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# Current Events

January 2022

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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).

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## January 2022

### 1. Sports and Games

#### ICC Awards announced

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced the winners of the 17<sup>th</sup> edition of ICC Awards for the year 2021 to recognize and honour the best international cricket players.

Winners are listed below:

Category	Winners
Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy for ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year	Smriti Mandhana (India)
Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year	Shaheen Afridi (Pakistan)
ICC Umpire of the Year	Marais Erasmus
ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year	Babar Azam
ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year	Lizelle Lee (South Africa)
ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year	Joe Root (England)

#### Rafael Nadal won Men's Single Title at Australia Open 2022

Rafael Nadal (Spain) has defeated Daniill Medvedev (Russia) to win the Men's Singles title at the Australian Open 2022. This is his 21<sup>st</sup> Major title, becoming the first male player to do so. Note that, in women's category, Margaret Court (Australian) has 24 singles majors, an all-time record.

In Women category, Ashleigh Barty (Australia) has defeated Danielle Collins (USA) to win Women's Singles Title Australian Open 2022.

Other Winners are listed below:

- Men's Doubles – Thanasi Kokkinakis and Nick Kyrgios
- Women's Doubles – Barbora Krejčíková and Katerina Siniakova
- Mixed Doubles – Kristina Mladenovic and Ivan Dodig

#### India's first Para-badminton Academy set up in Lucknow

India's first state-of-the-art, high-performance Para-badminton academy with advanced equipment and facilities has been set up in Lucknow. The centre has been launched by Dronacharya awardee and head national coach of Indian Para-badminton team, Gaurav Khanna, in association with Ageas Federal Life Insurance.

Ageas Federal 'Quest for Fearless Shuttlers' programme was also launched to spot and nurture new talent for the 2028 and 2032 Paralympics.

#### Best FIFA Player Award 2021

The Best FIFA Football Awards 2021 ceremony was held virtually in Zurich, Switzerland to crown outstanding players for excellent achievement in football.

Winners are listed below:

- Best FIFA Men's Player 2021 – Robert Lewandowski (Poland)
- Best FIFA Women's Player 2021 – Alexia Putellas (Spain)
- FIFA Special Award for an Outstanding Career Achievement – Christine Sinclair (Female) & Cristiano Ronaldo (Male)

- Best FIFA Men's Coach – Thomas Tuchel (Germany)
- Best FIFA Women's Coach – Emma Hayes (England)

## 2. Science and Technology

### **ISRO's Gaganyaan to launch before 2022 Independence Day**

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is planning to launch Gaganyaan before the Independence Day in 2022.

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 4<sup>th</sup> nation in the world to launch a Human Spaceflight Mission after USA, Russia and China.

ISRO has also conducted a successful qualification test of its High Thrust VIKAS Engine at the ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC) in Tamil Nadu's Mahendragiri. VIKAS engine belongs to a family of liquid fueled rocket engines, that will power the ambitious Gaganyaan mission into space. It is also used in the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) series of expendable launch vehicles for space launch use.

### **ISRO's SSLV to be launched in April 2022**

ISRO's indigenous new launch rockets, called the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV), will have its maiden development flight in April 2022. Note that, this flight was scheduled for launch in July 2019 but that has since been delayed due to setbacks from COVID-19 and other issues.

The SSLV aims to cater to the market for the launch of small satellites into Earth's low orbits that has emerged in recent years for catering to the need of developing countries, small satellites for universities, and private corporations. It can carry satellites weighing up to 500 kg to a low earth orbit.

NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), a PSU and a commercial arm of ISRO, will be the sole nodal agency responsible for providing end-to-end SSLV launch services for customer satellites, encompassing contractual, technical, programmatic, launch campaign, launch and post launch activities.

### **US Surgeons successfully performed first-ever Pig Heart Transplant to human patient**

Surgeons in USA have successfully transplanted a genetically modified pig's heart inside a human which is the first such incident of xenotransplantation in the world of medical science. The transplanted heart was harvested from a pig that had undergone genetic editing to make its organs more appropriate to the human body. The editing was performed by Virginia-based biotech firm Revivicor.

The process of grafting or transplanting organs or tissues between members of different species is known as Xenotransplantation.

### **ISRO-NASA's NISAR Mission to be launched in 2023**

ISRO and NASA's combined NISAR mission is proposed to be launched in early 2023.

*Key features:*

- It will scan the globe every 12 days over the course of its 3-year mission of imaging the Earth's land, ice sheets and sea ice to give an "unprecedented" view of the planet.
- It will be equipped with the largest reflector antenna ever launched by NASA.
- Its primary goals include tracking subtle changes in the Earth's surface, spotting warning signs of imminent volcanic eruptions, helping to monitor groundwater supplies and tracking the rate at which ice sheets are melting.

*Synthetic Aperture Radar:* The name NISAR is short for NASA-ISRO-SAR. 'SAR' here refers to the Synthetic Aperture Radar that NASA will use to measure changes in the surface of the Earth. Essentially, SAR refers to a technique for producing high-resolution images. Because of the precision, the radar can penetrate clouds and darkness, which means that it can collect data day and night in any weather.

**India's Anti-Satellite (A-SAT) missile under Mission Shakti**

Mission Shakti is a joint programme of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). As part of the mission, an Anti-Satellite (A-SAT) weapon was launched and targeted an Indian satellite which had been decommissioned. Mission Shakti was carried out from DRDO's testing range in Odisha's Balasore. India is only the 4<sup>th</sup> country to acquire such a specialised and modern capability, and entire effort is indigenous. Earlier, only USA, Russia and China had the capability to hit a live target in space.

**NASA Mission to the Moon – Artemis**

The first Moon-bound rocket and spacecraft of NASA's Artemis programme are expected to do a "wet dress rehearsal" on the launch pad.

Artemis stands for – "Acceleration, Reconnection, Turbulence and Electrodynamics of Moon's Interaction with the Sun". It is NASA's next mission to the Moon. It aims to measure what happens when the Sun's radiation hits the rocky moon, where there is no magnetic field to protect it. With the Artemis program, NASA will land the first woman on the Moon by 2024.



### 3. Environment

#### **MoEF&CC released India State of Forest Report, 2021**

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has released the India State of Forest Report (ISFR), 2021.

*India State of Forest Report (ISFR)* is an assessment of India's forest and tree cover, published every 2 years by the Forest Survey of India (under the MoEF&CC). The first survey was published in 1987, and ISFR 2021 is the 17<sup>th</sup> edition of the Report. The data for the Report is computed through wall-to-wall mapping of India's forest cover through remote sensing technique.

*Forest Cover:* Forest Cover refers to all lands more than 1 hectare in area, with a tree canopy density of more than 10% irrespective of ownership and legal status. Such lands may not necessarily be a recorded forest area. It also includes orchards, bamboo and palm.

*Tree Cover:* Tree patches outside recorded forest areas exclusive of forest cover and less than the minimum mappable area of 1 hectare.

*New Chapters introduced in ISFR, 2021 are given below:*

- Forest Cover assessment in Tiger reserves and Tiger corridor areas of the country.
- Above Ground Biomass Estimation using Synthetic Aperture Radar data.
- Mapping of Climate Change Hotspots in Indian Forests.

*Key Highlights are given below:*

- Total forest cover: 21.71% of the geographical area of India
- Top 3 states in Total Forest cover: Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh
- Top 3 states by percent of State's Geographic Area under Forest Cover: Mizoram (84.53%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.33%), Meghalaya
- Total tree cover: 2.91% of the geographical area of India
- State with Maximum Tree cover: Maharashtra.
- Tree Outside Forests: 36.18% of the total forest and tree cover of India
- Total Area of Mangrove Cover: 0.15% of country's geographical area
- Top States & UTs with Mangrove Cover: West Bengal, Gujarat, Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- Forest Cover in the Tiger Reserve: 7.80% of the country's total forest cover

#### **Government to reintroduce Cheetahs in National Park**

The Government of India has decided to reintroduce Cheetahs in National Parks over 5 years, under 'Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in India', launched at the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). Action Plan aims to establish viable Cheetah metapopulation in India that allows the Cheetah to perform its functional role as a top predator and provides space for the expansion of the animal within its historical range, thereby, contributing to its global conservation efforts. Cheetah is the only large carnivore that got completely wiped out from India in 1952, mainly due to over-hunting and habitat loss.

#### **WEF published report 'BiodiverCities by 2030'**

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has published a report titled 'BiodiverCities by 2030: Transforming cities' relationship with nature'. The report was developed as an output of the BiodiverCities by 2030 initiative.

*BiodiverCities by 2030* is a joint initiative of the World Economic Forum and the Government of Colombia. It aims to support city governments, businesses and citizens, to enable cities to live in harmony with nature by 2030. The report examines the relationship between cities and nature, and, provides a clear path for city leaders to embrace the BiodiverCities by 2030 vision and increase urban competitiveness and liveability through nature.

