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# Current Events

July 2022

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

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

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

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

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

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## July 2022

### 1. Sports and Games

#### Wimbledon Championships 2022 Winners

Serbia Novak Djokovic has won his 7<sup>th</sup> Wimbledon Men's title and 21<sup>st</sup> Grand Slam of his career. He defeated Nick Kyrgios (Australia).

List of Winners is given below:

Category	Winner	Runner-up
Men's Singles	N. Djokovic	N. Kyrgios
Women's Singles	E. Rybakina	O. Jabeur
Men's Doubles	M. Ebden & M. Purcell	N. Mektic & M. Pavic
Women's Doubles	K. Siniaková & B. Krejčíková	S. Zhang & E. Mertens
Mixed Doubles	D. Krawczyk & N. Skupski	M. Ebden & S. Stosur

The Wimbledon Championships 2022 is a Grand Slam tennis tournament that takes place at the All-England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in Wimbledon, London, United Kingdom.

#### Sports brand Adani Sportsline becomes official partner with IOA

Adani Sportsline has become an official partner with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) for the upcoming Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022, Hangzhou Asian Games 2022, and Paris Olympic Games 2024. This is the second time that the Adani Group has come on board with IOA. The earlier association was in 2021 when the group sponsored the Indian Contingent during the Tokyo Olympics. Adani Sportsline is the sports arm of the Adani Group.

#### Arjun Babuta wins his first Gold Medal in 10 m Air Rifle

India's Shooter Arjun Babuta have won his first gold medal at the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup stage at Changwon in South Korea. He defeated Tokyo 2020 silver medallist Lucas Kozeniesky of the USA in the final. This was India's first medal under new national foreign rifle coach Thomas Farnik.

#### English Cricketer Ben Stokes announces Retirement

England Cricketer Ben Stokes has announced his retirement from ODI cricket. He played his last ODI against South Africa in Durham. His ODI debut was against Ireland in 2011.

#### Carlos Sainz wins maiden Formula 1 Grand Prix victory

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz has won his maiden Grand Prix at 2022 Formula 1 British Grand Prix. He beat Red Bull's Sergio Perez and Lewis Hamilton for Mercedes.

#### New Zealand men and women cricketers sign five-year equal pay deal

New Zealand Cricket and the players' association have signed a five-year deal that will see male and female cricketers receive equal pay. The agreement will see women players at both international and domestic level receive the same match fees as men across all formats and competitions.

#### 94-yr-old sprinter Bhagwani Devi Dagar won 3 medals in Finland

94 years old Sprinter Bhagwani Devi Dagar has won a gold and two bronze medals for India at the World Masters Athletics Championships 2022 held in Finland. She achieved the feat in 100 metres sprint clocking 24.74

seconds. She hails from Khidka village in Haryana. Note that, the World Masters Athletics Championships is an event for athletics (track and field) for athletes aged 35 years and over.

## 2. Science and Technology

### **What is Radiocarbon Dating?**

Burning of fossil fuels has resulted in falling proportion of radioactive Carbon-14 in the atmospheric carbon-dioxide affecting effectiveness of Carbon-14 dating adversely.

*Radiocarbon Dating:* In 1946, Willard Libby proposed an innovative method for dating organic materials by measuring their content of Carbon-14, a newly discovered radioactive isotope of Carbon. Known as radiocarbon dating, this method provides objective age estimates for carbon-based objects that originated from living organisms.

### **ISRO launches PSLV-C53 onboarding 3 Singapore Satellites**

ISRO has successfully launched PSLV-C53 with 3 Singapore satellites onboard. This is the 55<sup>th</sup> mission of PSLV, often described as ISRO's trusted workhorse. PSLV-C53 is the second dedicated commercial mission of New Space India Limited (NSIL).

*New Space India Limited* is the commercial arm of ISRO with primary responsibility of enabling Indian industries to take up high technology space-related activities.

*PSLV:* It is the third generation launch vehicle of India. It is the first Indian launch vehicle to be equipped with liquid stages. It is used mainly for delivering various satellites in Low Earth Orbits, particularly the Indian Remote Sensing series of satellites. It can take up to 1750 kg of payload to Sun-Synchronous Polar Orbits of 600 km altitude.

*Difference between PSLV and GSLV:* India has 2 operational launchers: Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV).

- PSLV was developed to launch low-Earth Orbit satellites into polar and sun synchronous orbits. It has since proved its versatility by launching geosynchronous, lunar and interplanetary spacecraft successfully.
- On the other hand, GSLV was developed to launch the heavier INSAT class of geosynchronous satellites into orbit.

### **James Webb Space Telescope delivers deepest infrared image of Universe**

NASA's James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) has delivered deepest infrared image of Universe yet. Known as Webb's First Deep Field, image shows the galaxy cluster SMACS 0723 as it appeared 4.6 billion years ago. Note that, one of the goals of JWST was to search for first galaxies or luminous objects formed after Big Bang along with other goals of determining how galaxies evolved, observing stars formation etc.

