AYUSH, inaugurated "Nikarshan Sadan Dredging Museum".

- The Nikarshan Sadan Museum is built by “Dredging Corporation of India”, at DCI campus in Visakhapatnam.
- The museum displayed models of different types of dredgers, historical milestones, and vintage photos of this dredging behemoth from Eastern Port of Vizag City.



The museum displayed models of different types of dredgers, historical milestones, and vintage photos of this dredging behemoth from Eastern Port of Vizakhapatnam.

1.63. OMBUDSMAN APP LAUNCHED FOR MGNREGA.

Why in news?

- Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, launched the Ombudsman App for MGNREGA. This App is a **step toward e-governance**, and it will help in accountability and transparency.
- This app will help the Ombudsman in carrying out their duties in a transparent and accountable manner.
- The minister showed concern regarding the appointment of Ombudspersons, and that in many districts the appointment of an Ombudsperson has yet to be made. Hence, all states and UTs have been asked to work with the union government to make MNREGA more transparent by utilizing the Ombudsperson App.
- **The Ministry of Rural Development** developed this app with the aim of smooth categorization and reporting of grievances by the appointed Ombudsperson based on complaints that they have received from various sources i.e. digital, physical, and mass media, related to the MGNREGA Scheme implementation in the States and UTs.
- This app will allow for **easy tracking and timely redressal of complaints** by the Ombudsperson. The app will also allow the Ombudsperson to upload annual and quarterly reports to the website.



This app will allow for easy tracking and timely redressal of complaints by the Ombudsperson.

Union Minister Shri Giriraj Singh launches **Ombudsperson App** for Mahatma Gandhi NREGA

1.64. WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM AND NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF URBAN AFFAIRS INK MOU TO DESIGN 'SUSTAINABLE CITIES INDIA' PROGRAM.

Why in news?

- This partnership between WEF and NIUA is significant in the light of India's commitment of achieving net zero carbon emission by 2070, made at COP26 summit in Glasgow.
- WEF and NIUA will adapt WEF's 'City Sprint' process as well as 'Toolbox of Solutions' for decarbonisation of five to seven Indian cities in two years.



About Sustainable Cities India Program

- The Sustainable Cities India Program is aims to enable cities to generate decarbonisation solutions in different sectors including energy and transport.
- It seeks to enable cities to decarbonise in a systematic and sustainable way, in a bid to reduce emissions and deliver equitable and resilient urban ecosystems.

World Economic Forum (WEF)

- The WEF is an international non-governmental and lobbying organisation.
- It is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- It was founded on January 24, 1971 by Klaus Schwab.

1.65. INDIA'S FIRST OF ITS KIND 'ELECTRONIC-WASTE ECO-PARK' TO COME UP IN DELHI.

Why in news?

- The Delhi Cabinet has approved to set up India's first of its kind 'electronic-waste eco-park'.

About country's First e-waste eco-park

- The electronic waste eco-friendly park is to be built on 20 acres of land.
- Nearly, 2 lakh tonnes of e-waste is thrown by Delhi every year. This eco-park will recycle, refurbish and dismantle e-waste in a scientific and a safe way.
- This eco-park will act as an Integrated Facility, by engaging in dismantling, segregating, refurbishing, material-wise storage, testing and plastic recycling.
- It will also have precious metal extraction facilities, especially from Printed Circuit Boards (PCBs) through high-end technologies.



INDIA'S FIRST OF ITS KIND 'ELECTRONIC-WASTE ECO-PARK' TO COME UP IN DELHI.

1.66. BHASHA CERTIFICATE SELFIE CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE MULTILINGUISM.

Why in news?

- On 25 February 2022, the Ministry of Education (MoE) launched a campaign named "Bhasha Certificate Selfie" to encourage cultural diversity and promote multilingualism and promote the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.
- This campaign is to **promote the Bhasha Sangam mobile app** which was developed by MoE and MyGov India.
- It encourages people to upload their selfie with the certificate from their social media accounts using the hashtag #BhashaCertificateSelfie.
- The certificate will be authorized by MoE, which will be provided in Bhasha Sangam mobile app once the user finishes all the levels of the given test.
- The **app is available in 22 scheduled Indian languages**. It provides the opportunity to learn more than 100 sentences of daily use in these languages.
- The 8th Schedule to the Constitution consists of the 22 languages.

About Bhasha Sangam Initiative:

- It was launched to commemorate Rashtriya Ekta Diwas which is celebrated to mark the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel i.e 31st October.
- It is an initiative of the Ministry of Education (MoE) under **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**.
- It is developed by **the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)**.
- Objective- to ensure that people acquire basic conversational skills in Indian languages other than their mother tongue.
- Three sub-initiatives under the Bhasha Sangam scheme:
- Bhasha Sangam initiative for Schools



Ministry of Education (MoE) launched a campaign named "Bhasha Certificate Selfie" to encourage cultural diversity and promote multilingualism and promote the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.

- Bhasha Sangam Mobile App
- Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB) Mobile Quiz app

1.67. OPERATION GANGA TO EVACUATE INDIANS FROM UKRAINE.

Why in news?

- The ministry of external affairs set up 24x7 control centres in order to assist the evacuation of Indian nationals from Ukraine.
- India also launched a multi-prong evacuation plan titled 'Operation Ganga'.
- Indian nationals will be evacuated through border crossing points with Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Slovak Republic. Ministry has activated a dedicated Twitter handle, 'OpGanga'.
- India started the evacuation of stranded citizens on February 26, under Operation Ganga, as Russia intensified its offensive against Ukraine.
- Evacuation operation started after Ukrainian airspace was shut for civil aircraft operations from February 24. So far, Indian government has managed to fly three special flights of Air India to bring back stranded citizens.
- The India Government is bearing the cost of evacuation, amid prevailing emergency situation. Under Operation Ganga, around 15,000 stranded Indians will be evacuated from Ukraine.



India launched a multi-prong evacuation plan titled 'Operation Ganga' from Ukraine.

PRACTICE MCQS

1. With reference to Indian Coast Guard, which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?

1. The Indian Coast Guard was formally established on 1 February 1977 by the Coast Guard Act, 1978.
2. The first Indian Coast Guard Ship was ICGS Kuthar.

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

2. Recently an Artificial Intelligence (AI) based chest X-ray technology that can detect COVID-19 has been developed by which institute?

- A. IIT Jodhpur
- B. IIT Delhi
- C. IIT Kanpur
- D. None of the Above

ANSWER: A

3. With reference to Mission Shakti, Mission POSHAN 2.0, and Mission Vatsalya., which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?

1. Mission Shakti will consist of the schemes and policies for the empowerment and protection of women.
2. Mission Vatsalya will be looking into child welfare services and child protection services all over the country.
3. Mission POSHAN 2.0 include schemes such as Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), Anganwadi Services, Poshan Abhiyan, Scheme for Adolescent Girls, National Creche Scheme among others.

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

4. 11th meeting of India-Oman Joint Military Cooperation Committee was recently held in which of the following city?

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

ANSWER: C

5. Home delivery of Medicines under SeHAT scheme has been started under which of the following Union Ministry?

- A. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (Full and complete names of the ministries should be given)
- B. Ministry of Defence
- C. Ministry of Women and Child development
- D. All of the above

ANSWER: B

6. Consider the following statements:

1. Under One Nation One Ration Card scheme, beneficiaries can get their quota of foodgrains from any Fair Price Shop in the country.
2. It covers all the citizens of India.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

D. Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: A

7. Consider the following statements:

1. Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti received Khilafat from Sheikh Usman Harawani.
2. He is also known as Khwaja Garib Nawaz.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

8. Torgya Festival is celebrated in which state?

- A. Arunachal Pradesh
- B. Manipur
- C. Meghalaya
- D. Tripura

ANSWER: A

9. What is the name of election mascot of Punjab?

- A. Bhalu
- B. Cheetah
- C. Shera
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: C

10. Consider the following statements:

1. Har ghar Nal se Jal scheme is aimed at providing tap water supply to all rural households and public institutions located in villages.
2. About 8.7 crore households (nearly 45%) have so far been covered under the scheme.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

11. Punaura Dham that has been included in the Ramayana circuit of the Swadesh Darshan scheme, is situated in-

- A. Uttar Pradesh
- B. Uttrakhand
- C. Bihar
- D. Gujarat

ANSWER: C

12. Which state has become the first State in the country to launch a financial assistance scheme for the landless agri-labourers?

- A. Gujarat
- B. Uttar Pradesh
- C. Punjab
- D. Chattisgarh

ANSWER: D

13. With reference to Republic Day Parade 2022, Consider the following statements:

1. In the Republic Day Parade 2022, Uttar Pradesh state tableau has been adjudged as the best state tableau.
2. Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) was adjudged as the best marching contingent among the CAPF.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

14. With reference to Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, Consider the following statements:

1. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), is a maternity benefit programme being implemented only in aspirational districts of the country, identified by NITI Aayog.

2. It is a centrally sponsored scheme being executed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

15. With respect to Chauri Chaura incident, consider the following statements:

- 1. Chauri Chaura is a town in Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh.
- 2. This incident led to the termination of Quit India Movement.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

16. SRESHTA Scheme of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is associated with-

- A. Providing hearing aids to the elderly.
- B. Providing residential schooling to meritorious students of Scheduled Castes.
- C. Opening rehabilitation centres for destitute women.
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: B

17. Which of the following state has launched an open-air classroom programme called Paray Shikshalaya?

- A. West Bengal
- B. Punjab
- C. Haryana
- D. Goa

ANSWER: A

18. Consider the following statements regarding International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics:

- 1. ICRISAT was founded in 1972 and conducts agricultural research for development in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.
- 2. ICRISAT headquarters are located in Bengaluru.
- 3. ICRISAT was awarded the 2021 Africa Food Prize.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

19. The ancient festival of Kanchoth is celebrated annually in-

- A. Haryana
- B. Jammu and Kashmir
- C. Punjab
- D. Goa

ANSWER: B

20. Consider the following statements regarding 'Operation Aahat':

- 1. It has been launched by National Investigating Agency.
- 2. It is a nationwide operation to curb human trafficking.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

21. Consider the following statements regarding India press freedom report 2021:

1. It is released by the Rights and Risks Analysis Group.
2. As per the report, the highest number of journalists or media organisations targeted was in Uttar Pradesh.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

22. With respect to Sachindra Nath Sanyal, consider the following statements:

1. He was one of the founders of the Hindustan Republican Association.
2. He was involved in Ghadar Conspiracy and Kakori Conspiracy.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

23. The nodal ministry for National Ropeways Development Programme – “Parvatmala” is-

- A. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
- B. Ministry of Tourism
- C. Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region
- D. Ministry of Commerce and Industry

ANSWER: A

24. Consider the following statements regarding Intensified Mission Indradhanush 4.0-

1. Intensified Mission Indradhanush 4.0 will have three rounds and will be conducted in 416 districts.

2. Its main focus is to protect children and pregnant women from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

25. Consider the following statements regarding Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA):

1. It was set up under Agriculture Produce (Grading and Marketing Act) in 1985.
2. Its functions include fixing of standards and specifications for the scheduled products for the purpose of exports.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

26. Consider the following statements regarding SAMRIDH initiative-

1. It aims to improve access to quality and affordable education.
2. It is a joint initiative of NITI Ayog’s Atal Innovation Mission and U.S. Agency for International Development.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

27. Who has been appointed as the brand ambassador of Uttarakhand for 2022?

- A. Sunny Deol
- B. Akshay Kumar
- C. Kangana Ranaut
- D. Rishab Pant

ANSWER: B

28. Consider the following statements about Aspirational District Programme-

1. It is a flagship programme of NITI Aayog.
2. Data is collected on a real-time basis for 49 indicators on 5 core dimensions.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

29. Which state/Union territory has signed a pact with New Zealand for transforming sheep farming sector?

- A. Jammu and Kashmir
- B. Ladakh
- C. Himachal Pradesh
- D. Uttarakhand

ANSWER: A

30. Consider the following statements regarding Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram Scheme-

1. It is an ongoing Central Sector Scheme under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
2. The objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance and other help to athletes in their pursuit of medals international sporting events.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only 1

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

ANSWER: A

31. Consider the following statements regarding Sri Madhawacharya:

1. He is regarded as an incarnation of wind-god Vayu.
2. He was a great exponent of the Dvaita School of philosophy.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

32. Consider the following statements regarding Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE) Scheme.

1. It is a Central Sector scheme launched by Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment.
2. It has been designed for providing welfare measures to Transgender community and people engaged in begging.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

33. Consider the following statements regarding Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) number:

1. The integration of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission with the Aarogya Setu app, allows users to create ABHA numbers.

2. It is a 12 digit number which individuals can use to link their existing and new medical records among other applications.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

34. Consider the following statements regarding Scheme of Modernization of State Police Forces-

- 1. The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Defence since 1969-70.
- 2. Its objective is to gradually reduce the dependence of the State Governments on the Army and the Central Armed Police Forces to control internal security.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

35. A 14.5-kilometre long 'Rail-cum-Road-Bridge' has been recently inaugurated on River Ganga in which state?

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

ANSWER: B

36. The world-famous Maru mahotsav festival began recently in the state of-

- A. Rajasthan
- B. Gujarat
- C. Andhra Pradesh
- D. Haryana

ANSWER: A

37. Consider the following statements regarding Rani Abbakka Chowta:

- 1. She belonged to the Chowta dynasty, which ruled over parts of coastal Karnataka.
- 2. She fought against the Portuguese in the 16th century.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

38. River Devika Rejuvenation Project, seen recently in news, is located in-

- A. Uttarakhand
- B. Jammu and Kashmir
- C. Uttar Pradesh
- D. Bihar

ANSWER: B

39. As per recent India Justice report, the number of undertrials in India now stands at 75%. The state with highest increase in the proportion of undertrials is-

- A. Uttar Pradesh
- B. Madhya Pradesh
- C. Goa
- D. Punjab

ANSWER: D

40. Consider the following statements regarding Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (Saubhagya) scheme-

- 1. SAUBHAGYA is one of the largest household electrification drives in the world that started in 2014.

- The beneficiaries for free electricity connections would be identified using Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011 data.
- The Rural Electrification Corporation Limited (REC) is the nodal agency for the implementation of the scheme.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- Only 1 and 2
- Only 1 and 3
- Only 2 and 3
- 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: C

41. Consider the following statements regarding Medaram Jathara festival-

- It is celebrated by the tribal community of Jharkhand.
- It is the second-largest fair of India, after the Kumbh Mela.
- It is a festival with no Vedic or Brahmanic influence.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- Only 1 and 2
- Only 1 and 3
- Only 2 and 3
- 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: C

42. Consider the following statements regarding Guru Ravidas-

- He was born in Seer Goverdhanpur village in Uttar Pradesh.
- He was a contemporary of Saint Kabir.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- Only 1
- Only 2
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: C

43. With respect to Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban), consider the following statements-

- It implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- It adopts a demand driven approach wherein the Housing shortage is decided based on demand assessment by States/Union Territories.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- Only 1
- Only 2
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: C

44. Consider the following statements regarding 'New India Literacy Programme':

- Objective of the scheme is to cover all aspects of Adult Education which include foundational literacy and numeracy.
- It aligns with National Education Policy 2020.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- Only 1
- Only 2
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: C

45. Pasuvula Panduga Cattle Festival is celebrated in which of the following states?

- Andhra Pradesh
- Karnataka
- Kerala
- Tamil Nadu

ANSWER: A

46. February 15 is to be commemorated as Bihar Shahid Diwas in honour of freedom fighters killed in Tarapur Massacre. The incident occurred in-

- A. 1912
- B. 1922
- C. 1932
- D. 1942

ANSWER: C

47. Consider the following statements about Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan-

- 1. It seeks to provide strategic funding to eligible state higher educational institutions.
- 2. It is a central sector scheme launched in 2013.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

48. Consider the following statements about Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj-

- 1. He was the first Chhatrapati and founder of the Maratha Empire.
- 2. His birth anniversary celebration, Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti was first celebrated by Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

49. 'Operation Nanhe Farishte' for rescue of kids was recently launched by-

- A. Child Rights and You
- B. Railway Protection Force
- C. Delhi Police
- D. Intelligence Bureau

ANSWER: B

50. Consider the following statements:

- 1. Both Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh celebrate their Foundation Day on February 20.
- 2. Mizoram is also called the land of dawn and lit mountains.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

51. Recently three-year long celebrations of the 150th birth anniversary of Siddhanta Prabhupada were inaugurated. He was the founder of -

- A. Sharada Peetham
- B. Gaudiya Math
- C. Dwarka Peeth
- D. Jyotir Matha

ANSWER: B

52. Consider the following statements about star campaigners in elections-

- 1. Star campaigners are nominated by Election Commission to campaign in a given set of constituencies.
- 2. A recognised political party can have 40 Star campaigners and an unrecognised (but registered) political party can have 20.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

53. Which state has become first state to launch Night Navigation mobile application in rivers?

- A. Assam
- B. West Bengal
- C. Andhra Pradesh
- D. Kerala

ANSWER: A

54. Consider the following statements regarding Border Infrastructure and Management (BIM) scheme-

- 1. It is a central sector scheme which aims to strengthen border infrastructure.
- 2. Ministry of Defence is responsible for the implementation of BIM.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

55. Byanjana Dwadashi festival, seen recently in news, is celebrated majorly in which state?

- A. Uttar Pradesh
- B. Odisha
- C. Tamil Nadu
- D. Gujarat

ANSWER: B

56. Karakattam or Kumbakkali dance is ancient dance form performed in-

- A. Tamil Nadu
- B. Kerala
- C. Andhra Pradesh
- D. Both A and B

ANSWER: D

57. Consider the following statements regarding National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship scheme-

- 1. It is central sector scheme to award meritorious economically weaker students.

- 2. The income ceiling under the eligibility criteria for the scholarship has been changed to Rs 3.5 lakh per annum.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

58. Upper Bhadra Project, a major lift irrigation project is located in which of the following states?

- A. Maharashtra
- B. Karnataka
- C. Goa
- D. Tamil Nadu

ANSWER: B

59. Project Arohan, to help students hone their skills, has been launched by which state?

- A. Kerala
- B. Assam
- C. Haryana
- D. Uttar Pradesh

ANSWER: B

60. Khajuraho temples were built during the reign of which dynasty?

- A. Paramera dynasty
- B. Malwa Sultanate
- C. Chandella dynasty
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: C

61. With respect to Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, consider the following statements:

- 1. The Scheme provides income support to all families of Small and Marginal Farmers only.

2. It is a central sponsored scheme with equal share of states and union government.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: D

62. Nikarshan Sadan Dredging Museum has been inaugurated recently at-

- A. Mumbai
- B. Visakhapatnam
- C. Paradip
- D. Kochi

ANSWER: B

63. Recently Ombudsman App has been launched for MGNREGA. The nodal ministry for Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is-

- A. Ministry of Rural Development
- B. Ministry of Finance
- C. Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation
- D. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare

ANSWER: A

64. Which of the following organisation has National Institute of Urban Affairs partnered with, to design 'Sustainable Cities India' program?

- A. World Bank

- B. World Economic Forum
- C. United Nations Environment Program
- D. Asian Development Bank

ANSWER: B

65. India's first 'electronic-waste eco-park' is slated to be set up in-

- A. Ahmedabad
- B. Bengaluru
- C. Chennai
- D. Delhi

ANSWER: D

66. Consider the following statements with respect to Bhasha Sangam Initiative-

- 1. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Culture.
- 2. It is developed by Centre for Cultural Resources and Training.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: D

67. What is the name of mission launched by Government to evacuate Indians stranded in Ukraine?

- A. Operation Yamuna
- B. Operation Maitri
- C. Operation Thunderbolt
- D. Operation Ganga

ANSWER: D

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

1.68. AUSTRALIA TO HOST QUAD FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING.

Why in news?

- The two-day meeting of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) foreign ministers comes amid the USA Administration's concerns about China, even as tensions with Russia over Ukraine ratchet up in Europe.

About the Quad

- The Quad is an informal strategic forum comprising four nations, namely -- **United States of America (USA), India, Australia and Japan.**
- It is also Known as the 'Quadrilateral Security Dialogue' (QSD).
- According to the Spirit of the Quad, the group's primary objectives include maritime security, combating the Covid-19 crisis, especially vis-à-vis vaccine diplomacy, addressing the risks of climate change, creating an ecosystem for investment in the region and boosting technological innovation.
- The group met for the first time in 2007 on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).
- It is considered an alliance of maritime democracies, and the forum is maintained by meetings, semi-regular summits, information exchanges and military drills of all the member countries.



1.69. SUPREME COURT QUASHES ONE-YEAR SUSPENSION OF 12 MAHARASHTRA BJP MLAs.

Why in News

- The Supreme Court revoked the one-year suspension of 12 Maharashtra BJP legislators, calling it an “irrational” act that would impact the democratic set-up, leave constituencies unrepresented and help “thin majority” governments manipulate numbers.
- The MLAs were suspended for a year for “grossly disorderly conduct” in the House.



1.70. SRI LANKA 'UNITARY DIGITAL IDENTITY FRAMEWORK'.

Why in news?

- India has agreed to provide a grant to Sri Lanka for implementing a 'Unitary Digital Identity framework'.
- The **Unitary Digital Identity Framework** is apparently **modelled on the Aadhaar card.**

- Sri Lankan government will give priority to the implementation of this Framework as a national level programme.
- Sri Lanka's Cabinet of Ministers approved this proposal made by President Rajapaksa, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with India to obtain the grant and launch this project.
- This project comes amid substantive economic assistance from India, worth USD 1.4 billion to Sri Lanka, since the start of 2022 to help Sri Lanka cope with its dollar crunch, and import food, medicines and fuel due to shortages.

About Unitary Digital Identity Framework

- Under the Unitary Digital Identity Framework, a **personal identity verification device will be introduced, based on biometric data, which is a digital tool to represent identities of individuals in cyberspace.** Identification of individual identities can be accurately verified in physical and digital environments by combining two devices.
- The initiative will be launched following bilateral talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in December 2019.



1.71. FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER RE-ELECTS AS PRESIDENT OF GERMANY FOR SECOND TERM.

Why in news?

- German President, **Frank-Walter Steinmeier** has been re-elected for a second term of five years by a special parliamentary assembly. This is also the final term for Steinmeier, which he won with **71% of the vote.**
- The special assembly was made up of the members of parliament of the lower house and representatives of Germany's 16 states. Steinmeier was first elected as the president on February 12, 2017, with 74% of the vote.



1.72. ISRAEL BECOMES FIRST COUNTRY TO ALLOW DRONES IN CIVILIAN AIRSPACE.

Why in news?

- **Israel** becomes the first-ever country to allow **drone flights in civilian airspace.** The certification was issued to the Hermes Starliner unmanned system by the **Israeli Civil Aviation Authority** and was manufactured and developed by **Elbit Systems**, an Israeli defence electronics company.
- The UAVs will be used for the benefit of agriculture, the environment, public welfare, economic activity and against crime. For safety reasons, international aviation regulations prohibit uncertified aircraft from flying in civilian airspace, limiting the operation of UAVs to unsegregated airspace.



1.73. UNION CABINET APPROVES SETTING UP OF A G20 SECRETARIAT.

Why in news?

- The G20 Secretariat will be responsible for implementing overall policy decisions and arrangements needed to steer India's forthcoming Presidency of the forum for international economic cooperation.

- It is being established for handling the work related to substantive/ content/knowledge media, technical, security and logistical aspects of India's G20 Presidency.
- It will be manned by staff and officers from Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and other line Ministries or Departments and domain knowledge experts.
- The Secretariat will be functional till February 2024.
- The G20 Secretariat will be guided by an apex committee, headed by Prime Minister. It will also comprise of Finance Minister, External Affairs Minister, Home Minister, and G20 Sherpa (Commerce & Industry Minister). It will provide overall guidance to India's G20 Presidency.
- India will hold G20 Presidency from December 1, 2022 to November 30, 2023. It will culminate with the G20 Summit in India in 2023.

About G20

- G20 is an intergovernmental forum, consisting of 19 countries and the European Union (EU). It works for addressing major issues related to global economy, like climate change mitigation, international financial stability, and sustainable development.
- It is composed of most of world's largest economies, including industrialized and developing nations. It accounts for 90% of gross world product (GWP), 75–80% of international trade, half of world's land area and two-thirds of the global population.
- The G20 was founded in 1999. Since 2008, it has convened at least once a year. The summits involve head of government or state, foreign minister, finance minister, and other high-ranking officials from each member state. EU is represented by European Commission and European Central Bank.
- Currently, Italy, Indonesia and India are the G20 troika countries.



1.74. MINSK AGREEMENT 1 AND 2.

Why in news?

- The agreements relate to peace seeking settlement signed between Ukraine and Russia and are named after the Belarusian capital where the agreements were first settled.
- **Minsk 1** - Signed in 2014, it was a 12-point ceasefire deal. However, it could not stand.
- **Minsk 2** - Representatives of Russia, Ukraine, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and leaders of separatist-held regions Donetsk and Luhansk signed a 13-point agreement in February 2015.
- Its provisions include ceasefire, withdrawal of weapons, interim self-government for the Donetsk and Luhansk etc.
- However, Ukraine and Russia interpret the pact very differently leading to the "Minsk conundrum".



1.75. GERMANY SUSPENDS THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS OF NORD STREAM 2 GAS PIPELINE.

Why in news?

- Germany has suspended the certification process of Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia.

- Nord Stream 2 is **1,230-kilometer-long natural gas pipeline** run from **Ust-Luga in Russia to Greifswald in Germany** through the **Baltic Sea**, and will carry 55 billion cubic metres of gas per year.
- It is **designed to double Russia's gas exports to Germany**.
- It runs parallel to an earlier Nord Stream pipeline which has been working since 2011 and would double its capacity, to 110 billion cubic meters of gas a year.
- Russian state-owned gas company Gazprom owns half of Nord Stream 2.



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PRACTICE MCQS

1. An informal strategic forum of USA, India, Australia and Japan (QUAD) is also known as which of the following?

- A. Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
- B. Quadrilateral Political Dialogue
- C. Quadrilateral economic Dialogue
- D. All of the Above

ANSWER: A

2. The Supreme Court of India recently quashed a one-year suspension of 12 MLAs of which state ?

- A. Maharashtra
- B. Rajasthan
- C. Punjab
- D. None of the above

ANSWER – A

3. India recently agreed to provide a grant for implementing a 'Unitary Digital Identity framework', on the lines Aadhaar, to which of the following country?

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

ANSWER: B

4. Frank-Walter Steinmeier has been selected President for the second time in which country?

- A. Finland
- B. Netherlands
- C. France
- D. Germany

ANSWER: D

5. Which country has become the first-ever country to allow drone flights in civilian airspace?

- A. USA
- B. Israel
- C. Norway
- D. South Korea

ANSWER: B

6. Consider the following statements regarding G20-

1. G20 is an intergovernmental forum, consisting of 20 countries and the European Union (EU).
2. Currently, France, Indonesia and India are the G20 troika countries.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: D

7. The Minsk Agreement is related to peace seeking settlement signed between-

- A. European Union and Russia
- B. NATO and Russia
- C. Ukraine and Russia
- D. USA and Russia

ANSWER: C

8. Nord Stream 2, seen recently in news is a-

- A. Computer malware
- B. Satellite constellation launched by blue origins
- C. Gas pipeline connecting Germany and Russia
- D. 6G phone launched by Alienware international.

ANSWER: C

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DAY REMEMBER

1.76. ECONOMIC SURVEY 2021-22.

Why in News

- The Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Economic Survey 2021-22 in Parliament today.
- The central theme of this year's Economic Survey is the "Agile approach", implemented through India's economic response to the COVID-19 Pandemic shock.



Highlights of the Economic Survey

State of the Economy

- Indian economy estimated to grow by 9.2 percent in real terms in 2021-22 (as per first advanced estimates) subsequent to a contraction of 7.3 percent in 2020-21.
- GDP projected to grow by 8- 8.5 percent in real terms in 2022-23.
- The year ahead poised for a pickup in private sector investment with the financial system in good position to provide support for economy's revival.
- Projection comparable with World Bank and Asian Development Bank's latest forecasts of real GDP growth of 8.7 percent and 7.5 percent respectively for 2022-23.
- As per IMF's latest World Economic Outlook projections, India's real GDP projected to grow at 9 percent in 2021-22 and 2022-23 and at 7.1 percent in 2023-2024, which would make India the fastest growing major economy in the world for all 3 years.
- Agriculture and allied sectors expected to grow by 3.9 percent; industry by 11.8 percent and services sector by 8.2 percent in 2021-22.
- On demand side, consumption estimated to grow by 7.0 percent, Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) by 15 percent, exports by 16.5 percent and imports by 29.4 percent in 2021-22.
- Macroeconomic stability indicators suggest that the Indian Economy is well placed to take on the challenges of 2022-23.
- Combination of high foreign exchange reserves, sustained foreign direct investment, and rising export earnings will provide adequate buffer against possible global liquidity tapering in 2022-23.
- Economic impact of "second wave" was much smaller than that during the full lockdown phase in 2020-21, though health impact was more severe.
- Government of India's unique response comprised of safety-nets to cushion the impact on vulnerable sections of society and the business sector, significant increase in capital expenditure to spur growth and supply side reforms for a sustained long-term expansion.



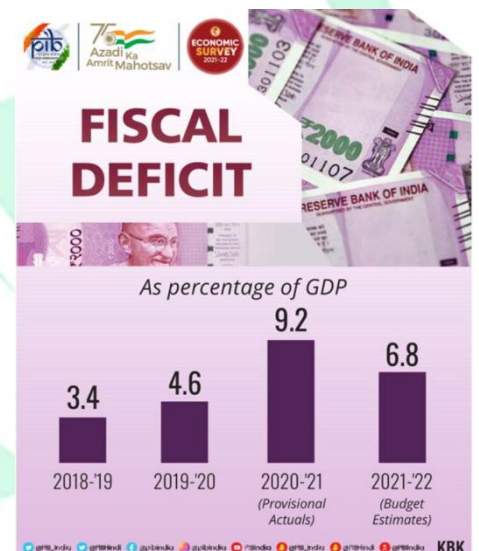
- Government's flexible and multi-layered response is partly based on an "Agile" framework that uses feedback-loops, and the use of eighty High Frequency Indicators (HFIs) in an environment of extreme uncertainty.

Fiscal Developments

- The revenue receipts from the Central Government (April to November, 2021) have gone up by 67.2 percent (YoY) as against an expected growth of 9.6 percent in the 2021-22 Budget Estimates (over 2020-21 Provisional Actuals).
- Gross Tax Revenue registers a growth of over 50 percent during April to November, 2021 in YoY terms. This performance is strong compared to pre-pandemic levels of 2019-2020 also.
- During April-November 2021, Capex has grown by 13.5 percent (YoY) with focus on infrastructure-intensive sectors.
- Sustained revenue collection and a targeted expenditure policy has contained the fiscal deficit for April to November, 2021 at 46.2 percent of BE.
- With the enhanced borrowings on account of COVID-19, the Central Government debt has gone up from 49.1 percent of GDP in 2019-20 to 59.3 percent of GDP in 2020-21, but is expected to follow a declining trajectory with the recovery of the economy.

External Sectors

- India's merchandise exports and imports rebounded strongly and surpassed pre-COVID levels during the current financial year.
- There was significant pickup in net services with both receipts and payments crossing the pre-pandemic levels, despite weak tourism revenues.
- Net capital flows were higher at US\$ 65.6 billion in the first half of 2021-22, on account of continued inflow of foreign investment, revival in net external commercial borrowings, higher banking capital and additional special drawing rights (SDR) allocation.
- India's external debt rose to US \$ 593.1 billion at end-September 2021, from US \$ 556.8 billion a year earlier, reflecting additional SDR allocation by IMF, coupled with higher commercial borrowings.
- Foreign Exchange Reserves crossed US\$ 600 billion in the first half of 2021-22 and touched US \$ 633.6 billion as of December 31, 2021.
- As of end-November 2021, India was the fourth largest forex reserves holder in the world after China, Japan and Switzerland.