### **IMD launched first Climate Hazards and Vulnerability Atlas of India**

India Meteorological Department (IMD) has launched first 'Climate Hazards and Vulnerability Atlas of India'. It is based on 14 extreme weather events (extreme rainfall, drought, cold wave, heatwave, thunderstorm, cyclones, lightning, etc.) and the risks they pose to the local population, livelihoods and economy of each district. The Atlas provides a range of vulnerability, with risks ranging from nil, low, moderate, high and very high categories for every Indian district. The Atlas is developed by the scientists at Climate Research and Services (CRS) office of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Pune.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Asia Ministerial Conference on Tiger Conservation concluded in Malaysia**

4<sup>th</sup> Asia Ministerial Conference (AMC) on Tiger Conservation was concluded. It was hosted by Malaysia in collaboration with Global Tiger Forum (GTF).

AMC is a meeting of 13 Tiger Range Countries (TRC) to discuss the plight and plans for conservation of the wild Tiger population. TRCs consist of Malaysia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

According to the St. Petersburg Declaration on Tiger Conservation (2010), TRC agreed to Global Tiger Recovery Programme (GTRP), which envisages doubling the wild tiger population by 2022. Note that, under Project Tiger (launched in 1973), India has achieved the remarkable feat of doubling the tiger population in 2018 itself, 4 years ahead of the 2022 target. India has 70% of the world's tiger population.

Global Tiger Day is observed every year on 29<sup>th</sup> July.

### **IMD's criteria for Cold Wave**

Various parts of India, especially North India, experienced a severe cold wave.

A *cold wave* is different for the plains and the mountains. According to the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) if the temperature goes below 10 degree and minimum temperature is at 4.5 degree, it is a cold wave for the plains. The criteria for hills is 0 degree. If the temperature is 6.4 degree below normal or down to 2 degree, it is a severe called wave in the plains. The IMD calls it "a condition of air temperature which becomes fatal to the human body when exposed".

### **What is Bomb Cyclone?**

The US East Coast was hit by a "bomb cyclone" (*Nor'easter*). A Nor'easter is a storm along the East Coast of North America, so called because the winds over the coastal area are typically from the northeast.

Bombogenesis or 'Bomb cyclone' is a mid-latitude cyclone that intensifies rapidly. It has low pressure at its center, weather fronts and an array of associated weather, from blizzards to severe thunderstorms to heavy precipitation. Generally, a bomb cyclone happens when atmospheric pressure in the middle of the storm drops at least 24 millibars over 24 hours, quickly increasing in intensity. The lower the pressure, the stronger the storm.

### **Stockholm Convention on POPs**

European Commission has proposed to tighten limits for a range of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) to tackle contamination in recycled products, health and environment.

In 1995, the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) called for global action to be taken on POPs, which it defined as “chemical substances that persist in the environment, bioaccumulate through the food web, and pose a risk of causing adverse effects to human health and the environment”.

*Stockholm Convention on POPs:* It was signed in 2001 and came into effect from May 2004 (90 days after the ratification by at least 50 signatory states). It aims to eliminate or restrict the production and use of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

Note that, in 2021 the Union Cabinet approved the ratification of 7 chemicals listed under the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). The Cabinet has also delegated its powers to ratify chemicals under the Stockholm Convention to the Union Ministers of External Affairs (MEA) and Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) in respect of POPs already regulated under the domestic regulations.

### **Haryana-Himachal Pradesh initiative to rejuvenate Saraswati River**

The Governments of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh have entered into an agreement to build a dam at Adi Badri in Yamunanagar district, which, among others, will rejuvenate the mythical Saraswati River. Adi Badri, situated in Haryana near the Himachal Pradesh border, is believed to be the river’s origin point.

*Saraswati River:* The river, which had originated from Kapal tirth in the Himalayas in the west of Kailash, was flowing southward to Mansarovar, and then, taking a turn towards west. The river flowed through Haryana, Rajasthan and North Gujarat. It also flowed through Pakistan before meeting Arabian Sea through Rann of Kutch, and was approximately 4,000 km in length.

### **Gateway to Hell**

Turkmenistan’s President has ordered his officials to find a method of finally extinguishing the ‘Gateway to Hell’ in the country.

Turkmenistan’s Gateway to hell (also known as *The Darvaza Crater*) is 225 feet wide, 99 feet deep with diameter of 70 metres, across an area of 5.5 square metres. It is a natural gas field collapsed into a cavern near Darvaza in Turkmenistan. It has raging flames, burning for five decades in a large natural gas crater.

### **First-of-its-kind State level bird Atlas in Kerala**

The first-of-its-kind State-level bird atlas in India, has been created with The Kerala Bird Atlas (KBA). KBA is said to be Asia’s largest bird atlas in terms of geographical extent. KBA has been conducted as a citizen science-driven exercise with the participation of over 1,000 volunteers of the birdwatching community. The atlas has details of three lakh records of 361 species.

### **India’s Supermom tigress passed away**

India’s Supermom tigress, popularly known as ‘*Collarwali*’ passed away at Pench Tiger Reserve. She was known for giving birth to 29 cubs during her lifetime, which is believed to be a world record.

## 4. Schemes & Programmes

### **Government launched SAAR Programme**

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched “Smart cities and Academia Towards Action & Research (SAAR)” programme. It is a joint initiative of MoHUA, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and leading Indian academic institutions of the country. Under the program, 15 premier architecture & planning institutes of the country will be working with Smart Cities to document landmark projects undertaken by the Smart Cities Mission.

### **CCEA approves Green Energy Corridor Phase II**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the scheme on ‘Green Energy Corridor (GEC) Phase II’ for Intra-State Transmission System (InSTS). The Green Energy Corridor (GEC) Project aims at synchronizing electricity produced from renewable sources such as solar and wind with conventional power stations in the grid. The Project was sanctioned in 2015-16, for evacuation and integration of the renewable energy capacity through setting up of transmission lines and increasing transformation capacity of sub-stations.

#### *Phase I of the Project:*

- It is being implemented by 8 renewable energy-rich States of Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh.
- Under this phase, the target is to install 9700 circuit km. of transmission lines and 22,600 Megavolt-Amperes (MVA) transformation capacity of sub-stations by 2022.
- The funding mechanism consists of a 40% Government of India Grant, 20% state equity and a 40% loan from KfW Bank, Germany.

#### *Phase II of the Project:*

- It will be implemented in 7 States namely, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.
- Under this phase, the target is to install 10,750 circuit km. of transmission lines and 27,500 Megavolt Amperes (MVA) transformation capacity of sub-stations by 2025-26.
- The Centre will provide assistance at 33% of the cost of the project.

### **Various Projects inaugurated under PRASHAD Scheme**

Ministry of Tourism has inaugurated various projects at Govardhan, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh under PRASHAD Scheme.

The ‘National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive’ (PRASHAD) is a central-sector scheme launched by the Ministry of Tourism in the year 2014-15 with the objective of integrated development of identified pilgrimage and heritage destinations. The scheme is aimed at infrastructure development such as entry points (Road, Rail and Water Transport), last mile connectivity, basic tourism facilities like Information/ Interpretation Centers, ATM/ Money exchange etc.

### **MoPR released revised RADPFI Guidelines**

Ministry of Panchayati Raj has revised Rural Area Development Plan Formulation and Implementation (RADPFI) guidelines in a view to transforming rural India and ensuring rural prosperity. RADPFI 2021 guidelines is a continuation to the Ministry's efforts towards promotion of spatial rural planning, and would create pathways for rural transformation, by developing a perspective for long term planning in villages.

*Objectives:* It is aimed at ensuring ease of living in villages, and help minimizing migration to big cities, by providing all necessary infrastructure and facilities, and also resources and opportunities for livelihood in rural areas.

*Key Features*

- It includes Village Planning Scheme (VPS) on the lines of Town Planning Schemes in urban areas.
- Provisions linking Gram Panchayat Development Programme (GPDP) with Spatial Land Use Planning,
- Spatial standards for Gram Panchayat development.

## 5. Polity

### **European Commission proposes Digital rights**

European Commission, in a global first, has proposed a set of digital rights and principles. It is an extension of the Berlin Declaration on Digital Society and Value-Based Digital Government of European Union Council. Declaration aims to contribute to a value-based digital transformation by addressing and ultimately strengthening digital participation and digital inclusion in our societies.

*Digital rights*, closely linked to freedom of expression and privacy, are those that allow people to access, use, create and publish digital media, as well as access and use computers, other electronic devices and communications networks.

### **EVM and VVPAT**

Citizens' Commission on Elections' Report on EVMs and VVPAT was released.

*Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)* is a microcontroller-based portable instrument designed to modernise the election procedure of conducting elections. EVM consists of 2 Units – a Control Unit and a Balloting Unit. These units are joined together by a cable. EVMs do not require electricity. EVMs run on an ordinary battery assembled by Election Commission (EC) in collaboration with 2 Public Sector undertakings – Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL), Bangalore (Ministry of Defence), and Electronic Corporation of India Ltd (ECIL), Hyderabad (Department of Atomic Energy).

EVMs were first used in Parur Assembly Constituency elections of Kerala in the year 1982. In 1988, a new Section 61A was inserted in the Representation of the People Act, 1951 empowering Election Commission of India to use electronic voting machines. An EVM being used by ECI can record a maximum of 2,000 votes. EVMs can cater to a maximum of 64 candidates (including NOTA). There is provision for 16 candidates in one Balloting Unit.

*Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT)* is another independent machine attached to the EVM which helps the voter verify the vote. After casting the vote, a slip is printed which contains the serial number, name, and symbol of the candidate and is visible through a window for 7 seconds. Post this, the printed slip automatically falls in the sealed drop box of the VVPAT.

### **Budget Session**

The Budget Session of Parliament has begun and is scheduled to conclude in the month of April. As per the procedure, first, President Ram Nath Kovind addressed both the Houses of the Parliament.

The Economic Survey 2021-22 was laid by Finance Minister in Lok Sabha on January 31. The Budget was then presented by Finance Minister on February 1<sup>st</sup> at 11 am. There was no Zero Hour and Question Hour in both Houses of Parliament during the first 2 days of the Budget Session. During the First Part of the Session, after the presentation of the Budget (February 2-11), 40 hours of normal time were available for various Businesses such as Question, Private Members' Business, Discussion on Motion of Thanks, General Discussion on Union Budget, etc.

### **ECI raises election expenditure limit for candidates**

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has raised the expenditure limit for candidates contesting elections. Last major revision in the election expenditure limit for candidates was carried out in 2014, which was further increased by 10% in 2020.

The following changes have been made:

*For Parliamentary Constituencies:*

Rs. 54 lakhs to Rs. 70 lakhs – revised to Rs 75 lakhs to Rs. 95 lakhs (range depends upon the State)

*For Assembly Constituencies:*

Rs. 20 lakhs to Rs. 28 lakhs – revised to Rs 28 lakhs to Rs. 40 lakhs (range depends upon the State)

*Election Expenditure Limit:* Under Section 77 of the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951, every candidate shall keep a separate and correct account of all expenditure incurred between the date on which they have been nominated, and the date of declaration of the result. All candidates are required to submit their expenditure statement to the Election Commission of India within 30 days of the completion of the elections. An incorrect account or expenditure beyond the cap can lead to disqualification of the candidate by the ECI for up to 3 years, under Section 10A of RPA, 1951.

### **What is Postal ballot?**

The Election Commission of India has allowed journalists to cast their votes through postal ballot facility.

Postal voting is a type of voting in elections, whereby, Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot Papers (ETPB) are distributed to electors and returned by Post.

Service voters, have the option of either voting through Postal Ballot or through a proxy voter. It includes:

- (i) Members of Armed Forces of the Union,
- (ii) Members of Forces to which provisions of Army Act, 1950 applies,
- (iii) Members of Armed Police Force of a State and serving outside that state, and
- (iv) Persons who are employed by Government of India in a post outside India.

It is to be noted that under Section 62 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, prisoners are not allowed to vote, but people under preventive detention can cast their votes through postal ballots.

### **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights**

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has asked the West Bengal Chief Secretary to get all Children Care Institutions (CCIs) registered under the Juvenile Justice Act 2015. Citing that it was mandatory for all CCIs to comply with the Juvenile Justice Act 2015, the NCPCR has sought an action taken report from the State Government within 10 days.

NCPCR was set up in March 2007, under the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005. It works under the administrative control of the Ministry of Women & Child Development. The Commission's mandate is to ensure that all laws, policies, programmes, and administrative mechanisms are in consonance with the Child Rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India, and, also the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

*Composition:* This Commission has a chairperson and 6 members of which at least 2 should be women. All of them are appointed by Central Government for 3 years. The maximum age to serve in Commission is 65 years for Chairman and 60 years for members.

Under the Right to Education Act, 2009, the NCPCR can:

- (i) inquire into complaints about violation of the law,

- (ii) summon an individual and demand evidence,
- (iii) seek a magisterial enquiry,
- (iv) file a writ petition in the High Court or Supreme Court,
- (v) approach the Government concerned for prosecution of the offender, and
- (vi) recommend interim relief to those affected.

**Article 348: Language to be used in the Supreme Court and in the High Courts and for Acts, Bills, etc.**

A Division Bench of the Gujarat High Court has asked a journalist, facing contempt of court proceedings, to speak only in English, as that was the language in the higher judiciary.

Article 348 (1) of the Constitution of India provides that all proceedings in the Supreme Court, and, in every High Court shall be in English Language until otherwise provided by law by Parliament.

Under Article 348 (2), the Governor of the State may, with the previous consent of the President, authorize the use of the Hindi language or any other language used for any official purpose of the State, in the proceedings of the High Court having its principal seat in that State provided that decrees, judgments or orders passed by such High Courts shall be in English.



## 6. Governance

### **Hyderabad Declaration on e-Governance Adopted**

24<sup>th</sup> National e-Governance Conference was jointly held by Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances, in collaboration with Telangana Government. The conference unanimously adopted *the Hyderabad Declaration*.

*Key highlights of Hyderabad Declaration:*

- Transform citizen services by using Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker, UMANG, e Sign etc.
- Fast track implementation of national level public digital platforms in key social sectors viz. Health, Education, Agriculture, etc.
- Foster responsible use of emerging technology such as AI, Machine Learning, Blockchain, 5G etc.
- Robust technological solutions to withstand pandemic like disruptions.
- Make digital the primary aspect of government service design and delivery.
- National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) to be adopted in collaboration with MeitY.

*Some of the e-Governance initiatives are:*

- Bhoomi Project for (Karnataka): Online Delivery of Land Records.
- e-Seva (Andhra Pradesh)
- Gyandoot (MP): Service delivery initiative.
- Lokvani (UP): For handling of grievances, land record maintenance and providing a mixture of essential services.
- FRIENDS (Fast, Reliable, Instant, Efficient Network for the Disbursement of Services) in Kerala.

### **Transparency International released Corruption Perception Index**

Corruption Perception Index was released by Transparency International. As per the Index, India ranked at 85<sup>th</sup> among 180 countries (ranked 86<sup>th</sup> in the last year index) with a score of 40. Denmark, New Zealand and Finland have jointly topped the index.

Index uses a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean), to rank countries by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and business people.

### **District Good Governance Index launched in Jammu and Kashmir**

District Good Governance Index (DGGI) was launched for the 20 districts in Jammu and Kashmir, which is the first Union Territory to have such an index. As per the index, Jammu district topped the composite ranking, followed by Doda and Samba districts of the Jammu Division.

*District Good Governance Index* has been prepared by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in partnership with the Union Territory's administration. Under the index, the policies, schemes and programs of the Union Government as well as the State Governments have been monitored at the district level.

### **Multi-Agency Centre**

The Union Government has asked the States to share more intelligence inputs through the Multi Agency Centre (MAC).

*Multi Agency Centre (MAC)* is a common counter-terrorism grid under the Intelligence Bureau, that was made operational in 2001, following the Kargil War. As many as 28 organisations, including the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), Armed Forces and State Police, are part of the platform. Various security agencies share real-time intelligence inputs on the MAC. Functions as a 24/7 nodal body for sharing intelligence inputs, MAC coordinates with representatives from numerous agencies, different ministries, both central and state.

### **Special Protection Group Act**

The Union Government is considering action under the Special Protection Group (SPG) Act, 1988, against Punjab Police officers following the alleged breach in security of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Punjab. Protocols for Prime Minister's movements are set by the SPG. Section 14 of the SPG Act, makes the State Government responsible for providing all assistance to the SPG during the PM's movement.

### *Background*

In March 1985, following the recommendations of a committee set up by the Home Ministry, a special unit was created for the purpose of the protection of PM, under the Cabinet Secretariat. This unit, initially called the Special Protection Unit, was renamed as Special Protection Group in April 1985. Subsequently, the Parliament passed The Special Protection Group (SPG) Act, which was notified in June 1988 "to provide for the constitution and regulation of an armed force of the Union for providing proximate security to the Prime Minister of India and for matters connected therewith".

### **BARC Rating Agency to resume ratings after revised protocols and procedures**

Ratings by Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) for the news channels will resume, after the organisation revised its procedures and protocols. Earlier, the ratings were suspended after the Mumbai police busted a racket involving a private channel's efforts to tamper the ratings.

*Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC)* is an industry body jointly owned by advertisers, ad agencies, and broadcasting companies, represented by The Indian Society of Advertisers, the Indian Broadcasting Foundation and the Advertising Agencies Association of India. It commenced its operations in 2015 and since then, it is the sole provider of Television Rating services on a commercial basis. BARC calculate Television Rating Points (TRP) using "BAR-O-meters."

*TRP* is the criterion that indicates the popularity of a channel or programme. Television ratings provide information about the TV watching habits of viewers from different socio-economic background of the audience.

### **Kevadiya Railway Station renamed as Ekta Nagar Railway Station**

The Ministry of Railways has recently announced change in name of the Kevadiya railway station in the Narmada district of Gujarat, as Ekta Nagar railway station. The Kevadiya railway station is famous for Statue of Unity as it is more nearby railway station from the world's tallest statue.

### **Mullaperiyar dam**

An application has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking appropriate direction to Government of Tamil Nadu to construct a new dam to augment the storage capacity of the Vaigai dam downstream or to take such steps to strengthen the Mullaperiyar dam till an alternative dam is constructed.

