



humanperitus

Current Events

August 2022

HUMAN PERITUS
www.humanperitus.com

The download for Current Affairs for Recruitment Test (RTs) exams of UPSC, including ALC, LEO, APFC, EPFO EO/AO, Admin Officer, Store Officer, Deputy Director, and Investigator Grade-I is available.

The Current Events are tailored to the latest RTs trends and requirements of UPSC. To optimize exam performance, focus on the following key points:

- Cover current events from the past 18 months only, up to the date of the exam. For periodic events, such as the Budget, Economic Survey, Nobel Prize, or Tournaments, refer to only the latest ones. For instance, for an April 2023 exam, study the 2023 budget, not the 2022 budget.
- The UPSC RT exam is factual, so don't delve into details or implications.
- The Return on Investment (ROI) for studying current affairs is generally low. Therefore, devote an appropriate amount of time to them while prioritizing other topics that have a higher ROI. For instance, studying 100 pages of current affairs may result in solving only 5 questions, while studying 100 pages of Polity could yield 14-15 questions.
- A few questions will always be unsolvable, no matter how much you've studied. Don't get discouraged by them, as they won't affect your selection.
- Based on experience, you can expect to answer approximately 60-70% of question in exam, from these concise current affairs booklets.
- Current affairs for UPSC RT exams are purely factual, so self-study is better than coaching classes. In fact, coaching classes are counterproductive, as a teacher may only cover 10 events in 60 minutes, while you can cover 35-40 events in the same time frame.

Finally, note that these files are specifically prepared for RT exams of UPSC and should not be used for Civil Services Preliminary exam (GS Paper 1).

If you want to report any correction/error/feedback, you are welcome at contact@humanperitus.com. We will check and respond within 1 working day.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

August 2022.....5

1. *Sports and Games* 5

2. *Science and Technology* 7

3. *Environment* 13

4. *Scheme and Programmes* 17

5. *Polity* 19

6. *Governance* 21

7. *International Relations* 25

8. *Awards and Recognition* 31

9. *Social Development* 34

10. *Economy* 38

11. *Important Days* 43

12. *Culture* 45

August 2022

1. Sports and Games

Tejaswin Shankar clinched bronze in Commonwealth Games 2022

Athlete Tejaswin Shankar has won India's first medal in athletics at the Commonwealth Games 2022 (CWG 22) by clinching bronze in the Men's High Jump Final.

The 2022 Commonwealth Games, officially known as XXII Commonwealth Games, was held in Birmingham, UK. Logo of the Event is given below:



As informed by the organizers, “the blue and yellow ‘B’ emblem is meant to link the venues of the sporting events to be held as part of the games. The colour palette represents Birmingham as the youngest city in Europe.”

The Commonwealth Games (*also known as the Friendly Games*) is an international multi-sport event involving athletes from the Commonwealth of Nations. The event was first held in 1930. The Commonwealth Games are quadrennial which means it is held for 4 years.

Background: In 1881, a new idea of having multiple games at one sports event was introduced by Astley Cooper.

India's Performance in CWG 2022

- India won 61 medals at Birmingham 2022.
- 61 Medals - 22 golds, 16 silvers and 23 bronze
- Sanket Sargar was the first Indian to win a medal in Birmingham, bagging a silver in the men's 55kg weightlifting event.
- Mirabai Chanu was the first Indian to win a gold at CWG 2022 while Jeremy Lalrinnunga was the first Indian man to clinch top podium at Birmingham.
- Sudhir won the first medal for India, a gold, in para sports at the CWG 2022. He became the champion in the para powerlifting men's heavyweight category.
- In the Lawn bowls India's women team clinched first ever gold after defeating South Africa country. Women team Lawn bowl include: Nayanmoni Saikia, Pinki, Lovely Choubey and Rupa Rani Tirkey.
- Indian women's cricket team has settled for the silver medal in Birmingham after losing to five-time T20 champions Australia.
- India's flag bearer for the opening ceremony of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games – PV Sindhu (badminton player) and Manpreet Singh (Indian men's hockey team captain).

England defeats Germany to win European Championship in Women's Soccer

England team has defeated Germany by 2-1 in the final of the European Championship to win its first major women's soccer title at Wembley Stadium. Also, England coach, Sarina Wiegman made history by becoming the first manager to win the Euros with two separate teams (England and Netherlands).

Serena Williams to retire from Tennis

Tennis veteran Serena Williams (USA) has announced her retirement from professional tennis. She has been ranked singles world No. 1 by the Women's Tennis Association for 319 weeks. She has won 23 Grand Slam

singles titles, the second most of all time by any player in the open history after an Australian player, Margaret Court (24). She won her first Grand Slam, the U.S. Open in 1999.

Virat Kohli first Indian to play 100 matches in all 3 Formats

Virat Kohli has become the first Indian and the second player overall in international cricket history to have played 100 matches each in all three formats of the game. The only other cricketer is Ross Taylor (New Zealand).

2. Science and Technology

Delhi, Bengaluru Airports launch ‘DigiYatra’ App for face recognition

Airports at Delhi and Bengaluru have launched the beta version of the DigiYatra App.

DigiYatra (DY): It is a Biometric Enabled Seamless Travel (BEST) experience based on Facial Recognition Technology. It is a part of the DY Central Ecosystem (DYCE). The app links facial features to the documents, like ID proof, vaccine proof and boarding pass. Thus, the passengers’ face acts as their ID proof and travel document, automatically validating entry at all checkpoints including entry into the airport, security check areas, aircraft boarding, etc. through E-Gate.

Facial Recognition is a way of identifying or confirming an individual’s identity using their face. The systems can be used to identify people in photos, videos, or in real-time. Computer algorithms map unique facial-landmarks (biometric data) such as shape of the cheekbones, contours of the lips, and distance from forehead to chin, and convert these into a numerical code—termed faceprint.

Indian Army tests its satellite-based system under Operation Skylight

The Indian Army has tested the operational readiness of its satellite-based systems deployed across the country under Operation ‘Skylight’. Satellite-based systems provide resilience to communication capabilities in case terrestrial connectivity is disrupted in conflicts.

Also in March 2022, the Defence Acquisition Council, government’s weapons procurement body, cleared the Indian Army proposal for a GSAT-7B satellite to sharpen its operational capabilities.

GSAT 7 series

GSAT 7 series satellites are advanced satellites developed by ISRO to meet the communication needs of the defence services. GSAT 7 satellite (launched in 2013) is mainly used by the Indian Navy for its communication needs. It helps the Navy to have a secure, real time communication link.

GSAT 7A (launched in 2018) helps in boosting the connectivity between the ground radar stations, airbases and the Airborne Early Warning & Control Aircraft (AEW&C) of the IAF (Indian Air Force).

GSAT 7B will primarily fulfil the communication needs of the Army. It will help the Army enhance its surveillance in border areas.

DRDO and Indian Army successfully test-fired Laser-Guided ATGM

DRDO and Indian Army have successfully test-fired indigenously developed Laser-Guided Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM) from Main Battle Tank (MBT) Arjun.

The all-indigenous Laser Guided ATGM employs a tandem High Explosive Anti-Tank (HEAT) warhead to defeat Explosive Reactive Armour (ERA) protected armoured vehicles. The ATGM has been developed with multi-platform launch capability and is currently undergoing technical evaluation trial.

DRDO and Indian Navy successfully flight-tested VL-SRSAM

Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy have successfully flight tested the indigenously developed Vertical Launch Short Range Surface-to-Air Missile (VL-SRSAM) from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.

The VL-SRSAM system has been designed to strike high-speed airborne targets at the range of 40 to 50 km and at an altitude of around 15 km. Its design is based on Astra missile, which is a Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air

missile. VL-SRSAM is a canisterised system, which means it is stored and operated from specially designed compartments.

What are Small Modular Reactors?

One of the NITI Aayog members has suggested that the government should focus on setting up Small Modular Reactors as it would help meet the country's energy needs and also in replacing aging Thermal Power Plants.

Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) are advanced Nuclear Reactors that have a power capacity of up to 300 MW(e) per unit, which is about one-third of the generating capacity of traditional nuclear power reactors. They can produce a large amount of low-carbon electricity.

SMR means:

- *Small*: physically a fraction of the size of a conventional nuclear power reactor.
- *Modular*: making it possible for systems and components to be factory-assembled and transported as a unit to a location for installation.
- *Reactors*: harnessing nuclear fission to generate heat to produce energy.

What is Quantum Key Distribution?

Bengaluru-based Start-up 'QNu labs' has innovated advanced secured communication through Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) systems. It is developed by QNu Labs under aegis of Innovation for Defence Excellence (iDEX).

Quantum Key Distribution (QKD): It is a secure communication technology that uses quantum physics to construct a cryptographic protocol. It allows 2 parties to generate a shared secret key that is only known to them and can be used to encrypt and decrypt messages, thus achieving a very highly secure communication.

In QKD, security is achieved through the laws of quantum physics. Two such important laws in quantum physics, in this regard, are Superposition and Entanglement.

- *Superposition* means that each quantum bit (basic unit of information in a quantum computer) can represent both a 1 and a 0 at the same time.
- In *quantum entanglement*, subatomic particles become "entangled" (linked) in such a way that any change in one disturbs the other even if both are at opposite ends of the universe.

iDEX is operational framework of Defence Innovation Organization (DIO), a special purpose vehicle under Ministry of Defence. Objective of iDEX is to create an innovative and entrepreneurial ecosystem, specifically in Defence and Aerospace sector.

CSIR launches India's first indigenously developed Hydrogen Fuel Cell

India's first indigenously developed Hydrogen Fuel Cell bus was launched. It is jointly developed by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and private firm KPIT Technologies Ltd.

Fuel cell is an electrochemical energy conversion device which generates electricity, heat and water by using hydrogen and air. Applications of Fuel Cell can be classified into 3 broad sectors:

- (i) Transport,
- (ii) Portable such as military applications, Auxiliary Power Units, laptops etc., and
- (iii) Stationary such as power to industrial/commercial/residential buildings etc.

Green Hydrogen is hydrogen generated by renewable energy or from low-carbon power. It is produced by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen using an electrolyzer powered by renewable energy sources such as wind and solar. Project offers benefits of decarbonizing far-off regions (ex- Ladakh) and meet the clean energy goals because of its features like sustainability, easy to store etc.

CSIR is the largest Research & Development (R&D) organisation in India established in 1942. It is funded by the Ministry of Science and Technology but operates as an autonomous body through the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

Headquarters: *New Delhi*

India's First Commercial SSA Observatory to be set up in Uttarakhand

Digantara, a space sector Start-up of India, is going to set-up India's first commercial Space Situational Awareness (SSA) observatory in Garhwal region of Uttarakhand. It will be able to track objects as small as 10 cm in size orbiting the earth.

Space Situational Awareness refers to knowledge of space environment, assessment of any threats to space activities and implementation of necessary mitigation measures to safeguard space assets.

ISRO has SSA Control Centre – “NETRA (Network for Space Objects Tracking and Analysis)” in Bengaluru, to detect debris and other hazards to Indian satellites. Also, India and US have signed a bilateral SSA arrangement.

SSA covers 3 main areas:

- Space Surveillance and Tracking (SST) of man-made objects.
- Space Weather (SWE) monitoring and forecast.
- Near-Earth Objects (NEO) monitoring (only natural space objects)

Govt. launches India's first Saline Water Lantern – Roshni

Government of India has launched India's first Saline Water Lantern named “Roshni”. It uses the sea water as the electrolyte between specially designed electrodes to power the LED lamps. It is developed by National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai. Note that, the technology can also be used in hinterlands, as any saline/normal water mixed with common salt can be used to power the lantern.