Monetary Management and Financial Intermediation

- The liquidity in the system remained in surplus.
- Repo rate was maintained at 4 per cent in 2021-22.
- RBI undertook various measures such as G-Sec Acquisition Programme and Special Long-Term Repo Operations to provide further liquidity.
- The economic shock of the pandemic has been weathered well by the commercial banking system:
- YoY Bank credit growth accelerated gradually in 2021-22 from 5.3 per cent in April 2021 to 9.2 per cent as on 31st December 2021.
- The Gross Non-Performing Advances ratio of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) declined from 11.2 per cent at the end of 2017-18 to 6.9 per cent at the end of September, 2021.
- Net Non-Performing Advances ratio declined from 6 percent to 2.2 per cent during the same period.

- Capital to risk-weighted asset ratio of SCBs continued to increase from 13 per cent in 2013-14 to 16.54 per cent at the end of September 2021.
- The Return on Assets and Return on Equity for Public Sector Banks continued to be positive for the period ending September 2021.
- Exceptional year for the capital markets:
- Rs. 89,066 crore was raised via 75 Initial Public Offering (IPO) issues in April-November 2021, which is much higher than in any year in the last decade.
- Sensex and Nifty scaled up to touch peak at 61,766 and 18,477 on October 18, 2021.
- Among major emerging market economies, Indian markets outperformed peers in April-December 2021.

Prices and Inflation

- The average headline CPI-Combined inflation moderated to 5.2 per cent in 2021-22 (April-December) from 6.6 per cent in the corresponding period of 2020-21.
- The decline in retail inflation was led by easing of food inflation.
- Food inflation averaged at a low of 2.9 per cent in 2021-22 (April to December) as against 9.1 per cent in the corresponding period last year.
- Effective supply-side management kept prices of most essential commodities under control during the year.
- Proactive measures were taken to contain the price rise in pulses and edible oils.
- Reduction in central excise and subsequent cuts in Value Added Tax by most States helped ease petrol and diesel prices.
- Wholesale inflation based on Wholesale Price Index (WPI) rose to 12.5 per cent during 2021-22 (April to December).
- This has been attributed to:
- Low base in the previous year,
- Pick-up in economic activity,
- Sharp increase in international prices of crude oil and other imported inputs, and
- High freight costs.
- Divergence between CPI-C and WPI Inflation:
- The divergence peaked to 9.6 percentage points in May 2020.
- However, this year there was a reversal in divergence with retail inflation falling below wholesale inflation by 8.0 percentage points in December 2021.

This divergence can be explained by factors such as:

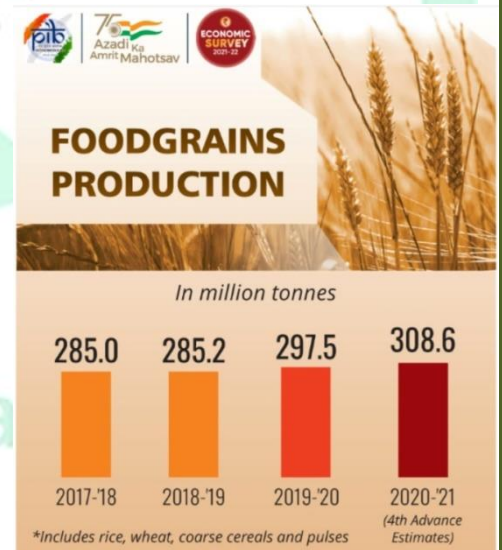
- Variations due to base effect,
- Difference in scope and coverage of the two indices,
- Price collections,
- Items covered,
- Difference in commodity weights, and
- WPI being more sensitive to cost-push inflation led by imported inputs.
- With the gradual waning of base effect in WPI, the divergence in CPI-C and WPI is also expected to narrow down.

Sustainable Development and Climate Change

- India's overall score on the NITI Aayog SDG India Index and Dashboard improved to 66 in 2020-21 from 60 in 2019-20 and 57 in 2018-19.
- Number of Front Runners (scoring 65-99) increased to 22 States and UTs in 2020-21 from 10 in 2019-20.
- In North East India, 64 districts were Front Runners and 39 districts were Performers in the NITI Aayog North-Eastern Region District SDG Index 2021-22.
- India has the tenth largest forest area in the world.
- In 2020, India ranked third globally in increasing its forest area during 2010 to 2020.
- In 2020, the forests covered 24% of India's total geographical, accounting for 2% of the world's total forest area.
- In August 2021, the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, was notified which is aimed at phasing out single use plastic by 2022.
- Draft regulation on Extended Producer Responsibility for plastic packaging was notified.
- The Compliance status of Grossly Polluting Industries (GPIs) located in the Ganga main stem and its tributaries improved from 39% in 2017 to 81% in 2020.
- The consequent reduction in effluent discharge has been from 349.13 millions of litres per day (MLD) in 2017 to 280.20 MLD in 2020.
- The Prime Minister, as a part of the national statement delivered at the 26th Conference of Parties (COP 26) in Glasgow in November 2021, announced ambitious targets to be achieved by 2030 to enable further reduction in emissions.
- The need to start the one-word movement 'LIFE' (Lifestyle for Environment) urging mindful and deliberate utilization instead of mindless and destructive consumption was underlined.

Agriculture and Food Management

- The Agriculture sector experienced buoyant growth in past two years, accounting for a sizeable 18.8% (2021-22) in Gross Value Added (GVA) of the country registering a growth of 3.6% in 2020-21 and 3.9% in 2021-22.
- Minimum Support Price (MSP) policy is being used to promote crop diversification.
- Net receipts from crop production have increased by 22.6% in the latest Situation Assessment Survey (SAS) compared to SAS Report of 2014.
- Allied sectors including animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries are steadily emerging to be high growth sectors and major drivers of overall growth in agriculture sector.
- The Livestock sector has grown at a CAGR of 8.15% over the last five years ending 2019-20. It has been a stable source of income across groups of agricultural households accounting for about 15% of their average monthly income.
- Government facilitates food processing through various measures of infrastructure development, subsidized transportation and support for formalization of micro food enterprises.
- India runs one of the largest food management programmes in the world.
- Government has further extended the coverage of food security network through schemes like PM Gareeb Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY).



Industry and Infrastructure

- Index of Industrial Production (IIP) grew at 17.4 percent (YoY) during April-November 2021 as compared to (-) 15.3 percent in April-November 2020.
- Capital expenditure for the Indian railways has increased to Rs. 155,181 crores in 2020-21 from an average annual of Rs. 45,980 crores during 2009-14 and it has been budgeted to further increase to Rs. 215,058 crores in 2021-22 – a five times increase in comparison to the 2014 level.
- Extent of road construction per day increased substantially in 2020-21 to 36.5 Kms per day from 28 Kms per day in 2019-20 – a rise of 30.4 percent.
- Net profit to sales ratio of large corporates reached an all-time high of 10.6 percent in in July-September quarter of 2021-22 despite the pandemic (RBI Study).
- Introduction of Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, major boost provided to infrastructure-both physical as well as digital, along with measures to reduce transaction costs and improve ease of doing business, would support the pace of recovery.



Services

- GVA of services crossed pre-pandemic level in July-September quarter of 2021-22; however, GVA of contact intensive sectors like trade, transport, etc. still remain below pre-pandemic level.
- Overall service Sector GVA is expected to grow by 8.2 percent in 2021-22.
- During April-December 2021, rail freight crossed its pre-pandemic level while air freight and port traffic almost reached their pre-pandemic levels, domestic air and rail passenger traffic are increasing gradually – shows impact of second wave was much more muted as compared to during first wave.
- During the first half of 2021-22, service sector received over US\$ 16.7 billion FDI – accounting for almost 54 percent of total FDI inflows into India.
- IT-BPM services revenue reached US\$ 194 billion in 2020-21, adding 1.38 lakh employees during the same period.
- Major government reforms include, removing telecom regulations in IT-BPO sector and opening up of space sector to private players.
- Services exports surpassed pre-pandemic level in January-March quarter of 2020-21 and grew by 21.6 percent in the first half of 2021-22 - strengthened by global demand for software and IT services exports.
- India has become 3rd largest start-up ecosystem in the world after US and China. Number of new recognized start-ups increased to over 14000 in 2021-22 from 733 in 2016-17.
- 44 Indian start-ups have achieved unicorn status in 2021 taking overall tally of unicorns to 83, most of which are in services sector.

Social Infrastructure and Employment

- 157.94 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccines administered as on 16th January 2022; 91.39 crore first dose and 66.05 crore second dose.
- With revival of economy, employment indicators bounced back to pre-pandemic levels during last quarter of 2020-21.
- As per the quarterly Periodic Labour Force Survey (PFLS) data up to March 2021, employment in urban sector affected by pandemic has recovered almost to the pre-pandemic level.

- According to Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) data, formalization of jobs continued during second COVID wave; adverse impact of COVID on formalization of jobs much lower than during the first COVID wave.
- Expenditure on social services (health, education and others) by Centre and States as a proportion of GDP increased from 6.2 % in 2014-15 to 8.6% in 2021-22 (BE).

As per the National Family Health Survey-5

- Total Fertility Rate (TFR) came down to 2 in 2019-21 from 2.2 in 2015-16.
- Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), under-five mortality rate and institutional births have improved in 2019-21 over year 2015-16
- Under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), 83 districts have become 'Har Ghar Jal' districts.
- Increased allotment of funds to Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS) to provide buffer for unorganized labour in rural areas during the pandemic.

1.77. WORLD WETLANDS DAY

Why in news?

- Two new Ramsar sites — **Khijadiya wildlife sanctuary in Gujarat** and **Bakhira wildlife sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh** — were announced on the occasion of World Wetlands Day at Sultanpur national park.
- India now has a network of **49 such sites**, the highest in South Asia, covering 10,93,636 hectares.
- Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance as per UNESCO's 1971 Convention on Wetlands held in Ramsar, Iran.

About World Wetlands Day

- World Wetlands Day, celebrated annually on 2 February, aims to raise global awareness about the vital role of wetlands for people and planet.
- This day also marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar.
- This year is especially significant as World Wetlands Day 2022 will be observed as a United Nations international day for the first time.
- The **theme** of World Wetlands Day 2022 is '**Wetlands Action for People and Nature**'.
- It aims to highlight the importance of actions to conserve and sustain wetlands.



1.78. WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK: 1-7 FEBRUARY.

Why in news?

- **World Interfaith Harmony Week** is an annual event observed during the **first week of February (1-7 February)**, after **General Assembly designation in 2010**.
- World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW), was conceived to promote cultural peace and nonviolence. The World Interfaith Harmony Week is based on the pioneering work of **The Common Word initiative**.

- This initiative, which **started in 2007**, called for Muslim and Christian leaders to engage in a dialogue based on **two common fundamental religious Commandments; Love of God, and Love of the Neighbour**, without nevertheless compromising any of their own religious tenets.
- The Two commandments are at the heart of the three Monotheistic religions and therefore provide the most solid theological ground possible.
- World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW), conceived to promote culture, peace and nonviolence, was **first proposed by King Abdullah II of Jordan** at the United Nations in 2010.



1.79. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF HUMAN FRATERNITY OBSERVED ON 4TH FEBRUARY.

Why in news?

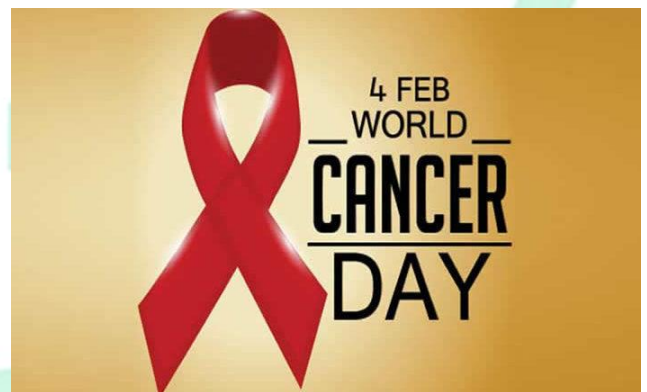
- The **'International Day of Human Fraternity'** is celebrated across the world on **4th February**.
- The day **aims to raise awareness about different cultures and religions, or beliefs**, and the promotion of tolerance; and to educate people that tolerance, pluralistic tradition, mutual respect, and the diversity of religions and beliefs promote human fraternity.
- It **also aims to educate people that tolerance, pluralistic tradition, mutual respect, and the diversity of religions** and beliefs promote human fraternity.
- The **first International Day of Human Fraternity** was held in **2021**.
- The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to declare 4 February as International Day of Human Fraternity on 21 December 2020. The Day is a part of the **'World Interfaith Harmony Week'**, observed during the first week of February, as proclaimed by UN General Assembly in 2010.



1.80. WORLD CANCER DAY.

Why in news?

- World Cancer Day is marked on **February 4th every year** to raise awareness about cancer and encourage its early detection and prevention.
- According to World Health Organisation, cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for nearly one in six deaths.
- The **World Cancer Day 2022 theme is "Close the Care Gap"**. The theme aims to increase awareness about the inequities in cancer care. The theme has been launched as a three-year campaign.
- **World Cancer Day Significance** -As per recent studies, about **one out of six people in the world die from cancer**, which is more than the number of deaths caused by tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and malaria combined.
- In India alone, a 2020 WHO study revealed that one in every 10 Indians will develop cancer and one in every 15 will die. According to the study, India has a population of almost 1.35 billion reported around 1.16 million new cancer cases and 784,800 cancer deaths in 2018.



- Overall, India ranks third among nations in terms of the highest number of cancer cases. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has estimated a 12 percent rise in cancer cases in India by the next five years.

1.81. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ZERO TOLERANCE TO FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION.

Why in news?

- International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation** is observed on **6th February** globally.
- This day is sponsored by the United Nations for their efforts to eradicate female genital mutilation. It was first introduced in 2003.
- This year theme of International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female: **Accelerating Investment to End Female Genital Mutilation**.



About the Female genital mutilation:

- Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons and is recognized internationally as a **violation of the human rights**, the health and the integrity of girls and women.
- Girls who undergo female genital mutilation face short-term complications such as severe pain, shock, excessive bleeding, infections, and difficulty in passing urine, as well as long-term consequences for their sexual and reproductive health and mental health.

1.82. WORLD PULSES DAY 2022: OBSERVED ON 10 FEBRUARY.

Why in news?

- The United Nations designated **World Pulses Day** is observed every year on **10 February**.
- The day has been established by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** of the United Nations to recognize the importance of pulses (dry beans, lentils, dry peas, chickpeas, lupins) as a global food.
- World Pulses Day's 2022 **theme: "Pulses to empower youth in achieving sustainable agrifood systems"**.



1.83. SAFER INTERNET DAY 2022 OBSERVED ON 8 FEBRUARY.

Why in news?

- Safer Internet Day** is observed every year on the **second day of the second week** of February with the aim of providing a safer and better internet, where every user gets to use the internet responsibly and without getting their data leaked.
- This year **February 8** is being celebrated as Safer Internet Day across the world.
- This year marks the **19th edition** of Safer Internet Day with actions taking place right across the globe.
- The theme for this year is **'Together for a better internet'**, calling upon all stakeholders to join together to make the internet a safer and better place for all, and especially for children and young people.

Safer Internet Day 2022 | **Tuesday 8 February**

Coordinated by the UK Safer Internet Centre

- It started as an initiative of the European Union's (EU's) Safe Borders project in 2004 and was taken up by the In safe network as one of its earliest actions in 2005, according to its website.
- It is now celebrated in nearly 200 countries across the world. From cyber bullying to social networking to digital identity, each year Safer Internet Day aims to raise awareness of emerging online issues and current concerns.

1.84. NATIONAL DEWORMING DAY OBSERVED ON FEBRUARY 10.

Why in news?

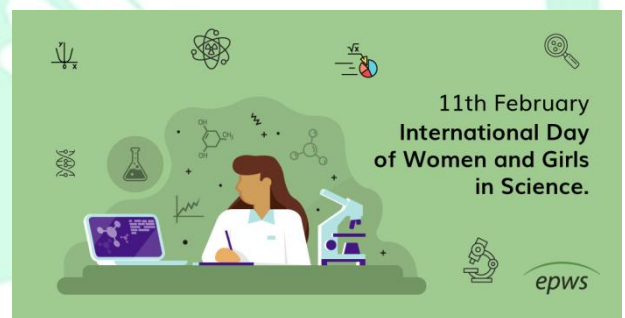
- National Deworming Day is observed on February 10, to make people aware of the importance of deworming, particularly for children from 1 to 19 years of age, who are the most vulnerable.
- The National Deworming Day campaign is held in schools and in villages through Anganwadi centres, which are tasked with providing basic healthcare facilities in rural areas.
- **Albendazole** is a deworming medicine that is provided in tablet and syrup form as per the age and body weight of the child.
- About 241 million children in India between 1 and 14 years of age are at risk of infections from Soil-Transmitted Helminths (STH) and resulting anaemia and other health issues.



1.85. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SCIENCE OBSERVED ON 11 FEBRUARY.

Why in news?

- **International Day of Women and Girls in Science** is observed globally on **11 February**.
- The **7th International Day of Women and Girls in Science Assembly**, taking place on **11 February 2022**, aims to recognize the role of women and girls in science, not only as beneficiaries but also as agents of change, including in view of accelerating progress towards the achievement of **SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)**.
- The Day is implemented by UNESCO and UN-Women in collaboration with institutions and civil society partners that aim to promote women and girls in science.
- The 2022 theme of the Day is **"Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Water Unites Us"**.
- In December 2015, the United Nations adopted a resolution to celebrate February 11 as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science. It was celebrated in 2016 for the first time.
- The idea behind this day is to ensure equal participation and involvement of women and girls in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).



1.86. WORLD UNANI DAY OBSERVED ON 11 FEBRUARY.

Why in news?

- **World Unani Day** is observed on **February 11** every year to mark the birth anniversary of **"Hakim Ajmal Khan"**, an eminent Indian Unani physician.
- The first Unani Day was celebrated in **2017** at the **Central Research Institute of Unani Medicine (CRIUM), Hyderabad**.

- The **main objective** is to spread the awareness in masses and action about healthcare delivery through the Unani system of medicine worldwide through its preventive and curative philosophy.

About Unani system of medicine

- The Unani system of medicine was introduced in India by the Arabs and Persians sometime around the eleventh century.
- India has the largest number of Unani educational, research and health care institutions.
- The Unani system of medicine **originated in Greece. Its foundation was laid by Hippocrates.**
- The system owes its present form to the Arabs who not only saved much of the Greek literature by rendering it into Arabic but also enriched the medicine of their day with their own contributions.



World Unani Day is observed on February 11 every year to mark the birth anniversary of "Hakim Ajmal Khan", an eminent Indian Unani physician. The first Unani Day was celebrated in 2017 at the Central Research Institute of Unani Medicine (CRIUM), Hyderabad.

About Hakim Ajmal Khan

- **Hakim Ajmal Khan** was an eminent Indian Unani physician who was a versatile genius, a great scholar, a social reformer, a noted freedom fighter, an Unani medical educationist and founder of scientific research in Unani System of Medicine.
- He was one of the founders of the **Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi.**

1.87. WORLD RADIO DAY 2022 CELEBRATED ON 13 FEBRUARY.

Why in news?

- **World Radio Day** is celebrated on **13 February** each year to recognize radio as a powerful medium, which brings people together from every corner of the globe, to promote diversity and help build a more peaceful and inclusive world.
- The day was proclaimed in 2011 by the Member States of UNESCO and after being adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012 as an International Day, February 13 became World Radio Day (WRD).
- **On the occasion of World Radio Day 2022, UNESCO calls on radio stations to celebrate the Day through three sub-themes:**
 - Trust in radio journalism: Produce independent and high-quality content;
 - Trust and accessibility: Take care of your audience;
 - Trust and viability of radio stations: Ensure competitiveness.



1.88. NATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY OF INDIA 2022 OBSERVED ON 13 FEB.

Why in news?

- **Indian National Women's Day** is observed every year on **13 February** to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Sarojini Naidu**.
- This year Nation celebrates its 143rd Birth Anniversary. She was born on February 13, 1879.
- She was famous for her nickname **'Nightingale of India' or 'Bharat Kokila'** because of her poems. Sarojini Naidu is well-known across the globe for her contributions to literature.



About Sarojini Naidu:

- Sarojini Naidu, born in Hyderabad and educated in Cambridge was the powerful face of Women in the Indian Independence struggle.
- Anti-imperialistic, Universal Suffragist, Women rights activist Mrs. Naidu paved the path for women's movements in India.
- Indian Nightingale Sarojini Naidu shines both as an activist and as a poet.
- In 1925 Sarojini Naidu became the **president of the Indian National Congress**.
- Sarojini Naidu was one of the forefront leaders who led the **Civil Disobedience Movement and the Quit India Movement**.
- When she graces the **United Provinces as Governor in 1947**, she rewrites the history by becoming the first woman to hold the office of Governor in the Dominion of India.
- For Women's Rights, suffrage and representation in organizations and assemblies she established the Women's India Association in 1917.

1.89. NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY DAY OBSERVED ON 12TH FEBRUARY 2022.

Why in news?

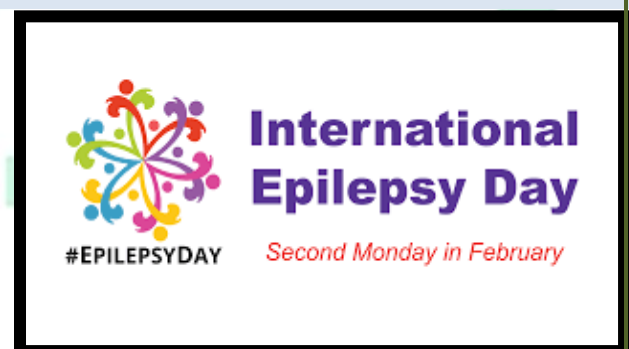
- **National Productivity Day** is observed every year in India on **February 12**.
- The objective of the National Productivity Council is to stimulate and promote productivity and quality consciousness across all sectors in the country.
- The main observance of the day is to encourage all stakeholders in the implementation of productivity tools and techniques with contemporary relevant themes.
- The day is celebrated by the **National Productivity Council (NPC)** to promote productivity culture in India.
- **National Productivity Council (NPC)** under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry Government of India** is a premier institution for propagating productivity movement in India. NPC works for providing solutions towards accelerating productivity, enhancing competitiveness, increasing productivity.



1.90. INTERNATIONAL EPILEPSY DAY 2022: FEBRUARY 14.

Why in news?

- **International Epilepsy Day** is observed every year on the **Second Monday of February** across the world. In 2022, International Epilepsy Day falls on **February 14, 2022**.
- International Epilepsy Day seeks to raise awareness and educate the general public on the true facts about epilepsy and the urgent need for improved treatment, better care, and greater investment in research.
- The day is organised jointly by the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) and the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) to raise awareness about epilepsy and highlight the kinds of problems faced by victims, their friends and family.
- **Epilepsy** is a **neurological disorder** that makes a person go through sudden and recurrent episodes of **sensory disturbances**.



1.91. INTERNATIONAL CHILDHOOD CANCER DAY 2022 OBSERVED ON FEBRUARY 15.

Why in news?

- Every year, **February 15** is observed as **International Childhood Cancer Day (ICCD)** to raise awareness about the evil that entails this issue and the ways to deal with the same.
- The day is a **global collaborative campaign to raise awareness** about childhood cancer and to express support for children and adolescents with cancer, the survivors and their families.
 - The **most common types of childhood cancers** include **leukemias, brain cancer, lymphomas, solid tumours, such as neuroblastoma, Wilms tumour and bone tumours.**
- The day promotes increased appreciation and deeper understanding of issues and challenges relevant to childhood cancer and impacting children/adolescents with cancer, the survivors, their families and the society as a whole. It also spotlights the need for more equitable and better access to treatment and care for all children with cancer, everywhere.
- This annual event was **created in 2002 by Childhood Cancer International**, a global network of 176 parent organizations, childhood cancer survivor associations, childhood cancer support groups, and cancer societies, in over 93 countries, across 5 continents.



1.92. INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY OBSERVED ON 21 FEBRUARY.

Why in news?

- The **International Mother Language Day (IMLD)** is observed annually on the **21st of February**. The day aims to raise awareness regarding linguistic and cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism.
- The 2022 **theme** is **“Using technology for multilingual learning: Challenges and opportunities”**.
- The UN mentioned in its statement that this year’s theme raises the potential role of technology to advance multilingual education and support the development of quality teaching and learning for all.
- International Mother Language Day was proclaimed by the General Conference of the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** in November 1999. The UN General Assembly welcomed the proclamation of the day in its resolution of 2002.



1.93. WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE OBSERVED ON 20 FEBRUARY 2022.

Why in news?

- **World Day of Social Justice** is celebrated annually all over the world on **20 February**.
- The International Labour Organization unanimously adopted the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization on **10 June 2008**.
- Social justice is an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations.
- World Day of Social Justice **2022 Theme: Achieving Social Justice through Formal Employment.**



1.94. WORLD PANGOLIN DAY 2022 OBSERVED ON 19TH FEBRUARY.

Why in news?

- **World Pangolin Day** is celebrated on the “**Third Saturday of February**” every year.
- In 2022, the annual World Pangolin Day is being celebrated on **19 February 2022**. It marks the **11th** edition of the event.
- The day aims to raise awareness about these unique mammals and speed up conservation efforts. Pangolin numbers are rapidly declining in Asia and Africa.

About Pangolins

- Pangolins are the only mammal to be covered in scales.
- They are the most smuggled mammal in the world because people want their meat and scales.

Pangolins in India

- Out of the eight species of pangolin, the Indian Pangolin (*Manis crassicaudata*) and the Chinese Pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*) are found in India.
- Indian Pangolin is a large anteater covered by 11-13 rows of scales on the back. A terminal scale is also present on the lower side of the tail of the Indian Pangolin, which is absent in the Chinese Pangolin.
- **Habitat**
- **Indian Pangolin** is widely distributed in India, except the arid region, high Himalayas and the North-East. The species is also found in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
- **Chinese Pangolin** is found in the Himalayan foothills in Eastern Nepal, Bhutan, Northern India, North-East Bangladesh and through Southern China.
- **Threats to Pangolins in India:** Hunting and poaching for local consumptive use (e.g. as a protein source and traditional medicine) and international trade for its meat and scales in East and South East Asian countries, particularly China and Vietnam.
- **IUCN Red List**
- Indian Pangolin: Endangered
- Chinese Pangolin: Critically Endangered
- Both these species are listed under **Schedule I, Part I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.



1.95. WORLD THINKING DAY OBSERVED ON 22ND FEBRUARY.

Why in news?

- World Thinking Day (WTD) is annually observed across the globe on 22nd February by the Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in 150 countries across the world to speak up on gender equality and climate change.
- The day is annually celebrated and organised by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS).
- World Thinking Day, celebrated since 1926, is a day of international friendship.
- The **theme** for World Thinking Day 2022 is "Our World, Our Equal Future: The Environment & Gender Equality".
- WTD 2022 **starts a 3-year journey for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts to become environmentally conscious leaders**.
- World Thinking Day theme 2022-2024:
- The World Thinking Day theme from 2022-2024 will be 'Our World, Our Future.'
- Each year will build on the environmental theme and explore the relationship between the environment and other global concerns.
- 2022: Our World, Our Equal Future; The Environment and Gender Equality.

- 2023: Our World, Our Thriving Future; the Environment and Global Poverty.
- 2024: Our World, Our Peaceful Future; the Environment, Peace and Security.

About World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS):

- WAGGGS is the World's largest voluntary movement dedicated to girls and young women.
- WAGGGS was formed at the fifth International Conference, Hungary in 1928.
- It is **headquartered in London**, the United Kingdom.



1.96. RARE DISEASE DAY OBSERVED ON FEBRUARY 28.

Why in news?

- The **Rare Disease Day (RDD)** is observed every year on the last day of February. This year in 2022 it falls on **February 28, 2022**. The day is observed to raise awareness for rare diseases and improve access to treatment and medical representation for individuals with rare diseases and their families.
- Rare Disease Day was first launched by **European Organisation for Rare Diseases (EURORDIS)** and its Council of National Alliances in 2008.
- The Rare Disease Day theme 2022: **“Share Your Colors.”**
- The first Rare Disease Day was coordinated by the **European Organisation for Rare Diseases (EURORDIS)** and held on February 29, 2008 in numerous European nations and in Canada through the Canadian Organization for Rare Disorders.
- The date was chosen because February 29 is a **“Rare day”**.

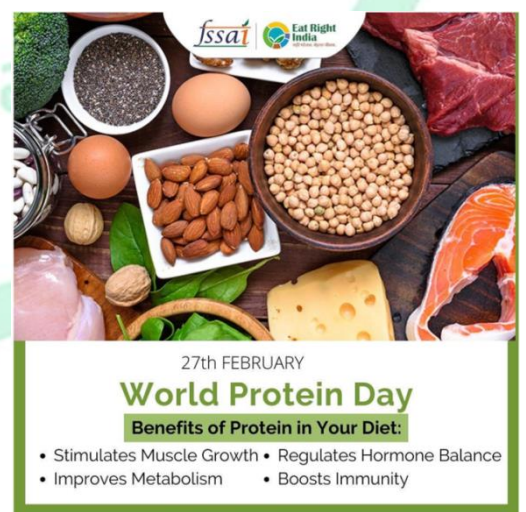


The Rare Disease Day (RDD) is observed every year on the last day of February. This year in 2022 it falls on February 28, 2022

1.97. FEBRUARY 27TH IS CELEBRATED AS THE NATIONAL PROTEIN DAY.

Why in news?

- In India, **February 27th** is celebrated as the **National Protein Day**, to create awareness about protein deficiency and encourage people to include of this macronutrient in their diet. The day urges people to include this crucial macronutrient in their diet.
- The day also helps people to learn more about different sources of plant and animal protein. Protein Day is celebrating its third year in 2022.
- This year's **theme** of India Protein Day is **‘Food Futurism’**.
- The day was launched on **February 27, 2020**, by the ‘Right to Protein’, a national-level public health awareness initiative to educate people about the importance of adequate protein consumption for better nutrition, health, and wellbeing.



PRACTICE MCQS

1. With reference to Economic Survey 2021- 22, which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?

1. GDP is projected to grow by 8- 8.5 percent in real terms in 2022-23.
2. Agriculture and allied sectors expected to grow by 3.9 percent; industry by 11.8 percent and services sector by 8.2 percent in 2021-22.
3. The central theme of Economic Survey is the Agile approach.

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

2. Consider the following statements:

1. World Wetlands Day is celebrated annually on 2 February.
2. India currently has 59 Ramsar sites.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

3. World Interfaith Harmony Week is an annual event observed worldwide during the

- A. The first week of February
- B. The last week of January
- C. The last week of February
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: A

4. The 'International Day of Human Fraternity' is celebrated on 4th February. It was first celebrated in which year?

- A. 2018
- B. 2019
- C. 2020
- D. 2021

ANSWER: D

5. With reference to World Cancer Day, Consider the following statements:

1. World Cancer Day is marked on 4th February every year.
2. World Cancer Day 2022 theme is "Close the Care Gap".

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

6. Consider the following statements regarding Female Genital Mutilation:

1. International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation is observed on 6th February globally.
2. Theme for 2022 Day of Zero Tolerance for Female is "Raising Awareness to End Female Genital Mutilation".

