

Current Affairs MONTHLY



AUGUST 2022

**By
CivilsTap Himachal**



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

Prelims

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NATIONAL NEWS.....12

- 1.1. NTPC Commissions India's largest floating solar power project in Telangana is now fully operational. 12
- 1.2. Prasar Bharti launches new logo. 12
- 1.3. ONDC to be gradually expanded to more cities: Union Minister Piyush Goyal. 13
- 1.4. Proportion of unmarried in age group 15-29 increases to 23%. 13
- 1.5. Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIO) seminar 'Swavlamban' to be held at Dr Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi. 13
- 1.6. 'DIGI YATRA' Project. 14
- 1.7. Centre gives approval for renaming 7 cities, towns. 14
- 1.8. Renunciation of Indian Citizenship. 15
- 1.9. PM Narendra Modi unveils India's first Passenger Drone "Varuna". 15
- 1.10. Digital Jyot: Tribute to Martyrs. 16
- 1.11. 'Har Ghar Tiranga': Centre Tweaks Flag Code; Tricolour Can Now Be Flown Day & Night. 16
- 1.12. Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM) at Jamnagar, Gujarat. 16
- 1.13. Lok Sabha passes National Anti-Doping Bill with Focus on Clean Sports. 17
- 1.14. Fusion reactor for clean energy. 17
- 1.15. Govt launches 11th agricultural census 2021-22. 18
- 1.16. New Delhi: PM Modi to address inaugural session of first All India District Legal Services Authorities Meet. 18

INTERNATIONAL20

- 1.17. UK announces 75 scholarships for Indian students on 75th year of Independence. 20
- 1.18. Partners in the Blue Pacific': New programme started by US and Allies. 20
- 1.19. India, Iran to activate new shorter corridor to Russia. 20
- 1.20. Top army officer Lt. Gen Mohan Subramanian appointed Force Commander of UN South Sudan mission. 21
- 1.21. Change in British leadership would not impact India-UK relationship: MEA 22
- 1.22. India projected to surpass China as world's most populous country during 2023: UN report. 22
- 1.23. The Film '83' to be celebrated at Indian Film Festival of Melbourne; Kapil Dev as guest of honour. 23
- 1.24. Ukraine joins NATO's program of technological cooperation. 23
- 1.25. Sri Lanka declares state of emergency after President flees. 23
- 1.26. Ranil Wickremesinghe sworn in as interim President of Sri Lanka. 23
- 1.27. Assam, Arunachal CMs agree to border realignment based on 1960 papers. 24
- 1.28. Tribal body in Pakistan province bans women from visiting tourist spots. 24
- 1.29. India among top five investors in Africa: External Affairs Minister. 24

1.30.	Israel launches plan to rehabilitate southern Jordan River.	25
1.31.	China launches second space station module, Wentian.	25
1.32.	Zimbabwe debuts gold coin as legal tender to stem inflation, boost currency.....	26
1.33.	China launches second space station module, Wentian.	26
1.34.	Zimbabwe debuts gold coin as legal tender to stem inflation, boost currency.....	26
1.35.	Women outnumber men in Bangladesh population census.	27
DAYS TO REMEMBER.....		28
1.36.	National Statistics Day 2022: 29 June.	28
1.37.	National Doctor’s Day celebrates on 1st July.....	28
1.38.	World Zoonosis Day observed on July 6.	28
1.39.	22nd National Fish Farmers Day celebrated on 10 th July.	29
1.40.	World Brain Day celebrates globally on July 22.	29
1.41.	India's Indermit Gill appointed Chief Economist of World Bank.....	30
1.42.	World Nature Conservation Day.	30
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY		31
1.43.	NASA launches CAPSTONE mission to the moon.	31
1.44.	NTPC’s 10 GW Renewable Energy (RE) park to come up in Rajasthan.....	31
1.45.	Directorate General Defence Estates (DGDE) develops AI-based software to detect unauthorised constructions & encroachments on defence land.....	31
1.46.	JNCASR researchers discover 'new material' that can convert infrared light into renewable energy. 31	
1.47.	TIHAN: India's first technology innovation hub on autonomous navigation facility launched at IIT Hyderabad.	32
1.48.	Union Bank of India becomes the first Bank in India to launch virtual banking lounge on Metaverse. 32	
1.49.	Nokia partners with IISc, Bengaluru to set up networked robotics Center of Excellence.....	32
1.50.	Perovskites can replace Silicon as the material of choice for solar panels.	33
1.51.	NASA released new full-colour images taken from James Webb Space Telescope.....	33
1.52.	Sire becomes the 105th unicorn in the country.....	33
1.53.	Pratt & Whitney to set up engineering centre in Bengaluru.	34
1.54.	Space Tourism in India soon’ as ISRO developing indigenous human space flight capability.	34
1.55.	Research Breakthrough: Jodhpur IIT scientists find ‘lithium free’ battery option.	34
1.56.	James Webb telescope finds oldest galaxy in the universe.....	35
ECONOMY		36
1.57.	Core sector output expands by 18.1% in May 2022, highest in 13 months.	36
1.58.	SEBI imposed Rs. 7 crore penalty on National Stock Exchange.	36

1.59.	Five years of Goods and Services Tax (GST).	36
1.60.	Punjab's debt position as the worst in the country: RBI	37
1.61.	Services PMI rises to 59.2 in June, highest since April 2011.	37
1.62.	Google announces Start-up School India for small-city entrepreneurs.	37
1.63.	RBI sets up mechanism to settle trade transactions in Rupees.	37
1.64.	G-20 watchdog to propose first global crypto rules in October.	38
1.65.	Global economic outlook has 'darkened significantly': IMF	39
1.66.	India's First community-driven Non-Fungible Token (NFT).	39
1.67.	E-commerce companies fined over Rs 78 lakh for making false declarations.....	39
1.68.	SBI launches WhatsApp Banking Services to make banking easier for its customers.	40
1.69.	Windfall tax.	40
1.70.	Bullet Train project: JICA announces 3rd tranche loan of Rs. 6000 crores.....	41
1.71.	Electric Vehicles (EV) sales in India to cross 9 million units by 2027.....	41
1.72.	India rapidly emerging as preferred country for foreign investments in manufacturing sector: Govt 42	
1.73.	ECGC launches new scheme for benefit of small exporters.	42
1.74.	ECGC launches new scheme for benefit of small exporters.	42
DEFENCE	44
1.75.	PADMA, the Centralised Pay System for Indian Coast Guard launched.....	44
1.76.	DRDO successfully carries out maiden flight of unmanned fighter aircraft.	44
1.77.	Tejas Malaysia's top choice for its new fighter jet plan.....	44
1.78.	Navy to develop and induct 75 new technologies, products.....	45
1.79.	Indian Navy's stealth frigate INS Tarkash, visited Djibouti.	45
1.80.	Rajnath Singh to launch 75 newly-developed AI-enabled defence products.....	45
1.81.	Navy to get first indigenous aircraft carrier in August.....	46
1.82.	Ministry of Defence sets target of Rs 1.75 crores of defence production by 2025.	46
1.83.	Defence Minister to launch Project 17A stealth frigate 'Dunagiri'.	47
1.84.	Navy decommissions Sindhudhvaj.	47
1.85.	The 52nd BGB-BSF DG level conference begins.	47
1.86.	ITBP Establishes the First Mountain Warfare Training School in The Northeast for LAC Security Personnel.....	48
1.87.	Aatmanirbhar Bharat': MoD accords high priority to indigenisation of Software Defined Radios for the Armed Forces.....	48
1.88.	India, Japan conducts maritime partnership exercise in Andaman Sea.	49
1.89.	India, France, UAE hold talk to boost maritime security.	49
1.90.	India's first Indigenous Aircraft Carrier 'Vikrant' built by Cochin Shipyard handed over to Navy.	49

1.91.	IAF to phase out entire MiG-21 fleet by 2025.....	49
SUMMITS		51
1.92.	India-EU to hold next round of FTA talks at Brussels in September 2022.....	51
1.93.	India's first ever Animal Health Summit held in New Delhi.....	51
1.94.	PM addresses Natural Farming Conclave.	51
1.95.	Iran to obtain full SCO membership in 2023: Iranian embassy.....	51
1.96.	PM to participate in first I2U2 Leaders' Summit virtually.....	52
1.97.	G20 finance leaders in Bali to tackle Ukraine, inflation.....	52
1.98.	13th Petersberg Climate Dialogue in Berlin, Germany.....	52
POLICY AND PROGRAMME		54
1.99.	Dak Karmayogi E-Learning Platform Launched by the Government.....	54
1.100.	PM inaugurates Digital India Week 2022 in Gandhinagar.....	54
1.101.	The 13 th Edition of Toy Biz B2B (Business to Business) International Exhibition was held at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.....	55
1.102.	Gujarat, Karnataka and Meghalaya emerge best enablers for startups.	55
1.103.	Plant Based Foods Industry Association (PBFIA), proposed the setting up of India's "First plant protein cluster".....	55
1.104.	PM GatiShakti Plan to bring about greater coherence in all investments in infrastructure projects: Sitharaman	56
1.105.	Mission Buniyaad.....	56
1.106.	Gujarat Becomes First state to Launch Semiconductor Policy.	56
1.107.	PM To Launch Power Ministry's Flagship Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme.....	57
INDEXES AND REPORTS.....		58
1.108.	India will have 122 unicorns in 25 cities within next 2-4 years: Hurun Research Institute.....	58
1.109.	Government released the 1 st edition of 'State Ranking Index for National Food Security Act (NFSA). 58	
1.110.	Over 66 pc of India's blue-collared employees earn below Rs 15K per month: Report.	59
1.111.	National Monuments Authority report declares Mangarh hillock in Rajasthan as a monument of National Importance.	59
1.112.	International Energy Agency report warns on China's dominance of solar panel supply chain.	60
1.113.	India ranks 135 out of 146 in Gender Gap Index.....	60
1.114.	Union Education Minister Releases India Rankings 2022 of higher educational institutes.	61
1.115.	Maternal mortality above UN target in 70 pc of India's districts: Study.	62
1.116.	NITI Aayog to launch the third edition of the India Innovation Index.....	63
1.117.	With \$87 billion, India top remittance recipient in 2021: UN report.....	63
1.118.	Bureau of Indian Standards established 1037 Standards Clubs in schools and colleges across India in 2021-22.63	

1.119. ONGC to make Green Hydrogen; inks MoU with India’s leading renewable energy Company Greenko Zero C.	64
ENVIRONMENT	65
1.120. UK-built Forum satellite will measure greenhouse effect.	65
1.121. Botanical Survey of India (BSI) rediscovered presumed extinct species Brachystelma attenuatum after a gap of 188 years in Himachal Pradesh.	65
1.122. India adds 540 species to faunal database.	65
1.123. Glacier collapse in Italian Alps.	66
1.124. The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change proposes amendments in Environment Protection Act, to decriminalize provisions.	66
1.125. Odisha eyes Forest Act implementation by 2024.	66
1.126. Another draft notification for Western Ghats sensitive area sans Kerala.	67
1.127. Coffee Board to collaborate with ISRO to develop climate-resistant varieties.	67
1.128. Sustainable Use of Wild Species is Key to Achieve Sustainable Development.	68
1.129. Air pollution behind rising burden of NCDs: ASSOCHAM report	68
1.130. Climate Change Missions in all districts of T.N.	68
1.131. To curb pollution in Delhi-NCR, new policy framed.	69
1.132. Steps initiated for declaration of ‘Indus River’ as UNESCO World Heritage.	69
1.133. Syngenta India Launched Biodiversity Sensor Project with IIT Ropar.	70
1.134. No GM rice approved for commercial cultivation: Union Minister for Agriculture.	70
1.135. India inks pact with Namibia to reintroduce cheetah declared extinct in country 50 yrs ago.	71
1.136. Forest Rights Act has enhanced income basket of beneficiaries: Ministry of Tribal Affairs.	72
1.137. Wind power rates may bottom out.	72
1.138. India Designates 5 New Ramsar Sites.	72
1.139. Light-mantled Albatross.	73
1.140. Puducherry Fossil Wood Park contains 20 million years old Fossil Wood.	73
1.141. World Tiger Day.	74
GEOGRAPHY.....	75
1.142. NDDDB moving to revive edible oil co-ops, support fruit/vegetable growers.	75
1.143. India explores investment in Australian lithium.	75
1.144. Typhoon Aere makes landfall in Japan.	75
1.145. Second Ken-Betwa Link Project Steering Committee Meeting held.	76
1.146. Jawaharlal Nehru Port becomes first 100 per cent Landlord Major Port of India having all berths being operated on PPP model.	76
1.147. This ‘ant chutney’ attempts to make it to the Geographical Indications list.	76
1.148. GI Tag to White Onion.	77

1.149.	Govt proposes amendments in Cantonments Act, 2006 for greater democratization of Cantonment Boards	78
ART & CULTURE.....		79
1.150.	Jagannath Puri Rath Yatra 2022:	79
1.151.	Only university in the world which offers courses in folk arts and culture to branch out across the globe.	79
1.152.	Kutchi community of Gujarat celebrated their new year.	79
1.153.	Kharchi Puja 2022	80
1.154.	PM addresses birth centenary celebration of Swami Atmasthananda.	80
1.155.	Heavy rains cause partial collapse of Hampi heritage structure.	80
1.156.	PM extended greetings on the occasion of Guru Purnima and Ashadha Purnima.	81
1.157.	Bonalu festival celebrated in Hyderabad and Secunderabad	81
1.158.	Balamani Amma: The Legendary Malayalam Poet and Author.	82
1.159.	Aadi Krithigai.	82
HEALTH		83
1.160.	AIIMS, Delhi bags patent for cancer detection system for early and effective identification of prostate cancer.	83
1.161.	Researchers to be hired for integrative medicine.	83
1.162.	World hunger levels rising: UN food security and nutrition report,2022	83
1.163.	New law to strengthen public health response.	84
1.164.	Zydus launches top anti-diabetic drug after it goes off patent; prices to fall by 60 per cent.	85
1.165.	Health alert as Nairobi fly invades Bihar's border region.	85
1.166.	AIIMS to document works of Sushruta.	86
1.167.	India achieves landmark of '200 Crore' COVID-19 Vaccinations.	86
1.168.	First-Ever 'Made in India' surgical robotic system installed at Rajiv Gandhi Institute and Research Center, New Delhi (RGCI).	86
1.169.	Take Home Ration: an initiative to close the nutrition gap.	87
1.170.	African swine fever reported in Kerala's Wayanad.	87
1.171.	Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD).	87
STATE NEWS.....		89
1.172.	Karnataka government launched 'Kashi Yatra' scheme.	89
1.173.	Anthrax alert in Kerala's Thrissur.	89
1.174.	Haryana to promote Dragon Fruit cultivation.	89
1.175.	Karnataka invited the Korean delegation to participate in the Karnataka Global Investors Meet and the Bengaluru Tech Summit to be held in November.	89
1.176.	UP becomes the first state in the country to have 13 expressways.	90

1.177.	Textile Park near Mattewara Forest scrapped in Punjab.....	91
1.178.	Drone-enabled services in Himachal soon.....	91
1.179.	Tripura government will restart the 'schemes to bring dropouts back to schools.....	91
1.180.	PM Addresses Bihar Assembly's Centenary Celebration.....	91
1.181.	Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign to be celebrated in Haryana from Aug 13 to 15.....	92
1.182.	Kerala becomes first state to have own internet service.....	92
1.183.	Haryana to set up 'Footwear-Leather' cluster on 500 acres in Rohtak.....	92
1.184.	Rajasthan gets the country's first AI-powered tool for fast disposal of cases at Lok Adalat.....	93
1.185.	Andhra Pradesh launches first-ever blackbuck survey on Godavari islands.....	93
1.186.	Burhanpur, Madhya Pradesh becomes the first Har Ghar Jal certified district in the country.....	94
1.187.	Kali Bein River.....	94
1.188.	Gurugram Police, Haryana launches E-Beat system to Prevent Crime.....	95
1.189.	Haryana & Israel will cooperate in water conservation and management projects: Khattar.....	95
1.190.	'Haryana Atmanibhar Textile Policy 2022' to be implemented soon.....	95
1.191.	PM Modi launches India's first International Bullion Exchange in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.....	96
SPORTS	97
1.192.	Athlete Parul Chaudhary sets new national record in women's 3000 m event in Los Angeles.....	97
1.193.	Wimbledon: Tunisia's Ons Jabeur becomes first Arab woman to enter a Grand Slam singles semis. 97	
1.194.	Elorda Cup: Boxers Alfiya Pathan and Gitika clinch Gold medals.....	97
1.195.	Wimbledon 2022.....	97
1.196.	Arjun Babuta hits mark, wins shooting gold for India.....	97
1.197.	Praggnanandhaa wins Paracin Open chess title.....	98
1.198.	Durand Cup from August 16.....	98
1.199.	Indian Men's team bags silver medal at ISSF World Cup.....	98
1.200.	Sadio Mané named African Player of the Year.....	98
1.201.	World Athletics Championships: Neeraj Chopra clinches India's first-ever silver medal with historic throw of 88.13m.....	98
1.202.	Savita Kanswal becomes first woman in India to successfully climb Mt Everest and Mt Makalu in just 16 days.....	99
1.203.	Four times world champion Sebastian Vettel announces retirement from Formula One.....	99
AWARDS	100
1.204.	Japan awards Shinzo Abe country's highest order posthumously.....	100
1.205.	Japan's 'Order of the Rising Sun' award conferred to Narayanan Kumar.....	100
1.206.	IAS Ashish Chauhan wins the News Maker Achiever's Award 2022.....	100
1.207.	68th National Film Awards.....	101

1.208.	Sri Sri Ravi Shankar honoured with Suriname's highest civilian honour.	102
1.209.	Amartya Sen turns down West Bengal Government award.	102
HIMACHAL CURRENT AFFAIRS.....		103
1.210.	Himachal Pradesh among 7 states that are top achievers in ease-of-doing- business ranking of states, UTs.	103
1.211.	Mandi features in 'Uttam' category on performance index by Education Department.	103
1.212.	Cultural programme concludes in Bilaspur.	103
1.213.	Shikari Mata temple in Mandi witnessing heavy tourist influx.	104
1.214.	Country's highest village gets tap water.	104
1.215.	Himachal Pradesh tops in giving loans to street vendors.	104
1.216.	Paragpur, First heritage village of Himachal Pradesh, lacks facilities.	104
1.217.	SS Guleria is Appointed as the Information Commissioner of Himachal Pradesh.	105
1.218.	Himachal CM launches 'Naari Ko Naman' scheme; women to get 50 pc concession on bus fare. .	105
1.219.	Subsidy for solar power plants enhanced in Himachal Pradesh	105
1.220.	Shiv Dham comes up at Sujampur in the Hamirpur District.	106
1.221.	Himachal Pradesh ranked 2nd in food security Act implementation.	106
1.222.	Robotics labs to be set up in 100 schools.	106
1.223.	Minister lays stone of cow sanctuary in Una district.	107
1.224.	JUARE makes it to Asia, India books of records	107
1.225.	Govt pushes for Una's inclusion in industrial corridor project.	107
1.226.	Project to develop Gaggal-Guler stretch in Kangra as 'heritage road' gets nod.	108
1.227.	NDRF starts nationwide safety audit of ropeways.	108
1.228.	Products of Himachal SHGs most sought after on e-commerce websites	108
1.229.	March at Nahan against tribal status to Hattees.	109
1.230.	Union Minister Anurag Thakur visits newly built IIIT-Una.	109
1.231.	417 households switch to green energy in Una:	109
1.232.	Dharamsala to have 10 e-vehicle charging stations.	110
1.233.	Innovative effort to promote agriculture in Himachal Pradesh.	110
1.234.	RD Dhiman replaces Ram Subhag Singh as Himachal Pradesh Chief Secretary.	110
1.235.	The Cabinet approved loan for Himachal Pradesh Rural Water Improvement and Livelihood Project for providing clean drinking water.	110
1.236.	L&T to repair temples in Govind Sagar Lake.	111
1.237.	IIT-Mandi 20th among engineering institutes, 43rd overall.	111
1.238.	Mandi bags silver medal for tuberculosis eradication.	111
1.239.	Campaign to make Chamba tobacco-free launched.	111
1.240.	Dharamsala theatre festival concludes.	112

1.241.	518 sites identified for setting up Panchvati Parks in Himachal Pradesh.....	112
1.242.	Rs 1,600 crore World Bank grant for power sector reforms in Himachal Pradesh.....	112
1.243.	Himachal Pradesh has become first in country to launch Vehicle location Tracking Device, Emergency Panic Button System and Command Control Centre.	113
1.244.	Entrepreneurship centre to be set up at Himachal Pradesh University: Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar.....	113
1.245.	Award for Krishi Doot Kundan Lal.....	113
1.246.	Nahan, Kullu adjudged best municipal councils of 2020, '21.....	114
1.247.	Una administration ropes in CSIR to combat malnutrition.....	114
1.248.	3-D animated centre to be set at Chintpurni temple.	115
1.249.	Three-day trout fair commences in Manali.	115
1.250.	Himachal Governor inaugurates Minjar Mela at Chowgan, Chamba.....	115
1.251.	HP CM seeks special assistance from Niti Aayog for Mandi greenfield airport.....	116
1.252.	Museum of wood culture to come up in Kullu.....	116
1.253.	ADB nod to Rs 770 Cr loan for safe drinking water project in Himachal Pradesh.	116
1.254.	Two solar parks to come up in Lahaul-Spiti, Kinnaur.	117
1.255.	Eight districts in Himachal Pradesh suitable for cold water fisheries.	117
1.256.	Chamba gets Rs 3 cr award.	117
1.257.	22-day camp on robotics, AI held at IIT-Mandi.....	117
1.258.	After maize, Kangra vegetable crops under white fly attack.....	117
1.259.	The Aryabhata Geo Informatics and Space Application Centre.	118
1.260.	Shravan Ashtami fair begins.....	118
1.261.	Progressive Himachal event to be held at Chamba.....	119
OTHER IMPORTANT ONE LINERS.....		120

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NATIONAL NEWS

1.1. NTPC COMMISSIONS INDIA'S LARGEST FLOATING SOLAR POWER PROJECT IN TELANGANA IS NOW FULLY OPERATIONAL.

- India's largest floating Solar Power Project is now fully operational. NTPC declared Commercial Operation of the final part capacity of 20 MW out of 100 MW Ramagundam Floating Solar PV Project at Ramagundam, Telangana.
- With the operationalisation of 100-MW Solar PV Project at Ramagundam, total commercial operation of Floating Solar Capacity in Southern Region rose to 217 MW.
- Earlier, NTPC declared Commercial operation of 92 MW Floating Solar at Kayamkulam (Kerala) and 25 MW Floating Solar at Simhadri (Andhra Pradesh).
- The 100-MW Floating Solar project at Ramagundam is endowed with advanced technology as well as environment friendly features.
- The project spreads over 500 acres of its reservoir. Divided into 40 blocks, each having 2.5 MW. Each block consists of one floating platform and an array of 11,200 solar modules.
- The floating platform consists of one Inverter, Transformer, and a HT breaker. The solar modules are placed on floaters manufactured with HDPE (High Density Polyethylene) material.
- The entire floating system is being anchored through special HMPE (High Modulus Polyethylene) rope to the dead weights placed in the balancing reservoir bed. The power is being evacuated up to the existing switch yard through 33KV underground cables.
- This project is unique in the sense that all the electrical equipment including inverter, transformer, HT panel and SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) are also on floating ferro cement platforms. The anchoring of this system is bottom anchoring through dead weight concrete blocks.
- The presence of floating solar panels, the evaporation rate from water bodies is reduced, thus helping in water conservation. Approximately 32.5 lakh cubic meters per year water evaporation can be avoided. The water body underneath the solar modules helps in maintaining their ambient temperature, thereby improving their efficiency and generation.
- Similarly, while coal consumption of 1,65,000 Tons can be avoided per year; Co2 emission of 2,10,000 tons per year can be avoided.

1.2. PRASAR BHARTI LAUNCHES NEW LOGO.

- Headquartered in New Delhi, Prasar Bharati is a statutory autonomous body set up by an Act of Parliament. It comprises the Doordarshan Television Network and All India Radio (AIR), which were earlier media units of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

KEY POINTS

- The new logo was released by the secretary I&B Apurva Chandra, secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) in the presence of Mayank Kumar Agrawal, CEO, Prasar Bharati, DPS Negi, Member (Finance), Prasar Bharati, and officers of Ministry of I&B and Prasar Bharati.
- In the earlier format, the corporate office of Prasar Bharati used both AIR and Doordarshan logos on both the sides of the written text 'PRASAR BHARATI' along with the Indian emblem in the middle.
- Inspired from the identities of both All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan, the new logo of Prasar Bharati is defined as a blend of both AIR and Doordarshan.
- As per the broadcaster, the new logo of Prasar Bharti is replete with rich meaning. The elements in the central circle and map of India signify the service of trust, security, and perfection for the common man.

- While the elements in the central circle and map of India signify the service of trust, security and perfection to the Nation, its colour, 'Dark Moderate Blue' represents both the sky and the sea and is associated with open spaces, freedom, intuition, imagination, inspiration, and sensitivity.
- Blue also represents meanings of depth, trust, loyalty, sincerity, wisdom, confidence, stability, faith, and intelligence. The colour blue also pays tribute to the Indian ethos and traditions associated with religious figures; mythological characters found in the Indian miniature paintings.

1.3. ONDC TO BE GRADUALLY EXPANDED TO MORE CITIES: UNION MINISTER PIYUSH GOYAL.

- Open network for digital commerce (ONDC) is a set of standards for voluntary adoption by sellers or logistics providers or payment gateways.
- The objective is to democratise the fast-growing e-commerce sector in the country to help small retailers and reduce the dominance of online retail giants.
- According to Union Minister Piyush Goyal, the presence of open network for digital commerce, a Unified Payments Interface-type protocol, will be gradually expanded to more cities after the successful launch of its pilot phase.
- It provides small retailers the freedom to choose any logistics player and seller platform based on different parameters like location and rates.
- The initiative is also aimed at curbing the dominance of two large multinational e-commerce players -- which control more than half of the country's e-commerce trading, limit access to the market and give preferential treatment to certain sellers and squeeze supplier margins.
- The ONDC was launched in five cities in April - Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Shillong and Coimbatore.
- As many as 20 organisations of national repute have confirmed investments of Rs 255 crore into the ONDC. Lenders, such as the State Bank of India, UCO Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Bank of Baroda, have already committed investments.

1.4. PROPORTION OF UNMARRIED IN AGE GROUP 15-29 INCREASES TO 23%.

- According to a Government survey, the proportion of unmarried persons within the age bracket of 15-29 years has increased to 23 per cent in 2019 from 17.2 per cent in 2011.
- As per the **National Youth Policy 2014**, those aged 15 to 29 years are classified as youth.
- The latest report of the **National Statistical Office** stated that the percentage share of the youth population (15-29 years) who are never married has shown an increasing trend in the male population from 20.8 per cent in 2011 to 26.1 per cent in 2019 and a similar trend has been observed in case of the female population.
- The proportion of unmarried females rose from 13.5 per cent in 2011 to 19.9 per cent.
- In 2019, the highest percentage share of youth population who are never married have been observed in the States/UTs of Jammu & Kashmir followed by Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Punjab and the lowest have been observed in the States/UTs of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
- However, the report did not attribute any reason for rising in the proportion of unmarried youth. It stated that early marriage in India has been declining over time.

1.5. NAVAL INNOVATION AND INDIGENISATION ORGANISATION (NIIO) SEMINAR 'SWAVLAMBAN' TO BE HELD AT DR AMBEDKAR INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, NEW DELHI.

- Prime Minister to address the Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO) seminar 'Swavlamban' at Dr Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.

- As a part of the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav', NIIO, in conjunction with the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO), aims at inducting at least 75 new indigenous technologies/products into the Indian Navy. This collaborative project is named **SPRINT** (Supporting Pole-Vaulting in R&D through iDEX, NIIO and TDAC).
- The seminar aims to engage Indian industry and academia towards achieving self-reliance in the Defence sector.
- Sessions dedicated to Innovation, Indigenisation, Armament and Aviation will be held.
- The Seminar will also witness outreach to the Indian Ocean Region, in line with the government's vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region).

1.6. 'DIGI YATRA' PROJECT.

- The Consultative Committee for the Ministry of Civil Aviation recently met in New Delhi. The subject of conversation was "DIGI YATRA". Members of the committee who are also members of parliament (MPs) attended the meeting and offered some insightful ideas regarding the project.

What is 'DIGI YATRA'?

- 'DIGI YATRA' is an initiative designed to ensure contactless, seamless processing of passengers at airports and is based on facial recognition technology (FRT).
- In essence, the idea envisions any traveller being able to pass through numerous checkpoints at the airport utilising a paperless and contactless procedure, establishing their identification through facial recognition and linking it to their boarding card.
- Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Union Minister of Civil Aviation, claims that the system has addressed privacy issues.

How is 'DIGI YATRA' beneficial?

- It offers a decentralised, cost-effective, mobile wallet-based identity management technology that addresses privacy and data protection concerns while implementing Digi Yatra. After the amended Digi Yatra rules were approved, the DGCA published an AIC (Aeronautical Information Circular) on April 18, 2022.

How did the "DIGI YATRA" come into being?

- Under Section 8 of the Companies Act of 2013, the Digi Yatra Foundation (DYF) was established as a joint venture (JV) firm in 2019. AAI (26 percent of the shares) and BIAL, DIAL, GHIAL, MIAL, and CIAL are its shareholders. The remaining 74 percent of the shares are held equally by these 5 shareholders.
- To create the Digi Yatra Central Ecosystem, the Foundation was established (DYCE). The curator of the Passenger ID validation procedure would be the pan-Indian Digi Yatra Foundation. Additionally, it will foster agreement among Indian aviation stakeholders. Additionally, it would outline the local airport systems' policies and requirements for compliance.
- The JV will regularly audit the different compliances and guidelines for the regional airport biometric boarding systems, including those related to security, picture quality, and data privacy (BBS).
- In first phase, Digi Yatra is proposed to be rolled out at two Airports namely Varanasi and Bengaluru in August 2022 and at five Airports namely Pune, Vijayawada, Kolkata, Delhi and Hyderabad by March next year. AAI will identify their airports where Digi Yatra would be implemented in phased manner.

1.7. CENTRE GIVES APPROVAL FOR RENAMING 7 CITIES, TOWNS.

- Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai informed the Lok Sabha that a proposal has also been received from the West Bengal government for renaming the state as 'Bangla' in all three languages - Bengali, English and Hindi.
- The Centre has given its nod for renaming seven cities and towns, including Allahabad to Prayagraj, in the last five years.
- While the No Objection Certificate (NOC) to change the name of Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh to Prayagraj was given on December 15, 2018, the NOC for changing the name of Rajahmundry city in Andhra Pradesh to Rajamahendravaram was given on August 3, 2017.
- Approval for changing the name of Nagar Untari in Jharkhand to Shri Banshidhar Nagar was given in August 2018.
- Clearance was also given to change names of Birshingpur Pali, Hoshangabad Nagar and Babai city - all three in Madhya Pradesh - to Maa Birasini Dham (2018), Narmadapuram (2021) and Makhan Nagar (2021), respectively.
- Approval to change name of Punjab's Shri Hargobindpur city to Shri Hargobindpur Sahib was given in March 2022.

1.8. RENUNCIATION OF INDIAN CITIZENSHIP.

- Recently, Government Data claimed that over **3.9 lakh Indians gave up citizenship** in the past 3 yrs to settle abroad.
- **America** emerged as the top choice among 103 countries where the emigrants settled.
- **2021:** More than 1.63 lakh Indians relinquished their citizenship in **2021 alone**. Of them, more than 78,000 took **US citizenship**.
- **2019 and 2020:** While 1.44 lakh Indians gave up their citizenship in 2019, the numbers fell in 2020 to 85,256 in 2020, before rising again last year.
- **Other Countries:** Apart from choosing countries such as Singapore (7,046) and Sweden (3,754), many have also renounced their citizenship for Bahrain (170), Angola (2), Iran (21), and Iraq (1) — one person took the citizenship of Burkina Faso in 2021.
- More than 1,400 persons took Chinese citizenship, while 48 persons renounced their citizenship for Pakistan's.
- **Most citizenship acquired:** The largest numbers of Indians who relinquished Indian citizenship in 2021 went to: The United States (78,284), Australia (23,533), Canada (21,597), and The United Kingdom (14,637).

1.9. PM NARENDRA MODI UNVEILS INDIA'S FIRST PASSENGER DRONE "VARUNA".

- Prime Minister has unveiled **Varuna**, India's first passenger drone. PM Modi is seen watching the demonstration of the drone.
- **Prime Minister** asserted that the current government has ensured last-mile delivery of services with the help of technology, including drones.
- The Prime Minister was there to address the **Naval Innovation and Indigenization Organization (NIIO)** seminars **Swavlamban** which took place at Dr Ambedkar International Center in New Delhi.

Varuna drone:

- The makers of this indigenous pilot-less Varuna drone startup Sagar Defense Engineering demonstrated this in his presence.
- This Varuna drone has been designed and developed by a startup and has the capacity to carry one person inside.
- Varuna, India's first drone that can carry a human payload has a range of 25 km. The drone can carry a 130 kg payload and has 25-33 minutes of flight time.

1.10. DIGITAL JYOT: TRIBUTE TO MARTYRS.

- PM Narendra Modi urges people to take part in paying digital tributes to freedom fighters.
- A sky beam light has been installed at Central Park in Delhi and every tribute paid will intensify the illumination of the Digital Jyot.
- Digital Jyot uses technology and enables people to share a heartfelt message of gratitude to freedom fighters.
- **As per the Ministry of Culture**, “the Digital Jyot symbolises the glow of freedom that illuminates our lives. It is surrounded by an illuminated metallic floral sculpture inspired by the courage and determination of our freedom fighters and martyrs.”
- The design is inspired by the “nature and flowers linked to ideas of hope, strength, and positivity.”

1.11. 'HAR GHAR TIRANGA': CENTRE TWEAKS FLAG CODE; TRICOLOUR CAN NOW BE FLOWN DAY & NIGHT.

- The central government has introduced some changes in the nation's flag code by permitting the Indian national flag to fly both day and night and be machine-made besides using polyester fabric.
- The development came as the government will launch a 'Har Ghar Tiranga' (hoisting of flag in every home) programme as part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' to celebrate the 75th Independence Day of India from August 13 to 15.

What Are the Changes?

- The display, hoisting and use of the Indian national flag is ruled by the **Flag Code of India, 2002** and the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971**.
- The Flag Code of India has been additionally amended through an order on July 20, 2022. The clause (xi) of paragraph 2.2 of Part-II of the Flag Code of India, 2002 shall now be read as follows- (xi) "where the Flag is displayed in open or displayed on the house of a member of the public, it may be flown day and night".
- Earlier, the national flag of India was allowed to be flown from sunrise to sunset, irrespective of the prevailing weather conditions.
- Similarly, paragraph 1.2 of Part-I of the Flag Code of India, 2002 shall now be read as follows- 1.2. "The National Flag shall be made of hand spun and hand woven or machine made, cotton/ polyester/ wool/ silk khadi bunting."
- Previously, machine-made and polyester flags were not allowed to be used.

'Har Ghar Tiranga' Programme

- The 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' is being celebrated to commemorate the 75 years of a progressive independent India. As part of this celebration, the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' programme has been launched to motivate citizens to hoist the tricolour in their homes for three days that is from August 13 to 15.
- According to the official statement, over 20 crore tricolours would be hoisted atop the houses for three days, from August 13 to 15. Government and private establishments will also be involved.

1.12. GLOBAL CENTRE FOR TRADITIONAL MEDICINE (GCTM) AT JAMNAGAR, GUJARAT.

- The WHO-GCTM Centre aims to provide support for all traditional medicines in the world. No proposal is under consideration for setting up another such type of centre elsewhere in India.
- Recently, this information was given by Minister of Ayush Shri Sarbananda Sonowal in a written reply in Rajya Sabha.
- The Ministry of Ayush and WHO signed a Host Country Agreement on 25th March 2022 for the establishment of the first WHO's Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in India.

The salient aspects of this agreement are as follows:

- That WHO will set up GCTM Centre in Jamnagar (Gujarat).
- That it aims to support nations in developing policies & action plans to strengthen the role of traditional medicine as part of their journey to universal health coverage.
- The Government shall respect the functional independence of WHO in carrying out its activities and in assigning to the Centre such WHO officials or other WHO personnel as it deems necessary for carrying out the particular functions assigned to the Centre.
- The Government shall provide to WHO, free of charge, appropriate and adequate office premises for the Centre and its installations.
- The Government shall also be responsible for the maintenance and security of the workplace premises for the Centre, its installations and technical plants, together with storage and archive space, meeting space, equipment and other facilities.
- The Ground breaking ceremony of main office of WHO GCTM has been carried out by the Prime Minister and DG WHO in Jamnagar, Gujarat. The construction of Interim office of WHO GCTM is under progress.
- All expenditure involved for operational, programmatic, infrastructure and construction costs of the Interim Office and the Main Office of WHO GCTM will be borne by the Ministry of Ayush.
- The financial implications of Rs. 130.00 Cr (approx.) have been approved by the Ministry of Ayush towards the functional cost of the Interim Office of WHO-GCTM and Funds of Rs. 63.26 Cr have been released till date.

1.13. LOK SABHA PASSES NATIONAL ANTI-DOPING BILL WITH FOCUS ON CLEAN SPORTS.

- The Lok Sabha passed the national anti-doping bill, to provide statutory framework in the form of legislation for prohibition of doping in sports in the country.
- Already, the **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)** has been performing the anti-doping measures as per the **World Anti-Doping Agency** norms. It was felt that the legislative powers would lend teeth to the whole system of anti-doping.
- The passing of the bill, which was introduced by the Union Sports Minister **Anurag Thakur**, in December last year, would help in the establishment of the National Board of Anti-Doping in sports, with competent and independent personnel.
- Among others, the bill attempts to achieve time-bound justice to athletes, apart from enhancing cooperation among agencies in fighting doping.
- It is also an attempt to reinforce India's commitment to fulfil international obligations for clean sports.
- The bill would help in establishing a robust independent mechanism for anti-doping adjudication.
- The bill also would lend legal sanctity to the functioning of NADA and **National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL)**.
- It is expected to lead to the establishment of more dope testing laboratories in the country.
- The legislation would help in academic research and manufacture of things related to anti-doping.

About

- The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) was set up as registered society on November 24, 2005.
- The primary objectives of NADA are to make anti-doping rules as per WADA code, to promote education and research and create awareness about doping and make Indian sports dope free.

1.14. FUSION REACTOR FOR CLEAN ENERGY.

- India may consider setting up a fusion reactor for generating clean energy in future, being part of the 35-nation International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project.

- India is one of the partner countries in ITER project. India has contributed significantly in the international collaborative effort.
- To help in speedy implementation of the project, NPCIL has ordered long-delivery items and equipment.
- NPCIL (Nuclear Power Corporation of India) has also worked on standardising the design of indigenous 700 MWe Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor, to help in faster project implementation.
- To augment additional electricity generation through nuclear power plants, work has been initiated at the Kudankulam site for completion of KKNPP 3, 4, 5 and 6 plants, each with a capacity of 1,000 MWe, in collaboration with the Russian Federation.
- The Department of Atomic Energy's R&D institutes Bhabha Atomic Research Centre and Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research are carrying out considerable research in development for thorium-based fuel cycle technology.

What are fusion and ITER?

- Fusion is the nuclear reaction that powers the sun and the stars, is a potential source of safe, non-carbon-emitting and virtually limitless energy.
- International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) is a collaboration of **35 nations** launched in **1985**.
- The ITER members include **China, the European Union, India, Japan, South Korea, Russia and the United States**.
- It is located in **France**.
- Harnessing fusion's power is the goal of ITER, which has been designed as the key experimental step between today's fusion research machines and tomorrow's fusion power plants.

1.15. GOVT LAUNCHES 11TH AGRICULTURAL CENSUS 2021-22.

- Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar launched the eleventh agricultural census to collect data on various parameters, including operational holdings.
- For the first time, the data will be collected through smartphones and tablets.
- According to the agriculture ministry, the fieldwork of the Eleventh Agricultural Census (2021-22) will start in August 2022.
- Agriculture Census is conducted every 5 years.
- The ministry is implementing an agriculture census scheme from 1970-71. The tenth edition of the census was conducted with the reference year 2015-16.
- The agricultural census is the main source of information on a variety of parameters, such as the number and area of operational holdings, their size, class-wise distribution, land use, tenancy and cropping pattern, etc.
- Most of the states have digitised their land records and surveys, which will further accelerate the collection of agricultural census data.
- The use of digitised land records and the use of mobile apps for data collection will enable the creation of a database of operational holdings in the country.
- According to the, Agriculture Minister this computation will bring huge benefits in a vast and agricultural country like India.
- Agricultural computations can also contribute to the mapping of crops so that the country gets its benefits, further it can help in increasing farmers' income.

1.16. NEW DELHI: PM MODI TO ADDRESS INAUGURAL SESSION OF FIRST ALL INDIA DISTRICT LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITIES MEET.

- Prime Minister will address the inaugural session of first All India District Legal Services Authorities Meet in New Delhi on 30th July 2022.