What are ANPR Cameras?

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is planning to remove all the toll plazas on the national highways and rely on Automatic Number Plate Reader (ANPR) cameras.

ANPR Cameras will read the vehicle number plates and automatically deduct toll fees from the bank accounts of the vehicle owners. The entries and exits of the toll roads will have these cameras installed. Only those number plates that have come after 2019 will be registered by these cameras.

What is Green Modulation?

In recent studies, it has been found that, adding a second copy of one of its own genes has boosted the yield of a Chinese rice variety by up to 40%. It boosts grain yields and shortens the growth duration of rice. The phenomena is termed as Gene Modulation.

Gene Modulation refers to the process of temporarily altering gene expression levels without making heritable changes to the underlying cellular DNA.

Rice is a kharif crop which requires high temperature, (above 25°C) and high humidity with annual rainfall above 100 cm. Leading producer States of Rice are West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab.

Ministry of Communication communicates about Reduction in EMF Emissions

According to Ministry of Communication, Electro-Magnetic Field (EMF) emissions from Mobile towers are non-ionizing Radio frequencies having very minuscule power and are incapable of causing any adverse environmental impact.

The International EMF Project of World Health Organisation (WHO) has published an information sheet in 2005 on effect of EMF emissions on animals, insects, vegetation and aquatic life and has concluded that the exposure limits in the Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines for protection of human health are also protective of the environment.

Electro-Magnetic Field are invisible areas of energy, often referred to as radiation, that are associated with the use of electrical power and various forms of natural and man-made lighting. EMFs are typically grouped into 2 categories by their frequency:

1. Non-ionizing: low-level radiation which is generally perceived as harmless to humans.

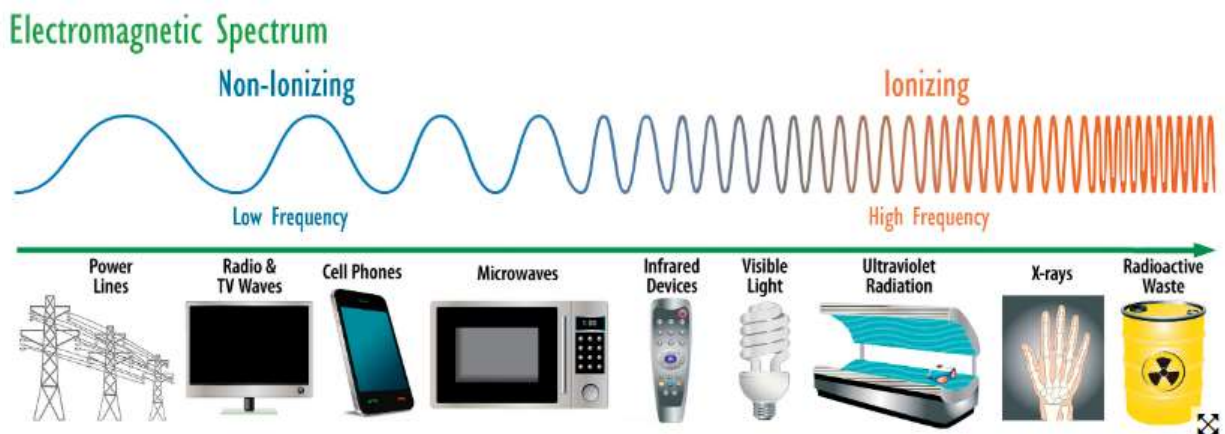
Form of Radiation: Extremely Low Frequency (ELF), Radio Frequency (RF), Microwaves, Visible Light

Sources - Microwave ovens, Computers, House energy smart meters, Wireless (wifi) networks, Cell Phones, Bluetooth devices, Power lines, MRIs

2. Ionizing: high-level radiation which has the potential for cellular and DNA damage.

Forms of Radiation: Ultraviolet (UV), X-Rays, Gamma

Sources - Sunlight, X-Rays, Some Gamma Rays



ISRO successfully carries out test-firing of Low Attitude Escape Monitor

ISRO has successfully carried out the test-firing of the Low Altitude Escape Motor (LEM) of the Crew Escape System, from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh for the ‘Gaganyaan Project’. The Crew Escape System (CES) takes away the Crew module of the Gaganyaan mission in case of any eventuality and rescues the astronauts. The LEM is a distinctive special purpose solid rocket motor.

The *Gaganyaan Programme* envisages undertaking the demonstration of indigenous capability to undertake human spaceflight to Low Earth Orbit (LEO). As part of this programme, 2 unmanned and 1 manned mission will be carried out. Firstly, ISRO is planning to launch an unmanned mission under Gaganyaan in 2022,

following which, the second unmanned mission “Vyommitra” will carry a robot and this, will then be followed by the manned mission.

With this launch, India will become the 4th nation in the world to launch a Human Spaceflight Mission after USA, Russia and China. 4 Indian astronaut candidates have already undergone generic space flight training in Russia as part of the Gaganyaan programme.

Ministry of Home Affairs launches National Automated Fingerprint Identification System

National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS) has been launched by the Home Ministry to allow a country-wide search of crime-related fingerprints.

NAFIS will create a unique 10-digit National Fingerprint Number (NFN) for each person arrested for the crime. Using the database of fingerprints, different crimes can be linked to NFN. It will provide the much-needed unique identifier for every arrested person in the CCTNS (Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems). It is developed by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). It is already being implemented in Madhya Pradesh.

NIPUN Mines; The Landing Craft Assault (LCA) and the F-INSAS System

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has handed over several new defence systems, including the F-INSAS, the Nipun mines, and the Landing Craft Assault (LCA), to the Army. The equipment/systems have been jointly developed by Indian Army in collaboration with Defence Public Sector Undertakings, Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO).

F-INSAS system: F-INSAS stands for Future Infantry Soldier as a System, a programme for infantry modernisation aimed at increasing the operational capability of the soldier. As part of the project, soldiers are being equipped with modern systems that are lightweight, all-weather-all terrain, cost-effective and low maintenance.

Nipun mines are indigenously designed and developed anti-personnel mines, termed by the DRDO as ‘soft target blast munition’. These mines are meant to act as the first line of defence against infiltrators and enemy infantry. They have been developed with the efforts of the Armament Research and Development Establishment.

The *Landing Craft Assault (LCA)* is meant to serve as a replacement for the boats with limited capabilities currently in use in the Pangong Tso lake. The LCA, which has been indigenously developed by Goa-based Aquarius Shipyard Limited, is said to have better launch, speed and capacity to operate across water obstacles in eastern Ladakh.

CII and EY releases report titled – India: The Next Global SaaS Capital

A report titled “India: The Next Global SaaS Capital” has been developed by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and EY based on inputs. It aims to educate the world on India as the future global SaaS destination.

SaaS is a software distribution model in which a cloud provider hosts applications and makes them available to end users over the internet. For examples, it includes services provided by Google Workspace, Adobe Creative Cloud, Github etc.

Note that, it is one of three main categories of cloud computing, alongside:

- *Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)* where company leases a whole digital infrastructure (servers, network resources, etc.) for organizing business activities, creating applications, data storing, etc, and

- *Platform as a Service (PaaS)* where cloud environment (hardware, software, development tools and infrastructure) is provided for creating apps and their further support.

PM addresses Smart India Hackathon 2022

Prime Minister of India has addressed the Grand Finale of Smart India Hackathon, launched in the year of 2017.

Smart India Hackathon is a nationwide initiative, by Ministry of Education (then HRD), to provide students a platform to solve some of pressing problems we face in our daily lives. It provides a platform to offer out-of-the-box ideas and thus inculcate a culture of product innovation and a mindset of problem solving.

Note that, every year SIH had 2 editions – SIH Software and SIH Hardware. This year Smart India Hackathon-Junior has also been introduced for school students to build a culture of innovation and problem-solving attitude at the school level.

3. Environment

India to submit its updated NDC to UNFCCC (update in Schemes, etc.)

India has submitted its Updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Earlier, 'Glasgow Climate Pact', signed during the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP), of UNFCCC had requested Parties to revisit and strengthen the 2030 targets in their NDCs by the end of 2022.

India submitted its first NDC to UNFCCC in 2015. The 2015 NDC comprised 8 goals; 3 of which have quantitative targets upto namely,

- (i) cumulative Electric Power Installed capacity from non-fossil sources to reach 40%;
- (ii) reduce the Emissions Intensity of GDP by 33 to 35 % compared to 2005 levels; and
- (iii) creation of Additional Carbon Sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through additional forest and tree cover.

India's updated NDCs:

It represents the framework for India's transition to cleaner energy for the period 2021-2030. The new NDCs have updated 2 of the 3 quantitative targets of 2015 NDCs related to emissions intensity and share of non-fossil fuels in installed electricity capacity.

These are – India now stands committed to reduce Emissions Intensity of its GDP by 45 % by 2030, from 2005 level and achieve about 50 % cumulative Electric Power Installed Capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030.

Key Points related to Ethanol Blending

According to the Government, India has achieved the target of 10% ethanol blending in petrol 5 months ahead of schedule.

Key Points

- India started ethanol blending programme in 2003 with an aim to blend 5% ethanol in petrol in nine States and four UTs.
- The 'National Policy on Biofuels', 2018 envisaged an indicative target of 20% ethanol blending in petrol (E20) by 2030. It has now been preponed to 2025.
- In 2018 Government launched Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN (Jaiv Indhan-Vatavaran Anukool fasal awashesh Nivaran) Yojana". It seeks to provide financial support to Integrated Bioethanol Projects using lignocellulosic biomass and other renewable feedstock.
- Department of Food and Public Distribution (DFPD) is the nodal department for promotion of fuel grade ethanol producing distilleries in the country.

Ethanol, or ethyl alcohol, is a liquid that has several uses. At 95% purity, it is called rectified spirit and is used as the intoxicating ingredient in alcoholic beverages. At 99%-plus purity, ethanol is used for blending with petrol. Both products are made from molasses, a by-product of sugar manufacturing.

India's first Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion Plant

The National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), an autonomous Institute under Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) is establishing India's first Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) plant.

OTEC plant will have a capacity of 65kW in Kavaratti, Lakshadweep with indigenous technology. The plant will power the 1 lakh litre per day Low Temperature Thermal Desalination Plant, which converts seawater into potable water.

Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) is a process for producing energy by harnessing the temperature differences (thermal gradients) between ocean surface waters and deep ocean waters. In tropical regions, surface water, heated by sun's energy, can be much warmer than deep water. This temperature difference can be used to produce electricity and to desalinate ocean water. OTEC systems use a temperature difference of at least 20° Celsius to power a turbine to produce electricity. OTEC plants may be land-based as well as floating or grazing.

Ocean energy refers to all forms of renewable energy derived from the sea.

Forms of Ocean based Energy:

1. *Wave Energy:* It is generated by the movement of a device either floating on the surface of the ocean or moored to the ocean floor by the force generated by the ocean waves.
2. *Current Energy:* It captures kinetic energy from the ocean currents with submerged turbines.
3. *Tidal Energy:* Harness potential energy from difference in water levels from low tide and high tide.

Stockholm World Water Week 2022 held

World Water Week is held in last week of August every year and was initially part of a public water festival in the Swedish capital, Stockholm, started in 1991. It is the meeting place to address the global water issues and to understand how water can help us address the world's greatest challenges.

Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) is a not-for-profit institute with a wide range of expertise in water governance – from sanitation and water resources management to water diplomacy. This year theme was “*Seeing the Unseen: The Value of Water*”

India accorded independent and international legal entity status to CDRI

India has signed ‘Headquarter Agreement’ with CDRI, thereby accorded the status of an ‘independent and international legal entity’ to CDRI.

Agreement will enable CDRI to pursue functions internationally with all rights, immunities, and privileges, as per United Nations (Privileges & Immunities) Act, 1947. Note that, India enacted UN (Privileges & Immunities) Act, 1947 to give effect to Convention on Privileges and Immunities of United Nations, adopted by UN General Assembly in 1946.

Headquarter Agreement is an agreement between an international organisation and host State to determine the privileges and immunities necessary for its good functioning.

CDRI (Headquartered: New Delhi): It is a global partnership of national governments, UN agencies and programmes, private sector, and academic and research institutions. It was launched in 2019 by Indian Prime Minister at UN Climate Action Summit (New York). It aims to promote resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks, thereby ensuring sustainable development. It aims to work at intersection of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Paris Climate Agreement.

MoEF&CC notifies Elephant Reserve in Tamil Nadu

Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change has notified areas of Kanyakumari and Tirunelveli as Agasthiyarmalai Elephant Reserve in Tamil Nadu.

Elephants: The Indian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) are found in the Central and Southern Western Ghats, North-East India, Eastern India and Northern India and in some parts of Southern Peninsular India. It is included in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES).

IUCN Status: *Endangered*

Related Initiatives:

- India launched 'Project Elephant' in 1992. Under the project, the government provides technical and financial help to States to save elephants.
- Development of Elephant Reserves.
- Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE), an international effort for conservation of elephants in Asia and Africa.

World Elephant Day is celebrated on August 12 to raise awareness about the plight of elephants and the need to protect them.

What is Strong Thermal Emission Velocity Enhancement (STEVE)?

A sudden solar storm struck the Earth's magnetic field late on 7th August 2022 night.

Strong Thermal Emission Velocity Enhancement, or STEVE for short, is a puzzling aurora-like phenomenon that appeared as a result of the storm's collision with our planet's outer shield. STEVE first appeared in the sky in 2017 and has been appearing often since. It has been observed in New Zealand, Canada, Alaska and UK.

ONGC to generate electricity in Ladakh using Geothermal Power

ONGC has stated drilling its first well at Puga (Ladakh) to generate electricity using Geothermal Power to reduce the dependence of Ladakh on diesel-run generators. It will be India's first geothermal energy project and also the world's highest at 14,000ft.

Geothermal Energy is the heat from the earth. This heat is used for bathing, to heat buildings, and to generate electricity. It is a renewable energy source because heat is continuously produced inside the earth.

Source: Hot water or steam reservoirs deep in the earth are accessed by drilling.

Puga hot spring area has the greatest potential for the near-term development of geothermal energy in the Indian subcontinent. It is located at the junction of the Indian and Tibetan plates along the Indus Suture Zone.

The top 5 countries in terms of geothermal power generation are the US, Philippines, Indonesia, Mexico and New Zealand.

Union Cabinet nod for Climate Pledges taken at Glasgow Summit

India has ratified pledges made by the Prime Minister in Glasgow in November 2021 to accelerate India's reliance on renewable energy to power the economy and be effectively fossil fuel-free by 2070.

Climate Action Plan announced by the Government of India during the COP26 (termed as '*Panchamrit*')

- India will reach its non-fossil energy capacity to 500 GW by 2030.
- India will meet 50 % of its energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030.
- India will reduce the total projected carbon emissions by 1 billion tonnes from now onwards till 2030.
- By 2030, India will reduce the carbon intensity of its economy by less than 45 %.
- By the year 2070, India will achieve the target of Net Zero carbon emission.

Bhitarkanika National Park

The Bhitarkanika National Park have reached a saturation point in the population of crocodile which could lead to more human-Crocodile conflict.

Notable Points related to Bhitarkanika National Park:

- Bhitarkanika National Park is situated in Odisha.
- It is the second largest Mangrove ecosystems of India.
- The National Park is essentially a network of creeks and canals which are inundated with waters from rivers Brahmani, Baitarani, Dhamra and Patasala forming a unique ecosystem.
- Its proximity to Bay of Bengal makes the soil of the area enriched with salts, the vegetation and the species of the sanctuary is comprised of those which are mainly found in the tropical and subtropical inter tidal regions.
- It is the breeding place for the Salt-Water Crocodiles.
- The Gahirmatha Beach which forms the boundary of the sanctuary in the east is the largest colony of the Olive Ridley Sea Turtles.
- The other unique phenomenon is the Bagagahana or the heronry near Surajpore creek. Thousands of birds colonize the creek for nesting and the aerial acrobatics performed prior to mating make for an impressive sight.
- Bhitarkanika is also home to eight varieties of Kingfisher birds which is also a rarity.

4. Scheme and Programmes

NMCG organizes ‘Yamuna Par Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has organized the event ‘Yamuna Par Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’. In the event, Government launched several initiatives under the concept of ‘Arth Ganga’.

Several new initiatives were launched under Arth Ganga concept during the event of ‘Yamuna Par Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’ organized by National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).

Arth Ganga is a concept espoused by the Prime Minister of India during National Ganga Council meeting in Kanpur in 2019. It focuses on creating economic livelihood opportunities to sustain the activities under Namami Gange Programme, the flagship program of the Government to clean Ganga and its tributaries.

New initiatives launched under it:

- *Jalaj*: Launched at 26 locations on Ganga basin main stem states. It involves setting up of small shops or floating mobile centres to promote livelihood on the banks of River Ganga.
- *MoU between NMCG and Sahakar Bharti*: It aims at identifying 75 villages in 5 States on the main stem that will be designated as ‘Sahakar Ganga Grams’, promoting natural farming among the farmers, FPOs and Cooperatives and facilitating marketing of natural farming/organic produce under brand Ganga.
- *Tourism-related portal – ImAvatar*: to promote livelihood opportunities along the Ganga basin by facilitating tourism, marketing of local products (both agriculture and handicrafts), and sustainability of ghats and other assets created by NMCG.

Namami Gange Programme is a World Bank funded Central Sector Scheme under the Ministry of Jal Shakti for effective abatement of pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.

It has a 5-tiered structure

- National Ganga Council under chairmanship of Prime Minister of India.
- Empowered Task Force (ETF) under chairmanship of Union Minister of Jal Shakti.
- National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).
- State Ganga Committees.
- District Ganga Committees in every specified district abutting river Ganga and its tributaries in the states.

Other components:

- ‘Ganga Task Force’ to spread public awareness.
- Ganga Praharis, a grassroots-level workforce.

Atal Pension Yojana (addition in Development schemes)

Ministry of Finance has issued an order that all income tax payers will not be eligible to join in Atal Pension Yojana (APY) scheme w.e.f. 1st October 2022.

APY was launched in 2015 by replacing Swavalamban scheme to create a universal social security system for all Indians, especially poor, under-privileged and workers in unorganised sector.

MoLE announces convergence of ESI Scheme with Ayushman Bharat

Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoLE) has announced expansion of ESI Scheme and convergence with Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY). This convergence will create an

ecosystem wherein ESI beneficiaries will be able to access services at ABPM-JAY empanelled Hospitals and vice versa.

Employee State Insurance Scheme was launched under ESI Act, 1948 by MoLE. It aims to provide social security to the industrial workers in certain contingencies such as sickness, maternity, temporary or permanent physical disablement and death due to employment injury resulting in loss of wages or earning capacity.

MoSJ&E launches SMILE-75 Initiative

The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has launched the “SMILE-75 Initiative”.

SMILE (Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise Scheme) is aimed at making cities/towns and municipal areas begging-free and comprehensive rehabilitation of the persons engaged in the act of begging. Under the initiative, 75 Municipal Corporations in collaboration with NGOs and other stakeholders will cover several comprehensive welfare measures for persons who are engaged in the act of begging.

5. Polity

Chhattisgarh notifies PESA Rules on World Tribal Day

Chhattisgarh has notified the rules for implementation of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) (PESA) Act, 1996 on the occasion of World Tribal Day. With PESA rules being notified, Chhattisgarh became the 7th State in the country to frame rules and implement PESA after Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Telangana.

World Tribal Day: 9th August

PESA Act, 1996: Based on the recommendations of Dileep Singh Bhuria Committee, PESA Act was enacted in 1996 for tribal empowerment and to bring them into the mainstream. Ministry of Panchayati Raj is the nodal Ministry for implementation of the provisions of PESA in the States. PESA Act is called a 'Constitution within the Constitution' as it provides for the extension of the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution relating to the Panchayats to the Scheduled Areas of 10 States under Article 244(1) read with Schedule 5, with certain modifications and exceptions.

What are Parliament Privileges?

On privileges enjoyed by Member of Parliaments, Rajya Sabha Chairman has stated that MPs do not enjoy any immunity from arrest in criminal cases when House is in session and cannot avoid summons issued by law enforcement agencies.

Parliamentary Privileges are certain rights and immunities enjoyed by MPs, individually and collectively, so that they can "effectively discharge their functions". These rights are also given to those individuals who speak and participate in any committee of the Parliament, which includes the Attorney General of India and the Union Ministers.

Special Privileges are enshrined under Article 105 (for Parliament) and Article 194 (for State Legislature) of Constitution. One of the privileges is that a member of Parliament cannot be arrested in a civil case 40 days before the commencement of the session or committee meeting and 40 days thereafter.

Shri. Jagdeep Dhankhar elects as 14th Vice President of India

Shri. Jagdeep Dhankhar has been elected as the 14th Vice President of India.

Vice President is the second-highest constitutional post, provided under Article 63 of the Constitution. He is elected by, method of indirect election, members of an electoral college consisting of the members of both Houses of Parliament. He holds office for a term of 5 years but can resign and can be removed before completion of 5 years. He acts as the ex-officio Chairman of Rajya Sabha.

CJI assures atleast 1 Constitutional Bench throughout the year

Chief Justice of India has assured that there will be at least one Constitution Bench functioning throughout the year in the Supreme Court.

A *Constitution Bench* is a bench of the Supreme Court having 5 or more judges on it. Presently, they are set up by the CJI on an ad-hoc basis as and when the need arises. The Chief Justice of India has the power to constitute a Constitution Bench and refer cases to it.

Constitution Benches are set up only if one or more of the following circumstances exist:

- *Article 143:* Case involves a substantial question of law pertaining to the interpretation of the Constitution.

- *Article 145(3)*: President of India has sought the SC's opinion on a question of fact or law under Article 143.
- Two or more three-judge benches of SC have delivered conflicting judgments on the same point of law, thus warranting a definitive pronouncement by a larger bench.
- A later three-judge bench doubts the correctness of a judgment delivered by a previous three-judge bench of SC and decides to refer to a larger bench for a reconsideration of earlier judgment.

Note that, in a related development, for the first time the SC livestreamed its proceeding to ensure right of access to justice, guaranteed under Article 21.

Key Points related to Fundamental Duties

CJI of India has said that Fundamental Duties are not just pedantic, they are key to social transformation.

Fundamental Duties is meant to guide citizens to engineer a social transformation. While the constitution has granted us inalienable rights, it places upon us certain fundamental duties. The fundamental duties serve as a reminder to citizens that while enjoying their rights, they have also to be quite conscious of the duties they owe to their country, their society and to their fellow citizens.