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

7. World Pulses Day is observed every year on-

- A. 7th February
- B. 8th February
- C. 9th February
- D. 10th February

ANSWER: D

8. Safer Internet Day 2022 was observed on 8th February. Its theme was-

- A. Internet for everyone
- B. Together for a better internet
- C. Equity in access
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: B

9. National Deworming Day is observed every year on ?

- A. 8th February
- B. 9th February
- C. 10th February
- D. 11th February

ANSWER: C

10. International Day of Women and Girls in Science is observed every year on-

- A. 8th February
- B. 9th February
- C. 10th February
- D. 11th February

ANSWER: D

11. Consider the following statements with respect to Unani system of medicine:

1. The Unani system of medicine originated in Greece.
2. It was introduced in India by the Arabs and Persians around the eleventh century.
3. World Unani Day is observed on February 11 every year.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only 1 and 2

- B. Only 2 and 3
- C. Only 1 and 3
- D. 1,2 and 3

ANSWER: D

12. World Radio Day is celebrated each year on-

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

ANSWER: A

13. Consider the following statements regarding Sarojini Naidu-

1. She is also known as 'Nightingale of India'.
2. Indian National Women's Day is observed every year on 13 February to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu.
3. She became the president of the Indian National Congress in 1917.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only 1 and 2
- B. Only 1 and 3
- C. Only 2 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: A

14. National Productivity Day is observed every year in India on-

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

ANSWER: B

15. Epilepsy is a neurological disorder. International Epilepsy Day is observed every year on-

- A. Second Monday of February
- B. Second Tuesday of February

- C. Second Wednesday of February
- D. First Thursday of February

ANSWER: A

16. International Childhood Cancer Day is observed every year on-

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

ANSWER: D

17. International Mother Language Day is observed every year on-

- A. 18TH February
- B. 19TH February
- C. 20TH February
- D. 21ST February

ANSWER: D

18. The theme for World Day of Social Justice 2022 celebrated on 20th February, was-

- A. Equality and Equity for all
- B. Achieving Social Justice through Formal Employment
- C. Equal Rights, Equal Governance for All
- D. Empowering the Disadvantaged

ANSWER: B

19. Consider the following statements regarding Pangolins in India-

1. Indian Pangolin and the Chinese Pangolin are found in India.
2. IUCN status of both Indian Pangolin and Chinese Pangolin is 'Critically Endangered'.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

20. World Thinking Day is annually observed across the globe on 22nd February. The theme for 2022 is-

- A. Our World, Our Equal Future; The Environment and Gender Equality.
- B. Our World, Our Thriving Future; The Environment and Global Poverty.
- C. Our World, Our Peaceful Future; The Environment, Peace and Security.
- D. None of the above.

ANSWER: A

21. The Rare Disease Day is observed every year on the last day of February. The theme for Rare Disease Day 2022 is-

- A. Rare is beautiful.
- B. Spread the word.
- C. Awareness is the treatment.
- D. Share Your Colors.

ANSWER: D

22. National Protein Day is celebrated in India every year on-

- A. 25th February
- B. 26th February
- C. 27th February
- D. 28th February

ANSWER: C

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1.98. INDIA SIGNS COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH SQUARE KILOMETRE ARRAY OBSERVATORY (SKAO).

Why in news?

- India recently inked an interim agreement confirming its commitment to work on the mega science project — **Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO)** — proposed to be the world's largest radio telescope.
- The agreement will be valid for one year.
- The signing of the Cooperation Agreement between India, represented by **TIFR – National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA)**, and SKA, was held virtually.
- This move will facilitate India to make its first monetary contribution towards the construction phase of the SKA, which got underway last year. Though **India** is a participating country in the setting up of the world's largest radio telescope, it is **yet to get the central government's approval to become a Member Country**.

About SKAO

- SKAO is working towards the establishment of the world's largest radio telescope.
- SKAO is a new intergovernmental organisation dedicated to radio astronomy and is headquartered in the UK.
- SKA will be built in Australia and South Africa.
- Along with the three host countries, Italy, France, China, Switzerland and Canada are among the countries building SKAO, which is expected to be operational by the end of this decade.

1.99. THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE INSTALLS 'PARAM PRAVEGA' UNDER NATIONAL SUPERCOMPUTING MISSION.

Why in news?

- The Indian Institute of Science (IISc.) has installed and commissioned **Param Pravega**, one of the most powerful supercomputers in India, and the largest in an Indian academic institution, under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).
- It has a **total supercomputing capacity of 3.3 petaflops** (1 petaflop equals a quadrillion, or 10¹⁵ operations per second).
- It has been designed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC).
- A majority of the components used to build this system have been manufactured and assembled within India, along with an indigenous software stack developed by C-DAC, in line with the Make in India initiative.
- The Param Pravega system at IISc. is a mix of heterogeneous nodes, with Intel Xeon Cascade Lake processors for the CPU nodes and NVIDIA Tesla V100 cards on the GPU nodes. The hardware consists of an ATOS BullSequana XH2000 series system, with a comprehensive peak compute power of 3.3 petaflops.

National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).

- NSM is steered jointly by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), and implemented by C-DAC and IISc.

- The Mission has supported the deployment of 10 supercomputer systems so far at IISc., in IITs, IISER Pune, JNCASR, NABI-Mohali and C-DAC, with a cumulative computing power of 17 petaflops.
- About 31,00,000 computational jobs have successfully been carried out by around 2,600 researchers across India till date.

1.100. INDIAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANISATION (ISRO) CONDUCTS BREAKTHROUGH DEMONSTRATION OF HACK-PROOF QUANTUM COMMUNICATION.

Why in news?

- In a major step forward towards satellite-based quantum communication, scientists from ISRO's **Ahmedabad-based Space Applications Centre and Physical Research Laboratory** successfully demonstrated quantum entanglement. Using real-time **Quantum Key Distribution (QKD)**, they **conducted hack-proof communication between two places separated by 300 meters.**

About Quantum Communication

- Quantum communication is one of the **safest ways of connecting two places with high levels of code** and quantum cryptography that cannot be decrypted or broken by an external entity.
- If a hacker tries to crack the message in quantum communication, it changes its form in such a manner that would alert the sender and would cause the message to be altered or deleted.
- The basic properties of quantum computing are **superposition, entanglement, and interference.**
- **Superposition:**
- It is the ability of a quantum system to be in multiple states simultaneously.
- The example of superposition is the flip of a coin, which consistently lands as heads or tails—a very binary concept. However, when that coin is in mid-air, it is both heads and tails and until it lands, heads and tails simultaneously. Before measurement, the electron exists in quantum superposition.
- **Entanglement:**
- It means the two members of a pair (Qubits) exist in a single quantum state. Changing the state of one of the qubits will instantaneously change the state of the other one in a predictable way. This happens even if they are separated by very long distances.
- **Interference:**
- Quantum interference states that elementary particles(Qubits) can not only be in more **than one place at any given time** (through superposition), but that an **individual particle**, such as a photon (light particles) **can cross its own trajectory and interfere with the direction of its path.**
- **China** already has a **satellite dedicated to quantum information** science, **Micius**, and demonstrated quantum communication in a laboratory over a coiled optical fibre up to 404 kilometres long.

WHAT WAS THE EXPERIMENT ?

Isro-SAC held a live videoconference using quantum-key-encrypted signals between two buildings 300 metres apart within their Jodhpur Tekra campus

ISRO'S NEXT LEAP: QUANTUM SATELLITES: Isro will soon demonstrate Satellite Based Quantum Communication (SBQC) between two Indian ground stations

ISRO'S FEAT

➤ The experiment was performed at night to ensure no interference of direct sunlight

➤ Most of mission critical technologies were built by ISRO in-house

➤ Critical to the experiment were NAVIC receiver for time synchronization between the transmitter and receiver modules,

➤ A special gimbal mechanism instead of large-aperture telescopes was used for optical alignment

CHINA'S CHALLENGE

2016 | China launched the world's first quantum communication satellite **QUESS(Mozi/Micius)** and achieved QKD with two ground stations 2,600km apart

2017 | An over 2,000-km-long optical fibre network was completed for QKD between Beijing and Shanghai

2021 | The world's first integrated quantum communication network was built combining over 700 optical fibres on the ground with two ground-to-satellite links. This achieved a QKD over a total distance of 4.6K km



1.101. INDIA BECOMES FIRST COUNTRY TO ADMINISTER COVID-19 DNA VACCINE.

Why in news?

- **India** has become the first country in the world to administer a **DNA vaccine against COVID-19.**
- The **ZyCoV-D** which is the World's **first plasmid DNA vaccine** has been produced by Ahmedabad-based vaccine manufacturer **Zyventus Cadila** and it was administered for the first time in Patna.
- It is the **second India-made vaccine** to get emergency authorization in India after **Bharat Biotech's Covaxin.**

About ZyCov – D Vaccine

- The vaccine is to be administered only persons in the age group of 12 to 19 years.
- The ZyCov – D is administered using a **needle – free applicator**.
- It is a three dose vaccine. It is taken at 28th day and 56th day of the first dose.
- The ZyCov – D showed 66.6% efficiency.
- The ZyCov – D vaccine was **developed on plasmid DNA**. In simple terms, it was developed using a piece of DNA of the weakened or killed virus. When this DNA piece is injected into the body, the human immune systems learn to respond against the virus. The **plasmid is produced using E Coli cells**.



1.102. SWARAJABILITY: INDIA'S FIRST AI-BASED JOB PLATFORM FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.

Why in news?

- **The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT-Hyderabad)** has launched the beta version of 'Swarajability', a job portal powered by artificial intelligence that helps people with disabilities acquire relevant skills and find jobs.
- The platform will **analyse the profiles of the job seekers** and suggest the skills they would require to become eligible. A platform that addressed this challenge would help this vulnerable section of the population.
- The institute has developed the platform in association with **Youth4Jobs, Visual Quest and Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.**
- While IIT-H offers its expertise in AI, Visual Quest India has developed the platform. Youth4Jobs provides skilling services to job seekers.
- The project is **funded by Kotak Mahindra Bank**.
- There are 21 million persons with disabilities in the country. About 70 per cent of them are either unemployed or underemployed.



1.103. NASA DEVELOPED ASTEROID TERRESTRIAL-IMPACT LAST ALERT SYSTEM (ATLAS) ASTEROID TRACKING SYSTEM.

Why in news?

- NASA's asteroid monitoring system has been upgraded so that it can **scan the entire night sky once every 24 hours** for potentially hazardous space rocks.

About ATLAS

- ATLAS is a **state-of-the-art asteroid detection system**.
- It is **operated by University of Hawaii Institute for Astronomy (IfA)** for Planetary Defense Coordination Office (PDCO) of NASA.
- ATLAS has expanded its reach to southern hemisphere by including two additional observatories in Chile and South Africa. **It now comprises of four telescopes**.
- It has two existing northern-hemisphere telescopes on Haleakala and Maunaloa in Hawai'i.
- ATLAS is now capable of searching entire dark sky every 24 hours. Thus, it has become an important asset for NASA's continuous effort for finding, tracking and monitoring **near earth objects (NEOs)**.



1.104. NASA WILL RETIRE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION IN 2031.

Why in news?

- According to **NASA**, the **International Space Station** will continue its operation until **2031** and then crash into an uninhabited area in the Pacific Ocean '**South Pacific Oceanic Uninhabited Area (SPOUA)**' known as **Point Nemo**.
- It will be replaced with three free-flying space stations to continue the work after ISS's retirement.
- NASA also selected Houston-based Axiom Space to provide the ISS's first commercial module.

About International Space Station

- In **Low Earth Orbit**, it is a space station or a habitable artificial satellite (approximately 250 miles above Earth).
- Former US President Ronald Reagan advocated in 1984 the construction of a permanently inhabited spacecraft in cooperation with a few other countries.
- The first piece of the ISS was launched into space on a Russian rocket in 1998.
- **NASA and its international partners finished the space station in 2011.**
- The International Space Station is one of the most ambitious international collaborations in human history.
- **Countries involved:** The ISS program is a collaboration of five space agencies: NASA (the United States), Roscosmos (Russia), ESA (Europe), JAXA (Japan), and CSA (Canada).
- Intergovernmental treaties and agreements govern the ownership and use of the space station.
- The station is divided into two sections: the Russian Orbital Segment (ROS) and the United States Orbital Segment (USOS), both of which are shared by many nations.



1.105. GEOMAGNETIC STORM THAT KILLED STARLINK SATELLITES.

Why in news?

- Starlink has lost dozens of satellites that were caught in a geomagnetic storm a day after they were launched.

Space internet working

- **Broadband from space (BFS)** is a **high-speed wireless communication to bring internet traffic to a consumer's home/office** via a satellite network in space.
- Satellite broadband data speeds can go beyond 300 Mbps, but initial peak speeds likely 100 Mbps.
- **Working-** A satellite network involves geostationary or low-earth orbit (LEO) satellites.
- The heart of a satellite network operation is an earth station gateway located in a particular region that links satellite network to the Net.

About Starlink project

- Starlink is the name of a satellite network developed by the private spaceflight company **SpaceX** to provide low latency, low-cost internet to remote locations.
- SpaceX eventually hopes to have as many as 42,000 satellites in this so-called **megaconstellation**.
- The first 60 Starlink satellites launched in 2019 and were **placed in Low Earth Orbit at an altitude of 340 miles (550 kilometers)**, so that it is easy to get pulled down to Earth by atmospheric drag by avoiding space junk.
- The current version of each Starlink satellite weighs 573 lbs (260 kilograms).

- As of early January 2022, SpaceX had launched more than 1,900 Starlink satellites overall.
- SpaceX plans to refresh the Starlink megaconstellation every five years with newer technology.

Geomagnetic storm

- A geomagnetic storm is a major disturbance in Earth's magnetosphere that occurs when there is a very efficient exchange of energy from the solar wind into the space environment surrounding the planet.
- The disturbance that drives the magnetic storm may be a solar coronal mass ejection (CME) or a co-rotating interaction region (CIR), a high-speed stream of solar wind originating from a coronal hole.
- The frequency of geomagnetic storms increases and decreases with the sunspot cycle.
- In the current event, the passing of the latter part of the storm, with its high density core, possessed speeds higher than what was recorded during the storm's arrival.
- This has caused the loss of 40 satellites in a single solar event that has been described as "unheard of" and "huge".
- There are models capable of predicting a storm's time of arrival and its speed but the storm's structure or orientation cannot be predicted still.



1.106. NASA SELECTS MUSE AND HELIOSWARM PROJECTS.

Why in news?

- NASA selected two science missions namely, **Multi-slit Solar Explorer (MUSE)** and **HelioSwarm**, for improving our understanding on dynamics of the Sun, constantly changing space environment and Sun-Earth connection.
- Both the mission will provide deeper insights into universe as well as offer critical information, for protecting astronauts, satellites, and communications signals like GPS.
- Missions will provide new and deeper insight into solar atmosphere and space.
- They further extend the science of other heliophysics missions as well as provide a unique perspective and novel approach for understanding mysteries of star.



About MUSE Mission

- The MUSE Mission will help the scientists in understanding driving forces of Sun's corona heating. It will also help in understanding the eruptions in outermost region which are at the foundation of space
- It will offer deeper insight on physics of solar atmosphere by using an instrument called multi-slit spectrometer, which will observe extreme ultraviolet radiation of Sun and obtain highest resolution images of Solar transition region and the corona.
- Mission will further provide complementary observations from heliophysics research like ground-based observatories and Extreme Ultra-Violet Spectroscopic Telescope.

The HelioSwarm mission

- This mission is a constellation or "swarm" of nine spacecraft. It will be launched to capture first multiscale in-space measurements of fluctuations in magnetic field as well as motions of solar wind, called as solar wind turbulence.
- The outermost atmospheric layer of Sun called the heliosphere encloses an enormous region of solar system. Solarwinds spread through heliosphere. Their interactions with planetary magnetospheres and

disruptions like coronal mass ejections affect the turbulence. This mission will provide a unique ability to investigate turbulence. Mission's budget is USD 250 million.

1.107. NARCOTICS CONTROL BUREAU ORGANISES "DARKATHON-2022".

Why in news?

- The **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)** is organising a "**Darkathon-2022**" to find solutions to counter drug trafficking through the **darknet**.
- The initiative aims at involving students, youth and technical experts to find effective solutions to unravel the anonymity of darknet markets.
- The agency recently smashed three groups of drug peddlers that were operating on the network that is accessed through encryption software which enables anonymity of users.

About Darknet

- **Internet consists of three layers:**
 - The first layer is **public**, consisting of sites that one uses frequently such as Facebook, Twitter, Amazon and LinkedIn. This layer makes up only 4% of the entire internet.
 - The second layer, **the deep web**, is a network where data is stored in inaccessible databases (i.e. cannot be accessed through traditional search engines like Google). It is used to provide access to a specific group of people.
The data is generally sensitive and private (government private data, bank data, cloud data etc), so kept out of reach.
 - The third layer is the **darknet** which is also known as a part of the 'Deep Web'. It is a network built over the **internet which is encrypted**.
- It is basically a layer of the Internet accessible **only by using special software like Tor (The Onion Router)**, or I2P, which stands for **Invisible Internet Project**.
- Anything present on the dark web will not be pulled up in internet searches, thereby offering a **high degree of anonymity**.

DARKATHON-2022

SOLUTIONS TO COUNTER DRUG TRAFFICKING

1.108. PROMOTION OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AND SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE (PURSE).

Why in news?

- Through infrastructure support granted under PURSE scheme, Indian Scientists have developed a first-of-its-kind tool for understanding the process of long-term memory consolidation in the brain.

About PURSE

- It is flagship Infrastructure program of Department of Science and Technology, commenced in 2009 exclusively for the University sector.
- The main objective of the scheme is to strengthen the research capacity of performing Indian Universities and provide support for nurturing the research ecosystem and strengthening the R&D base of the Universities in the country.
- The duration of support for PURSE Project will be for a period of **4 years**.
- Pattern of funding is in the ratio 75% by DST and 25% by host institution.

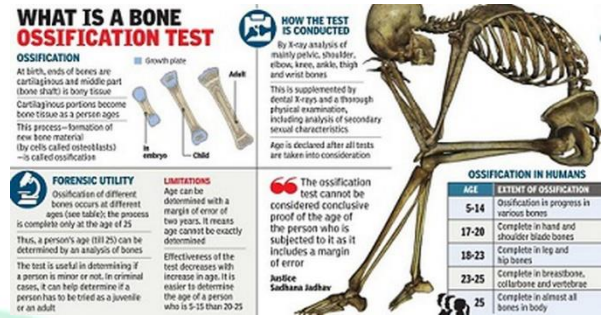


PROMOTION OF UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH AND SCIENTIFIC
EXCELLENCE

1.109. BONE OSSIFICATION TEST.

Why in news?

- Recently, Supreme Court has said the test can't be said to be an infallible and cannot be the sole basis to decide the age of an accused who claims to be a juvenile.
- It is an age determination test of a person on the basis of assessment of his or her bony framework done through X-Rays/ CT-scans.
- The test is required to determine the age in order to fix the criminal liabilities based on which the law treats the persons differently based on their age.
- It is the primary **test for age determination**.
- Human bones are remodelled and new layer of bone material is laid by a process called **ossification** (or osteogenesis). Based upon this phenomenon, ossification test is carried out.
 - This test only tells the 'estimated' age of a person and not the exact age.
 - The test is not useful when a person has crossed 25-27 years of age. This is primarily because **nearly all the bones are completely ossified and the skeletal growth ceases by the age of 25 years**.



1.110. PLUTO'S ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE.

Why in news?

- A team of scientists have **derived accurate value of Pluto's atmospheric pressure** which is **80,000 times less than the atmospheric pressure at mean sea level on Earth**.
- It was calculated from data obtained by observation of stellar occultation by Pluto.
 - An occultation happens when a celestial object gets hidden from the view of the observer due to another celestial object passing in between them.
- Data was calculated using 3.6-m Devasthal optical telescope (DOT) (India's largest optical telescope) and 1.3-m Devasthal Fast Optical Telescope (DFOT) telescopes located at Devasthal, Nainital.



1.111. FIRST WOMAN REPORTED CURED OF HIV AFTER STEM CELL TRANSPLANT.

Why in news?

- A US patient became the first woman and the third person to date to be cured of HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) after receiving a SCT from a donor who was naturally resistant to virus that causes AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).
- HIV is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. If HIV is not treated, it can lead to AIDS.



About Stem Cell Transplant

- Stem Cell Transplant SCT, also called bone marrow transplant, is a procedure in which a patient receives healthy stem cells to replace damaged stem cells.
- Types of SCT**
 - Autologous transplantation** uses the patient's own stem cells. These cells are removed, treated and returned to his or her own body after a conditioning regimen.
 - Allogeneic transplantation** where stem cells come from another person, called a donor.
- Stem cells** are special human cells that are able to develop into many different cell types such as muscle cells, blood cells, and brain cells.
 - They are **unspecialized**, so they cannot do specific functions in the body.
 - Three main types of stem cells:
 - Embryonic stem cells** (supply new cells for an embryo as it grows and develops into a baby);

- **Adult stem cells** (supply new cells as an organism grows and to replace cells that get damaged);
- **Induced pluripotent stem cells**, or IPS cells' (stem cells that scientists make in laboratory).

1.112. TAMIL NADU SAYS NO TO INDIAN NEUTRINO OBSERVATORY (INO) PROJECT IN THENI.

Why in news?

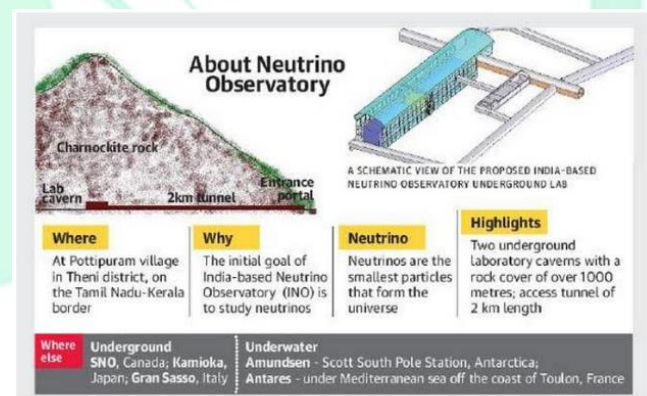
- Tamil Nadu government has filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court stating that it would not permit the proposed INO at Bodi West Hills in Theni district.
- Affidavit raised following concerns over INO Project
 - Tunnelling work would create the problems like construction waste material, rock bust and roof collapse movement in the eco-fragile area.
 - Biodiversity impact as the region harbours many endemic species.
 - The area is a significant watershed and catchment zone for the rivers **Sambhal** and Kottakudi, and supports livelihoods in five districts of Tamil Nadu.
 - The project area links **Periyar Tiger Reserve** in Kerala with **Srivilliputhur Meghamalai Tiger Reserve**. Quarrying and construction activities will upset wild animals which use the corridor for seasonal migration.

About Indian Neutrino Observatory (INO)

- It is a multi-institutional effort aimed at building a **world-class underground laboratory** and an **Iron Calorimeter (ICAL)** detector for studying neutrinos.
- It aims to assess the properties of neutrino particles and to make precision measurements of the parameters related to neutrino oscillations.
- It is **jointly funded** by the **Dept. of Atomic Energy** and the **Dept. of Science and Technology**.

About Neutrinos

- Neutrinos are tiny neutral, elementary particles which interact with matter via the weak force. The weakness of this force gives neutrino the property that matter is almost transparent to them.
- The Sun and all other stars, produce neutrinos copiously due to nuclear fusion and decay processes within their core.
- Neutrinos provide a **tool to study structure of nucleons** (protons and neutrons), to learn how matter evolved from simple particles into more complex composites of particles.



1.113. JPMORGAN BECOMES FIRST BANK TO ENTER THE METAVERSE.

Why in news?

- **JPMorgan** has become the world's first bank to set up shop in the metaverse. The largest bank in the US has opened a lounge in the blockchain-based world **Decentraland**.
- Users can create their virtual avatars, build virtual spaces and roam in the lounge christened '**Onyx Lounge**' after its suit of Ethereum-based services. The lounge also features a digital image of the bank's CEO **Jamie Dimon**.

About Metaverse

- Metaverse is a virtual universe where users can do multiple activities like socialising, shopping or even attending events through their avatar.



- Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) headsets are becoming more pocket-friendly, and both technologies have together contributed to a significantly enhanced user experience.

1.114. HYDROGEN DISTRIBUTION MAPPED USING GIANT METRE RADIOWAVE TELESCOPE (GMRT).

Why in news?

- Astronomers at National Centre of Radio Astrophysics (NCRA), Pune used GMRT to map distribution of atomic hydrogen gas from the galaxy hosting a fast radio burst (FRB) for the first time.
- **FRBs** are **extremely bright radio pulses from distant galaxies** that last for only a few milliseconds.



About Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT)

- GMRT is an instrument for studying astrophysical phenomena, ranging from nearby Solar system to the edge of observable Universe, at low radio frequencies (40 to 1450 MHz).
- It is **operated by** National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (**NCRA**), which is part of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research.
- It is located near **Pune**.

1.115. INDIGENOUSLY DEVELOPED MANNED UNDERWATER SUBMERSIBLE VEHICLE, MATSYA 6000 TO BE READY BY 2024.

Why in news?

- The indigenously developed manned underwater submersible vehicle, Matsya 6000 that is capable of taking 3 humans to a depth of 6,000 metres (m), will be ready as for its launch in 2024 for the Samudrayaan Mission.



About Matsya 6000

- MATSYA 6000 is an **undersea submersible vehicle designed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and developed by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) under the aegis of Deep Ocean Mission (DOM).
- The navigation and electronics aspects of the vehicle were designed by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), MoES. [Click here to know more](#)
- **Features:**
- Matsya 6000 is of 2.1 m in diameter with Titanium Alloy Personnel Sphere of 80 mm thickness that uses a battery powered propulsion which can reach a maximum depth of 6,000 metres.
- It has the operational capacity of 12 hours and during emergencies it can operate up to 96 hours for deep ocean exploration of non-living resources such as polymetallic manganese nodules, gas hydrates, hydro-thermal sulphides and cobalt crusts, located at a depth between 1,000 m and 5,500 m.
- It will also study cobalt crust, hydrothermal sulphides, hydrates and polymetallic manganese nodules in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

About Samudrayaan Mission:

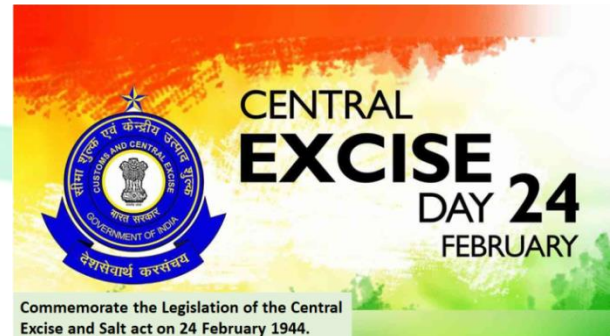
- In October 2021, Union Minister of State, Science & Technology and Earth Sciences Jitendra Singh launched India's first and unique manned Ocean Mission Samudrayaan that aims to send humans for deep sea exploration.

- By the launch of Samudrayaan mission, India will join the elite club of countries that includes United States, Russia, France, Japan, and China.

1.116. CENTRAL EXCISE DAY CELEBRATED ON 24 FEBRUARY.

Why in news?

- **Central Excise Day of India** is celebrated every year on **February 24**. The day is being celebrated to honour the service of the **Central Board of Excise and Custom (CBEC)** to the country. The day is celebrated to honour the officers associated with CBEC and their services. The day is celebrated to commemorate the legislation of the **Central Excise and Salt act on 24 February 1944**.



About Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs:

- The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs is formerly known as the Central Board of Excise and Customs. The Customs and Central Excise/ Central GST department was established to administer customs laws.
- Now the department is **under the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance** which deals with the policy formulation concerning levy and collection of Customs, Central Excise duties, Central Goods & Services Tax and IGST, prevention of smuggling and administration of matters relating to Customs, Central Excise, Central Goods & Services Tax, IGST and Narcotics to the extent under CBIC's purview.

PRACTICE MCQS

1. Square Kilometre Array Observatory is an intergovernmental organisation dedicated to radio astronomy. It is headquartered in-

- A. UK
- B. Australia
- C. South Africa
- D. USA

ANSWER: A

2. Consider the following statements:

- 1. Param Pravega is the largest installed supercomputer in an Indian academic institution.
- 2. It has a total supercomputing capacity of 13.3 petaflops.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

3. Which country has a dedicated satellite for quantum communications called Micius?

- A. USA
- B. United Kingdom
- C. Germany
- D. China

ANSWER: D

4. Consider the following statements regarding Covid-19 DNA vaccine-

- 1. India has become the second country in the world to administer a DNA vaccine against COVID-19 called ZyCov-D.
- 2. The ZyCov – D vaccine is developed on plasmid DNA.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

5. Swarajability, seen recently in news is a/an -

- A. Web portal for promotion of Make in India.
- B. Information portal for micro small and medium enterprises.
- C. Artificial intelligence based job platform for persons with disabilities.
- D. None of the above.

ANSWER: C

6. NASA's ATLAS mission is associated with-

- A. Study of Ganymede, Jupiter's moon.
- B. Observation of moon's surface for water and nitrogen.
- C. Detection of asteroid and other near earth objects.
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: C

7. Consider the following statements regarding International Space Station (ISS):

- 1. It is a habitable artificial satellite orbiting the planet in a low earth orbit.
- 2. It is a joint project of NASA (the United States) and Roscosmos (Russia) only.
- 3. According to NASA, the International Space Station will retire from its operations in 2031.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only 1 and 2
- B. Only 2 and 3

- C. Only 1 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: C

8. Consider the following statements regarding Starlink project-

1. It is a satellite network developed by SpaceX to provide low latency, low-cost internet to remote locations.
2. Satellites are placed in high earth orbit to maximize the coverage area.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

9. NASA's science missions, called MUSE and HelioSwarm, have been selected recently -

- A. For study of Sun.
- B. For providing satellite internet to far off areas
- C. For observing near earth objects (NEOs)
- D. For studying Mercury's atmosphere

ANSWER: A

10. Darkathon-2022, an initiative to counter drug trafficking through the darknet was recently organised by-

- A. Interpol
- B. Narcotics Control Bureau
- C. Central Bureau of Investigation
- D. National Investigation Agency

ANSWER: B

11. Consider the following statements regarding Promotion of University Research and Scientific Excellence (PURSE) scheme:

1. It is flagship Infrastructure program exclusively for the University sector.

2. The duration of support for PURSE Project will be for a period of 6 years.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

12. Consider the following statements regarding Bone Ossification Test-

1. It is the primary test for age determination.
2. This tests gives out the exact age of the person.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

13. Recently a team of scientist calculated accurate value of Pluto's atmospheric pressure using India's largest optical telescope. This telescope is located in-

- A. Hanle, Ladakh
- B. Devasthal, Uttarakhnd
- C. Yelagiri, Tamil Nadu
- D. Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu

ANSWER: B

14. Consider the following statements regarding types of Stem Cell Transplant:

1. Autologous transplantation uses the patient's own stem cells.
2. Allogeneic transplantation is where stem cells come from another person, called a donor.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2

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

ANSWER: C

15. Consider the following statements regarding Indian Neutrino Observatory-

1. It is proposed to come up in Tamil Nadu.
2. It aims to build a world-class underground laboratory and an Iron Calorimeter (ICAL) detector for studying neutrinos.
3. It is jointly funded by the Dept. of Atomic Energy and the Dept. of Science and Technology.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only 1 and 2
- B. Only 1 and 3
- C. Only 2 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: D

16. Which bank has become World's first bank to enter the virtual universe of Metaverse?

- A. Wells Fargo
- B. Morgan Stanley
- C. JPMorgan
- D. BNP Paribas

ANSWER: C

17. The Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope is located in which state/UT of India?

- A. Ladakh
- B. Uttarakhand
- C. Maharashtra
- D. Tamil Nadu

ANSWER: C

18. Consider the following statements about Matsya 6000-

1. It is a supercomputer recently installed in IIT Madras.
2. It has been developed under National Supercomputing Mission.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: D

19. Central Excise Day is celebrated every year on-

- A. 22nd February
- B. 23rd February
- C. 24th February
- D. 25th February

ANSWER: C

HEALTH

1.117. WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION LAUNCHES QUIT TOBACCO APP.

Why in news?

- World Health Organization (WHO) South-East Asia Region (SEAR) has launched a 'Quit Tobacco App'.
- This application helps people to give up the use of tobacco in all forms, including smokeless and other newer products.
- The App was launched by Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director, WHO-SEAR, during WHO's year-long 'Commit to quit' campaign, which is the latest tobacco control initiative by the WHO South-East Asia Region.
- The app, the first such by WHO, and the first that targets all forms of tobacco, helps users to identify the triggers, set their targets, manage cravings, and stay focused to quit tobacco.
- Tobacco is the **world's leading cause of preventable death and kills nearly 8 million persons every year**. It claims 1.6 million lives in the WHO South-East Asia Region which is amongst the largest producers and consumers of tobacco products.



1.118. GUDUCHI IS SAFE AS PER MINISTRY OF AYUSH.

Why in news?