- The first-ever national-level meet of District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs) is being organized by National Legal Services Authority.
- The meeting will deliberate on creation of an integrated procedure to bring homogeneity and synchronization across DLSAs.
- There are a total of 676 District Legal Services Authorities in the country. They are headed by the District Judge who acts as Chairman of the authority.
- Through DLSAs and State Legal Services Authorities, various legal aid and awareness programmes are implemented by National Legal Services Authority.
- The DLSAs also contribute towards reducing the burden on courts by regulating the Lok Adalats conducted by NALSA.



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INTERNATIONAL

1.17. UK ANNOUNCES 75 SCHOLARSHIPS FOR INDIAN STUDENTS ON 75TH YEAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

- The United Kingdom government has announced a partnership with leading businesses in India to offer 75 fully funded scholarships for Indian students to study in the UK from September, in celebration of the 75th anniversary of India's independence. Additionally, the British Council in India is offering around 18 scholarships for women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) covering over 12,000 courses across more than 150 UK universities.

About the Chevening scholarships programme:

- The programmes on offer include Chevening scholarships for a one-year Master's programme, with the opportunity to study any subject at a UK university.
- HSBC, Pearson India, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Sons and Duolingo are among the companies supporting this initiative to celebrate India's 75th year of independence. HSBC India will sponsor 15 scholarships, Pearson India will sponsor two, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Sons and Duolingo will sponsor one each as part of the 75 scholarships.
- The Chevening scheme is the UK government's international awards scheme offered in 150 countries, aimed at developing global leaders since 1983. India's Chevening programme is the largest in the world with over 3,500 alumni.
- The fully funded scholarships include tuition, living expenses and travel cost for a one-year-postgraduate programme. A minimum of two years' work experience is required for candidates to be eligible for the award and details will be made available through the Chevening website.

1.18. PARTNERS IN THE BLUE PACIFIC': NEW PROGRAMME STARTED BY US AND ALLIES.

- The US and its allies, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and the United Kingdom, have launched a new initiative called Partners in the Blue Pacific for effective and efficient cooperation with the region's small island nations in response to China's aggressive push to expand its sphere of influence in the Pacific.
- After China pushed for a broad, common cooperation pact with 10 Pacific states, it became obvious the planned extent of its expanding influence and the geostrategic competition in the region increased.

About Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP):

- A five-nation informal framework, the PBP aims to support Pacific islands and strengthen regional political and economic ties.
- It calls for further cooperation to improve "prosperity, resilience, and security" in the Pacific. It simply means that these nations will contribute more resources through the PBP, both collectively and individually, to block China's aggressive outreach.
- Members of the initiative have also promised to strengthen ties with the Pacific Islands Forum and promote regionalism in the Pacific.
- The five member countries said in a joint statement announcing the project that the forum "remains open to engaging with additional partners," adding that "at every point, the Pacific Islands will be led and guided by us."
- On the choice of the PBP's lines of effort and its flagship projects, we shall look to the Pacific for advice.
- The climate issue, connectivity and transportation, marine security and protection, health, prosperity, and education are among the sectors where PBP seeks to improve cooperation.

1.19. INDIA, IRAN TO ACTIVATE NEW SHORTER CORRIDOR TO RUSSIA.

- Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra spoke to Ali Bagheri Kani, Iran's Deputy Minister for Political Affairs, in a high-level talk in order to activate a shorter and sanctions-proof route between Russia and India. Almost a dozen countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus will also benefit from the route.
- Recently, Iran's state-run shipping company had successfully completed the first transit of Russian goods to India using the International North-South Transportation Corridor (INSTC).
- India has requested for the Chabahar Port to be brought under the INSTC ambit.
- Russian President Vladimir Putin also reiterated on the importance of the INSTC and emphasized on making the Caspian basin, the hub of energy and logistics.
- Significantly, ONGC Videsh Limited had a stake in the Satpayev oil block, but decided to exit after it could not find commercially exploitable oil.
- Interestingly, all 18-odd countries touched by the INSTC route have never been active backers of unilateral sanctions announced periodically by the West.
- Recently, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian had visited India and held talks on regional connectivity which entailed reviewing the progress made at the Shahid Beheshti terminal, Chabahar that will provide sea access to landlocked Afghanistan and emerge as a commercial transit hub for the region, including Central Asia.
- As if in acknowledgement of the developing ties, a few days later India abstained from voting against Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency board meeting.
- Last month, a test cargo of 41 tonnes of wooden laminate sheets left St Petersburg for the Russian port of Astrakhan and from there, it was shipped to Iran's Anzali Caspian port. It was then taken by road across Iran to Bandar Abbas from where the cargo was shipped to Mumbai. The entire journey took 24 days and is likely to become quicker once the trans-Iranian railway is completed.
- Traditionally, shipments from South Asia go via the Suez Canal to the ports of Rotterdam (The Netherlands), Antwerp (Belgium), Piraeus (Greece) and Valencia (Spain). All of these places are amenable to the West's diktat on unilateral sanctions.

1.20. TOP ARMY OFFICER LT. GEN MOHAN SUBRAMANIAN APPOINTED FORCE COMMANDER OF UN SOUTH SUDAN MISSION.

- United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appointed Indian Army's Lieutenant General Mohan Subramanian as the new Force Commander of the **United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)**, succeeding fellow officer Lieutenant General Shailesh Tinaikar.
- Lt General Subramanian has a distinguished military career with the Indian Army spanning over 36 years. Most recently, he served as the General Officer Commanding, Military Region (Operational and Logistic Readiness Zone) in central India, contributing to the Army's operational and logistic preparedness.
- In addition to Lt. Gen Subramanian's appointment, India has provided fifteen Force Commanders, two military advisors, one deputy military advisor to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, two divisions commanders and eight Deputy Force Commanders in various United Nations missions.

What is the UNMISS?

- In 2011, South Sudan gained independence and became a new country. The creation of South Sudan marked the end of a deadly conflict spanning more than 20 years and a civil war between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).
- However, assessing the security situation in South Sudan as volatile and posing a threat to international peace even after its independence, the UNMISS was first established in 2011 under Security Council Resolution 1996.
- The mission has **four main pillars** which include protecting civilians, and creating conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance. It also supports the implementation of the "revitalised agreement

and the peace process” and monitors, investigates, and reports on violations of humanitarian and human rights law.

- Since its inception, the Security Council resolution has been renewed every year with the UN body maintaining that the situation in South Sudan continues to pose a threat to global security. In fact, this year, the Security Council Resolution 2625 was adopted to renew the UNMISS till 15 March 2023.
- India for decades has had a strong association and presence with UN peacekeeping missions. Since 1948, over 2,00,000 Indians have served in 49 UN peacekeeping missions. Currently, India has a presence in eight out of fourteen UN peacekeeping missions, with 5,400 military personnel serving.

1.21. CHANGE IN BRITISH LEADERSHIP WOULD NOT IMPACT INDIA-UK RELATIONSHIP: MEA

- UK is an important strategic partner and India shared a multifaceted partnership with UK.
- India said that the resignation of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will not impact its relationship with UK as both countries share a close multifaceted partnership.
- Notably, India and the UK announced their intention to have a comprehensive free trade agreement during a virtual summit held in May 2021 between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his then British counterpart Boris Johnson.
- Formal negotiations on the proposed FTA between the two countries started early this year.
- A number of non-tariff barriers, like rules related to investor protection, intellectual property rights, and harmonisation of governance and standards, are among the key sticky points in the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that India and the United Kingdom target to sign by Diwali this year.
- The UK and India have established the Science and Innovation Council in 2010 to jointly undertake scientific projects.
- The two countries launched the Climate Finance Leadership Initiative (CFLI) in September 2021 to support climate and green energy projects in India.
- India-UK relations were elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2021, based on a shared commitment towards democracy, fundamental freedoms and multilateralism,

1.22. INDIA PROJECTED TO SURPASS CHINA AS WORLD'S MOST POPULOUS COUNTRY DURING 2023: UN REPORT.

- India is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country next year, according to a report by the United Nations.
- According to, the World Population Prospects 2022 by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, the global population is projected to reach eight billion on November 15, 2022.
- The latest projections by the United Nations suggest that the world's population could grow to around 8.5 billion in 2030 and 9.7 billion in 2050.
- It is projected to reach a peak of around 10.4 billion people during the 2080s and to remain at that level until 2100.
- According to the report, India is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country during 2023.”
- The world's two most populous regions in 2022 were Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, with 2.3 billion people, representing 29 per cent of the global population, and Central and Southern Asia, with 2.1 billion, representing 26 per cent of the total world population.
- China and India accounted for the largest populations in these regions, with more than 1.4 billion each in 2022.

- More than half of the projected increase in global population up to 2050 will be concentrated in just eight countries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and Tanzania.
- According to the report, India's population stands at 1.412 billion in 2022, compared to China's 1.426 billion.
- India, which will surpass China as the world's most populous nation by 2023, is projected to have a population of 1.668 billion in 2050, way ahead of China's 1.317 billion people by the middle of the century.

1.23. THE FILM '83' TO BE CELEBRATED AT INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL OF MELBOURNE; KAPIL DEV AS GUEST OF HONOUR.

- The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne, which for the last two years was held virtually, is set for a comeback. The festival will take place in Melbourne from August 12-20.
- The line-up this year is more diverse than ever before with over 100 films in 23 languages having been selected for the festival. The Movie 83, directed by Kabir Khan, will be celebrated at IFFM and the festival has invited legendary cricketer Kapil Dev to be the guest of honour.

1.24. UKRAINE JOINS NATO'S PROGRAM OF TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION.

- Ukraine has become an associate member of the Multilateral Interoperability Program (MIP), which takes care of the technical cooperation of the armies of NATO member states.
- According to the ministry, the associate membership in the MIP gives Ukraine a right to join the development and introduction of key NATO standards related to the interaction of combat control systems and related practices.
- The MIP is a program of technological cooperation between the Armed Forces of NATO member states, which was established at the level of national developers of combat control information systems and aims to achieve interoperability of national C2IS systems.
- Recently, the western military alliance formally invited Sweden and Finland to join during the NATO summit.

1.25. SRI LANKA DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY AFTER PRESIDENT FLEES.

- Sri Lankan authorities confirmed that President Gotabaya had flown to Maldives after full approval of the country's Defence Ministry.
- As per the PM's office, "Sri Lanka declares state of emergency after president flees."
- According to the Parliament Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena, Gotabaya Rajapaksa landed in Maldivian capital Male on a Sri Lanka Air Force plane adding that he is yet to receive a letter of resignation.
- According to the Parliament Speaker that he has not received Gotabaya's resignation letter who departed from Sri Lanka hours before he was expected to resign amid widespread protests in the country.
- Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe is scheduled to be sworn in as interim President till a new President is elected by Parliament on July 20 and nominations for the presidency will be called for on July 19.

1.26. RANIL WICKREMESINGHE SWORN IN AS INTERIM PRESIDENT OF SRI LANKA.

- Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe has sworn in as the interim President after Parliament Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena accepted the resignation of Gotabaya Rajapaksa.
- Wickremesinghe was sworn in as the Acting President before Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya.
- Gotabaya Rajapaksa submitted his resignation letter after arriving in Singapore, officially vacating the post of President.

- According to Parliament Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena, President will be selected according to the provisions of the Special Provisions Act No. 2 of 1981 and Article 40 of the Constitution.

1.27. ASSAM, ARUNACHAL CMS AGREE TO BORDER REALIGNMENT BASED ON 1960 PAPERS.

- The boundary line shown on 29 topo--sheets by a high-- powered committee in 1960 will be taken as the basis for the realignment of the Arunachal Pradesh-- Assam boundary towards resolving decades of dispute. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his Arunachal Pradesh counterpart Pema Khandu signed the Namsai Declaration for minimising the interstate boundary dispute involving 123 villages.

List of villages

- A list of these villages had been placed before a local commission by Arunachal Pradesh on December 26, 2007. Namsai is the headquarters of Namsai district in southern Arunachal Pradesh.
- According to the Declration,the boundary line delineated and signed on 29 toposheets by the High-Powered Tripartite Committee as notified boundary in 1960 would be taken as the basis for the realignment of boundary by both the States.
- Present--day Arunachal Pradesh, which attained Statehood in February 1987, used to be the North East Frontier Tract, administered by the Governor of Assam as an agent of the President of India.
- It was renamed North East Frontier Agency and brought under the Central government's control in 1954.
- According to the declaration, all border issues between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh will be confined to those raised before the local commission in 2007.

12 committees

- Following the model for resolving the Assam-- Meghalaya boundary dispute, both the States decided to constitute 12 regional committees each covering the districts on either side of the boundary for joint verification of the 123 villages.
- These committees will make recommendations to the respective State government keeping in view the historical perspective, administrative convenience, contiguity and people's will, to delineate the interstate boundary.

1.28. TRIBAL BODY IN PAKISTAN PROVINCE BANS WOMEN FROM VISITING TOURIST SPOTS.

- According to the media reports, a grand **Jirga** held in Bajaur in the Pakistan province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has decided against the liberty of women to visit the tourist spots with men in the area.
- The local elders in Tehseel Salarzai of Bajaur took this decision in a Jirga where representatives of all tribes were present.
- They announced that women will not be allowed to travel to any tourist place, even with men.
- The Jirga ruled that it was against their tribal values and traditions that women visit the recreational spots with men and requested the administration to respect their values.
- They said that they could not allow promotion of 'vulgarity' in the name of recreation while warning the administration to implement their decision by Sunday or else they would be compelled to do so on their own.

1.29. INDIA AMONG TOP FIVE INVESTORS IN AFRICA: EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER.

- According to the External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, that India is among the top five countries that have invested in the African continent.

- While addressing the 17th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Growth Partnership, S. Jaishankar said that with cumulative investments at \$73.9 billion from 1996-2021, India is among the top five investors in Africa.
- India's bilateral trade with Africa has now reached \$89.5 billion in 2021-22 compared with \$56 billion the previous year.
- Notably, through the Duty-Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme that extends duty free access to 98.2 per cent of India's total tariff lines, India has opened its market to African countries. So far 33 LDC African nations have been entitled to get benefits under this scheme.
- The African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA) which was commenced in 2021 would be helpful to Indian companies to enhance and intensify the business footprint in Africa.

What is African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)?

- AfCFTA aims to create a **single continental market** for products and services, with free movement of people and capital, paving the way for the **Continental Customs Union and the African Customs Union** to be established faster.
- The preliminary work on the **AfCFTA focuses on incremental tariff reductions**, non-tariff barriers, supply networks, and dispute resolution.
- It creates the **world's largest free-trade zone** since the World Trade Organization was founded in **1995**.
- AfCFTA will have a worldwide influence that is becoming increasingly reliant on African markets and commodities.
- It is headquartered in **Accra, Ghana**.

1.30. ISRAEL LAUNCHES PLAN TO REHABILITATE SOUTHERN JORDAN RIVER.

- Israel has announced a plan to restore and develop the southern course of the Jordan River.
- The plan aims to increase the amount of water and cut pollution in the Israeli section of the river, with the establishment of a new desalination facility that will treat the polluted and salty water and make it suitable for agricultural purposes.
- The rehabilitation of the southern Jordan River is more essential than ever and is possible due to the restoration of Israel's relations with Jordan, which allow both sides to address the issue jointly, along with international support.
- The Israeli section of the river will develop into a clean habitat with rich biodiversity and a tourist attraction.
- Presently, only about 70 million cubic meters of water flow in the southern course per year, mostly polluted and salty due to the activity of a nearby sewage treatment plant.

1.31. CHINA LAUNCHES SECOND SPACE STATION MODULE, WENTIAN.

- China launched the second of three modules to its permanent space station, in one of the final missions needed to complete the orbiting outpost by year's end.
- The 23-tonne Wentian ("Quest for the Heavens") laboratory module launching on the back of China's most powerful **rocket, the Long March 5B**, from the **Wenchang Space Launch Center** on the southern island of Hainan.
- China began constructing the space station in April 2021 with the launch of the Tianhe module, the main living quarters, in the first of 11 crewed and uncrewed missions in the undertaking.
- The Wentian lab module, 17.9 metres (59 feet) long, will be where astronauts can carry out scientific experiments, along with the other lab module yet to be launched – Mengtian ("Dreaming of the Heavens").
- Wentian features an airlock cabin that is to be the main exit-entry point for extravehicular activities when the station is completed.

- It will also serve as short-term living quarters for astronauts during crew rotations on the station, designed for long-term accommodation of just three astronauts.
- Mengtian is expected to be launched in October and, like Wentian, is to dock with Tianhe, forming a T-shaped structure.
- On board the space station are Shenzhou-14 mission commander Chen Dong and team mates Liu Yang and Cai Xuzhe. They are slated to return to Earth in December with the arrival of the Shenzhou-15 crew.

1.32. ZIMBABWE DEBUTS GOLD COIN AS LEGAL TENDER TO STEM INFLATION, BOOST CURRENCY.

- Zimbabwe has launched gold coins to be sold to the public in a bid to tame runaway inflation that has further eroded the country's unstable currency.
- The unprecedented move was announced by the country's central bank, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, to boost confidence in the local currency.
- Trust in Zimbabwe's currency is low after people saw their savings wiped out by hyperinflation in 2008 which reached 5 billion, according to the IMF.
- The central bank disbursed 2,000 coins to commercial banks.
- The first batch of the coins was minted outside the country but eventually they will be produced locally, according to the governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, John Mangudya.
- Any individual or company can buy the coins from authorised outlets such as banks, according to an announcement by the country's central bank.

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1.35. WOMEN OUTNUMBER MEN IN BANGLADESH POPULATION CENSUS.

- For the first time in the history of Bangladesh women outnumber men in its total population.
- The preliminary result of the 6th population census of Bangladesh recorded 8.33 crore women, 8.17 crore men, and 12,629 hijras in the total population.
- Releasing the summary data of the 6th Population and Housing Census 2022 conducted last month, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) revealed that the total population of the country increased from 14.4 crore in 2011 to 16.51 crore in 2022.
- Bangladesh recorded an average annual population growth rate of 1.22 percent., down from the average annual population growth rate of 1.37 percent recorded in 2011.

Other Key Findings of Census:

- The population census also revealed that the percentage of minorities in the total population declined between 2011-2022. The percentage of Hindus declined from 8.54 percent in 2011 to 7.95 percent in 2022. The Buddhist population fell from 0.62 percent in 2011 to 0.61 percent of the total in 2022. The Christian population also fell from 0.31 percent to 0.30 percent of the total during this period. However, the Muslim population increased from 90.39 percent in 2011 to 91.4 percent in 2022.
- The percentage of literacy in the country showed a sharp rise between 2011-2022. From 51.77 percent in 2011, literacy in Bangladesh now stands at 74.66 percent marking a rise of over 22.89 percent.
- Close to 56 percent of Bangladeshis use mobile phones in 2022 while 30.68 percent of the population is using the internet.
- Dhaka division has the largest population in the country at 4.4 crore people reflecting a population growth rate of 1.94 percent per year.

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DAYS TO REMEMBER

1.36. NATIONAL STATISTICS DAY 2022: 29 JUNE.

History:

- It was initially observed on June 29, 2007, to honour Professor Mahalanobis' exceptional contributions to statistical research and economic planning.
- It was decided to designate his birthday as National Statistics Day. On June 5th, 2007, the Indian Gazette initially published a notification about this.

KEY POINTS:

- National Statistics Day is observed in India on June 29 each year. The day aims to raise public awareness of the value of statistics in everyday life as well as in the planning and development process.
- The celebrated statistician, Professor Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, is recognised on National Statistics Day for his contributions to economic planning and statistics. Additionally, the Indian Statistical Institute's founder, Professor PC Mahalanobis, celebrates his birthday on 29 June.
- The **theme** of National Statistics Day 2022 is '**Data for Sustainable Development**'.

1.37. NATIONAL DOCTOR'S DAY CELEBRATES ON 1ST JULY.

History

- It was in 1991, when the day was first established. Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy is remembered on this day.
- He was a famous doctor and West Bengal's second chief minister. Interestingly, his birthday and death anniversary are on the same day. The day honours Dr Roy and also recognises everyone's effort to patients.
- India celebrates **National Doctor's Day on July 1**, the birth anniversary of **Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy**, an eminent physician, academician, freedom fighter and politician. Doctor's Day is celebrated globally on different dates.
- The date changes from country to country. National Doctor's Day marks the role of doctors who work tirelessly to ensure that patients remain in good health.
- The day celebrates the efforts taken by the healthcare staff for their hardwork and dedication.

National Doctor's Day 2022: Theme

- For 2022, the theme for National Doctor's Day is "**Family Doctors on the Front Line.**"

1.38. WORLD ZONOSIS DAY OBSERVED ON JULY 6.

- World Zoonoses Day was instituted on 6th July 1885 to educate and raise awareness about zoonotic diseases that can transmit from animals to humans.
- It commemorates French biologist Louis Pasteur, who administered the first dose of the first vaccine against rabies.

What Are Zoonoses?

- Zoonosis or a zoonotic disease is an infection that is naturally transmissible from vertebrate animals to humans. Animals can often carry harmful germs which may spread to people and cause illnesses, known as zoonoses.
- Pathogens such as viruses, bacteria, parasites, and fungi may cause zoonotic diseases. The pathogens may cause different types of illnesses in people and animals, ranging from mild to serious illness, and sometimes, death.

- There are over 200 known types of zoonoses, which comprise a large percentage of new and existing diseases in humans. Rabies is a zoonotic disease which is 100 per cent preventable through vaccination and other methods.
- Zoonotic pathogens may spread to humans through direct contact or through food, water or the environment, and represent a major public health problem around the world.

1.39. 22ND NATIONAL FISH FARMERS DAY CELEBRATED ON 10TH JULY.

- National Fisheries Development Board, Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, celebrated the 22nd National Fish Farmers Day today in a hybrid mode at NFDB Hyderabad.
- More than 1000 fish farmers, aquapreneurs & fisher folks, professionals, officials and scientists from across the nation participated in the event.
- The country stands second in fish production through aquaculture.
- The Government has launched the PMMSY, FIDF and KCC for benefit of the fishers and fish farmers in the country.
- To promote seaweed cultivation the Government of India sanctioned Seaweed Park in Tamil Nadu and fishing harbours are being modernized across the country.
- Government is implementing the flagship scheme of PMMSY for benefit of fishers and fish farmers in the country with a highest outlay of Rs.20050 crore.
- On the occasion NFDB and State Bank of India signed MOU to facilitate FIDF & Entrepreneur Models scheme.

1.40. WORLD BRAIN DAY CELEBRATES GLOBALLY ON JULY 22.

- The **World Federation of Neurology (WFN)** celebrates **World Brain Day** on every **July 22**, focusing on a different theme each year. According to WHO, good brain health is a state in which every individual can realize their own abilities and optimize their cognitive, emotional, psychological and behavioural functioning to cope with life situations.
- **Theme of World Brain Day 2022: "Brain Health for all"**

This year's World Brain Day campaign consists of 5 key messages:

1. Awareness:

- Create awareness about brain and brain diseases. Give special lectures on brain to children in schools and colleges.

2. Prevention:

- Serious diseases like stroke, brain infection, epilepsy etc. can be controlled by proper preventive measures. Around 80 to 90 percent of stroke cases can be prevented by controlling its underlying causes like high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, heart diseases, obesity, smoking etc.

3. Advocacy:

- It is very important that the scientific study of brain diseases, new discoveries and treatments are accessible to the masses at an affordable cost.

4. Education:

- Education for all is still on paper in many parts of the world and all governments and non-governmental organizations of the world must join hands to overcome this socio-educational inequality.

5. Access:

- Resources for information and treatment of brain diseases should be easily accessible to everyone in all parts of the world, be it in the form of digital information or in the form of newsletters for awareness campaigns.

1.41. INDIA'S INDERMIT GILL APPOINTED CHIEF ECONOMIST OF WORLD BANK.

- World Bank has appointed Indian national Indermit Gill as its Chief Economist and Senior Vice President for Development Economics.
- Gill will succeed American economist Carmen Reinhart in the role and his appointment will be effective 1 September 2022.
- Gill is currently Vice President for Equitable Growth, Finance, and Institutions, where he led work on macroeconomics, debt, trade, poverty, and governance. Between 2016 and 2021, he was a professor of public policy at Duke University and non-resident senior fellow in the Global Economy and Development program at the Brookings Institution.
- Gill has also taught at Georgetown University and the University of Chicago. A student of Nobel Laureates Gary Becker and Robert E. Lucas Jr., Gill holds a Ph. D. in economics from the University of Chicago.
- Gill will be only the second Indian to serve as chief economist at the international financial institution after Kaushik Basu, who was Chief Economist of the World Bank from 2012 to 2016.

1.42. WORLD NATURE CONSERVATION DAY.

- World Nature Conservation Day is observed on 28th July.
- The day is observed to create awareness the importance of protecting our natural resources. Conservation of resources has an important role in protecting the Mother Earth.
- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu has emphasized for concerted efforts to conserve the limited natural resources, reduce the carbon footprint and protect our planet.
- According to the United Nation Food and Agriculture Organization, 90 per cent of the Earth's precious topsoil is likely to be at risk by 2050.

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1.43. NASA LAUNCHES CAPSTONE MISSION TO THE MOON.

- The NASA researchers successfully launched CAPSTONE spacecraft to the moon from New Zealand.
- The launch took place on Rocket Lab's Electron rocket. Mission CAPSTONE stands for Cislunar Autonomous Positioning System Technology Operations and Navigation Experiment.
- With a price tag just shy of \$30 million, NASA hopes the mission will verify that a specific type of moon orbit is suitable for the lunar Gateway space station that the agency aims to launch later this decade.

About the CAPSTONE:

- CAPSTONE is a microwave oven-sized spacecraft with the aim to study a specific type of moon orbit that will be suitable for the lunar Gateway space station that NASA aims to launch later this decade.
- The lunar Gateway space station will be a small space station for astronauts in orbits where they can stop before and after going to the moon's surface.

1.44. NTPC'S 10 GW RENEWABLE ENERGY (RE) PARK TO COME UP IN RAJASTHAN.

- NTPC Renewable Energy (NTPC REL), a subsidiary of NTPC, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Rajasthan government for the development of 10 gigawatts (GW) Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Park in the State.
- NTPC Group has set a target of 60 GW renewable energy capacity by 2032.
- In less than 2 years since its inception, NTPC REL has won 4 GW renewable energy.

1.45. DIRECTORATE GENERAL DEFENCE ESTATES (DGDE) DEVELOPS AI-BASED SOFTWARE TO DETECT UNAUTHORISED CONSTRUCTIONS & ENCROACHMENTS ON DEFENCE LAND.

KEY POINTS:

- Centre of Excellence on Satellite & Unmanned Remote Vehicle Initiative (CoE-SURVEI) has developed an Artificial Intelligence-based software which can automatically detect change on ground, including unauthorised constructions and encroachments in a time series using Satellite Imagery.
- The CoE-SURVEI, established by Directorate General Defence Estates at National Institute of Defence Estates Management, leverages latest technologies in survey viz. satellite imagery, drone imagery and geo-spatial tools for effective land management and urban planning.
- This Change Detection Software has been developed by CoE-SURVEI in collaboration with knowledge partner Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Visakhapatnam.
- The CoE-SURVEI has developed tools for vacant land analysis and 3D imagery analysis of hill cantonments for land management.
- By leveraging technology, it is trying to ensure optimum use of defence land through Geographic Information System (GIS)-based land management systems

1.46. JNCASR RESEARCHERS DISCOVER 'NEW MATERIAL' THAT CAN CONVERT INFRARED LIGHT INTO RENEWABLE ENERGY.

- In a significant development, researchers from Bengaluru's **Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR)**, an autonomous institute of Department of Science and Technology (DST) have discovered a novel material called single-crystalline scandium nitride (ScN) that can emit, detect, and modulate infrared light with high efficiencies.
- They have utilized a scientific phenomenon called polariton excitations that occur in tailored materials when light couples with either the collective free electron oscillations or polar lattice vibrations to achieve

this feat. They have carefully controlled material properties to excite polaritons (a quasi-particle) and achieve strong light-matter interactions in single-crystalline scandium nitride (ScN) using infrared light.

- These exotic polaritons in the ScN can be utilized for solar and thermal energy harvesting. Also, belonging to the same family of materials as gallium nitride (GaN), scandium nitride is compatible with modern complementary-metal-oxide-semiconductor (CMOS) or Si-chip technology and, therefore, could be easily integrated for on-chip optical communication devices.
- "From electronics-to-healthcare, defense and security-to-energy technologies, there is a great demand for infrared sources, emitters and sensors.
- According to Dr. Bivas Saha, Assistant Professor at JNCASR, this work on infrared polaritons in scandium nitride will enable its applications in many such devices.
- Apart from JNCASR, researchers from the Centre for Nano Science and Engineering from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc.) and the University of Sydney also participated in this study published recently in the scientific journal Nano Letters.

1.47. TIHAN: INDIA'S FIRST TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION HUB ON AUTONOMOUS NAVIGATION FACILITY LAUNCHED AT IIT HYDERABAD.

- India's first Autonomous Navigation facility, TiHAN was inaugurated by Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State for Science & Technology at the IIT Hyderabad campus.
- Developed at a budget of Rs. 130 crores by the Union Ministry of Science & Technology, TiHAN (Technology Innovation Hub on Autonomous Navigation) is a multidisciplinary initiative that will make India a global player in the futuristic and next generation 'smart mobility' technology.
- TiHAN Testbed will provide a unique platform for high quality research between academia, industry and R&D labs both at the national and international level, thus making India a global leader in autonomous navigation technologies."
- This testbed includes simulation platforms that allow for non-destructive testing of algorithms and prototypes. Several real-world scenarios can be emulated on the testbed. In terrestrial systems, a few examples of these scenarios are Smart Cities, Signalised Intersections, Autonomous Vehicle Interactions with Cyclists and Pedestrians, Wireless Networking among vehicles and Road-Side Units, etc.
- The autonomous vehicle testbed also provides dummy signboards, pedestrians, overpasses, and bikers to test all real-world conditions.

1.48. UNION BANK OF INDIA BECOMES THE FIRST BANK IN INDIA TO LAUNCH VIRTUAL BANKING LOUNGE ON METAVERSE.

- State-led Union Bank of India launched a Metaverse-based virtual lounge where it will showcase its products to customers virtually. The lender is the first Indian bank to open a virtual shop for publicity.
- Uni-verse, the Metaverse virtual lounge of the bank, hosts the bank's product information and videos in the initial phase.
- Uni-verse will deliver a unique experience of banking to the customers who can roam around the lounge, get information of the bank's deposits, loans, government welfare schemes, and digital initiatives as if they are experiencing the real world. This initiative is in partnership with Tech Mahindra.
- US-based JPMorgan Chase & Co achieved that feat earlier this year in February.
- In simple words, Metaverse is an evolved form of internet. The technology enables real-life experiences and situations with Augmented Reality (AR). Users can do nearly every task using Metaverse. They can visit different stores, enquire and hold conversations with different Metaverse users.

1.49. NOKIA PARTNERS WITH IISc, BENGALURU TO SET UP NETWORKED ROBOTICS CENTER OF EXCELLENCE.

- Nokia has partnered with the Indian Institute of Science to set up the Nokia Center of Excellence in networked robotics at IISc Bengaluru.
- The Center of Excellence (CoE) will promote inter-disciplinary research involving robotics and advanced communication technologies in 5G and Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- It will also develop use cases across industrial automation, agriculture and disaster management.

About the center:

- The center will facilitate engagement and cooperation between academia, start-ups and industry ecosystem partners to research and develop these use cases.
- The research projects undertaken by the CoE will include the design of advanced robotics, AI and automation solutions built upon next-generation telecom networks and their applications for solving societally relevant problems.
- Nokia has been present in India since the last 22 years and deployed all technologies that have been used for mobile communication starting from 2G in 2000, 3G in 2011, 4G in 2012 and gearing up for commercial 5G.

1.50. PEROVSKITES CAN REPLACE SILICON AS THE MATERIAL OF CHOICE FOR SOLAR PANELS.

- According to the Ministry of Science and Technology that Scientists have identified co-dopants that can increase the photovoltaic performance of transparent metal oxides such as ZnO, In₂O₃ and SnO₂ thereby creating potential for more efficient, better performing and more stable solar cells.
- The study has been published in the Journal of Power Resources shows the benefits of codopants in increasing the photovoltaic performance, repeatability, and stability in solar devices.
- **Perovskites** are a leading candidate for eventually replacing silicon as the material of choice for solar panels. Perovskite solar cell consists of a perovskite layer as the light absorber, sandwiched between the electron transport layer (ETL) coated with transparent conducting glass and hole transport layer (HTL) coated with a metal back contact electrode.
- A research team from Department of Physics, Alagappa University group focused on the electron transport layer of solar cell devices which is made up of transparent metal oxides.
- Cross-sectional morphologies of Perovskite films that had been prepared were analysed utilising Field emission Scanning Electron Microscopy, while elemental and chemical characteristics were examined using X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS, Kratos AXIS Supra) supported by DST- **Promotion of University Research and Scientific Excellence (PURSE)**.
- The study concluded that perovskite materials-based solar cells are cost-effective compared to commercial silicon-based solar cells.

1.51. NASA RELEASED NEW FULL-COLOUR IMAGES TAKEN FROM JAMES WEBB SPACE TELESCOPE.

- On 12 July 2022, NASA released new full-colour images taken from James Webb Space Telescope. It released the images of the Southern Ring, Planetary Nebula, showing a dying star clacked by dust and layers of light. Another image shows Stephan's Quintet, a visual grouping of 5 galaxies. An image revealing baby stars in Carina Nebula were also released.
- NASA called the release of photographs "The Dawn of New Era in Astronomy" in partnership with ESA (European Space Agency) and CSA (Canadian Space Agency).
- The pictures were released during a Televised Broadcast. As per the official website of NASA, these images represent the first wave of full-colour scientific images and the official beginning of the James Webb Space Telescope general science operations.
- Webb's first observations were selected by a group of representatives from NASA, ESA, CSA, and the Space Telescope Science Institute.

1.52. 5IRE BECOMES THE 105TH UNICORN IN THE COUNTRY.

- Unicorns are privately held, venture-capital backed startups that have reached a value of \$1 billion.
- Indian-based entrepreneurs Pratik Gauri, Prateek Dwivedi, and web3 financier Vilma Mattila's startup 5ire has become the country's new Unicorn.
- The blockchain startup 5ire has raised 100 million in Series A funding from UK-based conglomerate SRAM & MRAM, which now makes 5ire valuation of \$1.5 billion.
- 5ire was founded in August 2021, and after just one year, it has become the 105th unicorn in the country and the 20th this year. 5ire has now joined companies like Deal Share, Drawinbox, Xpressbees, and Mamaearth which has turned unicorn this year.
- The Blockchain company works on 5th generation blockchain system.
- It Becomes the world's first and only sustainable unicorn born out of India, in just 11 months.
- 5ire earlier raised a funding of \$21 million in its seed round at a valuation of \$110 million with participation from both private and institutional investors like Alhabit, Marshland Capital, Launchpool Labs, and Moonrock Capital, among others.
- American venture capitalist Aileen Lee is credited with coining the term in 2013.

1.53. PRATT & WHITNEY TO SET UP ENGINEERING CENTRE IN BENGALURU.

- Aircraft engine maker Pratt & Whitney (PW) said it will set up an engineering centre in Bengaluru, that is slated to begin operations in January 2023.
- The centre, its first facility in Asia Pacific and fifth globally, will enable the firm to offer engineering services on contract to domestic and international customers.
- PW's integrated global engineering operations currently has centres in the U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico and Poland.

1.54. SPACE TOURISM IN INDIA SOON' AS ISRO DEVELOPING INDIGENOUS HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT CAPABILITY.

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) is working on developing space tourism capability in a bid to score a chunk of the pie, which is set to become a multi-million-dollar market in the coming years.
- As the country's premier space agency Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is developing indigenous capabilities towards space tourism through the demonstration of human space flight capability to Low Earth Orbit (LEO).
- The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) is seeking to promote active participation of private sector in carrying out end-to-end space activities, which includes space tourism as well.
- IN-SPACe, an independent nodal agency under Department of Space (DOS) allows space activities and usage of DOS owned facilities by Non-Government Private Entities (NGPEs) as well as to prioritise the launch manifest.
- Further, the single window agency, IN-SPACe promotes, handholds and authorizes the activities of the private sector in the space domain, including those by young entrepreneurs and students interested in the field of Space Science.
- The centre is also in process of coming up with mechanisms to enable sharing of technical facilities and expertise available across ISRO Centres with private entities.
- According to Science & Technology Minister Dr Jitendra Singh, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) pursues international cooperation and relations with 61 countries in varied domains of space activities.
- The Department of Space (DOS) is in the process of drafting a comprehensive, integrated Space Policy, which shall provide direction to the activities of the private Indian space industry.

1.55. RESEARCH BREAKTHROUGH: JODHPUR IIT SCIENTISTS FIND 'LITHIUM FREE' BATTERY OPTION.

- Jodhpur’s Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) scientists for the first time have devised a ‘Calcium-Magnesium’ made a battery that is flawless and non-problematic in all aspects, low cost in their raw material availability and viability in manufacturing commercially.
- According to the researchers, Next-generation rechargeable batteries based on zinc (Zn), magnesium (Mg), calcium (Ca), and aluminum (Al) are the most promising options.

Advantages:

- Lithium batteries’ fabrication and their reaction with nitrogen in the atmosphere is always dangerous leading to the fire. Whereas Calcium and Magnesium abundantly exist in marbles, tolerate heat up to 50 degrees Celsius of temperature, are available at a very low cost, have potential for recyclability, and have no disposable problems like Lithium made batteries.

Limitations:

- Besides the benefits, lithium-ion (Li-ion) batteries have limitations and drawbacks that hinder their application for large-scale marketing and industrial applications.
- The main crisis of existing Lithium is going to be its import from Bolivia, Chilli, Brazil, USA, and China in the future as it is not produced enough in India’s Karnataka from original ore and whatever is available is usually required for Atomic Energy.

Industry expectation:

- There is an industry expectation that the market for lithium-ion batteries will expand from \$30 billion in 2017 to \$100 billion by 2025

1.56. JAMES WEBB TELESCOPE FINDS OLDEST GALAXY IN THE UNIVERSE.

- James Webb Telescope, the world's most powerful telescope, has discovered the oldest galaxy in the universe.
- The telescope spotted galaxy candidates that existed when the universe was just 300 million years old.
- After analysing the data, a team of researchers spotted two candidates to be the oldest galaxies in the universe -GLASS-z11 and GLASS-z13.
- The light from GLASS-z13 galaxy took about 13.4 billion years to hit the mirrors of the spacecraft, which is almost 15,00,000 km away from Earth.

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ECONOMY

1.57. CORE SECTOR OUTPUT EXPANDS BY 18.1% IN MAY 2022, HIGHEST IN 13 MONTHS.

- **Eight core sectors are:** Coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertiliser, steel, cement and electricity.
- Led by healthy growth in coal, crude oil, fertilisers, cement and electricity production, output of eight core industries grew to a 13-month high of 18.1 per cent in May this year, according to official data released.
- The growth of core infrastructure sectors expanded by 16.4 per cent in the year-ago period and 9.3 per cent in April this year. The last high growth was recorded in April 2021 when it was 62.6 per cent.
- In May, the output of coal, crude oil, refinery products, fertiliser, cement and electricity rose by 25.1 per cent, 4.6 per cent, 16.7 per cent, 22.8 per cent, 26.3 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively.
- Growth rate in the production of natural gas and steel slowed down by 7 per cent and 15 per cent in the month under review as compared to 20.1 per cent and 55.2 per cent, respectively in May 2021.
- Cumulatively, during April-May 2022-23, the output of these eight sectors declined to 13.6 per cent as compared to 36.3 per cent during the same period of FY22.
- It is expected that the IIP (Index of Industrial Production) or factory output to expand by 16-19 per cent in May 2022, benefitting from the high growth in the core sector as well as various other high frequency indicators.
- The eight core industries account for 40.27 per cent of the IIP.

1.58. SEBI IMPOSED RS. 7 CRORE PENALTY ON NATIONAL STOCK EXCHANGE.

- **SEBI was founded in 1988 and SEBI was given statutory recognition in 1992 on the recommendation of the Narasimham Committee.**
- **The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi)** has slapped heavy penalties in a 2015 'dark fibre' case that saw certain brokers exploiting **the National Stock Exchange's (NSE's)** internet infrastructure to get faster connectivity to its colocation (colo) facilities.
- The markets regulator has imposed a penalty of **Rs 7 crore** on NSE and **Rs 5 crore** on former Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) **Chitra Ramkrishna**.
- In this case, a total of 18 entities received penalties. It has also levied a fine of Rs 5 crore each on former Group Operating Officer Anand Subramanian and current Chief Business Development Officer Ravi Varanasi.
- Internet service provider Sampark Infotainment has been asked to pay Rs 3 crore. Online trading firms Way2Wealth and GKN Securities, too, have been asked to cough up Rs 6 crore and Rs 5 crore, respectively.

1.59. FIVE YEARS OF GOODS AND SERVICES TAX (GST).

- July 1 marks the completion of five years since the Goods and Services (GST) was introduced in our country. It was first discussed in the report of the Kelkar Task Force on indirect taxes in 2003.
- GST Bill was first introduced in 2014 as The Constitution (122nd Amendment) Bill.
- This got an approval in 2016 and was renumbered in the statute by Rajya Sabha as The Constitution (101st Amendment) Act, 2016.
- The tax base has almost doubled in the last five years from 6.63mn to over 13mn.
- The introduction of GST has simplified business processes, tax administration and compliances in India, that helped India in improving its rank in Ease of doing Business.
- GST has eliminated the tax arbitrage that existed among the states under the CST/VAT regime.