Notable Points

- The idea of Fundamental Duties is inspired by the Constitution of Russia.
- These were incorporated in Part IV-A of the Constitution by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976 on the recommendations of the Swaran Singh Committee.
- Originally 10 in number, one more duty was added through the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002.
- All the 11 duties are listed in Article 51 - A of the Constitution (the sole Article in Part-IV-A).
- However, like the Directive Principles, the duties are also non-justiciable in nature.

6. Governance

Sports Administration in India

After the dissolution of the Committee of Administrators (CoA) by the Supreme Court (SC), the Bureau of FIFA Council has lifted the suspension on All India Football Federation (AIFF). This will help India to hold FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup 2022 (scheduled to take place in India in October 2022).

The CoA was appointed by the Supreme Court to manage the AIFF affairs and adoption of its constitution in line with the National Sports Code and Model Guidelines. Dissolution of CoA was a necessary condition from FIFA to lift the AIFF suspension as it gives AIFF full control on its daily affairs.

Sports Administration in India: In India, Sports oversight and direction is broadly divided under 2 wings as –

- the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) and its subordinate organisations (e.g., Sports Authority of India (SAI); and
- Sports Organizations under Olympic Charter, i.e., Indian Olympic Association (IOA), State Olympic Association (SOA), National Sports Federation (NSF) etc.

For Non-Olympic Sports such as Cricket, concerned organizations (such as Board of Control for Cricket in India) have direct affiliation from respective international federations.

MoSPI releases report titled – Demographic Dividend

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoS&PI) has released a Report titled – ‘Youth in India 2022’ Report. According to it, India's favorable demographic dividend is at an inflection point of sorts, with the population share of the youth starting to taper off.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the *demographic dividend* is the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure.

The situation of having a relatively larger working-age population is related to the so-called first demographic dividend. As the working-age population matures, the prospect of retirement can provide the motivation to save for financial security. The additional savings can either be consumed or used to prolong economic growth. This stage of economic growth has been termed as the second demographic dividend, which can occur in the later stage of the demographic transition.

Key initiatives to tap the demographic dividend:

- *National Youth Policy, 2014 (NYP-2014):* It focuses on education, employment and skill development and entrepreneurship.
- *Skill India Mission:* It has introduced common norms for skills, competencies, occupational standards, and training activities through a National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) and Sector Skill Councils (SSCs).
- *Start-up India:* The government is providing an enabling environment, access to finance and facilitating the incubation of start-ups.
- *Women centric approach:* Special provisions to incentivize female employment such as MGNREGA, PMEGP, MUDRA.

MPEDA celebrates its 50 years of establishment

MPEDA has celebrated its 50 years of establishment.

MPEDA: It was launched in 1972 as a statutory body of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as the nodal agency to promote the export of marine products. It is given the mandate to promote the marine products industry with special reference to exports from the country.

The erstwhile Marine Products Export Promotion Council established in 1961 was converged in to MPEDA. It is empowered to regulate exports of marine products and take all measures required for ensuring sustained, quality seafood exports from the country.

Its key functions include:

- Identifying bottlenecks in seafood trade and taking corrective action.
- Registering seafood processing units, fishing vessels, pre-processing centres, etc.
- Marketing activities such as buyer-seller meets, delegation visits to potential markets, etc.
- Promotes research and development for commercial aquaculture activities through the Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Aquaculture (RGCA).
- Undertaking capacity building measures through societies such as National Centre for Sustainable Aquaculture and Network for Fish Quality Management and Sustainable Fishing.

Since 2004, it is implementing the National Residue Control Plan (NRCP), for monitoring the residues of substances like Antibacterial/Veterinary Medicinal Products, etc. for exports of marine products to the European Union.

Dept. of Commerce notifies new rule for Work From Home

The Department of Commerce has notified a new Rule, namely Rule 43A - Work from Home in Special Economic Zones Rules, 2006 across all Special Economic Zones. The notification was issued on demand from the industry for making a provision for a country wide uniform Work From Home (WFH) policy across all Special Economic Zones.

The notification under Rule 43A provides work from home for following category of employees of a unit in Special Economic Zone:

- (i) Employees of IT/ITeS SEZ units
- (ii) Employees, who are temporarily incapacitated
- (iii) Employees, who are travelling
- (iv) Employees, who are working offsite

As per the new notification, WFH may be extended to maximum 50 % of total employees including contractual employees of the unit. There is flexibility granted to Development Commissioner (DC) of SEZs to approve a higher number of employees (more than 50%) for any bona-fide reason to be recorded in writing.

Work From Home is now allowed for a maximum period of 1-year. However, same may further be extended for a period of 1 year at a time by the DC on the request of units. In respect of SEZ units whose employees are already working from home, the notification has provided a transition period of 90 days to seek approval.

NCRB's NIDAAN Portal – database of narcotics offenders – gets operational

A first-of-its kind database of arrested narcotics offenders – NIDAAN portal – has been made operational for use by various central and State prosecution agencies tasked to enforce anti-drugs laws in the country. The portal – NIDAAN or the National Integrated Database on Arrested Narco-offenders – has been developed by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).

NIDAAN is a first-of-its-kind database and one-stop solution for all narcotics offenders related data of arrested narcotics offenders for prosecution agencies. It is part of earlier launched Narcotics Coordination Mechanism (NCORD) portal. It sources its data from the ICJS (Inter-operable Criminal Justice System) and e-Prisons (a cloud-based application) repository. It is planned to integrate with Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS).

Delhi Police, first to make collection of forensic evidence mandatory

Delhi Police has become first Police force in country to make collection of forensic evidence mandatory in crimes punishable by more than 6 years. Forensic evidence is the application of science within legal proceeding.

NCRB releases report on Accidental Death & Suicides in India

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) released the “Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India Report 2021.” The report tabled figures for “Crime Against Women”, “Suicide” and “Crime Rates”.

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) (HQ: New Delhi): It was established in 1986 based on the recommendations of the National Police Commission (1977) and the modalities worked out by a Task Force (1985). NCRB also looks after the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS), Central Finger Print Bureau etc.

Govt. amends Right of Way Rules for Faster 5G Roll-out

Ministry of Communications, Electronics & IT and the Ministry of Railways has released amendment in the Indian Telegraph Right of Way (RoW) Rules, 2016 to facilitate faster and easier deployment of Telecom Infrastructure. Ministry released the 5G RoW application ‘form’ on GatiShakti Sanchar Portal to enable a faster 5G roll-out in India.

Right of Way is the legal right, established by a grant from a landowner or long usage, to pass along a specific route through property belonging to another.

PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan (PMGS-NMP) was launched in October 2021 for providing multimodal connectivity infrastructure to various economic zones. It is a transformative approach for economic growth and sustainable development. The approach is driven by 7 engines, namely: Railways, Roads, Ports, Waterways, Airports, Mass Transport, Logistics Infrastructure.

The approach is powered by Clean Energy and *Sabka Prayas* – the efforts of the Central Government, the state governments, and the private sector together – leading to huge job and entrepreneurial opportunities for all, especially the youth.

Government’s Bal Aadhaar initiative

According to the Government, the Unique Identification Authority has enrolled more than 79 lakh children in the 0-5 age group during the first four months (April – July) of the current financial year.

Baal Aadhaar vs normal Aadhaar: To differentiate the Bal Aadhaar from normal Aadhaar, it is issued in blue colour, with a remark that this is valid till the child attains the age of 5 years. On attaining the age of 5, the child is required to furnish his or her biometrics at an Aadhaar Seva Kendra to complete a process called mandatory biometric update (MBU). The MBU process goes through a de-duplication process. After completion of this process, the child is issued a normal Aadhaar without any change in the Aadhaar number.

UIDAI: The UIDAI is a statutory authority established in July 2016.

Parent body: Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

Mandate: The UIDAI is mandated to assign a 12-digit Unique Identification (UID) number (Aadhaar) to all the residents of India.

Principal Scientific Adviser launches Manthan Portal

Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser has launched Manthan Portal for promoting collaboration between industry and the Scientific research and development ecosystem to meet India's sustainability goals.

Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) is the Chief Advisor to the government on matters related to scientific policy and holds a secretary-level position. 'Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser', through the PM's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC) helps scientific cross-sectoral synergy across ministries, institutions and the industry. First PSA was A. P. J. Abdul Kalam (1999-2002).

Central Government introduces Competition (Amendment) Bill 2022 in Lok Sabha

The Central Government has introduced the Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2022 in the Lok Sabha to amend the Competition Act, 2002.

The Competition Act, 2002 was enacted to provide for establishment of Competition Commission of India (CCI). CCI aims:

- to prevent practices having adverse effect on competition,
- to promote and sustain competition in markets,
- to protect the interests of consumers,
- to ensure freedom of trade carried on by other participants, in India.

A Competition Law Review Committee, chaired by Mr. Injeti Srinivas, was formed in 2018 to review the existing Competition law framework and make recommendations to further strengthen it to meet new economy challenges. The proposed amendments in the Bill are based on the report submitted by the Committee to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs in 2019.

What is CPGRAM?

Government has informed that the timeline for redressal of grievances through Centralized Public Grievances Redress and Monitoring System has been reduced from 45 days to 30 days.

Centralized Public Grievances Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAM) is an online web-enabled system developed by the National Informatics Centre (Ministry of Electronics & IT [MeitY]), in association with the Directorate of Public Grievances (DPG) and Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) (under Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions) It helps in receiving, redressing and monitoring of grievance of the public in an efficient way.

7. International Relations

Parliament releases comprehensive report on Indian Diaspora

A Parliamentary Committee has released a comprehensive Report on Indian Diaspora.

Indian Diaspora is the group of people who are currently living outside India (temporary or permanent) and those who can trace their origin to India. It is commonly understood to include Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), who are citizens of India and Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) including Persons of Indian Origins (PIOs), who are foreign nationals.

PIO and OCI card holders have been merged under one category OCI in 2015. India's engagement with its diaspora is characterized under the rubric of 4Cs – *Care, Connect, Celebrate & Contribute*.

Girmitiya countries are the countries where Indians were taken as indentured labourers during British India to work on plantations in British colonies. Girmitiya countries includes countries like – Fiji, Mauritius, Jamaica, South Africa, Guyana, Suriname etc.

Note that, Government merged the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in 2015.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated on 9th January every year since 2003 to mark the contribution of Overseas Indian community in the development of India. January 9 was chosen as the day to celebrate this occasion since it was on this day in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Pravasi, returned to India from South Africa, led India's freedom struggle and changed the lives of Indians forever.

What is Minerals Security Partnership?

There is a growing concern over India not finding a place in the US-led Minerals Security Partnership (MSP).

Minerals Security Partnership (MSP): It is an ambitious US-led partnership of 11 countries to secure and strengthen supply chains of critical minerals such as Cobalt, Nickel, Lithium, and other rare earth minerals.

Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL) is a joint venture of 3 Central Public Sector Enterprises namely, National Aluminium Company Ltd. (NALCO), Hindustan Copper Ltd. (HCL) and Mineral Exploration Company Ltd. (MECL). It is mandated to identify and acquire overseas mineral assets of critical and strategic nature such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, Copper, Neodymium, other rare earths etc.

What is Common Security?

Palme International Center, International Peace Bureau (IPB) and International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) have released a report on Common Security 2022.

Common Security is a notion based on the assumption that no nation, community or individual can be secure without other nations, communities and individuals enjoying the same level of security.

What is SAARC?

Former Prime Minister of Bhutan has expressed concerns about the current status of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and called for greater efforts to rejuvenate the organisation.