- The Ministry of Ayush HAS reiterated that Giloy/Gudduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*) is safe and as per available data, Guduchi does not produce any toxic effect.
 - Certain sections of the media have earlier falsely linked again Giloy/Guduchi to liver damage.
- The medicinal herb has to be used in an appropriate dose as prescribed by a qualified physician to get medicinal effects.
- Giloy/Guduchi is used as **anti-oxidant, anti-hyperglycemic, anti-hyperlipidemic, hepatoprotective, cardiovascular protective, neuroprotective, osteoprotective, radioprotective, anti-anxiety, adaptogenic, analgesic, anti-inflammatory, anti-pyretic, anti-diarrheal, anti-ulcer, anti-microbial, and anti-cancer** medicinal herb.
- It is used as a major component of therapeutics for ameliorating metabolic, endocrinal, and several other ailments, aiding in the betterment of human life expectancy.



1.119. GOOGLE DOODLE PAYS TRIBUTE TO MICHIAKI TAKAHASHI- WORLD'S FIRST CHICKENPOX VACCINE DEVELOPER.

Why in news?

- **Michiaki Takahashi Google Doodle:** Google Doodle commemorated the **94th birth anniversary of Japanese virologist Dr Michiaki Takahashi** on February 17, 2022. Takahashi developed the world's first vaccine against chickenpox.

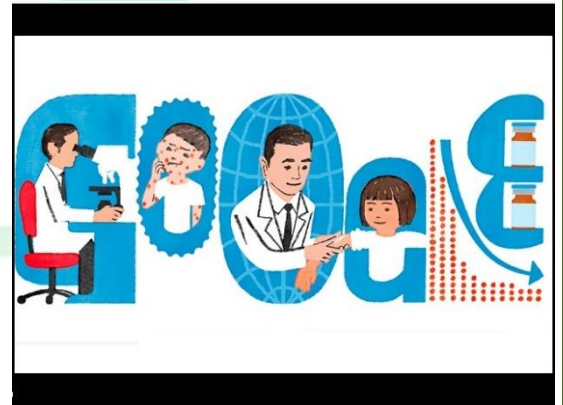
About Michiaki Takahashi

- Michiaki Takahashi was born on February 17, 1928 in Osaka, Japan.

- He got his medical degree from Osaka University. He later got the opportunity to work as a researcher at the Research Institute for Microbial Disease at Osaka University in 1959. He studied polio viruses and measles at the institute.
- He developed the world's first chickenpox vaccine named "Oka" in early 1974. The lifesaving vaccine has been utilized in over 80 countries over the years and has been administered to millions of children around the world.
- Takahashi was appointed as the director of the Microbial Disease Study Group at Osaka University in 1994.

World's first Chickenpox vaccine

- Michiaki Takahashi cultured live but weakened chickenpox viruses in animal and human tissue to make the world's first chickenpox vaccine. Within five years of development, the vaccine was ready for clinical trials.
- Takahashi developed the world's first vaccine targeting the varicella virus that causes chickenpox. The vaccine was subjected to rigorous research and was proven to be extremely effective.
- The Research Foundation for Microbial Diseases began the rollout of the vaccine in 1986 as the only varicella vaccine approved by the World Health Organization.
- The vaccine helped prevent millions of chickenpox cases every year.



1.120. H5N1 BIRD FLU OUTBREAK REPORTED IN PATNA & MAHARASHTRA.

Why in news?

- According to World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), India reported an outbreak of highly contagious H5N1 bird flu virus on a poultry research farm in state of Bihar and at a small farm in Thane, Maharashtra.

About H5N1

- Influenza A virus subtype H5N1 is a subtype of "influenza A virus". It can cause illness in humans and many other animal species.
- A bird-adapted strain of H5N1 is the highly pathogenic causative agent of H5N1 flu, commonly called as **avian influenza** (or bird flu).
- It is enzootic in many bird populations, particularly in Southeast Asia.
- One strain of HPAI A(H5N1) is spreading across the globe, after first appearing in Asia. It is epizootic and panzootic that kills millions of birds.
 - An **epizootic** is defined as an outbreak of disease in which there is an unusually large number of cases, whereas an **enzootic** refers to a low level of disease that is constantly present in a population.
 - A **panzootic** is an epizootic that spreads across a large region, or even worldwide.



1.121. FIRST WILD POLIOVIRUS (WPV) CASE IN FIVE YEARS RECORDED IN MALAWI.

Why in news?

- Malawi has recorded Africa's first wild poliovirus (WPV) case in five years.

About Polio:

- Poliomyelitis (polio) is a **highly infectious viral disease** that largely affects children under 5 years of age.

- It may **affect the spinal cord causing muscle weakness** and paralysis.
- Transmitted by **person-to-person** spread mainly through the faecal-oral route or, less frequently, by a contaminated water or food).
- **Wild poliovirus (WPV)** is the most commonly known form of the poliovirus.
- There are 3 strains of WPV- type 1, type 2 and type 3.
 - > type 2 was eradicated in 1999
 - > no case of type 3 has been found since 2012.
 - > As at 2020, type 1 affects two countries: Pakistan and Afghanistan.



CivilsTap HImachal

PRACTICE MCQS

1. 'Quit Tobacco App' has been recently launched by which organisation?

- A. World Health Organisation
- B. Doctors without borders
- C. NITI Aayog
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: A

2. Which of the following are the potential benefits of Giloy/Gudduchi herb?

- A. Anti-oxidant
- B. Anti-ulcer
- C. Neuroprotective
- D. All of the above

ANSWER: D

3. The world's first Chickenpox Vaccine was developed by-

- A. Luc Montagnier
- B. Edward Jenner
- C. Alexander Fleming
- D. Michiaki Takahashi

ANSWER: D

4. Consider the following statements regarding animal diseases-

- 1. An epizootic is defined as an outbreak of disease in which there is an unusually large number of cases.
- 2. An enzootic refers to a low level of disease that is constantly present in a population.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

5. Africa's first wild poliovirus (WPV) case in five years was recently recorded in-

- A. Gabon
- B. Malawi
- C. Sierra Leone
- D. Kenya

ANSWER: B

PERSON IN NEWS

1.122. LT GEN MANOJ PANDE TO TAKE CHARGE AS VICE CHIEF OF ARMY.

Why in News

- Lt Gen Manoj Pande, Eastern Army Commander, is moving to the Army Headquarters as the new Vice Chief of the Army.
- An alumnus of National Defence Academy, Lt Gen Manoj Pande was commissioned in December 1982 to the Corps of Engineers (The Bombay Sappers).
- The General Officer commanded an Engineer Regiment during Operation Parakram in the sensitive Pallanwala Sector along the Line of Control of Jammu and Kashmir.
- He is a graduate of Staff College, Camberley (United Kingdom) and attended the Higher Command (HC) and National Defence College (NDC) Courses.

Other Appointments

- Lt. Gen. RP Kalita has been appointed as the new Eastern Army Command chief in Kolkata.
- Lt. Gen. Upendra Dwivedi will take over as the new Northern Army Commander.

Chief of Indian Armed Forces

- **Chief of Indian Army** - General Manoj Mukund Naravane
- **Chief of the Air Staff** - Chief Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari
- **Chief of the Naval Staff** - Admiral R. Hari Kumar
- **Director General of the Indian Coast Guard** - Virender Singh Pathania



1.123. XIOMARA CASTRO SWORN AS HONDURAS' FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT.

Why in News

- Xiomara Castro has been sworn in as Honduras' first female president, amid a political crisis that threatens her plans for the impoverished nation.
- The 62-year-old Castro replaces President Juan Orlando Hernández, as 56th President of Honduras.



About Honduras

- Honduras Capital: Tegucigalpa
- Currency: Honduran lempira
- Continent: North America



1.124. ANTONIO COSTA RE-ELECTED AS PRIME MINISTER OF PORTUGAL.

Why in news?

- The Prime Minister of Portugal, **Antonio Costa** has been re-elected after his centre-left Socialist Party secured a landslide victory in the **2022 Portuguese legislative election**.

About Portugal

- **Portugal**, is a country whose mainland is located on the **Iberian Peninsula**, in Southwestern Europe, and whose territory also includes the **Atlantic archipelagos of the Azores and Madeira**. It features the westernmost point in mainland Europe, and its Iberian portion is bordered to the west and south by the Atlantic Ocean and to the north and east by **Spain, the sole country to have a land border with Portugal**. Its two archipelagos form two autonomous regions with their own regional governments.
- The official and national **language is Portuguese**.
- **Lisbon** is the **capital** and largest city.
- **Portugal President**: Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa;
- Portugal Currency: **Euro**.



1.125. GOVT. APPOINTS FORMER CIVIL SERVANT RAVI MITTAL AS IBBI CHAIRPERSON.

Why in news?

- The government has appointed former civil servant Ravi Mittal as the chairperson of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI).
- Mittal would head the IBBI for five years or till he is 65 years of age, whichever is early.
- Mittal, has served as Secretary of Information and Broadcasting (I&B), among other positions.
- Mittal will be the second full-time Chairperson of the IBBI, a key institution in implementing the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), which came into force in 2016.

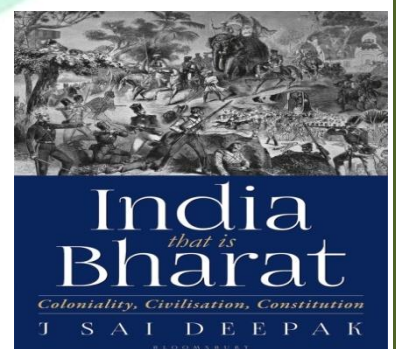
About IBBI

- The IBBI is a **regulatory institution set up by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs** for enforcing the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.
- The **board regulates corporate insolvency and resolution processes**.
- It also regulates **insolvency professionals and information utilities**.

1.126. 'INDIA, THAT IS BHARAT: COLONIALITY, CIVILISATION, CONSTITUTION' AUTHORED BY J SAI DEEPAK.

Why in news?

- A Trilogy book series titled, 'India, That is Bharat: Coloniality, Civilisation, Constitution' is authored by J Sai Deepak and published by Bloomsbury India.
- The 1st part was released on 15th August 2021, is set to launch the 2nd part in June 2022. Whereas, the 3rd and last part will be released in June 2023.
- It is the first part of a comprehensive trilogy, which examines the impact of **European 'colonial consciousness' (or 'coloniality'), on Bharat (India)**. It highlights how colonialism changes the socio-religious culture, history,



education, language and racial patterns in India.

- India, That Is Bharat, the first book of a comprehensive trilogy, explores the influence of European 'colonial consciousness' (or 'coloniality'), in particular its religious and racial roots, on Bharat as the successor state to the Indic civilisation and the origins of the Indian Constitution.

1.127. SENIOR SCIENTIST GA SRINIVASA MURTHY APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF DEFENCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION.

Why in news?

- Senior scientist **GA Srinivasa Murthy** has been appointed director of **Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL)** of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in Hyderabad.
- He joined DRDL in the year 1987 and made significant contributions in the area of structural dynamics, ground resonance testing, electrical integration and checkout for various projects of the missile complex.

About DRDL

- DRDL is responsible for the design and development of state-of-the-art Missile Systems and technologies required for the deterrence and defence of the country. Systems and Technologies developed by DRDL are deployed on underwater, sea, land as well as air based platforms.
- DRDL is working on several technologies required for the Missiles and Strategic Systems including; Aerodynamics and Airframe Design, Computational Fluid Dynamics, Solid, Liquid, Ramjet and Scramjet Propulsion, Precision Fabrication, Systems Analysis, as well as the Command and Control systems for missile based weapon systems.



1.128. LEGENDARY SINGER LATA MANGESHKAR PASSED AWAY.

Why in news?

- Legendary singer **Lata Mangeshkar** has passed away at the age of 92 after suffering a multi-organ failure. The Bharat Ratna awardee was admitted to the hospital after being diagnosed with pneumonia and tested positive for the coronavirus disease in January. She is survived by her 3 sisters – **Usha Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Meena Khadikar** and **Brother Hridaynath Mangeshkar**.

About the Lata Mangeshkar career:

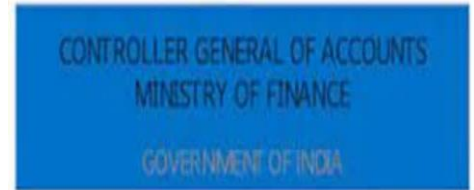
- She began her career as a singer back in **1942** and never looked back. She recorded innumerable songs in over 36 Indian and foreign languages.
- She gave us musical gems such as Aye Mere Watan Ke Logo, Lag Jaa Gale, Yeh Kahan Aage Hain Hum and Pyar Kiya To Darna Kya, among others.
- Having led an eventful and rich life of several milestones, Lata Mangeshkar was conferred with the **Dadasaheb Phalke Award** in **1990**. For her contribution to Indian music, she also was bestowed with **Padma Bhushan** in **1969** and **Bharat Ratna** in **2001**.



1.129. SONALI SINGH NAMED AS CONTROLLER GENERAL OF ACCOUNTS (CGA) ON ADDITIONAL CHARGE.

Why in news?

- The Government of India has appointed **Sonali Singh** to hold the additional charge of the **Controller General of Accounts (CGA)**, under the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, with effect from February 01, 2022.
- She has been appointed in place of **Dipak Dash**, who superannuated on January 31, 2022.
- **Sonali Singh** is a 1987 batch officer of the **Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS)**.
- She is serving as the Additional Controller General of Accounts since October 2019.
- **Prior to that, she had also served as Additional Secretary at Central Vigilance Commission.**



About Controller General of Accounts (CGA)

- The Controller General of Accounts (CGA), in the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, is the Principal Accounting Adviser to Government of India and is responsible for establishing and maintaining a technically sound Management Accounting System. The Office of CGA prepares monthly and annual analysis of expenditure, revenues, borrowings and various fiscal indicators for the Union Government.

1.130. PROFESSOR DINESH PRASAD SAKLANI NAMED AS NEW NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING DIRECTOR (NCERT).

Why in news?

- Professor **Dinesh Prasad Saklani** has been appointed as the new **Director of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)**.
- He has replaced **Hrushikesh Senapaty**, who finished his term a year ago.
- The new director has been appointed for a period of five years with effect from the date of assumption of charge of the post, or till he attains the age of 65 years, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.



Professor Dinesh Prasad Saklani:

- Professor Saklani has been awarded with Distinguished Academy Award by **Punjab Kala and Sahitya Academy, Jalandhar for Historical writing in 2005.**
- The new director is a member of the Academic Council of Uttarakhand Open University, Haldwani.

About NCERT

- The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is an autonomous organisation set up in 1961 by the Government of India to assist and advise the Central and State Governments on policies and programmes for qualitative improvement in school education.
- The **major objectives of NCERT and its constituent units** are to:
 - Promote and coordinate research in areas related to school education;
 - Prepare and publish model textbooks, supplementary material, newsletters, journals and develops educational kits, multimedia digital materials, etc. organise pre-service and in-service training of teachers;
 - Develop and disseminate innovative educational techniques and practices;
 - Collaborate and network with state educational departments, universities, NGOs and other educational institutions;
 - Act as a clearing house for ideas and information in matters related to school education;
 - Act as a nodal agency for achieving the goals of Universalisation of Elementary Education.

1.131. DR. UNNIKRISHNAN NAIR NAMED AS NEW DIRECTOR OF VIKRAM SARABHAI SPACE CENTRE.

Why in news?

- Scientist and launch vehicle specialist, **Dr S Unnikrishnan Nair** took charge as the director of **Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC)**.
- Nair, who started his career in VSSC Trivandrum in 1985, has made significant contributions in launch vehicle mechanisms, acoustic protection systems and payload fairing areas during his tenure.



About Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre

- Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) is the lead Centre of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) under the Department of Space (DOS), Government of India.
- VSSC pioneers in **rocket research** and **launch vehicle projects** of ISRO.
- The Centre also pursues **research and development activities** in associated areas like **propellants, solid propulsion technology, aerodynamics, aero structural and aero thermal fields, avionics, polymers and composites, guidance, control & simulation, computer and information, mechanical engineering, aerospace mechanisms, vehicle integration and testing, space ordnance, chemicals and materials.**
- It was set up in 1962 and is located in **Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.**

1.132. BOOK TITLED 'GOLDEN BOY NEERAJ CHOPRA' BY NAVDEEP SINGH GILL RELEASED.

Why in news?

- A short biography of Indian athlete **Neeraj Chopra** has titled '**Golden Boy Neeraj Chopra**' authored by sports author **Navdeep Singh Gill** has been released.
- Neeraj Chopra won a Gold medal in **Javelin Throw** at the **2020 Tokyo Olympics**.
- The biography on Tokyo Olympics-2021 gold medalist Neeraj Chopra was released by the chairperson of Punjab Kala Parishad Surjit Patar and president of Punjabi Sahit Akademi Lakhwinder Singh Johal, amid the presence of the author and his family members.
- The 72 page book covers the life history and achievements of Neeraj Chopra right from his childhood to the Tokyo Olympics.
- The book very aptly covers his sporting techniques, numerous awards and contemporaries in different chapters with coloured photos in each chapter.



1.133. SANJAY MALHOTRA NAMED AS SECRETARY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES IN FINANCE MINISTRY.

Why in news?

- **Sanjay Malhotra** has been named as **Secretary in the Department of Financial Services in the Ministry of Finance.**
- He has succeeded **Debashish Panda**, who completed his term as DFS Secretary on January 31, 2022.
- He is a 1990 batch IAS officer of the Rajasthan cadre.
- Before this, Sanjay Malhotra was Chairman and Managing



Director of REC Ltd.

1.134. 'MAHABHARAT'S BHEEM' ACTOR PRAVEEN KUMAR SOBTI PASSES AWAY.

Why in news?

- Actor-athlete **Praveen Kumar Sobti**, best known for playing **Bheem** in the TV series "Mahabharat" and for winning an Asian Games gold medal, passed away.
- He represented the country across various athletic events in hammer and discus throw and even won four medals at the Asian Games, including two gold medals in 1966 and 1970.
- **Praveen Kumar Sobti** also won a silver medal in Hammer Throw during the 1966 Commonwealth Games.
- The athlete gained popularity after he began his acting career and was featured as Bheem in BR Chopra's classic "Mahabharat" in 1988.



1.135. S. KISHORE APPOINTED AS CHAIRMAN OF STAFF SELECTION COMMISSION (SSC).

Why in news?

- Senior bureaucrat **S. Kishore** has been appointed as Chairman, **Staff Selection Commission (SSC)**.
- According to an order issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Kishore to the post in the rank and pay of Secretary to Government of India by temporarily upgrading the post and keeping the Recruitment Rules of the post in abeyance.
- Presently, he is serving as **Special Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.



1.136. MUNISHWAR NATH BHANDARI HAS BEEN APPOINTED AS NEW CHIEF JUSTICE OF MADRAS HIGH COURT.

Why in news?

- Justice **Munishwar Nath Bhandari** has been appointed Chief Justice of the **Madras High Court**.
- Justice Bhandari had taken over as the Acting Chief Justice of the Madras High Court after the transfer of Justice **Sanjib Banerjee** to the Meghalaya High Court in November last year.
- The Law Ministry also notified the appointment of a total of 13 advocates and three judicial officers as judges of **Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh High Courts**.

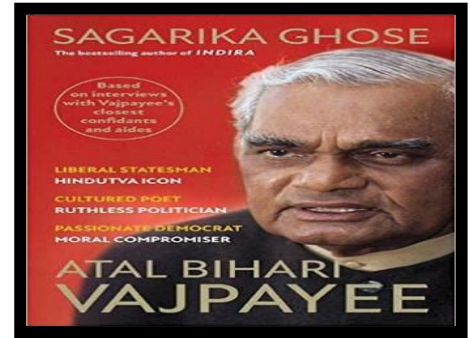


1.137. A BOOK TITLED "ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE" AUTHORED BY SAGARIKA GHOSE RELEASED.

Why in news?

- A book titled "**Atal Bihari Vajpayee**" authored by **Sagarika Ghose** has been launched.
- It is a biography of the former Prime Minister of India.

- Sagarika Ghose is a journalist. She has also authored a book titled “**Indira: India’s Most Powerful Prime Minister**”.
- It took three years for the author to complete the biography. She researched on his parliamentary speeches from the 1950s to the 90s, Parliament records, his speeches, his written work, the pronouncements made by his Government, minutes of party meetings, proceedings of annual conferences, party periodicals, the large number of bills etc.



1.138. NOBEL-WINNING CO-DISCOVERER OF H.I.V LUC MONTAGNIER PASSES AWAY.

Why in news?

- **Luc Montagnier**, a French virologist who shared a **Nobel Prize in 2008** for discovering the virus that causes AIDS, passed away. He was 89.
- Luc Antoine Montagnier (born 18 August 1932) was a **French virologist** and joint **recipient, with Françoise Barre-Sinoussi and Harald Zur Hausen**, of the 2008 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his discovery of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
- He has worked as a researcher at the Pasteur Institute in Paris and as a full-time professor at Shanghai Jiao Tong University in China.
- The discovery of H.I.V. began in Paris on Jan. 3, 1983 when Dr. Montagnier, who directed the Viral Oncology Unit at the Pasteur Institute, received a piece of the lymph node that had been removed from a 33-year-old man with AIDS.



1.139. PRIME MINISTER PAYS TRIBUTES TO DEENDAYAL UPADHYAY ON HIS DEATH ANNIVERSARY.

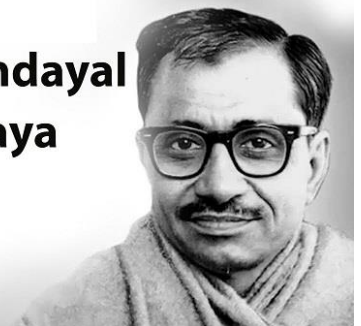
Why in news?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday paid tributes to Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay on his death anniversary.

About Deen Dayal Upadhyay

- He was a visionary and leader of Bharatiya Jan Sangh, forerunner of present day Bharatiya Janta Party.
- Contributions-
 - started the movement **Ek Vidhan, Ek Nishan, Ek Pradhan(One Constitution, one Flag, One Prime Minister)**
 - **Publication-** Journalist in ‘**Rashtra Dharma**’ daily, worked as editor for ‘**Panchjanya**’ and wrote a column named Political Diary for the weekly The Organiser’.
 - He established the publishing house ‘**Rashtra Dharma Prakashan**’ in Lucknow.
- His philosophies of '**Integral Humanism**' and '**Antyodaya**' provide inspiration to many to serve the nation and the downtrodden.

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya



1.140. DEBASHIS MITRA TAKES OVER AS PRESIDENT OF INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS OF INDIA.

Why in news?

- **Debashis Mitra** has been elected as the **President of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)** for the year 2022-23.

- Mitra, who is serving his third term in ICAI Council, has been in the accounting profession for more than 34 years. Apart from being a Chartered Accountant, he is also a Cost Accountant and a Company Secretary. He holds a master's degree in commerce and is also a law graduate as well as a qualified Information Systems Auditor.

About Institute of Chartered Accountants of India

- **The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)** is the national professional accounting body of India. It was established to regulate the profession of Accountancy.
- It is the only licensing cum regulating body of the financial audit and accountancy profession in India.
- It recommends the accounting standards to be followed by companies in India to National Advisory Committee on Accounting Standards (NACAS).



1.141. ILKER AYCI APPOINTED AS NEW CEO, MD OF AIR INDIA.

Why in news?

- Ilker Ayci has been appointed as the **new CEO and MD of Air India**.
- He was previously serving as the Chairman of Turkish Airlines and was on the board of the company before that.
- Ilker Ayci will take charge of his new role on or before April 1, 2022.

About Ilker Ayci

- Born in Istanbul in 1971, Ilker Ayci is a 1994 alumni of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Bilkent University.
- He also did research on political science at UK's Leeds University in 1995. He then did International Relations from Marmara University in Istanbul in 1997.
- He was serving as the Chairman of Turkish Airlines from 2015 to 2022.
- He has also previously served as the advisor of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in 1994.
- Ilker Ayci expressed delight at being chosen for the post. He said that he is honoured to accept the privilege of leading the iconic airline and join the Tata Group.
- He said that by working closely with his colleagues at Air India and Tata Group, they will utilize Air India's strong heritage to make it one of the best airlines in the world.



1.142. VINEET JOSHI APPOINTED AS CHAIRMAN OF CBSE.

Why in news?

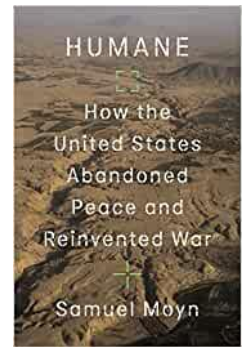
- IAS **Vineet Joshi** has been appointed as the new Chairman of the **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)**.
- He replaces IAS Manoj Ahuja, who has been appointed as the Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- Mr Joshi, a 1992-batch IAS officer of the Manipur cadre, is an Additional Secretary, Department of Higher Education, under the Ministry of Education. He is also the Director-General of the National Testing Agency (NTA). In 2010 as well he got the responsibility of CBSE chairman.



1.143. A BOOK TITLED 'HUMANE: HOW THE UNITED STATES ABANDONED PEACE AND REINVENTED WAR' RELEASED.

Why in news?

- A new book titled "Humane: How the United States Abandoned Peace and Reinvented War" authored by **Samuel Moyn** was released.
 - Samuel Moyn is the Professor of Jurisprudence at Yale Law School and a professor of History at Yale University.
- This provocative book argues about the endless wars the USA created in the past including Vietnam War (1955-1975), Korean War (1950-1953), World War II (1939-1945) etc and this development might not represent progress at all.



1.144. PM CONDOLES DEMISE OF NOTED KANNADA WRITER AND POET SHRI CHENNAVEERA KANA VI.

Why in news?

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has expressed grief over the demise of noted Kannada writer and poet, Shri Chennaveera Kanavi.

About Shri Chennaveera Kanavi

- Chennaveera Kanavi was born in Hombal of Gadag district on June 28, 1928. He completed his schooling and college in Dharwad.
- He later worked as a director of Prasara ng a of the Karnataka University from 1956 to 1983.
- He was considered one of the major poets and writers in the Kannada language and received the Sahitya Akademi Award for his work Jeeva Dhvani (Poetry) in 1981.
- He was popularly known as "Samanvayada Kavi" and "Soujanya da Kavi".
- In 2011, he was honoured with the Sahitya Kala Kaustubha Award.



1.145. SOCIAL WORKER SHAKUNTALA CHOWDHARY PASSED AWAY.

Why in news?

- The Padma Shri recipient Shakuntala Chowdhary passed away at the age of 102 years due to age related ailments.
- Shakuntala Choudhary was born on 25 June 1920 in Guwahati, Assam. She was also known as Shakunthala Baideo (elder sister), was an **Indian social worker** known for her commitment and devotion to the popularization of the **Gandhian way of life**.
- In 1947, she joined the Assam branch of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust (KGNMT).
- This branch of the Trust in Guwahati, known as the Kasturba Ashram or the Sarania Ashram. It was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi in 1946.
- She was also **closely associated with Vinoba Bhave** who initiated the 'Bhoodan Movement' in India. She worked with him in translating his lectures from Hindi to Assamese, and was an active participant in Padayatra undertaken by Vinoba Bhave in Assam during the Bhoodan movement.
- Awards-
 - Jamnalal Bajaj Award (2010) for the Development and Welfare of Women And Children.
 - Padma Shri award (2022), for distinguished service in the field of social work.
 - Vavosheshta Samman - National Awards For Senior Citizens 2021.



1.146. SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LAUNCH OF THE SHYAMA PRASAD MUKHERJI RURBAN MISSION.

Why in news?

- 21st February 2022 marked the 6th anniversary of the launch of the Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM), undertaken by the **Ministry of Rural Development**.
- In 2016, PM launched the SPMRM with an aim to develop 300 Rurban clusters in India by provisioning economic, social and physical infrastructure facilities.
- So far, the Ministry of Rural Development has approved 296 clusters under SPMRM.

About Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission

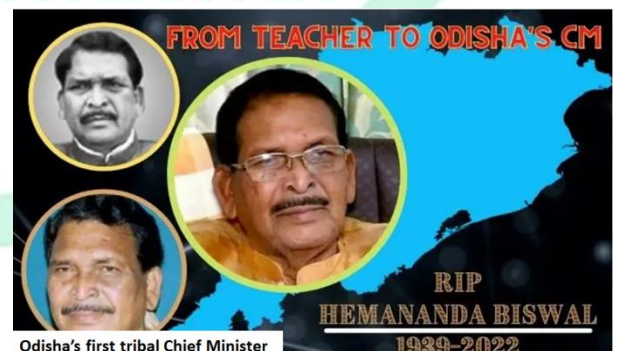
- Rurban cluster is a cluster of geographically contiguous villages with a population of around 25000 to 50000 in plain and coastal areas and with a population of 5000 to 15000 in desert, hilly or tribal areas.
- Objective: To stimulate local economic development, enhance basic services, and create well planned Rurban clusters.
- Key Points:
 - SPMRM focuses on **cluster-based integrated development** through Spatial Planning.
 - The Rurban clusters are **identified across the rural areas of India** which shows the **increasing signs of urbanisation**.
 - The **signs include an increase in population density, high levels of non-farm employment, the presence of growing economic activities and other socioeconomic parameters**.
- The mission aims to transform the Rurban clusters by stimulating local economic development, enhancing basic services, and creating well planned Rurban clusters.
- There will be two categories of clusters under SPMRM: Non-Tribal and Tribal.
- Outcomes: The anticipated outcomes under the mission are,
 - Bridging the rural-urban divide through economic, technological and those related to facilities and services.
 - Stimulating local economic development with emphasis on reduction of poverty and unemployment in rural areas.
 - Spreading development in the region.
 - Attracting investment in rural areas.



1.147. ODISHA'S FIRST TRIBAL CM HEMANANDA BISWAL PASSES AWAY.

Why in news?

- Odisha's first tribal chief minister as well as last Congress chief minister of the state, **Hemananda Biswal** passed away. He was 82.
- Biswal, a **Bhuyan tribal** from Jharsuguda district, served as the chief minister twice from 1989 to 1990 and 1999 to 2000.
- In December 1999, he was again made chief minister after erstwhile chief minister Giridhari Gamang was replaced over his failure in relief and rehabilitation measures in the aftermath of the 1999 super cyclone that ripped through the Odisha coast.
- Biswal began his political journey as a chairman of Kirimira panchayat Samiti in the Jharsuguda district.
- He was elected to the Odisha assembly for the first time in 1974 from Laikera constituency.



- He was elected to the assembly as MLA six times from the same seat. In 2009 he was elected as an MP from Sundargarh.



PRACTICE MCQS

1. Who among the following has been appointed as Vice Chief of Indian Army?

- A. Lt Gen Manoj Pande
- B. Lt Gen RP Kalita
- C. Lt. Gen. Upendra Dwivedi
- D. None of the Above

ANSWER: A

2. Xiomara Castro sworn in as the first female President of Honduras. In which Continent, the country of Honduras located?