1.60. PUNJAB'S DEBT POSITION AS THE WORST IN THE COUNTRY: RBI

- The RBI studied the debt-GSDP ratio of 10 states that prima facie appears to be in trouble.
- Besides Punjab, it identified four other states—Bihar, Kerala, Rajasthan and West Bengal—that are also highly stressed.
- Rajasthan, Kerala and West Bengal are projected to exceed the debt-GSDP ratio of 35 per cent by 2026-27, while Punjab is expected to cross 45 per cent.
- Five other states in trouble are Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand.
- These 10 states account for around half of the total expenditure by all state governments in India.
- According to the RBI, the own tax revenue of Punjab, MP and Kerala has been declining over time.
- Among the 10 states, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Punjab exceeded both debt and fiscal deficit targets for 2020-21 set by the 15th Finance Commission.
- Kerala, Jharkhand and West Bengal exceeded the debt target, while Madhya Pradesh overshot the fiscal deficit target. Haryana and Uttar Pradesh met both criteria.
- Punjab would find it difficult to source loans after the RBI identified its debt position as the worst in the country.

1.61. SERVICES PMI RISES TO 59.2 IN JUNE, HIGHEST SINCE APRIL 2011.

- Services activities are on rise as Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to 59.2 in June 2022. This is highest mark since April 2011. Service sector has a share of over 53 per cent in gross value added. PMI is based on survey and data compiled by S&P Global.
- India's services activity expanded again in June, with the S&P Global India Services Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) coming in at 59.2.
- A reading above 50 indicates expansion in activity, while a sub-50 print is a sign of contraction.
- Services firms noted a substantial upturn in new work intakes at the end of the first fiscal quarter, with the rate of increase improving to the best in over 11 years.
- According to, economics associate director at S&P Global Market Intelligence, Demand for services improved to the greatest extent since February 2011, supporting a robust economic expansion for the sector over the first quarter of FY23 and setting the scene for another substantial upturn in output next month.

1.62. GOOGLE ANNOUNCES START-UP SCHOOL INDIA FOR SMALL-CITY ENTREPRENEURS.

- Google announced the launch of Startup School India (SSI) as part of the Google for Startups initiative.
- This is a platform under which Google will bring together investors, successful entrepreneurs and programmers that startups from the smaller cities can tap into and learn from the best.
- The idea of creating the Startup School India is to reach out to more and more startup Google aims to reach out to at least 10,000 startups with this programme.
- The SSI will be a nine-week program, delivered virtually, will feature fireside chats between Google leaders and trailblazing collaborators from across the startup ecosystem spanning fintech, D2C, B2B and B2C e-commerce, language, social media & networking, job search and many more.
- With close to 70,000 startups, India is the third largest birthing ground for startups in the world.
- The programme is also aimed for startups that come from smaller cities and are looking for some knowledge sharing that will help them in their next stage.
- Almost 90 per cent of all startups fail within the first five years of their journey - mostly for the same key reasons - unmanaged cash burn, flawed demand assessment, ineffective feedback loops or lack of leadership.

1.63. RBI SETS UP MECHANISM TO SETTLE TRADE TRANSACTIONS IN RUPEES.

- In order to promote growth of global trade with emphasis on exports from India and to support the increasing interest of global trading community in INR, it has been decided to put in place an additional arrangement for invoicing, payment, and settlement of exports / imports in INR. Before putting in place this mechanism, Authorised Dealer (AD) banks shall require prior approval from the Foreign Exchange Department of Reserve Bank of India.
- Forex dealers say the Rupee Payment Mechanism could be used by Indian exporters/importers for their trade with countries such as Russia, Iran and Sri Lanka.

The broad framework for cross border trade transactions in INR under Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA) is as delineated below:

- **Invoicing:** All exports and imports under this arrangement may be denominated and invoiced in Rupee (INR).
- **Exchange Rate:** Exchange rate between the currencies of the two trading partner countries may be market determined.
- **Settlement:** The settlement of trade transactions under this arrangement shall take place in INR in accordance with the procedure laid down in Para 3 of this circular.
- In terms of Regulation 7(1) of Foreign Exchange Management (Deposit) Regulations, 2016, AD banks in India have been permitted to open Rupee **Vostro Accounts**.

The balance in Special Vostro Accounts can be used for:

- Payments for projects and investments.
- Export/Import advance flow management
- Investment in Government Treasury Bills, Government securities, etc. in terms of extant guidelines and prescribed limits, subject to FEMA and similar statutory provision

1.64. G-20 WATCHDOG TO PROPOSE FIRST GLOBAL CRYPTO RULES IN OCTOBER.

- The Financial Stability Board (FSB) would propose “robust” global rules for cryptocurrencies in October, following the recent turmoil in markets that has highlighted the need to regulate this “speculative” sector.
- The FSB – a body of regulators, Treasury officials and central bankers from the Group of 20 (G-20) economies – has so far limited itself to monitoring the crypto sector, saying the industry does not seem to pose a systemic risk.
- But the recent turmoil has highlighted the crypto markets’ volatility, structural vulnerabilities and increasing links to the wider financial system.
- According to FSB, the failure of a market player, in addition to imposing potentially large losses on investors and threatening market confidence arising from crystallisation of conduct risks, can also quickly transmit risks to other parts of the crypto-asset ecosystem.
- The value of Bitcoin – the largest cryptocurrency – has slumped some 70 per cent since its November record of US\$69,000 (S\$97,000). It was trading at US\$20,422 on Monday, leaving many investors nursing losses.
- The Terra USD stable coin collapsed earlier this year, and withdrawals and transfers from major crypto firms Celsius Network and Voyager Digital have rattled markets.
- According to FSB, Stable coins should be captured by robust regulation if they are to be used as a means of payment.
- FSB would report to the G-20 finance ministers and central bank governors in October “on regulatory and supervisory approaches to stable coins and other crypto assets”.
- The FSB has no law-making powers, but its members commit to applying its regulatory principles in their own jurisdictions.
- Many countries require crypto firms to have anti-money laundering controls.

1.65. GLOBAL ECONOMIC OUTLOOK HAS 'DARKENED SIGNIFICANTLY': IMF

- According to the IMF's managing director, Kristalina Georgieva the global economic outlook has "darkened significantly" and could deteriorate further, citing Russia's war in Ukraine and the rapid inflation it has caused, threatening widespread hunger and poverty.
- The warning comes just months after the IMF already cut its global growth forecast for 2022 and 2023.
- The Ukraine war hit as the world was struggling to recover from the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and has caused an acceleration of inflation that endangers the gains of the past two years.
- According to Kristalina Georgieva, the international crisis-lender is "projecting a further downgrade to global growth" in 2022 and 2023.
- The outlook remains extremely uncertain and the poorest is expected to suffer the most.
- The risk of social instability was also increasing due to food and energy prices rising.

1.66. INDIA'S FIRST COMMUNITY-DRIVEN NON-FUNGIBLE TOKEN (NFT).

What are NFTs?

- Anything that can be converted into a digital form can be an NFT. Everything from your drawings, photos, videos, GIF, music, in-game items, selfies, and even a tweet can be turned into an NFT, which can then be traded online using cryptocurrency.

KEY POINTS:

- The Dapper Cheetah Club, India's first community-driven Non-Fungible Token (NFT), has launched the first phase of its collection – the issuance of limited 200 NFTs.
- Dapper Cheetah Club has a one-of-its-kind collection of 10,000 Cheetah NFTs on the Metaverse or the digital space.
- The highly anticipated tokens were launched and were fully indulged by enthusiasts, investors and traders alike.
- Dapper Cheetah Club proposes a new digital world that's user-friendly and welcoming for every user.
- First revealed in June, the Dapper Cheetah Club has gained a lot of public interest. To reward its community investors, the brand will soon launch Phase 2, which will be a part of the broader collection.
- While the first set of NFT collections was opened for the private mint with only 200 NFTs, the Club said that the future phases will be available for the public mint with the remaining 9800 NFTs.
- The launch of the collection will be done in 5 phases. The Phase 1 collection went for bidding on 29th June on OpenSea and has been sold at the price of 0.03 Ethereum.

1.67. E-COMMERCE COMPANIES FINED OVER Rs 78 LAKH FOR MAKING FALSE DECLARATIONS.

- Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution Ashwini Kumar Choubey explained in a written response to a question in the Lok Sabha that an E-Commerce entity must ensure that the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, or importer, the Maximum Retail Price (MRP), the nation of origin, the common or generic name of the commodity, and the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules 2011 under the Legal Metrology Act, 2009 are all included.
- This is to ensure that the consumer is taking an informed and conscious decision based on the declaration of the product on the E-Commerce platform.
- The Legal Metrology Division, Department of Consumer Affairs, has issued 38 notices between 16 October 2020 and 31 December 2020, 232 notices between 1 January 2021 and 31 December 2021, and 178 notices between 1 January 2022 and 11 July 2022 for declaration violations by e-commerce companies.
- An amount of about Rs. 77, 90,500 has been realised from e-commerce companies in the form of compounding fees.

- When the 2011 Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules are broken, state governments are also permitted to initiate enforcement action.
- Recently, the Union govt. has amended the **Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) 2011 Rules**.

About The Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities), (Second Amendment) Rules 2022

- It has allowed the **electronic products to declare certain mandatory** declarations through the **QR Code for a period of one year**, if not declared in **the package itself**.
- Earlier, all the pre-packaged commodities including the electronic products were required to declare all the mandatory declarations as per the **Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities), Rules 2011 on the package**.
- The amendment will allow the industry to declare the **information in digital form through the QR Code**.
- It will allow important declarations to be declared effectively on the label in the package while the **other descriptive information can be conveyed to the Consumer through the QR Code**.

1.68. SBI LAUNCHES WHATSAPP BANKING SERVICES TO MAKE BANKING EASIER FOR ITS CUSTOMERS.

- India's largest public sector lender, State Bank of India has launched its WhatsApp Banking services to make banking easier for its customers.
- Now, SBI customers can avail certain banking services using WhatsApp, which may come in handy for many as they do not have to download the app or go to the ATM anymore.
- SBI customers can get their Account Balance and view Mini Statement on WhatsApp.
- SBI WhatsApp Banking services will be available to customers when they send a message saying 'Hi' on the number 919022690226.
- State Bank of India will also offers WhatsApp-based services to its credit card holders through the platform under the name of SBI Card WhatsApp connect.
- Through this, SBI credit card customers can check their account summary, reward points, outstanding balance and make card payments.

1.69. WINDFALL TAX.

- Recently, the government called off a three-week old tax imposed on the export of petrol. Windfall taxes on shipments of diesel and ATF, and on domestically produced crude oil was also cut.

What is windfall Tax?

- Windfall taxes are imposed by a government against certain industries when they experience above-average profits due to economic conditions.
- Windfall taxes are primarily directed on companies in a certain industry that sees the most windfall economically.

Background

- India imposed windfall taxes on July 1, following the super normal profits of energy companies. But since then, international oil prices have cooled down, and profit margins have eroded for both oil producers and refiners. International crude prices slumped on concerns of a global recession.
- On July 1, the government levied export duties amounting to Rs 6 per litre of \$12 per barrel on petrol and ATF, while it imposed Rs 13 a litre or \$26 a barrel on diesel. The government imposed Rs 23,260 per tonne or \$40 per barrel windfall tax on crude production.

Objective

- The above taxes were slapped to garner more revenue as well as to limit exports.

- The government stated that the objective was to shore up domestic supplies as refiners were preferring to export than to meet the local requirements.
- The government expected to bring over Rs 1 lakh crore additional revenue in the full year.

Implications

- Once the windfall taxes were imposed, the realised spread on diesel and petrol fell to near loss-making levels. The realisation on ATF and crude also dipped to below 15-year averages. After the windfall tax, the realised spread on petrol was just \$2 per barrel. The diesel spread too fell in a similar manner to \$30 a barrel, while ATF crashed to \$25-30 a barrel.
- As per a report, the windfall tax scrapped away 40 per cent of earnings for oil producers. This is apart from the royalty and cess that they are required to pay.
- However, Brent crude price cooled off by \$15-20 per barrel in the past couple of weeks to \$100 per barrel.
- The government corrected the anomaly that was the result of the windfall taxes.
- The slashing of windfall taxes is expected to benefit Reliance that operates two oil refineries in Gujarat, out of which one is focussed only on exports, state-owned ONGC and Oil India Ltd, and Vedanta Ltd that account for almost all of the crude oil produced in the country, and Russia's Rosneft-backed Nayara Energy, which operates a 20 million tonnes a year refinery at Vadinar in Gujarat.

1.70. BULLET TRAIN PROJECT: JICA ANNOUNCES 3RD TRANCHE LOAN OF RS. 6000 CRORES.

- Recently, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) announced third tranche of Rs 6,000 crore for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) project.
- The JICA -- which has been supporting the project for the Bullet Train project --- signed a loan agreement with the Government of India to provide an Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan of 100,000 million Japanese Yen (approx. INR 6,000 Crore) as Tranche 3 for the Construction of Mumbai Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR).
- The loan agreement was signed between Mr. Rajat Kumar Mishra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India and Mr. Watanabe Jun, Senior Representative, JICA India.
- The JICA had earlier in 2017 extended a loan package of JPY 250,000 million (approximately INR 18,000 crore) package that JICA had committed in 2017.
- National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) is the Executing Agency of the Project.
- In the first phase, the bullet train will cover 508 kilometres between Mumbai and Ahmedabad.
- The operating speed of the bullet train will be 320 kilometers per hour and maximum speed will be 350 kilometers per hour.

1.71. ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EV) SALES IN INDIA TO CROSS 9 MILLION UNITS BY 2027.

- EV sales in India is all set to cross 9 million units by 2027 says a new report by IVCA-EY-IndusLaw.
- The Indian Private Equity and Venture Capital Association (IVCA) launched a report on "Electrifying Indian Mobility" in Mumbai, in partnership with EY and IndusLaw.
- According to, the Indian Private Equity and Venture Capital Association (IVCA), a total of \$1.7 billion has been invested by private equity and venture capitals in the Indian electric vehicle (EV) industry in 2021.
- According to IVCA President Rajat Tandon, a sum of \$1.7 billion was invested by private equity funds and venture capitalists in the Indian EV sector in 2021.
- However, during 2022, the investment has touched \$66 million so far as per IVCA President.
- It estimated that the Indian EV industry is set to create over 10 million direct and 50 million indirect jobs by 2030.

1.72. INDIA RAPIDLY EMERGING AS PREFERRED COUNTRY FOR FOREIGN INVESTMENTS IN MANUFACTURING SECTOR: GOVT

- According to the Union Government that India is rapidly emerging as a preferred country for foreign investments in the manufacturing sector.
- According to the Commerce and Industry Ministry FDI Equity inflow in manufacturing sectors have increased by 76 per cent in last financial year compared to 2020-21.
- Karnataka with over 37 per cent and Maharashtra with over 26 per cent are the top two states in receiving highest FDI Equity Inflow.
- According to the Ministry, Singapore and USA have emerged as top two sourcing nations in FDI equity flows into India in 2021-22 followed by Mauritius, Netherland and Switzerland.

1.73. ECGC LAUNCHES NEW SCHEME FOR BENEFIT OF SMALL EXPORTERS.

- The Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC) launched a new scheme to provide enhanced export credit risk insurance amid rising uncertainties in global trade.
- The scheme provides enhanced export credit risk insurance cover up to 90 per cent to support small exporters under Export Credit Insurance for Banks Whole Business Packaging Credit and Post Shipment (ECIB- WTPC&PS).
- According to ECGC chairman M. Senthilnathan "By giving 90 per cent cover to banks, we expect more small companies to get export credit from banks, benefiting these industries greatly. We expect banks to provide more concessions. The net effect will be a benefit to exporters, involving a reduction in interest rate."
- SBI is the first to benefit from the new policy and ECGC is in talks with other lenders. ECIB does not cover the entire loss incurred by the bank in respect of the account. The loss is shared between the ECGC and the bank in a specified percentage. The average percentage of cover is estimated to be around 70 per cent for export accounts with limits up to Rs 20 crore. The increased cover percentage will now be 90 per cent.
- The enhanced cover for SBI will be at the premium rate of the previous year, considering its favourable claim premium ratio. For other banks, there may be a marginal increase in the premium rates. The increase in cover will be based on expected interest concession from banks for accounts with export credit working.
- In the financial year 2021-22, ECGC had extended support to exports worth Rs 6.18 lakh crore. In addition, as of March 31, 2022, more than 6,700 exporters benefitted through the direct cover issued to exporters and around 9,000 distinct exporters benefitted under the Export Credit Insurance for Banks (ECIB). It should also be noted that about 96 per cent of these are small exporters.

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DEFENCE

1.75. PADMA, THE CENTRALISED PAY SYSTEM FOR INDIAN COAST GUARD LAUNCHED.

- **Pay Roll Automation for Disbursement of Monthly Allowances (PADMA)**, an automated Pay & Allowances module for the **Indian Coast Guard** was inaugurated by Shri Rajnish Kumar, Controller General of Defense Accounts (CGDA), Ministry of Defence.
- The CGDA emphasized that the Government has campaigned for Digital India to ensure dedicated services and reduce manual intervention at every level & to promote E-Governance in a big way.
- Launch of PADMA will strengthen the Digital India concept. Also, it is an **'Atmanirbhar Bharat'** initiative as the entire module has been designed and developed by Indian entrepreneurs assisted by domain experts.

About the PADMA:

- PADMA is an automated platform leveraging latest technology which will provide seamless and timely disbursement of Pay & Allowances to around 15,000 Indian Coast Guard personnel.
- This module has been developed under the aegis of Defense Accounts Department and will be operated by Pay Accounts Office Coast Guard, Noida.
- The launch marked the beginning of the Centralized Pay System (CPS), the foundation of which is being laid down by the Defence Accounts Department Headquarters to provide one stop pay accounting solutions for all organisations under the Ministry.

1.76. DRDO SUCCESSFULLY CARRIES OUT MAIDEN FLIGHT OF UNMANNED FIGHTER AIRCRAFT.

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully carried out the inaugural flight of the Autonomous Flying Wing Technology Demonstrator. The flight was carried out at the Aeronautical Test Range, Chitradurga, Karnataka.
- Operating in a fully autonomous mode, the aircraft exhibited a perfect flight, including take-off, way point navigation and a smooth touchdown. This flight marks a major milestone in terms of proving critical technologies towards the development of future unmanned aircraft and is significant step towards self-reliance in such strategic defence technologies.”
- Designed and developed by the Bengaluru-based Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), a premier research laboratory under the DRDO, the unmanned fighter aircraft is powered by a small, turbofan engine.
- The vehicle's airframe, as well as its undercarriage, flight controls and avionics system, were developed indigenously.
- It is a major achievement towards autonomous aircrafts which will pave the way for Aatmanirbhar Bharat in terms of critical military systems.

1.77. TEJAS MALAYSIA'S TOP CHOICE FOR ITS NEW FIGHTER JET PLAN.

- India's Tejas light combat aircraft has emerged as the top choice for Malaysia as the Southeast Asian nation looks at replacing its ageing fleet of fighter jets and the two sides are holding negotiations to firm up the procurement.
- According to R Madhavan, Chairman and Managing Director of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Malaysia has narrowed down on the Indian aircraft notwithstanding the stiff competition from China's JF-17 jet, South Korea's FA-50 and Russia's Mig-35 as well as Yak-130,
- As part of the package, India has offered to set up an MRO (maintenance, repair and overhaul) facility in Malaysia for its Russian-origin Su-30 fighter fleet as it is facing difficulties in procuring spares for the aircraft from Russia in view of western sanctions against Moscow.

- According to the top executive of the state-run aerospace behemoth if the deal is sealed, it will give a “very good signal” to other prospective buyers of the aircraft and boost its overall export potential.
- According to R Madhavan, It (the negotiation) is almost in the final stages. India is the only country which is offering them the support for their Su-30 aircraft as other than Russia.

1.78. NAVY TO DEVELOP AND INDUCT 75 NEW TECHNOLOGIES, PRODUCTS.

- In an effort to achieve self-reliance in Defence manufacturing, the Navy has proposed to develop and induct at least 75 new technologies or products in the coming year.
- It will be part of the ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’ to celebrate the 75th year of independence.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed between the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO) and the Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO) to work on a **collaborative project** named **SPRINT** (Supporting PoleVaulting in Research and Development through iDEX, NIIO and TDAC).
- The Navy in conjunction with the DIO will unveil the problem statements for Indian Industries as part of iDEX(SPRINT) during the NIIO **Seminar ‘Swavlamban 2022’** scheduled on July 18-19 at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.
- The purpose of the Seminar is to engage the Indian Industry and Academia towards achieving ‘Self-reliance in Defence Sector.’
- The Defence Acquisition Policy (DAP 2020) envisages creation of ‘Innovation and Indigenisation Organisations (IIOs)’ within Service Headquarters.
- The NIIO was launched on August 13, 2020 by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. The NIIO is a three-tiered mechanism headed by Vice Chief of Naval Staff. At apex level, the Naval Technology Acceleration Council (NTAC) has been constituted to bring together twin aspects of innovation and indigenisation and accelerate induction of disruptive combat technology into Navy so as to enhance war fighting capabilities.
- The NTAC meets every six months and gives apex level directives. It consists of ex-officio members as well as nominated members of technical expertise and standing, both from within Navy and civilians, scientists and industry.

1.79. INDIAN NAVY’S STEALTH FRIGATE INS TARKASH, VISITED DJIBOUTI.

- Indian Navy’s stealth frigate INS Tarkash, visited Djibouti as part of her long-range overseas deployment followed by Maritime Partnership Exercise with Sudan Navy.
- The ship is on a deployment to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which is intended to coincide with the Independence Day enabling her to hoist the tricolour in South America on the occasion as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- The Indian Navy maintains continuous presence in the Gulf of Aden region as part of its mission-based deployment philosophy.
- INS Tarkash also conducted a Maritime Partnership Exercise with Sudan Navy ships Almazz (PC 411) and Nimer (PC 413) in the Red Sea near the Sudan Naval Base.
- The exercise included manoeuvres, flying operations for vertical replenishment, visit and board operations, and communication procedures. It provided opportunity for exchange of professional experiences and strengthening maritime cooperation between the two countries.
- INS Tarkash is a state-of-the-art platform and has a weapon-sensor fit that enables her address threats in all dimensions.
- The ship is part of the Indian Navy’s Western Fleet and functions under the operational command of the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command.

1.80. RAJNATH SINGH TO LAUNCH 75 NEWLY-DEVELOPED AI-ENABLED DEFENCE PRODUCTS.

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will launch the first-ever 'Artificial Intelligence in Defence' (AIDef) symposium and exhibition organised by the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence at Vigyan Bhawan in the national capital.
- The event will feature an exhibition to showcase the cutting-edge AI-enabled solutions developed by the services, research organisations, Industry and start-ups and innovators and the launch of AI products for the market.
- The 75 newly-developed AI products/technologies, having applications in defence, will be launched, as part of the celebrations marking 75 years of Independence 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' and to promote 'Aatmanirbharta' initiative in Defence.
- The products are in the domains of automation/unmanned/robotics systems, cyber security, human behaviour analysis, intelligent monitoring system, logistics and supply chain management, speech/voice analysis and Command, Control, Communication, Computer and Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) systems and operational data analytics.

1.81. NAVY TO GET FIRST INDIGENOUS AIRCRAFT CARRIER IN AUGUST.

- The first indigenously built aircraft carrier — Vikrant — is set to be commissioned next month. The fourth and the last phase of sea trials for the Vikrant were successfully completed. The warship conducted integrated trials of equipment and systems onboard, including some of the aviation facilities on the deck.
- The first trial was successfully completed in August last year, followed by the second and third phase in October 2021 and January 2022, respectively.
- The warship's endurance testing of propulsion machinery, electrical and electronic warfare suites, deck machinery, life-saving appliances, navigation and communication systems have been tried out at the sea.
- The fighter jets that will operate from the deck of the carrier are to be tested using the Russian MiG-29K jets after the warship is handed over to the Navy.
- The 44,000-tonne indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC) has been made at the state-owned Cochin Shipyard in Kochi, Kerala.
- It is being commissioned in the backdrop of India-China race off to expand their naval strength.
- India has one operational carrier — INS Vikramaditya — purchased from Russia and the upcoming Vikrant. The plan for the third carrier is, so far, not approved by the Government.

1.82. MINISTRY OF DEFENCE SETS TARGET OF RS 1.75 CRORES OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION BY 2025.

- According to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the Ministry of Defence has set a target of Rs 1.75 lakh crores of defence production by 2025, which includes exports of Rs 35,000 crores.
- Defence PSUs would play a major role in achieving this goal with a contribution of 70-80 per cent.
- The Non-Official Directors (NODs) of DPSUs to ensure smooth implementation of various initiatives taken by the government towards achieving 'Aatmanirbharta in Defence'.
- The defence minister described NODs as a bridge between DPSUs and the MoD, which not only strengthened corporate governance in public sector companies but also ensured that the work was carried out as per the policies of the government.

He listed various initiatives taken by the MoD to achieve self-reliance.

- Simplification of the acquisition process of defence equipment/platforms under the Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020.
- Flexibility in Offset guidelines.
- Increase in FDI limit to 74 per cent under Automatic Route and up to 100 per cent under the government route.
- Simplification of the process of obtaining a license.

- Launch of Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) initiative and enhanced use of Artificial Intelligence in the defence sector.

1.83. DEFENCE MINISTER TO LAUNCH PROJECT 17A STEALTH FRIGATE 'DUNAGIRI'.

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will inaugurate stealth frigate 'Dunagiri', built by warship-maker Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers, in Kolkata.
- Christened after a mountain range in Uttarakhand, 'Dunagiri' is the fourth ship of P17A stealth frigates. A follow-up of the P17 Shivalik-class frigate, Dunagiri has improved stealth features, advanced weapons sensors and platform management systems.
- 'Dunagiri' is the reincarnation of the erstwhile 'Dunagiri', the Leander-class anti-submarine warfare frigate which was in service for 33 years from 1977 to 2010.
- The first two ships of P17A Project were launched in 2019 and 2020. The third ship (Udaygiri) was launched at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders on May 17 earlier this year.
- The launch of the fourth ship within such a short span is a testimony to the impetus provided towards self-reliant shipbuilding with a focused approach.
- P17A ships have been designed in-house by Indian Navy's Directorate of Naval Design.

1.84. NAVY DECOMMISSIONS SINDHUDHVAJ.

- The Navy's Kilo class submarine INS Sindhudhvaj was decommissioned from service at Visakhapatnam after 35 years in service.
- With this, the Navy now has 15 conventional submarines in service.
- She had many a firsts to her credit, including operationalisation of the indigenised sonar USHUS, indigenised satellite communication system Rukmani and MSS, inertial navigation system and indigenised torpedo fire control system.
- She also successfully undertook mating and personnel transfer with Deep Submergence Rescue Vessel and was the only submarine to be awarded Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) rolling trophy for Innovation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Commissioned into the Navy in June 1987, Sindhudhvaj, was one of the 10 Kilo class submarines India acquired from Russia between 1986 and 2000.

1.85. THE 52ND BGB-BSF DG LEVEL CONFERENCE BEGINS.

- The Indian delegation, led by DG, BSF Pankaj Singh, arrived in Dhaka early on the first day of the 52nd BGB-BSF Director General level Border conference in Bangladesh.
- On the first day, a variety of topics including border management, drug trafficking, smuggling of weapons and ammunition, trafficking in women and children, and other development initiatives within 150 yards of the international boundary were discussed.

KEY POINTS:

- During the conference, there was discussion about joint initiatives to implement the Coordinated Border Management Plan (CBMP) as well as information exchange on various armed groups, extremist groups, and terrorist organisations.
- The two nations talked about methods to increase confidence between the BGB and BSF and to further solidify the already existent bilateral ties.
- According to a press statement from the BGB, the Indian team will also travel to Padma Bridge and Cox's Bazar during the conference in an effort to improve bilateral ties and boost goodwill between the two nations. The Joint Record of Discussions will be signed to conclude the meeting (JRD).

- Director General of the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB), Major General Shakil Ahmed, is in charge of the 20-person Bangladesh delegation.
- On opening day of the conference, senior representatives from the BGB, Bangladesh Home Ministry, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate of Narcotics, and Joint Rivers Commission participated in the proceedings.
- Along with Pankaj Kumar Singh, the DG of the Border Security Force (BSF), several senior representatives from the Ministries of Home Affairs and External Affairs attended the conference on behalf of India.

1.86. ITBP ESTABLISHES THE FIRST MOUNTAIN WARFARE TRAINING SCHOOL IN THE NORTHEAST FOR LAC SECURITY PERSONNEL.

- As part of its mission to train its troops in high-altitude combat and survival techniques, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), which is tasked with securing the Line of Actual Control with China, has established its first mountain warfare training facility in northeast India and its second overall.
- The facility was built nearly 50 years after the founding of the first institution of its kind, the Mountaineering and Skiing Institute (M&SI), which opened in Auli, near Joshimath, in 1973–74.
- The M&SI, which is situated in the Himalayan hills of Uttarakhand at a height of over 9,000 feet, has taught hundreds of members of the ITBP, army, air force, and other security professionals in this field as well as that of adventure sports.
- The new centre is situated in Sikkim, which shares a frontage of 220 kilometres with the India-China LAC, at a height of 10,040 feet with distant Dombang, which borders the LAC.

1.87. AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT': MOD ACCORDS HIGH PRIORITY TO INDIGENISATION OF SOFTWARE DEFINED RADIOS FOR THE ARMED FORCES.

- Ministry of Defence (MoD) has fast-tracked the indigenisation of Software Defined Radios (SDRs) with country's premier R&D institutions viz. Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur to fulfill the increasing demand by the Armed Forces across a broad spectrum of operations.
- The complete product life cycle management framework is necessary for security sensitive SDR technology and products. It involves indigenous self-sustainable design, development, manufacturing, testing/certification and maintenance ecosystem.
- **Two key elements of indigenous SDR technology** are the standardised operating software environment (OE) and applications (also known as waveforms) with associated waveforms repository and test/certification facility. Standard OE enables waveform portability and interoperability among SDRs of multiple vendors. Towards this, the Ministry of Defence has taken a decision to define and develop reference implementation of India specific operating environment called India Software Communication Architecture (SCA) profile or Indian Radio Software Architecture.
- Director, IIT Kanpur Dr Abhay Karandikar, who is the Chairman of SCA Committee constituted by MoD, has pioneered the idea of having 'India SCA Profile'.
- A Draft Project Report (DPR) has been formulated by DEAL/DRDO towards indigenous development of SDR with a roadmap and timelines.
- The three institutions involved in the development namely, DEAL/DRDO, IIT-Kanpur and DoS have already started the work as per DPR. Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar exuded confidence on all organisations and said that it will create a new benchmark towards indigenisation of critical equipment which, so far, has been imported.
- This would give a boost to the endeavour to achieve 'Aatmanirbharta', reduce import budget and create secured radio network for the Armed Forces.

1.88. INDIA, JAPAN CONDUCTS MARITIME PARTNERSHIP EXERCISE IN ANDAMAN SEA.

- A Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) was conducted between Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Indian Navy in the Andaman Sea.
- According to the Ministry of Defence, **INS Sukanya**, an offshore patrol vessel and JS Samidare, a Murasame class destroyer, undertook various exercises including seamanship activities, aircraft operations and tactical manoeuvres as part of the operational interaction.
- The two countries have been carrying out regular exercises in Indian Ocean Region towards reinforcing maritime association.
- The exercise was aimed at enhancing interoperability and streamlining seamanship and communication procedures.
- According to the Defence Ministry, this exercise is part of the ongoing efforts between the two navies towards ensuring safe and secure international shipping and trade in Indian Ocean Region.

1.89. INDIA, FRANCE, UAE HOLD TALK TO BOOST MARITIME SECURITY.

- Recently, A trilateral meeting of India, France and the United Arab Emirates was held.
- The three sides exchanged perspectives on the Indo-Pacific region and explored the potential areas of trilateral cooperation including Maritime Security, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, Blue Economy, Regional Connectivity, Cooperation in Multilateral Fora, Energy and Food Security, Innovation and Startups, Supply Chain Resilience and Cultural and People-to-People Cooperation.
- They also discussed the next steps to be taken for further trilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

1.90. INDIA'S FIRST INDIGENOUS AIRCRAFT CARRIER 'VIKRANT' BUILT BY COCHIN SHIPYARD HANDED OVER TO NAVY.

- Indian Navy took the delivery of the Indigenous Aircraft Carrier 'Vikrant' from Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) in Kochi.
- Designed by the Indian Navy's in-house Directorate of Naval Design (DND) and built by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), a Public Sector Shipyard under the Ministry of Shipping (MoS).
- The 262-meter-long aircraft carrier is the largest ever warship to be built in the country. The vessel, which has a displacement of 45,000 tonnes, has been built at an overall cost of close to 20,000 crore rupees.
- The IAC is capable of operating 30 aircraft comprising MIG-29K fighter jets, Kamov-31, and MH-60R multi-role helicopters, in addition to indigenously manufactured Advanced Light Helicopters and Light Combat Aircraft.
- The vessel is powered by four Gas Turbines totalling 88 MW power and has a maximum speed of 28 Knots.
- The vessel is scheduled to be commissioned and inducted into the services of the Indian Navy by next month.
- With an overall indigenous content of 76%, IAC is a perfect example of the nation's quest for Aatma Nirbhar Bharat and provides thrust to Government's 'Make in India' initiative.
- The name of India's first Aircraft Carrier was also INS Vikrant which played a vital role in the 1971 war.
- The Aircraft Carrier was decommissioned on 31st January 1997, after 36 years of glorious service to the Navy.

1.91. IAF TO PHASE OUT ENTIRE MIG-21 FLEET BY 2025

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) is set to retire a squadron of MiG-21 Bison aircraft by September 30.
- After that only three squadrons of the aircraft will remain in service, which would be phased out by 2025.

- According to reports, the 51 Squadron based out of Srinagar airport is being number plated on September 30. Thereafter, every year one squadron will be fitted with a number plate.
- The 51 Squadron is famous for thwarting Pakistan's air strike on India on February 27, 2019, and shooting down an F-16 by an aircraft flown by Wing Commander (now Group Captain) Abhinandan Varthaman.
- According to Sources, this is the only instance when a MiG-21 aircraft shot down an F-16 in air-to-air combat. IAF is replacing MiG-21 fighter jets with more capable aircraft like Su-30 and indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA).
- In the last 20 months, 6 MiG-21 aircraft have crashed in accidents in which five pilots have lost their lives.
- Recently, a MiG-21 Type 69 Trainer aircraft crashed in Barmer, Rajasthan killing both the pilots. The MiG-21 was supposed to be discontinued long back, but the delay in induction of the LCA Tejas aircraft has forced the IAF to continue flying these aircraft.
- As per officials, the IAF conducts extensive checks of these aircraft before the flight and all safety aspects are taken care of before the pilot takes off.
- According to officials, that the number-plated squadron would be reactivated soon with more capable aircraft in the near future.

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SUMMITS

1.92. INDIA-EU TO HOLD NEXT ROUND OF FTA TALKS AT BRUSSELS IN SEPTEMBER 2022.

- India and the European Union concluded the first round of talks for the proposed free trade agreement (FTA) and the next round of talks is scheduled at Brussels in September 2022.
- India and the 27-nation bloc resumed negotiations, after a gap of over eight years, on the proposed agreements on trade, investments and Geographical Indications (GI). The first round of talks, which began on June 27, 2022 concluded on July 1, 2022.
- The week-long negotiations were held in a hybrid fashion - with some of the teams meeting in Delhi and the majority of officials joining virtually.
- During the first round, 52 technical sessions covering 18 policy areas of FTA and seven sessions on investment protection and GIs were held.
- India's bilateral trade with the EU amounted to USD 116.36 billion in 2021-22.
- Currently, the EU is India's 2nd largest trading partner after the US, and the second largest destination for Indian exports.
- The trade agreement with the EU would help India further expand and diversify its exports of goods and services, including securing the value chains.

1.93. INDIA'S FIRST EVER ANIMAL HEALTH SUMMIT HELD IN NEW DELHI.

- First India Animal Health Summit 2022 was held at NASC Complex, New Delhi understanding the significance of animal health towards the broader objective of the country's food and nutrition security, rural incomes and prosperity and overall economic development.
- Shri Rupala, Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying was the chief guest at the inaugural function of 'India Animal Health Summit 2022' organized by Indian Chamber of Food and Agriculture (ICFA) and the Agriculture Today Group.
- The two-day event will host a plethora of panel discussions ranging from topics such as Animal Health policy initiatives to Business environment & investment opportunities in the Animal Health sector.

1.94. PM ADDRESSES NATURAL FARMING CONCLAVE.

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed a Natural Farming Conclave via video conferencing. The conclave, organised in Surat, Gujarat, is witnessing participation of thousands of farmers and all other stakeholders who have made adoption of Natural farming in Surat a success story.

KEY POINTS:

- Gujarat is leading the country's resolution of achieving the goals of the Amrit Kaal.
- The Surat Model of natural farming can become a model for the entire country.
- Sabka Prayas' is leading the development journey of New India.
- Our villages have shown that villages can not only bring change but can also lead the change.
- India has been an agriculture-based country by nature and culture.
- Now is the time when we move forward on the path of natural farming and take full advantage of the global opportunities.
- Certified natural farming products are fetching good prices when farmers export them.

1.95. IRAN TO OBTAIN FULL SCO MEMBERSHIP IN 2023: IRANIAN EMBASSY.

- According to Iranian Embassy After signing its first memorandum of obligations in Uzbekistan at this year's Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit to be held in Samarkand in September, Iran's accession to the full membership of the Euroasia-spanning organization will be finalized by April 2023.

- Samarkand is a city in southeastern Uzbekistan, where the 2022 annual summit of the SCO Heads of State Council is to be held on September 15-16.
- Earlier, according to Russia that Iran is slated to join the SCO as a full-pledged member state this year and a memorandum of Iran's obligations as a SCO member will also be signed in Samarkand.
- Iran has also approached the SCO with a proposal to create a new single currency for carrying out trade among SCO members, in a push to counter the increasing weaponization of the US dollar-dominated global financial system.

1.96. PM TO PARTICIPATE IN FIRST I2U2 LEADERS' SUMMIT VIRTUALLY.

- Prime Minister is set to participate in the first Leaders' Summit of I2U2 virtually, along with leaders of Israel, the United Arab Emirates and the United States.
- The proposed virtual summit of India, Israel, UAE, and the USA dubbed "I2U2" is being projected as the Quad for West Asia. I2U2 is aimed to encourage joint investments in six mutually identified areas such as water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security.
- The I2U2 Grouping was conceptualized during the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the four countries held on October 18 last year.
- Each country also has Sherpa-level interactions regularly to discuss the possible areas of cooperation.
- It intends to mobilize private sector capital and expertise to help modernize the infrastructure, low carbon development pathways for our industries, improve public health, and promote the development of critical emerging and green technologies.
- The Leaders will discuss the possible joint projects within the framework of I2U2 as well as the other common areas of mutual interest to strengthen the economic partnership in trade and investment in our respective regions and beyond.
- According to MEA, these projects can serve as a model for economic cooperation and offer opportunities for our businesspersons and workers.
- US President Joe Biden will convene the maiden Virtual Summit with Prime Ministers of India, Israel and the President of UAE during his upcoming visit next month to the Middle East.
- According to the White House, the meeting of I2U2 was a part of the Biden administration's effort to revitalize American partnerships across the world. I2U2 leaders would discuss the food security crisis in the wake of the Ukraine war and other areas of cooperation.

1.97. G20 FINANCE LEADERS IN BALI TO TACKLE UKRAINE, INFLATION.

- Top financial officials from the Group of 20 leading rich and developing nations met on the Indonesian island of Bali seeking strategies to counter inflation, food insecurity and other troubles that have worsened due to the war in Ukraine.
- Indonesian Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati opened the two-day meeting by urging fellow finance ministers, central bank chiefs and other leaders to find ways to "build bridges, not walls." The consequences of failure, especially for less wealthy nations, would be "catastrophic. "Millions and millions if not billions of people are depending on us."
- The financial leaders are searching for ways to coordinate how they shepherd their economies through inflation that is running at 40-year highs, unsnarling supply chains and bottlenecks due to the coronavirus pandemic and fortifying financial systems against future risks.
- US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen called for the G-20 to take action to fight food insecurity as millions go hungry due to soaring costs for food and other necessities. It is crucial, to avoid stockpiling and export bans, to provide financial help to the needy and to ensure all organizations, such as development banks and food agencies, do their part to alleviate hunger.

1.98. 13TH PETERSBERG CLIMATE DIALOGUE IN BERLIN, GERMANY.

- The 13th Petersberg Climate Dialogue held in Berlin. This informal ministerial meet is being chaired by Germany and Egypt, hosts of this year's annual climate meet (COP-27).
- The informal ministerial meet proposes to build consensus and provide political direction to resolve divergences aimed at improving implementation of climate action, the core goal of COP-27.
- According to media reports, during the dialogue, ministers and delegations from several countries recalled the urgency to move to the implementation of all the previous resolutions made during the last meeting in order to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- As per the previous resolution, the fight against climate change requires the preservation of the Congo Basin forests, which alone absorb 1.2 billion tonnes of carbon globally per year.
- The Petersberg Climate Dialogue will pave the way for a successful global climate conference in Egypt in November.
- Since its inception in 2010, the Petersberg Dialogue has served as a forum for ministers to build political consensus that help resolve differences on issues holding up progress in negotiations.