*Mullaperiyar dam:* Although the dam is located in Kerala, it is operated by Tamil Nadu following an 1886 lease indenture for 999 years (the Periyar Lake Lease Agreement) that was signed between the Maharaja of Travancore and the Secretary of State for India for the Periyar Irrigation works. Constructed between 1887 and 1895, the dam redirected the river to flow towards the Bay of Bengal, instead of the Arabian Sea and provide water to the

arid rain region of Madurai in Madras Presidency. The dam is located on the confluence of the Mullayar and Periyar rivers in Kerala's Idukki district.

## 7. International Relations

### **India hosts first India-Central Asia Summit**

India hosted the first India-Central Asia Summit in virtual format.

#### *Key Highlights of the Summit*

- It was attended by Presidents of all 5 central Asian Republics: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
- The Leaders agreed to institutionalize the Summit mechanism by deciding to hold it every 2 years.
- India-Central Asia Centre would be set up in New Delhi which could act as the Secretariat for the India-Central Asia Summit.
- Countries agreed to further cooperation in areas of trade and connectivity, development cooperation, defence and security through showcasing of Buddhist Exhibitions or joint counter-terrorism exercises.
- To setup joint working groups on Afghanistan and use of Chabahar port.

### **WTO's Developed, Developing and Least Develop Countries**

China's status as a 'Developing Country' at the World Trade Organization (WTO) has become a contentious issue since China is deriving benefits reserved for developing countries under WTO norms.

Note that, there are no WTO definitions of "developed" and "developing" countries. Members announce for themselves whether they are "developed" or "developing" countries. However, other members can challenge the decision of a member to make use of provisions available to developing countries.

#### *Benefits of Developing Countries*

The WTO Agreements contain special provisions which give developing countries special rights' and which give developed countries the possibility to treat developing countries more favourably than other WTO Members. These special provisions include, for example, longer time periods for implementing Agreements and commitments or measures to increase trading opportunities for developing countries. These provisions are referred to as "Special & Differential treatment" (S&D) provisions.

The Enabling Clause officially called the "Decision on Differential and More Favourable Treatment, Reciprocity and Fuller Participation of Developing Countries", was adopted under GATT in 1979 and enables developed members to give differential and more favourable treatment to developing countries.

GATT: *General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade*

The Enabling Clause is the WTO legal basis for the 'Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)'. Under the GSP, developed countries offer non-reciprocal preferential treatment (such as zero or low duties on imports) to products originating in developing countries. Preference-giving countries unilaterally determine which countries and which products are included in their schemes.

*Least Developed Country (LDC) at WTO:* WTO recognizes LDCs relying on a classification by the UN based on a criterion that is reviewed every 3 years. The identification of LDCs is currently based on 3 criteria: (1) per capita Gross National Income (GNI), (2) Human Assets and (3) economic vulnerability to external shocks.

### **India to chair 2022 Counter Terrorism Committee**

India, which will chair the UNSC Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) in 2022, voted in favour of a resolution to renew CTED's mandate until the end of the year 2025. As CTC chair, India will make determined efforts to

further enhance the role of CTC in strengthening multilateral response to counter terrorism. India will also ensure that global response to threat of terrorism remains unambiguous, undivided and effective.

*Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC)* was established by UNSC in 2001, to implement measures intended to enhance their legal and institutional ability to counter terrorist activities at home, in their regions and around the world. It was established after the 9/11 terror attack, to bolster the ability of UN member states to prevent terrorist acts, both within their borders and across regions.

*Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)* was established by UNSC in 2004 as an expert body to support CTC. CTED conducts country visits on CTC's behalf to assess Member States' counter-terrorism efforts, including progress made, remaining shortfalls, priority areas for technical assistance needs etc.

### **First BRICS Sherpas meeting held 2022**

First BRICS Sherpas meeting of 2022 was held virtually, where China has taken leadership from India.

A *Sherpa* is a personal representative of the leader of a member country at an international summit such as the G8, G20 etc. The term is derived from the Nepalese Sherpa people, who serve as guides for mountaineers in the Himalayas. They coordinate the agenda, seek consensus, and participate in a series of pre-Summit consultations to help negotiate their leaders' positions.

### **India ranked at 83<sup>rd</sup> position on Henley Passport Index for first quarter of 2022**

Henley Passport Index was released by Henley & Partners. As per the Index, India's passport power has improved compared to 2021. It now ranks at 83<sup>rd</sup> position compared to 90<sup>th</sup> rank last year. India shares the position with Sao Tome and Principe in Central Africa. The current rankings are for the first quarter of 2022. Japan and Singapore top the index.

The *Henley Passport Index* is the original ranking of all the world's passports according to the number of destinations their holders can access without a prior visa. Originally created by Dr. Christian H. Kaelin (Chairman of Henley & Partners), the ranking is based on exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which maintains the world's largest and most accurate database of travel information.

### **Philippines bought BrahMos Missile**

Philippines has signed a \$375 million deal for BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles.

*BrahMos* is a universal long range supersonic cruise missile system that can be launched from land, sea and air against surface and sea-based targets. BrahMos is a joint collaboration between India (*DRDO*) and Russia (*NPO Mashinostroyeniya*). It is a two-stage missile with a solid propellant booster engine as first stage and liquid ramjet as second stage. It operates at 'fire and forget' principle. BrahMos name represents Brahmaputra and Moskva rivers.

### **First Colombo Security Conclave Workshop on Cyber Security held**

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

At the 5<sup>th</sup> Deputy National Security Advisor Level Meeting of the Colombo Security Conclave held in August 2021, Members and Observer States had agreed on four pillars of cooperation including Maritime Safety and Security, Terrorism and Radicalization, Trafficking and Organized Crime and Cyber Security and Protection of Critical Infrastructure. The workshop was the inaugural activity under the fourth pillar. It addressed key areas of Deep Web and Dark Net Investigation and Challenges; Digital Forensics; Cyber Threat intelligence; and Defensive Operations in Cyber Domain. Discussions focused on technological advancements, research challenges and approaches in these areas.

### **Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) Vikrant**

IAC Vikrant (IAC-I) is heading out for the next set of sea trials.

*IAC Vikrant* is the first aircraft carrier built in India and the first Vikrant-class aircraft carrier built by Cochin Shipyard (CSL) in Kochi, Kerala for the Indian Navy. It has been designed by the Indian Navy's Directorate of Naval Design (DND) and is being built at Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), a public sector shipyard under the Ministry of Shipping. The IAC-1, the biggest warship made indigenously, has an overall length of 263 m and a breadth of 63 m. It is capable of carrying 30 assorted aircraft including combat jets and helicopters. Apart from India, only US, UK, Russia, France and China have the capability to build aircraft carriers.

### **Indonesia changes its capital to East Kalimantan – named Nusantara**

Indonesia has announced to shift its capital from Jakarta to East Kalimantan. New capital will be called '*Nusantara*', meaning 'archipelago' in Javanese. Indonesia is the largest archipelago of the world with over 17,000 islands straddling the equator in Southeast Asia. It is located in the Indian and Pacific Ocean. It is the 4<sup>th</sup> most populous nation of the world.

Indonesia is not the first country to change its capital city. Some other nations are given below:

- Brazil changed its capital city from Rio De Janerio to Brasilia, a more centrally located city, in 1960.
- In 1991, Nigeria changed the country's capital from Lagos to Abuja.
- Kazakhstan moved its capital city from Almaty, which is still its commercial centre, to Nur-Sultan in 1997.
- Myanmar changed its capital from Rangoon to Naypyidaw in 2005.

### **Indo-Lanka Accord**

Sri Lanka has announced that the Indian Oil Subsidiary 'Lanka IOC' would be given 49% stake in the joint development of the Trincomalee Oil Tank farm, with Ceylon Petroleum Corporation keeping 51%. If it goes according to plan, India and Sri Lanka would have finally achieved the implementation of an agreement — contained in an exchange of letters between then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President J. R. Jayewardene as part of the annexure to the India-Sri Lanka Accord of July 29, 1987 — that the tank farm would be developed jointly.

*Indo-Lanka Accord:*

- It is popularly referred to as the Rajiv-Jayewardene Accord.
- It was signed in 1987 on the pretext of the Civil War in Sri Lanka (between Tamils and Sinhala community).
- The accord sought to balance India's strategic interests, interest of people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka and Tamil minority rights in Sri Lanka.
- The accord saw the placement of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka to resolve the Sri Lankan Civil War.

- The accord also resulted in enactment of the thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka and the Provincial Councils Act of 1987.

### **Sir Creek Pact and Siachen Glacier**

Siachen and Sir Creek have long been termed “low hanging fruits” in the past for resolution between India and Pakistan and the 2 countries have held 13 rounds of Defence Secretary-level talks on Siachen, the last one in June 2012. But there has been no resolution yet on the issue.

*Sir Creek* is a 96-km strip of water disputed between India and Pakistan in the Rann of Kutch marshlands. Originally named Ban Ganga, Sir Creek is named after a British representative. The Creek opens up in the Arabian Sea and roughly divides the Kutch region of Gujarat from the Sindh Province of Pakistan.