- A. North America
- B. Africa
- C. South America
- D. Europe

ANSWER: A

3. Who has been elected as Prime Minister of Portugal?

- A. Munroe Batista
- B. Antonio Costa
- C. Juan Gonzales
- D. none of the above

ANSWER: B

4. Who has been appointed as the chairperson of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)?

- A. Madan Mohan Tripathi
- B. Vinodanand Jha
- C. Ravi Mittal
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: C

5. 'India, That is Bharat: Coloniality, Civilisation, Constitution' book is authored by-

- A. Kiran Bedi
- B. Narendra Modi

- C. Sambit Patra
- D. J Sai Deepak

ANSWER: D

6. Who has been appointed as director of Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL)?

- A. GAV Reddy
- B. GA Srinivasa Murthy
- C. Ravi Mittal
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: B

7. Legendary Singer Lata Mangeshkar who passed away recently, was conferred Bharat Ratna in which of the following year?

- A. 1990
- B. 1995
- C. 2001
- D. 2007

ANSWER: C

8. Who has been appointed as the Controller General of Accounts by Government of India?

- A. Ravi Mittal
- B. Sonali Singh
- C. GA Srinivasa Murthy
- D. GAV Reddy

ANSWER: B

9. Who has been appointed as the Director of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)?

- A. Ravi Mittal
- B. GAV Reddy
- C. Sonali Singh
- D. Dinesh Prasad Saklani

ANSWER: D

10. Who has been recently appointed as Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre?

- A. Ravi Mittal
- B. GAV Reddy
- C. S Unnikrishnan Nair
- D. Sonali singh

ANSWER: C

11. The book titled 'Golden Boy Neeraj Chopra' has been written by-

- A. Sonali Singh
- B. Navdeep Singh Gill
- C. Chetan Bhagat
- D. Anupama Verma

ANSWER: B

12. Who has been appointed as Secretary in the Department of Financial Services in the Ministry of Finance?

- A. Sanjay Malhotra
- B. GAV Reddy
- C. Sonal Chauhan
- D. Ravi Mittal

ANSWER: A

13. Praveen Kumar Sobti who passed away recently was a famous-

- A. Painter
- B. Writer
- C. Actor
- D. Politician

ANSWER: C

14. Who has been appointed as Chairman of Staff Selection Commission recently?

- A. Sanjay Malhotra
- B. S. Kishore
- C. GAV Reddy
- D. Ravi Mittal

ANSWER: B

15. Who has been appointed as Chief Justice of the Madras High Court?

- A. Justice Sanjib Banerjee
- B. Justice Munishwar Nath Bhandari
- C. Justice Rajesh Bindal
- D. Justice Dipankar Datta

ANSWER: B

16. A book titled "Atal Bihari Vajpayee" released recently has been authored by-

- A. Chandrakant Bakshi
- B. Kiran Bedi
- C. Sagarika Ghose
- D. Abhijit Bnaerjee

ANSWER: C

17. Luc Montagnier, who won Nobel Prize in 2008 for discovering HIV virus, passed away recently. He belonged to which country?

- A. USA
- B. United Kingdom
- C. Germany
- D. France

ANSWER: D

18. Consider the following statements regarding Deen Dayal Upadhyay:

1. He started the movement Ek Vidhan, Ek Nishan, Ek Pradhan.
2. He propounded the philosophy of 'Integral Humanism' and 'Antyodaya'.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

19. Who has been elected as the President of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India recently?

- A. Ravi Mittal
- B. GAV Reddy
- C. Sonali Singh
- D. Debashis Mitra

ANSWER: D

20. Who has been appointed as the new CEO and MD of Air India?

- A. N Chandrashekharan
- B. T V Narendaran
- C. Ilker Ayci
- D. Arun Mishra

ANSWER: C

21. Who has been appointed as the new Chairman of the Central Board of Secondary Education?

- A. Manoj Ahuja
- B. Vineet Joshi
- C. GAV Reddy
- D. Debashis Mitra

ANSWER: B

22. A new book "Humane: How the United States Abandoned Peace and Reinvented War" released recently is authored by

- A. Samuel Moyn
- B. Greg Abott
- C. Elliot Abrahams
- D. Mumia Abu Jamal

ANSWER: A

23. Shri Chennaveera Kanavi who passed recently, was a famous writer/poet of which language?

- A. Tamil
- B. Malayalam

- C. Telugu
- D. Kannada

ANSWER: D

24. Consider the following statements with respect to Shakuntala Chowdhary, who passed away recently-

1. She was an Indian social worker and member of Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust.
2. She was closely associated with Vinoba Bhave during Bhoodan Movement.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

25. Consider the following statements regarding Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission-

1. It aims to develop 300 Rurban clusters in India by provisioning economic, social and physical infrastructure facilities.
2. It is being undertaken by the Ministry of Rural Development.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

26. Hemananda Biswal who passed away recently was first tribal Chief Minister of which state?

- A. Odisha
- B. Jharkhand
- C. West Bengal
- D. Chhattisgarh

ANSWER: A

ENVIRONMENT

1.148. JAIPUR'S KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES COMMISSION PRODUCTION UNIT MAKES 'PRAKRITIK PAINTS' OUT OF COW DUNG.

Why in news?

- Khadi Prakratik Paint has been developed from cow dung by **Kumarappa National Handmade Paper Institute (KNHPI), Jaipur**, a unit of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), under the administrative control of the Ministry of MSME.
- **Khadi Prakratik paint is eco-friendly and cost effective.**
- It is envisaged that **manufacture of Khadi Prakratik Paint will promote local manufacturing, create sustainable employment and generate additional revenue for farmers and cow shelter homes and will also generate employment** in the rural areas, which will improve the rural economy and help in controlling the migration from rural to urban areas, in the country.
- **Cow dung is a major constituent used in the manufacture of Prakritik Paint.** 100 kgs. of cow dung is utilized for making 500 liters of paint. Therefore, setting up of paint units would be helpful in utilization of cow dung and thereby help in cleaning the environment.

1.149. THE INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN) DESIGNATES ARAVALLI BIODIVERSITY PARK IN GURUGRAM 2022.

Why in news?

- The Aravalli Biodiversity Park in Gurugram, Haryana, has been declared as India's first "Other effective area-based conservation measures" (OECM) site.
- This was informed by the Union ministry of Environment, forest and climate change on the occasion of World Wetlands Day.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) gives OECM tag to those areas that are not protected but support rich biodiversity. The tag designates the area as a biodiversity hotspot on the international map.

About OECM

- OECM is a status for a place that has achieved effective in-situ conservation of biodiversity outside protected areas like forests.
- The park, which once was an abandoned mining pit, was transformed into a lush green forest patch in 10 years. Now, it has about 400 native species of plants.

About IUCN

- The IUCN is a global union composed of both government as well as civil society organisations. With more than 1400 organisations as its members, the IUCN is an international authority on the status of the natural world.
- Established in 1948, the IUCN has the tools and knowledge repository to help the world conserve nature and ensure sustainable development.
- It established the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species in 1964.
- The IUCN's Secretariat is in Gland, Switzerland.

Gurugram: Aravali Biodiversity Park hits a conservation milestone

Ipsita Paul / TNN / Updated: Feb 3, 2022, 11:29 IST



ARTICLES

- Gurugram: Aravali Biodiversity Park hits a conservation...
- Fake call centre offers technical aid, cheats US citizens, busted
- City records 970 new cases, 4 more deaths—all fully-vaxed
- Driver found murdered on Ggn-Flod road



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1.150. GAS AUTHORITY OF INDIA LIMITED (GAIL) STARTS INDIA'S MAIDEN PROJECT OF BLENDING HYDROGEN INTO NATURAL GAS SYSTEM IN INDORE.

Why in news?

- In line with **National Hydrogen Mission**, State gas utility GAIL (India) has commenced **India's first-of-its-kind project of mixing hydrogen into the natural gas system in Indore, Madhya Pradesh**.
- The hydrogen blended natural gas will be supplied to Avantika Gas Ltd, one of GAIL's joint venture with HPCL, for retailing of CNG to automobiles and piped natural gas to households in Indore, the company said in a statement.
- GAIL started injection of grey hydrogen at the city gate station (CGS), Indore.
- The grey hydrogen would subsequently be replaced by green hydrogen.

LOOKING TOWARDS HYDROGEN

National Hydrogen Mission - to make India a global hub for the production and export of green hydrogen

India spends over **Rs. 12 million** annually for energy requirements

Green hydrogen production to help replace energy imports

Types of hydrogen

- **Blue hydrogen** is when natural gas is split into hydrogen and CO₂. The CO₂ is captured and then stored.
- **Grey hydrogen** is a similar process to blue hydrogen but the CO₂ is not captured and is released into the atmosphere.
- **Green hydrogen** is hydrogen produced by splitting water by electrolysis using electricity from renewable energy sources such as wind or solar. This produces only hydrogen and oxygen. The hydrogen is used and oxygen is vented into the atmosphere with no negative impact.



1.151. RESEARCHERS SPOT DHOLES IN KYRGYZSTAN AFTER 3 DECADES.

Why in news?

- A new study has reported the **presence of dholes or Asiatic wild dogs (*Cuon alpinus*)** in the high mountains of Central Asia **nearly 30 years after their presence was last recorded**.
- The animals have been **discovered in the Bek-Tosot Conservancy** in the Osh region of southern **Kyrgyzstan**, a few kilometres from the Tajik border. It **lies in the Pamir mountain range**.



About Dhole

- Dhole (*Cuon alpinus*) is a **wild carnivorous** animal belonging to the **canine** family, found in **Central, South, East Asia, and Southeast Asia**.
- They are also known as **Asian wild dogs**.
- **Ecological role:** Dholes play an important role as **apex predators** in forest ecosystems.
- **Conservation Status:** It is under the **International Union for Conservation of Nature's 'endangered'** category.
- The species is protected under **Schedule 2 of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972** and under **Appendix 2 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**.
- **Threats:**

- **Ongoing habitat loss:** Due to deforestation and fragmentation of forest corridors.
- **Depletion of prey base:** Ungulates are main prey of dholes whose population is rapidly decreasing due to excessive hunting and habitat loss.
- **Persecution due to livestock predation and disease transfer** from domestic and feral dogs.

1.152. ASSAM VILLAGERS OPPOSE SANCTUARY TAG FOR GOLDEN LANGUR HABITAT.

Why in news?

- Recently neighbours of a golden langur habitat in western Assam's Bongaigaon district have opposed a move by the State government to upgrade it to a wildlife sanctuary.
- Kakoijana Reserve Forest is one of the better-known homes of the golden langur (*Trachypithecus geei*) found only in Assam and Bhutan.
- The villagers demanded that the **“conventional idea of wildlife sanctuary”** be **dropped** and the **reserve forest converted into a community forest resource** “using Forest Rights Act, 2006, to ensure community co-managed system of participation for sustainable conservation.
- The villagers pointed out that the conservation efforts of the locals had helped the authorities concerned to restore the forest canopy from **less than 5% to more than 70%**, and the **golden langur population** from **less than 100 to more than 600** over almost three decades.



About Golden Langur (*Trachypithecus geei*)

- Golden langurs can be **most easily recognized by the color of their fur**, after which they are named.
- It has been noted that their **fur changes colors according to the seasons** as well as geography (region they live in).
- The **color of the young also differs from adults** in that they are almost pure white.
- They are highly dependent on trees, living in the upper canopy of forests. They are **also known as leaf monkeys**.
- **Habitat:** It is **endemic to western Assam, India, and southern Bhutan**.
- Their habitat is restricted to the region surrounded by four geographical landmarks: the foothills of Bhutan (North), Manas river (East), Sankosh river (West), and **Brahmaputra river** (South).
- **Threats:**
- **Restricted Habitat:** As mentioned above, their habitat is restricted by natural boundaries further increasing the threat of extinction.
- **Habitat Fragmentation:** Their habitat in Assam has fragmented drastically especially after a thrust on rural electrification and massive deforestation.
- **Inbreeding:** Obstructions such as wires, and gaps in the forest due to felling, have increased the threat of inbreeding among golden langurs.
- **Protection Status:**
- **IUCN List of Threatened Species:** Endangered
- **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES):** Appendix I
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 :** Schedule I
- It is listed as among the world's 25 most endangered primates.

1.153. IIT MADRAS ESTABLISHES AQUA MAP, AN INTER-DISCIPLINARY WATER MANAGEMENT AND POLICY CENTRE.

Why in news?

- To solve water problems in India, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras establishes a new inter-disciplinary water management and policy centre known as 'AquaMAP'.
- The centre will offer smart solutions for water problems by designing scalable models using innovative technologies. These models will be implemented at various chosen locations across the country as proof of the concept.
- Aqua Map comprises a governing body chaired by director IIT Madras and an advisory board that includes eminent people in the area of water technology, management, and policy.
- In future AquaMAP will collaborate with other IIT Madras water research centers such as Sutram, International Centre for Clean Water (ICCW) – IIT Madras, and PCoE on Water and Sustainability, and other partners as well.
- **Expected outcomes** from AquaMAP in the medium or long term include
 - The capability to address complex real-life water problems through consortia approach,
 - Establish as an entity that can deliver solutions with wide impact and application,
 - Address at least three chronic water issues through grand challenges and their successful translation into pilot projects,
 - Completing pilot studies in at least six water innovation villages or towns that can be replicated for water management and policy implementation, within the country.



1.154. WHITE-CHEEKED MACAQUE.

Why in news?

- Scientists have recorded presence of **White-Cheeked Macaque (*Macaca leucogenys*)** from central Arunachal Pradesh in India. The significance of the discovery is that it marks a new addition to mammals of India.
- The **species was discovered in 2015** by a group of Chinese scientists from the Modog region in southeastern Tibet and this discovery was considered a significant breakthrough as far as primates are concerned.
- **White-Cheeked Macaques are distinct from other macaques found in the region by displaying white cheeks, long and thick hairs on the neck area, and a longer tail.**
- White Cheeked Macaque has **not been yet included in the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** of India.
- Along with **White-Cheeked Macaques** and **Arunachal Macaque** the other species of Macaques are **Assamese Macaque (*Macaca assamensis*)** and **Rhesus Macaque (*Macaca mulatta*)** reported from the same landscape. The number of mammals reported from India stands at 434.
- The **potential threat** to all species of macaques in the landscape are due to hunting by locals for consumption and habitat degradation due to urbanisation and infrastructure development.

White-Cheeked Macaque



1.155. PHASI WOOD USED FOR JAGGANNATH CHARIOTS.

Why in news?

- Odisha marked the day of Basant Panchami February 5, 2022, with a prayer ceremony to consecrate the logs used in the chariot of the deity Jagannath.
- But this year, most of the **Phasi (*Anogeissus acuminata*)** wood came from private land rather than forests, according to the state forest department.

About Phasi (Anogeissus acuminata) Wood

- It is a deciduous tree with a narrow crown and takes 50-60 years to mature.
- Range- India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam.
- Phasi trees are mostly found in the alluvial floodplain of the Mahanadi.
- Habitat – Tropical low land open forest or semi deciduous forests at elevations below 700 m.
- It is found particularly in deep, humus rich, loamy soils along streams or river banks.
- The trees for the chariot have to be pencil straight, six feet in girth and 12-14 feet in height. If the girth is less, they cannot be used.



1.156. INDIA'S FIRST BIOMASS-BASED HYDROGEN PLANT TO COME UP AT MADHYA PRADESH.

Why in news?

- India's first commercial-scale biomass-based hydrogen plant will come up at the **Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh**.
- Every day this plant will produce one tonne of hydrogen, from 30 tonnes of biomass feedstock.
- The plant is being put up by a joint venture of **Watomo Energies Ltd and Biezel Green Energy** with an investment of **Rs 24 crore**.
- The company owns the technology for a '**thermally accelerated anaerobic digestion (TAD) reactor**' that can produce hydrogen, methane and biochar from biomass.
- Biezel Green will own 50 per cent in the yet-to-be-named joint venture; the other 50 per cent will come from interested farmers.



1.157. AUSTRALIA: DESIGNATION OF KOALAS AS ENDANGERED SPECIES.

Why in news?

- Recently, Australia designated the koala as an **endangered species** amid pressure on the marsupials' eucalyptus tree habitats in eastern states of Australia.
- Endangered status to koala means, the species and their forest homes should be provided with greater protection in accordance with Australia's national environment law. This would not only protect Koala but many other species living alongside them.
- **Threats-** Population of Koalas is declining dramatically across the country because of habitat loss, impact of prolonged drought, black summer bushfires, Urbanisation and cumulative impacts of disease. Furthermore, thousands of koalas are thought to have been killed in fires that swept Australia's eastern and southern states in 2019 and 2020. Thus, this designation would provide more protection to the species.



About Koala

- The koala is an **arboreal herbivorous marsupial**, native to Australia.

- It is the only extant representative of Phascolarctidae family. Its closest living relatives are wombats, which are the members of Vombatidae family.
- This species is found in **coastal areas of Australia's eastern and southern regions**, inhabiting New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales.
- **Physical traits**-It is recognised by its stout, large head, tailless body, round & fluffy ears and large, spoon-shaped nose. It has a body length of 60–85 cm while and weighs 4–15 kg. Fur colour of Koala ranges from silver grey to chocolate brown.

1.158. GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY TRUST FUND PROVIDES FUND FOR THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF WETLAND, BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS SERVICES PROJECT.

Why in news?

- The Integrated Management of Wetland, Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services project, funded by the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund (GEFTF), has been allocated ₹31.13 crore for a period of 5 years.
- The three wetlands included in the project are Sasthamcotta Lake in Kerala, Harike Lake in Punjab, and Kabartal in Bihar.
- These three wetlands have been awarded a total budget equivalent of ₹19.02 crores from the GEFTF. The funds are to be divided equally between the three states.
- A project management unit (PMU) and National Project Steering Committee have been constituted to overlook the progress of the project.
- The PMU has conducted a technical appraisal of the plans submitted by state governments, analysing the incorporation of ecosystem services and biodiversity values, mapping the interventions with the threats.

About GEF trust Fund

- The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Trust Fund was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems. GEF funding to support the projects is contributed by donor countries.
- GEF funds are available to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to meet the objectives of the international environmental conventions and agreements.
- The **World Bank** serves as the GEF Trustee, administering the GEF Trust Fund.



1.159. NATIONAL NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

Why in news?

- Recently Minister of State, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change in Rajya Sabha provided information on National Natural Resource Management System.

About National Natural Resource Management System

- The Scheme "National Natural Resources Management System (NNRMS)" is a **Central Sector Scheme** of Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change.
- Objective-The prime objective of NNRMS scheme is utilization of Remote Sensing Technology for Inventorization, Assessment and Monitoring of the country's natural resources.
- NNRMS carries out the following tasks:
 - Mapping of forests and grasslands.
 - Monitoring of forest encroachment and shifting cultivation Forest fire surveillance.
 - Mapping and monitoring of biosphere reserves.

- Eco-system management related studies for environmentally fragile/sensitive regions like the Himalayas, Western Ghats etc.
- Development of Environment/Forest Resources Information System (ERIS/FRIS).
- Establishment of State Forest Data Management Centres, with linkages to National System.
- Resources assessment of fuel wood.
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) involving land, water and air pollution
- Environmental hazard related studies (landslide, volcano, earthquake).
- Mapping/monitoring of Coastal Regulation Zone/coastal areas, etc.



1.160. LASSA FEVER RESULTS IN DEATH IN UNITED KINGDOM.

Why in news?

- Recently one of the three persons diagnosed with Lassa fever in United Kingdom, died.
- Lassa fever is a **viral haemorrhagic fever** that is primarily transmitted to humans via contact with food or household items contaminated with urine or faeces from Mastomys rats.
- Lassa fever is **zoonotic disease** caused by **Lassa virus**.
- It was **first discovered in 1969 in Nigeria**.
- It is **endemic in parts of West Africa** including Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea and Nigeria.
- Symptoms include **bleeding**, difficulty in breathing, vomiting, facial swelling, pain in the chest, etc.
- It spreads through infected rats, rarely spread via direct contact with a sick person's body fluids.
- **Ribavirin** an antiviral drug that is used for its treatment and maintaining hydration, oxygen levels etc.



1.161. DABUR BECOMES FIRST INDIAN PLASTIC WASTE NEUTRAL' FMCG COMPANY.

Why in news?

- **Dabur India** has become the **first Indian consumer goods company** to become completely plastic waste neutral.
- It has done this by collecting, processing and recycling around **27,000 metric tonnes** of post-consumer plastic waste during FY21-22.
- Dabur has achieved the landmark of surpassing its plastic packaging usage with recycling. Dabur's Plastic Waste Management initiative was launched in 2017-18 as part of the Plastic Waste Management (PWM) Rule.



1.162. PM DELIVERS INAUGURAL ADDRESS AT TERI'S WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT.

Why in news?

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi delivered the inaugural address at The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI) World Sustainable Development Summit today via video message.
- The **theme** of the event is '**Towards a Resilient Planet: Ensuring a Sustainable and Equitable Future**'

- The Summit would also see participation of Ministers for Environment from about a dozen countries, representatives from the United Nations, heads of inter-governmental organizations, and delegates from 126 countries.

About The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)

- TERI is a **non-profit research institution** that conducts research work in the fields of energy, environment and sustainable development.
- Established in **1974** as Tata Energy Research Institute and was renamed The Energy and Resources Institute in 2003.
- It aims to focus on **formulating local and national level strategies** for shaping global solutions to critical issues.
- It conducts research work in the fields of energy, environment and sustainable development.
- Its key focus lies in promoting clean energy, water management, pollution management, sustainable agriculture and climate resilience.



1.163. NEW BENT-TOED GECKO SPECIES DISCOVERED IN MEGHALAYA, NAMED AFTER INDIAN ARMY.

Why in news?

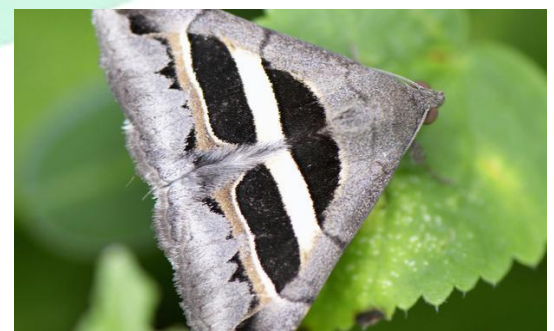
- A team of researchers recently discovered a new species of bent-toed gecko or lizard, from Umroi Military station in Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya.
- The new species of Gecko or lizard belongs to the family of *Cyrtodactylus exercitus* ('exercitus' means army, in Latin).
- It has been named to honour the valour of Indian Army for their services to India.
- These new species was discovered as part of efforts of research team, to uncover herpetofaunal diversity of North East India.
- **Bent-toe geckos** are scientifically known as *Cyrtodactylus*. It is a diverse genus of Asian geckos. This genus has about 300 described species as of 2020. Thus, it is the largest of all gecko genera.
- **Genus *Cyrtodactylus***
- The genus *Cyrtodactylus* is represented by about 320 species across the world. It is the third most speciose vertebrate genus worldwide. Members of the genus range from South Asia to Melanesia. There is high diversity of the species in south Asia. North East India has now become home to 16 species of bent-toed gecko.



1.164. MOTHS VITAL FOR HIMALAYAN ECOSYSTEM- REPORT.

Why in news?

- A recent study has found that **moths are vital to pollination in the Himalayan ecosystem** of northeast India.
- The study establishes **91 species of moths as potential pollinators of 21 plant families in Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh** in the northeastern Himalayas.
- Study can help in understanding the **role of these nocturnal (active at night) insect pollinators**.
- Till now a majority of the pollination-related studies are based on diurnal pollinators (bees and butterflies).



- **Pollination** is the act of transferring pollen grains from the male anther of a flower to the female stigma.

About Moth

- Moths are a **paraphyletic** group of insects that includes all members of the order Lepidoptera that are not butterflies.
- While the butterflies form a monophyletic group, the moths, comprising the rest of the Lepidoptera, do not.
- There are about 12,000 moth species in India.

1.165. UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME FRONTIERS REPORT SAYS WILDFIRES TO BE MORE FREQUENT AND INTENSE IN FUTURE.

Why in news?

- On 17th February 2022, the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** released the "4th edition of **Frontiers report** titled "**Frontiers 2022: Noise, Blazes and Mismatches -Emerging Issues Of Environmental Concern**" which predicts that wildfires will worsen in the upcoming years and decades. The report states that wildfires are becoming more frequent, larger, and more intense due to climate change.
- The report has attributed this to climate change and human activities.

About Frontiers

- The Frontiers reports of UNEP **identify and draw attention to the emerging issues of environmental concern.**
- The Frontiers report was **first published in 2016.**
- The Frontiers 2022 report has **identified the 3 most important environmental issues** that have emerged due to climate change: **wildfires, noise pollution, and shifts in the biological life cycles of plants and animals.**
- The 3 chapters of Frontiers 2022 are,
 - Listening to Cities: From Noisy Environments to Positive Soundscapes
 - Wildfires Under Climate Change: A Burning Issue
 - Phenology: Climate Change Is Shifting the Rhythm of Nature
- **Wildfire affected region:**
 - Between 2003 and 2016, a total of 13 million individual fires (lasting for 4-5 days) have occurred. The Savannah (mixed woodland - grassland) ecosystem accounts for 77% of these.
 - Between 2002 and 2016, an average of about 423 million hectares (4.23 million square km) of the earth's land surface was burnt every year.
 - According to the report, around 67% of the annual global area burned by all types of fires was in Africa.



1.166. ILLEGAL TRAFFICKING OF SEA CUCUMBERS FROM INDIA.

Why in news?

- Sea cucumber related seizures increased in 2019 and 2020, making Gulf of Mannar/Palk Bay region a global hotspot for sea cucumber smuggling.
- Sea cucumbers are being harvested in India and Sri Lanka owing to **high demand from East Asia** where they are **considered a delicacy, eaten both fresh or dried, and are also used in traditional Chinese medicine.**
- Though India banned sea cucumber fishery in 2001, Sri Lanka tried to restrict the trade through a system of permits. This disparity allowed Indian fishers to exploit Sri Lanka's legalised sea cucumber trade.
- About Sea Cucumbers

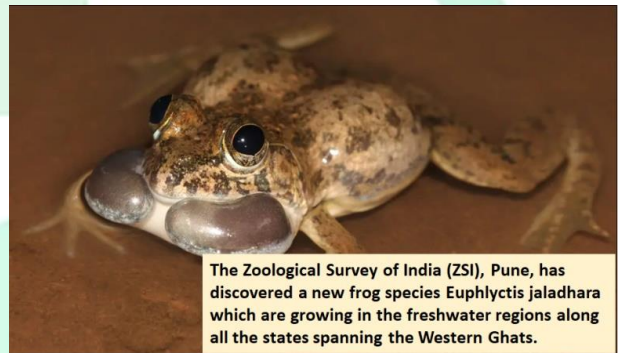
- Sea cucumbers are part of animal group called **echinoderms** (marine invertebrates) that live on the seafloor.
- Their body shape is similar to a cucumber, but they have small tentacle-like tube feet that are used for locomotion and feeding.
- Habitat: **Found in virtually all marine environments** throughout the world- **shallow to deep-sea environments**.
- Threats: climate change and ocean acidification, habitat destruction, illegal fishing, and water pollution.
- Sea cucumber in India is treated as an **endangered species** listed under **schedule I of Wildlife Protection Act of 1972**.



1.167. NEW FROG SPECIES DISCOVERED IN FRESHWATER REGIONS OF WESTERN GHATS.

Why in news?

- The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Pune, has discovered a new frog species ***Euphlyctis jaladhara*** which are growing in the freshwater regions along all the states spanning the Western Ghats.
- Scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), the National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER), Bhubaneswar, Mount Carmel College (MCC), Bengaluru, tied up on the discovery.



The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Pune, has discovered a new frog species *Euphlyctis jaladhara* which are growing in the freshwater regions along all the states spanning the Western Ghats.

About *Euphlyctis jaladhara*

- The common name of this frog is Jaladhara skittering frog and *Euphlyctis jaladhara* is the scientific name. This species was first discovered in freshwater bodies located near the **Thattekad Bird Sanctuary** in Ernakulam District of Kerala.
- This is the second skittering frog species discovered in this area. The Kerala Pond Frog (*Phrynoderma Kerala*) was also discovered in the same area.
- Multiple populations of this species have been discovered in forest surveys which have focused on freshwater bodies in Goa, Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Daman and Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Conservation plans have to be made focusing on this newly discovered frog species so that the population grows.

1.168. INDIA'S FIRST 'SMART MANAGED EV (ELECTRIC VEHICLE) CHARGING STATION' COMMISSIONED IN NEW DELHI.

Why in news?

- BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL), a subsidiary of Reliance Infrastructure commissioned **India's first 'Smart Managed EV (Electric Vehicle) Charging Station'** in New Delhi.
- The project is supported by **Nordic Innovation**, an organization promoted by the governments of Nordic countries, and executed by Fortum Charge & Drive.
- **Nordic countries**-Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Greenland.
- The management and operation of Smart EV Charging Stations will be under BYPL.



BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL), a subsidiary of Reliance Infrastructure commissioned India's first 'Smart Managed EV (Electric Vehicle) Charging Station' in New Delhi.

- It has the capacity to charge five EVs simultaneously and the charging station can be integrated with BYPL's **SCADA system**. It is located at BYPL's 11 kV substation building in Mayur Vihar Extension Phase-I in New Delhi.
- It is also Demand Response (DR) compatible, which is an important demand side management (DSM) tool for bearing the high load.

1.169. PALK BAY DUGONG RESERVE COMING UP IN TAMIL NADU.

Why in news?

- Tamil Nadu government has begun work to set up the **first Dugong Conservation Reserve of India** in the Palk Bay region.
- Dugongs are **endangered species** and are **protected under the Wildlife Protection Act's, 1972** Schedule 1.
- The size of the reserve will be spread over around 500 sq km and will be located in Palk Bay's northern part from Adiramapattinam to Amapattinam.
- For the first 5 years, Rs 5 crore would be the initial cost for the reserve's establishment.
- There are plans to build enhanced seagrass beds and an international conservation centre under the Climate Change Mission.

About Dugong

- The dugong is a sirenian species found along the Indian coast.
- Dugongs are related to **manatees** and have a **similar plump appearance to them**, but they have a tail that looks like a dolphin's fluke.
- Unlike manatees, which live in freshwater, dugongs are purely marine mammals. **Dugongs are also known as Sea Cows**. They graze, on seagrass, in shallow coastal waters of the Indian and western Pacific Oceans.

The population of Dugong in India

- The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) states that **only 200-250 dugongs are left**, of which 150 are found in the Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay.
- The dugong is on the verge of becoming extinct. The Dugong population of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is less than 100. In the Gulf of Mannar, there are only a few left.
- There are only a few sporadic records in the Gulf of Kutch. They were once common in Lakshadweep but are now extinct locally.



First Dugong Conservation Reserve of India in the Palk Bay region (Tamil Nadu)

PRACTICE MCQS

1. Consider the following statements:

1. Khadi Prakratik paint is an eco-friendly and cost effective paint developed by KVIC.
2. Rice Husk is a major constituent used in the manufacture of Prakritik Paint.

- B. Only 1
- C. Only 2
- D. 1,2 and 3

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

2. With reference to “The International Union for Conservation of Nature”, Consider the following statements:

1. IUCN has declared Aravalli Biodiversity Park in Gurugram as India’s first “other effective area-based conservation measures” (OECM) site.
2. IUCN secretariat is located in Nairobi, Kenya.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

3. Consider the following statements regarding GAIL hydrogen :

1. GAIL has commenced India's first-of-its-kind project of mixing hydrogen into the natural gas system in Bhopal, MP.
2. It has started using grey hydrogen in the natural gas system of the city.
3. Grey hydrogen is produced when natural gas is split into hydrogen and CO2. The CO2 is captured and then stored.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only 1 and 2

ANSWER: C

4. Consider the following statements regarding Dholes:

1. They are also known as Asian wild dogs and found in Central, South, East Asia, and Southeast Asia.
2. They are listed under ‘critically endangered’ category of IUCN list of threatened species.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

5. Consider the following statements about Golden Langur-

1. It is endemic to western Assam, India, and southern Bhutan
2. It is listed as ‘Endangered’ in IUCN List of Threatened Species.
3. They are highly dependent on trees and also known as leaf monkeys.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only 1 and 2
- B. Only 2 and 3
- C. Only 1 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: D

6. A new inter-disciplinary water management and policy centre known as ‘AquaMAP’ has been established by-

- A. IIT Delhi
- B. IIT Bombay
- C. IIT Roorkee
- D. IIT Madras

ANSWER: D

7. Recently presence of White-Cheeked Macaque has been recorded in which state of India?

- A. Arunachal Pradesh
- B. Mizoram
- C. Kerala
- D. Meghalaya

ANSWER: A

8. With respect to Phasi Wood seen in news recently, consider the following statements:

- 1. It is used to make chariot of the deity Jagannath in Odisha.
- 2. It is an alpine species specially sourced from Nepal.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

9. India's first biomass-based hydrogen plant will be set up in which state?

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

ANSWER: A

10. Consider the following statements about Koalas-

- 1. They are only found in Australia.