SAARC is a regional intergovernmental organisation established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka in 1985. SAARC comprises of 8 Member States: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives,

Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Its secretariat is in Kathmandu, Nepal. The last SAARC summit was held in 2014.

China Nepal to build Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network

China and Nepal have agreed to build the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network. It is an economic corridor proposed in 2019 between Nepal and China as a part of China's Belt and Road Initiative. The corridor aims to enhance connectivity in ports, roads, railways, aviation, and communications.

Also, China marked the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's return and emphasised Beijing's control over Hong Kong under One Country, Two Systems (OCTS).

"One Country, Two Systems" is China's constitutional principle for describing the governance of the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau which was formulated in the early 1980s during talks over Hong Kong between China and the United Kingdom. According to the principle there would be only one China, but that these regions could retain their own economic and administrative systems while each of the two regions could continue to have its own governmental system, legal, economic and financial affairs, including trade relations with foreign countries, independent from China.

India begins trial run for trans-shipment of goods using Bangladesh Port

India has begun trial runs for the trans-shipment of goods to the North-Eastern States using 2 key ports in Bangladesh, with a vessel arriving at Mongla port with 2 containers of transit cargo. This movement of cargo is part of the trial runs being undertaken for the operationalization of the Agreement to use Chattogram and Mongla Ports (ACMP) for the transit of goods to and from India which was signed between Indian and Bangladesh in 2018.

India's other cross border connectivity initiatives

- The Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Facility with Myanmar
- The India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project
- The Mekong India Economic Corridor: The corridor proposes to connect Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam) with Dawei (Myanmar) via Bangkok (Thailand) and Phnom Penh (Cambodia) and further linking it to Chennai (India).
- The Stilwell Road (the Ledo Road and the Burma Road) with Myanmar
- The Delhi-Hanoi Railway Link: It proposes to link India with Vietnam via Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore.
- The Tamu-Kalewa-Kalemyo Friendship Road: It forms part of the India-Myanmar Thailand Trilateral Highway.
- The Rhi-Tiddim Road in Myanmar
- The BCIM Economic Corridor: The cross-border transportation network linking China's Kunming to India's Kolkata from Myanmar and Bangladesh.

India observes Chabahar Day

India has observed 'Chabahar Day' to mark the Chabahar – Link to International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) – Connecting Central Asian Markets.

Chabahar Port is located in Sistan and Baluchistan province in the South-Eastern part of Iran, on the Gulf of Oman. It is the only deep-sea port in Iran with direct ocean access. It has a status as a key transit center on the burgeoning International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).

India, Afghanistan and Iran signed a deal to establish the International Transport and Transit Corridor (Chabahar Agreement) in 2016. This involved construction of a rail line from Chabahar port to Zahedan along the border with Afghanistan and linking it to the Zaranj-Delaram Highway, as an alternate trade route to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

INSTC is a 7200 km multi-modal transportation network, first envisaged in 2000 by Russia, India and Iran, to promote transportation cooperation among the Member States. INSTC connects Indian Ocean to Caspian Sea via Persian Gulf onwards Russia and Northern Europe. Currently, it has 13 members including India. Recently, INSTC began operation with the first shipment from Russia to India via Iran.

What is Regional Economic Integration?

First Session of High-Powered Joint Trade Committee (JTC) under India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA) was held. It is a form of Regional Economic Integration.

Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA), which entered into force in 2021, is the first trade Agreement signed by India with a country in Africa. It covers Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin, Trade in Services, Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, Dispute Settlement, Movement of Natural Persons, Telecom, Financial services etc.

Regional Economic Integration is a process in which two or more countries agree to eliminate economic barriers, with the end goal of enhancing productivity and achieving greater economic interdependence.

Levels

1. *Free Trade*: It is the simplest and most common arrangement, in which member countries agree to gradually eliminate formal barriers to trade in products and services within the bloc, while each member country maintains an independent international trade policy with countries outside the bloc. NAFTA is an example.
2. *Custom Union*: The custom union is the second level of regional integration, similar to a free trade area except that member states harmonize their external trade policies and adopt common tariff and nontariff barriers on imports from non-member countries. MERCOSUR, an economic bloc in Latin America, is an example of this type of arrangement.
3. *Common Market*: In the third stage of regional integration, member countries establish a common market (also known as a single market), in which trade barriers are reduced or removed, common external barriers are established, and products, services, and factors of production such as capital, labor, and technology are allowed to move freely among the member countries. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) is an example.
4. *Economic Union*: An economic union is the fourth stage of regional integration, in which member countries enjoy all the advantages of early stages but also strive to have common fiscal and monetary policies. European Union is an example.
5. *Political Union*: In this stage, there is perfect unification of all policies by a common organization, submersion of all separate national institutions.

Convention on International Road Traffic of 1949 (Geneva Convention)

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued notification on standardizing process for issuance of International Driving Permit (IDP) across country in adherence to Convention on International Road Traffic of 1949, also known as Geneva Convention.

Geneva Convention is an international treaty promoting the development and safety of international road traffic by establishing certain uniform rules among the contracting parties. India, being a signatory to convention is required to issue IDP as provided under this Convention, for acceptance of the same on reciprocal basis with other countries.

Parliament passes amended to WMD Act 2022

Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Act, 2022 was passed by Parliament.

While there is no single, authoritative definition of a WMD in international law, the expression is usually understood to cover nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) weapons. As per India's 2005 WMD Act, WMDs are biological, chemical, or nuclear weapons.

Global treaties to outlaw WMDs

1. *Biological Weapons Convention, 1972*: Prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons.
2. *Chemical Weapons Convention, 1992*: Prohibits the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of chemical weapons. It led to the establishment of Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) headquartered at Hague, Netherlands.
3. *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), 1970*: To prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament.
4. *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), 2017*: Prohibits participating in any nuclear weapon activities. These include undertakings not to develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons and also to provide assistance to any State in the conduct of prohibited activities.
5. *Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), 1996*: It bans all nuclear explosion tests on Earth. It also establishes a CTBT Organization (CTBTO), located in Vienna, to ensure the implementation of its provisions. It is yet to enter into force.
6. *Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC)*: To regulate access to ballistic missiles which can potentially deliver weapons of mass destruction. It is formerly known as "The International Code of Conduct" (ICOC), 2002.

India begins cooperation with Combined Maritime Forces

India has formally commenced cooperation with the Bahrain-based multilateral partnership, Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). At the India-U.S. 2+2 in April 2022, India had announced that it would join the CMF as an Associate Partner.

Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) is a multi-national naval partnership to promote security, stability and prosperity across international waters, which encompass some of the world's most important shipping lanes.

Government designates 2022 as ASEAN – India Friendship Year

To celebrate the 30 years of India-ASEAN relations, 2022 has been designated as ASEAN-India friendship year.

Areas of Cooperation

- *Forums*: India is a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Mekong Ganga Cooperation.
- *Transport*: India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highways, Kaladan Multi-modal Project.
- *Security*: India's 'Act East Policy' and 'Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)'
- *Military exercise*: CORPAT (with Indonesia and Thailand); Samudra Shakti (Indonesia); SIMBEX (Singapore)
- *Socio-Cultural Cooperation*: Inviting ASEAN students to India, Special Training Course for ASEAN diplomats, Exchange of Parliamentarians, etc.
- *East Asia Summit (EAS)*: First held in 2005, the summit is usually attended by the heads of state from ASEAN, Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea, and the United States.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the Founding Fathers of ASEAN: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. It was established to promote political and social stability amid rising tensions among the Asia-Pacific's post-colonial states. The motto of ASEAN is "One Vision, One Identity, One Community". 8th August is observed as ASEAN Day.

Current Members: *Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia.*

ASEAN Secretariat – *Indonesia, Jakarta.*

What is Porcupine Strategy?

Taiwan is planning to use Porcupine strategy to fight back in case China attempts to occupy it by force.

The "*porcupine doctrine*", which was proposed in 2008 by US Naval War College Research Professor William S Murray, is a strategy of asymmetric warfare focused on fortifying a weak state's defences to exploit the enemy's weaknesses rather than taking on its strengths. It is about building defences that would ensure that Taiwan "could be attacked and damaged but not defeated, at least without unacceptably high costs and risks".

Govt. approves ratification of amendment to UPU Constitution

Union Cabinet has approved the ratification of amendments to the Constitution of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) as contained in the Eleventh Additional Protocol to the Constitution signed during the 27th Congress of the Universal Postal Union held at Abidjan 2021. It would fulfill the obligations arising from Articles 25 and 30 of the UPU Constitution which provides for ratification of the amendments to the Constitution adopted by a Congress as soon as possible by the member countries.

Universal Postal Union is a United Nations specialized agency, established in 1874 by the Treaty of Bern. The aim is for cooperation between postal sector in different countries. Any member of United Nations or a non-member of the United Nations may become a member of the UPU, provided a non-member's request is approved by at least two-thirds of the member countries of the UPU.

Members: *Currently 192 members (India became its member in 1876)*

Headquarters: *Bern, Switzerland*

What is Thucydides' trap in International Relations?

Thucydides Trap is a term popularized by American Political Scientist 'Graham T. Allison' to describe an apparent tendency towards war when an emerging power threatens to displace an existing great power as a regional or international hegemon. It was coined and is primarily used to describe a potential conflict between the United States and the People's Republic of China.

India-Iran signs MoU to help seafarer voyages

India and Iran have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on recognition of 'Certificates of Competency in Unlimited Voyages' to help seafarers from both countries as per the provisions of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (1978). The Convention sets qualification standards for masters, officers and watch personnel on seagoing merchant ships. STCW was adopted in 1978 by a conference at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London and entered into force in 1984.

A '*seafarer voyage*' means an uninterrupted period when the sailor carries out his assigned duties or performs work assigned on board a ship.

Defence Exercise in News

1. *VINBAX 2022*: Vietnam-India Bilateral Army Exercise VINBAX 2022 was conducted at Chandimandir with display of Multi Agency Humanitarian Assistance in Disaster Relief (HADR) demonstration and an equipment display showcasing the Make in India and AtmaNirbhar Bharat initiatives. It was the first time ever that the Vietnam People's Army (VPA) was undertaking a Field Training Exercise with any foreign Army.

2. *Exercise 'Pitch Black'*: It is a biennial multi-national large force employment exercise conducted by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). India took part in the exercise along with 16 other nations.

3. *Ex Vajra Prahar 2022*: It is an Indo-US Joint Special Forces exercise.

4. *AL NAJAH-IV*: It is a joint military exercise between Indian Army and Royal Army of Oman. Note that, India and Oman conduct regular biennial bilateral exercises between all 3 services. The other 2 are – Air Force Exercise: *Eastern Bridge*; Naval Exercise: *Naseem Al Bahr*.

5. *Udarshakti*: It is a bilateral air exercise between India and Malaysia at Kuantan (Malaysia).

6. *Yudh Abhyas Joint Exercise*: It is one of the longest-running joint military training and defence cooperation, started in 2004 under the US Army Pacific Partnership Program, between India and the US. The exercise is hosted alternately between both countries.

8. Awards and Recognition

World Highest Railway bridge inaugurated over Chenab River

The World's Highest Railway bridge- Chenab Bridge's Golden Joint - was inaugurated in Reasi District of UT Jammu & Kashmir. The Golden Joint is connecting two ends of the deck of the world's highest railway bridge. The Chenab Bridge is now being built, and when it is finished, it will be 35 meters higher than the Eiffel Tower. The bridge will prove direct connectivity to the Kashmir valley. 1.3-km-long bridge is located 359 metres above Chenab River.