*Siachen Glacier* lies in the Karakoram Range system, which is a part of western Himalayas. It is the highest battlefield in the world and lies on LoC (Line of Control) between India and Pakistan. It has been continuously contested by Pakistan as its own part which has led to militarization of the glacier. After the Indo-Pakistan war in 1971, an agreement was signed between the two countries in 1972, which came to be known as the ‘Shimla Agreement’, but it failed to clearly mention who controls the glacier. However, in 1984, the Pakistan army tried to enter the glacier, forcing India to launch a military operation known as “*Operation Meghdool*” and since then, India has control over the glacier.

### **What is Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)?**

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is a multilateral treaty aimed at limiting the spread of nuclear weapons and includes 3 elements: non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful use of nuclear energy. These elements constitute a “grand bargain” between the 5 nuclear weapon states and the non-nuclear weapon states. The treaty was signed in 1968 and entered into force in 1970. Presently, it has 190 member states.

#### *Key provisions of NPT:*

- (i) The Treaty defines Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) as those that had manufactured and detonated a nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January, 1967. All the other states are, therefore, considered Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS).
- (ii) The 5 nuclear weapon states are China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States.
- (iii) The Treaty does not affect the right of state parties to develop, produce, and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

India is one of the only 5 countries that either did not sign the NPT or signed but withdrew, thus becoming part of a list that includes Pakistan, Israel, North Korea, and South Sudan.

*India’s stand on NPT:* India refused to join the Treaty on the basis that it was discriminatory because of its grouping of countries. India believes, it is a biased legal instrument that divided the world into “nuclear haves” and “nuclear have-nots”. Also, nuclear weapons constitute an integral part of India’s security. However, in spite of India not joining NPT, India’s unblemished record on non-proliferation and its consistently responsible posture on nuclear weapons enabled it to successfully conclude the Indo-US Nuclear deal in 2008 and to obtain a waiver from the guidelines of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). This has enabled to resume international cooperation in the nuclear domain and gain access to the international civil nuclear market.

### **World Economic Forum Annual Meeting**

The World Economic Forum has held its annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland. The WEF summit is attended by people from across the political and corporate world, including heads of state, policy makers, top executives, industrialists, media personalities and technocrats.

*World Economic Forum* is a Swiss non-profit foundation established in 1971, based in Geneva, Switzerland.

Founder and Executive Chairman: *Klaus Schwab*.

Major Publications: *Energy Transition Index, Global Competitiveness Report, Global IT Report, Global Gender Gap Report, Global Risk Report, Global Travel and Tourism Report*.

### **Sea Dragon Exercise**

India has participated, along with 6 Indo-Pacific nations, in Sea Dragon Exercise. Its participants include – Navies of the US, India, Australia, Canada, Japan and South Korea.

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

### **BSF Operation Sard Hawa and Garam Hawa**

Border Security Force (BSF) has conducted the operation ‘Sard Hawa’ at the international border of Rajasthan, under which vigil will be beefed-up to check the instances of infiltration due to the dense fog in the area. BSF conducts “Operation Garam Hawa” in summer and “Operation Sard Hawa” in winter every year.

BSF is a Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) that functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs. It was raised in 1965. BSF is deployed along the Pakistan and Bangladesh borders. It is also deployed in areas affected by Left Wing Extremism etc.

### **Antigua and Barbuda becomes the newest member of ISA**

Antigua and Barbuda has become the newest member (102<sup>nd</sup>) of the International Solar Alliance (ISA). Antigua and Barbuda is a sovereign island country, lying between the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean.

*International Solar Alliance* was launched in 2015. It is an alliance of more than 122 countries initiated by India. ISA is a coalition of solar resource rich countries lying fully or partially between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn to specifically address energy needs by harnessing solar energy.



## 8. Awards and Recognition

### **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puruskar**

The Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP) for the year 2022 has been conferred to 29 children. The Award is distributed by the Government of India. It is awarded to children between the ages of 5 and 18 to recognize their exceptional abilities and outstanding achievement. It is given in 6 fields of innovation, scholastic achievements, sports, art and culture, social service and bravery. Formerly known as the National Child Award for Exceptional Achievement, it is India's highest civilian honour for exceptional achievers under the age of 18.

Each awardee is given a medal, a cash prize of Rs. 1 Lakh and a certificate. It has 2 categories – Bal Shakti Puraskar and Bal Kalyan Puraskar. Award is administered by Ministry of Women and Child Development.

### **Padma Awards**

The Padma awards are announced every year on the eve of Republic Day. While most accepted the awards gracefully, former West Bengal CM Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee refused to accept it.

Padma Awards is one of the highest civilian Awards of the country & are conferred in 3 categories (given in descending order of honour), namely,

- (i) 'Padma Vibhushan' is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service;
- (ii) 'Padma Bhushan' for distinguished service of high order; and
- (iii) 'Padma Shri' for distinguished service in any field.

The awards were instituted in 1954 to recognize achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved. They are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz. – art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc. They are conferred on the recommendations made by the Padma Awards Committee, which is constituted by the Prime Minister every year and headed by the Cabinet Secretary. There is no cash prize involved.

Padma Vibhushan Recipients for the year 2022 are as follows:

Winner	Field
Ms. Prabha Atre	Arts
Shri Radheyshyam Khemka (Posthumous)	Literature and Education
General Bipin Rawat (Posthumous)	Civil Services
Shri Kalyan Singh (Posthumous)	Public Affairs

Also, this year, Sandhya Mukherji, a noted singer, has refused to accept Padma Shri award.

*Bharat Ratna*, also instituted in 1954, is the highest civilian award of the country. It is awarded in recognition of exceptional service/performance of the highest order in any field of human endeavour. It is treated on a different footing from Padma Award. The recommendations for Bharat Ratna are made by the Prime Minister to the President of India. No formal recommendations for Bharat Ratna are necessary. The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is restricted to a maximum of 3 in a particular year.

### **Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism awards announced**

The Indian Express Group has announced the Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards (RNG Awards) for journalists across the country, for their work done in 2019. RNG awards are one the most prestigious awards in India in the field of journalism, held annually since 2006.

### **Golden Globe Awards announced**

79<sup>th</sup> edition of Golden Globe Awards 2022 ceremony was held to recognize excellence in film, both American and international, and American television. The Awards are chosen by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA).

Winners are listed below:

Category	Recipients
Best film (Drama)	Power of Dog
Best Actor (Drama)	Will Smith for King Richards
Best Actress (Drama)	Nicole Kidman for Being the Ricardos
Best Director	Jane Campion for The Power of the Dog

### **Amar Jyoti merged with National War Memorial Flame**

The Amar Jawan Jyoti or the “eternal flame” at the India Gate was extinguished after 50 years and merged with the flame at the adjoining National War Memorial.

The Amar Jawan Jyoti was inaugurated on the Republic Day of 1972 by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The eternal flame of Amar Jawan Jyoti was lit in memory of soldiers who laid their lives during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war.

The National War Memorial was inaugurated in February 2019. The eternal torch of this memorial burns at the heart of the *Smarak Stambh*, the main pillar of the memorial, inside the Amar Chakra.

### **Indian Numerologist won first-ever Guinness World Record in Numerology**

The first-ever Guinness World Record in Numerology and the first world record of 2022 was achieved by India's Numerologists J.C. Chaudhry educating about ancient science to around 6000 participants, enthusiasts of numerology joined from USA, UK, Middle East, and India. The initiative was organised by CNPL (Chaudhry Numero Pvt. Ltd.) and the Indian Institute of Numerology to create awareness regarding numerology, which was prevalent across ancient cultures like Greece, Egypt, China, Chaldea and India.

### **Mrs. World 2022 announced**

Shaylyn Ford (USA) was crowned as the winner of Mrs. World 2022. Also, Mrs. Jordan, Jaclyn Stapp and Mrs. UAE, Debanjali Kamstra, were declared as the runner ups.

### **Veer Baal Diwas**

The Union Government has announced 26<sup>th</sup> December as ‘Veer Baal Diwas’ to mark martyrdom of Sahibzada Zorawar Singh Ji and Fateh Singh Ji who were the sons of Guru Gobind Singh. While all 4 sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji were martyred, the date has been chosen as it was the day observed as the martyrdom day of Sahibzada Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, who were killed at the tender age of 6 and 9 in Sirhind by Mughal forces.

### **UNESCO Heritage Tag sought for Living Root Bridges**

UNESCO Heritage tag is being sought for the Living Root Bridges of Meghalaya.

*Living root bridges (Jing kieng jri)* are the community driven innovations by forest dwellers especially Khasi and Jaintia people of Meghalaya by weaving and manipulating the roots of the Indian rubber tree in hollowed out Areca catechu or native bamboo trunks. Spanning between 15 and 250 feet and built over centuries, the bridges, primarily a means to cross streams and rivers, have also become world-famous tourist attractions.

### **Highest motorable road in the World built in the Ladakh**

Several projects built by Border Roads Organisation, including a bridge on world's highest motorable road, were inaugurated.

The highest motorable road was built under Project Himank, a project to keep lines of communication open throughout the year (in Ladakh/Siachen sector). Road is in south Ladakh, connecting Chisumle and Demchok. It passes through Umling La pass, which is at a height of over 19,000 feet. It betters previous record of a road in Bolivia. New road will make it easier to mobilise troops and equipment.