- 2. Koalas have been recently designated as endangered species by Australia.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

11. Consider the following statements regarding Global Environment Facility (GEF) Trust Fund:

- 1. It was established on the eve of the 1972 Stockholm Summit.
- 2. The World Bank serves as the GEF Trustee.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

12. With respect to National Natural Resource Management System, consider the following statements-

- 1. National Natural Resource Management System is Central Sector Scheme of Ministry of Science and technology.
- 2. Its objective is utilization of Remote Sensing Technology for Inventorization, Assessment and Monitoring of the country's natural resources.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

13. Consider the following statements regarding

Lassa fever-

1. It was first discovered in 1969 in Nigeria.
2. Lassa fever is a zoonotic disease transmitted through wild pigs.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

14. Which Indian company has become first Indian plastic waste neutral FMCG company?

- A. Patanjali
- B. Dabur
- C. Godrej
- D. Reliance fresh

ANSWER: B

15. Consider the following statements regarding World Sustainable Development Summit-

1. It is hosted by NITI Aayog.
2. The theme of the event is 'Towards a Resilient Planet: Ensuring a Sustainable and Equitable Future'

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

16. A new species of bent-toed gecko, named after the Indian Army, was discovered in which state?

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

ANSWER: B

17. Recently a study underlined importance of moths as pollinators in Himalayan ecosystem of North east India. Consider the following statements regarding this-

1. Moths are a paraphyletic group of insects that includes all members of the order Lepidoptera that are not butterflies.
2. There are about 12,000 moth species in India.
3. Pollination is the act of transferring pollen grains from the male anther of a flower to the female stigma.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only 1 and 2
- B. Only 2 and 3
- C. Only 1 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: D

18. Consider the following statements regarding Frontiers Report-

1. It is released by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
2. The Frontiers 2022 report has identified the 3 most important environmental issues- wildfires, noise pollution, and shifts in the biological life cycles of plants and animals.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

19. Consider the following statements regarding Sea cucumbers-

1. They are part of animal group called echinoderms that live on the seafloor.

2. In India, it is treated as an endangered species listed under schedule I of Wildlife Protection Act.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

20. Euphyctis jaladhara, seen recently in news, is a species of-

- A. Sea weed
- B. Frogs
- C. Spiders
- D. Gecko (lizard)

ANSWER: B

21. India's first 'Smart Managed EV (Electric Vehicle) Charging Station' has been recently commissioned in-

- A. Bengaluru
- B. Guru Gram
- C. New Delhi
- D. Mumbai

ANSWER: C

22. Consider the following statements about Dugongs-

- 1. Dugongs are considered as 'endangered' species.
- 2. As per Wildlife Institute of India (WII) there are only 200-250 dugongs left in India.
- 3. The first Dugong Conservation Reserve of India is coming up in Andaman Islands.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only 1 and 2
- B. Only 2 and 3
- C. Only 1 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: A

ECONOMICS

1.170. CHENNAI SUPER KINGS BECOMES FIRST INDIAN SPORTS ESTABLISHMENT TO GAIN UNICORN STATUS.

Why in news?

- The second most successful franchise in the Indian Premier League, (After Mumbai Indians) Chennai Super Kings (CSK) has become the first sports enterprise in the country to achieve unicorn status.
- Chennai Super Kings achieved this historic status as the franchise achieved the market cap of over \$1 billion in the private equity market.
- The Chennai-based outfit reached an all-time high of Rs 7,600 crores and became the most valuable sports company in the country.

About Chennai Super Kings

- The parent company of Chennai Super Kings is India Cements, owned by former BCCI president N Srinivasan.
- As the name suggests the parent company is involved in cement manufacturing and its market cap stood at Rs 6,869 crores – over Rs 700 crores less than Chennai Super Kings Cricket Limited (CSKCL).
- Srinivasan bought the franchise way back in 2008 for just \$91 million.



Chennai Super kings Becomes First Indian Sports Establishment To Gain Unicorn Status

1.171. UNION BUDGET OF INDIA PRESENTED FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2022-23.

Why In News

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unveiled a bigger ₹39.45 lakh crore Budget, with higher spending on highways to affordable housing with a view to fire up the key engines of the economy to sustain a world-beating recovery from the pandemic.
- A Made in India tablet has replaced the traditional 'Bahi Khata' as Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman leaves the Finance Ministry's office to go to the Parliament to present the Budget.

From where rupee Come and Goes

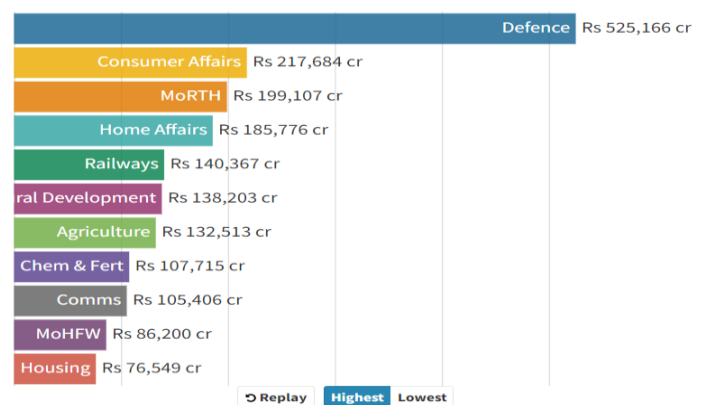
- For every rupee in the government coffer, 58 paise will come from direct and indirect taxes, 35 paise from borrowings and other liabilities, 5 paise from non-tax revenue like disinvestment and 2 paise from non-debt capital receipts, according to the Budget documents for 2022-23.
- Goods and services tax will contribute 16 paise in every rupee revenue, while corporation tax will contribute 15 paise to each rupee earned.
- The government is also looking to earn 7 paise for every rupee from Union excise duty and 5 paise from customs duty.
- Income tax will yield 15 paise to every rupee collection.
- Allocation for the defence stood at 8 paise.
- Expenditure on central sector schemes will be 15 paise, while the allocation for centrally-sponsored schemes will be 9 paise.
- The expenditure on the 'Finance Commission and other transfers' is pegged at 10 paise. Subsidies and pension will account for 8 paise and 4 paise, respectively, in each rupee spending.

- Government will spend 9 paise in every rupee on 'other expenditures'.

Key facts of Budget 2022- 23

- GDP of Country is expected to grow at 9.27 per cent.
- Focus areas:
- **PM Gati Shakti, Inclusive Development, Productivity Enhancement, Sunrise Opportunities, Energy Transition, Climate Action and Financing of investments.**
- Lay the foundation & give a blueprint of the economy over 'Amrit Kal' of next 25 years – from India at 75 to India at 100.
- Startups will be promoted to facilitate Drone Shakti to make drone a service. In select ITIs in all states, courses will be started.
- Govt continuously encouraging digital banking. Taking forward, 75 digital banking units will be set up in 75 districts.
- Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme will be extended up to March 2023 and the guaranteed cover will be expanded by Rs 50,000 crore to cover an amount of Rs 5 lakh crore.
- Issuance of e-passports will be rolled out in 2022-23 to make it easier for citizens. Ease of business 2.0 will be launched.
- 5G spectrum auctions to be carried out in calendar 2022 to enable the launch of services within FY22-23.
- Digital rupee to be issued using blockchain and other technologies and will be issued by RBI starting 2022-23. This will give a big boost to the economy. This will give a big boost to the economy. Introduction of central bank digital currency to boost digital economy, and lays down a solid plan of the government to have a public digital currency.
- Income from transfer of digital assets (Cryptocurrency) to be charged 30% tax, plus 1% tax on the transaction.
- Corporate surcharge to be reduced from 12% to 7%, says Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- Existing tax benefits for startups, which were offered redemption of taxes for 3 consecutive years, to be extended by 1 more year.
- Proposes fiscal deficit of 4.5% of GDP by 2025/26
- Projects fiscal deficit of 6.4% of GDP in 2022/23
- Revised fiscal deficit for 2021/22 at 6.9% of GDP
- Total expenditure in 2022/23 seen at 39.45 trillion rupees
- States will be allowed 4% fiscal deficit to GDP in FY23
- 50 year interest free loans over and above normal borrowing allocated to states
- Scheme for financial assistance to states for capital investment outlay to be 1 trillion rupees in 2022/23
- 100% of 1.5 lakh post offices will come on the core banking system, enabling financial inclusion and access to accounts through net banking, mobile banking, ATMs, and also providing online transfer of funds between post office accounts and bank accounts.
- This will be helpful especially for farmers and senior citizens in rural areas, enabling interoperability, and financial inclusion.
- Fiscal Deficit target set at 6.4% for FY23:
- FY23 total expenditure seen at Rs 39.45 lakh crore.
- Total Receipts other than borrowing seen at Rs 22.84 lakh crore.
- Revised Fiscal Deficit 6.9% of GDP in FY22 as against 6.8% in Budget estimates.
- Fiscal Deficit target set at 6.4% for FY23.

- National Telehealth programme:
- Announced a National telehealth programme in Budget 2022. An open platform for the National Digital Health Ecosystem will be rolled out. It will consist of digital registries of health providers and health facilities, unique health identity and universal access to health facilities. The pandemic has accentuated mental health problems in people of all ages.
- States will be encouraged to revise syllabi of agricultural universities to meet needs of natural, zero-budget & organic farming, modern-day agriculture. One class, one TV channel' program of PM eVIDYA will be expanded from 12 to 200 TV channels. This will enable all states to provide supplementary education in regional languages for classes 1 to 12.
- PM Gati Shakti plans one of the four pillars of growth. 25,000 km of national highways to be built in 2022-23.
- 400 new-generation Vande Bharat trains with higher efficiency and better facilities for passengers will be developed in the next three years. Over 2,000 km of the rail network to be brought under the indigenous world-class technology KAWACH, for safety and capacity augmentation.
- India's farmers
- Procurement of wheat in Rabi season 2021-22 and the estimated procurement of paddy in Kharif season 2021-22 will cover 1,208 lakh metric tonnes of wheat and paddy from 163 lakh farmers & Rs 2.37 lakh crores will be the direct payment of MSP value to their accounts.
- Chemical-free natural farming to be promoted in India
- Use of drones to be promoted for crop assessment, digitization of land records, spraying of insecticides and nutrients. Fund to be facilitated through NABARD to finance start-ups for agriculture and rural enterprise which are relevant for the farm produce value chain.
- In 2022-23, 80 lakh houses will be completed for identified beneficiaries of PM Awas Yojana; 60,000 houses will be identified as beneficiaries for PM Awas Yojana in rural & urban areas.
- 60,000 crore allocated for providing access to tap water to 3.8 crore households. In 2022-23, 80 lakh households will be identified for the affordable housing scheme.
- 68% of the capital procurement budget for Defence to be earmarked for domestic industry to promote Aatmanirbharta and reduce dependence on imports.
- This is up from 58% last fiscal. Defense R&D will be opened up for industry, startups and academia with 25% of the defence R&D budget.
- National Ropeways Development Program, Parvatmala to be taken up on PPP mode.
- Contracts to be awarded in 2022-23 for 8 ropeway projects of 60 Km length.
- Digital Ecosystem for Skilling and Livelihood (DESH-Stack e-portal) will be launched to empower citizens to skill, reskill or upskill through on-line training.
- Startups will be promoted to facilitate 'Drone Shakti' and for Drone-As-A-Service (DrAAS).

Budget Allocation: Defence gets top billing

1.172. SAFFRON BOWL PROJECT.

Why in news?

- **North East Centre for Technology Application and Reach (NECTAR) under Saffron Bowl project has identified few locations in Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya for saffron cultivation.**
- In Arunachal Pradesh, there is a good growth of organic saffron with flowers. In Meghalaya, sample plantations were grown at Cherrapunji, Mawsmai and Lalingtop sites.
- The following sites have been identified in Meghalaya under the Saffron Bowl project: Barapani, Cherrapunji, Mawsmai, Shillong, and Lalingtop.

About NECTAR

- **NECTAR is an autonomous society, set up under the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India, with its headquarters at Shillong, Meghalaya.**
- With this, the government is looking at harnessing and leveraging niche frontier technologies available with central scientific departments and institutions.
- The **aim** is to be the leading Centre to foster, nurture and ensure the delivery, sustenance, and use of technology applications for public and social good; and to reach and expand the benefits of technology among people, communities, institutions, and governments for equitable and inclusive social and economic development of the Northeastern Region of the country.

About Saffron

- Saffron is a plant whose **dried stigmas** (thread-like parts of the flower) are used to make saffron spice.
- Saffron cultivation is believed to have been **introduced in Kashmir by Central Asian immigrants** around the 1st Century BCE.
- It has been associated with traditional Kashmiri cuisine and represents the rich cultural heritage of the region.
- In ancient Sanskrit literature, saffron is referred to as 'bahukam'.
- It is **presently cultivated and harvested in the Karewa (highlands) of Jammu and Kashmir.**
- **Pampore region, commonly known as Saffron bowl of Kashmir, is the main contributor to saffron production.**
- **Pampore Saffron Heritage of Kashmir is one of the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage systems (GIAHS) recognised sites in India**



1.173. BANKS TO TRANSFER 15 NON-PERFORMING ASSETS ACCOUNTS WORTH Rs 50,000 CRORES TO NARCL IN FY22.

Why in news?

- As per SBI Chairman **Dinesh Kumar Khara, National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd (NARCL) or bad bank and India Debt Resolution Company Ltd (IDRCL) are ready to commence operations.**
- A total of 38 **Non-Performing Asset (NPA)** accounts worth Rs 82,845 crore have been identified to be transferred to NARCL initially.
- In Phase I, 15 stressed assets (i.e. Non-Performing Asset accounts) worth Rs 50,000 crore will be transferred to NARCL in the current financial year.

About NARCL AND IDRCL

- The **National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd** or NARCL is the name of the asset reconstruction company incorporated to take over and dispose of the stressed assets of commercial banks.
- Stressed assets of commercial banks worth Rs 2 lakh crore have been identified to be taken up in the first phase by the NARCL.
- NARCL will be starting with a total capital of Rs 6,000 crore.
- In October 2021, NARCL received the RBI's license to enable it to commence operations as a 'bad bank'.
- **Public Sector Banks (PSBs) have a 51% ownership** of NARCL.
- Banks will aggregate and consolidate stressed assets with NARCL for resolution.
- NARCL's Managing Director is PM Nair, a stressed assets expert from the State Bank of India (SBI).
- NARCL will acquire fully provisioned stressed assets by making an offer to the lead bank in a consortium of lenders; once the offer is accepted, NARCL will engage with India Debt Resolution Company Ltd. (IDRCL) for management and resolution of the stressed assets.
- **IDRCL** is an operational entity/service company that would manage the assets and engage professionals and turnaround experts in the process.
- PSBs and public FIs would hold a maximum of 49% stake in IDRCL while the remaining 51% will be vested with private lenders.
- Stressed assets acquired by NARCL will be managed by IDRCL for price discovery and value addition.

1.174. ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK LENDS RECORD \$4.6 BILLION LOANS TO INDIA IN 2021.

Why in news?

- As per the data official released by the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)**, it **provided a record USD 4.6 billion in sovereign lending to India in 2021**.
- This included USD 1.8 billion towards coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic response.
- The \$ 4.6 billion was **committed by ADB for 17 loans**.
- The \$1.8 billion COVID-19-related assistance included USD 1.5 billion for vaccine procurement and \$ 300 million to strengthen primary health care in urban areas and the country's future pandemic preparedness.
- The ADB's project portfolio in 2021 reflected the Indian government's focus on transforming cities into economically vibrant and sustainable communities.



About Asian Development Bank

- The Asian Development Bank is a regional development bank established in 1966.
- It is **headquartered in Manila**, Philippines.
- It also maintains 31 field offices around the world to promote social and economic development in Asia.

1.175. ONLY 1 OF 4 IN UDAN ROUTES SURVIVE ON COMPLETION OF 3 YEARS.

Why in news?

- As per Ministry of Civil Aviation, of the 94 RCS-Udan routes that have completed 3-year tenure, only 22 routes are in operation.
- The Ministry has cited **several challenges** to the scheme. These include-
- Difficult airline business which has **low yield and high operating costs, lack of slots at congested airports** like Delhi and Mumbai,

Only 1 of 4 in UDAN routes survive on completion of 3 years



non-availability of smaller planes and maintenance issues which require procurement of spare parts from abroad.

- There also have been **delays in completing airport development work** due to **lack of funds and non-availability of land**.

About Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik (Udan) scheme

- UDAN scheme, also known as regional connectivity scheme (RCS) was launched in 2016.
- The aim of the scheme was to take flying to the masses and **improve air connectivity to tier-2 and tier-3 cities**.
- Under the scheme, airlines have to **cap fares at ₹2,500 per seat per hour of flight for 50% of the seats in a plane** for which they receive a viability gap funding (subsidy) from the government along with some other benefits.



1.176. ODISHA LIGHT HOUSE TOURISM.

Why in news?

- The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways is to develop five light houses in the state of Odisha.
- The Light Houses are to be built in **Public – Private Partnership mode**. The **identified districts** are as follows: Gopalpur lighthouse in Ganjam, Paradip lighthouse in Jagatsinghpur, also point lighthouse in Kendrapara, Chandrabhaga lighthouse in Puri and Puri lighthouse.
- 71 lighthouses have been identified to increase lighthouse tourism. The plan is to build open air theatre, cafeteria, museum, children’s park, landscaping and eco – friendly cottages in these light houses.
- The Odisha Light house tourism being **developed is a part of Marine aids to Navigation 2021**. Under the aid, the development was to be brought in the **states of Gujarat, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Andaman and Nicobar Islands**. The aid will help develop the lighthouses into tourism destinations. It will preserve the historical and traditional values of the lighthouses.
- The lighthouses are **maintained by the Directorate General of Lighthouses and lightships** which functions under the Ministry of Shipping.
- **Facts-**
- The Jeddah port control tower is the tallest lighthouse in the world. It is 133 metres tall.
- The tallest lighthouse in India is located in Jakhau port of Gujarat. It is 45 metres tall.



1.177. RBI MONETARY POLICY: RBI KEEPS REPO RATE UNCHANGED AT 4.0 PER CENT.

Why in news?

- The Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) headed by **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das** kept the repo rate unchanged at **4 per cent** for the **10th** consecutive time while maintaining an ‘accommodative stance’ as long as necessary.
- The reverse repo rate will continue to be **3.35 per cent**. The central bank had last revised the policy rate on May 22, 2020, in an off-policy cycle to perk up demand by cutting the interest rate to a historic low.
- **The Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and bank rates remain unchanged:**
- Policy Repo Rate: 4.00%
- Reverse Repo Rate: 3.35%
- Marginal Standing Facility Rate: 4.25%

- Bank Rate: 4.25%
- CRR: 4%
- SLR: 18.00%
- **RBI Monetary Policy Highlights & Key Decisions:**
- The MPC decided to continue with the **accommodative stance**.
- RBI has projected the real **GDP growth for 2022-23 at 7.8 per cent**.
- For the current fiscal year, RBI projected real GDP growth of **9.2 per cent** and expects that it will take the economy above the pre-pandemic level.
- For the current fiscal year, RBI retained its retail inflation projection at **5.3 per cent**.
- MPC has been given the mandate to maintain annual inflation at 4 per cent until March 31, 2026, with an upper tolerance of 6 per cent and lower tolerance of 2 per cent.

Monetary policy instruments

- **Repo Rate:** It is the (fixed) interest rate at which banks can borrow overnight liquidity from the Reserve Bank of India against the collateral of government and other approved securities under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF).
- **Reverse Repo Rate:** It is the (fixed) interest rate at which the Reserve Bank of India can absorb liquidity from banks on an overnight basis, against the collateral of eligible government securities under the LAF.
- **Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF):** The LAF has overnight as well as term repo auctions under it. The term repo helps in the development of the inter-bank term money market. This market sets the benchmarks for the pricing of loans and deposits. This helps in improving the transmission of monetary policy. As per the evolving market conditions, the Reserve Bank of India also conducts variable interest rate reverse repo auctions.
- **Marginal Standing Facility (MSF):** MSF is a provision that enables the scheduled commercial banks to borrow an additional amount of overnight money from the Reserve Bank of India. Bank can do this by dipping into their Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) portfolio up to a limit at a penal rate of interest. This helps the banks to sustain the unanticipated liquidity shocks faced by them.



1.178. NABARD LAUNCHES PROGRAM JIVA TO PROMOTE NATURAL FARMING.

Why in news?

- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is implementing **Jiva** (life) alongside its network of non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders in rural areas to revitalise 'life' around agriculture.
- It is a **natural farming program under NABARD's** ongoing **watershed** and **Wadi** (tribal development projects) programs in 11 states.
- To be implemented under Wadi programmes. It consists of five geographical regions. These areas are environmentally fragile and rain-fed areas.
- NABARD will collaborate with Australia-based Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) for simple soil water monitoring techniques and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for scientific validation of natural farming activities for research support.



1.179. FINANCE MINISTER LAUNCHES FIRST COLOUR SOUVENIR COIN ON 'PANCHTANTRA'.

Why in news?

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday launched the **first colour souvenir coin** on 'Panchtantra' on the occasion of 17th foundation day of Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Limited (SPMCIL).
- The **Panchtantra** was authored by **Vishnu Sharma during 200 BC**. It is an ancient Indian collection of interrelated animal fables in Sanskrit verse and prose.
- **About SPMCIL-**
 - It is a wholly owned Schedule 'A' Miniratna Category-I company of Government of India.
 - It is involved in the manufacture/ production of currency and bank notes, security paper, Non Judicial Stamp Papers, Postal Stamps and stationery, Travel Documents, Cheques, Bonds, Warrant, Special certificates with security features etc.

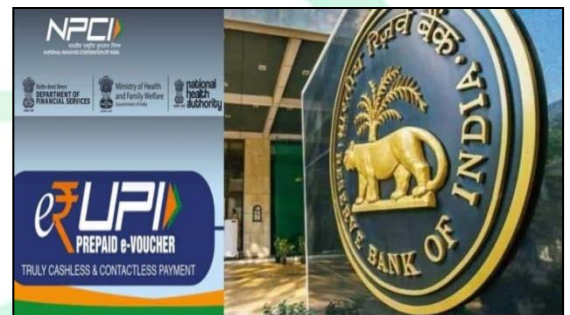
1.180. RBI INCREASES CAP ON E-RUPI VOUCHERS.

Why in news?

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on increased the cap on e-RUPI vouchers issued by the central and state governments **from the existing Rs 10,000 to Rs 1,00,000 per voucher**.
- The central bank has also permitted such **e-RUPI vouchers to be used more than once** until the amount of the voucher is completely redeemed.

About e-Rupi Digital Voucher

- The e-RUPI is a **prepaid digital voucher**, which a beneficiary gets on his phone in form of an SMS or QR code, to facilitate cashless payment for various services like donations, corporate gift vouchers, etc.
- It is **developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** and was launched in August 2021.
- **It allows users to redeem voucher without a card, digital payments app or internet banking access.**
- It does not require beneficiaries to have a bank account and works on basic phones.



1.181. RAILTEL GETS ICAI AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN FINANCIAL REPORTING.

Why in news?

- RailTel has bagged the ICAI award for excellence in financial reporting for the year 2020-21 in Public Sector Entities Category. The company was adjudged as the winner in the category "plaque".
- **Financial Reporting** includes the preparation and presentation of financial information. Effective Financial Reporting plays a significant role in accelerating the economic growth of a country as the information provided through annual reports enables the management and other relevant stakeholders in taking various effective business, investment, regulatory decisions.
- The award was given by the **Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)**, the premier accounting body which has been holding the annual competition for these awards since 1958.
- This award has been instituted with a view to promote better standards in the preparation and presentation of information in the financial statements.



1.182. SCHEME FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF DE-NOTIFIED, NOMADIC AND SEMI NOMADIC TRIBES (SEED) LAUNCHED.

Why in news?

- Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment launched the **Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs (SEED)** for the welfare of De-notified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic Communities.
- DNTs, NTs, SNTs are the one of the most deprived and economically weaker communities in India.
- The misery of these communities began with the enactment of the **Criminal Tribes Act, 1871** during the British rule. These **communities were subjugated, persecuted and neglected**. The policies of the colonial government affected lives and livelihood adversely. They were **branded as criminals under various colonial acts**. This led to the **forcible alienation from their traditional occupations and habitations**. They remained hunter gatherers and pastoral/peripatetic.
- Even after the Independence; they have not benefitted much from the planned development of over seven decades. They were deprived of state support like the SCs/STs.
- Commissions set up for DNTs
 - **Renke Commission** was set up in 2008
 - National Commission was constituted in 2015 under the chairmanship of **Shri Bhiku Ramji Idate**.
- Based on the recommendation of Idate commission, the Government of India set up the Development and Welfare Board for DNTs, SNTs &NTs (DWBDNCs) in 2019.

About SEED scheme

- It is an an umbrella scheme for empowerment of these communities.
- The four component of the SEED scheme are:
 1. **Educational empowerment**- Free coaching to students from these communities for Civil Services, entry to professional courses like medicine, engineering, MBA, etc.
 2. **Health Insurance** through PMJAY of National Health Authority.
 3. **Livelihoods to support income generation**, and
 4. **Housing** (through PMAY/IAY)
- The scheme will ensure expenditure of Rs.200 crore to be spent over five years beginning 2021-22. The **DWBDNCs has been tasked with the implementation of this scheme**.



1.183. RBI EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR NBFCs TO MEET NEW NON PERFORMING ASSETS (NPA) UP GRADATION NORMS.

Why in news?

- The Reserve Bank of India on Tuesday extended the timeline by six months till September 30, 2022 for nbfc's to adhere the new Non Performing Assets recognition norms.
- Earlier the regulator had set March 31 deadline for non-bank lenders to upgrade npas only after all arrears and principal dues are paid.



About Non-Banking Financial Companies

- A Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) is a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 engaged in the business of loans and advances, acquisition of shares/ stocks/ bonds/ debentures/ securities issued by Government or local authority or other marketable securities of a like nature, leasing, hire-purchase, insurance business, chit business but does not include any institution whose principal business is that of agriculture activity, industrial activity, purchase or sale of any goods (other than securities) or providing any services and sale/purchase/construction of immovable property.
- A non-banking institution which is a company and has principal business of receiving deposits under any scheme or arrangement in one lump sum or in installments by way of contributions or in any other manner, is also a non-banking financial company.

- Nbfcs lend and make investments and hence their activities are akin to that of banks; however there are a few differences as given below:
 - NBFC cannot accept demand deposits;
 - Nbfcs do not form part of the payment and settlement system and cannot issue cheques drawn on itself;
 - Deposit insurance facility of Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation is not available to depositors of nbfcs, unlike in case of banks.

About npas

- Non-Performing Assets is a loan or advance wherein interest or installments of principal remain overdue for a period of 90 days.

Classification of npas

- **Substandard Assets**-These are the assets which have remained NPA for a period of less than or equal to 12 months.
- **Doubtful Assets**- If the asset is in the substandard category for a period of 12 months
- **Loss Assets**- These assets are of little value, it can no longer continue as a bankable asset, there could be some recovery value.

1.184. SIDBI LAUNCHES 'WASTE TO WEALTH CREATION' PROGRAMME 2022.

Why in news?

- Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has launched the '**Waste to Wealth Creation**' programme for **women in the Sundarbans** in West Bengal.
- In this, the women will make ornaments and showpieces from the fish scales.
- SIDBI will extend benefits to 50 women indirectly generating revenues from alternate livelihoods.
- Later, these women are expected to become a trainer for replicating and disseminating the knowledge among other aspirants. This is a part of **mission Swavalamban of SIDBI** that aims to support artisans to become sustainable.



1.185. CREDIT GUARANTEE FUND SCHEME FOR MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES.

Why in news?

- Recently, non-scheduled urban co-operative banks, state co-operative banks, and district central co-operative banks have been included as member lending institutions (MLIs) under the Scheme.
- The scheme was **launched in 2000** jointly by **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** and **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises**.
- **Objective:** To make available collateral-free credit to the micro and small enterprise sector.
- Fund and non-fund based (Letters of Credit, Bank Guarantee etc.) credit facilities up to Rs 200 lakh per eligible borrower are covered
- Trust named **Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises** was established to implement the scheme.



1.186. NEPAL TO BE THE FIRST FOREIGN COUNTRY TO ADOPT UNIFIED PAYMENTS INTERFACE (UPI).

Why in news?

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) announced that Nepal will be the first foreign country to adopt India's UPI system.
- It is expected to serve the larger digital public good in Nepal and bolster interoperable real-time person-to-person (P2P) and person-to-merchant (P2M) transactions.
- **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** is a system that **powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application** (of any participating bank), merging several banking features.
- Key Features of UPI: Instant transfer of funds, bill sharing facility, can be used 24 hours and on all public holidays etc.



NPCI International, Gateway Payment Service, and Manam Infotech join hands to deploy UPI solution in Nepal 17/02/2022

NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL), the International arm of National Payments Corporation of India has joined hands with Gateway Payments Service Pvt Ltd, authorized Payment System Operators in Nepal, and Manam Infotech Private Limited to deploy Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in Nepal for the larger Digital Public Good and to bolster interoperable real-time Person to person (P2P) and Merchant payment transactions (P2M) in Nepal. Nepal shall be the first country outside of India to adopt UPI as the payments platform driving the digitalization of cash transactions and furthering the vision and objectives of the Nepal Government and Nepal Rastra Bank as the Central bank.

1.187. MERI POLICY MERE HATH DOOR-STEP CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCED.

Why in news?

- With the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) entering the seventh year of implementation in the upcoming Kharif season, the government has announced a new doorstep crop insurance distribution policy known as 'Meri Policy Mere Hath'.
- The 'Meri Policy Mere Hath' door-step campaign has been launched to ensure that all farmers are well informed about their land records, policies, and the PMFBY's claim and grievance redressal process.
- In the upcoming Kharif season which will be beginning in June, the doorstep campaign will be launched in all implementing states.



About Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)

- In the 2016, PMFBY was launched with the aim of providing financial assistance to all the farmers who have suffered crop damage or loss from natural disasters.

About Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY):

- In the 2016, PMFBY was launched with the aim of providing financial assistance to all the farmers who have suffered crop damage or loss from natural disasters.
- It provides a **comprehensive insurance cover** against failure of the crop thus helping in stabilising the income of the farmers.
- **Scope:** All food & oilseed crops and annual commercial/horticultural crops for which past yield data is available.
- **Premium:** The prescribed premium is **2%** to be paid by farmers for all Kharif crops and **1.5%** for all rabi crops.
- In the case of annual commercial and horticultural crops, the premium is **5%**.
- Premium cost over and above the farmer share was **equally subsidized** by States and GoI.
- However, GoI shared **90% of the premium subsidy for North Eastern States** to promote the uptake in the region.
- The scheme was **compulsory for loanee farmers** availing Crop Loan/**Kisan Credit Card (KCC)** account for notified crops and voluntary for others.
- In order to ensure more efficient and effective implementation of the scheme, the central government **had revamped PMFBY in the 2020 Kharif season.**
- This overhauled PMFBY is often called **PMFBY 2.0**, it has the following features:
- **Completely Voluntary:** Enrolment 100% voluntary for all farmers from 2020 Kharif.

- **Limit to Central Subsidy:** The Cabinet has decided to cap the Centre's premium subsidy under the scheme for premium rates up to 30% for unirrigated areas/crops and 25% for irrigated areas/crops.
- **More Flexibility to States:** The government has given the flexibility to states/UTs to implement PMFBY and given them the option to select any number of additional risk covers/features.
- **Investing in ICE Activities:** Insurance companies have to now spend 0.5% of the total premium collected on information, education and communication (IEC) activities.

1.188. WORLD BANK AND GOI SIGN AGREEMENT FOR REWARD PROJECT.

Why in news?

- The Government of India (GoI), and the World Bank signed loan agreements of USD 115 million to implement the "Rejuvenating Watersheds for Agricultural Resilience through Innovative Development" (REWARD) Project in the states of Karnataka and Odisha with the support of the respective governments.
- REWARD is a \$115 million project signed by Central government, Karnataka, Odisha, and World Bank.
- The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), lending arm of World Bank Group financing will support the \$115 million loan has a maturity of 15 years, including a grace period of 4.5 years.
- Karnataka with \$60 million ,
- Odisha with \$49 million , and
- The remaining \$6 million will be for the central government's Department of Land Resources.
- It will help in the adoption of improved watershed management practices that further help increase farmers' resilience to climate change, promote higher productivity and better incomes.
- **Watershed management** refers to implementing land use practices and water management practices to protect and improve the quality of the water and other natural resources within a watershed.
- **REWARD Project:**
- This project is an initiative of the Department of Land Resources (DoLR), Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) and World Bank. It is proposed as a 6 years project, from 2021 to 2026 and one of the largest watershed management programs in the world.