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POLICY AND PROGRAMME

1.99. DAK KARMAYOGI E-LEARNING PLATFORM LAUNCHED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

Dak Karmayogi E-learning Platform

- The **Dak Karmayogi**, which is an e-Learning portal of the department of posts was launched by **Shri Ashwini Vaishnav minister** of communication, railways, electronics, and IT, and **Shri Devusinh Chauhan** minister of state for communications.
- The function was held at Stein auditorium Indian habitat Centre on 28 June 2022. This portal has been developed under the vision of mission Karmayogi which was initiated by **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi** with a view of bringing efficiency in the actions of all the employees of the Government of India and transforming the efficiency of bureaucracy with minimum Government and maximum governance.

Objectives:

- Dak Karmayogi portal aims to enhance the competencies of about 4 lakh Gramin Dak Sevaks and department employees by enabling the trainees to access the uniform standardized training content online and in blending campus mode to enable them to effectively deliver several G2C services for enhanced customer satisfaction.
- When the trainee completes the final summative assessment successfully, a system-generated course completion certificate will be sent to the trainee's registered email ID automatically.
- The portal allows the train to give their feedback, ratings, and suggestions for every video and other learning content for future enhancement.

1.100. PM INAUGURATES DIGITAL INDIA WEEK 2022 IN GANDHINAGAR.

- The theme for Digital India Week 2022 was Catalyzing New India's Techade.

PM launched various initiatives:

- Digital India Bhashini' will enable easy access to the internet and digital services in Indian languages, including voice-based access, and help the creation of content in Indian languages.
- Digital India GENESIS' (Gen-next Support for Innovative Startups) - a National Deep-tech Startup Platform, to discover, support, grow and make successful startups in Tier-II and Tier-III cities of India.
- Indiastack.global' - a global repository of key projects implemented under India Stack like Aadhaar, UPI, Digilocker, Cowin Vaccination Platform, Government e-Marketplace (GeM), DIKSHA Platform and Ayushman Bharat Digital Health Mission
- MyScheme' - a service discovery platform facilitating access to Government Schemes. It aims to offer a one-stop search and discovery portal where users can find schemes that they are eligible for.
- Meri Pehchaan'- National Single Sign on for One Citizen Login. National Single Sign-On (NSSO) is a user authentication service in which a single set of credentials provide access to multiple online applications or services.

KEY POINTS

- PM announces the first cohort of 30 Institutions to be supported under Chips to Startup Programme.
- India is working on the target of taking electronics manufacturing to more than \$ 300 billion in the next three-four years.
- India is guiding the world in the fourth industrial revolution, Industry 4.0.
- Digital India has brought the government to the doorsteps and phones of the citizens.
- India's FinTech endeavour is truly a solution by the people, of the people and for the people.

- India wants to become a chip maker from a chip taker.

1.101. THE 13TH EDITION OF TOY BIZ B2B (BUSINESS TO BUSINESS) INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION WAS HELD AT PRAGATI MAIDAN, NEW DELHI.

- The 13th Edition of Toy Biz B2B (Business to Business) International Exhibition from 2-5 July 2022 was held at Pragati Maidan.
- Prime Minister had given a clarion call on “Rebranding the Indian Toy Story” and emphasized on the availability of right kind of toys for children, using toys as a learning resource, designing of toys based on Indian value system, Indian history, and culture to strengthen domestic designing and position India as a global manufacturing hub for toys.
- All the 96 exhibitors have showcased the diverse product category ranging from traditional plush toys, construction equipment toys, dolls, building block toys, board games, puzzles, electronic toys, educational toys, ride-ons, etc.
- All the toys’ products were ‘**Made in India**’ product manufactured domestically by small, medium and large enterprises.
- **The Toys bearing GI tag such as Chennapatna, Varanasi etc. are also being displayed.** The exhibition is showcasing toys based on Indian ethos & value system duly endorsing ‘Vocal for Local’ theme. Each toy category has affordable and high-end versions. This is a major shift from the 12th edition of the exhibition held in 2019, wherein of 116 stalls, 90 stalls exhibited only imported toys.
- This exhibition witnessed a footfall of over 3,000 visitors from India and international buyers’ delegation from Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bhutan, USA etc.
- **The import of toys is down by 70% in the last three years.**

1.102. GUJARAT, KARNATAKA AND MEGHALAYA EMERGE BEST ENABLERS FOR STARTUPS.

- Gujarat and Karnataka have been awarded best performers among the category of states, while Meghalaya has been ranked number one among Union Territories and North Eastern states in the third edition of the States Startup India Ranking 2021.
- Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa and Telangana emerged as top performers among states, while Jammu and Kashmir was the top performer among UTs and North-East state.
- For the ranking, states are divided into five categories: Best Performers, Top Performers, Leaders, Aspiring Leaders and Emerging Start-up Ecosystems.
- This is the third consecutive year that Gujarat has been ranked the number one state in providing an enabling ecosystem for startups.
- The results were announced by Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce and Industries at the third edition of the States’ Startup Ranking 2021, released by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIT).
- According to Piyush Goyal, initiatives such as Fund of Funds, Seed Fund Scheme, Income Tax exemption for three years, and resolving the issue of Angel Tax, have helped start-ups.
- India is currently the third-largest ecosystem.

1.103. PLANT BASED FOODS INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (PBFIA), PROPOSED THE SETTING UP OF INDIA'S “FIRST PLANT PROTEIN CLUSTER”.

- Plant Based Foods Industry Association (PBFIA), with the support of the Nagpur Dall Millers Cluster, will set up a plant protein cluster in Nagpur, Maharashtra.
- According to a statement from the association, the cluster will aim to make India a credible global supplier of plant proteins.
- Nagpur is a strategic location because of the availability of raw materials, workforce and land.

- Plant based food market is expected to grow from ₹2,000 crores in 2022 to ₹40,000 crores by 2032.
- Eat Just, a US –based producer of plant-based egg alternatives, procures its main ingredient — mung beans (indigenous to the Indian subcontinent) — from Myanmar rather than the main producer, India.
- The plant-based food can enhance the export potential.
- APEDA is working to create export standards for vegan products to address the huge overseas opportunity, based on the principle of ‘Ahimsa Parmo Dharma’, increasing farmers’ income and addressing climate change.

1.104. PM GATISHAKTI PLAN TO BRING ABOUT GREATER COHERENCE IN ALL INVESTMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS: SITHARAMAN

- Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman asked the NITI Aayog to map all the different projects such as Industrial Corridors, Freight Corridors, Defence Corridors, NIMZ (National Industrial Manufacturing Zones) PLI-based industry parks, PM-Mitra parks, Medical & Pharma Parks and Logistic Parks to understand the need for bringing them under PM GatiShakti.
- Chairing the first meeting of the Apex Monitoring Authority constituted to review the activities of National Industrial Corridor Development programme, the finance minister also asked the Shipping Ministry to map out all the seaports connected to various industrial corridors to see whether there are meaningful linkages.
- According to the Finance Minister PM’s GatiShakti National Master Plan was expected to bring about greater coherence in all investments in infrastructure projects.
- The Apex Monitoring Authority comprises the finance minister as Chairperson, Minister-in-charge, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Minister of Railways, Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Minister of Shipping, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, and chief minister(s) of states concerned.

1.105. MISSION BUNIYAAD.

- Mission Buniyaad was started during the summer holidays to help bridge the learning gaps caused by COVID –induced lockdowns.
- According to the Delhi government, that under Mission Buniyaad, held between April and June, students of government and Municipal Corporation of Delhi schools have shown 20%–30% improvement in literacy and numeracy skills.
- The government plans to extend the scheme.
- The State Council of Educational Research and Training, Delhi, held a joint orientation programme on Mission Buniyaad for 2,700 heads of government schools under the Directorate of Education and the MCD to discuss the achievements and learnings from the previous phase of Mission Buniyaad.
- Foundational skills It also focused on drawing a road map to further strengthen the foundational learning skills of students.
- The programme of the Delhi government concentrates on building the foundational skills of students in Hindi and English literacy as well as mathematics.

1.106. GUJARAT BECOMES FIRST STATE TO LAUNCH SEMICONDUCTOR POLICY.

- The Bhupendra Patel-led Gujarat government announced a dedicated ‘Gujarat **Semiconductor Policy 2022-27**’ with a view to generate at least 2,00,000 new employment opportunities during a period of five years.
- With this, Gujarat has become the first state in the country to have dedicated semiconductor policy. In the new policy the state government has decided to give heavy subsidies on power, land and water tariffs for entrepreneurs interested in investing in semiconductors or display fabrication manufacturing in the state.

- According to a state government, the main objective of the policy is to make Gujarat a pioneer in developing the Electronics System Design & Manufacturing (**ESDM**) ecosystem.
- The policy will facilitate effective and timely execution of the eligible projects for setting up a robust semiconductor and display fabrication ecosystem.
- The central government has recently announced the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) and it has already come out with four policies providing support to semiconductor and display fab projects.
- The Gujarat policy focuses on guiding a significant portion of investments made under these ISM policies towards Gujarat. The state government is aiming to develop a '**Semicon City**' which would be part of **Dholera Special Investment Region (DSIR)**.
- Under the policy Gujarat will provide additional capital assistance at 40 % of the capex assistance extended by the Centre for the projects approved under ISM.
- As per the policy one project each of semiconductor and display fabrication will get support. In case of multiple applications, the State-appointed high-powered committee will make recommendations on the basis of credentials of projects.
- According to the state government, the projects approved under the Design-linked Incentive scheme of the Government of India will not be eligible for availing the benefits under the new policy, Eligible projects will get 75% subsidy on procurement of first 200 acres of land in the SIR, while additional land for upstream or downstream projects will get 50 % subsidy on land cost.
- Moreover, one-time reimbursement of 100% stamp-duty and registration fees paid to the government, fixed water tariff at Rs 12 per cubic meter for five years and a capital subsidy of 50% for desalination plants are the fiscal benefits under the new policy. Under the policy, the approved project will get an electric subsidy of 2 per unit.

1.107. PM TO LAUNCH POWER MINISTRY'S FLAGSHIP REVAMPED DISTRIBUTION SECTOR SCHEME.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to launch the Ministry of Power's flagship Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme, which is aimed at improving the operational efficiencies and financial sustainability of the Distribution Companies (DISCOMs) and power departments.
- The scheme will be launched by PM Modi during a programme marking the culmination of 'Ujjwal Bharat Ujjwal Bhavishya – Power @2047' on 30 July 2022 via video conferencing.
- With an outlay of over Rs 3 lakh crore over a period of five years from FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26, the scheme aims to provide financial assistance to DISCOMs for modernisation and strengthening of distribution infrastructure, focussing on improvement of the reliability and quality of supply to end consumers.
- It also aims to reduce the AT&C (Aggregate Technical and Commercial) losses to pan-India levels of 12-15 per cent and ACS-ARR (Average Cost of Supply-Average Revenue Realised) gap to zero by 2024-25 by improving the operational efficiencies and financial sustainability of all state-sector DISCOMs and power departments.

UDAY Scheme - Centrally Sponsored Scheme

- The UDAY scheme was launched on November 15, 2015, under the Government of India for operational and financial turnaround of the Power Distribution Companies (DISCOMs) owned by any state.
- This scheme was established with a vision to provide affordable and accessible 24x7 Power to all. UDAY scheme also aims in providing a solution for revenue-side efficiency as well as cost-side efficiency.

INDEXES AND REPORTS

1.108. INDIA WILL HAVE 122 UNICORNS IN 25 CITIES WITHIN NEXT 2-4 YEARS: HURUN RESEARCH INSTITUTE.

- According to a report by the **Hurun Research Institute** titled **Hurun India Future Unicorn Index 2022**, India is predicted to have 122 new unicorns in the following 2-4 years.
- The total worth of these potential unicorns is currently 49 billion US dollars. When a startup is valued at **\$1 billion USD**, it is considered to be a **Unicorn**.

KEY POINTS:

- The city of **Bengaluru**, which currently has 33 unicorns, will receive 46 new additions, followed by **Delhi NCR** with 25, **Mumbai** with 16, Chennai with 5, and **Pune** with 3. **Bengaluru** currently has the most unicorns in the nation. It's anticipated that the remaining unicorns will appear in 20 additional cities.
- **Tiger Global** has invested in 27 of these potential Unicorns, followed by the international venture capital firm **Sequoia Capital**, which has invested in 39 of them.
- The majority of these prospective unicorns were founded in 2015.

About the Survey:

- The survey states that 63% of these businesses focused on consumer-facing businesses, while the remaining 37% belonged to the **business-to-business (B2B)** industry that provided services to the financial services, logistics, healthcare, and education sectors.
- The report has divided would-be unicorns into groups: **Gazelles**, which are startups with the greatest likelihood of becoming unicorns in the next two years, and **Cheetahs**, which are startups with the potential to become unicorns in the following four years.
- It claimed that the pandemic had sped up the rise of startups.
- Experts claim that a record 44 unicorns emerged in 2021, making India the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world.
- In addition, the experts noted that there are now 65 percent more unicorns, 51 percent more gazelles, and 71 percent more cheetahs in the nation.
- According to the report's findings, product and market fit will continue to be what motivates Indian businesses.

1.109. GOVERNMENT RELEASED THE 1ST EDITION OF 'STATE RANKING INDEX FOR NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT (NFSA).

- Odisha has been adjudged the top ranked State followed by Uttar Pradesh at the 2nd spot and Andhra Pradesh at third amongst the General Category States in 'State Ranking Index for NFSA'.
- Among the Special Category states/UTs, Tripura stood first followed by Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim respectively.
- Further, among the 3 UTs where Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)- Cash is operational, Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu is the top ranked UT.
- This State ranking Index for NFSA, attempts to document the status and progress of implementation of NFSA and various reform initiatives across the country, post consultation with states.
- It highlights the reforms undertaken by States and UTs and create a cross-learning environment and scale-up reform measures by all states and union territories.

- The present Index is largely focused on NFSA Distribution and will include procurement, Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (**PMGKAY**) Distribution in future.
- The Index for ranking the states and UTs is built on **three key pillars** which covers the end-to-end implementation of NFSA through TPDS. These pillars are: **i) NFSA— Coverage, targeting and provisions of the Act, ii) Delivery platform, and iii) Nutrition initiatives.**
- The National Food Security Act (NFSA) was enacted on July 5, 2013 and in order to celebrate the day, the conference was organized to deliberate and discuss nutritional security, food security, best practices followed in Public Distribution System, crop diversification, reforms in PDS and storage sector.
- The system of digitized, Aadhaar linked Public Distribution will be used to issue Ayushman Bharat Card.
- Uttar Pradesh is using the system to issue Ayushman Bharat card.
- Immunization of migrant kids can also be linked with the system to ensure medical facility to them.

1.110. OVER 66 PC OF INDIA'S BLUE-COLLARED EMPLOYEES EARN BELOW RS 15K PER MONTH: REPORT.

- According to a recent report, more than two-thirds of blue-collared employees in India earn less than Rs 15,000 per month.
- According to the report by payroll management app Salarybox, females in the workplace made Rs 12,398 on average, which was 19 per cent less than their male colleagues, which brings forth the country's wide gender pay disparity.
- The data also highlights that less than 15 per cent of the employee base earns in the range of Rs 20,000-40,000 per month (on an average Rs 25,000), calling attention to the fact that a vast majority of Indians have difficulties securing even a livable wage.
- Interestingly, the majority of firms pay wages below the minimum wage set by the Central Pay Commission (CPC), that is Rs 18,000 per month.
- The report is based on a database of over a million employed workforce from more than 850 districts around the country.
- The report also found that only 27 per cent of the workforce is made up of women, whereas 73 per cent of the workforce is made up of men.
- Employees working at supermarkets, grocery/kirana/general stores as well as the garments/textile industries are paid at the lower end of the scale, with an average monthly salary of Rs 8,300.
- Logistics and transport, IT software, and tailoring /boutiques emerge as the businesses that pay the most to females, with primary roles being of telecallers, documentation executives, and recruitment associates.
- According to the resources, Economic development is still not translating into enough jobs for the yearly influx of educated young people entering the workforce. A much bigger proportion of Indians work in the informal sector, and they have been hit hard in recent months by increasing inflation, particularly in food prices.

1.111. NATIONAL MONUMENTS AUTHORITY REPORT DECLARES MANGARH HILLOCK IN RAJASTHAN AS A MONUMENT OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE.

- A team from National Monuments Authority lead by Shri Tarun Vijay, Chairman, National Monuments Authority, submitted a report on declaring Mangarh hillock in Rajasthan as a monument of National Importance in the year of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, to Minister of State for Culture Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal at Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi.
- This report carries relevant details about the Mangarh hillock and recommendations by National Monuments Authority.
- According to Minister of State for Culture Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, that the unsung heroes and Mangarh hillock haven't received the importance in history which they deserved.

- He also said 1500 Bhil tribal freedom fighters were brutally killed by the British army on 17th November 1913.
- To pay our tribute to them, on the occasion of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav we will positively take forward the report submitted by NMA Chairperson, Shri Tarun Vijay.
- The Union Minister reiterated that younger generation is unaware of their sacrifice and Mangarh hillock, it will be our responsibility to highlight significance of and provide information about Mangarh Hillock.

1.112. INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY REPORT WARNS ON CHINA'S DOMINANCE OF SOLAR PANEL SUPPLY CHAIN.

- The International Energy Agency (IEA) has warned in its latest report that global solar PV manufacturing capacity has increasingly moved from Europe, Japan and the United States to China over the last decade, with the second-largest economy's share in all the manufacturing stages of solar panels exceeding 80 per cent.
- The IEA Special Report on Solar PV Global Supply Chains states that China has invested over USD 50 billion in new PV supply capacity – ten times more than Europe – and created more than 300 000 manufacturing jobs across the solar PV value chain since 2011.
- China's share in all the manufacturing stages of solar panels (such as polysilicon, ingots, wafers, cells and modules) exceeds 80 per cent.
- According to, IEA report This is more than double China's share of global PV demand. In addition, the country is home to the world's 10 top suppliers of solar PV manufacturing equipment.
- The report highlighted how government policies in China have shaped the global supply, demand and price of solar PV over the last decade. Chinese industrial policies focusing on solar PV as a strategic sector and on growing domestic demand have enabled economies of scale and supported continuous innovation throughout the supply chain.
- These policies have contributed to a cost decline more than 80 per cent, helping solar PV to become the most affordable electricity generation technology in many parts of the world. However, they have also led to supply-demand imbalances in the PV supply chain.
- According to the IEA, global capacity for manufacturing wafers and cells, which are key solar PV elements, and for assembling them into solar panels (also known as modules), exceeded demand by at least 100 per cent at the end of 2021.
- By contrast, production of polysilicon, the key material for solar PV, is currently a bottleneck in an otherwise oversupplied supply chain. This has led to tight global supplies and a quadrupling of polysilicon prices over the last year.
- Solar PV products are a significant export for China. In 2021, the value of China's solar PV exports was over USD 30 billion, almost 7 per cent of China's trade surplus over the last five years.
- In addition, Chinese investments in Malaysia and Viet Nam also made these countries major exporters of PV products, accounting for around 10 per cent and 5 per cent respectively of their trade surpluses since 2017.
- The total value of global PV-related trade – including polysilicon, wafers, cells and modules – exceeded USD 40 billion in 2021, an increase of over 70 per cent from 2020.

1.113. INDIA RANKS 135 OUT OF 146 IN GENDER GAP INDEX.

- The Global Gender Gap Index benchmarks gender parity across four key dimensions or sub-indices – economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.
- It measures scores on a 0-to-100 scale, which can be interpreted as the distance covered towards parity or the percentage of the gender gap that has been closed.

- India ranks poorly among its neighbours and is behind Bangladesh (71), Nepal (96), Sri Lanka (110), Maldives (117) and Bhutan (126). Only the performance of Iran (143), Pakistan (145) and Afghanistan (146) was worse than India in South Asia.
- In 2021, India ranked 140 out of 156 nations
- Iceland retained its place as the world's most gender-equal country, followed by Finland, Norway, New Zealand and Sweden, as per the annual Gender Gap Report 2022 of the World Economic Forum (WEF) released in Geneva.
- Only 11 countries are ranked below India on the index of 146 nations, with Afghanistan, Pakistan, Congo, Iran and Chad being the worst-five.
- The WEF warned that the cost-of-living crisis is expected to hit women hardest globally with a widening gender gap in the labour force and it will take another 132 years (compared to 136 in 2021) to close the gender gap.
- On India, the WEF said its gender gap score recorded its seventh-highest level in the last 16 years, but it continues to rank among the worst performers on various parameters.
- India registered the most significant and positive change to its performance on Economic Participation and Opportunity. But, labour-force participation shrunk for both men and women since 2021.
- The share of women legislators, senior officials and managers increased from 14.6 per cent to 17.6 per cent, and the share of women as professional and technical workers grew from 29.2 per cent to 32.9 per cent.
- The gender parity score for estimated earned income improved; while values for both men and women diminished, they declined more for men.
- However, in the area of political empowerment, the subindex where India ranks relatively higher at 48th place, showed a declining score due to the diminishing share of years women have served as head of state for the past 50 years.
- On the health and survival subindex, India ranked the lowest at 146th place and figured among the five countries with gender gaps larger than 5 per cent -- the other four being Qatar, Pakistan, Azerbaijan and China.
- However, India was ranked the top globally in terms of gender parity for primary education enrolment and tertiary education enrolment and at the eighth place for the position of head of state.
- Within South Asia, India was ranked the sixth best on overall score after Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bhutan. Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan scored worse than India.
- South Asia (62.3 per cent) has the largest gender gap of all regions, with low scores across all measured gender gaps and little progress made in most countries since 2021.
- At its current pace, it will take 197 years to close the gender gap in the region. The economic gender gap has closed by 1.8 per cent with increases in the share of women in professional and technical roles in countries including Bangladesh and India as well as Nepal.

1.114. UNION EDUCATION MINISTER RELEASES INDIA RANKINGS 2022 OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES.

- The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) to rank India's top colleges and universities has been released.
- IIT Madras remains the best institute in the country, IISc Bengaluru has topped the university category while University of Delhi's Miranda House has been ranked first in the college category.
- NIRF India Ranking 2022 has been announced for 11 categories. This includes overall, university, management, college, pharmacy, medical, engineering, architecture, ARIIA (Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements), law and research institutions.
- The ranking framework judges institutions under five broad generic groups of parameters of Teaching, Learning and Resources (TLR), Research and Professional Practice (RP), Graduation Outcomes (GO),

Outreach and Inclusivity (OI) and Perception (PR). Ranks are assigned based on the total sum of marks assigned for each of these five broad groups of parameters.

- The best medical college in India — like in the previous years' — is All India Institute of Medical Science in Delhi, followed by Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research in Chandigarh.
- In 2021 too, IIT-Madras retained its number one position in the overall educational institutes and engineering categories. The institute also bagged the second position in the 'research' category that was newly introduced last year.

1.115. MATERNAL MORTALITY ABOVE UN TARGET IN 70 PC OF INDIA'S DISTRICTS: STUDY.

KEY POINTS:

- According to the study published in the journal PLOS Global Public Health, Arunachal Pradesh fares the worst of all states and Maharashtra the best. Scientists analysed 61,982,623 (61.9 million) live births and 61,169 maternal deaths recorded in the Health Management Information System (HMIS) during 2017-2019.
- (PTI) Maternal mortality ratio (MMR) in 448 of India's 640 districts are higher than the target set under UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), according to the first mapping of India's maternal deaths at the district level.
- HMIS is a web-based monitoring system put in place by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW). As Census 2011 data was used, only 640 districts were considered against 773 in 2022.
- The findings suggest that 70 per cent of districts (448 out of 640 districts) in India have reported MMR above 70 deaths — a target set under Sustainable Development Goal.
- MMR refers to deaths due to complications from childbirth or pregnancy per 1 lakh live births. The MMR under the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for 2030 is 70. India's MMR is 113 right now.
- It accounts for 15 per cent of world maternal deaths, second only to Nigeria (19 per cent), the study said.
- The highest MMR is in Arunachal Pradesh (284) and the lowest in Maharashtra (40), researchers from the International Institute for Population Sciences in Mumbai, the University of Portsmouth, UK, and the University of Western Australia found.
- Four other states — Manipur (282), Andaman and Nicobar Island (275), Meghalaya (266), and Sikkim (228) — have MMR greater than or equal to 210.
- Nine states and two union territories have MMR in the range of 140-209. These are Nagaland (143), Punjab (143), Chhattisgarh (144), Jammu and Kashmir (151), Delhi (162), Rajasthan (162), Bihar (164), Madhya Pradesh (179), Lakshadweep (208), Uttar Pradesh (208), and Assam (209).
- Recent estimates of Sample Registration System (SRS) of India have witnessed a steady decline in the MMR from 130 to 113 per 100,000 live births.
- Although MMR is falling at an average of 4.5 per cent yearly, the target set under SDG-3 is an annual rate of 5.5 per cent.
- A comparison of successive rounds of information from the Office of Registrar General of India reveals a surprising rise in MMR in Punjab.
- Among the districts, the highest MMR is found in the Tirap district in Arunachal Pradesh and the **lowest in Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti in Himachal Pradesh.**
- Overall, 115 districts registered a maternal mortality ratio greater than or equal to 210; 125 districts show a range of 140-209 while 210 districts fall in the range of 70-139, and only 190 districts reported a maternal mortality ratio less than 70, they said.
- The findings can be immensely useful in identifying 'hot spots' of maternal mortality within the states, thus aiding in micro-level maternal health care policy and planning.
- These "hotspots" or cluster of districts need to initiate immediate action to meet the ambitious SDG-3 target for maternal mortality ratio and thereby eliminate all preventable maternal mortality.

- The researchers also noted that despite some caveats about the completeness of information in a few states, HMIS is a reliable, cost-effective, and routine source for monitoring progress in reducing avoidable maternal mortality in India and its states and districts.

1.116. NITI AAYOG TO LAUNCH THE THIRD EDITION OF THE INDIA INNOVATION INDEX.

- NITI Aayog will release the third edition of the India Innovation Index on the 21st of July, 2022 at an event in the NITI Bhawan. The India Innovation Index 2021 will be released by the Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog, Shri Suman Bery.
- The release of the third edition of the index – the first and second editions were launched in October, 2019 and January, 2021, respectively.
- The India Innovation Index 2021, which examines innovation capacities and ecosystems at the sub-national level, highlights the recent factors and catalysts for promoting such crisis-driven innovation.
- The third edition strengthens the scope of innovation analysis in the country by drawing on the framework of the Global Innovation Index (GII).
- The new framework presents a more nuanced and comprehensive outlook for measuring innovation performance in India, with the introduction of 66 unique indicators, as compared to the 36 indicators used in the preceding edition (viz. India Innovation Index 2020).
- Through this comprehensive framework, the index evaluates the innovation performance of all the states and union territories in India.
- The states and the union territories have been divided into 17 'Major States', 10 'North-East and Hill States', and 9 'Union Territories and City States', for effectively comparing their performance.

1.117. WITH \$87 BILLION, INDIA TOP REMITTANCE RECIPIENT IN 2021: UN REPORT.

- India received 87 billion dollars in remittances in 2021, the top remittance recipient, and way ahead of countries like China and Mexico, according to a World Health Organisation report.
- The First WHO World report on the health of refugees and migrants said that today about one in eight people in the world, some one billion, are migrants.
- The report by the specialised agency of the United Nations responsible for international public health said that in 2021 the top five remittance recipients in current US dollars were India, China, Mexico, the Philippines and Egypt.
- With USD 87 billion, India was the top remittance recipient among low- and middle-income countries, as per 2021 estimates, way ahead of China and Mexico's 53 billion dollars, the Philippines (36 billion dollars) and Egypt (33 billion dollars).
- The United States was the largest source country for remittances in 2020, followed by the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Switzerland.

1.118. BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS ESTABLISHED 1037 STANDARDS CLUBS IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES ACROSS INDIA IN 2021-22.

- BIS is the **National Standard Body** of India established under the **BIS Act 2016** for the harmonious development of the activities of standardization, marking and quality certification of goods and for matters connected therewith or incidental there to.
- Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the National Standards Body is mandated by Government of India to create a robust quality Eco System in the Country through its core activities of Standardization and Certification.
- Towards this mandate, BIS had started off with the concept of creating Standards Club in Schools and Colleges, wherein the concepts of Standardization and Quality are introduced to the students at an early age.

- BIS in its first year of 2021-22 established 1037 Standards Clubs across India and upon realizing the potential and success of the novel endeavour, the target is ambitiously enhanced to creating 10,000 clubs by the end of 2022-23.
- Through Standards Clubs, BIS aims to expose science students of class 9th and above classes to the concept of Quality and Standardization with the help of student centric activities.
- In pursuance to the current target in 2022-23 of opening 10,000 Standards Clubs, BIS is aggressively following up with Schools and Colleges on pan India basis and has already created over 1755 and many more are in its advance stage of approvals. As on date over 43,000 students are members of these Standards clubs.

1.119. ONGC TO MAKE GREEN HYDROGEN; INKS MOU WITH INDIA'S LEADING RENEWABLE ENERGY COMPANY GREENKO ZERO C.

- Energy major Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with M/s Greenko ZeroC Private Limited (Greenko), to jointly pursue opportunities in Renewables, Green Hydrogen, Green Ammonia and other derivatives of green hydrogen.
- The MoU, valid for two years, was inked in New Delhi by ONGC Director Onshore Shri Anurag Sharma and Greenko CEO & Managing Director Shri Anil Kumar Chalamalasetty.
- Greenko is one of India's leading renewable energy Companies.
- This MoU is in line with the **National Hydrogen Mission** launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister in making India a global green hydrogen hub.
- The activities envisaged under this MoU will contribute towards India's target of producing of 5 million tonnes of green hydrogen per annum by 2030.
- This MoU will also act as a stepping stone for ONGC to achieve renewable energy targets as per its Energy Strategy 2040.

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ENVIRONMENT

1.120. UK-BUILT FORUM SATELLITE WILL MEASURE GREENHOUSE EFFECT.

- Forum is an acronym that stands for Far-infrared Outgoing Radiation Understanding and Monitoring.
- The Forum satellite will be assembled by aerospace giant Airbus at its factory in Stevenage.
- It will monitor far-infrared radiation coming up from our planet's surface.
- It's this particular type of light that makes molecules of gases such as carbon dioxide and water vapour vibrate, leading to a heating of the atmosphere - a key aspect of climate change.
- Forum is an Earth observation mission of the European Space Agency (ESA)
- Forum falls in ESA's Earth Explorer class of missions. These are experimental satellites that do novel science in areas of pressing environmental interest.
- Forum would be the ninth one in the series.
- The UK has played significant roles in the preceding missions, at both manufacturer and science investigator level.

1.121. BOTANICAL SURVEY OF INDIA (BSI) REDISCOVERED PRESUMED EXTINCT SPECIES BRACHYSTELMA ATTENUATUM AFTER A GAP OF 188 YEARS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH.

- The researchers from the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) rediscovered a rare, threatened and presumed extinct species *Brachystelma attenuatum* after a gap of 188 years.
- The **scientists hail** from BSI in Dehradun and **Himachal Pradesh University in Shimla**.
- This species was first discovered and described in 1835 by British botanists -- John Forbes Royle and Robert Wight -- from Doongie village (now Hamirpur in Himachal Pradesh).
- In 2020, while conducting field surveys in the Western Himalayas, some interesting tuberous plants were observed in the Bhoranj region of Hamirpur.
- These plants were brought to the BSI and there it was identified as *Brachystelma parviflorum*, a species thought to be extinct by the scientists 186 years ago.
- Another presumed extinct species, '*Brachystelma attenuatum*' has been rediscovered in Hamirpur and Mandi District of Himachal Pradesh.

1.122. INDIA ADDS 540 SPECIES TO FAUNAL DATABASE.

- India added 540 species to its faunal database in 2021 taking the total number of animal species to 1,03,258.
- Among the new species discovered is one species from mammal, 35 reptiles and 19 species of pisces.
- The new mammal species discovered is *Crocidura narcondamica*, a whitetoothed shrew, from Narcondam Island of the Andaman and Nicobar group of islands. Among the reptiles discovered in 2021, notable is *Boiga whitakeri*, or Whitaker's cat snake, from the Western Ghats in Tamil Nadu.
- The **most number** of new discoveries was **from** the faunal group **Hymenoptera**, an order of insects, comprising the sawflies, wasps, bees, and ants, in which 80 species, including one new genus, were discovered.
- Scientists from the ZSI had contributed to 68% of the animal discoveries in 2021.
- India contributes to 6.1% of faunal diversity in the world.
- According to the BSI, regions such as the Western Ghats and the northeastern regions have contributed 28% of the total discoveries.

- In State wise analysis, the most number of discoveries were made from Kerala with 51 taxa followed by Maharashtra and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Recently, Zoological Survey of India ((ZSI), observed its 107th foundation day on July 1.

1.123. GLACIER COLLAPSE IN ITALIAN ALPS.

- The avalanche took place on the Marmolada, which at more than 3,300 metres is the highest peak in the Dolomites, a range in the eastern Italian Alps straddling the regions of Trento and Veneto.
- Rising average temperatures have caused the Marmolada glacier, like many others around the world, to shrink steadily over recent decades.
- According to the polar sciences institute of the National Research Council (CNR), For weeks the temperatures at high altitudes in the Alps have been well above normal values, while this past winter there has been little snow, which hardly protects the glacial basins anymore.

1.124. THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE PROPOSES AMENDMENTS IN ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ACT, TO DECRIMINALIZE PROVISIONS.

- The **Environment (Protection) Act (EPA)** was enacted in 1986 with the objective of providing the protection and improvement of the environment.
- The Environment Ministry proposes to soften the provisions of the Environment Protection Act (EPA) by replacing a clause that provides for imprisoning violators with one that only requires them to pay a fine. This, however, doesn't apply to violations that cause grave injury or loss of life. The proposed fines, in lieu of imprisonment, are also 5-500 times greater than those currently levied.
- The Act currently says that violators will be punishable with imprisonment up to five years or with a fine up to ₹1 lakh, or with both. Were violations to continue, an additional fine of up to ₹5,000 for every day during which such failure or contravention continues after the conviction would be levied. There's also a provision for jail terms to extend to seven years.
- According to Ministry, the rationale governing the amendments, to decriminalise existing provisions of the EPA to weed out "fear of imprisonment for simple violations".
- The two major changes proposed are appointing an "adjudication officer" who would decide on a penalty in cases of environmental violations such as reports not being submitted or information not provided when demanded. However, in case of serious violations which lead to grievous injury or loss of life, they shall be covered under the provision of Indian Penal Code, 1860 read with Section 24 of EP Act.
- Funds collected as penalties would be accrued in an "Environmental Protection Fund".
- In case of contraventions of the Act, the penalties could extend to anywhere from ₹5 lakh to ₹5 crore, the proposal notes.
- The removal of prison terms also applies to the Air Act, that is the cornerstone legislation for dealing with air pollution, and the Water Act, which deals with violations to water bodies.

1.125. ODISHA EYES FOREST ACT IMPLEMENTATION BY 2024.

About Forest Act:

- Forest Right Act (FRA) was enacted in 2006 which recognises the rights of forest-dwelling tribal communities and other traditional forest dwellers to forest resources on which these communities were dependent for a variety of needs, including livelihood, habitation and other sociocultural needs.
- It recognizes and vest the forest rights and occupation in Forest land in Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes (FDST) and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFD) who have been residing in such forests for generations.

KEY POINTS:

- According to Odisha's ST and SC Development Secretary Ranjana Chopra, Odisha set to launch Mission 2024 for FRA in which State aims to grant all kinds of forest rights whether it is individual, community or habitat.
- All tribals will be granted their rightful ownership.
The Mission is under scrutiny by the Finance Department and the Planning and Convergence Department.
- All old records of rights (land pattas) have been digitised and the future pattas would also be digitised. A dedicated website has been hosted to keep all records.
- The whole process of demarcation of land and reaching out to last citizen has been facilitated by non-government organisation partners.

1.126. ANOTHER DRAFT NOTIFICATION FOR WESTERN GHATS SENSITIVE AREA SANS KERALA.

- The Environment Ministry notified yet another draft for demarking 46,832 sq km areas across five states sans Kerala as the Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA) of the Western Ghats.
- A global biodiversity hotspot, the Western Ghats – parts of which are inscribed in the UNESCO World Natural Heritage List – are the origin of Godavari, Krishna, Cauvery and a number of other rivers and extends over a distance of approximately 1,500 km from Tapti River in the north to Kanyakumari in the south through six states namely, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- Originally, the Madhav Gadgil-led committee had recommended designating the entire region as Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) – more than 1 lakh sq kms – in the 522-page report submitted to the Environment Ministry in 2011 while the Kasturirangan panel, constituted soon after that had diluted it to about 50 per cent area.
- The Environment Ministry had constituted a High-Level Working Group to study the ecology, environmental integrity and holistic development of the Western Ghats. It was to address the balance between protection of environment / biodiversity and aspirations of the communities. It had submitted its report on April 15, 2013 wherein it had identified approximately 37 per cent of the Western Ghats as ecologically sensitive covering an area of 59,940 sq kms.
- The first draft notification was issued on March 10, 2014 that mentioned ESA for other states as recommended by the High-Level Working Group (13,108 sq kms) and for Kerala, mentioned the area as recommended by the state (9,993.7 sq kms). That was followed by consultation with stakeholders, including states and there came a series of drafts, last of which expired on June 30.
- This time round, the latest draft notified on July 6 has recommended an ESA totaling to 46,832 sq km sans Kerala's. It comprises 449 sq kms in Gujarat, 17,340 sq kms in Maharashtra, 1,461 sq km in Goa, 20,668 sq kms in Karnataka and 6,914 sq kms in Tamil Nadu.

1.127. COFFEE BOARD TO COLLABORATE WITH ISRO TO DEVELOP CLIMATE-RESISTANT VARIETIES.

- **State-run Coffee Board** is planning to focus on developing new varieties that will be resistant to the changing climatic patterns.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the **Coffee Board** and the **Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)** was signed with regard to breeding climate-resilient varieties and assessing the carbon sequestration potential in coffee among others.
- The Central Coffee Research Institute (CCRI) in the **Chikmagalur district of Karnataka** conducts plant-related research activities under the Board in the areas of plant breeding, agronomy, agriculture chemistry and soil science, plant physiology, pathology, entomology, and post-harvest technology, among others.

- In recent years, coffee growers in the country have borne the brunt of changing climatic patterns. The number of extreme weather events affecting growers, such as excessive rain in a short period or deficit rainfall, is increasing.

1.128. SUSTAINABLE USE OF WILD SPECIES IS KEY TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

- A report released by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has stated that about 50,000 wild species globally can meet the needs of billions of people.

KEY POINTS

- The IPBES assessment of the sustainable use of wild species aims to address challenges faced by policymakers and will be completed in 2022.
- Wild species provide half of the world's seafood, a significant proportion of timber and energy, and remain a major source of protein, fiber and medicines for many communities in both developing and developed countries.
- Policies and decisions relating to the use of wild species will have consequences for people who depend on these species and affect progress towards the SDGs.

1.129. AIR POLLUTION BEHIND RISING BURDEN OF NCDs: ASSOCHAM REPORT

- According to recent health report by ASSOCHAM, Air pollution is the topmost cause for the rising burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like hypertension, diabetes, stroke, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in India.
- According to the report, 76 percent of the population with NCDs is exposed to high air pollution. It also suggests that nearly 29 per cent of the population is exposed to high levels of household pollution, while 20 per cent is exposed to air pollution at the workplace.
- According to the report, after pollution, low physical activity and high stress levels are the most prevalent factors, while alcohol consumption, smoking and excessive intake of sugary drinks and red meat are the least prevalent factors leading to NCDs.
- “The report makes an alarming observation that NCDs increase after 18 years and show a quantum leap when an individual crosses the age of 35. More than two-thirds of people suffering from these diseases are in the most productive life age group – between 26 and 50 years.
- The recent Covid onslaught and the higher mortality rate among patients with NCDs (comorbidities) have brought the focus back on preventive healthcare. “Despite challenging circumstances, several laudable steps have been taken by the Government of India to address this mounting concern. A population-based initiative for screening, prevention, and control of common NCDs has been rolled out under the National Health Mission and as part of Comprehensive Primary Healthcare.
- The preventive aspect of NCDs is also strengthened through the Ayushman Bharat Health Wellness Centre scheme by promotion of wellness activities and targeted communication at the community level.
- The rising levels of pollution across the country especially pose a serious threat to expecting mothers. Multiple studies have established a direct link between air pollution and premature birth.
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the annual deaths caused by NCDs will increase to 55 million by 2030, if timely preventive interventions are not made.
- For India, a vast population combined with rapid urbanization and people’s changing lifestyle makes the problem even more complex.

1.130. CLIMATE CHANGE MISSIONS IN ALL DISTRICTS OF T.N.

- The Tamil Nadu government has established District Climate Change Missions in all 38 districts. The missions will be headed by the Collectors as Mission Directors. The District Forest Officers will function as Climate Officers.
- The missions will help strengthen the government’s climate response at the grassroots.