### **Urjit Patel appointed as Vice-President of AIIB**

Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Urjit Patel has been appointed as Vice-President of the Beijing-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) for a term of 3-years.

*Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)* is a multilateral development bank with a mission to improve social and economic outcomes in Asia and beyond. It is headquartered in Beijing. The bank started operation after the agreement entered into force on 25<sup>th</sup> December 2015, after ratifications received from 10 member states holding a total number of 50% of the initial subscriptions of the Authorized Capital Stock. Currently, China is the largest shareholder.

### **ISRO New Chief appointed – S. Somnath**

S. Somanath was appointed as the 10<sup>th</sup> Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). He will assume the charge as the Secretary of the Department of Space and the Chairman, Space Commission.

### **Pakistan first female Supreme Court Judge appointed**

Pakistan's first female Supreme Court judge Ayesha Malik has been sworn in the capital Islamabad. She now sits on a bench with 16 other male colleagues in the country's top court. It is to be noted that so far, it was the only South Asian country to have never had a female Supreme Court judge.

### **Honduras gets its first woman President**

Xiomara Castro was sworn in as the first woman President of Honduras, a Central American country.

### **New Chief Economic Advisor appointed – Anantha Nageswaran**

The Government of India has appointed Anantha Nageswaran as the new Chief Economic Advisor (CEA). He is a former member of Prime Minister Economic Advisory Council. The CEA reports to the Finance Minister of India. The post is equivalent to Secretary in India. The CEA is also the head of the Department of Economic Affairs that operates under Ministry of Finance.

## 9. Social Development

### **National Commission for Safaikaramcharis**

National Commission for Safaikaramcharis (NCSK) was established in the year 1993 as per the provisions of the NCSK Act 1993 initially for the period up to 31.3.1997. Later validity of the Commission was extended up to 2004. However, after 2004, the tenure of NCSK has been extended as a non-statutory body from time to time through resolutions. The tenure of present Commission is up to 31.3.2022.

#### *Key Roles of NCSK*

- Giving recommendations to Government regarding specific programmes for welfare of SafaiKaramcharis.
- Monitor implementation of ‘Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013’.
- Enquire into complaints regarding contravention of the Act.

### **What is Antimicrobials Resistance (AMR)?**

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and the World Health Organization (WHO) have launched the new One Health Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance. The group will provide political leadership to address this critical global challenge of Antimicrobials Resistance.

*Antibiotic resistance:* It is the ability of a microorganism (like bacteria, viruses, and some parasites) to stop an antimicrobial (such as antibiotics, antivirals and antimalarials) from working against it. As a result, standard treatments become ineffective, infections persist and may spread to others.

### **What is Dark Genome?**

Scientists investigating the DNA outside our genes (called as *Dark Genome*) have discovered evolved regions that code for proteins associated with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder (behavioural mental disorders).

*Dark Genome* refers to DNA outside of the regions conventionally defined as genes. They are genes/proteins for which there is minimal knowledge on biological function and, allied to this, limited tools for their analysis (such as antibodies). Thus, it adversely affects the precision medicine initiative.

### **What is GitHub?**

GitHub is the world’s largest open-source developer community platform where users upload their projects and code for others to view, edit, and tweak. It is in the news after it was used to create and share an offensively named app (*Bulli Bai*) that sexually harassed Muslim women in India. The app used pictures of the women stolen from their social media handles and invited “users” to bid for them.

GitHub has blocked the user, and the Indian Computer Emergency Response System (Cert-In), the nodal agency for monitoring cyber security incidents, has been asked to form “a High-Level Committee” to investigate.

*SHe-Box:* The Ministry of Women & Child Development launched Sexual Harassment electronic Box (SHe-Box) as an effort to provide a single window access to every woman, irrespective of her work status, whether working in organised or unorganised, private or public sector, to facilitate the registration of complaint related to sexual harassment. Any woman facing sexual harassment at the workplace can register their complaint through this portal. Once a complaint is submitted to the ‘SHe-Box’, it will be directly sent to the concerned authority having jurisdiction to take action into the matter.

### **What is Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)?**

The government has brought the IITs, IIMs and other Institutions of National Importance (INIs) under the Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) framework, which allows students to pursue up to 50% of a course from institutions other than the one with which they are enrolled. The Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) is proposed under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Under the ABC, students will be given multiple entry and exit options. This enables students to leave a degree or course and get a corresponding certification and rejoin studies after a certain time and be able to start from where they had left. It will also provide students with the flexibility to move between institutes while pursuing one degree or leave a course. ABC will keep records of the academic credits of a student. It will not accept any credit course document directly from the students for any course they might be pursuing, but only from higher education institutes, who will have to make deposits in students' accounts.

### **What is Food Fortification?**

The FSSAI's Food Fortification Resource Centre (FFRC) has reported that over 70% of India's population consumes less than half the daily recommended dietary allowance of micronutrients. These deficiencies are prevalent not only in women and children from rural areas but also affect population groups in urban India.

Food Fortification is defined as the practice of adding vitamins and minerals to commonly consumed foods during processing to increase their nutritional value. It is a proven, safe and cost-effective strategy for improving diets and for the prevention and control of micronutrient deficiencies. The FSSAI defines fortification as "deliberately increasing the content of essential micronutrients in a food so as to improve the nutritional quality of food and to provide public health benefit with minimal risk to health."

FSSAI: *Food Safety and Standards Authority of India*

### **Ministry of Education launched NEAT 3.0**

The Ministry of Education has launched the National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) 3.0.

The Ministry of Education had announced NEAT as a Public-Private partnership model between the Government (through its implementing agency AICTE) and the Education Technology companies across India. It is an initiative to provide the use of best-developed technological solutions in the education sector to enhance the employability of the youth on a single platform for learners' convenience. These solutions use artificial intelligence for a personalized and customized learning experience for better learning outcomes and skill development in niche areas.

## 10. Economy

### **NSO released first advance estimates of GDP for 2021-22**

The National Statistical Office (NSO) has released the first advance estimates of GDP for 2021-22 with GDP growth rate pegged at 9.2%.

First Advance Estimates of GDP were introduced in 2016-17 to serve as essential inputs to the Budget exercise. It uses the Benchmark-indicator method i.e., extrapolating previous year estimates by using relevant indicators on performance of different sectors of economy.

Key Estimates (Base year for Constant Prices- 2011-12):

- Real GDP is estimated to grow at 9.2% and Nominal GDP at 17.6%,
- Real GVA is estimated to grow at 8.6% and Nominal GVA at 17.4%.

*Additional indicators to measure well-being*

*Gross National Happiness (GNH)*: Coined by the 4<sup>th</sup> king of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck in the 1970's, GNH focuses on 4 pillars – good governance, sustainable socio-economic development, cultural preservation and environmental conservation.

*Human Development Index (HDI)*: Launched in 1990 by the United Nations to measure factors such as education, income, and health.

*Bare Necessities Index (BNI)*: Introduced by the Finance Ministry in 2020-21, it assesses the fulfillment of bare necessities of life such as housing, water sanitation, electricity etc.

*Green GDP*: Also known as environmentally adjusted domestic product, it allows the cost of natural resource depletion and environmental degradation to be subtracted from GDP.

*Gross Environment Product*: A component of Green GDP, it measures the ecosystem services, or the benefits derived from natural resources and processes such as food, clean water etc.

*Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI)*: Used to measure the economic growth of a nation, GPI takes into account the GDP as well as its negative social and environmental costs such as crimes, resource depletion, etc.

### **RBI notified market making scheme**

RBI has notified the market making scheme to promote retail participation in government securities by providing prices/quotes to Retail Direct Gilt (RDG) account holders enabling them to buy and sell securities under the Retail Direct Scheme.

*RBI Retail Direct Scheme* is a one-stop solution to facilitate investment in Government Securities by individual investors. It allows retail investors (individuals) to open and maintain the Retail Direct Gilt account with RBI.

In the Union Budget for FY 2021-22, the government proposed to consolidate various statutory Acts like the Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Act, 1992, and the Government Securities Act 2007, etc. into a rationalized single securities markets code. Consequently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) allowed retail investors to participate in the government securities (G-Sec) market (both primary and secondary) through 'Retail Direct', an online portal for trading. India became the 3<sup>rd</sup> country, after the US and Brazil, in enacting such a provision.

*Retail investors:* The term retail investor refers to individual investors or retail traders. These are non-professional investors who purchase assets such as stocks, bonds, securities, mutual funds, and exchange traded funds (ETFs).

*Primary dealers:* A primary dealer is a bank or other financial institution that has been approved to trade securities with a national government.

*Gilt Account:* A "Gilt Account" means an account opened and maintained for holding Government securities, by an entity or a person.

*G-Sec:* These are debt instruments issued by the government to borrow money. Two key categories are:

1. Treasury bills: Short-term instruments which mature in 91 days, 182 days, or 364 days, and
2. Dated securities: Long-term instruments, which mature anywhere between 5 years and 40 years.

### **What is General Network Access (GNA)?**

The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission has issued draft Connectivity and General Network Access to the inter-State Transmission System Regulations, 2021. Central Electricity Authority initiated the idea of GNA.