1.189. COAL INDIA GETS 'INDIA'S MOST TRUSTED PUBLIC SECTOR COMPANY' AWARD.

Why in news?

- Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), Kolkata awarded Most Dependable Public Sector Company in India award 2022' to **Coal India Limited (CIL)**, an organization under Ministry of Coal in Energy Meet & Excellence Awards 2022 ceremony.



About Coal India Limited (CIL):

- CIL is a **state owned enterprise** and a **Maharatna** company that has expanded their operations and emerged as a global giant.
- CIL has **7 producing subsidiaries** namely Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL), Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL), Central Coalfields Limited (CCL), Western Coalfields Limited (WCL), South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL), Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL) and Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCI) and One mine planning and consultancy company that is Central Mine Planning & Design Institute (CMPDI).
- CIL also has a **foreign subsidiary Coal India Africana Limitada (CIAL)** in Mozambique.
- CIL has incorporated two new subsidiaries i.e. CIL NaviKamiya Urja Limited and CIL Solar PV Limited.

1.190. ASIA'S BIGGEST BIO-CNG PLANT INAUGURATED IN INDORE.

Why in news?

- Recently, the PM inaugurated Asia's biggest Bio-CNG plant - the Gobar-Dhan plant - in Indore.
- Government is working to build such plants in 75 major municipal bodies in the next 2 years.
- Municipal solid waste based Gobar-Dhan plant is in line with "garbage-free cities" under the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) Urban 2.0.
- **Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBAR-DHAN)** scheme focuses on managing and converting cattle dung and solid waste in farms to compost, biogas and bio-CNG.
- It was launched by Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation (Now Ministry of Jal Shakti) in 2018 as part of the SBM (Gramin).



1.191. INDIA ELECTED FOR CHAIRMANSHIP OF INTERNATIONAL RUBBER STUDY GROUP.

Why in news?

- India has been elected for the Chairmanship of the International Rubber Study Group (IRSG), an **Inter-governmental organisation** of natural rubber (NR) and synthetic rubber (SR) producing and consuming countries.
- **India succeeds Cote d'Ivoire** as the chairman of IRSG.
- KN Raghavan, Executive Director of Indian Rubber Board and the Head of the Indian delegation to IRSG will officiate as the Chairman of IRSG for the next 2 years.



About International Rubber Study Group (IRSG):

- Members- Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, European Union, India, Nigeria, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka
- **Formed in 1944**, IRSG is **headquartered in Singapore**.

Roles of IRSG:

- IRSG is the only forum for NR and SR producers and consumers to discuss matters affecting the world rubber industry and act as an interface between government and the Industry.
- IRSG will collect and share the statistics on the production, consumption and trade in NR and SR across the globe.
- It is the only International commodity body which is approved by the Common Fund for Commodities for development financing in rubber sector.

1.192. ANGADIA SYSTEM.

Why in news?

- Angadias have recently been under attack by robbers owing to the large quantities of cash they carry.
- It is a **century-old parallel banking system** in the country where traders send cash generally from one state to another through a person called Angadia that stands for courier.
- It is used largely in jewellery business.
- The cash involved is huge and it is the responsibility of the Angadia to transfer cash from one state to another for which they charge a nominal fee.
- Generally, it is the Gujarati, Marwari and Malbari community that are involved in the business.



1.193. INDIAN RAILWAYS AND BHEL JOINTLY COMMISSION INDIA'S FIRST SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC PLANT.

Why in news?

- **Indian Railways** along Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), has successfully commissioned **India's first Solar Photovoltaic Plant of 1.7-MegaWatt (MW) at Bina, Madhya Pradesh.**
- The plant is under extensive testing and will be in operation for Indian Railways.
- The **solar plant will be directly connected to the overhead traction system.** And will produce approximately 25 lakh units of energy annually.
- The plant has 5800 solar modules, mounted on 145 sets of modular mounting structure.
- The construction of a solar plant by Indian Railways is a step to fulfil its self-sufficient energy needs by 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.
- The solar power plant has been installed on vacant unused lands for Renewable Energy (RE) projects of Indian Railways.
- Aim:
- The installation of the solar plants is to achieve conversion of Indian Railways to 'Net Zero' Carbon Emission and 'Go Green' by 2030.
- Aiming to reduce 2,160 tonnes of carbon dioxide emission every year.
- Aims to save around **Rs 1.37 crore** every year.
- Technology Involved:
- The **solar plant converts Direct Current (DC) into Single Phase Alternating Current (AC)** to feed directly to the Overhead Traction System of Railways.
- The high capacity inverters were used to convert DC energy to AC energy of 25 kilovolts (kV) AC-1 power to run electric trains.



1.194. NHPC SIGNS PACT TO HDFC BANK TO MONETIZE RETURN ON EQUITY OF CHAMERA-I POWER PLANT.

Why in news?

- Recently State-owned National Hydropower Generation Company (NHPC) limited signed a facility agreement with HDFC bank limited to securitise return on equity (RoE) of its 540 MegaWatt (3 X 180 MegaWatt) Chamera-I Power Plant in Himachal Pradesh for 10 years.

Business / Finance By Capital Market

NHPC securitizes RoE of Chamera-I Power Station for 10 year period

NHPC announced that with regard to monetization by securitization, the company has signed a Facility Agreement today i.e. February 24,...



About Chamera-I Power Station:

- Chamera-I Power Plant (3 x 180 MW) is an underground powerhouse with an installed capacity of 540 MW houses 3 units of 180 MW capacity each designed which generates 1664.56 million units of hydropower from **river Ravi in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh.**
- The power plant comprises a **121 metre high, 295-metre long concrete arch-gravity dam** with a **9.5-metre diameter**, 6.414-kilometre long headrace tunnel.
- The **beneficiary states/Union Territories (UTs)** of the powerhouse are **Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh (UP), Delhi, Himachal Pradesh (HP), Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), Punjab, Rajasthan and Chandigarh.**

1.195. NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK: FIRST MULTILATERAL AGENCY TO OPEN OFFICE IN GIFT CITY.

Why in news?

- New Development Bank (NDB) will become the 1st multilateral agency to open an office in the Gujarat International Finance Tec (Gift) City, Gujarat which will start its operation by the mid of May 2022.
- NDB also expects to partner with the newly launched National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NBFID) to support crucial infrastructure projects in India.

About New Development Bank

- NDB was set up in 2014 by the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa)
- It started operations in 2015 at Shanghai, China (headquarters) with the **objective** of mobilising resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in the BRICS as well as other emerging markets.



New Development Bank (NDB) will become the 1st multilateral agency to open an office in the Gujarat International Finance Tec (Gift) City, Gujarat which will start its operation by the mid of May 2022.

PRACTICE MCQS

1. Which of the following is the first Indian sports establishment to gain unicorn status?

- A. Mumbai Indians
- B. Lucknow Super Giants
- C. Rajasthan Royals
- D. Chennai super kings

ANSWER: D

2. With reference to Union budget 2022- 23, which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?

- 1. The total Volume of Union budget 2022- 23 is ₹39.45 lakh crore.
- 2. Digital rupee to be issued using blockchain and other technologies and will be issued by RBI.
- 3. Highest allocation will be given to Defence sector.

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

3. Consider the following statements:

- 1. Saffron is majorly cultivated and harvested in the Karewas (highlands) of Jammu and Kashmir.
- 2. Pampore region in Kashmir is known as Saffron bowl of Kashmir.
- 3. Pampore Saffron Heritage of Kashmir is one of the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage systems (GIAHS) recognised sites in India.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

D. All are correct

ANSWER: D

4. Consider the following statements regarding National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd (NARCL) and India Debt Resolution Company Ltd (IDRCL):

- 1. These are incorporated to take over and dispose of the stressed assets of commercial banks.
- 2. NARCL has majority stake of private lenders while IDRCL have majority ownership of Public sector banks.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

5. Consider the following statements regarding Asian Development Bank-

- 1. As per recent reports, ADB lent record \$4.6 billion loans to India in 2021.
- 2. ADB headquarters are located in Tokyo.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

6. Consider the following statements regarding Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN) scheme:

- 1. It is a regional connectivity scheme launched in 2018.

2. Under the scheme, airlines have to cap fares at ₹3,500 per seat per hour of flight for 50% of the seats in a plane.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: D

7. Consider the following statements regarding lighthouse tourism-

- 1. Development of five lighthouse projects for tourism in Odisha recently is a part of Marine Aids to Navigation 2021.
- 2. The lighthouses are maintained by the Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships which functions under the Ministry of Tourism.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

8. Consider the following statements about instruments of monetary policy-

- 1. Repo Rate is the interest rate at which the Reserve Bank of India can absorb liquidity from banks.
- 2. Reverse Repo Rate is the interest rate at which banks can borrow overnight liquidity from the RBI.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: D

9. Jiva, a natural farming program has been launched recently by-

- A. NITI Aayog
- B. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
- C. Reliance Philanthropy
- D. none of the above

ANSWER: B

10. India's first ever colour souvenir coin was launched recently. It is based on-

- A. Mahabharata
- B. Ramayan
- C. Jataka Tales
- D. Panchtantra

ANSWER: D

11. Consider the following statements regarding e-Rupi Digital Voucher:

- 1. It does not require beneficiaries to have a bank account and works on basic phones.
- 2. It allows users to redeem voucher without a card, digital payments app or internet banking access.
- 3. It is developed by the National Payments Corporation of India.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only 1 and 2
- B. Only 2 and 3
- C. Only 1 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: D

12. Which public sector enterprise has won Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) award for excellence in financial reporting in Public Sector Entities Category?

- A. Gas Authority of India Ltd.
- B. Steel Authority of India Ltd

- C. RailTel
- D. Bharat Electronics Ltd.

ANSWER: C

13. Consider the following statements regarding Scheme for Economic Empowerment of De-notified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic Tribes (SEED)-

1. It is an umbrella scheme for these communities focusing on Educational empowerment, Health Insurance, Livelihoods to support income generation and Housing.
2. Development and Welfare Board for DNTs, SNTs &NTs is the implementing agency.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

14. Non-Performing Asset is a loan or advance wherein interest or installments of principal remain overdue for a period of _____.

- A. 45 Days
- B. 90 Days
- C. 120 Days
- D. 180 Days

ANSWER: B

15. An initiative 'Waste to Wealth Creation' programme for women in West Bengal was recently launched by-

- A. State Bank of India
- B. National Bank For Agriculture And Rural Development
- C. Small Industries Development Bank of India
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: C

16. Consider the following statements regarding Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises-

1. Its objective is to make available collateral-free credit to the micro and small enterprise sector.
2. The scheme was launched in 2000 jointly by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

17. Which country has become the first foreign country to adopt India's United Payment Interface system?

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

ANSWER: B

18. With respect to Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, consider the following statements-

1. It was launched in 2014 with the aim of providing financial assistance to all the farmers who have suffered crop damage.
2. It was made 100% voluntary for all farmers from 2020 Kharif season.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

19. The Government of India has partnered with which institution to implement the "Rejuvenating Watersheds for Agricultural Resilience through Innovative Development" (REWARD) Project?

- A. World Bank
- B. International Monetary Fund
- C. United Nations Environment Programme
- D. Food and Agriculture Organization

ANSWER: A

20. Which public sector undertaking has been awarded Most Dependable Public Sector Company in India award 2022' by ASSOCHAM?

- A. Gas Authority of India Limited.
- B. Steel Authority of India Limited
- C. Coal India Limited
- D. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation

ANSWER: C

21. Asia's biggest Bio-CNG plant has been recently inaugurated in-

- A. Indore
- B. Pune
- C. Ahmedabad
- D. Varanasi

ANSWER: A

22. Consider the following statements regarding International Rubber Study Group (IRSG)-

1. It is an inter-governmental organisation of both natural rubber (NR) and synthetic rubber (SR) producing and consuming countries.
2. India has been recently elected for the IRSG chairmanship.
3. IRSG is headquartered in Jakarta.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

D. 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: A

23. Angadia system is associated with-

- A. Cash courier service for Jewellery sector.
- B. Land revenue system in Medieval Gujarat.
- C. Agriculture cropping system in Assam.
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: A

24. A 1.7-megawatt solar photovoltaic plant for the Railways has been recently commissioned at-

- A. Bina, Madhya Pradesh
- B. Gaya, Bihar
- C. Pune, Maharashtra
- D. Indore, Madhya Pradesh

ANSWER: A

25. Chamera-I power station seen recently in news, is located on which river?

- A. Ravi
- B. Chenab
- C. Satluj
- D. Jhelum

ANSWER: A

26. Consider the following statements regarding New Development Bank (NDB)-

1. NDB was set up in 2014 by the BRICS countries.
2. It is headquartered at Beijing, China.
3. It will become the 1st multilateral agency to open an office in the GIFT city.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only 1 and 2
- B. Only 2 and 3
- C. Only 1 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: C

DEFENSE

1.196. FIRST SEA SORTIE OF FIFTH SCORPENE SUBMARINE 'VAGIR'.

Why in news?

- The fifth submarine of Project 75, Yard 11879, Indian Navy's Kalvari class commenced her sea trials on 01 Feb 22. The submarine was launched in Nov 2020 from the Kanhoji Angre Wet Basin of Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL).
- The submarine would be named **Vagir**, after commissioning.
- Three submarines **INS Kalavari**, **INS Khanderi** and **INS Kharanj** have been commissioned into the Indian Navy.
- Trials of 4th and 5th submarines, the **INS Vela** and **INS Vagir** are underway while the construction of the 6th **Vagsheer** is underway.

About Project 75

- Project-75 (I) envisages indigenous construction of **six** modern conventional submarines with contemporary equipment, weapons & sensors including **Fuel-Cell based AIP (Air Independent Propulsion Plant)**, advanced torpedoes, modern missiles and state-of-the-art countermeasure systems.
- This would provide a major boost to the indigenous design and construction capability of submarines in India, in addition to bringing in the latest submarine design and technologies as part of the project.
- The overall aim is to progressively build indigenous capabilities in the private sector to design, develop and manufacture complex weapon systems for the future needs of the Armed Forces.
- The project would not only aid in boosting the core submarine/shipbuilding industry but would also greatly enhance the manufacturing/industrial sector, especially the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) by developing an industrial ecosystem for the manufacture of associated spares/systems/equipment related to submarines.
- This will be an important step towards meeting broader national objectives, encouraging self-reliance and aligning the defence sector with the 'Make in India' initiative of the Government.



1.197. BHARAT DYNAMICS LIMITED (BDL TO MAKE KONKURS-M MISSILE FOR INDIAN ARMY.

Why in news?

- Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) and Indian Army on Wednesday signed a three-year contract of Rs 3,131.82 crore for **manufacture and supply of anti-tank guided missile Konkurs-M** to the Indian Army.
- BDL has augmented its manufacturing capacity to meet the domestic as well as overseas demand for Konkurs-M. BDL also exports the missile to friendly countries. As a part of its global outreach, the company also offers **portable anti-tank guided missiles Nag, Milan-2T and Amogha**.

About Konkurs-M

- Konkurs-M is a **second-generation, mechanised infantry anti-tank guided missile**, to destroy armoured vehicles.
- The missile **can be launched either from BMP-II tank or from ground launcher**.
- It covers a **range between 75 and 4,000 metre** with a flight time of 19 seconds.

1.198. INDIA'S GOA SHIPYARD LTD DELIVERED THE 5TH VESSEL ICGS 'SAKSHAM'.

Why in news?

- **India's Goa Shipyard Ltd** delivered the 5th and final vessel of the **5 Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Vehicle (CGOPV) Project** ahead of contractual schedule. The vessel was named **ICGS 'Saksham'**. The point to be underlined- all 5 vessels have been delivered before time to the Indian Coast Guard. The contract for 5 CGOPVs was signed by GSL with the Ministry of Defence on 26 August 2016.



About the vessels:

- All the five CGOPVs will be the most advanced patrol vessels in service with the coast guard. Also, the 2,400 tonnes vessels are fitted with additional features including quick response boats for rescue and anti-piracy and gunnery simulators.
- The hull is designed to provide fuel efficiency, crew comfort and enhanced sea keeping qualities.
- With computerised control systems, they are the most advanced patrol vessels in service with the Coast Guard. It has an indigenous content of about 70% and weighs around 2400 tonnes.

1.199. IRAN UNVEILS NEW MISSILE KHAIBER- BUSTER.

Why in news?

- Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) of Iran has revealed a long range ballistic Surface to surface missile.
- The missile, which uses solid fuel and has a range of 1,450 km is called the Kheiber Shekhan (Khaibar-buster), a reference to a Jewish castle overrun by Muslim warriors in the early days of Islam.
- The missile has high accuracy, is manufactured completely domestically, and can defeat missile shield systems.



1.200. INDIA-OMAN BILATERAL EXERCISE EASTERN BRIDGE-VI BEGINS IN RAJASTHAN.

Why in news?

- A 6th edition of 5-day bilateral air exercise between the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) namely 'Eastern Bridge-VI' commenced at Jodhpur Air Force Station in Rajasthan.
- Objective: This exercise is an opportunity to **enhance operational capability** and **interoperability** between the two Air Forces.
- Participants:
- The Indian Air Force (IAF) has deployed a fleet of Sukhoi-30MKIs, Jaguar and Mirage-2000 fighter jets for the sixth edition of the exercise 'Eastern Bridge'.
- The Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) has deployed its F-16 jets.
- Eastern Bridge promotes professional interaction, exchange of experiences and enhancement of operational knowledge, and strengthening of bilateral relations.
- Exercise Eastern Bridge V was held in October 2019 at the Air Force Base Masirah, Oman.



1.201. ISRAEL SUCCESSFULLY TEST FIRES ITS "C-DOME" NAVAL AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM.

Why in news?

- On 21 February 2022, Israel successfully test fired its "C-Dome or Protective Dome" naval defence system based on Iron Dome which was tested against rockets, cruise missiles and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV).
- The C-Dome was successfully tested for the first time from Saar-6 Corvette INS Magen, Israel's Naval Warship.
- The C-Dome is installed in corvette ships to protect Israel's coastline and offshore natural gas assets in the Mediterranean.
- The defence system has been upgraded to defend against the threat of Iranian proxies, which targeted natural gas assets of Israel.

About The "C-Dome or Protective Dome" Missiles:

- The C-Dome is a **multilayer missile defence system**, alongside the Arrow and David's Sling systems which is capable of intercepting everything from long-range missiles to short-range rockets.
- The C-Dome has the **speed of mach 2.2** (2716.56 kmph).
- The command and control system was developed by the mPrest software company.
- The Multi-Function Surveillance, Track and Guidance Radar (MF-STAR) was developed by IAI's Elta Systems.



1.202. MH-60R MULTI-ROLE HELICOPTERS ARE EXPECTED TO ARRIVE IN JULY.

Why in news?

- The first batch of three MH-60R Multi-Role Helicopters is expected to arrive in India in the month of July 2022 in Kochi, Kerala.
- These three helicopters were already handed over by the US in 2021 but Indian pilots were using these helicopters for training purpose in Pensacola, San Diego and Florida of United States.
- The Indian Navy signed a contract agreement for these helicopters with the US.
- The MH-60R Multi-Role helicopters will replace Sea King 42/42A helicopters, which were decommissioned in the 1990s.
- They will operate from frontline ships and aircraft carriers and provide better surveillance, crucial traits of flexibility and assault capacity to India.
- In 2020, India signed a USD 2.2 billion deal for MH-60R helicopters **built by Lockheed Martin** during the visit of former U.S. President Donald Trump. All deliveries will be completed by 2025.



1.203. BOEING DELIVERS 12TH P-8I MARITIME PATROL AIRCRAFT TO INDIA.

Why in news?

- **The Indian Navy** has received the **12th anti-submarine warfare aircraft P-8I** from the US-based aerospace company Boeing.
- This is the fourth of four additional aircraft, for which the contract was signed in 2016. The Ministry of Defence had signed a contract for eight P-8I aircraft in 2009. However, later in 2016, it signed a contract for four additional P-8I aircraft.



About P-8I maritime patrol aircraft:

- P-8I is a long-range maritime reconnaissance and Anti-Submarine Warfare Aircraft, and a variant of the P-8A Poseidon used by the US Navy.
- India was the **first international customer of Boeing** for this aircraft. The **Indian Navy inducted the first P-8I aircraft in 2013**. The P-8I aircraft is a variant of the P-8A Poseidon aircraft that Boeing developed as a replacement for the US Navy's ageing P-3 fleet.
- P-8I aircraft is equipped for long-range anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance in support of the broad area, maritime and littoral operations. Its communication and sensor suite includes indigenous equipment developed by defence PSUs and private manufacturers. With its high speed and high endurance of about 10 hours, the aircraft is capable of thrusting a punitive response and maintaining a watch over India's immediate and extended.

1.204. 'MILAN' MULTILATERAL NAVAL EXERCISE.

Why in news?

- 'Milan' is the name of the multilateral naval exercise which is hosted by the Indian Navy. This is a **biennial exercise** and features seminars, sports, social events, and professional exercises among the participating nations.
- This exercise was started in the year 1995.
- Along with the Indian Navy, the navies of Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka had participated in the inaugural edition of this exercise.
- **All editions of Milan were held in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands**, under the Andaman and Nicobar Command.
- The Navy, in **2020**, announced that the **next edition of Milan will be held at Visakhapatnam**, under the Eastern Naval Command.
- This exercise is held under **various themes** like anti-submarine warfare, and other areas.
- Capacity building, training, marine domain awareness, technical assistance, hydrography, and operational exercises are among the areas of cooperation for the exercise.
- Through professional engagement with friendly navies, the exercise aims to hone operational abilities, instill best practices and procedures, and enable learning in the maritime environment.

- Milan Exercise will be the largest edition of this exercise with 46 countries.
- This year's Milan exercise will be held in Visakhapatnam in February 2022.
- The QUAD countries will also be participating.



About Milan Exercise 2022

- This year's Milan Exercise will be the largest edition of this exercise with 46 countries invited to participate. This year's Milan exercise will be held in Visakhapatnam in February 2022. The QUAD countries will also be participating.
- Milan 22 is being held in two phases over a nine-day period, with the harbor phase being held from February 25 to February 28, and the sea phase from March 1 to 4.
- The theme for this year's exercise is '**Camaraderie – Cohesion – Collaboration**' through which India will be projected to the world as a responsible maritime power.

1.205. THIRD INDIA-JAPAN JOINT EXERCISE 'EX DHARMA GUARDIAN-2022'.

Why in news?

- The **third edition** of the joint military exercise "**EX DHARMA GUARDIAN-2022**" between **India and Japan** will be conducted from 27 February to 10 March 2022, at **Belagavi (Belgaum), Karnataka**.
- The 15th Battalion the **Maratha Light Infantry Regiment of the Indian Army** and 30th Infantry Regiment of **Japanese Ground Self Defence Forces (JGSDF)** are participating in this 12 days long joint exercise.

About the exercise:

- The military exercise will focus on operations in Jungle & Semi-Urban/Urban terrains.
- The exercise aims at enhancing the inter-operability and foster mutual understanding between the two Armies.
- Exercise DHARMA GUARDIAN is an annual military training event, being conducted in India since 2018.



EX DHARMA GUARDIAN-2022" between India and Japan will be conducted from 27 February to 10 March 2022, at Belagavi (Belgaum), Karnataka



CivilsTap Hlmachal

PRACTICE MCQS

1. Consider the following statements:

1. Project 75 encompasses indigenous construction of six modern nuclear submarines.
2. These are being constructed at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL).

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

2. Konkurs-M, seen recently in news is a/an -

- A. Assault rifl
- B. Naval corvette
- C. Anti-tank guided missile
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: C

3. Indian Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Vehicle 'Saksham' was delivered recently. It has been built by-

- A. Cochin Shipyard Limited
- B. Mazagaon Dock Limited
- C. Goa Shipyard Ltd
- D. Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers

ANSWER: C

4. Recently a missile named Khaiber- buster has been unveiled by which country?

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

ANSWER: A

5. India recently conducted exercise 'Eastern Bridge-VI' with which of the following countries?

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

ANSWER: A

6. Which country has recently tested naval Air defence system called 'C-Dome'?

- A. USA
- B. China
- C. UK
- D. Israel

ANSWER: D

7. The Indian Navy is set to acquire MH-60R Multi-Role helicopters from USA. These helicopters are built by-

- A. BAE systems
- B. Raytheon
- C. Lockheed Martin
- D. Boeing

ANSWER: C

8. Consider the following statements regarding P-8I maritime patrol aircraft, seen in news recently-

1. It is a short-range maritime reconnaissance and Anti-Submarine Warfare Aircraft.
2. It is built by French aviation company, Dassault Aviation.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

D. Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: D

9. 'Milan' Multilateral Naval Exercise 2022 will be held in-

- A. Visakhapatnam
- B. Mumbai
- C. Haldia
- D. Port Blair

ANSWER: A

10. India conducts bilateral military exercise 'Dharma Guardian' with-

- A. Russia
- B. Japan
- C. Mongolia
- D. Saudi Arabia

ANSWER: B



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REPORTS

1.206. WOMEN IN BOARDROOM REPORT RELEASED BY DELOITTE.

Why in news?

- The Women in the Boardroom report was recently released by Deloitte Global.
- This is the seventh edition of the report.
- According to the report, women hold only 17.1% board seats in India. However, this has increased. In 2014, it was 9.4%.
- **2014 has been taken as base year of comparison** because in 2013, the Companies Act mandated that every board should have at least one woman member.
- The report said that only 3.6% of the chairpersons are women in the country. The women representation in chair positions has come down in the last four years. Globally, the women representation in boards is 19.7%. This has increased by 2.8% as compared to 2018. Between 2016 and 2018, the increase was 1.9%.
- At this pace, the equality in representation all over the world shall be achieved only by 2045.



1.207. INDIA RANKED 46TH IN ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT DEMOCRACY INDEX.

Why in news?

- India has ranked **46th** position in the **2021 Democracy Index's global ranking**, according to **The Economist Intelligence Unit**.
- With the highest score of 9.75, **Norway** topped the Democracy Index 2021 by Economist Intelligence.
- India scored 6.91 to rank 46th on the list. **Pakistan** has been placed further below in the hybrid regime with a rank of 104.
- Top 10 countries in the list: Norway, New Zealand, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Denmark, Ireland, Taiwan, Australia, Switzerland.

DEMOCRACY



INDEX 2021

About Economist Intelligence Unit

- The Economist Intelligence Unit is the research and analysis division of the Economist Group, providing forecasting and advisory services through research and analysis, such as monthly country reports, five-year country economic forecasts, country risk service reports, and industry reports
- The Economist Intelligence Unit was founded in 1946.
- Its headquarters are located in London.

1.208. RBI RELEASES INDUSTRIAL OUTLOOK SURVEY.

Why in news?

- 96th round of the Industrial Outlook Survey of the Manufacturing Sector for Q3 2021-22 released.
- Conducted: by RBI
- It Assesses
- Business sentiments relating to demand conditions,
- Financial situation in terms of finance availability,
- Employment conditions,
- And the prevailing price situation in the economy.
- Highlights of current survey



- It shows improved demand conditions for manufacturers in terms of production, order books, and employment.
- Input cost for the business is likely to remain elevated.

1.209. INDIA RANKS 43RD IN INTERNATIONAL I INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY INDEX 2022.

Why in news?

- **India** has improved its overall IP score from 38.4 per cent to 38.6 per cent, and the country is ranked 43 out of 55 countries on the **International Intellectual Property Index 2022**.
- This index was released by the **Global Innovation Policy Center of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce**.
- In July 2021, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce released a Review of the Intellectual Property Rights Regime in India. This review is a welcome development and offers a comprehensive and detailed study of the strengths and weaknesses of India's national IP environment.
- **The top five countries in the ranking are:** United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden and France.



PRACTICE MCQS

1. The Women in the Boardroom Report was recently released by-

- A. Amnesty International
- B. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry
- C. Deloitte Global
- D. Confederation of Indian Industry

ANSWER: C

2. Consider the following statements regarding Democracy Index-

- 1. It is released by The Economist Intelligence Unit.
- 2. India has ranked 46th position in the 2021 Democracy Index.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

3. Industrial Outlook Survey is released by-

- A. Reserve Bank of India
- B. Ministry of Finance
- C. Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- D. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry

ANSWER: A

4. Consider the following statements with respect to International Intellectual Property Index 2022-

- 1. It is released by World Intellectual Property Organization.
- 2. It is topped by United States of America.
- 3. India's rank is 43 out of 55 countries.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only 1 and 2
- B. Only 2 and 3
- C. Only 1 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 3

ANSWER: B

SPORTS

1.210. PR SREJEESH BECOMES SECOND INDIAN TO WIN WORLD GAMES ATHLETE OF THE YEAR AWARD 2021.

Why In News

- Veteran India hockey goalkeeper PR Srejeesh won the prestigious World Games Athlete of the Year for his 2021 performances.
- The other nominated athletes were sport climber Alberto Gines Lopez of Spain and wushu player Michele Giordano of Italy.
- He became the second Indian to receive the accolade.
- In 2020, Indian women's hockey captain Rani Rampal became the first Indian to win the honour for her performances in 2019.
- PR Srejeesh, who was part of the men's team that claimed a bronze medal in the Tokyo Olympics.

The International World Games Association

- The International World Games Association (IWGA) is the international association responsible for the direction and control of The World Games.
- Its headquarters are located in Lausanne, Switzerland, and its official language is English
- The World Games are an international multi-sport event comprising sports and sporting disciplines that are not contested in the Olympic Games.
- The World Games are governed by the International World Games Association, under the patronage of the International Olympic Committee.
- They are usually held every four years, one year after a Summer Olympic Games, over the course of 11 days.
- The first edition of The World Games was held in Santa Clara, USA in 1981.
- The next edition will be held in Birmingham, USA from 7–17 July 2022, having been delayed one year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



1.211. ARGENTINA WON 6TH PAN AM WOMEN CUP HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP.

Why in News

- Argentina won 6th Pan Am Women Cup Hockey Championship, beat Chile 4-2 – Argentina has won the 6th women's field hockey championship title at the 2022 Women's Pan American Cup.

About the Tournament

- The 6th edition of the Women's Pan Am Cup was held from January 19th to 29th January, 2022 in Santiago, Chile.
- Women's Pan American Cup is the quadrennial international championship.
- It is conducted by Pan American Hockey Federation.



1.212. ODISHA OPEN BADMINTON TOURNAMENT 2022.

Why In News

- The 14-year-old Indian badminton player Unnati Hooda defeated Smit Toshniwal in straight games to clinch the women's singles title.
- Kiran George won the men's singles crown.
- With the win, Unnati Hooda, 14, became the youngest-ever Indian to win a BWF Super 100 tournament.
- It was held in Cuttack (Odisha).



Odisha Open 2022 badminton winners

- **Men's singles:** Kiran George (India)
- **Women's singles:** Unnati Hooda (India)
- **Men's doubles:** Nur Mohd Azriyn Ayub / Lim Khim Wah (Malaysia)
- **Women's doubles:** Treesa Jolly / Gayatri Gopichand Pullela (India)
- **Mixed doubles:** Sachin Dias / Thilini Hendaheewa (Sri Lanka)

1.213. WELFARE SCHEMES FOR TRANSGENDERS LAUNCHED BY THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT.

Why In News

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has formulated a scheme "SMILE - Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise", which includes sub scheme -'Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons'.
- The focus of the sub-scheme is on rehabilitation, provision of medical facilities and intervention, counseling, education, skill development, economic linkages to the transgender persons.
- Ministry has also initiated 12 pilot shelter homes namely Garima Greh: Shelter Home for Transgender Persons and provided financial assistance to community-based organizations (CBOs) for setting up of these shelter homes.
- These pilot shelter homes are in States of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Odisha and also including Bihar.
- The main aim of Garima Greh is to provide shelter to transgender persons with basic amenities like food, medical care and recreational facilities.

1.214. LAUREUS WORLD SPORTS AWARDS 2022: NEERAJ CHOPRA NOMINATED FOR 'BREAKTHROUGH' OF YEAR AWARD.

Why in News?