- The missions will create strong policy support across all sectors of governance, devise strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and benchmark industries to move towards green manufacturing. They will also promote eco-friendly technologies, such as solar and wind energy technologies, biodegradable packaging and e-vehicles.
- Educating local communities in the management of climate change and creating technologies for evidence based green models for adaptation and practical models for green mobility are the other objectives of the missions.
- The government has initially sanctioned ₹ 3.80 crore for 38 district missions which will function under the supervision of the Tamil Nadu Climate Change Mission.

1.131. TO CURB POLLUTION IN DELHI-NCR, NEW POLICY FRAMED.

- The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has included clean power and transport among the fundamentals to deal with air pollution in the National Capital Region (NCR) and adjoining areas.
- Besides, greening and plantation on a large scale also feature in its new policy to abate the menace of air pollution in Delhi-NCR.
- According to CAQM report, High-level protection will have to be accorded to the entire stretch of Aravalli range in Haryana and Delhi, and its different categories of forest areas, calling for dust and pollution mitigation through forest sinks to control pollution.
- This green walling is needed against desertification and ingress of dust and cleansing of toxic gases," stated the report aimed at overall amelioration of air quality through differentiated geographical approach and timely action.
- The new plan also entails a ban on BS IV four-wheeler diesel vehicles, barring those engaged in essential services, in Delhi and the bordering districts of NCR if the air quality index (AQI) breaches the 450-mark.
- An AQI of more than 450 is classified as "severe plus".
- The policy has received a mixed response from experts.
- The policy focuses on industries, transport, construction and demolition (C&D), dust from roads and open areas, municipal solid waste burning and stubble-burning, among other things.
- It also lays emphasis on thermal power plants, clean fuels and electric mobility, public transportation, road traffic management, diesel generators and bursting of firecrackers.
- The policy, in its chapter on the management of paddy straw through different in-situ measures, stated: "By 2021, more than 13,100 Happy Seeders and 17,600 Super Seeders were available in Punjab, besides other categories of crop residue management (CRM) machinery, including combine harvesters.

1.132. STEPS INITIATED FOR DECLARATION OF 'INDUS RIVER' AS UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization:

- It was founded in 1945 and its Headquarters are in Paris, France.
- A World Heritage Site is a place on earth having a special cultural or physical significance and outstanding universal value to humanity.
- It may be a building, a city, a complex, a desert, a forest, an island, a lake, a monument, or a mountain.

KEY POINTS:

- The Administration of Union Territory of Ladakh and the National Monuments Authority (NMA) has initiated steps to seek a declaration of the "Indus River" as an UNESCO World Heritage.
- Lieutenant Governor, Radha Krishna Mathur termed "Indus River" as the "Lifeline of Ladakh".
- The Culture Department, Ladakh also plans to publish a Coffee Table Book on the river Indus so as to bring to light history and to generate awareness about the mighty "Indus".

- According to MP Ladakh, Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, highlighted the need to consider the usage of water and developmental activities along and around the river in case the river Indus is declared as UNESCO World heritage.

1.133. SYNGENTA INDIA LAUNCHED BIODIVERSITY SENSOR PROJECT WITH IIT ROPAR.

Biodiversity Sensor Project

- A unique biodiversity sensor project is launched by Syngenta, a global agri-business major. It claimed to be the first such project in India. Syngenta has launched this project in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology, Ropar, Punjab (IIT-R). This project will help in studying the behaviour of insects around farms, particularly bees and butterflies.
- Along with this, the firm flagged off the Drone Yatra which will cover 10,000 Km across the country. This project will monitor to identify and quantify insect life around farms to get real-time data on biodiversity through a sensor.

KEY POINTS

- This project includes a centralized biodiversity data repository that can be shared and tracked.
- The biodiversity monitoring will be done by a modem-like sensor that has cameras to capture real-time images of the bees and butterflies.
- The species will be identified through an artificial intelligence-based algorithm.
- It will help the researchers to identify the types of insects and record the data.
- The data will be open source and free for anyone to access across the world.
- The blueprint of the project will also be made accessible for everyone to share ideas for development.
- The sensor will run on solar power and machine learning will also be used in capturing data.
- The drone yatra will cover 13 states and spread awareness about drone spraying.

1.134. NO GM RICE APPROVED FOR COMMERCIAL CULTIVATION: UNION MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE.

- India has categorically stated that no variety of Genetically Modified (GM) rice has been approved for commercial cultivation in India, and it has not exported any GM rice, Narendra Singh Tomar, Union Minister for Agriculture, said in a written reply in Lok Sabha while replying to a query on whether GM rice was discovered in a consignment exported to EU in 2021.

HISTORY

- The discovery of 500 tonnes of genetically modified (GM) rice in a consignment that India exported to the European Union countries in June 2021.
- Several batches of rice flour were marketed in several European countries, as well as in the United States, Iraq, Mauritius, Qatar, Dubai (United Arab Emirates), Lebanon, Senegal and Turkey.
- They were recalled for use in the EU after European Commission Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) identified illegalities in food products upon a check.

PRESENT STATUS

- India is yet to approve commercial cultivation of a genetically modified food crop. It has, however, cultivated multiple GM rice varieties at various stages of confined field trials.
- **The Coalition for GM Free India**, in its letter, warned that such trials have led to “contamination and leaks” that have made their way to the food chain.
- The letter, written by a paddy farmer from Kerala, demanded that an inter-ministerial, inter-agency body be set up with the GEAC to facilitate creation of a body to look into illegal GM imports.

- It also suggested that field trials should be banned to avoid any contamination of food and seed supply chains.
- **India has approved** commercial cultivation of **only one GM crop, Bt Cotton**.

1.135. INDIA INKS PACT WITH NAMIBIA TO REINTRODUCE CHEETAH DECLARED EXTINCT IN COUNTRY 50 YRS AGO.

- Fifty years after it was declared extinct in the country in 1952, Cheetahs will formally make an entry in India next month before Independence Day.
- India and Namibia signed a crucial memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the reintroduction of Cheetahs, with the first batch comprising four male and as many females arriving from Namibia in August.
- Namibia has the world's largest population of Cheetahs. According to the pact, the two countries will share and exchange expertise and capacities to promote cheetah conservation in their ranges.
- According to a senior environment ministry official that talks are on with South Africa too. An MoU will be signed after getting the approval.
- The fastest land animal in the world will find a new home in the Kuno-Palpur National Park in Madhya Pradesh' Sheopur district.
- The Cheetahs are likely to be brought to India before August 15. The Cheetah is the only large carnivore that got completely wiped out from India, mainly due to over-hunting and habitat loss.
- The last spotted feline died in 1948 in the Sal forests of Chhattisgarh's Koriya district.
- They will collaborate in areas of climate change, environmental governance, environmental impact assessments, pollution and waste management etc and undertake an exchange of personnel for training and education in wildlife management, including sharing of technical expertise, wherever relevant.

HISTORY:

- At the first wildlife board meeting of Independent India in 1952, the government had "called for assigning special priority for the protection of the cheetahs in central India" and a "bold experimentation to preserve the Cheetah" was suggested. Subsequently, negotiations commenced with the Shah of Iran in the 1970s for bringing the Asiatic cheetah to India in exchange for Asiatic lions. Keeping in view the small Asiatic cheetah population of Iran and the genetic similarity between the Iranian and the African cheetah, it was decided that the latter would be introduced in India.
- As many as 10 sites were surveyed between 2010 and 2012. Kuno National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh was considered ready for receiving cheetahs with the least management interventions since a lot of investments had been done in this protected area for reintroducing Asiatic lions, which are also an endangered species.
- Spread over 748 square kilometres, KNP has an adequate prey base. It is devoid of human settlements, forms a part of the Sheopur-Shivpuri deciduous open forest landscape and is estimated to have a capacity to sustain 21 cheetahs.
- Once restored, the larger landscape can hold about 36 cheetahs. The carrying capacity can be further enhanced by including the remaining part of the Kuno Wildlife Division (1,280 sq km) through prey restoration.

Action plan:

- The action plan for cheetah translocations in KNP has been developed in compliance with International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) guidelines and considering site assessment and prey density, current cheetah carrying capacity of the national park, among other criteria.
- The financial and administrative support to the cheetah reintroduction programme in India would be provided by the ministry through the National Tiger Conservation Authority.

1.136. FOREST RIGHTS ACT HAS ENHANCED INCOME BASKET OF BENEFICIARIES: MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS.

- According to the Minister of State for Tribal Affairs, Bishweswar Tudu, the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, has resulted in enhancing the income basket of the beneficiaries.
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has provided funds to various State Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) to conduct studies on post implementation of the FRA Act, 2006.
- According to the study report, the income basket of the beneficiaries has increased due to the provisions of rights under FRA.
- This has resulted in improving the quality of life. Furthermore, the Act has empowered tribal women and also helped Gram Sabhas in managing and conserving their forest resources.
- It has enabled the need for capacity building of Gram Sabha members for their empowerment for forest governance, preparation of micro plans for the sustainable management of forest resources, improving livelihood opportunities, assessment of the biomass stock, and biodiversity conservation.

Forest Rights Act

- The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 also known as the Forest Rights Act, recognizes the rights of forest-dwelling tribal communities and other traditional forest dwellers to forest resources. These communities are dependent on a variety of needs, including livelihood, habitation, and other socio-cultural needs.
- The Act provides certain individual rights such as Rights of Self-cultivation and Habitation and community rights such as grazing, fishing, and access to water bodies in forests, community right to intellectual property and traditional knowledge etc.
- Moreover, it empowers the forest dwellers to access and use the forest resources in the manner that they were traditionally accustomed to, to protect, conserve and manage forests, protect forest dwellers from unlawful evictions, and also provides for basic development facilities for the community of forest dwellers to access facilities of education, health, nutrition, infrastructure, etc.
- As per Forest Rights Act, 2006 and rules made thereunder, the responsibility for implementation of the Act lies with State Governments/UT Administrations.

1.137. WIND POWER RATES MAY BOTTOM OUT.

- Recently, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) said it would be doing away with the practice of reverse auctions — when companies bid to offer the lowest price — while awarding contracts for setting up wind –energy projects.
- India has committed to installing 60,000 MW of wind power projects by 2022, but has met only two thirds of the target.
- According to Indu Shekhar Chakravarty, Secretary, MNRE, there were complaints from the industry that e–reverse auctions are leading to tariffs being artificially lowered leading to unhealthy competition.
- While reverse auctions were the norm for all renewable energy projects, including solar and wind projects since 2015, the government’s change of stance signals that the rock–bottom prices associated with clean energy projects — per unit solar power costs have fallen to ₹2.40 a unit — do not reflect the true costs of renewable energy.

Reason for dip in health

- The cost of large tracts of land required to install wind turbines is among the reasons cited for the dwindling health of the sector.

1.138. INDIA DESIGNATES 5 NEW RAMSAR SITES.

About Ramsar Convention:

- The Ramsar convention was established by UNESCO on February 2, 1971. It is an intergovernmental environmental treaty, named after Ramsar city in Iran because it was signed there. The convention came into effect on 1975.
- It encourages the international cooperation and national action to conserve the wetlands and sustainably use their resources. Under it, wetlands of international importance are identified worldwide.

KEY POINTS

- India has designated five (5) new wetlands of international importance, which include three wetlands (Karikili Bird Sanctuary, Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest & Pichavaram Mangrove) in Tamil Nadu, one (Pala wetland) in Mizoram and one wetland (Sakhya Sagar) in Madhya Pradesh, making a total of 54 Ramsar sites in the country.
- The Ramsar sites have been increased from 49 to 54 Ramsar sites.

1.139. LIGHT-MANTLED ALBATROSS.

- Recently, a rare flight of **Antarctica's Light-mantled Albatross** to Tamil Nadu coast has intrigued the researchers.

About

- This record from the **Palk Bay side of Rameswaram island** is significant.
- The location where the Albatross was spotted is part of the Palk Bay and near the Gulf of Mannar, an **'Important Bird Area'** on India's southeast coast.
- The **IBA programme of Birdlife International** aims to identify, monitor and protect a global network of IBAs for conservation of the world's birds and associated biodiversity.
- Listed as a **'Near Threatened' species by the ICUN**, Light-mantled Albatross has a worldwide population of 21,600 breeding pairs, according to an estimate in 1998.

1.140. PUDUCHERRY FOSSIL WOOD PARK CONTAINS 20 MILLION YEARS OLD FOSSIL WOOD.

- The fossil wood park situated near Puducherry holds trees that have turned as fossils is believed to be 20 million years old.
- The National Fossil Wood Park situated in the bordering Thiruvakkarai village in Viluppuram District of Tamil Nadu will add a feather to the cap of the tourism map of Puducherry if more infrastructure development is done.
- Thiruvakkarai is less than 25 Kilo metres from Puducherry.
- Situated at the banks of Sankarabarani River in the Puducherry Tamil Nadu border, this national fossil wood park hosts around 200 pieces of stone turned trees that are estimated to be more than 20 Million years old.
- These trees are believed to have been drifted to this place that might have been formed due to crushed sediments of the Sankarabarani River due to plate tectonics that would have happened millions of years ago. Even though these trees are scattered in a sprawling 247 acres of land, stone trees that lay in around 15 acres of land are open for the public.

Other fossil parks in India include:

- Indroda Dinosaur and Fossil Park, Gujarat
- Ghughua Fossil Park, Madhya Pradesh
- Salkhan Fossils Park, Uttar Pradesh
- Akal Wood Fossil Park, Rajasthan
- Amkhoi Fossil Park, West Bengal

- Raiyoli Dinosaur Fossil Park, Gujarat
- Rajmahal Hills Fossil Park, Bihar
- Wadadham Fossils Park, Wadadam, Sironcha, Gadchiroli, Maharashtra

1.141. WORLD TIGER DAY.

- In February 2008, a report by the National Tiger Conservation Authority presented an alarming report, revealing that there were only 1411 tigers left in the country, home to the big cats.
- The efforts for the conservation of tigers on a global level began in 2010, when 13 countries, including Nepal, Bhutan, and India met with a goal to increase their Tiger population. They decided to double their wild tiger numbers by 2022.
- International Tiger Day is being celebrated on **29th July**. The main aim behind this day is to promote a global system for protecting the natural habitats of tigers and to raise awareness and support for tiger conservation.
- According to World Wildlife Fund, tiger populations are currently stable or increasing in India.
- The tiger reserves of India were set up in 1973 and are governed by Project Tiger, which is administrated by the National Tiger Conservation Authority.
- According to the latest Tiger Census of 2018-19 conducted in India, 2,967 Tigers live in the country.
- The population growth rate of Tiger is six per cent per annum. India is home to 80 per cent of tigers in the world.
- There are a total of **53 Tiger reserves in India as of 2022**.
- The combined area of Guru Ghasidas National Park (Sanjay National Park) and Tamor Pingla Wildlife Sanctuary of Chhattisgarh have been designated as **India's 53rd Tiger Reserve** by the National Tiger Conservation Authority.

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GEOGRAPHY

1.142. NDDDB MOVING TO REVIVE EDIBLE OIL CO-OPS, SUPPORT FRUIT/VEGETABLE GROWERS.

- The National Dairy Development Board (NDDDB) is re-engaging itself to develop the edible oil co-operatives and fruit and vegetable (F&V) sector in the country on the lines of dairy cooperative model.
- NDDDB, which implemented the Operation Flood programme that helped the country achieve self-sufficiency in milk production, now expects to play a key role in boosting domestic oilseeds production such as sunflower and groundnuts, besides providing a forward linkage to co-operatives and the farmer producer companies focussed on F&V production.
- Fodder seeds NDDDB Chairman Meenesh Shah said the board's expertise in propagating the fodder seeds will be used to enhance the production of sunflower seeds.
- As a pilot, NDDDB recently partnered with the Karnataka Oilseeds Federation and the University of Agricultural Sciences, Bengaluru, to increase the production of hybrid sunflower seeds.
- NDDDB will also look at replicating the initiative in other States like Maharashtra, Punjab and Haryana
- In the 1980s, NDDDB was instrumental in setting up edible oil co-operatives across the country.

1.143. INDIA EXPLORES INVESTMENT IN AUSTRALIAN LITHIUM.

- India is exploring avenues for jointly investing in advanced processing facilities for lithium, a key component in electric vehicles (EV), in Australia, Coal and Mines. Lithium hydroxide is a key component in EV batteries.
- Dignitaries from both sides visited the Tianqi lithium processing facility in Kwinana, Perth, Australia.
- Domestic sources India imported around 627 million units of lithium-ion batteries in FY19, while during FY20 and FY21, the in-bound shipments of lithium-ion batteries stood at 539 million units and 516 million units, respectively.
- The Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research is carrying out exploration for lithium in **Mandya and Yadgir districts of Karnataka.**
- India has been exploring to acquire mines of strategic minerals such as lithium and cobalt in producing countries like Australia, Argentina, Bolivia and Chile.
- To that effect, a Joint Venture firm, **Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL)** with NALCO, Hindustan Copper and Mineral Exploration Corporation was also created.

1.144. TYPHOON AERE MAKES LANDFALL IN JAPAN.

- Typhoon is a **regionally specific name** for a strong Tropical Cyclone.
- A tropical cyclone is a **generic term** used by meteorologists to describe a **rotating, organized system of clouds and thunderstorms** that originates over tropical or subtropical waters and has closed, low-level circulation.
- A typhoon made landfall in Japan's Nagasaki prefecture, bringing with it torrential downpours and thunder amid unstable atmospheric pressure in the eastern and northern parts of the country.
- The Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) has warned that **Aere** could trigger landslides, rough seas, flooding in low-lying areas as rivers breach their banks, as well as warning of thunder and lightning strikes.
- The slow-moving typhoon that is forecast to be downgraded to **an extratropical low-pressure system**, is moving slowly eastward toward western and central parts of Japan.
- Typhoon Aere, had an atmospheric pressure of 1,000 hectopascals at its center and was packing winds up to **90 km per hour.**
- The Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre (RSMC) Tokyo - Typhoon Centre assigns the name for a tropical cyclone.

1.145. SECOND KEN-BETWA LINK PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD.

- Recently, the Steering Committee of the Ken-Betwa Link Project (SC-KBLP) conducted its second meeting.
- Members from the states of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, as well as representatives from the NITI Aayog and different central ministries, attended the conference.

KEY POINTS:

- The Ken-Betwa link project, is crucial for the water security and socioeconomic development of the Bundelkhand region, should be implemented in a time-bound manner using state-of-the-art technologies and know-how while properly taking care of R&R for project affected people and conservation of the region, in particular the landscape-dependent species of the Panna Tiger Reserve.
- Deliberations on the implementation of an integrated landscape management plan for Greater Panna prepared by the Wildlife Institute of India.
- It was also proposed to constitute a Technical Advisory Group for KBLP to review and advise the Authority on various planning and technical matters.
- An R&R Committee to monitor the implementation of R&R plan in transparent and time bound manner was proposed to be constituted.
- A Greater Panna Landscape council was also proposed to be constituted for implementation of Landscape Management Plan (LMP) and Environment Management Plan (EMP) of the project.

Ken Betwa (ILR) Project Details

- It is a project proposed to transfer excess water from the River Ken to the Betwa basin through the use of a concrete canal. The project aims to provide irrigation to the Bundelkhand region, which is one of the worst drought-affected areas in India.
- The beneficiary states are Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- It will meet the irrigation purposes, drinking water, and electricity needs of 6 districts in both states.
- The proposed concrete canal would be 221 km long. It will pass through Jhansi, Banda, and Mahoba districts of UP and Chhatarpur, Panna, and Tikamgarh districts of MP.
- A tripartite Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Centre and the governments of UP and MP for the project.
- Nearly 8,650 hectares of forest land including part of **Panna National Park** in Madhya Pradesh will be submerged if the project were to become a reality.

1.146. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU PORT BECOMES FIRST 100 PER CENT LANDLORD MAJOR PORT OF INDIA HAVING ALL BERTHS BEING OPERATED ON PPP MODEL.

- Jawaharlal Nehru Port has become the first 100 per cent Landlord Major Port of India having all berths being operated on PPP model.
- According to Sarbananda Sonowal, Ports, Shipping and Waterways Minister, this project will improve the utilization in crane and berth productivity of the terminal.
- The total handling of JNPT will increase to 1.8 million Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEUs) from the present handling capacity of 1.5 million TEUs in 2020-21.
- The terminal will also be handling Ro-Ro vessels which will not only lower the logistics cost and reduce transit time but will also contribute in reducing congestion on roads and promoting towards clean environment.

1.147. THIS 'ANT CHUTNEY' ATTEMPTS TO MAKE IT TO THE GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS LIST.

- Chaprah, an indigenous food delicacy found in the tribal regions of the country is looking to make it to the GI list of food items. Chaprah or a chutney made from red weaver ant is popular among the tribal

population who consume it for its nutritious value. Also known as 'The Kai' in Odisha, the food delicacy is trying for GI tag which will further help preserve the cultural value associated with it and also promote the food.

- In Odisha, scientists through their research are trying for the geographical indications (GI) registry of Kai Chutney. Applied under the food category, the GI tag would help develop a structured hygiene protocol in the preparation of Kai Chutney for standard wider use.

The Kai Chutney

- Kai Chutney, a savoury food item, is rich in valuable proteins, calcium, zinc, vitamin B-12, iron, magnesium, potassium, sodium, copper, fiber, and 18 amino acids, known to boost the immune system and keep diseases at bay.
- Found abundantly in Mayurbhanj throughout the year, weaver ants construct nests with the leaves of host trees. The larval and adult stages of the ants are preferred and are either eaten raw or turned into "chutney" by mixing them with spicy ingredients.
- The chutney is prepared by mixing and grinding salt, ginger, garlic, and chilly. The tribals also make a living by selling these in the rural markets.

Benefits of Chaprah/ Kai

- Weaver ants are consumed as a cure for many illnesses, boosting the immune system and keeping diseases away. The dishes made from weaver ants including Kai chutney and soup help get rid of flu, common cold, and whooping cough.
- It is also useful in increasing the appetite, enhancing vision and eyesight naturally without corrective eyewear, and treating joint pain, and stomach diseases. Weaver ants are also good for the development of a healthy brain and the nervous system.
- The tribal healers also prepare medicinal oil by dipping the collected Kais in pure mustard oil. This oil when ready after 30 days, is used as baby oil and used to cure rheumatism, gout, ringworm, and other skin diseases. So it is the only panacea for the tribes.
- Kais are also used as insecticides. These bio-control agents prey on most arthropods entering their territory. Due to their predatory habit, Kais are recognized as biological control agents in tropical crops as they can protect a variety of crops against many different insect pests.
- The GI tag will not only enhance the reputation and value of local products but also support local businesses. Chaprah is consumed as a delicacy in Indian states like Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Jharkhand.

1.148. GI TAG TO WHITE ONION.

- Alibag's white onion gets **GI tagged, to benefit farmers as white onion will get premium price.**
- With its picturesque beaches, **Alibag, in the Raigad district of Maharashtra, is one of the popular tourist spots.**
- This historic place will be now recognized for **Geographical Indication (GI) tagged white onion.**
- The GI for this **onion, characterised by its sweetness, has been accepted.**
- The GI tag gives a **unique identity to the white onion, which has medicinal qualities and is being cultivated in a traditional way for a long time.**
- Farmers will directly get benefits as the white onion will get the premium price because of the GI tag.

What is a Geographical Indication (GI)?

- It is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- In order to function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place.

- It is a part of the intellectual property rights that comes under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.
- In India, Geographical Indications registration is administered by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act of 1999.
- Items Covered: Agricultural products, foodstuffs, wine and spirit drinks, handicrafts, and industrial products.

1.149. GOVT PROPOSES AMENDMENTS IN CANTONMENTS ACT, 2006 FOR GREATER DEMOCRATIZATION OF CANTONMENT BOARDS

- The government has proposed amendments in the Cantonments Act, 2006 by incorporating provisions for imparting, inter-alia, greater democratisation to Cantonment Boards including direct election of Vice-President.
- This information was given by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in a written reply in the Lok Sabha. He said the draft bill is under finalization. The elections to Cantonment Boards are proposed to be held thereafter.
- Defence Minister said a framework for cutting out civil areas of certain Cantonments and to merge them with neighbouring State municipalities is under consultation with concerned States. He said this will provide uniformity in local governance and greater ease of living for citizens in the process.
- Mr Singh said several suggestions were received from public representatives and general public on the administrative structure of the Cantonment Boards. The suggestions mainly pertain to direct election of Vice-President, empowerment of Civil Area Committee, financial powers to Vice-President, power to vary the constitution of Boards, and power to suspend decisions of the Board.



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ART & CULTURE

1.150. JAGANNATH PURI RATH YATRA 2022:

- **Rath Yatra of Puri** is the annual **chariot festival of Odisha** which is traditionally known as Puri Rath Yatra.
- The Chariot festival is dedicated to **Lord Jagannath, his brother Balabhadra and his sister Subhadra**.
- The idols of the three deities are brought out by three priests out of the sanctum sanctorum or **Garbha Griha** and carried to Gundicha Shrine in three giant wooden chariots.

Name of the Deity	Jagannath	Balabhadra	Subhadra
Name of the Chariot	Nandighosha	Taladhwaja	Darpadalana

Puri Rath Yatra 2022: Chandan Yatra

- On **Akshaya Tritiya**, the **construction of the chariot begins**, with a ritual of fire worship. The ritual takes place in front of the palace of the King of Puri.
- This day also marks the **new agricultural season** for the farmers of Odisha and they start plowing their fields it also marks the **beginning of the summer festival** of the deities which is known as the **Sandalwood festival or Chandan Yatra**.

Puri Rath Yatra 2022: Suna Besha

- The **Suna Besha** is celebrated when the Chariots of the deities return to the main temple after returning from the **Gundicha temple**.

1.151. ONLY UNIVERSITY IN THE WORLD WHICH OFFERS COURSES IN FOLK ARTS AND CULTURE TO BRANCH OUT ACROSS THE GLOBE.

- Karnataka Janapada Vishwavidyalaya (Karnataka Folklore University), the only university in the world which offers courses in folk arts and culture, has now set its eyes on expanding its reach globally. It is approaching colleges and organisations across the world.
- The decade-old university, was an initiative of former CM B S Yediyurappa in 2011 and was inaugurated by former CM D V Sadananda Gowda in 2012.
- Initially, when the university was started, around 50 colleges and organisations from Karnataka enrolled and were affiliated to the university.
- Presently, it offers certificate courses in dodddata (folk drama), dollu kunitha, kamsale, thogalu bombeyata (puppet show), traditional embroidery, folk tourism, folk songs, folk dances, bamboo art, folk martial arts, folk sports, percussion instrument, and yoga.
- It also offers diploma courses in open air theatre, yakshagana, traditional tattoo art, martial arts and yoga. It also offers postgraduate diploma courses in folk poetry, traditional dairy and traditional horticulture.
- According to Prof C T Guruprasad, Registrar and Vice Chancellor (in-charge) of the university, over 600 students have enrolled for various courses offered by them. These classes are conducted on their campus at Shiggavi in Haveri district, which happens to be CM Basavaraj Bommai's constituency.

1.152. KUTCHI COMMUNITY OF GUJARAT CELEBRATED THEIR NEW YEAR.

- Ashadhi Bij is the second day of Shukla paksha of Aashaadha month, of Hindu calendar, which is associated with the beginning of rains in the Kutch region.
- Kutchi community of Gujarat celebrate their new year on this day.
- The Kutchi New Year is mostly a traditional affair and is observed in homes. Relatives, friends and neighbours join in the festival.

- Many organizations are also giving importance to the day and organize satsangs, musical competitions and other cultural programs.
- Ganesh, Goddess Lakshmi and other regional deities are worshipped on the day.

1.153. KHARCHI PUJA 2022

- Kharchi Puja is a festival where the 14 gods that comprise the dynastic deity of the Tripuri community are worshipped in the state of Tripura in northeast India. The rituals are observed for a whole week in the temple dedicated to the 14 gods which is located in the state's capital city of Agartala. The festival is celebrated on the 8th day of the new moon in the month of July. It can also sometimes fall in the month of June or August.

Origin of the Festival

- The word "kharchi" means "earth" and is derived from the word "khya". It is also derived from the words "khar" which means "sin" and "chi" which means "cleaning". So, it is a festival where there is a ritual cleaning of the earth. This is a festival that worships the earth, along with the 14 dynastic deities, and has tribal origins. However, it is celebrated by both tribal and non-tribal communities.

Mythology Behind the Festival

- According to the mythology behind the festival, the earth mother or mother goddess menstruates during this time, which is called Ama pechi or Ambu bachi. The soil is not ploughed during these days since the earth is considered to be unclean during the period of menstruation of the mother goddess. The Kharchi puja is conducted to ritualistically clean out the earth after her menstruation is over.

Rituals

- The rituals associated with the Kharch puja lasts for 7 days. On the day of the puja, from the temple premises in Agartala, the idols of the 14 deities are carried to the Saidra river, which is considered to be holy. After a dip in the river, they are carried back to the temple. After the ritual bath, the idols are decorated with flowers and vermilion paste on their foreheads.

1.154. PM ADDRESSES BIRTH CENTENARY CELEBRATION OF SWAMI ATMASTHANANDA.

- The Prime Minister expressed happiness over the release of a photo biography and documentary to take Swami Ji's mission to the masses.
- The meaning of sannyas is to work for the society by rising above oneself, and to live for the sake of society.
- Swami Vivekanand Ji moulded the great tradition of sanyasth into a modern form.
- The ideals of **Ramakrishna Mission** are to work in mission mode, to create new institutions, and to strengthen the institutions.
- The saint tradition of India has always been proclaiming '**Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat**'.
- Everyone knows the saints of Ramakrishna Mission as the conductors of national unity in the country.
- Swami Atmasthananda was from Kshetripara, now in Bangladesh. He received his spiritual initiation during his college days in 1938, at Belur Math from Swami Vijnanananda. He worked towards upliftment of disadvantaged communities, created welfare activities for the tribal population in Chhattisgarh, and was involved in the building of the TB sanatorium in Ranchi.

1.155. HEAVY RAINS CAUSE PARTIAL COLLAPSE OF HAMPI HERITAGE STRUCTURE.

- Heavy rains in Karnataka's Ballari district over the last few days have damaged one of the structures at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Hampi.
- According to police officials, a portion of the 16-pillar salu mantapa, located near the Virupaksha Temple, collapsed on Sunday.

- According to an official at the Hampi Police Station that due to the recent rains, eight out of the 16 pillars of the structure have fallen.
- This is not the first time that this structure has been under threat due to weather conditions. In 2015 and 2013, too, there was similar damage due to rains and loosening of soil under the structure.
- This development comes after many such world heritage sites were underwater for days in August due to rains and subsequent flooding in north Karnataka.
- The ancient town of Hampi, the seat of power of the erstwhile Vijayanagar empire, is a tourist hotspot. It was the only place in India and the second choice in the New York Times' list of '52 Places to Go in 2019'.
- The ruins and remains of the glorious 14th century kingdom were recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1986 while in February 2018, it was chosen by the union government as one of the 10 tourist destinations across India to be developed as an 'Iconic Tourism Site'.
- The place is best known for several Hindu temples constructed in the Dravidian style of architecture. However, Hampi's most famous icon is the stone chariot in the Vittala Temple. Over six lakh tourists, including foreigners, flock to the heritage site annually.

1.156. PM EXTENDED GREETINGS ON THE OCCASION OF GURU PURNIMA AND ASHADHA PURNIMA.

- The auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima is observed on the Purnima tithi (15th day) in the Shukla Paksh (waxing phase of moon) of Ashadha month.

GURU PURNIMA: SIGNIFICANCE

- This day is commemorated to express our gratitude to our gurus for their dedication and selflessness in nurturing a child.
- On Guru Purnima, the special bond between students and teachers is celebrated. Teachers have the greatest influence on students' lives.
- They not only transfer knowledge and teach co-curricular and extracurricular abilities, but they also help kids develop the morals and life skills that help them deal with the outside world.

1.157. BONALU FESTIVAL CELEBRATED IN HYDERABAD AND SECUNDERABAD

- Bonalu is a popular festival celebrated in Hyderabad and Secunderabad. This festivity is dedicated to Goddess Mahakali.
- Bonalu is celebrated in the month of Ashada, which falls in July-August. On the first day, which was July 3, this year, special puja and ceremonies are held to worship Yellamma, an avatar of Mahakali.
- Apart from Yellamma, during the Bonalu festival, the different forms of Mahakali are worshipped, including Mysamma, Dokkamma, Pedamma, Pochamma, Yellamma, Poleramma and Ankamma.

History and Significance

- The festival is dedicated to Goddess Mahakali. Basically, it's all about thanking her for fulfilling the wishes of her devotees.
- The word "Bonam" signifies a meal or a feast in Telugu. During this, the devotees offer rice cooked with milk and jaggery in an earthen or brass pot, which is decorated with neem leaves, turmeric and vermilion.
- Women carry these pots on their heads to temples. The festival is celebrated with much excitement and religious fervour in the state.
- The festivity traces back to the 19th century. Reportedly, the twin cities Hyderabad and Secunderabad experienced an outbreak of deadly plague that claimed many lives. During that time, a military battalion from the state, which was deployed in Ujjain, prayed to Goddess Mahakali to help the people get rid of the plague. They also promised Mahakali that a temple will be constructed once the plague comes to an end.

- The devotees, as promised, built a temple for Goddess Mahakali.

1.158. BALAMANI AMMA: THE LEGENDARY MALAYALAM POET AND AUTHOR.

- Google celebrated acclaimed Indian poet Balamani Amma's 113th birth anniversary with a special doodle dedicated to her. She continues to be known as the 'amma' (mother) and 'muthassi' (grandmother), of Malayalam poetry.
- Amma was the recipient of various awards and honours like the Padma Bhushan, India's third highest civilian honour, in 1987; the Sahitya Akademi Award for Muthassi in 1965; the Saraswati Samman for Nivedyam in 1995, among others.
- Her other well-known works were Amma, Mazhuvinte Katha (The Story of the Axe), and Sandhya. Amma had no formal education and was greatly influenced by her maternal uncle and his library.
- She published more than 20 anthologies of poems, along with other works including translations.
- Amma's other influences include Vallathol Narayana Menon, one of the triumvirate poets of modern Malayalam, and Nalapat Narayana Menon. She wrote an elegy for the latter, Lokantharangalil.
- Amma has in turn served as an inspiration to later generations of Malayalam poets, a prominent example being Akkitham Achuthan Namboothiri.
- The Kochi International Book Fair gives a cash prize for writers in her name, the Balamani Amma Award.

1.159. AADI KRITHIGAI.

- Aadi Krithigai is an important festival celebrated in the Tamil month of Adi or Aadi. In 2022, the date of Aadi Krithigai is July 23.
- The festival is dedicated to Lord Muruga or Subramanya. Incidentally, the festival is also referred as Aadi Krittika, Kirthigai, Kritika and Krithika.
- The festival is celebrated with fervor in the Murugan Temples in **Tamil Nadu**.

Story of Observing Aadi Krithigai

- As per some beliefs Muruga first appeared on earth on Aadi Krithigai day.
- Aadi Krithigai in some regions is celebrated to symbolize the victory of good over evil when Muruga slew the demon Surapadman. After the annihilation of the demon, Muruga blessed devotees with boons.
- According to Hindu scriptures, Lord Muruga was born as six different babies. And he was looked after by the six Krittika stars. Later, Lord Muruga was combined as a single baby with six heads by Goddess Parvati on Aadi Krithigai day. There are many variations to this legend. This is another reason for observing Aadi Krithigai.
- Krittikas, the six stars of the Pleiades, who happened to be traversing the skies, happened to hear the gurgling of a happy baby from the Saravana lake - a marshy lake in the Himalayas filled with a thicket of reeds.
- Flooded with maternal love, the six maidens rushed to pick up the charming infant. Each wanted to pick up the child. It is said that to fulfill the motherly affection of the six maidens, Muruga metamorphosed into six individual forms. The delighted krittikas each gathered a baby in their arms and suckled the infants and lavishing care on them.

The six babies represent synergy of

- Desire (Kama)
- Consciousness (Shiva)
- Earth (Parvati)
- Fire (Agni)
- Water (Ganga)
- Space (Krittika)

HEALTH

1.160. AIIMS, DELHI BAGS PATENT FOR CANCER DETECTION SYSTEM FOR EARLY AND EFFECTIVE IDENTIFICATION OF PROSTATE CANCER.

- The All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi has received a patent from the Indian Patent Office for its nanotechnology-based cancer detection system for early and effective identification of cancer.
- The order was issued by the patent office after the institution amended its claims and submitted all the required documents in recent months.
- The cancer detection system comprises an antibody against a target protein bio marker selected from microseminoprotein-beta, a prostate specific antigen (PSA) or combination thereof, a Quantum Dot conjugated with the antibody specific to target protein biomarkers.
- It also provides novel immuno-nano-fluorescent-assay, which has advantages over conventional Elisa based detection systems in terms of higher prognosis, specificity, sensitivity, robustness, portability, less time consuming and cost effectiveness.
- According to the institution, the prostate cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death in men globally as well as in India that killed an estimated three lakh men around the world in the year 2010.
- Out of the prostate cancers detected, almost 85 per cent of the cases were detected in the late stages in the country, mostly in the third or the fourth stages.
- The report was released based on testing of almost 4.46 lakh samples tested across the country.
- Higher levels of abnormal prostate cancer results were identified in men with more than 85 years of age, while the second highest were in men between 61 to 85 years.

1.161. RESEARCHERS TO BE HIRED FOR INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE.

- The National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (Nimhans) had received a grant of Rs 10 crore in April from the Ministry of Ayush for integrative medicine research involving Ayurveda and yoga.
- They are looking for suitable professionals in the field to start their research in the coming months.
- Dr Shivarama Varambally of the Department of Integrative Medicine said the grant is for a period of three to five years.
- The research on integrated benefits of yoga and Ayurveda would be beneficial for treating disorders like schizophrenia, clinical depression, Alzheimer's disease dementia, etc.
- They have a plan to create awareness among people to know about an integrative medicine department and its research work.
- Nimhans ex-director and now emeritus professor in Delhi, Dr BN Gangadhar, explained they have done a lot of work in the past for Yoga helping in healing mild and cognitive impairments.
- He added that multiple inputs were going on since two to three years and new courses were also added to generate more human resources.

1.162. WORLD HUNGER LEVELS RISING: UN FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION REPORT, 2022

- The 2022 edition of The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report presents updates on the food security and nutrition situation around the world, including the latest estimates of the cost and affordability of a healthy diet. The report also looks at ways in which governments can repurpose their current support to agriculture to reduce the cost of healthy diets, mindful of the limited public resources available in many parts of the world.

- The report was jointly published today by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

KEY POINTS:

- As many as 828 million people were affected by hunger in 2021 – 46 million people more from a year earlier and 150 million more from 2019.
- After remaining relatively unchanged since 2015, the proportion of people affected by hunger jumped in 2020 and continued to rise in 2021, to 9.8 percent of the world population. This compares with 8 percent in 2019 and 9.3 percent in 2020.
- Around 2.3 billion people in the world (29.3 percent) were moderately or severely food insecure in 2021 – 350 million more compared to before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly 924 million people (11.7 percent of the global population) faced food insecurity at severe levels, an increase of 207 million in two years.
- The gender gap in food insecurity continued to rise in 2021 - 31.9 percent of women in the world were moderately or severely food insecure, compared to 27.6 percent of men – a gap of more than 4 percentage points, compared with 3 percentage points in 2020.
- Almost 3.1 billion people could not afford a healthy diet in 2020, up 112 million from 2019, reflecting the effects of inflation in consumer food prices stemming from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures put in place to contain it.
- An estimated 45 million children under the age of five were suffering from wasting, the deadliest form of malnutrition, which increases children's risk of death by up to 12 times. Furthermore, 149 million children under the age of five had stunted growth and development due to a chronic lack of essential nutrients in their diets, while 39 million were overweight.
- Progress is being made on exclusive breastfeeding, with nearly 44 percent of infants under six months of age being exclusively breastfed worldwide in 2020. This is still short of the 50 percent target by 2030. Of great concern, two in three children are not fed the minimum diverse diet they need to grow and develop to their full potential.
- Looking forward, projections are that nearly 670 million people (8 percent of the world population) will still be facing hunger in 2030 – even if a global economic recovery is taken into consideration.

1.163. NEW LAW TO STRENGTHEN PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE.

- India is all set to enhance emergency response preparedness in the wake of Covid-19 with the government forming a high-level committee this week to finalise the new public health law and repeal the Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897.
- The seven-member committee, chaired by Girija Vaidyanathan, former Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary and incumbent expert member of the National Green Tribunal, has been directed to submit its report within a month of the first meeting.
- The primary objective of the committee was to ready the new law and repeal the 125-year-old epidemic Act which was woefully inadequate to deal with pandemics, as evidenced during the Covid-19 outbreak.
- The antiquated Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, is ineffective in supporting public health surveillance and responding comprehensively to public health emergencies arising from epidemics and disasters and needs to be replaced with a new law, particularly in light of the International Health Regulations (IHR), 2005. There is also a need to provide a legislative framework in keeping with the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Prevention and Control of NCDs (non-communicable diseases), 2011.
- The new Public Health Act, proposed to be enacted under Entries 13 and 14 of Seventh Schedule and Article 253 of the Constitution, seeks to strengthen public health governance in India.