Ministry of Jal Shakti launches National Water Awards

Ministry of Jal Shakti has launched 4th National Water Awards on Rashtriya Puraskar portal. All the applications will be received through the online Rashtriya Puraskar portal only. The cash prizes for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd rank winners are Rs. 2 lakhs, Rs. 1.5 lakhs, and Rs. 1 lakh, respectively.

3rd edition Winners:

- Best State Category: Uttar Pradesh followed by Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.
- Best District Category: Muzaffarnagar (Uttar Pradesh) and Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar (Punjab)

National Water Awards were introduced to recognize and encourage exemplary work and efforts made by States, Districts, individuals, etc. in accomplishing government's vision '*Jal Samridh Bharat*'. It aims to sensitize the public about importance of water and motivates them to adopt best water usage practices.

Angela Merkel wins UNESCO Felix Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize 2022

Former German Chancellor 'Angela Merkel' has won UNESCO Felix Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize 2022 for her 'efforts to welcome refugees.' In 2015, she, as German Chancellor, opened German borders for refugees (Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Eritrea) who were streaming into Europe.

The Award honours living individuals and active public or private bodies or institutions. It is awarded to those who have made a significant contribution to promoting, seeking, safeguarding or maintaining peace, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitution of UNESCO. This prize was established in 1989. First Felix Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize was given to Nelson Mandela and Frederik W. de Klerk in 1991.

Govt. invites application for National Gopal Ratna Award 2022

Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying has invited applications for National Gopal Ratna Awards during 2022. The Award is one of the highest National Award in the field of livestock and dairy sector. The awards are to be conferred on the occasion of National Milk Day (26th November 2022).

Note that, the "Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM)", was launched in December 2014 for the first time in the country, with a view to conserve and develops indigenous bovine breeds in a scientific manner. Under RGM, with an objective to encourage the Milk producing farmer, individuals working in this sector, and Dairy cooperative societies who provide market access to the milk producers, this department has continued to confer National Gopal Ratna Award during 2022 in the following categories:

- Best Dairy farmer rearing indigenous cattle/buffalo breeds
- Best Artificial Insemination Technician (AIT)
- Best Dairy Cooperative Society/ Milk producer Company/ Dairy Farmer Producer Organisation

The National Gopal Ratna Award consists of a Certificate of merit, a memento, and amount in each category as under:

- Rs. 5,00,000 – 1st rank
- Rs. 3,00,000 – 2nd rank
- Rs. 2,00,000 – 3rd rank

Shri. Shashi Tharoor receives France’s highest civilian Award

Shri Shashi Tharoor has been presented with French Government’s highest civilian award “Chevalier de la Legion D’Honneur”. The honour is being conferred to him because he delivered a speech in French in 2021. The French order of merit that was established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte is awarded for excellent civil or military conduct.

Note that, he had also received a similar honour “the ‘Encomienda de la Real Order Espanola de Carlos III’”, by the Spanish Government in 2010.

India secures 3rd position in International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics

India has secured the 3rd rank in medal tally at the 15th International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics (IOAA). India held the third position jointly with Singapore. The IOAA 2022 was held in Kutaisi, Georgia. It was won by Iran.

Prof. Ramadhar Singh marks on the ‘Heritage Wall of Fame’

Ahmedabad University Professor Ramadhar Singh has become the first Indian Psychologist to be marked as US Heritage Wall of Fame.

Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP), established in 1974, is the world's largest organisation of personality and Social Psychologists.

Dalai Lama honoured with Ladakh's highest civilian award “dPal rNgam Duston”

Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama was honoured with the ‘dPal rNgam Duston’ award – the highest civilian honour of Ladakh – for his immense contribution to humanity. The ‘dPal rNgam Duston’ is the celebration of the remarkable contribution and achievement of the heroes of Ladakh.

Dadabhai Naoroji House in London got Blue Plaque

Indian Parsi Nationalist Dadabhai Naoroji’s house in London has been honoured with a commemorative Blue Plaque. He lived here for 8 years at the end of the 19th century.

The Blue Plaque scheme, run by the English Heritage charity, honours the historic significance of particular buildings across London. Naoroji’s plaque was unveiled on Wednesday to coincide with the 75th anniversary celebrations of India’s Independence.

He was a prominent member of the Indian freedom struggle and Britain’s first Indian parliamentarian. He is referred to as the “Grand Old Man of India”. He was among the key proponents of the ‘Drain Theory’, disseminating it in his 1901 book ‘Poverty and Un-British Rule in India’.

Bangladesh-born Fahmida Azim wins 2022 Pulitzer Prize

Bangladesh born Fahmida Azim, working for the Insider online magazine of USA, has been selected for the 2022 Pulitzer prize under the category of ‘Illustrated Reporting and Commentary’. She is among the 4 Journalists including Anthony Del Col, Josh Adams and Walt Hickey of Insider, selected for their work on the Chinese oppression of the Uyghurs.

The Award was established by the provisions in the will of Joseph Pulitzer, who made his fortune as a newspaper publisher. The award is administered by Columbia University. Pulitzer Prize is awarded yearly in 21 categories. Each winner receives a cash award and a certificate. A Gold Medal is awarded to the winner in Public Service Category.

Haridwar declared best aspirational district in India

The NITI Aayog has declared Haridwar in Uttarakhand as the best Aspirational District.

As per the aspirational districts scheme norms, the districts are supposed to prepare a plan of action in consultation with the State and central Prabhari Officers and send the same to NITI Aayog for final approval of the Empowered Committee of Secretaries constituted for the programme.

First Woman Scientist to be appointed as Director General of CSIR

Dr N. Kalaiselvi has been appointed as the Director General of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) for 2 years. She is the first woman scientist to hold this position. She is known for her work in the field of lithium-ion batteries.

Indian-American teen Aarya Walvekar from Virginia crowned Miss India USA 2022

Indian American teenager Aarya Walvekar (Virginia) has been crowned with the title of Miss India USA 2022 in New Jersey. Akshi Jain of Washington was crowned Mrs. India USA. Tanvi Grover of New York was crowned as Miss Teen India USA. Also, Divita Rai has won the prestigious title of Miss Diva Universe 2022.

Lisbon Triennale Millennium wins Lifetime Achievement Award

Renowned Bangladeshi architect, researcher and educator Marina Tabassum has become the first person from the global south and first south Asian to win the prestigious Lisbon Triennale Millennium bcp Lifetime Achievement Award. She will receive an original artwork by the Portuguese artist and sculptor Carlos Nogueira as award during the Lisbon Triennale.

9. Social Development

Twitter releases Global Transparency Report

Twitter has released Global Transparency Report. According to it, India is in the 4th spot to issue blocking orders between 2014 and 2020, after Japan, Turkey, and Russia. Report also mentioned that there has been a rise in legal demands being made by India to remove content from Twitter between 2014 and 2020.

Section 66A of IT Act 2000

Note that, the 2008 amendment of Information Technology Act 2000, introduced the controversial Section 66A into the Act. Section 66A gave authorities the power to arrest anyone accused of posting content on social media that could be deemed ‘offensive’. The Supreme Court, however, in 2015, struck down this section of the IT Act saying it was unconstitutional as it violated Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution (*Shreya Singhal v. Union of India 2013*).

The data privacy rules introduced in the Act in 2011. The rules require firms to obtain written permission from customers before collecting and using their personal data. The Government of India in 2021 notified Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021.

Govt. launches second phase of Grameen Udyami Project to train tribal youths

Government has launched the second phase of Grameen Udyami Project, to train 450 tribal students in Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand.

Grameen Udyami Project, funded by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), aims to augment skill training in tribal communities for their inclusive and sustainable growth. Project is being implemented in 6 states— Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Gujarat. It is implemented under Sansadiya Parisankul Yojana. Training is conducted in job roles (such as electrician, plumbing, farm mechanisation, 2-wheeler repair & maintenance etc.) which are relevant to local economy.

Govt. NIPAM achieved its target to impart IP awareness and basic training

According to the Government, National Intellectual Property Awareness Mission (NIPAM) has achieved target of imparting Intellectual Property (IP) awareness and basic training to 1 million students.

National Intellectual Property Awareness Mission (NIPAM) is a flagship program to impart IP awareness and basic training. It was launched in December 2021 as a part of “*Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*” celebrations. The program is being implemented by Intellectual Property Office, the Office of Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks (CGPDTM), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) are the rights given to persons over the creations of their minds: inventions, literary and artistic works, and symbols, names and images used in commerce.

Nodal Agency: Intellectual Property Office (under Ministry of Commerce and Industry)

National IPR Policy (adopted in 2016): It gave an institutional mechanism for the implementation of IPR. CIPAM (cell for IPR promotion and management) is the implementation agency for National IPR Policy.

Goa and D&NH and D&D first to become Har Ghar Jal certified State and UT

‘Goa’ and ‘Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu’ has become the first ‘Har Ghar Jal’ certified State and Union Territory in the country, respectively.

'Har Ghar Jal' is a flagship programme of the Central Government, implemented by Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, in partnership with States/ UTs to ensure tap water connection in every rural household by 2024.

UGC plans to launch e-Samadhan for submitting grievances

University Grants Commission (UGC) is planning to launch UGC e-Samadhan, a single window for submitting grievances by merging the different portals and helplines that exist currently. The aim is to fast-track resolution of complaints and monitor institutes that are slow in responding to them. Portal will be available 24×7 and also specific timelines have been laid down for addressing the grievances registered at the portal.

MP's Mandla district becomes country's first fully Functionally Literate District

Madhya Pradesh's Mandla district, a tribal dominated region, has been reported as fully 'functionally literate' district.

A person can be called functionally literate when he or she is able to write his or her own name, to count and read and write. It also refers to the capacity of a person to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective function of his or her group and community.

WHO releases guidance to support National Strategic Planning for TB

World Health Organization (WHO) has released new guidance to support National Strategic Planning (NSP) for the Tuberculosis (TB).

Tuberculosis is caused by bacteria (*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*), and it most often affects the lungs. It is spread through the air when people with lung TB cough, sneeze or spit. Two categories of TB are – Pulmonary TB (affects lungs) and Extra Pulmonary TB (affects both lungs and other organs).

Global Commitments and Efforts taken to Eliminate TB

- *Moscow Declaration 2017*: It is commitment to increase multisectoral action and enhance accountability in the global TB response towards ending TB by 2030.
- *WHO End TB Strategy*: It serves as a blueprint for countries to reduce TB incidence by 80%, TB deaths by 90%, and to eliminate catastrophic costs for TB-affected households by 2030.
- *Find. Treat. All. #EndTB*: It is the joint initiative of WHO, Stop TB Partnership, and Global Fund to diagnose treat and report 40 million people with TB, including 3.5 million children and 1.5 million people with Drug Resistant-TB.

What is Genomic Surveillance?

A recent study revealed that the rate of genetic changes in the monkeypox virus was higher than expected. This calls for building a sustainable system for Genomic Surveillance.

Genomic Surveillance is the process of constantly monitoring pathogens and analyzing their genetic similarities and differences to identify variants of concern. Scientists use Genomic Sequencing to identify different variants of pathogen in a specimen.

Genomic Surveillance in India

- *Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG)* was established to expand Whole Genome Sequencing of SARS-CoV-2 across the nation, aiding our understanding of how the virus spreads and evolves. INSACOG, jointly initiated by the Union Health Ministry of Health, and Department of

Biotechnology (DBT) with Council for Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), is a consortium of over 50 laboratories.