*General Network Access* means open and non-discriminatory access to the inter-State transmission system. This is in keeping with the concept of “one nation, one grid”. The system does away with unnecessary contracts between power producers and the bulk consumers for delivery of power. Any producer will have right to access to any consumer as far as the quantum contracted is met.

### **What is CGD Network?**

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has invited electronic bids under ‘11A CGD Bidding Round’.

*City Gas Distribution Network:* CGD refers to transportation or distribution of natural gas to enable the supply of cleaner cooking fuel (like Piped Natural Gas or PNG) to households, industrial and commercial units as well as transportation fuel (like Compressed Natural Gas or CNG) to vehicles through a network of pipelines. Under the PNGRB Act 2006, PNGRB grants the authorization to the entities for developing a CGD network (including PNG network) in the country.

### **RBI releases framework for offline digital payments**

For offline digital payments, RBI has released framework under Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.

#### *Key Highlights of the Framework*

- It is aimed at pushing digital transactions in rural and semi-urban areas.
- It will allow offline payments of up to Rs 200 per transaction, subject to the total limit of Rs 2,000.
- It will enable small value digital payments in offline mode using cards, wallets and mobile device and allowed face-to-face mode only.
- Offline payment transactions may be offered without an Additional Factor of Authentication (AFA).
- RBI’s integrated ombudsman scheme will be applicable for grievance redressal.

*Offline Payment* refers to a transaction which does not require internet or telecom connectivity to take effect. It includes any channel or instrument like cards, wallets or mobile devices, with certain conditions for authorised Payment System Operators (PSOs) and Payment System Participants (PSPs).

### **Airtel Payments Bank as scheduled bank**

Airtel Payments Bank has been categorized as a scheduled bank by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

### **Exploring Minerals abroad**

Ministry of Mines has shortlisted the source nations for exploring possibilities of mineral asset acquisitions abroad. KABIL, a joint venture company, has been engaged to look for source countries like Australia, Argentina, Bolivia and Chile that have critical and strategic minerals. The company has been mandated to identify and acquire overseas mineral assets of critical and strategic nature such as lithium and cobalt.

*KhanijBidesh India Ltd. (KABIL)* is a joint venture company set up with the participation of 3 Central Public Sector Enterprises namely, National Aluminium Company Ltd. (NALCO), Hindustan Copper Ltd. (HCL) and Mineral Exploration Company Ltd. (MECL). KABIL 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 Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF)?**

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Expert Committee has highlighted that Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) would result in tremendous reduction in production of agricultural crops thus compromising India's food security. In 2019, ICAR had set up a Committee under V Praveen Rao to empirically validate the results of ZBNF.

*ZBNF:* It is a method of chemical-free agriculture drawing from traditional Indian practices. The word 'budget' refers to credit and expenses, thus the phrase 'Zero Budget' means without using any credit, and without spending any money on purchased inputs. 'Natural farming' means farming with Nature and without chemicals. It was originally promoted by Maharashtra agriculturalist and Padma Shri recipient Subhash Palekar, who developed it in the mid-1990s as an alternative to the Green Revolution. Because of the Green Revolution initiated in early 1970s through introduction of high yielding seeds, application of chemical fertilizer and assured irrigation, India has emerged as one of the biggest producers of several agricultural crops such as rice, wheat, pulses and oilseeds. However, in the last 4 decades or so there has been gradual degradation of soil health because of excessive use of chemical fertilizer and pesticides.

### **NITI Aayog releases report – Banking on Electric Vehicles**

NITI Aayog, Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), and RMI India have released 'Banking on Electric Vehicles in India' Report. The Report provides considerations and recommendations to inform the inclusion of Electric Vehicles (EVs) in the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) Priority-Sector Lending (PSL) guidelines.

RBI introduced PSL guidelines in 1972 to expand financial access to vulnerable sections of society by enhancing credit for "priority" sectors with high employment and poverty alleviation potential but low bankability. Guidelines mandate that banks subjected to the regulation direct a specified target percentage of credit to priority sectors.

Current priority sectors that can receive this credit include agriculture; MSMEs; Housing; Renewable Energy; Education; Social Infrastructure; Export Credit; Self-Help Groups and Startups; and Weaker sections of society.

### **Centre requested to extend GST Compensation Scheme**

Finance Ministers of several States have demanded that the GST compensation scheme be extended beyond June 2022. The adoption of GST was made possible by States ceding almost all their powers to impose local-level indirect taxes and agreeing to let the prevailing multiplicity of imposts be subsumed into the GST.



The Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016, was the law which created the mechanism for levying a common nationwide Goods and Services Tax (GST). While States would receive the SGST (State GST) component of the GST, and a share of the IGST (integrated GST), it was agreed that revenue shortfalls arising from the transition to the new indirect taxes regime would be made good from a pooled GST Compensation Fund for a period of 5 years that is currently set to end in June 2022.

This corpus is funded through a compensation cess that is levied on so-called ‘demerit’ goods. The items are pan masala, cigarettes and tobacco products, aerated water, caffeinated beverages, coal and certain passenger motor vehicles. The computation of the shortfall is done annually by projecting a revenue assumption based on 14% compounded growth from the base year’s (2015-2016) revenue and calculating the difference between that figure and the actual GST collections in that year.

### **Government notified Consumers Protection Rules 2021**

In exercise of its powers under the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, the Central Government has notified the Consumer Protection (Jurisdiction of the District Commission, the State Commission and the National Commission) Rules, 2021. The new rules revised pecuniary jurisdiction for entertaining consumer complaints. Currently, the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 promulgates a three-tier quasi-judicial mechanism for redressal of consumer disputes namely District Commissions, State Commissions and National Commission. The Act also stipulates the pecuniary jurisdiction of each tier of Consumer Commission.

#### *Overview of the new rules*

- The District Commissions will have jurisdiction to entertain complaints where value of the goods or services paid as consideration does not exceed Rs. 50 lakh.
- State Commissions shall have jurisdiction to entertain complaints where value of the goods or services paid as consideration exceeds Rs. 50 lakh but does not exceed Rs. 2 crore, it notified.
- National Commission will have jurisdiction to entertain complaints where value of the goods or services paid as consideration exceeds Rs. 2 crore.

### **Udyam system of registration**

According to the data furnished by the Office of the Development Commissioner in the Union Ministry of MSME, Maharashtra tops India’s list in the number of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) owned by entrepreneurs from the Scheduled Castes. Generally, the proportion of enterprises owned by Scheduled Caste entrepreneurs in the overall national tally of MSMEs is 6%.

The Udyam system of registration, which came into force on July 1, 2020, is a pre-requisite for any MSME (regardless of the social category of ownership) to avail itself of concessions or benefits from the Central and State Governments.

#### *Key features of the System*

- The Registration can be filed online based on self-declaration. Uploading of documents, papers or certificate as proof would not be necessary henceforth.
- The basic criteria for MSME classification would be on investment in plant, machinery and equipment and turnover.
- Export of goods or services or both would be excluded while calculating the turnover of any enterprise and investment calculation linked to the IT return of the previous year.
- Control Room across the country have been made legally responsible for facilitating entrepreneurs in registration and thereafter.

### **One District One Product Scheme**

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries had inked an agreement with NAFED for developing 10 brands as the ‘One District One Product’ brands under the Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme. Of this, 6 brands have been launched.

#### *Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme*

The scheme was launched as a part of AtmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan for providing financial, technical and business support for upgradation of existing micro food processing enterprises. The scheme will be implemented over a period of 5 years from 2020-21 to 2024-25 with an outlay of Rs 10,000 crore. It is a centrally sponsored scheme.

#### *Key Features*

- About 2 lakh FME will be given direct financial assistance in the form of credit linked subsidy.
- Existing Individual micro food processing units desirous of upgradation of their unit can avail credit-linked capital subsidy @35% of the eligible project cost with a maximum ceiling of Rs.10 lakh per unit.
- Seed capital @ Rs. 40,000/- per SHG member would be provided for working capital and purchase of small tools.
- FPOs/ SHGs/ producer cooperatives would be provided credit linked grant of 35% for capital investment along the value chain.
- Support would be provided through credit linked grant @ 35% for development of common infrastructure including common processing facility, lab, warehouses etc.

### **IEA Electricity Market Report**

The early 2022 edition of the Agency’s bi-annual Electricity Market Report was published by IEA. According to it, nations are largely turning to fossil fuels to meet the increase in electricity demand as COVID-19 lockdown restrictions are lifting.

*International Energy Agency (IEA)* is an autonomous intergovernmental organization established in the framework of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1974. It helps countries to collectively respond to oil supply disruptions. The framework was anchored in the IEA treaty called the “Agreement on an International Energy Program”. A candidate country to the IEA must be a member country of the OECD. It is headquartered in Paris, France.

*Members:* IEA is made up of 30 member countries and 8 association countries. India became an Associate Member in 2017.

*Reports:* 1. *Global Energy & CO<sub>2</sub> Status Report*. 2. *World Energy Outlook*. 3. *World Energy Statistics*. 4. *World Energy Balances*. 5. *Energy Technology Perspectives*.

### **RBI’s Systemically Important Banks List**

Reserve Bank of India has released its list of Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) in 2021. It has identified the state-owned lender State Bank of India and the private lenders ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank as systemically important banks, which are perceived as banks, ‘too big to fail’.