- The draft Bill provides for the constitution of public health authorities at the national, state, district and block level with well-defined public health powers and functions. “It will mandate the preparation of national, state and district-level policies and plans and ensure decentralisation.
- The establishment of public health laboratories and setting up of central and state-level public health cadres are among other hallmarks of the draft law.

1.164. ZYDUS LAUNCHES TOP ANTI-DIABETIC DRUG AFTER IT GOES OFF PATENT; PRICES TO FALL BY 60 PER CENT.

- Ahmedabad based Zydus Lifesciences launched top anti-diabetic drug molecule Sitagliptin in India under the brand names Sitaglyn and Siglyn to address Type 2 diabetes.
- Sitaglyn and Siglyn will add on to a comprehensive solution for the management of Type 2 diabetes by providing access to quality care to the patients at an affordable cost, approximately 60 pc less than the originator.
- Ahmedabad based Zydus Lifesciences on Friday launched top anti-diabetic drug molecule Sitagliptin in India under the brand names Sitaglyn and Siglyn to address Type 2 diabetes.
- Sitaglyn and Siglyn will add on to a comprehensive solution for the management of Type 2 diabetes by providing access to quality care to the patients at an affordable cost, approximately 60 pc less than the originator.
- The launch of the generic version has become possible after US pharma major Merck drug’s Sitagliptin, previously marketed under the brand Januvia, fell off patent.
- More Indian pharma companies are expected to announce generic versions now. While the original drug regime cost around Rs 450 a day treatment, the new will cost less than Rs 18 a day, iSitaglyn and Siglyn offer an oral solution to the patients providing ease of convenience and better compliance. Sitagliptin is the gold standard drug with over 62 pc market share in the global market.
- With more than 77 million active patients, India is the diabetes capital of the world after China.
- The drug will help patients achieve their treatment goals reducing the disease burden and providing better patient-care and quality of life.”
- India’s oral anti-diabetic market is worth Rs 125 billion.

TYPES OF DIABETES

- In Type 1 diabetes (previously called juvenile diabetes) the body’s immune system mistakenly targets its pancreatic tissues, interrupting insulin production and leading to high blood sugar. It is not caused due to lifestyle issues and does not go away on its own. It requires lifelong management.
- In Type 2 (the most common form of diabetes), the body’s cells are unable to use insulin properly leading to high blood sugar and diabetes. This is caused by factors including genetics and lifestyle and is easier to manage with lifestyle changes.

1.165. HEALTH ALERT AS NAIROBI FLY INVADES BIHAR’S BORDER REGION.

- The Health Department has sounded alert over reports of deadly Nairobi fly sneaking into the eastern region of Bihar from neighbouring West Bengal and Sikkim and attacking some local residents.
- According to Reports the deadly fly has invaded at least three eastern Bihar districts, such as Purnia, Kishanganj and Araria, causing panic in the border region. Health officials said the fly took seven days to reach Kishanganj from Sikkim and given their flying speed, this fly can reach Patna in the next 21 days.
- Nairobi flies, also called Kenyan flies or dragon bugs, are small, beetle-like insects that belong to two species, *Paederus eximius* and *Paederus sabaeus*. They are orange and black in colour, and thrive in areas with high rainfall, as has been witnessed in Sikkim in the past few weeks. Like most insects, the beetles are attracted by bright light.
- As per the Health Department, Nairobi flies do not bite or sting. However, if disturbed while sitting on anyone’s body, they release a potent acidic substance that causes burns.

- The toxin causing these burns is called pederin. Usually, the insects attack pests that consume crops and are beneficial for humans — but at times, they come in contact with humans directly and cause harm.

1.166. AIIMS TO DOCUMENT WORKS OF SUSHRUTA.

- The All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) has launched comprehensive research into the exact period when Sushruta, widely recognised as the “father of plastic surgery”, began conducting his medical procedures, the range of instruments he used and the expanse of reconstructive surgeries he performed.
- The idea is to establish evidence of the existence of medical and surgical knowledge in India as far back as 600 BC, when Sushruta lived.
- Dr Maneesh Singhal, head of the department of plastic, reconstructive and burns surgery at AIIMS, is leading the project.
- According to Dr Singhal, Sushruta is the father of plastic surgery. As far back as in 600 BC, he took India to the forefront of surgery. We are trying to find out all about Sushruta’s work and document it with evidence. Interestingly, we have found that the instruments Sushruta describes in his works exactly match with the metallurgy of his times. From 600 BC, Hippocrates and other physicians consumed Indian science and knowledge. It was from India that the science of surgery went all over the world. We are retracing our own steps.
- AIIMS, in collaboration with the Association of Plastic Surgeons of India, will mark the **National Plastic Surgery Day on July 15**.
- The institute, in a first, will showcase films documenting life-changing reconstructive procedures — from burns reconstruction to cancer reconstruction — which experts from across India have performed.
- The festival is named “Sushruta” and its publicity material mentions that ancient Indian surgeons performed nose jobs and skin grafts.

1.167. INDIA ACHIEVES LANDMARK OF ‘200 CRORE’ COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

- In a historic milestone, India’s cumulative COVID19 vaccination drive has surpassed the 200-Crore milestone.
- As per reports shared by the Union government, a total of 2,00,00,15,631 doses have been administered across the country. This has been achieved through 2,63,26,111 sessions.
- According to the Health Ministry, it took the country almost nine months to reach the 100-crore vaccination mark and another nine months to touch the 200- crore milestone.
- The highest single- day vaccination record of 2.5 crore doses was achieved on September 17, 2021.
- Several systematic interventions were carried out for capacity building to carry out this nationwide exercise.
- Existing supply chain for storage and transport of COVID-19 vaccines was leveraged and effective monitoring of vaccine distribution and efficient utilisation of vaccines and syringes were ensured at all times.
- The vaccination exercise was being carried out in a citizen- friendly approach through initiatives such as ‘Har Ghar Dastak’, workplace- and school-based vaccination, vaccination of persons without identity documents, and near-tohome and mobile vaccination centres.
- The Ministry said with 71% of the centres in rural areas and over 51% of the doses administered to women, the programme ensured geographical and gender equity.

1.168. FIRST-EVER ‘MADE IN INDIA’ SURGICAL ROBOTIC SYSTEM INSTALLED AT RAJIV GANDHI INSTITUTE AND RESEARCH CENTER, NEW DELHI (RGCI).

- Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Center, New Delhi (RGCI) have installed the first-ever Made-in-India Surgical Robotic System, “SSI-Mantra”, devised by the new-age Indian med-tech start-up SS Innovations.
- The ingenious SSI Mantra, "a brainchild of robotic cardiac surgeon Dr Sudhir P Srivastava, will be signifying the beginning of a new era of surgical procedures in India, making robotic surgery accessible and affordable for the people.
- After two pilot projects where Dr Sudhir Rawal and his team from RGCI successfully performed a total of 26 surgeries with SSI Mantra, thereby validating safety, feasibility and effectiveness, the robot is now ready to provide an advanced method of surgery, which will be accessible to the general public at a much lower cost.

1.169. TAKE HOME RATION: AN INITIATIVE TO CLOSE THE NUTRITION GAP.

- NITI Aayog and the World Food Program released a **report “Take Home Ration-Good Practices across the State/Union Territories.”**
- The report outlines a number of beneficial and creative techniques that the States and UTs have used to implement the Take Home Ration value chain.
- In this report, various good practices at the State/UTs level have been identified and are documented which would serve as a guidebook to policymakers and administrators in strengthening their Take-Home Ration system.”

Take Home Rations (THR) programme:

- In line with the government’s persistent efforts to ensure food and nutrition security, India has been implementing the ICDS.
- The Take Home Rations (THR) programme, which is part of the Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) under ICDS, offers fortified rations for use at home for children aged 6 to 36 months as well as pregnant and lactating women, with the goal of bridging the nutrition gap among them.
- SNP is provided in two ways: Take-Home Rations and Hot-Cooked Meals at Anganwadi Centers. THR might be given as raw ingredients or in packets that have already been cooked.

1.170. AFRICAN SWINE FEVER REPORTED IN KERALA'S WAYANAD.

- According to officials, African swine fever has been reported from two farms at Mananthavady in Kerala's Wayanad district.
- The disease was confirmed among pigs of two farms in the district after the samples were tested at the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases in Bhopal.
- According to an official from the Animal Husbandry Department that the samples were sent for testing after pigs at one of the farms died en masse. Now the test result has confirmed the infection.
- According to the official Directions have been issued to cull 300 pigs of the second farm.
- The Department said steps are being taken to prevent the disease from being spread.
- The state had earlier this month tightened bio-security measures following an alert from the Centre that African swine fever has been reported in Bihar and a few northeastern states.
- African swine fever is a highly contagious and fatal viral disease affecting domestic pigs.

1.171. LUMPY SKIN DISEASE (LSD).

- Amid the death of nearly 1000 bovines, the government on Monday sent a special team to **Gujarat and Rajasthan** to assess the situation and measures taken to control the Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD).
- The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) has also issued advisories to all states and UTs for taking the bio-security measures to contain the spread of this infectious disease.

- Lumpy skin is a viral disease spread by mosquitoes, flies, lice, and wasps by direct contact among the cattle, and through contaminated food and water.
- The main symptoms are fever in animals, discharge from the eyes and nose, salivation from the mouth, soft blisters like nodules all over the body, reduced milk production, and difficulty in eating, which sometimes lead to the animal's death.
- The official said that directions were issued to ICAR-NIHSAD, Bhopal and ICAR-NIVEDI Bangalore to carry out the epidemiological investigation in the affected states.
- The ring vaccination strategy was communicated to be carried out in and around the affected area with available Goat pox vaccine (Uttarakashi strain) in cattle and buffalo.



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STATE NEWS

1.172. KARNATAKA GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED 'KASHI YATRA' SCHEME.

- Karnataka government has launched the 'Kashi Yatra' scheme. The Kashi Yatra project, which offers a cash assistance of Rs 5,000 to each of the 30,000 pilgrims willing to conduct a pilgrimage to the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- For this scheme, the government will be using funds of up to Rs 7 crores from the accounts head of 'Assistance to Manasa Sarovara Pilgrims' which was announced in the chief minister's budget speech for the financial year.
- According to Shashikala Jolle, the Minister for Religious Endowment, Hajj and Wakf, said, any pilgrim taking up the government-sponsored 'Kashi Yatra' would get the benefit only once in a life time.

1.173. ANTHRAX ALERT IN KERALA'S THRISSUR.

- The Kerala government sounded an alert in Thrissur district after Anthrax, an infectious disease which affects domestic as well as wild animals, was reported in wild boars.
- According to the Thrissur administration, the presence of the bacteria was found in carcasses of wild boars in hilly regions of Athirappilly village.
- Anthrax is caused by a spore-forming bacterium. It mainly affects animals. Humans can be infected through contact with an animal or by inhaling spores.
- Symptoms depend on the route of infection. They can range from a skin ulcer to difficulty breathing. Antibiotics cure most infections. Inhaled anthrax is harder to treat and can be fatal.

1.174. HARYANA TO PROMOTE DRAGON FRUIT CULTIVATION.

- Haryana is promoting dragon fruit cultivation by giving Rs 1,20,000 per acre grant for dragon fruit orchards.
- According to additional chief secretary, agriculture and farmers' welfare department, a special grant scheme has been implemented by the government to encourage the cultivation of dragon fruit. Dragon fruit is in great demand in the market due to which farmers can make good profits by cultivating this fruit.
- There is a provision of a grant of Rs. 1,20,000 per acre for the dragon fruit orchard. In which Rs. 50,000 is for planting saplings and Rs.70,000 per acre for trawling system. For planting saplings, a grant of Rs. 50,000 will be given in three instalments of Rs. 30,000 in the first year, Rs. 10,000 in the second year, and Rs. 10,000 in the third year.
- The farmers can get good profits by planting more orchards of different kinds of fruit. While establishing orchards saves water, fruit orchards help in increasing the income of the farmers.
- Under this scheme, a farmer can avail of the facility of the grant of up to a maximum of 10 acres. To get the grant, it is mandatory for the farmers to register on the '**Meri Fasal-Mera Byora**' portal.
- The grant will be given on a 'first come-first serve' basis. Farmers can take advantage of the scheme by applying on the website of the horticulture department.

1.175. KARNATAKA INVITED THE KOREAN DELEGATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE KARNATAKA GLOBAL INVESTORS MEET AND THE BENGALURU TECH SUMMIT TO BE HELD IN NOVEMBER.

- The Chief Minister of Karnataka had invited the Korean delegation to participate in the Bengaluru Tech Summit and Karnataka Global Investors Meet that are slated to be held in November.
- According to Ambassador to India Chang Jae-bok, Korea is keen to further strengthen its economic relations with Karnataka.
- Many startups are eager to invest in Karnataka. Already over 40 Korean companies have a presence here.

- The Korean Consular office has organised a programme– Korea on the move– in Bengaluru, which is drawing a huge response from the people.”
- According to Chief Minister of Karnataka, strengthening of relations between the Republic of Korea, which is a global powerhouse in electronics and automobiles sector, and Karnataka which is a frontline state in technology, would give a boost to the bilateral economy.
- India and Karnataka state are emerging as major economies with skilled human resources. India is a hot favourite as an investment destination.
- Karnataka is at the forefront among the states attracting about 38 per cent of the total FDI flowing into the country,
- Karnataka is the home to the highest number of international R&D centres in the world, it is the global hub of technology-based industries.

1.176. UP BECOMES THE FIRST STATE IN THE COUNTRY TO HAVE 13 EXPRESSWAYS.

- Uttar Pradesh has become the first state in the country to have 13 expressways. Of these 13 expressways having a total length of 3,200 kilometers, work is going on, on seven while six expressways are operational.
- The foundation stone of the 594 km long Ganga Expressway has been laid. This expressway will not only reduce the distance between East and West but will also serve to connect people.
- The Bundelkhand Expressway will connect people with Delhi and other states as well. This will benefit the people of Chitrakoot, Banda, Mahoba, Hamirpur, Jalaun, Auraiya and Etawah districts. People will get the benefit of connecting Bundelkhand with Delhi directly and Bundelkhand will be free from the stain of backwardness.
- Apart from this, Lucknow-Kanpur Expressway, Bundelkhand Expressway, Gorakhpur Link Expressway, Ghazipur-Ballia-Manjhighat Expressway and Delhi-Dehradun Expressway are being constructed
- These corridors will give impetus to rapid, balanced and inclusive growth as well as immense employment potential. Lands have been marked for this. Airstrips are also being built on the expressways for landing and take-off of Air Force aircraft in case of emergency.

Expressway network in Uttar Pradesh

1. Yamuna Expressway -- 165 km
2. Noida-Greater Noida Expressway -- 25 km
3. Agra-Lucknow Expressway -- 302 km
4. Delhi-Meerut Expressway -- 96 km
5. Purvanchal Expressway -- 341 km
6. Bundelkhand Expressway -- 296 km

Total operational expressways – 1,225 km

Expressways under construction

1. Gorakhpur Link Expressway -- 91 km
2. Ganga-Expressway-- 594 km
3. Lucknow-Kanpur Expressway -- 63 km
4. Ghaziabad-Kanpur Expressway -- 380 km
5. Gorakhpur-Siliguri Expressway -- 519 km
6. Delhi-Saharanpur-Dehradun Expressway -- 210 km
7. Ghazipur-Ballia-Manjhighat Expressway -- 117 km

Expressways under construction – 1,974 km

1.177. TEXTILE PARK NEAR MATTEWARA FOREST SCRAPPED IN PUNJAB.

- The proposal to set up the Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel Park, under the PM-MITRA scheme, near the Mattewara forest and on the river Sutlej floodplains, was red-flagged by locals, environmentalists, and Opposition parties on the ground that it will disturb the biodiversity of the protected forest and even lead to chemical discharge from factories into the river.
- Apart from cutting trees this project would have also led to massive pollution in the river water thereby jeopardising human life along with flora and fauna in the region.

1.178. DRONE-ENABLED SERVICES IN HIMACHAL SOON

- The Himachal Government and Skye Air signed an agreement to enable drone delivery within the state, which faces severe connectivity issues due to difficult terrain.
- The agreement was formalised in the presence of Mukesh Repaswal, Managing Director, HPSEDC, and Anil Semwal, General Manager, HP State Electronics Development Corporation (HPSEDC), and Shrikant Sarda, co-founder and director (Govt Business), Skye Air Mobility.
- The drone technology-based logistics firm has entered into an agreement with the HPSEDC to lend its support by offering payload as service throughout the state.
- The empanelment of various drone service providers and companies is being carried out as part of the Project GARUD. Skye Air has been empaneled with the HPSEDC for the provision of drones as a service.
- Skye Air will be using its most reliable UAV, Skye Ship One, to facilitate real-time deliveries. It has already undertaken two successful drone delivery projects in Himachal in the past.
- It delivered vaccines and medicines over a distance of 12 km from Dharamsala to Tanda Medical College using its small category drone named Skye Ship One.
- In February this year, the technology was used in Chamba district to connect six primary health centres and community health centres via multiple flights between points covering an aerial distance of 170 km throughout the trial.

1.179. TRIPURA GOVERNMENT WILL RESTART THE 'SCHEMES TO BRING DROPOUTS BACK TO SCHOOLS.

- The Tripura government will restart the 'Vidyalaya Chalo Abhiyan' after 8,850 school students were found to have dropped out from schools across Tripura during the covid-19 pandemic.
- The government has also announced a unique scheme called 'Earn with Learn'

Under the Earn with Learn scheme:

- The college students will be given a remuneration for identifying and convincing students to re-join schools. They will get Rs 500 for each admission," the teachers who will get involved in the project will be given Rs 200 for each admission.
- The government has decided to give away free school bags to more than 1.51 lakh students studying in pre-primary to Class III. It has been estimated to involve funding of over Rs 7.58 crore.
- Tripura has over 4,000 government schools along with those that are aided by the state.
- At present, the government is giving free books and school uniforms for girl, scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and below poverty line students of Classes I to VIII.

1.180. PM ADDRESSES BIHAR ASSEMBLY'S CENTENARY CELEBRATION.

- Speaking on the history of Bihar Vidhan Sabha, PM said, "The Bihar Vidhan Sabha has a history of its own and here in the Vidhan Sabha Bhawan, big and bold decisions have been taken. Before independence, Governor Satyendra Prasanna Sinha had appealed to this Assembly to encourage indigenous industries, to adopt Swadeshi Charkha."

- PM Modi also laid the foundation stone for the museum showcasing 100 years of the House and also inaugurated the Centenary Memorial Garden with 100 varieties of medicinal plants. Apart from these, PM Modi also unveiled “Shatabdi Stambh (centenary column)” marking 100 years of the House.
- After Bihar and Orissa provinces gained full statehood in 1920, the Legislative Assembly convened for the first time on February 7 at the freshly built building.
- The 17th Vidhan Sabha's current session is in progress. Lord Satyendra Prasad Sinha, the governor, attended the first meeting on February 7, 1921.
- The Bihar-Orissa Legislative Council was the name of this structure during the British era.
- Bihar and Orissa were given full state status following the passage of the Government of India Act, 1919. The first governor of Bihar was Satyendra Prasad Sinha.
- President Ram Nath Kovind launched the celebrations for the Bihar Legislative Assembly building's 100th anniversary on October 21, 2021. Prior to that, the President lay the foundation for the Assembly Complex's Centenary Memorial Stambh.

1.181. HAR GHAR TIRANGA' CAMPAIGN TO BE CELEBRATED IN HARYANA FROM AUG 13 TO 15.

- Haryana is geared up to become the first State in the country to hoist tricolour at every house, government, private, industrial and educational buildings.
- For three consecutive days, every corner of the state of Haryana will be decorated with a tricolour to proudly remember the glorious history of India, under the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign being celebrated countrywide from August 13 to August 15, 2022.
- The Department of Information Public Relations and Languages has planned a detailed programme of creating awareness by utilizing websites and social media handles of the State Government.
- A plan has been made under which all State Government websites would carry banners linking to the Amrit Mahotsava website – Har Ghar Trianga corner.

1.182. KERALA BECOMES FIRST STATE TO HAVE OWN INTERNET SERVICE.

- Kerala is now the first and only state in the country to have its own internet service, according to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who made the announcement. The announcement followed the Department of Telecommunications' granting of an Internet Service Provider (ISP) licence to the IT infrastructure project of the Kerala Fiber Optic Network Ltd (K-Fon), which aims to provide everyone in the state access to the internet.
- The principle behind the establishment of K-Fon is “non -discriminatory” treatment, which means that no service provider or business segment receives preferential treatment, as recommended by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).
- **K-Fon or Kerala Fiber Optic Network Ltd** is a state government initiative that aims to eliminate the digital gap. As per the government, the infrastructure created by this project is expected to complement the state's current telecom ecosystem.

Objectives of K-Fon

- Create a core network infrastructure (information highway) with non-discriminatory access to all service providers so that they can augment their connectivity gap.
- Provide a reliable, secure and scalable intranet connecting all government offices, educational institutions, hospitals, etc.
- Partner with Multiple System Operators, Telecommunication Service Providers, and Internet Service Providers for providing free internet to economically backward households.

1.183. HARYANA TO SET UP 'FOOTWEAR-LEATHER' CLUSTER ON 500 ACRES IN ROHTAK.

- The Haryana government will set up a 'Footwear-Leather' cluster on about 500 acres of land in Rohtak.

- According to the government, training will also be given to the students of ITI institutes around Rohtak city by connecting them with the footwear industry so that the industrialists of leather industry can get skilled youth at the local level and youth can get employment near their homes.
- According to government, as soon as about two dozen industries are commissioned, a Common Service Centre will be made in a year so that industrialists can get ease in their work.
- A centre of excellence related to leather will also be set up to help the industrialists of the leather industry in the state.
- There is also a plan to build a labour-hostel near the 'Footwear-Leather' cluster so that the labourers working there do not face any problem in commuting to the industry.
- In this field, where the state has got the third position at the national level, Haryana has been ranked in the top achievers' category in the fifth edition of 'State Ease of Doing Business' released by the Union ministry of commerce and industry.
- In addition, the state has been ranked first in the Export Readiness Index (Land Closed Category)-2021 and second in the 'Logistics Across Different Status Survey'-2021.

1.184. RAJASTHAN GETS THE COUNTRY'S FIRST AI-POWERED TOOL FOR FAST DISPOSAL OF CASES AT LOK ADALAT.

- National Legal Services Authority Chairman Uday Umesh Lalit launched the country's first AI-powered digital Lok Adalat during the 18th All India Legal Services Authorities' meet.
- The digital Lok Adalat by Rajasthan State Legal Services Authority (RLSA) was designed and developed by its technology partner Jupitice Justice Technologies.
- The two-day event was inaugurated by N V Ramana, the Chief Justice of India, in the presence of Union Minister of Law & Justice Kiren Rijiju and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.
- Recently, a district court in Bihar gave a verdict in a land dispute case after 108 years, making it one of the oldest pending cases in the country.
- A NITI Aayog report also suggested it would take approximately 324 years to dispose all cases pending in India.
- According to the reports, that 75-97 per cent of legal problems never reach the courts -- that means about 5 million to 40 million legal tangles arising in a month never reach the Court.
- This Technology will enable RLSA to provide online services to all the stakeholders ensuring efficiency, convenience, and transparency.
- The Digital Lok Adalat will be used to dispose of pending disputes or disputes that are at the pre-litigation stage.

How this platform helps?

- The platform helps one perform end-to-end dispute resolution with easy drafting and filing of applications, one-click generation of e-notices, smart templates to draft settlement agreements, digital hearings powered by tailor-made video conferencing tools, etc.
- Additionally, it offers an AI-powered voice-based interactive chatbot and advanced data analytics tools to help gain deeper insights into the functioning of Lok Adalat through custom reports and BI Dashboards for data-driven decision making.

1.185. ANDHRA PRADESH LAUNCHES FIRST-EVER BLACKBUCK SURVEY ON GODAVARI ISLANDS.

- The Andhra Pradesh State Wildlife Department has kick-started the first-ever survey of blackbucks along a stretch of islands in the Godavari between Dowleswaram and Yanam with the goal of drawing up a conservation plan to protect the endangered species.
- The survey was mooted in the wake of scores of blackbucks getting stranded on the islands that have been hit by the Godavari floods.
- The islands surrounded by the branches of the Godavari, such as the Gowthami, Vasista, Vainteya and Vridha Gowthami, in Konaseema and East Godavari districts are a major habitat for blackbucks, which roam across the region close to human habitations. There have been instances of blackbucks getting poached downstream of Dowleswaram.

- Of the many islands that are home to the animal, Bobbarlanka, located downstream Dowleswaram barrage, is home to a huge number of blackbucks, where they can be sighted all through the year.
- In the islands of the Godavari, co-existence of local communities with the blackbuck has been ensuring the safety of the species.
- Hunting of the blackbuck attracts **penal action** under **Schedule-1 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.**

1.186. BURHANPUR, MADHYA PRADESH BECOMES THE FIRST HAR GHAR JAL CERTIFIED DISTRICT IN THE COUNTRY.

- The Jal Shakti Ministry announced that Burhanpur has become the country's first 'Har Ghar Jal' certified district, with all the 254 villages in the district having access to safe drinking water.
- Only 37 percent of households in the district had access to safe drinking water in August 2019 and in less than three years, all the houses are able to use the facility.
- In Madhya Pradesh, 42.71 percent of the households have been provided with a tap water supply as of July 22.
- Burhanpur as of August 15, 2019 had tap connections in just 37,241 houses. However, as of July 22, all the houses in the district - 1,01,905 have access to tap water in 254 villages, including in 43,701 tribal households.

1.187. KALI BEIN RIVER.

- Recently, Punjab Chief Minister has been admitted to hospital, days after he had drunk a glass of water directly from River Kali Bein.

What is the Kali Bein?

- The 165-km rivulet starts from Hoshiarpur, runs across four districts and meets the confluence of the rivers Beas and Sutlej in Kapurthala.
- Along its banks are around 80 villages and half a dozen small and big towns.
- Waste water from there as well as industrial waste used to flow into the rivulet via a drain, turning its waters black, hence the name Kali Bein (black rivulet).
- Dense grass and weeds grew on the water until a cleaning project started.

Why did Bhagwant Mann drink water from it?

- The occasion was the 22nd anniversary of the cleaning project, which had started on July 16, 2000.

Significance of the Kali Bein

- The Kali Bein is of great significance to Sikh religion and history, because the first Guru, Nanak Dev, is said to have got enlightenment here.
- When Guru Nanak Dev was staying at Sultanpur Lodhi with his sister Bebe Nanki, he would bathe in the Kali Bein.
- He is said to have disappeared into the waters one day, before emerging on the third day.
- The first thing he recited was the "Mool Mantra" of the Sikh religion.

How did the cleaning project start?

- It was started by environmentalist Baba Balbir Singh Sechewal (now AAP Rajya Sabha MP), a former Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB) member, with a handful of followers, without government help.
- They removed weeds, treated the water and spread awareness among residents.
- Six years of hard work paid off when then President A P J Abdul Kalam visited the site in 2006 and praised them for their effort.

- The then Congress government in Punjab then announced that it would take up the project to stop the discharge of untreated water into the rivulet.
- The government identified around 73 villages in three districts releasing sewer water into the Kali Bein.

1.188. GURUGRAM POLICE, HARYANA LAUNCHES E-BEAT SYSTEM TO PREVENT CRIME.

- **Haryana** Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar launched the 'Smart E-Beat' system at the office of the Commissioner of Police, Gurugram and flagged off 119 motorcycle riders of the police connected with this system.
- With this initiative, the police claimed to improve patrolling, detecting crime, monitoring the police personnel on the beat, improving police-public relations and finding out their real-time location.
- According to the police, this is a **GIS-based system**, with the introduction of this system police riders monitoring will be done more effectively.
- This system will be integrated with Emergency Response Sport System in future so that apart from ERV, this rider can also reach for help on calls received on phone number-112.
- This system will work as a secure, digital, smart and real time patrolling solution.

1.189. HARYANA & ISRAEL WILL COOPERATE IN WATER CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PROJECTS: KHATTAR.

- Haryana and Israel to work on various water conservation and management projects.
- CM Addressed a meeting with a delegation of Israel regarding water conservation and management in Chandigarh.
- Haryana and Israel to work together to seek out the issue of depleting water table and water scarcity.
- Water level is depleting in some areas of the state and the Haryana government is constantly working to improve the water table.
- For this, the Haryana government has constituted the Haryana Water Resources (Conservation, Regulation and Management) Authority, under which the state government is working to renovate 18,000 ponds of the state.
- Besides cleaning these ponds, the ponds are also being desilted so that maximum recharging of water can be done. Along with this, Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) are being set up across the state.
- Emphasis is being given to use the water of these STPs for agriculture, construction works and gardening purposes. Along with this, drip irrigation is being promoted in Agriculture. The government is taking every possible step to conserve water in the state.
- Israel is already cooperating with Haryana in the field of Agriculture and Horticulture.
- Four Centres of Excellence for Indo-Israel Cooperation are running in Haryana and the fifth centre is being built in Bhiwani. Similarly, some private companies of India are working in Israel in drip irrigation.

1.190. 'HARYANA ATMANIBHAR TEXTILE POLICY 2022' TO BE IMPLEMENTED SOON.

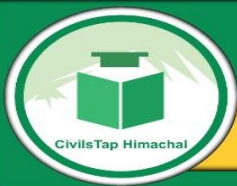
- 'Haryana Atmanibhar Textile Policy 2022' will soon be implemented in the state to promote the textile industry through micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).
- This policy, prepared for the time period till the year 2025, is expected to invest about Rs 4,000 crore and provide employment to 20,000 youth.
- The various goals of 'Haryana Atmanibhar Textile Policy 2022', are entrepreneurship expansion, investment, employment generation, grants, textile parks.
- Under this policy, technical textiles will be specially encouraged and expanded.
- Promotion of synthetic fiber and regenerated fiber units has also been included in this policy.
- Recently, Haryana has been awarded for its remarkable work done in the field of MSME.

1.191. PM MODI LAUNCHES INDIA'S FIRST INTERNATIONAL BULLION EXCHANGE IN GANDHINAGAR, GUJARAT.

- Prime Minister recently launched India's first International Bullion Exchange (IIBE) at Gujarat International Finance Tech (GIFT) City in Gandhinagar.
- Prime Minister also launched NSE IFSC-SGX Connect and laid the foundation stone of the headquarters of the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) at GIFT City. GIFT city has been established as an integrated finance and technology services hub for India and the world.
- It will help India in entering the league of countries like USA UK and Singapore which are giving direction to global finance.
- With the inauguration of IIBE, India can influence the gold pricing and can play an important role in setting the gold prices.
- The IFSCA headquarters will provide abundant opportunities for making India an economic superpower.

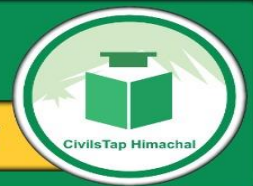
Various new initiatives

- The commencement of financial operations in India by three leading global banks such as Deutsche Bank, JP Morgan Chase Bank, and MUFG Bank.
- Indian Regional Office of the New Development Bank will also be set up at GIFT City
- IFSCA also signed memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with regulatory authorities of Singapore, Luxembourg, Qatar, and Sweden.



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SPORTS

1.192. ATHLETE PARUL CHAUDHARY SETS NEW NATIONAL RECORD IN WOMEN'S 3000 M EVENT IN LOS ANGELES.

- Athlete Parul Chaudhary has set a new national record in the women's 3000 metres event at the Sunset Tour in Los Angeles, surpassing the six-year-old record of Suriya Loganathan.
- The 27-year-old Chaudhary covered the distance in 8:57.19 to finish third.
- She clocked 8:57.19 in the women's 3000 m event, surpassing the national record set by Loganathan, who had clocked 9:04.5.
- Chaudhary's performance comes as a big boost ahead of World Championships, which will be held in Oregon from July 15 to July 24, where she will be competing in the 3000 m steeplechase event.

1.193. WIMBLEDON: TUNISIA'S ONS JABEUR BECOMES FIRST ARAB WOMAN TO ENTER A GRAND SLAM SINGLES SEMIS.

- Tunisia's world No.2 tennis player Ons Jabeur rallied from a set down to defeat Marie Bouzkova of the Czech Republic 3-6, 6-1, 6-1 at Wimbledon to become the first Arab or North African woman to reach a Grand Slam singles semifinal.
- Across both men's and women's tennis, Arabs and North Africans were previously winless in major quarterfinals in the Open Era, including two losses by Jabeur herself; she lost to eventual champion Sofia Kenin at the 2020 Australian Open, and Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka at Wimbledon 12 months ago.

1.194. ELORDA CUP: BOXERS ALFIYA PATHAN AND GITIKA CLINCH GOLD MEDALS.

- Reigning youth world champions Alfiya Pathan and Gitika produced sensational performances to win gold medals at the inaugural edition of the Elorda Boxing Cup in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.
- Kalaivani Srinivasan and Jamuna Boro signed off with silver.
- With the addition of two gold, two silver and 10 bronze, India concluded its campaign with an overall tally of 14 medals.
- Alfiya got a unanimous 5-0 verdict over Lazzat Kungeibayeva, the 2016 world champion, in the women's 81kg category final.
- Gitika, clinched a 4-1 victory over compatriot Kalaivani in 48kg category final.

1.195. WIMBLEDON 2022.

- Novak Djokovic beats Nick Kyrgios for 7th Wimbledon title.
- Elena Rybakina became the **first player from Kazakhstan** to win a Grand Slam title.
- Rybakina was born in Russia and still has a home in Moscow. The 23-year-old, who became the first player from Kazakhstan to win a Grand Slam title, emigrated to her neighbouring country to take advantage of top tennis facilities, a paid stipend, and many other things offered to her by the Kazakhstan tennis federation.

1.196. ARJUN BABUTA HITS MARK, WINS SHOOTING GOLD FOR INDIA

- Arjun Babuta came up with a stunning performance to register a scintillating victory against Tokyo Olympics silver medallist Lucas Kozeniesky of America to win the men's 10m Air Rifle event in the ongoing ISSF World Cup.
- According to Arjun Babuta, Khelo India has helped a lot in shaping and preparing for big events and taught me how to handle pressure. Khelo Games acts as a launchpad for Indian athletes and does help a lot in the overall development.
- The 23-year-old shooter is from Punjab.

1.197. PRAGGNANANDHAA WINS PARACIN OPEN CHESS TITLE.

- R. Praggnanandhaa, won the the Open A section of the 15th International Chess Open Paracin in the Serbian town of Paracin.
- The 16-year-old Praggnanandhaa beats Alexandr Predke, a Russian player competing under the flag of FIDE, the sport's world governing body, in the Open A section of the event.
- Praggnanandhaa, who recently defeated world champion Magnus Carlsen in the Meltwater Champions Tour rapid chess tournament, remained unbeaten in the nine-round Swiss League tournament, winning seven games and drawing two.
- Praggnanandhaa, is from Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

1.198. DURAND CUP FROM AUGUST 16.

- The Durand Cup football tournament will be embracing a multi-city format and a bigger selection of teams in its 131st edition, which will be kicking off from August 16 with the most popular contest of Indian football – the Kolkata derby.
- The tournament, jointly organised by Indian Army and Government of West Bengal, started a month-long promotion campaign with a colourful 'Trophy Tour' initiative.
- As the participation list stands now, there will be 20 teams playing this time with all the 11 teams from the Indian Super League joining the contest.
- The three trophies presented to the winners of the tournament — the original Durand Cup, the President's Cup and the Shimla Trophy — will travel from Kolkata to Guwahati on July 21 before moving to Imphal on July 24.

1.199. INDIAN MEN'S TEAM BAGS SILVER MEDAL AT ISSF WORLD CUP.

- The Indian men's 25m rapid fire pistol team comprising Anish Bhanwala, Vijayveer Sidhu and Sameer won the silver medal on the last day of the ISSF World Cup Changwon 2022 in South Korea.
- The medal helped India retain the top spot on the medals table with five gold, six silver and four bronze.
- South Korea managed just one bronze on the final day and finished with four golds, five silver and three bronze medals.
- This is the second time this year that the Indian shooters had topped the ISSF World Cup medals table. India finished with four gold medals at the ISSF World Cup in Cairo.

1.200. SADIO MANÉ NAMED AFRICAN PLAYER OF THE YEAR .

- Sadio Mané was named African Player of the Year after a season in which he kicked the winning penalty for Senegal as they claimed their first Africa Cup of Nations title and repeated the feat when they secured World Cup qualification.
- Mané finished ahead of Egyptian forward Mohamed Salah, and fellow Senegalese Edouard Mendy in the voting for the award given by the Confederation of African Football.
- It was the second time the 30-year-old Mané, who last month joined German champions Bayern Munich, has won the award after receiving it in 2019.
- The Confederation of African Football did not give the award in 2020 and 2021. It now recognises a player's accomplishments over a season rather than during a calendar year.

1.201. WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS: NEERAJ CHOPRA CLINCHES INDIA'S FIRST-EVER SILVER MEDAL WITH HISTORIC THROW OF 88.13M.

- Tokyo Olympics javelin throw champion Neeraj Chopra ended India's 19-year-long wait for a medal at the World Athletics Championships after he clinched the silver medal at the 2022 meet with historic throw of 88.13m.

- This was India's second medal at the World Championships and the first podium finish since Anju Bobby George won a bronze medal in long jump at Paris in 2003.
- It was only the fifth time that the javelin throw final was won with a 90m-plus throw in the 18 editions of the World Championships.

1.202. SAVITA KANSWAL BECOMES FIRST WOMAN IN INDIA TO SUCCESSFULLY CLIMB MT EVEREST AND MT MAKALU IN JUST 16 DAYS.

- Savita Kanswal, a 26-year-old girl from Lonthru village in Uttarakhand's Uttarkashi, has become the first woman in India who has successfully climbed Mt. Everest and Mt. Makalu in just 16 days.
- Her passion started in Class 11 when she got a chance for a 10-day Adventure Foundation Course. It was the course where her love for mountains began.
- She has done her mountaineering course from the NIM (Nehru Mountaineering Institute), Uttarkashi.
- She climbed Mt. Everest (8848 m) on May 12, 2022. On the 16th day, she climbed Mt. Makalu (8485 m) on May 28, 2022.
- Even she climbed Mt. Lhotse becoming the first woman from Uttarakhand and second from India to climb successfully.

1.203. FOUR TIMES WORLD CHAMPION SEBASTIAN VETTEL ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT FROM FORMULA ONE.

- The world champion Sebastian Vettel announced his retirement from Formula One at the end of the season.
- **The German racer** announced his retirement through a video message on the social media platform, Instagram.
- The 35-year-old said, his goals had changed and he wanted to focus more on family and interests outside the sport.
- Sebastian will end his final season with Aston Martin after winning a total of 53 Grand Prix and 122 podium finishes. Vettel made his debut in 2007.
- His first title win came in 2010 which also made him the youngest title winner. He won four titles for Red Bull in between 2010 to 2013. Vettel who is a legend of the sport is third on the list of all-time Grand Prix winners with 53 victories to his name. Only Lewis Hamilton and Michael Schumacher have more titles than him.
- Sebastian made the announcement ahead of this weekend's Hungarian Grand Prix, the 13th round of the season and the last race before the August break.

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AWARDS

1.204. JAPAN AWARDS SHINZO ABE COUNTRY'S HIGHEST ORDER POSTHUMOUSLY.

- The Japanese government has decided to award with the country's highest order posthumously.
- Abe will receive the Supreme Order of the Chrysanthemum.
- The longest-serving PM of Japan will be the fourth former prime minister to receive the decoration under the postwar Constitution.

1.205. JAPAN'S 'ORDER OF THE RISING SUN' AWARD CONFERRED TO NARAYANAN KUMAR.

- Consul-General of Japan in Chennai Taka Masayuki conferred Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star to Vice Chairman of the Sanmar Group Narayanan Kumar in recognition of his contribution to the strengthening economic relations between Japan and India.
- Mr. Kumar is among the Spring 2022 Imperial Decorations recipients.
- He has been instrumental in promoting friendship, goodwill and mutual understanding between Japan and India by organising economic delegations to Japan as well as a number of events on Japanese economy and culture.
- He is also the Chairman of the Indo-Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and former President of the Confederation of Indian Industry.

1.206. IAS ASHISH CHAUHAN WINS THE NEWS MAKER ACHIEVER'S AWARD 2022.

- This year, 14th News Maker Achiever's Award took place in Maharashtra, where several personalities were felicitated for their commendable social work.
- District Magistrate of Pithoragarh, Dr Ashish Chauhan, was recognised with the 'Best IAS Officer' award for his enormous and splendid social work during the Covid-19 pandemic. Ashish Chauhan has a PhD in Medieval History and is an IAS officer from the 2012 batch. For many years now, Ashish Chauhan has been doing incredible work for farmers, communities, disaster management, healthcare, tourism, etc., in Uttarakhand.
- With a lot of patience, planning, and intelligence IAS Ashish Chauhan brought the rapidly increasing cases of Covid-19 under control and began masking, sample collection, testing, and sanitisation drives. Tips, awareness and guidelines were circulated to the public to promote cleanliness, and public announcements were made in the local language, Garhwali.
- To empower farmers and backward communities and drive people out of poverty, DM Ashish Chauhan launched the self-employment campaign. Officers and employees of the Horticulture Department, Agriculture Department, and Integrated Livelihood Cooperation Project prepared organic jam, juices, etc., from a local fruit Bedu. Bedu, also called Pahadi Anjeer (hill fig), has many nutrients such as vitamin C, potassium, iron, etc., and may also be beneficial for preventing skin problems. All these organic products are marketed through Hilans – providing a range of pure and organic farm-produced products in Uttarakhand.
- In 2018, DM Ashish Chauhan and the District Panchayat President launched Harshil Apple Festival. Harshil is a hidden serene place in Uttarakhand that produces exceptional apples. To give more exposure to Harshil apples, Ashish decided to begin a two-day apple festival where buyers, businessmen, and investors showed up in impressive numbers. Previously, orders of apples went out for Rs.50/kg but, with the right marketing and exposure, 10kg apples are sold for approx. Rs 1,200-1,500/-. DM Ashish Chauhan reveals the Harshil Apple Festival has helped lots of people combat poverty and opt for better a standard of living.