- *Regional Genome Sequencing Laboratories (RGSL)* serve as the regional hub laboratory for genome sequencing of the relevant region.
- *Indian Tuberculosis Genomic Surveillance Consortium (InTGS)* is proposed on lines of INSACOG.

What is PEN Plus Strategy?

Africa has adopted the PEN Plus strategy to tackle severe Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) such as Type 1 Diabetes (T1D), Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) and sickle cell disease.

PEN Plus Strategy: Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) are being treated in First-Level Referral Health Facilities. The plan aims to close the access gap in diagnosing and managing individuals with severe and chronic NCDs. It urged nations to implement standardized programmes to combat chronic and major NCDs by ensuring that crucial medications, technologies, and diagnostics are accessible and available in district hospitals.

“PEN-Plus” initiatives offer an integrated platform at hospitals that receive initial referrals to address priority disorders such as type 1 diabetes (T1D), rheumatic heart disease (RHD), and sickle cell disease, as well as palliative care for advanced cancers and other conditions.

SC directs states to fasten up the e-SHRAM Portal registration

Supreme Court has directed States to fasten-up registration of unorganized workers on the e-SHRAM Portal within 6 weeks.

e-Shram Portal was launched in August 2021 by the Ministry of Labour & Employment. It is a national database to register unorganised workers. The portal came into being after the Supreme Court directed the Government to complete the registration process of unorganised workers. Each registered worker will be issued an identity card, which can be used across the country to avail any benefits announced by the Government.

Categories of Unorganized workers covered:

- Construction Worker
- Migrant Worker
- Gig & Platform Worker
- Street Vendor
- Domestic Worker
- Agriculture Worker
- Other Unorganized Worker

Ministry of Ayush’s Champion Services Sector Scheme for Medical Value Travel

The Ministry of Ayush has signed a MoU with the Ministry of Railway for the introduction of Ayush Systems in 5 Railways Hospitals resulting in establishment of Ayush units at 5 Railway zonal hospitals at Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Guwahati. The Ministry has also collaborated with the Ministry of Defense resulting in the establishment of Ayurveda OPDs at 12 AFMS (Armed Force Medical Services) Hospitals and 37 Cantonment Board Hospitals.

The Ministry of Ayush had a Central Sector Scheme namely, Champion Services Sector Scheme for Medical Value Travel. There are 3 components of this scheme i.e.

1. Establishment of Ayush Super specialty Hospitals / Daycare Centers
2. Skill development in Ayush Sector, and

3. Establishment of Ayush Grid.

Note that, Ministry of Ayush has developed a Central Sector Scheme i.e., *Ayurwashya Yojana* in which there is a component called Up-gradation of facilities to Centre of Excellence (CoE). The main objective of CoE component is to support establishment and upgradation of both functions and facilities of reputed institutions to strengthen Ayush professionals in education, technology, research & innovation and other fields necessary for promotion of Ayush at National as well International level.

What is Vasculitis?

Hollywood renowned actor 'Ashton Kutcher' had a rare form of 'vasculitis' 2 years ago that knocked out his vision, hearing, and "equilibrium". This was mentioned by him in a Tweet over social media platform 'Twitter'.

Vasculitis is simply an inflammation of blood vessels. Inflammation is the natural response of the body's immune system to any injury or infection, which in normal course can help the body fight invading germs. However, in vasculitis, the body's immune system turns on healthy blood vessels, causing them to swell up and narrow down.

10. Economy

What is CAROTAR and ROO?

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs has stated that – in case of conflict between Customs (Administration of Rules of Origin under Trade Agreements) Rules, 2020 (CAROTAR) and ROO (under Free Trade Agreement (FTA)) provisions – provision of FTA or its ROO shall prevail.

CAROTAR are aimed at plugging duty evasion through routing exports to India under FTAs. Under *CAROTAR* rules, importers need to furnish proof of 35% value addition in goods from country of origin to claim duty concession under FTAs.

ROO are the criteria prescribed to determine national origin of an imported product in a country. Under this, a country that has inked an FTA with India cannot dump goods from some third country in Indian market by just putting a label on it. It has to undertake a prescribed value addition in that product to export to India.

EAC-PM releases Competitiveness Roadmap for India

The Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) has released ‘The Competitiveness Roadmap for India@100’ in collaboration with the Institute for Competitiveness. It is developed by Dr Amit Kapoor, Chair, Institute for Competitiveness, Professor Michael E. Porter and Dr. Christian Ketels of Harvard Business School. It envisions setting new guiding principles for the country’s growth journey over the following years and guiding different states, ministries and partners in India’s growth to develop sector-specific roadmaps for achieving targeted goals.

Note that, India gained 6 positions (from 43rd to 37th rank) in 2021 World Competitiveness Index by Institute for Management Development (IMD) largely due to economic performance gains.

Promotion and Regulation of E-Commerce in India

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce has presented its report on ‘Promotion and Regulation of E-Commerce in India’.

Steps taken to promote e-commerce in India:

- *Consumer Protection (e-commerce) Rules 2020*: Ministry of Consumer Affairs directed e-commerce companies to display the country of origin alongside the product listings. In addition, the companies will also have to reveal parameters that go behind determining product listings on their platforms.
- *ONDC*: In a bid to systematize the onboarding process of retailers on e-commerce platforms, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is planning to utilize ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce) to set protocols for vendor discovery and price discovery.
- Others – *National Retail Policy, Government e-Marketplace, Digital India, etc.*

What is Digital Tax?

India and other developing countries in the G24 grouping have objected to the proposal of making sovereign commitments to not introduce any future digital services tax like equalization levy, potentially delaying implementation of the global tax deal.

Digital Services tax is part of the OECD’s two-pillar plan. This plan has been agreed upon by 137 countries (including India) in 2021 to reform international taxation rules and address the tax challenges arising from the digitalization of the economy.

Group 24 (G24) is an intergovernmental Group on International Monetary Affairs and Development (G-24) which coordinates the position of developing countries on monetary and development issues in the deliberations and decisions of the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI). G-24 was established in 1971 by Group of 77 (G-77) and formally created in 1972. India is also a member of G24.

Global Tax Deal: It is tailored to address the low effective rates of tax shelled out by some of the world's biggest corporations, including Big Tech majors such as Apple, Alphabet and Facebook.

Equalisation levy: In 2016, India imposed an equalisation levy of 6% on online advertisement services provided by non-residents. This was applicable to Google and other foreign online advertising service providers. The government expanded its scope from April 1, 2020, by imposing a 2% equalisation levy on digital transactions by foreign entities operating in India or having access to the local market.

Gold Mining in India

The Central Government is planning out a detailed roadmap to identify potential gold-bearing regions to be developed by 2030 and boost gold production in the country with private participation.

Key Points

- India is the world's second biggest consumer of gold, after China.
- The state of Karnataka accounts for 88% of the total reserves located in India, with the Dharwar craton being most significant geological formation for gold mineralization.
- Over 50% of gold mineral resources (gold deposits that are potentially economically viable) are located in Karnataka, majorly followed by Rajasthan, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, among others.
-

Measures taken in India to encourage gold mining

- National Minerals Exploration Policy (NMEP), 2016 aims to stimulate non-fuel and non-coal mining exploration by allowing private companies to enter into a transparent bidding process, conducted via e-auction.
- National Mineral Policy, 2019 provided more streamlined permit award method with simple, transparent and accountable processes and clear deadlines, to encourage exploration.
- Minerals (Evidence of Mineral Contents) Rules, 2015 amended in 2021 to allow auction of composite licence at for deep seated minerals including Gold.
- 100% FDI is permitted under the automatic route.
- Amendments in Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act (MMDR Act) 1957.

What is AIF and VCF?

SEBI has eased norms on Alternate Investment Funds (AIFs), Venture Capital Funds (VCFs) investments in overseas markets. Guidelines are aimed to protect the interests of investors in securities and to promote the development of, and to regulate the securities market.

SEBI has issued guidelines to protect the interest of investors and promote the development of the securities market. SEBI will now allow investment (of AIFs, VCFs etc.) in global companies that are:

- Signatories to IOSCO or
- A signatory to bilateral MoU with SEBI

Alternate Investment Fund means any fund established or incorporated in India which is a privately pooled investment vehicle which collects funds from sophisticated investors, whether Indian or foreign, for investing.

Venture Capital Fund is a type of AIF which is an investment fund that manages money from different investors seeking to provide capital in startup and small- and medium-size enterprise.

IOSCO (HQ: Madrid, Spain): Founded in 1983, it is an international body that brings together the world's securities regulators as the global standard setter for the securities sector. It works with G20 and the Financial Stability Board (FSB) on the global regulatory reform agenda. From India, SEBI is an ordinary member of IOSCO; International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) is an associate member; and BSE, NSE and Multi Commodity Exchange of India are its affiliate members.

Securities are fungible (interchangeable) and tradable financial instruments used to raise capital in public and private markets. Types:

- *Equity*: which provides ownership rights to holders,
- *Debt*: essentially loans repaid with periodic payments,
- *Hybrids*: combine aspects of debt and equity.

What is Blue Bond?

SEBI has proposed the concept of blue bonds as a mode of sustainable finance.

A '*blue bond*' is a relatively new form of debt instrument that is issued to support investments in healthy oceans and blue economies. These blue bonds would finance projects such as ocean resource mining, sustainable fishing, efforts to rejuvenate degraded coral reefs and promote geoengineering techniques.

Blue Economy is sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs.

Note that in October 2018, Seychelles launched world's first Sovereign Blue Bond.

What is AA Framework?

SEBI has joined RBI's Account Aggregator (AA) framework system.

Account Aggregator (AA) ecosystem aims to transform how credit is processed and accessed in the country. It is a type of RBI regulated Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC). It helps an individual securely and digitally access and share information from one financial institution they have an account with to any other regulated financial institution in AA network.

What is Moonlighting?

Moonlighting has become very popular after the COVID-19 pandemic as people got time and opportunities to do more than one thing for a living.

Moonlighting refers to pursuing more than one job at a time without the awareness of the main employer (hence, considered unethical by many). Remote working has helped employees take up this option.

What is Cantillon Effect?

Cantillon Effect refers to the idea that changes in money supply in an economy causes redistribution of purchasing power among people, disturbs relative prices of goods and services, and leads to misallocation of scarce resources. The effect is named after 18th century French economist Richard Cantillon who published his ideas in 1755 book *Essay on "Nature of Trade in General"*.

GI Tag to Makhana

Makhana (a variety of fox nuts) has been granted a GI tag.

Gujarat first state to have semiconductor policy

Gujarat has become the first State in India to release a dedicated Semiconductor Policy 2022-27. In addition, the state proposes to develop a special “Semicon City” which would be part of the Dholera Special Investment Region.

A *semiconductor* is a substance that has specific electrical properties that enable it to serve as a foundation for computers and other electronic devices. It is typically a solid chemical element or compound that conducts electricity under certain conditions but not others.

PM addresses first meeting of DLSA

Prime Minister of India has addressed the inaugural session of the first District Legal Services Authorities (DLSA) meet.

DLSA has been established to provide free legal aid, organize Lok Adalat, legal literacy for the poor.

Established under Legal Services Authorities Act (LSA) 1987, District Legal Services Authority is constituted in every District to implement Legal Aid Programmes and Schemes in the District. These are headed by a District Judge, acting as Chairman.

Legal Services Institutions have been set up at various levels e.g.,

- NALSA (national level, CJI is a patron in chief)
- SLSA (state level, headed by the chief justice of HC)
- DLSA (district level)
- Taluka/sub-division level (TLSC) (Taluka level, headed by Civil Judge)

Note that, Government has combined all the access to justice programmes under the DISHA scheme.