The system of D-SIBs was adopted in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis where the collapse of many systematically important banks across various regions further fueled the financial downturn.

Since 2015, the RBI has been releasing the list of all D-SIBs. They are classified into 5 buckets, according to their importance to the national economy. In order to be listed as a D-SIB, a bank needs to have assets that exceed 2 % of the national GDP. The banks are then further classified on the level of their importance across the 5 buckets.

### **India largest exporter of Gherkins**

India has emerged as the largest exporter of gherkins in the world.

Also known as pickling cucumber, Gherkin cultivation, processing and exports started in India during the early 1990s with a modest beginning in Karnataka and later extended to the neighbouring states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Nearly 15% production of the world's gherkin requirement is currently grown in India.

### **Air India hand over to TATA Group**

The Union Government has transferred its shares in Air India, along with control and management, to Tata Sons subsidiary, Talace, ending a disinvestment process that started 5 years ago. Tatas will get Air India's fleet of 141 planes, along with ownership of iconic Brands like Air India, Indian Airlines & the Maharajah.

The Tata Group now owns 3 airlines along with Vistara in which it has a 51% stake and AirAsia India where it owns 84% stake.

Air India airlines was founded in 1932, when JRD Tata piloted the inaugural flight between Karachi and Bombay. It was then known as Tata Airlines. The government acquired a 49% stake in the carrier in 1948, followed by its nationalization in 1953 and the airline was renamed as Air India International, and domestic flights were transferred to Indian Airlines. In 2007, the 2 airlines were merged.

### **MeitY's C2S Programme**

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has invited applications from 100 academia, R&D organisations, start-ups and MSMEs under its C2S Programme.

C2S Programme aims to train 85,000 high-quality and qualified engineers in the area of Very Large-Scale Integration (VLSI) and Embedded System Design. Under C2S, project would be initiated in certain key areas including Energy & Environment, Healthcare, Agriculture, Disaster management etc. This will be a step towards leapfrogging in the electronics system design and manufacturing (ESDM) space. The programme is in line with Government of India's plan to transform India into the next semiconductor hub. The Center for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), a scientific society operating under MeitY, will serve as the nodal agency for the program.

Also, Prime Minister has announced that 16 January will be celebrated as National Startup Day.

### **Design Linked Incentive Scheme**

The Union Government has invited applications from domestic companies, start-ups and MSMEs under its Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme.

Design Linked Incentive Scheme is part of Indian semiconductor localization move announced last year as part of \$10 billion Programme for Development of Semiconductors and Display Manufacturing Ecosystem in India. DLI aims to nurture at least 20 domestic companies involved in semiconductor design and facilitating them to

achieve turnover of more than Rs. 1500 Crore in the next 5 years. Centre for Development of Advanced Computing is the nodal agency for the scheme.

The scheme has 3 Components:

1. Chip Design Infrastructure Support
2. Product Design-linked Incentive
3. Deployment Linked Incentive

### **RBI announces construction of Digital Payment Index**

The Reserve Bank had announced construction of a composite Reserve Bank of India – Digital Payments Index (RBI-DPI) with March 2018 as base to capture the extent of digitization of payments across the country.

The RBI-DPI comprises 5 broad parameters that enable measurement of deepening and penetration of digital payments in the country over different time periods.

#### *5 Parameters*

1. Payment Enablers (weight 25%),
2. Payment Infrastructure – Demand-side factors (10%),
3. Payment Infrastructure – Supply-side factors (15%),
4. Payment Performance (45%), and
5. Consumer Centricity (5%).

It has been constructed with March 2018 as the base period, i.e., DPI score for March 2018 is set at 100.

### **India's first heli-hub in Gurugram**

Gurugram will get India's first heli-hub designed to have many aviation facilities like heliport, hangars, repairs, and any other related services.

*Note:* The heli-hub is proposed to be built in Gurugram & would be near the metro facility along with easy connectivity to industrial areas (*Noida & Bhiwadi*).

## 11. Important Days

### **Netaji's 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary celebrated**

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary ('Parakram Diwas') was celebrated. On the occasion, a holographic statue of Netaji was unveiled at central Delhi's India Gate. It will later be replaced by a 28-foot high and 6-foot wide granite statue of the freedom fighter. The statue is symbolic of exhorting citizens to build a new India before the 100th year of Independence in 2047.

*Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar:* This award is to honour invaluable contribution and selfless service rendered by individuals and organizations in India in the field of disaster management. It is announced every year on 23<sup>rd</sup> January. The award carries a cash prize of Rs. 51 lakh and a certificate in case of an institution and Rs. 5 lakh and a certificate in case of an individual. There are maximum of 3 awards (every year). For 2022, Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management and Professor Vinod Sharma have been selected.

### **National Youth Day**

January 12 marks the Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. National Youth Day is celebrated on this day since 1984. The main objective is to promote rational thinking among the youth, believed to be the future of the country.

### **World Hindi Day**

World Hindi Day or Vishwa Hindi Diwas is celebrated every year on 10 January. It is celebrated across the world to promote the use of the Hindi language. The first World Hindi Conference was held in Nagpur on January 10 in 1975. First World Hindi Day was celebrated in the year 2006.

### **International Day of Education**

The International Day of Education is marked every year on 24<sup>th</sup> January. The first-ever International Day of Education was celebrated on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019 as per the resolution passed by the United Nations General Assembly. The theme of 4<sup>th</sup> International Day of Education in 2022 was: "*Changing Course, Transforming Education*".

### **National Tourism Day**

In India, the National Tourism Day is celebrated every year on 25<sup>th</sup> January to promote tourism and raise awareness about the importance of tourism for the country's economy.

Theme of the year 2022: "*Rural and Community Centric Tourism*"

### **World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day**

World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day (World NTD Day) is observed every year on 30<sup>th</sup> January.

Theme of the Year 2022: "*Achieving health equity to end the neglect of poverty-related diseases*"

## 12. Culture

### **Adi Sankaracharya's birthplace – Crocodile Ghat**

Adi Sankaracharya's birthplace Kaladi in Ernakulam, Kerala will likely be declared as national monument. Significance of Adi Sankaracharya's birthplace stems from a legend as per which Sankaracharya was caught by a crocodile that refused to leave him until his mother let him accept Sanyas (renunciation). This location is called Crocodile Ghat and holds religious value.

*National Monument status:* It is designated by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) under Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 which authorizes the Central Government to “maintain, protect and promote the site”.

*Archaeological Survey of India (ASI):* It is the premier organization for archaeological research, scientific analysis, excavation of archaeological sites, conservation and preservation of protected monuments. It was founded in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham. It is an attached office under Ministry of Culture.

### **India's First Open Rock Museum inaugurated in Hyderabad**

India's first open rock museum was inaugurated at campus of CSIR-National Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad. Museum displays around 35 different types of rocks gathered from different states with ages ranging from 3.3 billion years to around 55 million years.

### **What is Jallikattu?**

With a steep rise in the daily cases of COVID-19, the district administration in Vellore, Tiruvannamalai, Ranipet and Tirupattur, have banned the conduct of Jallikattu events, ahead of Pongal festival, as part of safety measures.

*Jallikattu:* The bull-taming sport is popular in Madurai, Tiruchirappalli, Theni, Pudukkottai and Dindigul districts known as the 'Jallikattu belt'. It is celebrated in the second week of January, during the Tamil harvest festival, Pongal. A tradition over 2,000 years old, Jallikattu is a competitive sport as well as an event to honour bull owners who rear them for mating. It is a violent sport in which contestants try to tame a bull for a prize; if they fail, the bull owner wins the prize.

### **Har Gobind 100<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary**

The 100<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the biochemist and chemical biologist Har Gobind Khorana was observed. He was born on 9 January 1922, Raipur, India.

#### *Key Points:*

- He began research on nucleic acids during a fellowship at the University of Cambridge (1951) under Sir Alexander Todd.
- He made another contribution to genetics in 1970 when he and his research team were able to synthesize the first artificial copy of a yeast gene.
- His later research explored the molecular mechanisms underlying the cell signalling pathways of vision in vertebrates.
- His studies were concerned primarily with the structure and function of rhodopsin, a light-sensitive protein found in the retina of the vertebrate eye.
- He also investigated mutations in rhodopsin that are associated with retinitis pigmentosa, which causes night blindness.

- He shared the 1968 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine with Marshall W. Nirenberg and Robert W. Holley for research that helped to show how the nucleotides in nucleic acids, which carry the genetic code of the cell, control the cell's synthesis of proteins.
- The Indian government awarded Khorana the Padma Vibhushan in 1969.

**Kathak Dancer Birju Maharaj passed away**

The Kathak dancer Birju Maharaj, who took the traditional Indian dance form 'Kathak' to the world stage, passed away. He was one of India's most revered artists, belonged to the Kalka-Bindadin gharana of Lucknow, a classical Kathak dance form. He was born on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1938 in Lucknow.

*Awards:* Padma Vibhushan in 1983, Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and Kalidas Samman.

*Kathak* is one of the main genres of ancient Indian classical dance and is traditionally regarded to have originated from the travelling bards of North India referred as Kathakars or storytellers.