- IAS Ashish Chauhan is also a social worker and activist who seizes all the right opportunities to carry out social work. His vision and altruistic approach have helped him achieve so much at a young age. During all his many tenures, Ashish discharged his duties and responsibilities immaculately.

1.207. 68TH NATIONAL FILM AWARDS.

- The winners of the 68th National Film Awards were announced in New Delhi.
- Established in 1954, the prestigious awards are administered by the Government of India's Directorate of Film Festivals.
- Because of Covid-19 related delays, this year's ceremony honoured films from 2020, across several categories.

Winners: Feature Films

- Best Feature Film: Soorarai Pottru
- Best Director: Sachy, Ayyappanum Koshiyum
- Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment: Tanhaji
- Best Actor: Suriya for Soorarai Pottru and Ajay Devgn for Tanhaji
- Best Actress: Aparna Balamurali, Soorarai Pottru
- Best Supporting Actor: Biju Menon, Ayyappanum Koshiyam
- Best Supporting Actress: Lakshmi Priya Chandramouli, Sivaranjaniyum Innam Sila Pengallum
- Best Screenplay: Soorarai Pottru, Shalini Usha Nair and Sudha Kongara
- Best Screenplay (Dialogue Writer): Madonne Ashwin, Mandela
- Best Music Direction (Songs): Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo, Thaman S
- Best Music Direction (Background Music): Soorarai Pottru, GV Prakash
- Best Male Playback Singer: Rahul Deshpande for Mi Vasant
- Best Female Playback Singer: Nanchamma, Ayyappanum Koshiyam
- Best Lyrics: Saina, Manoj Muntashir
- Best Audiography (Location Sound Recordist): Jobin Jayan, Dollu
- Best Audiography (Sound Designer): Anmol Bhave, Mi Vasant
- Best Audiography (Re-recordist of the final mixed track): Vishnu Govind and Sree Sankar for Malik
- Best Choreography: Sandhya Raju, Natyam
- Best Cinematography: Avijatrik, Supratim Bhol
- Best Costume Design: Nachiket Barve and Mahesh Sherla, Tanhaji
- Best Production Design: Anees Nadodi, Kappela
- Best Editing: Sreekar Prasad, Sivaranjaniyum Innum Sila Pengalum
- Best Make-up: TV Rambabu, Natyam
- Best Stunt Choreography: Rajasekhar, Mafia Sasi and Supreme Sunder, Ayyappanum Koshiyum
- Special Mention: Aimee Baruah for Semkhor, Vaanku, June, Kishore Kadam for Avwanchhit & Godakaath, and Varun Buddhadev for Toolsidas Junior
- Best Hindi Film: Toolsidas Junior
- Best Kannada Film: Dollu
- Best Malayalam Film: Thinkalazhcha Nishchayam
- Best Tamil Film: Sivaranjaniyum Innum Sila Pengalum
- Best Telugu Film: Colour Photo
- Best Haryanvi Film: Dada Lakhmi
- Best Dimasa Film: Samkhor
- Best Tulu Film: Jeetige
- Best Marathi Film: Goshta Eka Paithanichi

- Best Bengali Film: Avijatrik
- Best Assamese Film: The Bridge
- Best Child Artist: Anish Mangesh Gosavi for Tak-Tak
- Best Children's Film: Sumi
- Best Film on Environment Conservation/Preservation: Talendanda
- Best Film on Social Issue: Funeral
- Indira Gandhi Award for Best Debut Film of a Director: Mandela

1.208. SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR HONOURED WITH SURINAME'S HIGHEST CIVILIAN HONOUR.

- Global spiritual master and founder of The Art of Living, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has been conferred with Suriname's highest civilian honour, the '**Grand Cordon – honorary order of the yellow star** (Ere-Orde van de Gele Ster) by The President of Suriname, Mr Chandrikapersad Santokhi for his humanitarian work.
- He has become the **first Asian** to receive the award.
- The award is usually given to the heads of state, this is the first time it has been awarded to a spiritual leader.

1.209. AMARTYA SEN TURNS DOWN WEST BENGAL GOVERNMENT AWARD.

- Nobel laureate Amartya Sen will not be accepting the Banga Bibhushan award, the highest civilian honour conferred by the West Bengal government,
- The Banga Bibhushan was introduced by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in 2011.
- It is the higher one among the Banga Samman honours, the other being the Banga Bhushan.
- While Amartya Sen have declined the award, another Nobel laureate from the state, Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee — who shared the 2019 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences with Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer — is said to have accepted the honour.
- Banerjee is among 16 Banga Bibhushan and 20 Banga Bhushan recipients this year.



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HIMACHAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

1.210. HIMACHAL PRADESH AMONG 7 STATES THAT ARE TOP ACHIEVERS IN EASE-OF-DOING-BUSINESS RANKING OF STATES, UTs.

- Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Telangana are among the seven states categorised as top achievers in the ranking of states and Union Territories based on the implementation of the business reform action plan 2020.
- Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh are the other states categorised as achievers in the ranking.
- The Aspires category includes seven states, including Assam, Kerala and Goa. In the category of emerging business ecosystems, there are 11 states and UTs, including Delhi, Puducherry and Tripura.

1.211. MANDI FEATURES IN 'UTTAM' CATEGORY ON PERFORMANCE INDEX BY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

- The performances of various districts in Himachal has marginally improved and Mandi figured in the 'Uttam' category in the performance grading index for districts released by the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education.
- The index has been released for 2018-19 and 2019-20 and Mandi district, which improved its score from 357 out of 600 in 2018-19 to 388 in 2019-20, figures in the 'Uttam' category (61-70 per cent).
- Meanwhile, Kangra, Shimla, Hamirpur, Una, Kullu, Bilaspur, Kinnaur and Chamba with scores between 300 and 359 are in the Prachesta-I category (51 to 60 per cent) and Sirmaur, Solan and Lahaul and Spiti with scores between 270 and 300 are in the Prachesta-II category (41 to 50 per cent).
- The score card is based on performance of districts on **83 indicators in six domains**, namely outcome, effective classroom transaction (ECT), infrastructure, facilities, student entitlements, school safety and child protection, digital learning and governance process.
- In 2018-19, Kangra, Mandi, Shimla, Hamirpur, Una, Kullu, Bilaspur and Chamba districts were in the Prachesta-I category while Kinnaur, Sirmaur, Solan and Lahaul and Spiti districts were in the Prachesta-II category.
- The score of Kullu increased by 18 points, Kinnaur by 15, Sirmaur and Hamirpur by 10 each, Shimla, Una and Lahaul and Spiti by six, Solan by four and Bilaspur by two points. Kangra witnessed a decline of one point but there was no change in the score of Chamba district.
- The index is prepared on the basis of data filled by districts on an online portal. The idea is to assess the performance of the school education system at the district level by creating an index for comprehensive analysis and help in identifying gaps and improve their performances in a decentralised manner.
- Himachal had scored 839 out of 1,000 marks in the performing grading index (PGI) 2019-20 for states and union territories based on outcomes in five categories, namely learning outcomes and quality, access, infrastructure and facilities, equity and governance processes released earlier.

1.212. CULTURAL PROGRAMME CONCLUDES IN BILASPUR.

- A cultural programme, 'Sindhu Darshan 2022', under the campaign 'Not drugs, life is important' was organised by the Public Relation Department at Kehloor auditorium in Raura sector, Bilaspur. The evening was organised in collaboration with North Zone Cultural Centre (NZCC), Patiala.
- Over 100 artistes from seven states presented a unique cultural bouquet and mesmerised the audience with folk dances and songs of their respective states.
- Various dance forms such as Siddhi Dhamaal of Gujarat, Bihu of Assam, Kalvelia of Rajasthan, Mor (Peacock) of Uttar Pradesh, Ghumar of Haryana, Jindua of Punjab and Kahluri dance of Himachal Pradesh were presented during the occasion.

- Artistes also performed a skit on drug abuse to create awareness among people about the ill-effects of drugs.
- NZCC started the cultural journey from Udhampur in Jammu on June 18 and culminated it in Bilaspur.

1.213. SHIKARI MATA TEMPLE IN MANDI WITNESSING HEAVY TOURIST INFLUX.

- Among the places attracting tourists is the famous tourist place Shikari Mata temple in Mandi district. A large number of tourists from different parts of the country are thronging this sacred place to pay obeisance to **local deity Shikari Mata**.
- The Shikari Mata temple is situated in the Seraj Assembly constituency of Mandi district at an elevation of around 11,000 feet above sea level.
- Temple of Shikari Mata is roofless, which also arouses curiosity of visitors.
- The temple, it is believed, was in existence during the time of Pandavas. The temple has a great significance in the holy book Markandeya Purana and the Mahabharata.

1.214. COUNTRY'S HIGHEST VILLAGE GETS TAP WATER.

- **Tashigang village in Spiti, the highest village in the country**, got the domestic tap connection as Himachal achieved 93.05 per cent target of providing functional household connections under the Jal Jeevan Mission.
- Functional domestic tap connections have been provided to Tashigang, a small village at an altitude of 15,256 feet in the Spiti Valley.
- The government had achieved a 100 per cent target of providing tap connections in four districts, Una, Chamba, Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti.
- During the last two-and-a-half years, 8.44 lakh households have been given tap connections while during the last 72 years, only 7.63 lakh households were provided these.
- Under the mission, Rs 4,418.37 crore has been allocated to the state, including an incentive amount of Rs 1,028.43 crore.

1.215. HIMACHAL PRADESH TOPS IN GIVING LOANS TO STREET VENDORS.

- The State bagged the first position among Himalayan and North-Eastern states in disbursing loan worth Rs 20,000 each to street vendors under the PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (**PM SVANidhi**) scheme.
- In the second phase of the scheme, applications of 1,007 vendors have been approved and the amount has been disbursed to 894 vendors.
- According to an Urban Development official, there are three phases of the scheme, under which a street vendor is eligible to get a loan of Rs 10,000, Rs 20,000 and Rs 50,000, respectively. The scheme took off in July 2020, and will run till December 2024.
- All urban local bodies were surveyed to find the eligible beneficiaries for the scheme, and 4,892 street vendors have been identified.
- In the first phase, 3,444 vendors were disbursed a loan of Rs 10,000 each. Besides, 11 applications have already been received for a loan of Rs 50,000 in the third phase.

1.216. PARAGPUR, FIRST HERITAGE VILLAGE OF HIMACHAL PRADESH, LACKS FACILITIES.

- Paragpur, the first heritage village of the Himachal Pradesh located in the foothills of the Dhauladhars in the Kangra valley near Dehra Gopipur, 70 km from Palampur.
- The village got the heritage village tag 25 years ago but no development has taken place there.
- This village reflects the essence of an earlier era. Mature buildings, fine work, remarkable architecture and old shops are the core of the heritage zone. But with the passage of time, some of the historic buildings are decaying.

- In 1997, the state government had promised to come out with a master plan for the development of the village. A high-level committee was also constituted to submit its report to the government so that it could be developed as a major tourist destination, particularly for foreigners.
- However, no headway was made and the condition of the village turned from bad to worse. Most streets are in poor shape, water is overflowing on roads, there is no arrangement to clean the roads and streets regularly.
- Paragpur is also a shooting spot for many Punjabi and Hindi movies.
- This heritage zone can give a boost to tourism if the government takes care of historic monuments which are on the verge of collapse
- Villagers say that the government should set up a development board for the upkeep of the village. The board should have members from the area and also from the Sood community, whose ancestors are said to have built this village.

1.217. SS GULERIA IS APPOINTED AS THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER OF HIMACHAL PRADESH.

- Dr SS Guleria took oath as Information Commissioner of the State Information Commission.
- The oath ceremony took place at Raj Bhawan in the presence of Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar.
- Chief Secretary Ram Subhag Singh conducted the proceedings.
- DGP Sanjay Kundu, Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of various commissions and boards and senior government officers were present on the occasion.

1.218. HIMACHAL CM LAUNCHES 'NAARI KO NAMAN' SCHEME; WOMEN TO GET 50 PC CONCESSION ON BUS FARE.

- The Himachal Road Transport Corporation (HRTC) will charge women travelers only half the fare for their travel within the state.
- At Launching of the scheme '**Naari Ko Naman**', Chief Minister also issued concessional tickets to women.
- Seema Thakur, the first woman bus driver in the state, drove him in a state transport bus to the event venue.
- The chief minister had announced the 50 percent concession on bus fares to women on April 15, Himachal Day.
- In another scheme, CM announced a reduction in the minimum bus fare from Rs 7 to Rs 5 for all passengers across the state.
- According to CM, the government will sanction 25 new posts of women drivers in the '**Ride with Pride**' government taxi service - an initiative to ferry women passengers and senior citizens.

1.219. SUBSIDY FOR SOLAR POWER PLANTS ENHANCED IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

- Himurja is encouraging people of Mandi district to set up rooftop solar power plants to meet the domestic power demand.
- The Centre and the state government are providing subsidies to consumers for the rooftop solar power plants.
- To make people aware of the benefits of solar energy, the Himurja department is organising awareness camps in the district.
- To encourage domestic consumers, the government has proposed to enhance the subsidy from Rs 4,000 per kw to Rs 6,000 per kw this year.
- Himurja has fixed the rates of the plants — 1kw to 3 kw plants will cost Rs 50,000 per kw while 4-10 kw plants to cost Rs 48,600 per kw.
- The Centre offers 40 per cent subsidy on solar panels of 1-3 kw and 20 per cent subsidy on panels of 4-10 kw.

- The Centre has fixed a target of 10 megawatt for the state through roof-top solar panels by 2024.

1.220. SHIV DHAM COMES UP AT SUJANPUR IN THE HAMIRPUR DISTRICT.

- Darla gram panchayat in the district has established the Aadi Shiv Dham on barren land at a cost of over Rs 60 lakh. The panchayat started the development of the dham about 18 months ago and it is nearing completion.
- A number of idols of Lord Shiva have been installed in the dham, including a bust of Lord Shiva, Shivalingam, 31-feet Trishul and Nandi on the entrance.
- According to Panchayat Pradhan, the objective of constructing the dham is to establish a religious, cultural and small business centre to attract tourists and generate job opportunities for self-help groups of the area.
- Members of the panchayat approved the proposal to develop the land into a tourist spot and the block development authority also supported the initiative.
- The most of the work was done under MGNREGA and with convergence of other rural development schemes.
- According to Panchayat vice-president, that besides government funding, lakhs of rupees were contributed by locals.

1.221. HIMACHAL PRADESH RANKED 2ND IN FOOD SECURITY ACT IMPLEMENTATION.

- Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Piyush Goyal released the first edition of State Ranking Index for NFSA during the conference of Food Ministers of States and Union Territories on Food Nutrition and Security in India organized by Department of Food and Public Distribution at New Delhi.
- Himachal has obtained second position in the special category states and union territories for implementation of the National Food Security Act (NFSA).
- According to the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister Rajinder Garg that, Himachal Pradesh had scored the second position in the category of small states and despite the logistical limitations and also the state displayed a high degree of accomplishment in competing with the general category states as well.

1.222. ROBOTICS LABS TO BE SET UP IN 100 SCHOOLS.

KEY POINTS:

- According to Virender Sharma, state project director of the Samagra Shiksha scheme, the 21st century skills will be imparted to students of Class VI to XII in government schools to help them deal with peer pressure, develop critical thinking and improve decision making. The skills will be imparted through activities and inter-house competitions. Clubs will be set up to boost confidence and build leadership qualities among students.
- **Robotics** labs would be established in 100 schools as a pilot project to equip students with the knowledge of robotics and drones.
- A bank of 17,000 to 18,000 questions had been prepared to analyse and assess the learning outcomes of students of Class III, IV, VII, X and XII, which would act as a reference point and standard for teachers.
- Under the **STARS (strengthening teachers and result for states) project**, entrepreneurship mindset courses will be started in Kangra. English improvement courses will be introduced in 100 schools and career counselling will also be started for students of Class IX to XII. e-content for better learning will also be available for student.
- Rs 650 crore would be received in five years under the STARS project for language improvement, increasing pass percentage in Class X, vocational training and several other indicators.

1.223. MINISTER LAYS STONE OF COW SANCTUARY IN UNA DISTRICT.

- Rural Development and Animal Husbandry Minister Virender Kanwar laid the foundation stone of a cow sanctuary in Beetan village of Haroli Assembly segment in Una District. A sum of Rs 2.87 crore will be spent to develop the sanctuary on 540-kanal plot.
- Six sheds would be constructed to provide shelter to 500 stray cattle. The HP State Industrial Development Corporation would complete the civil works in three months. In the past four-and-a-half years, around 20,000 stray cattle had been provided shelter. Additional space to provide shelter to 5,000 stray animals was being created.
- The minister said the government was providing a monthly grant of Rs 700 per animal to the sanctuaries to ensure fodder and medical assistance for the animals.
- These efforts by the state government had significantly brought down the rate of accidents caused by stray cattle. Besides, the move will prevent destruction of standing crops by these cattle.

1.224. JUARE MAKES IT TO ASIA, INDIA BOOKS OF RECORDS

- JUARE (Joint United Action for Resilience in Emergencies), a theatrical genre in which the methods of dealing with disasters have been presented very effectively, has made it to the Asia Book of Records and the India Book of Records after being staged simultaneously at 206 places of the district by school students on the occasion of World Environment Day on June 5.
- Apart from this, it was staged at 14 places in six other districts — Mandi, Bilaspur, Chamba, Una, Sirmour and Hamirpur.
- The district administration had set the target of training 25,000 people simultaneously by staging a play together for its entry in the Asia and India Book of Records. However, the data collected revealed that 61,498 persons participated in the event.
- NDMA chairman PM had provided 10-point guidelines related to disaster management and JUARE covers most of these.
- JUARE is a unique initiative of District Disaster Management Kullu to spread awareness to deal with various types of calamities and to avoid loss when disaster strikes. Its objective is also to create a task force locally consisting of local people, including women and children.

1.225. GOVT PUSHES FOR UNA'S INCLUSION IN INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR PROJECT.

- The State government presented a case for the inclusion of Una in the Amritsar Kolkata Industrial Corridor (AKIC) project at the meeting of the Apex Monitoring Authority for National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP) in Delhi.
- Una is just 80 km from the Baddi-Barotiwala-Nalagarh industrial area and has the potential of becoming another industrially-developed district. Una district is well connected with a road and rail network and the state government has already proposed a Bulk Drug Park and an EV Park there.
- Una district has the state's first Food Park and seven developed industrial areas, besides a few upcoming industrial areas with a total land parcel of around 2,000 acres. The inclusion of Una under the AKIC project will help provide impetus to industrial development in the district and will also provide economic boost to neighbouring districts comprising almost 50 per cent of the state's population".
- Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), a joint venture between the state government and the National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC) Limited, was being formulated. The master plan for trunking infrastructure had been prepared by a professional agency hired by the NICDC. He apprised the meeting that in the BBN area projects of 'national importance' such as the Medical Devices Park (300 acres) and the Defence Park (800 acres) had been grounded.

1.226. PROJECT TO DEVELOP GAGGAL-GULER STRETCH IN KANGRA AS 'HERITAGE ROAD' GETS NOD.

- The state government has approved a project to develop state highway leading from Gaggal to Guler in Kangra district as a heritage road. The project aims at developing the road so that the tourists coming to Kangra district could travel and visit heritage structures on the said road. There are many heritage buildings on road, including the rock-cut Masrur temples that are under the protection of Archeological Survey of India (ASI) and Guler Fort of former rulers of Guler state of Kangra. Beside the said buildings, there were many heritage temples and building along the road. The idea is to take tourists coming to Kangra valley for a heritage trip on the road.
- The state government has approved the project to develop 46-km road leading from Gaggal to Guler as heritage road. The funding for developing the road is proposed to be provided by the Asian Development Bank.
- Including the rock-cut Masrur temples. Experts are of the opinion that they have similarity with Ankor temples of Cambodia.
- Rock-cut temples located in small and remote hamlet Masrur have been an enigma for historians and archeologists. Even the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) officials, who are maintaining the site, are not sure about history of temples. However, a book written by Professor NK Singh "Coronation of Shiva Rediscovering Masrur temple" has tried to solve the mystery.
- Masrur temples are one of the four monolithic rock-cut temples in the country. The other three are Kailash of Ellora, Mammapuram in Deccan and Dhamnar temples in Rajasthan. While these are in a pit or on the ground, Masrur temples are unique as they are located on the hill top.

1.227. NDRF STARTS NATIONWIDE SAFETY AUDIT OF ROPEWAYS.

- In view of recent accidents in Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has launched a nationwide survey of passenger cable cars and ropeway systems to find out possible security flaws and prepare a structural blueprint for effective rescue operations.
- The NDRF has also decided to train its rescuers in specific ropeway rescue skills, apart from purchasing a range of tools for transporting team to evacuate stranded people from a hanging car.
- Three persons were killed and 12 rescued after cable cars got trapped mid-air on a ropeway at Trikut Hills in Jharkhand's Deoghar district in April. A 40-hour-long operation was conducted by the Indian Air Force, NDRF, Army, ITBP and local administration after the incident.
- Eleven persons were stranded for hours after a cable car got stuck mid-air at Timber Trail in Parwanoo, Himachal Pradesh, in June. They were rescued after a six-hour operation undertaken by the NDRF and other agencies.
- In a similar incident in May, pilgrims visiting a shrine in Maihar town of Madhya Pradesh were rescued about an hour after they were stuck in cable cars.
- Officers from all 16 NDRF battalions across the country have been asked to conduct a survey in their jurisdiction and visit ropeway systems, carry out a security and operations analysis and submit a report to their headquarters.
- A final report on this would be submitted to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs with recommendations on remedial measures for the public and private sector operators.

1.228. PRODUCTS OF HIMACHAL SHGs MOST SOUGHT AFTER ON E-COMMERCE WEBSITES

- The self-help groups (SHGs) of urban women in the state have recorded the highest online sale of their products on Amazon and Flipkart among SHGs across the country over the last one year.
- SHGs have done business worth Rs 4.40 lakh, the highest among SHGs across the country.

- As per the report of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, the second spot was bagged by SHGs from Kerala that did business worth Rs 1.98 lakh in the same time frame.
- The Department of Urban Development made these products available on e-commerce portals to provide these SHGs a bigger and regular market.
- The department organises exhibitions, fairs and special haats to help these SHGs sell their products.
- Sold under the brand name of 'SonChiraiya', the most sought-after products on e-commerce portals are Kullu caps, Kullu shawls, Kullu socks, Chamba sandals, Chamba plates, etc.
- According to State Mission Manager, National Urban Livelihood Mission., The products made by the Kullu and Chamba SHGs are the most sought after at the moment.

1.229. MARCH AT NAHAN AGAINST TRIBAL STATUS TO HATTEES.

- Various organisations took out a march at Nahan opposing the ST status to residents of the trans-Giri area of Sirmaur district as the area has 40 per cent SC population.
- Various organisations, including the SC Adhikar Sarankshan Samiti, the Dalit Shoshan Mukti Morcha, the Bhim Army, the Vishvkarma Sabha, the Yuva Koli Samaj, the Akhil Bhartiya Koli Samaj and the Balmiki Sabha got together against the move.
- They gave a memorandum through the DC, Sirmaur, to the Prime Minister.
- Various speakers highlighted that the Registrar General of India's 2017 report had stated that there was no tribe named Hattee and it could not be granted constitutional status under Section 342(2)
- The speakers also claimed that there was no social community named as Hattee.
- They said the declaration of the Hattee community as ST would render the Prevention of SC ST Atrocities Act, 1989, defunct and this would further increase the acts of atrocities against this community.
- As many as 122 cases of atrocities have been registered in Sirmaur district from 2015 to 2022 and 106 pertained to the trans-Giri area.
- They feared that if all castes were declared Hattee ST, it would deprive them of reservation in panchayati raj institutions.
- They gave the example of Kinnaur where the posts of pradhan were reserved for ST while OBC and SC communities were deprived of this benefit as per the 2020 reservation roster.
- They claimed that the survey report of the Registrar General had failed to take into account the 40 per cent SC population.

1.230. UNION MINISTER ANURAG THAKUR VISITS NEWLY BUILT IIIT-UNA.

- Anurag Thakur, Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Youth Affairs and Sports, visited the Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) at Saloh village in Haroli.
- He also interacted with IIIT Director S Selva Kumar and Registrar Amarnath Gill.
- The campus of the IIIT, one of the premier institutes, had been constructed on a 560-acre plot.
- According to the Union Minister, a sum of Rs 128 crore has been spent on the construction of the academic campus and hostels, adding that the newly constructed IIIT building would be dedicated to the nation as soon as the sports infrastructure was complete.

1.231. 417 HOUSEHOLDS SWITCH TO GREEN ENERGY IN UNA:

- Under the Go Green Initiative of the Union and State governments, 417 households in Una district have installed roof top solar power plants and received a subsidy amounting to Rs 5.4 crores.
- According to Sohan Singh, Project Officer at the Una office of HIMURJA, the Union government provides a subsidy of 40 per cent on the total cost of solar plant up to **3-kilowatt** capacity, while there is a **subsidy component of 20 per cent for plants** having capacity above **3 kilowatts and up to 10 kilowatts**.
- According to Project Officer, the expenses per kilowatt of **installation is Rs 48,000 to Rs 50,000** and the consumers can sell extra power generated to the state electricity board.

- Power sale proceeds get deposited in the bank account of the beneficiary.

1.232. DHARAMSALA TO HAVE 10 E-VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS.

- Dharamsala city will soon have 10 charging stations for electric cars and two-wheelers. These stations will be set up at places having ample parking facilities.
- According to Commissioner of the Dharamsala Municipal Corporation (MC), a subsidiary of the BHEL had been given the contract of charging stations under the Smart City Project.
- Each station would have one point for charging four-wheelers and five points for two-wheelers.
- After installation, the company would hand over the charging stations to the MC.

1.233. INNOVATIVE EFFORT TO PROMOTE AGRICULTURE IN HIMACHAL PRADESH.

- Various ambitious schemes and programmes are being run by the government for giving a fillip to the agriculture sector, besides strengthening the socio-economic condition of farmers and a provision of Rs 628.52 crore has been made for the agriculture sector in the financial year.
- Majority of the population of Himachal Pradesh is dependent on agriculture and allied sectors for their livelihood and this sector is providing direct employment to about 70 percent people.
- About 9.44 lakh hectares of land is under cultivation in the state and it contributes about 13.62 percent of the GDP.
- Special emphasis is being laid on increasing the production of high value crops by adopting modern technologies. Prakritik Kheti, Khushhal Kisan Yojna is being implemented by the state government to encourage natural farming.
- The objective of this scheme is to enhance the farmers, income by reducing the cost of crop production and to save the soil and human from the harmful effects of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Rs. 58.46 crore has been spent under this scheme till date.
- As many as 1,71,063 farmers have adopted natural farming covering 9,421-hectare area of the state. The state government has set a target of bringing 50 thousand acres of land under natural farming and 50 thousand farmers will be certified as natural farmers during this financial year.
- Himachal Pradesh Crop Diversification Promotion Project is being implemented to promote crop diversification in the state. In view of the successful results of JICA phase-1 in the state, JICA phase-2 has also been approved. Under this, a budget of Rs. 1010.13 crore has been proposed.
- The State Agricultural Mechanisation Programme for the mechanisation in the agriculture sector is being implemented in the state.

1.234. RD DHIMAN REPLACES RAM SUBHAG SINGH AS HIMACHAL PRADESH CHIEF SECRETARY.

- The HP Government replaced Chief Secretary Ram Subhag Singh with a 1988-batch IAS officer, RD Dhiman, Additional Chief Secretary (Power and Industry).
- Chief Secretary Ram Subhag, a 1987-batch officer, will superannuate in July 2023.
- Subhag has been posted as Principal Adviser (PA) Administrative Reforms.
- Two officers whom Dhiman superseded have also been appointed as principal advisers to the government. They are Subhag's wife Nisha Singh (Training) and Sanjay Gupta (Public Grievances).
- Incidentally, Subhag is the fifth Chief Secretary not to complete the tenure during the present regime.
- The other such officials include VC Pharka, Vineet Chawdhary, BK Aggarwal and Anil Khachi.
- RD Dhiman is due to retire in December this year and as such his tenure as Chief Secretary will coincide with the Jai Ram government's term. Dhiman too had applied for the CIC post.

1.235. THE CABINET APPROVED LOAN FOR HIMACHAL PRADESH RURAL WATER IMPROVEMENT AND LIVELIHOOD PROJECT FOR PROVIDING CLEAN DRINKING WATER.

- The Cabinet also approved the signing of a loan agreement through the Department of Economic Affairs with Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the Rs 1,098.89 crore externally-aided Himachal Pradesh Rural Water Improvement and Livelihood Project for providing clean drinking water to every household.
- The project would be financed through a loan of Rs 760.77 crore (69.2 per cent) by the ADB and a counter fund of Rs 338.12 crore (30.8 per cent) by the government.

1.236. L&T TO REPAIR TEMPLES IN GOVIND SAGAR LAKE.

- **Larsen and Toubro (L&T)** conducted the **first survey** to repair damaged temples in the Govind Sagar Lake in **Bilaspur district**.
The state government has envisaged a **project of Rs 1,400 crore** for the repair of the temples submerged in the Govind Sagar Lake that were built in 1963 after the construction of the **Bhakra Dam on the Sutlej**.
- According to Pankaj Rai, DC, Bilaspur, a team of L&T visited various sites. He added that a detailed project report would be prepared before starting this ambitious project.
- According to DC, Chief Minister had announced that Bilaspur town would be restored to its **former glory** and a **provision of Rs 1,400 crore** had been made for the purpose. He added that besides L&T, some international companies would also be roped in for the effective execution of the project.
- According to Rai, the project would not only **beautify the old town but also bring alive historical art, culture and tradition**. This would also make **Bilaspur a new tourist destination**.

1.237. IIT-MANDI 20TH AMONG ENGINEERING INSTITUTES, 43RD OVERALL.

- **The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Mandi**, has been **ranked No. 20** — with a **score of 60.43** — among all the engineering institutes of the country in the **India Rankings 2022** that were announced by **Union Minister for Education, Dharmendra Pradhan**.
- **The institute climbed 39 positions** to capture **the 43rd rank in overall category** of the rankings, which are **conducted by the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)**.
- In the research category, it was **ranked No. 39**.
- According to the **Professor Laxmidhar Behera IIT-Mandi Director**, “The significant improvements in the NIRF 2022 has been possible by the efforts of our faculty and students towards research, teaching, and other parameters.
- We will strive to keep our commitment to make IIT-Mandi relevant with our research for the local region, while also being of relevance to the country.
- **The NIRF is an indigenous ranking** framework for higher educational institutions which outlines a methodology to rank institutions across the country.

1.238. MANDI BAGS SILVER MEDAL FOR TUBERCULOSIS ERADICATION.

- The State Government has awarded the silver medal to Mandi district in the tuberculosis (TB) eradication programme.
- According to the district Chief Medical Officer, the award was given after a survey was conducted in every district of the state in February and March.
- For TB detection, seven state-of-the-art machines are available in the district. The CM’s office has congratulated the district health department for their efforts.
- District Tuberculosis Officer urged the general public, including representatives of urban bodies and Panchayati raj institutions of the district to ensure their active participation in the programme.

1.239. CAMPAIGN TO MAKE CHAMBA TOBACCO-FREE LAUNCHED.

- The district administration has launched a campaign to check the use of tobacco products in public places.
- The **administration aims to make the district tobacco-free by 2025**.

- The campaign was launched by the district Deputy Commissioner, DC Rana, while chairing a meeting of various experts of Himachal Pradesh Tobacco Control Progressive Centre and officers of various stakeholder departments.
- The meeting was organised under the aegis of Dr Rajendra Prasad Government Medical College, Tanda.
- According to the DC, Emphasizing the need to ensure effective system for tobacco control at the panchayat-level, **tobacco-free panchayat** would be given a **cash award of Rs five lakh**. He directed the Rural Development Department and the Health Department to jointly take necessary steps at the panchayat-level. District-level Tobacco Control Coordination Committee, block-level flying squads have also been constituted.
- The DC directed to develop a mobile app for the monthly activities to ensure effective implementation of the coordination committee and flying squads.

1.240. DHARAMSALA THEATRE FESTIVAL CONCLUDES.

- The Dharamsala Residential International Festival for Theatre (DRIFT) concluded at the Club House of the Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC) in McLeod Ganj.
- According to, Quasar Thakore Padamsee, director of a theatre group—QTP—from Mumbai, the fest was one of the most unique events his group had ever been to. “It is a joy to be here and perform and be part of a larger theatre community. The audience has been fabulous, and diverse in Dharamsala”.
- The day started with a performance by Subhadra Kamath’s musical ensemble. Thereafter, a play, Agarbatti, was presented by Ashish Pathak.
- A play, Samay Kaise Guzra, was presented by Aagaaz Theatre from Delhi and then another play, Saag Meat, was presented by Pratibha Rai.
- Movement Therapy (play) was presented by Mitali Jangpangi.
- A workshop on making comics was conducted by Alia Sinha.

1.241. 518 SITES IDENTIFIED FOR SETTING UP PANCHVATI PARKS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH.

- As many as 57 Panchavati Parks have been set up in the state by the government.
- The project was launched in 2020 under which four to six parks would be set up in all 90 blocks.
- According to, Rural Development Minister Virender Kanwar, about 518 sites have been identified and work on setting up parks on 284 sites is in full swing.
- The park area is meant to provide an exclusive space for connecting senior citizens to nature.
- Around 200 parks would be set up during the financial year. A sum of Rs 9 lakh will be spent on each park.
- Each park, spreading over one or two bighas, will also be used for the promoting products made by self-help groups to generate additional economic and employment avenues, especially at the village level.
- Each park will have one-metre wide and 150-metre-long jogging track, walking tracks, benches, space for yoga and meditation, toilets, solar lights and flower beds, besides exercise and recreational equipment.
- Ayurvedic and medicinal plants such as amla, neem, tulsi and aloe vera and shade grass (lawn) will be grown in the parks.

1.242. RS 1,600 CRORE WORLD BANK GRANT FOR POWER SECTOR REFORMS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH.

- The Central Government will provide a financial assistance of Rs 1,600 crore through the World Bank (WB) for the Himachal Pradesh Power Sector Development Programme.
- According to the spokesperson for the Directorate of Energy of Himachal, that after including the state equity, the total programme would cost around Rs 2,000 crore.

- The WB funding under the programme is expected to be available by early next year, and its duration will be five years, starting from 2023 to 2028.
- The **objective** of the programme is to undertake holistic power sector reforms and pave the way for improvements in renewable energy integration in the state.
- Efforts will be made for the promotion of integrated resource planning to allow comprehensive planning of the power sector, piloting demand response management, improving technical utilisation of the existing hydropower assets to facilitate increased integration with other sources of renewable energy and establishing a single desk for efficient trading of power.
- These interventions would allow the state to maximise the revenue earned from the sale of energy through renewable balancing capacity.
- The programme also aims to install new capacities in solar generation of about 200 MW, through the HPPCL and HIMURJA.
- The programme will also focus on strengthening the power network within the state – at transmission by the HPPTCL and in 13 towns at the distribution level by the HPSEBL.
- An upgrade of the systems of the State Load Dispatch Centre will further allow better management of power demand and supply.
- Collectively, these interventions will ensure improved transfer of power within the state by improving reliability and quality of supply.

Target areas

- The key result areas that will be targeted are improvements in utilisation of the state's power sector resources (hydro and solar), improvements in reliability of the state's grid at transmission and distribution levels.

1.243. HIMACHAL PRADESH HAS BECOME FIRST IN COUNTRY TO LAUNCH VEHICLE LOCATION TRACKING DEVICE, EMERGENCY PANIC BUTTON SYSTEM AND COMMAND CONTROL CENTRE.

- Chief Minister inaugurated vehicle location tracking device, emergency panic button system and Command Control Centre of the Transport Department for the public from Peterhoff, Shimla
- It will provide prompt and accurate information regarding the vehicle equipped with this device at the time of any emergency.
- As many as 9,423 vehicles have been connected to this system. Complete details of vehicles and their movement in the last one year would be available at the monitoring centre.
- When the panic button is pressed, a signal would be received through satellite to 112 (emergency support) and the person in distress would be connected. An alert to the police would also be sent.
- Cent per cent concession was given on token tax, special road tax and passengers goods tax to stage carriage, contract carriage and buses to educational institutions from April 1, 2020, till September 30, 2021, besides other concessions to the tune of Rs 164 crore.
- HP has connected 9,423 vehicles to this system. Vehicles' one-year movement record will be there at monitoring centre.

1.244. ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE TO BE SET UP AT HIMACHAL PRADESH UNIVERSITY: GOVERNOR RAJENDRA VISHWANATH ARLEKAR.

- An entrepreneurship centre named after Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar will be established in Himachal Pradesh University (HPU) for the youth of the state, said Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar while speaking at the launch of the state chapter of Dr Ambedkar Chamber of Commerce (DACC).
- The Governor released a concept of the Himachal Chapter of the DACC on the occasion.

1.245. AWARD FOR KRISHI DOOT KUNDAN LAL.

- Prof HK Chaudhary, Vice-Chancellor, HP agriculture university, congratulated University Krishi Doot Kundan Lal for receiving the prestigious Pt Deen Dyal Antodya Krishi Puruskar.
- The award comprising Rs 1 lakh, a certificate and a memento was presented by Narendra Tomar, Union Agriculture Minister, on the ICAR foundation day in Delhi.
- The minister also appreciated last year's awardee and University Krishi Doot Sanjay Saklani.

1.246. NAHAN, KULLU ADJUDGED BEST MUNICIPAL COUNCILS OF 2020, '21.

- Kullu and Nahan were adjudged the best municipal council of 2021 and 2020, respectively, in the Atal Shresth Shahar Yojna (ASSY).
- Both the councils were awarded a sum of Rs 1 crore during a ceremony organised in the auditorium of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports at Manali.
- Manali and Kullu secured the second and third position, respectively, for the year 2020. Una and Baddi secured these positions, respectively, for the year 2021. Manali and Una were awarded Rs 75 lakh each while Kullu and Baddi got Rs 50 lakh each.
- In the nagar panchayat category for 2020, Chopal, Gagret and Kotkhai were awarded Rs 75 lakh, Rs 50 lakh and Rs 25 lakh, respectively as they got first, second and third position, respectively.
- In the same category for 2021, Arki bagged the first position while Sunni was second and Narkanda came third.
- According to Urban Development Minister Suresh Bhardwaj, at present there are 61 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in the state and new areas were being added to them from time to time.
- The state government has released a grant of Rs 679 crore to the ULBs in the period between 2017 to 2022 under the Fifth State Finance Commission.
- According to the recommendation of the Sixth State Finance Commission, a provision of Rs 184 crore has been made in the current financial year.

Felicitated with cash awards

- Chopal and Arki best nagar panchayats in 2020 and 2021, respectively
- In municipal council category, first, second and third placed towns were awarded Rs 1 crore, Rs 75 lakh and Rs 50 lakh, respectively.
- In nagar panchayat category, first, second and third placed towns were awarded Rs 75 lakh, Rs 50 lakh and Rs 25 lakh respectively.
- The govt has released a grant of Rs 679 crore to the ULBs in the period between 2017 to 2022.

1.247. UNA ADMINISTRATION ROPES IN CSIR TO COMBAT MALNUTRITION.

- To combat malnutrition, the Una district administration will launch an initiative to provide highly nutritious packaged food at Anganwari centres for children and expecting and lactating mothers.
- The administration has roped in the CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT), Palampur, which has developed packaged food products that have high nutritional content, for the initiative.
- According to Deputy Commissioner (DC) Raghav Sharma, the IHBT had come up with products such as spirulina bar, multi-grain energy bar, multi-grain high energy powder and fruit bar.
- Spirulina, which is an algae, is used to develop a super-food that has high content of essential minerals and vitamins.
- Initially, the district administration will enter into a year's agreement with CSIR-IHBT to procure these food items. The agreement can be subsequently extended on the basis of the result.
- The institute was preparing a detailed project report and the data regarding the number of children and women in the district was being shared with them.

- The district Women and Child Welfare Department has been providing food items like chickpea, biscuits, wheat porridge and powdered milk to the children at Anganwari centres and the same items are being provided to expecting and lactating mothers.

1.248. 3-D ANIMATED CENTRE TO BE SET AT CHINTPURNI TEMPLE.