Central Government releases Funds to State

Central Government has released funds to help front-load State Governments’ capital spending abilities in current Financial Year, after the expiry of the assured Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation to States.

Types of Funds States receives from the Central Government:

- Devolution (States’ share of taxes): As states share of taxes from the Gross Tax Revenue (extra-budgetary)
- Scheme Related Transfer: As Centrally Sponsored Schemes from the Scheme Expenditure. (Based on Budget Allocations).
- Finance Commission Grants: As Transfer to States from the Transfers, Expenditure, and Other Expenses. (Based on Budget Allocations)
- Other Transfers: Other grants or loans. (Based on Budget Allocations)

RBI allows BBPS to process cross-border transactions

RBI has allowed Bharat Bill Payment System to process cross-border “inbound” bill payments aimed at benefiting senior citizens and families of persons who are dependent on remittances from abroad. Till now, BBPS was accessible only to ‘residents in India’.

Bharat Bill Payment System is an interoperable platform for the standardized bill payment system, conceptualized by RBI and implemented by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). Payments can be made using cash, transfer cheques and electronic modes.

NPCI serves as an umbrella body for the operation of retail payment in India. This organization was established by the Reserve Bank of India along with the Indian Bank's Association under the provisions of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.

Products of NPCI

1. RuPay
2. National Common Mobility Card
3. Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM)
4. Unified Payments Interface (UPI)
5. Bharat Bill Payment System

US Firm Microsoft first big tech to join ONDC

US Firm Microsoft has become the first big tech company to join the government-backed Open Network for Digital Commerce.

ONDC is being touted as the next UPI (Unified Payments Interface), since the government hopes it will democratize e-commerce and give small sellers access to systems and technology that currently only big companies such as Flipkart and Amazon enjoy.

Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) is globally first-of-its-kind initiative that aims to democratize Digital Commerce, moving it from a platform-centric model to an open-network. ONDC will enable, buyers and sellers to be digitally visible and transact through an open network, no matter what platform/application they use. Integration of the platform will be provided by the Quality Council of India.

What is Electoral Bond?

According to the data provided by SBI, since 2018, political parties have collected more than Rs 10,000 crores from Electoral Bonds.

Electoral bonds are purchased anonymously by donors and are valid for 15 days from the date of issue. A debt instrument, these can be bought by donors from a bank, and the political party can then encash them. These can be redeemed only by an eligible party by depositing the same in its designated account maintained with a bank. The bonds are issued by SBI in denominations of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 crore.

Note that, Union Budget 2017-18 introduced EBs as interest-free bearer instruments to cleanse the system of political funding in the country.

11. Important Days

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

9th August is celebrated as the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. The day aims to highlight the role of indigenous people and the importance of preserving their rights, communities and knowledge they gathered and passed down over centuries.

Theme: *"The Role of Indigenous Women in the Preservation and Transmission of Traditional Knowledge"*

Note that, in 1994, the UNGA, passed a resolution, declaring August 9 as the International Day of the World's Indigenous People as it was on 9th August that the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations held its first meeting.

World Lion Day

August 10 is celebrated as World Lion Day.

Lions are the second-largest cats after tigers. They live in groups (called Pride). The lion is an apex and keystone predator.

IUCN Status: Asiatic lion: Endangered while African Lion: Vulnerable

In India, Gir Forest (Gujarat) is home to the only wild population of lions outside of Africa.

Earth sets record for the shortest day

Scientists, using atomic clocks, have recorded the shortest day on 29th July 2022 as Earth completed a full spin in 1.59 milliseconds less than its standard 24 hours. Before this, the Earth had recorded its shortest day on July 19, 2020, when it completed a full spin in less than 1.47 milliseconds than the standard 24-hour duration.

A day lasts 24 hours because the Earth completes a full spin on its axis roughly every 8,640,000 milliseconds. In the short term, this speed can fluctuate by fractions of a millisecond from day to day. This means that the length of a day can vary, but only usually by a tiny amount.

National Handloom Day

The National Handloom Day in India is observed annually on 7th August to highlight the contribution of the handloom industry in the socio-economic development. The National Handloom Day is celebrated across the country under the aegis of the Ministry of Textiles. The handloom sector is one of the largest economic sectors in the country. This sector played an important role during the Swadeshi Movement.

World Biofuel Day

World Biofuel Day is observed every year on 10th August to create awareness about the importance of non-fossil fuels as an alternative to conventional fossil fuels and highlight the various efforts made by Government in the biofuel sector.

Theme: *"Production of Biodiesel from Used Cooking Oil (UCO)"*

International Youth Day

International Youth Day is celebrated every year on 12th August. The day is organized by UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs in association with Food and Agriculture Organization and Major Group for Children and Youth. The Day was first observed in 1999.

World Mosquito Day

World Mosquito Day is celebrated every year on 20th August. World Mosquito Day was created in order to honour the discovery made of the link between humans, malaria, and mosquitoes. This is something that has changed the health industry considerably, ensuring that humans can be protected.

Sadbhavna Diwas

Sadbhavna Diwas is observed nationwide every year on August 20 to commemorate the Birth Anniversary of Late Shri. Rajiv Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India, to promote National Integration and Communal Harmony amongst people of all religions, language and region to eschew violence and to promote good will among the people.

World Humanitarian Day

World Humanitarian Day is celebrated every year on 19th August to pay tribute to humanitarian workers killed and injured in the course of their work, and to honour all aid and health workers who continue, despite the odds, to provide life-saving support and protection to people most in need.

This day was designated in memory of the 19 August 2003 bomb attack on the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, Iraq, killing 22 people, including the chief humanitarian in Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello. In 2009, the UN General Assembly formalized the day as World Humanitarian Day.

International Day against Nuclear Tests

International Day against Nuclear Tests is observed on 29th August to raise awareness about the devastating effects of testing nuclear weapons. This year marks the 13th anniversary of the event. Note that, Nuclear technology was developed under J. Robert Oppenheimer of the Manhattan Project.

National Sports Day

National Sports Day is celebrated every year on 29th August, the birth anniversary of Hockey hero Major Dhyan Chand. It was declared in 2012.

Dhyan Chand was born on 29th August 1905, in Prayagraj (formerly known as Allahabad). He had played a key role in India's 3 consecutive Olympic triumphs in 1928, 1932 and 1936. Often referred to as 'The Wizard' for his incredible hockey skills, he scored over 400 goals in his career that lasted from 1926 to 1948. Dhyan Chand's performance in the 1936 Berlin Olympic final is considered as one of his best. He was awarded India's third highest civilian honour of Padma Bhushan in 1956.

12. Culture

Ministry of Culture declares Anang Tal Lake as Monument of National Importance

Ministry of Culture has declared Anang Tal Lake as a monument of national importance under Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958.

Anang Tal Lake, dated back to 1060AD, is situated to north of Jog Maya temple and northwest of Qutub Complex in South Delhi. It is ascribed to Anangpal II of Tomar Dynasty that ruled parts of present-day Haryana and Delhi between 8th and 12th century.

Anangpal II was instrumental in populating Indraprastha and made Dhillikapuri (Delhi) as the capital of Tomar Dynasty. He built Lal Kot (later merged into Qila Rai Pithora by Prithviraj Chauhan) and also believed to bring Iron Pillar of Mehrauli from Udayagiri in Central India. He was succeeded by his grandson Prithviraj Chauhan, who was defeated by Ghurid forces in Battle of Tarain.

Ministry of Culture's Global Engagement Scheme

The Ministry of Culture operates a Global Engagement Scheme under which Festivals of India are organized in other countries showcasing folk art and other cultural events such as exhibitions, dance, music, theatre, food fest, literary fest, film fest, yoga etc. Under this scheme, the Ministry of Culture also gives Grant-in-aid to Indo-Foreign Friendship Cultural Societies for organizing programs and activities including folk art and other cultural activities for their promotion abroad. In addition to this, the Ministry of Culture also works in a coordinated manner with the Ministry of External Affairs.

Arunachal Pradesh Wancho community to digitize their folktales

Arunachal Pradesh's Wancho community have taken up the task of recording their age-old folktales in digitised form with the help of a UK-based Researcher Tara Douglas.

Wanchos have a rich tradition of oral stories, memories, and songs. The knowledge of the ancestors that have accumulated over generations is a record of life as it has been lived for centuries in this little-known area of the Patkai hills.

What is Mandala in Art?

Residents of Liverpool are marveling over a Mandala the size of one and a half football pitches in length created by Artist 'James Brunt' with materials such as leaves and rocks.



Mandala is a geometric design or pattern that represents the cosmos or deities in various heavenly worlds. It is all about finding peace in the symmetry of the design and the Universe. Mandala patterns are motifs that are centuries old and are used to depict the cosmos. While it can also be created in the shape of a square, a Mandala pattern is essentially interconnected.

Navroz Festival (Parsi New Year)

Navroz is celebrated at the time of the Vernal Equinox (marking the start of spring) in the Northern Hemisphere. It is being celebrated in India on 16th August in India.

Note that, *Navroz* is celebrated in March globally (as per the Iranian calendar), Navroz arrives 200 days later in India and is celebrated in the month of August as the Parsis here follow the Shahenshahi calendar which doesn't account for leap years. The Persian king Jamshed is credited with having created the Shahenshahi calendar. Navroz is on the list of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of India.

Zoroastrianism is one of the earliest known monotheistic faiths, created over 3,500 years ago in ancient Iran by Prophet Zarathustra. It was the official religion of Persia from 650 BCE until the emergence of Islam in the 7th century. With the coming of Islam numerous Zoroastrians fled to India (Gujarat) and Pakistan, thus the name Parsis ('Parsi' is Gujarati for Persian). In India, Parsis are one of the notified Minority Communities.

Other New Years:

- Chaitra Shukla Pratipada (beginning of the new year of the Vedic (Hindu) calendar)
- Gudi Padwa and Ugadi
- Navreh (the lunar new year in Kashmir)
- Sajibu Cheiraoba (celebrated by Meiteis (Manipur))
- Cheti Chand (by Sindhis)

150th Birth Anniversary of Shri Aurobindo Ghosh

To commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Shri Aurobindo Ghosh, the Central Government has held spiritual programmes across 75 prisons in India.

Shri Aurobindo Ghosh:

- He was a yogi, seer, philosopher, poet, and Indian nationalist who propounded a philosophy of divine life on earth through spiritual evolution.
- In Pondicherry, he founded a community of spiritual seekers, which took shape as the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1926.
- He helped to establish the Anushilan Samiti of Calcutta in 1902.
- He and his brother revolutionary Barin Ghose contributed articles to the magazine *Jugantar*.
- He was also a journalist, editing newspapers such as *Bande Mataram*. In 1914, he started publishing the magazine, *Arya*.
- In May 1908, Aurobindo was arrested in connection with the Alipore Conspiracy Case.
- He wrote copiously and his greatest literary achievement was 'Savitri', an epic poem with about 24,000 lines.
- He developed a kind of Yoga called Integral Yoga.

Speaker unveils statue of Pandurang Khankhoje in Mexico

Parliament Speaker has unveiled a statue of the freedom fighter and agricultural scientist, Pandurang Khankhoje during his visit to Mexico.

Pandurang Khankhoje (1883-1967) was a Maharashtra-born freedom fighter and agriculturalist. He was one of the founding members of the Ghadar Party, established by Indians living abroad in 1914, mostly belonging to Punjab.