- Olympics gold medal winner Neeraj Chopra was nominated for the prestigious Laureus World Breakthrough of the Year award, making him the first Indian to be featured in the short-list for this category.
- At the Tokyo Olympics, the 23-year-old Neeraj Chopra became only the second Indian to win an individual gold medal in the Games' history.
- The javelin thrower was clubbed alongside tennis stars Daniil Medvedev and Emma Raducanu among others.

- Neeraj Chopra is only the third Indian to fetch a Laureus nomination after cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar and wrestler Vinesh Phogat

Neeraj Chopra nominated for Laureus World Breakthrough of the Year Award



Neeraj Chopra

About The Laureus World Sports Awards

- The Laureus World Sports Awards is an annual award ceremony honouring individuals and teams from the world of sports along with sporting achievements throughout the year.
- It was established in 1999 by Laureus Sport for Good Foundation founding patrons Daimler and Richemont.

1.215. KHELO INDIA 2022 SCHEME ALLOCATION INCREASES BY 48% IN BUDGET 2022-23.

Why in news?

- The Government has decided to continue the scheme of ‘**Khelo India – National Programme for Development of Sports**’ over the **15th Finance Commission Cycle** — 2021-22 to 2025-26 — at an outlay of Rs 3165.50 crore.
- Khelo India Scheme Allocation increases by **48 per cent** in Budget 2022 and includes it in the **Prime Minister’s Award Scheme.**”

About the Khelo India Scheme:

- It is a flagship Central Sector Scheme of the Sports ministry which aims to **develop grassroots level talent by providing them with a national level platform.**
- Khelo India Scheme is based on **Gujarat’s model of “Khel Mahakumbh”** in which schools and colleges from across the country participate in **27 different disciplines.**
- It has been formed **after the merger of** Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan (RGKA), Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme (USIS) and National Sports Talent Search Scheme (NSTSS).
- This programme strives to promote “Sports for All” as well as “Sports for Excellence.”

1.216. GOVERNMENT APPROVES CONTINUATION OF SCHEME OF ASSISTANCE TO NATIONAL SPORTS FEDERATIONS (NSFs) WITH OUTLAY OF RS 1575 CRORE.

Why in news?

- Strengthening its support for sports in India, the Union Government has approved continuation of Scheme of Assistance to National Sports Federations (NSFs) with an outlay of Rs. 1575 crore for 15th Finance Commission Cycle (2021-22 to 2025-26).

About the scheme

- The Scheme of Assistance to NSFs is the **flagship Central Sector Scheme.**
- It is the main source of funding for preparation of national teams for all major national and international competitions, including the Olympic Games, Para-Olympics, Asian Games, Para Asian Games, Commonwealth Games (CWG) and other major international tournaments.
- The **outlay** in the cycle will therefore be **extended to NSFs to train and field national teams for national and international competitions between 2022 and 2026**, prime among them, the Commonwealth and Asian Games of 2022, Olympics and Paralympics 2024 and Asian and Commonwealth Games in 2026.
- The **financial support** extended by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** through this Scheme will be used **by NSFs to conduct national coaching camps, procure sports equipment and consumables, provide training of international standards to athletes, conduct data analysis on the performance of**

athletes, provide sports science support, provide recovery and rehabilitation to athletes with injury, engage foreign coaches and high performance directors, as well as to set up a professional administrative system within the NSFs.

- The scheme also sets out to **improve the bench strength of Indian athletes** through a strong **talent identification and development system** so as to achieve sporting excellence and drive India towards becoming a sporting power house.

1.217. UNDER-19 ICC WORLD CUP 2022: INDIA THROUGH TO THE FINAL, BEAT AUS BY 96 RUNS.

Why in News

- India defeated Australia by 96 runs to reach the U-19 Cricket World Cup final.
- Skipper Yash Dhull struck a sublime 110 in as many balls and shared a game-changing 204-run stand with his deputy Shaik Rasheed (94 off 108 balls) to fire India to a formidable 290 for five after opting to bat on Wednesday.
- Indian bowlers then performed their roles to perfection to bowl Australia out for 194 in 41.5 overs. Lachlan Shaw's fine 51 came too late in the day for Australia.
- Four-time champions India face England in the final and will be aiming to extend their dominance in the competition.

ABOUT U- 19 WORLD CUP

- The 2022 ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup is an international limited-overs cricket tournament that is held in the West Indies with sixteen teams taking part.
- It is the fourteenth edition of the Under-19 Cricket World Cup, and the first to be held in the West Indies

1.218. U-19 CRICKET WORLD CUP 2022: INDIA BEAT ENGLAND IN FINAL TO WIN 5TH TITLE.

Why in news?

- **India** defeated **England** by four wickets to clinch a record-extending **fifth title** at the **Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, Antigua**.
- India added the fifth title to their collection, having previously won the trophy in **2000, 2008, 2012, 2018**.
- **Yash Dhull** becomes the fifth Indian captain to win the title after **Mohammad Kaif, Virat Kohli, Unmukt Chand and Prithvi Shaw**.
- Earlier, England opted to bat after winning the toss but they were shot out by India for **189 in 44.5 overs**. India chases down the target of 190 with 2.2 overs to spare.



1.219. THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE APPROVES PROPOSAL TO INCLUDE SKATEBOARDING, SURFING AND ROCK CLIMBING AT 2028 LOS ANGELES OLYMPIC.

Why in news?

- The International Olympic Committee determines the sports to be held in the Olympics games. The committee has decided to conduct 28 Olympic sports and 24 paralympic sports at the Los Angeles Olympics.
- **New sporting events to be included in 2028 Olympics**- It includes surfing, climbing and skateboarding.

- **Removal of sports-** Weightlifting, boxing and modern pentathlon have been left off. The sports were removed over the issues between International Olympics Committee and the governing bodies of the sports. This includes AIBA (International Boxing Association), International Weightlifting Federation and Union Internationale de Pentathlon Moderne.

About the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics

- This is the first summer Olympics to be held in the US since 1996. Before this, the winter Olympics was held in 2002.
- This is the third time Los Angeles is hosting the Olympics. The other cities that have hosted Olympics three times are London and Paris.
- It is the ninth Olympics to be held in US and fourth to be held in the state of California.



1.220. FOUNDATION STONE OF WORLD'S THIRD-LARGEST CRICKET STADIUM LAID IN JAIPUR.

Why in news?

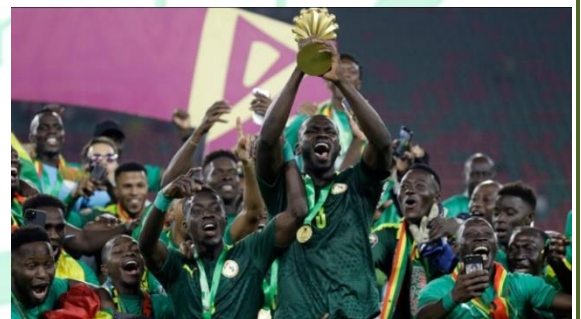
- Rajasthan Chief Minister, **Ashok Gehlot** and BCCI President **Sourav Ganguly** laid the foundation stone of the world's third-largest cricket stadium in **Jaipur**.
- The new international stadium will be built by the Rajasthan Cricket Academy (RCA) on the **Jaipur-Delhi bypass, over 100 acres of land in Jaipur**.
- The stadium will have a seating capacity of **75,000 spectators**.
- The International Cricket Stadium in Jaipur will be the second-largest cricket stadium in India and the third-largest in the world.
- Currently, **Narendra Modi Stadium (former Motera Stadium)** in Ahmedabad is the world's largest stadium with a capacity of 132,000 spectators.
- The second-largest stadium is **Australia's Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG)** which has a capacity of 1,00,024 spectators.



1.221. AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS: SENEGAL BEAT EGYPT 2022.

Why in news?

- **Senegal** has defeated **Egypt** in the **Africa Cup of Nations championship** winning the continental championship for the first time on penalty kicks at **Olembe Stadium in Yaoundé, Cameroon**.
- **Sadio Mane** scored the winning spot-kick as Senegal claimed a first-ever Africa Cup of Nations title with a 4-2 penalty shootout victory over seven-time winners Egypt.
- The final had ended 0-0 after extra time.



1.222. RISHABH PANT WON ESPN CRICINFO 'TEST BATTING AWARD' 2021.

Why in news?

- In the 15th Edition of ESPN cricinfo Awards, India's wicketkeeper-batsman, **Rishabh Pant** wins the '**Test Batting**' award by scoring 89 not out, helped India to win the Border Gavaskar Trophy 2021 by (2-1) and shattered Australia's unbeaten record at Gabba after 32 years.
- Rishabh Pant was the top scorer of the series for the Indian team, scoring (274 runs).



Other winners

- New Zealand skipper **Kane Williamson** was adjudged '**Captain of the Year**'.
- The Test bowling award went to **Kyle Jamieson** (New Zealand)
- England fast bowler **Ollie Robinson** was named **Debutant of the Year**.
- **Saqib Mahmood's** 4 for 42 in a nine-wicket win over Pakistan got him the **top ODI bowling prize**.
- **Jos Buttler** won the **T20I batting award**.
- **Fakhar Zaman** (Pakistan) won the ODI top batting prize.
- **Shaheen Afridi** won the **T20I bowling award**

1.223. CHELSEA WINS 2021 FIFA CLUB WORLD CUP CHAMPIONS.

Why in news?

- English club, **Chelsea** has defeated Brazilian club **Palmeiras**, **2-1**, to win the 2021 FIFA Club World Cup final. Chelsea has won the FIFA Club World Cup for the first time.
- The decisive goal was scored by Kai Havertz with 3 minutes of extra time to go. **Kai Havertz'** nerveless 117th-minute penalty settled a gruelling Club World Cup final.
- The final was held at Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium, Abu Dhabi.



1.224. INDIA WINS THE BID TO HOST 2023 INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE SESSION.

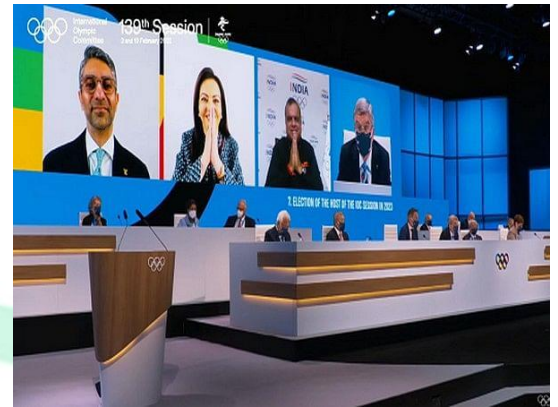
Why in news?

- India has won the Bid to Host 2023 IOC Session in Mumbai after 40 Years.
- During the 139th International Olympic Committee's session (IOC) in Beijing, China, India won the bidding rights to host the 2023 IOC session in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- India will host for the first time in 40 years since 1983.
- The IOC session is the general meeting of the Members of the IOC.
- The session will be hosted at the state-of-the-art, Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai.
- IOC session was last held at New Delhi in 1983.

About International Olympic Committee (IOC)

- Established in **1894** and **headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland**.
- The IOC has a total of **105 member's active members**.
- Additionally, it consists of 45 honorary members, 1 honour member who do not have the right to vote and 206 individual National Olympic Committees.
- In addition to the members, senior Representatives (President & Secretary-General) from more than 50 International Sports Federations (summer and winter sporting disciplines) attended the session.

- From which, Mumbai received a historic 99% of the votes in favour of its bid from the delegates, with 75 members endorsing its candidature in the session held in Beijing.
- An **ordinary Session of IOC is held once a year**, while Extraordinary Sessions may be convened by the President or upon the written wiliest of at least one-third of the Members.
- Activities of International Olympic Committee(IOC) Session:
- The IOC session discusses the global Olympics movement including adoption or amendment of the Olympic Charter.
- Election of IOC members and office bearers.
- Election of the host city of the Olympics.



1.225. INDIA'S R PRAGGNANANDHAA BECOMES YOUNGEST PLAYER TO BEAT WORLD NO 1 MAGNUS CARLSEN.

Why in news?

- India's teen chess Grandmaster, **Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa** has created history as he defeated world number one chess champion, **Magnus Carlsen**, of Norway in an online chess tournament.
- The Airthings Masters is the first of the nine events of the 2022 Meltwater Champions Chess Tour, being held from February to November 2022.
- The 16-year-old Pragg achieved the feat in the eighth round of the **Airthings Masters**, an online rapid chess tournament, in 39 moves with black pieces.
- Pragganandhaa is also only the third Indian grandmaster to win against Magnus Carlsen apart from Viswanathan Anand and Pentala Harikrishna.



1.226. RANJI TROPHY 2021-22: SAKIBUL GANI CREATES WORLD RECORD.

Why in news?

- Recently, Sakibul Gani, an Indian cricketer hailing from Motihari in Bihar, created a world record by becoming the first cricketer to score a triple century on his debut in a first-class match, 2021-22 Ranji Trophy.
- He scored 341 runs with 405 balls, (56 fours & 2 sixes) representing Bihar in the plate group 2021-22 Ranji Trophy fixture against Mizoram at the Jadavpur University Campus Ground, Kolkata, West Bengal.
- He made his List A debut for Bihar in October 2019.
- Previously, the record of highest score on first-class debut was held by Ajay Rothera of Madhya Pradesh (267 runs in December 2018) and Amol Muzumdar of Mumbai (260 runs in 1993-1994).

MOST RUNS ON DEBUT IN FIRST CLASS CRICKET

| Runs | Balls | Batsman | For | Vs | Series |
|------|-------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------|
| 341 | 405 | Sakibul Gani | Bihar | Mizoram | 2021-22 |
| 267* | 345 | Ajay Rohera | MP | Hyderabad | 2018-19 |
| 260 | 516 | Amol Muzumdar | Mumbai | Haryana | 1993-94 |
| 256* | 417 | Bahir Shah | Speen Ghar Region | Amo Region | 2017-18 |
| 240 | NA | Eric Marx | Transvaal | Griqualand West | 1920-21 |

Stats: Rajesh Kumar

1.227. INDIAN RAILWAY TO SET UP INDIA'S BIGGEST WORLD-CLASS WRESTLING ACADEMY AT KISHANGANJ, DELHI.

Why in news?

- The Ministry of Railways has approved to set up **India's biggest world Class wrestling academy** at Indian Railways, Kishanganj, Delhi.
- The state of the art wrestling academy will be set up at an estimated cost of Rs 30.76 crores.

- The academy will be equipped with advanced training facilities.
- Indian Railways promotes sports in India through the **Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB)**.
- **Sushil Kumar** (Bronze in 2008 Beijing Olympic and 2012 London Olympic); **Sakshi Malik** (Bronze in 2016 Rio Olympic); **Saikhom Mirabai Chanu** (Silver); **Ravi Kumar Dahiya** (Bronze) and **Bajrang Punia** (Bronze) of 2020 Tokyo Olympics were all associated with Indian Railways.

1.228. SPAIN'S CARLOS ALCARAZ GARFIA WINS MEN'S SINGLES TITLE AT THE 2022 RIO OPEN.

Why in news?

- Spain's Carlos Alcaraz Garfia (18 years old) has won the Men's Singles title at the 2022 Rio Open, defeating Diego Schwartzman of Argentina.
- The 2022 Rio Open was held from 14th February to 20th February 2022 at Jockey Club Brasileiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- This is Carlos Alcaraz's first ever Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP)500 trophy.
- 2022 Rio Open is the 8th edition of the Rio Open and it is a part of the selected group of 13 tournaments named ATP 500(ATP Tour 500) of 2022 ATP Tour.
- The first edition of the tournament was held in 2014 - "2014 Rio Open". Spaniard Rafael Nadal was the champion of the 1st edition.



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz Garfia (18 years old) has won the Men's Singles title at the 2022 Rio Open, defeating Diego Schwartzman of Argentina.

1.229. MIRABAI CHANU WINS GOLD AT SINGAPORE WEIGHTLIFTING INTERNATIONAL.

Why in news?

- Indian weightlifter and 2020 Tokyo Olympics silver-medallist, Mirabai Chanu has won the gold medal in the 55kg weight category at the Singapore Weightlifting International 2022.
- Chanu lifted 191kg (86kg+105kg) to stand on top of the podium.
- With this win, the 27-year-old Chanu has qualified for the 2022 Commonwealth Games (CWG) in Birmingham in the 55kg weight category.
- She has also qualified for the CWG in the 49kg weight category on the basis of her Commonwealth rankings.



Indian weightlifter and 2020 Tokyo Olympics silver-medallist, Mirabai Chanu has won the gold medal in the 55kg weight category at the Singapore Weightlifting International 2022 .

PRACTICE MCQS

1. Who among the following has been awarded with the Athlete of the Year Award 2021?

- A. Michele Giordano
- B. Gines Lopez
- C. PR Srejeesh
- D. Rani Rampal

ANSWER – C

2. Which of the following country has won the 6th Pan Am Women Cup Hockey Championship held in in Santiago, Chile?

- A. Canada
- B. USA
- C. Chile
- D. Argentina

ANSWER – D

3. Who has won the Men’s singles title at 2022 Odisha Open badminton tournament held in Cuttack, Odisha?

- A. Kiran George
- B. Nur Mohd Azriyn Ayub
- C. Lim Khim Wah
- D. Sachin Dias

ANSWER: A

4. Which of the following Ministry has launched a scheme “SMILE for Welfare of Transgender Persons’.

- A. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- B. Ministry of Housing and Urban affairs
- C. Ministry of Health and Family welfare
- D. None of the above

ANSWER – A

5. With reference to Laureus World Sports Awards, which of the following statement(s) is/are correct?

- 1. The Laureus World Sports Awards is an annual award ceremony honouring individuals and teams from the world of sports along with sporting achievements throughout the year.
- 2. It was established in 2009 by Laureus Sport for Good Foundation founding patrons Daimler and Richemont.

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 – A

6. With reference to Khelo India 2022 Scheme , consider the following statements :

- 1. Khelo India Scheme is a Central Sector Scheme.
- 2. It has been formed after the merger of Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan (RGKA), Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme (USIS) and National Sports Talent Search Scheme (NSTSS).

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

7. With reference to National Sports Federations (NSFs), Consider the following statements :

- 1. Scheme of Assistance to National Sports Federations is a Central sponsored scheme.

2. It is the main source of funding for preparation of national teams for all major national and international competitions.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

8. With reference to U-19 cricket world cup, consider the following statement :

- 1. It was held in the West Indies.
- 2. It was the 13th edition of the Under-19 Cricket World Cup.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: A

9. India won the U19 Cricket World Cup 2022 for the _____ time by defeating _____ in the finals.

- A. Fourth, England
- B. Fifth, England
- C. Fourth, West Indies
- D. Fourth, South Africa

ANSWER: B

10. Three new sporting events- surfing, climbing and skateboarding will be promoted to the core program in 2028 Summer Olympics. It will be held in-

- A. Paris
- B. Istanbul
- C. London
- D. Los Angeles

ANSWER: D

11. The world's largest cricket stadium, in terms of spectator capacity, is situated in-

- A. Melbourne
- B. Kolkata
- C. London
- D. Ahmedabad

ANSWER: D

12. Which country won the Africa Cup of Nations football championship 2022?

- A. Egypt
- B. Cameroon
- C. Ivory Coast
- D. Senegal

ANSWER: D

13. Which Indian cricket player has won the ESPN cricinfo 'Test Batting Award' 2021?

- A. Virat Kohli
- B. Rohit Sharma
- C. Rishab Pant
- D. K L Rahul

ANSWER: C

14. Which club has won the 2021 FIFA Club World Cup final?

- A. Real Madrid
- B. Palmeiras
- C. Juventus
- D. Chelsea

ANSWER: D

15. With respect to International Olympic Committee (IOC), consider the following statements:

- 1. International Olympic Committee is headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland.
- 2. India will host IOC Session for the first time in 2023.

3. The IOC session will be hosted in Mumbai.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: B

16. Who has recently becomes youngest player to beat World No 1 Magnus Carlsen?

- A. Leon Mendonca
- B. Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa
- C. Pentala Harikrishna
- D. Abhimanyu Mishra

ANSWER: B

17. Sakibul Gani created a world record by becoming the first cricketer to score a triple century on his debut. He represents which state in Ranji Trophy?

- A. Uttar Pradesh
- B. Rajasthan
- C. Delhi
- D. Bihar

ANSWER: D

18. The Ministry of Railways has approved to set up India's biggest world Class wrestling academy at-

- A. Kurukshetra
- B. Hisar
- C. Delhi
- D. Varanasi

ANSWER: C

19. Who has won the Men's Singles title at the 2022 Rio Open?

- A. Rafael Nadal
- B. Diego Schwartzman
- C. Novak Djokovic
- D. Carlos Alcaraz Garfia

ANSWER: D

20. Which Indian women weight lifter has won the gold medal in the 55kg weight category at the Singapore Weightlifting International 2022?

- A. Kunjarani Devi
- B. Swati Singh
- C. Mirabai Chanu
- D. Sanjita Chanu

ANSWER: C

AWARDS

1.230. 'WRITING WITH FIRE' DOCUMENTARY NOMINATED FOR ACADEMY AWARDS.

Why in news?

- Indian documentary Writing with Fire, has been nominated at the 94th Academy Awards in 'Best Documentary Feature Category'.
- The documentary is directed by filmmakers Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh.
- It has been nominated alongside Ascension, Flee, Attica, and Summer of the Soul.
- Writing with Fire is the only Indian title, to be nominated at Oscar awards 2022.

About 'Writing with Fire'

- 'Writing with Fire' is about a rural newspaper run by Dalit women called Khabar Lahariya.
- The newspaper was started by Delhi based NGO Nirantar from Chitrakoot, Bundelkhand region in 2002.
- The documentary shows transition of Khabar Lahariya from print to digital in recent years.
- The film follows Meera and her fellow journalists, when they get acquainted with new technology whilst questioning patriarchy, reporting stories about victims of caste & gender violence and investigating incompetence of the police force.



PRACTICE MCQS

1. Which Indian documentary has been nominated for 94th Academy Awards in 'Best Documentary Feature Category'?
 - A. Writing with fire
 - B. Dare to dream
 - C. Ladies First
 - D. Meru

ANSWER: A

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HIMACHAL PRADESH CURRENT AFFAIRS

1.231. CHAMBA ACHIEVES JAL JEEVAN MISSION GOALS.

Why in News

- Chamba district has achieved 100 per cent targets under the Jal Jeevan Mission
- Under the mission, 99.41 per cent of the targets had been achieved while the remaining houses would be connected with the facility of 'Har ghar nal se jal' soon.

About Jal Jeevan Mission

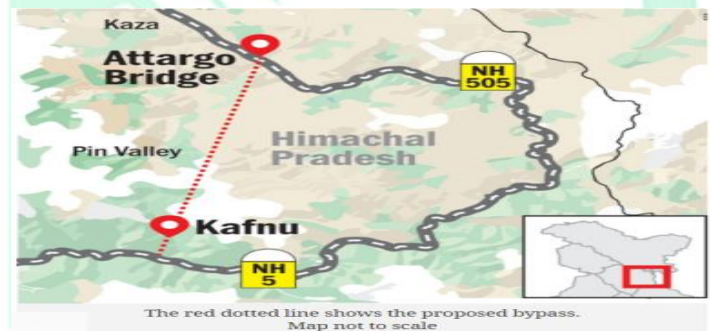
- Jal Jeevan Mission, is envisioned to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections by 2024 to all households in rural India.
- The programme will also implement source sustainability measures as mandatory elements, such as recharge and reuse through grey water management, water conservation, rain water harvesting.
- The Jal Jeevan Mission will be based on a community approach to water and will include extensive Information.



1.232. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WILL CONSTRUCT A 72-KM-LONG BYPASS TO CUT SHIMLA-KAZA DISTANCE BY 105 KM.

Why in news?

- The Public Works Department is geared up to construct a 72-km-long bypass from Kafnu in Kinnaur district to Mud village in Lahaul and Spiti.
- The bypass will reduce the travel distance between Shimla and Kaza by 105 km. At present, the travel distance between Shimla and Kaza by road is 460 km via Sumdo, close to the China border in Lahaul and Spiti.
- The bypass road will connect NH-5 at Kafnu with NH-505 near Atargu Bridge in the Spiti region.
- The 44 km length of the road project falls under Kinnaur district, while 28 km length in Lahaul and Spiti



1.233. POSTAL DEPARTMENT RELEASES COVERS ON CHAMBA 'RUMAL', 'CHAPPAL'.

Why in news?

- The Postal Department released a special cover on Chamba 'rumal' and 'chappal' at a function.
- Under a series, the Department of Posts had started releasing special covers on products bearing Geographical Indication (GI) tags.



1.234. ANCHAL THAKUR WON GOLD MEDAL IN NATIONAL SKIING CHAMPIONSHIP.

Why In News

- The **National Skiing Championship** has begun in Auli (Uttarakhand).
- A team of athletes from 16 states have reached Auli for the winter games. These include boys and girls of sub-junior, junior and senior categories.

About Anchal Thakur

- Anchal Thakur is an Indian female alpine skier.
- She represented India at the 2012 Winter Youth Olympics that took place in Innsbruck.
- In the 2012 Youth Winter Olympics she took part in the Alpine skiing - Girl's Slalom and Girl's Giant Slalom events. She also won bronze medal by winning bronze at FIS Alpine Ski Competition held in Montenegro.



1.235. DRONES TO BE USED FOR LAND DEMARCATION IN KANGRA.

Why in news?

- The Kangra district administration has planned to adopt drone technology for demarcation and division of land and preparing documents in populated areas. A demo survey of the technology was conducted at Kopra panchayat in Nurpur tehsil of the district .
- Under the Swamitav Scheme of the Central Government, the drone technology would be used to measure land in populated areas.
- It was a scheme proposed by the state and Central governments, which would help in providing property cards to people in 'abaadi' or Lal Dora areas in rural areas of the district.
- The first drone pilot school of the state was being established at the ITI, Shahpur, and the Central Government had granted approval for it.



The team with a drone for a demo survey at Kopra gram panchayat in Nurpur on Monday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

Cost effective, saves time

“The biggest advantage of drones is that it not only reduces cost but also saves a lot of time. Drones are a new dimension of the modern technology, which can be easily controlled and also used for daily tasks.” Nipun Jindal, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

1.236. IIT MANDI SIGNS MoU WITH DDMA TO DELOY LANDSLIDE MONITORING AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS IN MANDI.

Why in News

- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mandi, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) for the installation of landslide monitoring and early warning systems at some places in the district.
- The Landslide Monitoring and Early Warning System device has been developed by Dr. Varun Dutt, Associate Professor in the School of Computing and Electrical Engineering, and Dr K.V. Uday, Assistant Professor, School of Engineering, IIT Mandi.



- The Landslide Monitoring System developed by IIT Mandi provides soil movement alerts via hooters and blinkers mounted on the road and dispatched remotely via text message. Also, the system sends rainfall alerts if more than 5 mm of rain is forecast.
- Landslides are currently predicted 10 minutes before they actually occur by monitoring changes in soil movement.

1.237. VANDANA THAKUR HAS WON MRS INDIA GLOBE TITLE.

Why In News

- Vandana Thakur, an assistant professor at St Bede's College, has won Mrs India Globe title.
- She won the award in Chandigarh, beating contestants from across the country.
- She said she had now set her sight on Mrs Globe pageant.

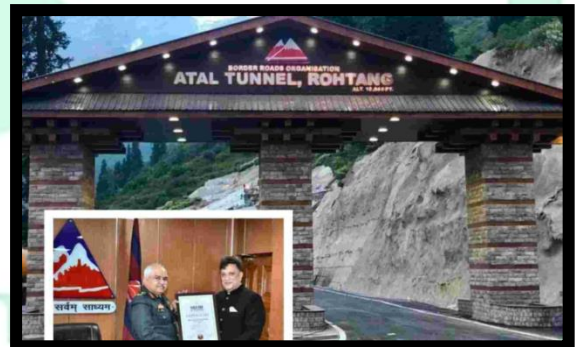
About Mrs. India Globe title

- Mrs. INDIA GLOBE it is a cultural and educational event that seeks to celebrate the talent and intellectual abilities of married women of India.
- The Objective of this cultural & educational event is to reach out to the community and provide a positive space to celebrate our dynamic and rich cultural heritage.

1.238. ATAL TUNNEL CERTIFIED BY WORLD BOOK OF RECORDS AS LONGEST HIGHWAY TUNNEL.

Why in news?

- Atal Tunnel has officially been certified by the World Book of Records, as the 'World's Longest Highway Tunnel above 10,000 Feet'.
- Atal Tunnel was dedicated to the nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2020. The 9.02 km long, strategically significant, Atal Tunnel, that **runs under the 'Rohtang Pass' was constructed on the Manali - Leh Highway** under the challenging conditions of freezing temperatures in extremely difficult terrain.
- It was built by **Border Roads Organization**.
- Construction of this tunnel has reduced the distance on Manali - Sarchu road by 46 km and travel time by four to five hours, providing **all-weather connectivity on the Manali - Leh axis**.
- Prior to the construction of the tunnel, the highway remained closed during the winter season for six months, isolating Lahaul and Spiti from the mainland.
- World Book of Records UK, is an **organisation that catalogues and verifies extraordinary records across the world with authentic certification**.



1.239. HIMACHAL PRADESH'S 2ND STATE VARSITY TO OPEN IN MANDI ON APRIL 1.

Why in News

- Education Minister of Himachal Pradesh Announced the second state university, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel University, at Mandi will start functioning from April 1.
- Addressing a gathering today on Thakur Ram Singh's birth anniversary celebrations at Vallabh Government Degree College, Mandi.

1.240. 25 ATAL GYAN KENDRAS SET UP IN KULLU PANCHAYATS.

Why in News

- The Gram Panchayat Atal Gyan Kendra initiative of the Kullu administration, launched in last year.

- As many as 25 Atal Gyan Kendras have been established while the process to open 25 more libraries in panchayats is going on.
- Inspired by DC Ashutosh Garg's initiative of opening libraries (Atal Gyan Kendras).
- These kendras provide a 24-hour library facility to students near their homes.
- The students also get free Internet facility to prepare for competitive examinations.
- To increase competition among panchayats, rewards have been announced for outstanding kendras.
- The administration has announced a reward of Rs 3 lakh for the panchayat that secures the first position, Rs 2 lakh for the runnerup and Rs 1 lakh for the third position holder.



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PRACTICE MCQS

1. Under Jal Jeevan Mission, By what year to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections?

- A. 2024
- B. 2025
- C. 2026
- D. 2027

ANSWER: A

2. Which of the following districts of Himachal Pradesh will be connected by the construction a 72-km-long bypass from Kafnu to Mud village?

- A. Kinnaur and Lahaul Spiti
- B. Shimla and Lahaul Spiti
- C. Kinnaur and Shimla
- D. Kinnaur and Kangra

ANSWER: A

3. Which among the followings are geographical indicators of Chamba?

- A. Rumal and Chappal
- B. Shawl and Tea
- C. Shawl and Chappal
- D. Tea and Chappal

ANSWER: A

4. National Skiing Championship was held in which of the following state?

- A. Uttarakhand
- B. Jammu and Kashmir
- C. Punjab
- D. Goa

ANSWER: A

5. Under the Which Scheme of the Central Government, the drone technology will be used to measure land in Kangra district?

- A. Swamitav Scheme
- B. Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana.
- C. Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi.
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: A

6. Which among the following Institute signed a MoU with the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) for the installation of landslide monitoring and early warning systems in Himachal Pradesh?

- A. IIT Mandi
- B. IIT Ropar
- C. IIT Hyderabad
- D. IIT Madras

ANSWER: A

7. Who among the following won the Mrs India Globe title?

- A. Hema Ghamatta
- B. Sujata Rana
- C. Shivani Thakur
- D. Vandana Thakur

ANSWER: D

8. Consider the following statements regarding Atal Tunnel-

- 1. It runs through Rohtang pass and is constructed on Manali- Leh Highway.
- 2. It has been officially certified by the World Book of Records, as the 'World's Longest Highway Tunnel above 10,000 Feet'.

Which of the above statements are correct?

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

ANSWER: C

9. Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel University will be opened in which of the following city of Himachal Pradesh?

- A. UNNA
- B. Kangra
- C. Mandi
- D. Solan

ANSWER: C

10. The Gram Panchayat Atal Gyan Kendra initiative of the Kullu administration related to-

- A. Hospitals
- B. Libraries
- C. Anganwadi's
- D. None of the above

ANSWER: B



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