- The Chintpurni Temple Trust has decided to set up a museum-cum-interpretation centre for visitors to have a virtual three-dimensional (3-D) experience about various temples in the district as well as historical facts or legends associated with them.
- According to the, Deputy Commissioner Raghav Sharma, who is also the Chairman of the Chintpurni Temple Trust, the museum would be set up in the Mai Das Sadan, which is part of the multi-purpose tourist-cum-facilitation centre, near the shrine, four contiguous halls would serve as the main part of the centre.
- According to DC, "Visitors will walk through rooms having three-dimensional video animations with audio effects around them. Each room will provide a virtual tour of some of the major shrines in the district with a brief about their history. They will get a feeling of being physically present at these shrines."
- According to the DC, "An exercise to create interiors for the right type of audio-visual effects has already begun. A detailed project report for the museum will be prepared by August 20 to be presented at the meeting of the Trustees."
- After the approval of the State Art, Culture and Language Department, the work on the project was expected to begin in September.

1.249. THREE-DAY TROUT FAIR COMMENCES IN MANALI.

- Trout fish will be available at half the price during the three-day-long fair launched by the state Fisheries Department on the Mall Road in Manali.
- Tourists and locals will be able to taste varieties of trout fish during the fair.
- The officials of the department gave information about the schemes being run for fish farmers in the state.
- The main objective of the fair was to make people aware of the trout fish variety. Hundreds of farmers in the state are strengthening the economy with the production of trout fish. The department is also encouraging people to adopt fish culture.
- According to the, Fisheries Department Director, 666 trout fish farmers were associated with the department.
- The main purpose of holding the fair in Manali was to encourage people from across the country and abroad to visit here and enjoy the trout fish.
- Tourists can promote trout fish in their states as well. People of other states can also strengthen their economy by producing trout fish and can spread information about it.

1.250. HIMACHAL GOVERNOR INAUGURATES MINJAR MELA AT CHOWGAN, CHAMBA.

- Himachal Pradesh Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar inaugurated a week-long Minjar Mela at the historic Chowgan in Chamba.
- This was Arlekar's first visit to Chamba as Governor.
- Arlekar also talked about famous art works of the district — Chamba Rumal and Chamba Chappal.
- The Governor inaugurated the fair by hoisting the Minjar flag amid traditional 'Kunjadi Malhar' singing — a seasonal song of the Chamba region. He also inaugurated exhibitions organised by various departments and social organisations.
- Chamba Municipal Council president Neelam Nayyar presented Minjars to the Governor.

- The Minjar, which is a silk tassel worn on the costumes by men, women and children during the fair, symbolises maize and paddy shoots.
- A procession was also taken out, which passed through the main market of the city to Laxminath temple and reached the Pink Palace.
- In Minjar Mela, traditional singers sing 'Kunjadi Malhar' in the evenings. Kunjadi refers to Kunja birds (Great Egrets) which fly over the Chowgan ground in the evenings during monsoon and Malhar is the raga for monsoon.
- During the time of the royals or before the Partition, Abdals — a community of Muslim singers who had migrated to Chamba state from Avadh — used to sing 'Kunjadi Malhar' in the evenings.

1.251. HP CM SEEKS SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FROM NITI AAYOG FOR MANDI GREENFIELD AIRPORT.

- Recently, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur called on Vice-Chairman of the Niti Aayog, Suman Bery, in New Delhi.
- CM discussed various important issues pertaining to the state with him and apprised him about the efforts of the state towards strengthening of air connectivity in the state.
- He said that a joint venture agreement has been signed between the state government and Airports Authority of India (AAI) for construction of Greenfield Airport in Mandi.
- He also requested for a special assistance grant of Rs 1,000 crore during the current financial year for strengthening air connectivity in the state.

1.252. MUSEUM OF WOOD CULTURE TO COME UP IN KULLU.

- A museum of wood culture — which will display the use and evolution of wood in architecture, furniture, sculpture, and various art forms — is set to come up in a few months at Shamshi in Bhuntar in the district. The museum was sanctioned last year to the Parvati Forest Division.
- Under the project, the premises of the furniture workshop at Shamshi, which was established as a wood-based industry workshop in 1965, saw major renovation works, including repairs, upgrade of the campus and entrance, and installation of new technologies such as solar kiln, last year.
- Deputy Conservator of the division Aishwarya Raj says that people visiting the museum will be able to get to know about the process of furniture making and various other forms of wood use through 3D models, images and interactive pictorial representation.
- They will be informed about the evolution of wood science and its uses; hardwood and softwood; defects, treatments and sources of raw materials; new technologies being used in the industry; and sustainable forestry.

1.253. ADB NOD TO RS 770 CR LOAN FOR SAFE DRINKING WATER PROJECT IN HIMACHAL PRADESH.

- According to the ADB, The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a loan of around Rs 770 crore to fund a safe drinking water and sanitation project in Himachal Pradesh.
- The loan has been provided under the Himachal Pradesh Rural Drinking Water Improvement and Livelihood Project.
- More than 90 per cent of the state's rural population had access to drinking water, but the water supply infrastructure was old and had deteriorated over the time, resulting in inefficient and poor service.
- The ADB project will connect 75,800 households to the service, providing uninterrupted water supply to about 3.7 lakh residents in 10 districts.
- According to the Jude Kohlhase, ADB Unit Head of Project Administration on Urban Development and Water for South Asia, "The project meets the objectives of the Jal Jeevan Mission, a national flagship

programme of the Union Government, which aims to provide piped water to all rural households by 2024,”.

1.254. TWO SOLAR PARKS TO COME UP IN LAHAUL-SPITI, KINNAUR.

- The government has approved two solar parks in Himachal Pradesh with capacities of 880 MW and 400 MW each at Lahaul & Spiti and Kinnaur districts.
- This was stated by Minister of State of New and Renewable Energy and Chemicals and Fertilizers Bhagwant Khuba in his written reply to the Rajya Sabha in response to a question asked by BJP member Indu Bala Goswami.

1.255. EIGHT DISTRICTS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH SUITABLE FOR COLD WATER FISHERIES.

- To promote cold water fisheries, a three-day trout fair was organised by the State Fisheries Department, which concluded in Manali.
- According to, Satpal Mehta, Director of Fisheries Department, eight districts of the state were suitable for cold water fisheries.
- Besides Kullu, trout are found in Mandi, Kangra, Chamba, Shimla, Kinnaur, Lahaul Spiti and Sirmaur districts and these are conducive for cold water fisheries.

1.256. CHAMBA GETS RS 3 CR AWARD.

- According to, Deputy Commissioner DC Rana, The NITI Aayog has given a Rs 3 crore award to Chamba district for its outstanding performance under the Aspirational District Programme.
- According to Rana, the money would be spent on works related to financial inclusion and skill development in the district.
- Even before this, the district had also received Rs 8 crore for achieving a high ranking of prescribed indicators of developments from the NITI Aayog under the Aspirational District Programme of the Central Government.
- According to DC, a plan had been prepared for financial inclusion and skill development of the youth.
- Training programmes would be organised for their skill development in various tourism activities, creating jobs.

1.257. 22-DAY CAMP ON ROBOTICS, AI HELD AT IIT-MANDI.

- According to Laxmidhar Behera, (IIT) Director, IIT- Mandi in collaboration with the Himachal Pradesh Kaushal Vikas Nigam, Shimla, has conducted a school camp on Robotics and Artificial Intelligence (**PRAYAS 1**) successfully.
- It was a 22-day event and was organised from July 1 to 22.
- According to the Director, “One hundred students out of more than 1,200 from Himachal were selected for the camp,”.
- According to the Director, IIT-Mandi to have at least 50 per cent students from Himachal. The Institute aims at encouraging school students to develop skills at an early stage. The Institute also plan to call teachers from schools and ITIs to get hands-on experience with the IIT-Mandi faculty.

1.258. AFTER MAIZE, KANGRA VEGETABLE CROPS UNDER WHITE FLY ATTACK.

- Vegetable crops are under attack by white fly in the lower hills of Kangra district. The pest attack comes after the recent damage caused by fall armyworm to the maize crop in the area.

- In the lower hills of the district, vegetable farming is a lucrative occupation. Farmers in these areas produce vegetables such as okra, bitter gourd, bottle gourd, brinjal, cucumber and ridged gourd during the season.
- The farmers claimed that the Agriculture Department was yet to swing into action and visit their fields to monitor and check the attack of white flies.
- As per information, the department was suffering from acute shortage of the field technical staff that could visit the fields and apprise the farmers about the attacks and measures to check the pest.
- According to Dr Rahul Katoch, Deputy Director, Agriculture Department, Palampur. The department has constituted special technical field teams of the state bio-control laboratories at Palampur and Nurpur. The teams will visit the fields and sensitise the vegetable growers about pest attacks. Experts will also suggest remedial measures to them.

1.259. THE ARYABHATTA GEO INFORMATICS AND SPACE APPLICATION CENTRE.

- Recently, The Cabinet gave approval for declaring the Aryabhata Geo Informatics and Space Application Centre as the nodal agency for the use of spatial and geo spatial technology in planning and development activities by various departments.

Establishment:

- Government of Himachal Pradesh established the Aryabhata Geo-informatics & Space Application Centre (**AGiSAC**) under aegis of the HP Council for Science Technology & Environment (**HIMCOSTE**) in the year **2011**.
- The centre has been set up in technological collaboration with Gujarat-based Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geo-Informatics (**BISAG**).

The following objectives were envisaged for the State Centre:

- To facilitate decentralized planning and decision making.
- To facilitate Monitoring and Evaluation of Government Schemes & Programmes.
- To set up integrated natural resources data management system.
- To provide services/consultancy based on specific user needs in the field of Remote Sensing and GIS.
- To provide wider usage of geo-spatial applications through simultaneous support systems/ software.

1.260. SHRAVAN ASHTAMI FAIR BEGINS.

- The nine-day Shraavan Ashtami fair that began at the **Chintpurni shrine in Una District**.
- In order to ensure safety and security of the temple and the visitors, **Una District** Magistrate Raghav Sharma has imposed Section 144 in the entire district from July 29 to August 6, the last day of the fair. No person, except personnel of the police force on duty have been allowed to carry firearms in any part of the district.
- The DM has also banned the use of public address systems at or near the temple premises, except the public address system of the temple administration, which is used for proper management in the temple premises.
- Use of brass bands and other musical instruments has also been banned. Any person found carrying such musical instruments will have to deposit these at the police barriers set up on the various roads leading to the temple.
- Setting up langars, use of fire crackers and littering at public places has also been banned.
- However, langars can be set up at designated places after paying due fees and on the written permission of Additional Deputy Commissioner Dr Amit Kumar, who is also Magistrate of the fair.

1.261. PROGRESSIVE HIMACHAL EVENT TO BE HELD AT CHAMBA.

- A grand event will be organised on July 31 under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur at the historic Chowgan under the 75 years of Progressive Himachal Establishment programme.
- The CM will also preside over the concluding ceremony of the Historic Minjar Fair.
- According to Chamba Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), exhibitions based on the theme of “Himachal - Tab Se Ab Tak” would be organised.
- It would showcase ‘Pragati Yatra’ during the **75 years of the state’s existence**.
- These would include health, horticulture, agriculture, tourism, education, public works, industry, Jal shakti, social justice and empowerment and energy departments.

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OTHER IMPORTANT ONE LINERS

1. The Monsoon Session of Parliament will begin on 18th of this month and will continue upto 12th of August. The Lok Sabha Secretariat said, the session will have 18 sittings.
2. Ban on manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of identified single use plastic items has come into force from 1st July across the country. Single-use plastic are those items that are used only once and discarded.
3. Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath begins in Puri, Odisha; President, V President and PM greet people on the occasion.
4. The National Insurance Awareness Day is observed on 28 June annually.
5. England's World Cup-winning captain Eoin Morgan retires from international cricket.
6. Prime Minister Modi will launch the year-long 125th birth anniversary celebration of legendary freedom fighter Alluri Sitarama Raju at Bhimavaram in Andhra Pradesh today. The Prime Minister will also unveil a 30-foot tall bronze statue of Alluri Sitarama Raju.
7. Digital India Week 2022 will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Gandhinagar in Gujarat. He will launch multiple digital initiatives aimed at enhancing accessibility of technology, streamlining service delivery to ensure ease of living and giving a boost to startups. The theme for Digital India Week is Catalyzing New India's Techade.
8. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will declare the States' Start-up Ranking 2021 in New Delhi. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade conducted the 3rd edition of the States' Start-up Ranking Exercise with the key objective to promote India's vision of competitive and cooperative federalism.
9. Home Minister Amit Shah will be the Chief Guest at the celebrations of the 100th International Day of Cooperatives in New Delhi today. The theme of 100th International Cooperative Day is "Cooperatives Build a Better World".
10. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has dedicated to the nation a number of new manufacturing facilities set up at the Bhanur Unit of Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) in Telangana yesterday. They include a Warhead facility at the Bhanur Unit, a Radio Frequency (RF) Seeker facility at Kanchanbagh Unit.
11. Indian Navy contingent joined the personnel of the Seychelles Defence Force and the citizens of Seychelles for the Independence Day celebrations recently. INS Kolkata, an indigenously built Stealth Guided Missile Destroyer of the Indian Navy, was deployed to Port Victoria of Seychelles to coincide with Independence Day on 29th June.
12. The 2022 Women's FIH Hockey World Cup is the 15th edition of the Women's FIH Hockey World Cup, the quadrennial world championship for women's national field hockey teams organized by the International Hockey Federation. It is held in Terrassa, Spain and Amstelveen, the Netherlands from 1 to 17 July 2022.
13. Elorda Cup boxing is held in Kazakhstan. Indian boxer Kalaivani Srinivasan enters final in Kazakhstan; Kuldeep Kumar progresses to semi-finals.
14. Sandeep Kumar Gupta, Director for Finance at Indian Oil Corporation, has been picked to head India's largest gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd.
15. The 9th Army to Army Staff Talks (AASST) between the Australian Army and Indian Army were conducted in Dehradun.
16. Iran, which holds the world's second-largest gas reserves, wants to join the BRICS group of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
17. Notification for filling nomination for Vice-Presidential election to be issued from today.

18. Ministry of Consumer Affairs has said that no hotels or restaurants can add service charge automatically or by default to the food bill. In this regard, the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued guidelines for preventing unfair trade practices and violations of consumer rights.
19. World Sports Journalists Day is observed on July 2 every year to celebrate the services of sports journalists for the promotion of sports.
20. The 2022 NATO Madrid Summit was held in Madrid, Spain, from June 28 to 30, 2022. This was the 32nd edition of the summit, since the first summit meeting held in Paris in 1957.
21. Karnataka's Sini Shetty crowned Miss India World 2022. At the ceremony, hosted at the Jio World Convention Centre, Rajasthan's Rubal Shekhawat emerged as Femina Miss India 2022 first runner-up and Shinata Chauhan from Uttar Pradesh was named Femina Miss India 2022 second runner-up.
22. Karnataka, Gujarat, and Meghalaya have emerged as best performers among Indian states in the startup rankings 2021 released by the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).
23. Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh have emerged as top three states in the 1st State Ranking Index for National Food Security Act, NFSA. This ranking Index attempts to document the status and progress of implementation of NFSA and various reform initiatives across the country.
24. PMBJAP resulted in huge savings for citizens on medical expenses: Mansukh Mandaviya.
25. Leader of Yesh Atid Party, Yair Lapid has been officially became the 14th prime minister of Israel, after replacing the Naftali Benett.
26. International Plastic Bag Free Day is celebrated on July 3 all over the world.
27. India captain Jasprit Bumrah bludgeoned a hapless Stuart Broad for 29 runs to create a world record for maximum runs off a single over in Test cricket, beating the legendary Brian Lara's feat by one run.
28. T. Raja Kumar of Singapore has been appointed as the president of Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the anti-money laundering watchdog.
29. BJP's Rahul Narvekar elected Maharashtra Assembly Speaker, becomes youngest ever in India to hold such post. Narvekar (45) is the youngest ever Assembly Speaker in the country,
30. Indian Navy commissions the first ALH Squadron INAS 324 in Visakhapatnam.
31. Ukrainian mathematician
 - Maryna Viazovska, Switzerland, (July 5) named as one of four recipients of the 2022 Fields Medal, an honour that is often described the Nobel Prize in mathematics.`
 - The other winners were
 - French mathematician Hugo Duminil-Copin of the University of Geneva;
 - Korean-American June Huh of Princeton;
 - And Briton James Maynard of the University of Oxford.
32. States' Startup Ranking 2021: Gujarat, Karnataka, And Meghalaya Become Best States Promoting Startup Ecosystem.
33. Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar: Govt to start cleanup drive at 75 beaches for 75 days from July 3.
34. Male and female cricketers in New Zealand will now earn equal pay, thanks to a five-year agreement by New Zealand Cricket and the players' association. According to the agreement, women's players will be paid the same match fees as men in all forms and events at both the domestic and international levels.
35. All India Institute of Ayurveda's Director Dr Tanuja Nesari bags Ayurveda Ratna Award in UK.
36. PT Usha, Ilaiyaraaja, V Vijayendra Prasad, and Veerendra Heggade nominated to Rajya Sabha.
37. Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani has been assigned the charge of Ministry of Minority Affairs, in addition to her existing portfolio. Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has been given the additional charge of the Ministry of Steel.

38. External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Bali, Indonesia. Dr. Jaishankar is on a two-day official visit to Bali to participate in the G-20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting.
39. 'Sheikh Kamal IT Business Incubator' was inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET) in a virtual function.
40. Africa Day 2022: The African Union is celebrating its 20th Anniversary on 9th of July 2022. The theme of the Africa day celebration for 2022 is Nutrition, and the aim of AU is to strengthen the Agro-Food Systems, Health and Social Protection Systems to Accelerate Human, Social, and Economic Capital Development on the African Continent.
41. UN Ocean Conference: 198 countries adopt Lisbon Declaration.
42. Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia launches new centre for artificial intelligence at Netaji Subhas University of Technology (NSUT).
43. Former Japan PM Shinzo Abe passes away after being shot during campaigning event.
44. Prime Minister Modi to attend First 'Arun Jaitley Memorial Lecture in New Delhi.
45. World Chocolate Day is celebrated on July 7 every year to commemorate the invention of chocolate. This special day allows people around the world to indulge in their favourite treat without any guilt.
46. Rashtriya Raksha University at Gandhinagar has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with DroneArya Aerial Innovations Private Limited for setting up a Remote Pilot Training Centre for imparting drone flying skills.
47. Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Secretary-General, Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo, passed away.
48. TACC BOSDY CRITICISES NCERT FOR REMOVING FOR REMOVING CHAPTERS ON CLIMATE CHANGE.
49. PM Modi unveils National Emblem cast on the roof of New Parliament Building.
50. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the newly built international airport at Deoghar(odisha). It will provide direct connectivity for devotees and tourists to Baba Baidyanathdham, one out of the 12 Jyortirlings in the country.
51. England beat India by 17 runs in third and final T-20 International in Nottingham; India clinch three-match series 2-1.
52. Sri Lanka PM's office confirms President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's resignation.
53. Global Forgiveness Day is being observed. The day is observed on 7th of July every year to celebrate goodwill among people and it gives us a chance to set things right and make our relationships stronger.
54. India has won its first medal at The World Games 2022 being held in Birmingham, USA, with the archer duo of Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Abhishek Verma bagging a bronze medal in archery, bringing home the countries first-ever medal in the discipline.
55. Today is World Population Day. The day is observed on the 11th of July every year. The objective of the day is to increase the awareness of the people towards the worldwide population issues. World Population Day, which seeks to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues, was established by the then-Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989.
56. R Dinesh elected as President Designate of CII.
57. States of Nebraska, Minnesota and Illinois in the US were hit by a storm system called a derecho.
58. World Kiswahili Language Day is being celebrated on 7th July.
59. World Kiswahili Day is celebrated on the 7th of July every year following a declaration by UNESCO member states in this regard. Kiswahili is one of the most widely spoken languages in Africa and the most widely spoken in sub-Saharan Africa. Kiswahili is also the only African language that is an official language of the African Union.
60. Gita Gopinath Is the First Woman on IMF's 'Wall Of Former Chief Economists'.

61. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the First I2U2 (India-Israel-UAE-USA) Leaders' Virtual Summit on Thursday along with Prime Minister of Israel Yair Lapid, President of the UAE Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and President of the USA Joseph R. Biden.
62. Around 60 StartUps have registered with Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), since the unlocking of the Indian Space sector recently by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and quite a few of them are dealing with projects related to Space debris management.
63. New UK PM set to be announced on September 5.
64. All-weather friends China and Pakistan on Sunday kicked off their 'Sea Guardians-2' drills off the Shanghai coast by deploying their new high-tech naval ships and fighter jets to "jointly deal with maritime security threats," as their navies stepped up cooperation in India's backyard, the Indian Ocean.
65. India's first elevated urban expressway, Dwarka will be operational in 2023.
66. Jagan Mohan Reddy Chosen Lifetime President of Y.S.R. Congress.
67. Alvaro Lario to be the New President of International Fund for Agricultural Development.
68. Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri said that India is witnessing an urban renaissance and construction will play a key role in moving the country towards a resilient, sustainable and inclusive future. He was speaking at 168th Annual Day celebrations of the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) in New Delhi.
69. Retail inflation, based on the consumer price index (CPI), eased to 7.01 percent in June this year compared to 7.04 percent in preceding month. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said, inflation eased marginally mainly due to easing prices in "Food & Beverages" section.
70. The Central government will soon launch a nationwide campaign Har Ghar Tiranga to inspire countrymen to hoist the national flag at their homes to mark the 75th Independence Day. The initiative has been taken under the aegis of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, for which the Ministry of Culture is the nodal ministry.
71. Paper Import Monitoring System, PIMS will come into effect from 1st October this year. As per PIMS, an importer will have to provide advance information online about the import of papers and obtain a registration number. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade has introduced Paper Import Monitoring System by amending the import policy of major paper products.
72. Geo-Portal for NCR known as 'PARIMAN' was launched on 31.08.2021 in the 40th meeting of the Board by Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Chairman, NCRPB and Union Minister for Housing & Urban Affairs.
73. For the purpose of effective utilization of remote sensing and GIS technology, a web geo-portal has been developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC).
74. Union Minister Jitendra Singh to launch the IS4OM for Safe & Sustainable Space Environment. The IS4OM system was developed with a comprehensive viewpoint, according to ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation), to assure the safety and sustainability of the space environment while enjoying the benefits of sustainable use of space for national development.
75. The Yuva Sammelan, which was hosted by "My Home India" in New Delhi, was attended by Ram Nath Kovind, the President of India. The President stated that youth are a nation's present and future when speaking at the event. Their skills have a distinct impact on elevating a nation.
76. Rajendra Prasad has been appointed as the Managing Director of National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) after the government dismissed Satish Agnihotri over corruption allegations.
77. Brijendra K Syngal, former Chairman of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd (VSNL), passed away after a prolonged illness. He was 82. Syngal, who has been acknowledged as the father of the Indian Internet, was known for his strong views and fearlessness in taking on the establishment.
78. Twitter sues Elon Musk to hold him to \$44 billion deal.
79. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana: Andhra rejoins, efforts on to woo 5 other states.
80. Ahmedabad, Kerala among TIME magazine's list of world's greatest places of 2022.

81. The annual Kanwar Yatra will begin today after a gap of two years. The Yatra, which was cancelled in the last two years due to the COVID-19 outbreak, is expected to be attended by around 3-4 crore devotees this year. Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh governments have made elaborate.
82. In Rajasthan, Jungle safari is likely to commence in Kota's Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve and Bundi's Ramgarh Vishdhari Tiger Reserve from October this year.
83. Md. Mustafizur Rahman appointed Bangladesh High Commissioner to India.
84. In the ISSF Shooting World Cup, India topped the medal tally at Changwon in South Korea. India finished the tournament with eight medals including three golds, four silvers and one bronze and was way ahead of hosts Korea and Serbia in the medal tally.
85. BCCI announces Indian women's cricket team for upcoming Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. It will be the first appearance for women's cricket at CWG with Edgbaston Cricket Ground in Birmingham hosting all matches. Cricket, however, has been played before at the 1998 Kuala Lumpur Games where South Africa won gold in the men's 50-over competition.
86. Uttarakhand became the first state in the country to implement the new National Education Policy.
87. Union Minister Piyush Goyal inaugurated the 17th National Institute of Fashion Technology in Panchkula, Haryana.
88. Union Cabinet approves setting up of Gati Shakti University.
The Union Cabinet has approved the formation of National Institute of Rail and Transport (NRTI) at Vadodara, Gujarat as a Central University.
89. India won 22 medals in Asian Under-20 wrestling competition held in Bahrain.
90. I2U2 Summit: UAE to invest two billion dollars to develop Integrated Food Parks in India; US and Israel to provide technology.
91. First phase of Common University Entrance Test Undergraduate 2022 to begin on 15th, 16th, 19th, and 20th July 2022. National Testing Agency (NTA) highlighted that all examination centres are under surveillance of CCTV and equipped with Jammer to conduct fair exams.
92. Kerala reports first monkeypox case, Centre sends disciplinary team to help in preventive measures.
93. Union Labour and Employment Minister Bhupender Yadav attended the BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting held under the Chinese Presidency yesterday. The discussions were held on three priority issues, namely - promoting green jobs for sustainable development, Developing skills for resilient recovery, and Protecting Workers Right in New Forms of Employment.
94. Union Chemicals and Fertilizer Minister Mansukh Mandavia says there is no fertilizer shortage in the country. Speaking at the foundation stone laying ceremony of South India's first nano urea production plant by IFFCO at Naganahalli near Bengaluru, the Minister said that nano urea is a revolution in the agriculture sector. He said that nano urea will reduce the storage space and cost and will increase crop production.
95. Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Anurag Thakur chaired the review meeting for the upcoming Arun Jaitley International Stadium at Hiranagar, Kathua in Jammu, and Kashmir. This new facility will boost sports in the region and nurture budding talent.
96. Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa resigns after fleeing to Singapore.
97. Ahead of the Monsoon Session, a row has erupted over a 50-page compilation of words deemed unfit for use in Parliament.
98. IIT Madras tops engineering category; IIT Delhi follows: NIRF Rankings 2022 followed by IIT Delhi and IIT Bombay at the second and third rank.
99. The Delhi University's Miranda House continued to retain first rank for the sixth year in a row in the college wise NIRF rankings 2022.

100. The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind addressed the Dhammacakka Day 2022 celebrations at Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh.
101. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Wednesday approved Taranga Hill-Ambaji-Abu Road new rail line to provide connectivity and improve mobility.
102. NDA Vice Presidential candidate Jagdeep Dhankar filed nomination papers.
103. New GST rates on number of items come into effect from today.
104. PM Narendra Modi urges MPs to make Monsoon Session productive and fruitful.
105. IND vs ENG 3rd: India beat England by 5 wickets, clinch series 2-1.
106. Murali Sreeshankar becomes first Indian to enter men's long jump final at World Athletics Championships at Oregon, USA.
107. Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has announced a 322-member strong Indian squad for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games (CWG), beginning 28th of this month. The contingent includes 215 athletes and 107 officials and support staff.
108. Singapore Open: Indian shuttler PV Sindhu clinches Women's Single title; Prez, PM Modi congratulates shuttler. She defeated Wang Zhi Yi of China.
109. 19th July is International Nelson Mandela Day. The Day is a celebration of 67-year-long fight of former South African President Nelson Mandela's fight against racial discrimination and human rights abuses.
110. The World Youth Skills Day is being observed on 15th July. It is celebrated every year on July 15 after the United Nations General Assembly's (UNGA) declaration in 2014. The day is celebrated to mark the strategic importance of equipping young people with skills for employment, decent work, and entrepreneurship, said a statement by UNESCO.
111. AAI Leh Airport is being built as India's first carbon-neutral airport. This system works by exchanging heat between the air and the ground as its heat pumps are used for space heating and cooling, as well as water heating.
112. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the goal of self-reliance in the defence sector is very important for the India of the 21st century. He was addressing the Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation Seminar 'Swavlamban' in New Delhi.
113. Opposition candidate Margaret Alva to file her nomination for Vice Presidential elections.
114. India's second monkeypox case confirmed at Kannur in Kerala; Airport and Port Health Officers advised to ensure strict health screening.
115. Last rites of legendary singer Bhupinder Singh held in Mumbai.
116. Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022 scheduled to be taken up for discussion in Lok Sabha today.
117. Sri Lanka's acting President Ranil Wickremesinghe has declared a state of emergency in the country. The move is aimed at handling the social unrest and tackling the economic crisis.
118. The 13th Petersberg Climate Dialogue began yesterday in Berlin. The two-day informal ministerial meet is being chaired by Germany and Egypt, hosts of this year's annual climate meet (COP-27).
119. The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has said that about 1.62 crore national flags would be hoisted across Andhra Pradesh as part of the Har Ghar Tiranga programme under Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav, from August 13 to August 15.
120. Mairaj Ahmad Khan becomes first Indian shooter to win gold medal in men's skeet event at ISSF World Cup at Changwon, Korea.
121. India provided assistance worth 3.8 billion dollars to Sri Lanka to tide over unprecedented economic crisis, says EAM S Jaishankar.
122. Dept of Commerce notifies rules for Work from Home for Special Economic Zones. As per the new notification, Work from Home may be extended to maximum 50 per cent of total employees including contractual employees of the unit. There is flexibility granted to Development Commissioner of Special

Economic Zones to approve a higher number of employees for any bona-fide reason to be recorded in writing. Work From Home is now allowed for a maximum period of one-year.

123. Facebook owner Meta has released its first annual human rights report following years of accusations that it turned a blind eye to online abuses that fueled real-world violence in places like India and Myanmar.
124. INS Sindhudhvj has decommissioned after 35 years of glorious service to the nation.
125. British government launched 'Aviation Passenger Charter' to help passengers know their rights.
126. The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has announced the appointment of Ashish Kumar Chauhan as its new managing director and CEO.
127. The World Athletics Council has selected Tokyo (Japan) to host the 2025 World Athletics Championships.
128. Manoj Kumar has assumed the charge as Chairman of Khadi and Village Industries Commission. His predecessor Vinai Kumar Saxena was appointed the Lt Governor of Delhi.
129. Lleyton Hewitt, a two-time Grand Slam champion and former world number one, was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.
130. England all-rounder Ben Stokes has made a surprise announcement to retire from ODI cricket.
131. The 2022 World Athletics Championships, the eighteenth edition of the World Athletics Championships, are currently being held at Hayward Field in Eugene, Oregon, United States, from July 15–24, 2022.
132. NITI Aayog releases 3rd edition of India Innovation Index; Karnataka, Manipur and Chandigarh topped in different categories.
133. Gujarat Assembly will be run by the students today. Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel will inaugurate the Youth Model Assembly programme which is being organised inside the State Assembly today as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
134. World Food Programme Chief David Beasley warned yesterday about the possibility of global food shortages IN 2023 if Russia does not lift its blockade of Ukrainian grain exports and send its own fertilizer to world markets. The price of a barrel of crude oil was 107 dollar which has dramatically driven up the cost of transporting food.
135. Rishi Sunak to contest with Liz Truss for final ballot to succeed Boris Johnson as UK Prime Minister.
136. Annu Rani qualifies for final of World Athletics Championships; Neeraj Chopra to play in qualification round on July 22.
137. Noted artist Achuthan Kudallur has passed away recently at the age of 77.
138. World Chess Day is celebrated annually on July 20 globally. The day marks the date of the establishment of the International Chess Federation (FIDE) in Paris in 1924.
139. Former Supreme Court judge, Vineet Saran has taken over as the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) ethics officer and ombudsman.
140. Droupadi Murmu elected as the 15th President of India; the first tribal woman and the youngest President to hold the post.
141. In Sri Lanka, Dinesh Gunawardena took the oath as Sri Lanka's new Prime Minister. Gunawardena's appointment comes a day after six-time Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as the country's new President.
142. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called upon people to strengthen the Har Ghar Tiranga Movement as the nation is marking Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav this year. In a tweet, Mr Modi asked people to hoist the Tricolour or display it in their homes between 13th and 15th August. He said, this movement will deepen our connection with the national flag.
143. European Central Bank raises interest rates after more than 11 years to control soaring eurozone inflation.
144. World Athletics Championships: Neeraj Chopra and Rohit Yadav qualify for men's javelin throw final.

145. Today is the Prakash Gurburab of Eighth Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Harkrishan Sahib Ji. Also known as Bal Guru, Guru Harkrishan attained guruship at the tender age of five years.
146. The General Assembly declared International Moon Day, a United Nations-designated international day to be observed annually on 20 July.
147. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama released the book "BEYOND THE MISTY VEIL", Temple Tales of Uttarakhand written by Ms Aradhana Johri (Senior IAS) on the temples of Uttarakhand.
148. The Department of Consumer Affairs has set up a committee in developing a framework for the 'Right to Repair'. The committee will be chaired by Nidhi Khatri (Additional Secretary of Department of Consumer Affairs).
149. The holy city of Varanasi showcasing India's culture and traditions over the ages will be declared the first "Cultural and Tourism Capital" of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Varanasi will become the "Cultural and Tourism Capital" of the SCO for 2022-23 under a new rotating initiative by the eight-member organisation to promote people-to-people contacts and tourism among the member states.
150. The RBI and the Bank Indonesia has signed an MoU in Bali Indonesia to improve mutual cooperation between them.
151. V.K. Singh has appointed as Director (Technical) of REC Limited.
152. Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has launched the fourth P17A stealth frigate 'Dunagiri' into the Hooghly River in Kolkata.
153. Consumer Affairs Department launches Jagriti, its new mascot Jagriti is a mascot created by the Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) with the goal of empowering customers and raising awareness of their rights.
154. Droupadi Murmu takes oath as India's 15th President; Reiterates her resolve to work towards inclusive growth of country.
155. New Delhi: 1st Khelo India Fencing Women's League to start at Talkatora Indoor Stadium , New delhi.
156. A 215-member Indian athlete contingent across 16 disciplines is all set to participate in the Commonwealth Games beginning on July 28 in Birmingham. Sports Authority of India has started a new initiative to cheer for Team India with the campaign "Create for India."
157. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has launched 'Swanirbhar Naari', a scheme to empower indigenous weavers in Assam's Guwahati.
158. India's rankings fell by three spots in the median mobile speeds, according to Ookla's Speedtest Global Index. India has at the number 115th spot in May this year, but it dropped down to 118th in June.
159. Rajarshi Gupta has taken over as Managing Director of ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL), the overseas investment arm of state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC).
160. Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah issued a decree to appoint Sheikh Mohammed Sabah Al Salem as a new Prime Minister.
161. Flipkart, the Indian e-commerce marketplace, has entered into an agreement with the Bihar State Skill Development Mission to help create a pool of skilled supply-chain operations talent via the Supply Chain Operations Academy (SCOA) in the state.
162. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has suspended four Congress members for the rest of the monsoon session for unruly behaviour and disrupting the proceedings of the House. The four suspended Congress MPs are Manickam Tagore, Ramya Haridas, Jothimani and TN Prathapan.
163. Five-G auctions begin today; Over 72,000 MHz of spectrum for period of 20 years being auctioned. It is expected that the spectrum will be utilised by Telecom Service Providers to roll-out of 5G technology-based services capable of providing speed and capacities which would be about 10 times higher than the current 4G services.

- 164.** India's Indermit Gill appointed Chief Economist of World Bank. Mr Gill will succeed American economist Carmen Reinhart in the role and his appointment will be effective September 1, 2022. Mr Gill is currently Vice President for Equitable Growth, Finance, and Institutions, where he led work on macroeconomics, debt, trade, poverty, and governance.
- 165.** India's foreign exchange reserves has dropped \$7.5 billion to \$572.7 billion during the week ended July 15, the latest data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed.
- 166.** The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has granted Kamal Haasan, one of the Tamil film industry's top stars, its prestigious 'Golden Visa.'
- 167.** With the Centre launching the "Har Ghar Tiranga" (hoisting of the flag at every home in the country) campaign, it has also made changes in the Flag Code of India 2002 allowing the tricolour to be flown by the public both day and night.
- 168.** The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has launched 'Aadhaar Face RD' app to enable Aadhaar card holders to authenticate their unique 12-digit identity number using face.
- 169.** Andhra Pradesh has selected Padmanabham mandal in Visakhapatnam district to implement the 'Family Doctor' project on a pilot basis. Under the scheme, Medical and health personnel should visit the Aarogyasri beneficiaries a week after being discharged from hospital to enquire about their health condition and get feedback.
- 170.** Union Minister for Science & Technology Dr Jitendra Singh released the 'India's Bioeconomy Report 2022' recently. India's Bio-economy has reached over USD 80 billion in 2021 with 14.1% growth over 2020. It is likely to touch 150 billion dollars by 2025 and over 300 billion dollars by 2030.
- 171.** Oak Fire recently broke out in Mariposa, California. It is the largest fire so far in 2022, overtaking 17,242 acres area. US firefighters (3000 in numbers) are trying to control the wildfire and stop its eastward expansion towards Yosemite National Park.
- 172.** The International Day for the Conservation of the Mangrove Ecosystem is observed on July 26, annually. It seeks to raise awareness on importance of mangrove ecosystems. Mangroves are considered as "a unique, special and vulnerable ecosystem".
- 173.** Startup Incubation and Innovation Centre (SIIC) at IIT Kanpur has launched "NIRMAN" Accelerator Programme, supported by the department of science and technology, the government of India.
- 174.** Large statue of Chandrashekhar Azad to be erected in Bhopal.
In Bhopal, a large statue honouring Amar Shaheed Chandrashekhar Azad will be erected. The statue site will be created as a source of inspiration for young people, with soil from Azad's hometown of Bhabra being used at its base.
- 175.** Wasifa Nazreen: First Bangladeshi to climb K2, second-highest peak in the world Mountaineer Wasifa Nazreen became the first person from Bangladesh to ascend Pakistan's administered K2, the second-highest mountain peak.
- 176.** Canara Bank has launched "Canara ai1", its mobile banking app. The banking app would be a one-stop solution with more than 250 features to cater to the banking needs of its customers.
- 177.** A Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) was conducted between Japan Maritime Self Defense Force and Indian Navy in the Andaman Sea.
INS Sukanya, an offshore patrol vessel and JS Samidare, a Murasame class destroyer, undertook various exercises including seamanship activities, aircraft operations and tactical manoeuvres as part of the operational interaction.
- 178.** Rajnath Singh, Minister of defence, to improve coordination between the armed forces, announced the creation of unified theatre commands of three services.

India is fast transitioning from being the world's top importer of defence equipment to an exporter. The defence minister was addressing at a ceremony held by the Jammu & Kashmir People's Forum in this city to honour the Indian Armed Forces martyrs.

- 179.** The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) has recognised former Indian Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane for his contribution to fostering ties between India and the US. The public service award has also been given to former US Defense Secretary General Jim Mattis in addition to Naravane. The USISPF gave prizes for public service and global leadership to those who had a significant impact on advancing connections between the US and India.
- 180.** The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has introduced a new A+ category for its umpires and Nitin Menon, along with ten other officials, have been grouped in the category. Umpires in A+ and A categories are paid Rs 40,000 a day for a first-class game while Rs 30,000 a day are paid in the B and C category. The others in the A+ category include four international umpires: Anil Chaudhary, Madangopal Jayaraman, Virender Kumar Sharma and K N Ananthapadmabhanan.
- 181.** PM Modi inaugurates and lays foundation stone of multiple projects of Sabar Dairy in Sabarkantha, Gujarat.
- 182.** Election Commission of India has said that youngsters above 17 years of age can now apply in advance for having their names enrolled in Voter's list. It said, now the youngster have to not necessarily await for the pre-requisite criterion of attaining the age of 18 years on 1st January of a year.
- 183.** HDFC Bank will be among the world's top 10 most valuable banks after its merger with parent HDFC at current valuations. It will also be the first Indian bank to make it to the top 10 club. HDFC Bank has a market capitalisation of about \$108 billion.
- 184.** Kaushik Rajashekara, an Indian-origin professor at the University of Houston, has won the prestigious Global Energy Prize for the year 2022.
- 185.** Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)'s long-standing title sponsor for international cricket at home – Paytm is backing out from the deal and will be replaced by Mastercard.
- 186.** On July 28, World Hepatitis Day is celebrated across the World, annually. The day seeks to raise awareness on the Hepatitis, which cause deaths of around 125 000 people in Africa every year, even though the disease can be cured. In year 2022, the World Hepatitis Day is being celebrated under the theme- "Bringing hepatitis care closer to you".
- 187.** Recently, government announced for companies to spend CSR funds on activities related to 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign. Government is organising the "Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign" as a part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- 188.** First stage of the Han Kuang Military Exercises was concluded recently and its second stage started on July 25, 2022. Second stage will run until July 29. The exercises involve all branches of Military of Taiwan.
- 189.** Russia is all set to exit the International Space Station after 2024. Russia took this decision after escalation of tensions between Russia and the West due to Russian military intervention in Ukraine and sanctions against Russia.
- 190.** Winston Churchill Leadership Award was presented to President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson presented the award on July 26, 2022, after comparing Winston Churchill and Zelensky in times of crises. Volodymyr Zelensky was presented this award for standing against Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 and fighting back.
- 191.** International Cricket Council (ICC) has confirmed that India will host the ICC Women's ODI World Cup 2025.
- 192.** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has slashed India's growth forecast for 2022-23 (FY23) by 80 basis points to 7.4 per cent from 8.2%.



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