James Webb Space Telescope, NASA's infrared flagship observatory, is an international collaboration between NASA, European Space Agency, and Canadian Space Agency. It is placed in Sun-Earth Lagrange Point 2 (L2). JWST is being considered as successor of Hubble Space Telescope (HST).

*Joseph Louis Lagrange points* are positions in space where objects tend to stay put as gravitational forces of a 2-body system (like Sun and Earth) equal the force required for a small object to move with them.

### **LHCb experiment observes new particles – Pentaquarks, Tetraquarks**

CERN has announced that the Large Hadron Collider beauty (LHCb) experiment – which is investigating the slight differences between matter and antimatter by studying a type of particle called the “beauty quark”, or “*b*”

*quark*” – has observed 3 never-before-seen particles which are - a new kind of “pentaquark” and the first-ever pair of “tetraquarks”.

*Quarks* are elementary particles that come in 6 “flavours”: up, down, charm, strange, top, and bottom. They usually combine together in groups of twos and threes to form hadrons such as the protons and neutrons that make up atomic nuclei. But they can also combine into four-quark and five-quark particles, called tetraquarks and pentaquarks.

The *Large Hadron Collider* is a giant, complex machine built to study particles that are the smallest known building blocks of all things. In its operational state, it fires two beams of protons almost at the speed of light in opposite directions inside a ring of superconducting electromagnets. The magnetic field created by the superconducting electromagnets keeps the protons in a tight beam and guides them along the way as they travel through beam pipes and finally collide.

*God Particle discovery*: A decade ago, CERN announced to the world the discovery of the Higgs boson or the ‘God Particle’ during the LHC’s first run. The discovery concluded the decades-long quest for the ‘force-carrying’ subatomic particle, and proved the existence of the Higgs mechanism, a theory put forth in the mid-sixties. This led to Peter Higgs and his collaborator François Englert being awarded the Nobel Prize for physics in 2013.

*Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire (CERN)* is the original name of the European Organisation for Nuclear Research, which runs the particle accelerator complex that houses the LHC, the world’s largest and most complex collider.

### **What is Fiberisation?**

Union Cabinet has approved a proposal of the Department of Telecommunications to conduct spectrum auction through which spectrum will be assigned to the successful bidders for providing 5G services to public and enterprises. However, the challenge for requisite infrastructure in terms of ‘*fiberisation*’ challenge is underscored.

*Fiberisation* is the process of connecting radio towers with each other via optical fibre cables. It represents the part of the network that connects the core of the network to the edge facilitating large amounts of data used in 5G services.

### **TiHAN, India’s first Autonomous Navigation facility, inaugurated at IIT Hyderabad**

Technology Innovation Hub on Autonomous Navigation or TiHAN, India’s first Autonomous Navigation facility (for both ground and aerial vehicle testing), was inaugurated at IIT Hyderabad.

TiHAN (by Ministry of Science & Technology) is a multidisciplinary that will provide industries, research and development labs, and academia a platform for research in autonomous navigation. It is an initiative to make India a global player in futuristic and next generation ‘smart mobility’ technology. It is one of the 25 technology innovation hubs under National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS).

*National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS)* was launched in 2018. The mission implementation would develop and bring Cyber Physical Systems (CPS) and associated technologies within reach in the country. The Mission aims at establishment of 15 Technology Innovation Hubs (TIH), 6 Application Innovation Hubs (AIH) and 4 Technology Translation Research Parks (TTRP). These Hubs & TTRPs will



connect to Academics, Industry, Central Ministries and State Governments in developing solutions at reputed academic, R&D and other organizations across the country in a hub and spoke model.

*Cyber Physical Systems* integrate sensing, computation, control and networking into physical objects and infrastructure, connecting them to the Internet and to each other. CPS encompasses technology areas of Cybernetics, Mechatronics, Design and Embedded systems, Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data, Artificial Intelligence (AI), among others.

### **What is Cryptojacking? Why is it done?**

According to a Report by SonicWall, a US-based cybersecurity firm, ‘*Cryptojacking*’ attacks on computer systems have gone up by 30% in the first half of 2022 compared to the first half of 2021.

*Cryptojacking* is a cyber-attack wherein a computing device is hijacked and controlled by the attacker, and its resources are used to illicitly mine cryptocurrency. In most cases, the malicious programme is installed when the user clicks on an unsafe link or visits an infected website — and unknowingly provides access to their Internet-connected device.

*Purpose:* Coin mining is a legitimate, competitive process used to release new crypto coins into circulation or to verify new transactions. It involves solving complex computational problems (*cracking 64-digit hexadecimal number code*) to generate blocks of verified transactions that get added to the blockchain. The reward for the first miner who successfully manages to update the crypto ledger through this route is crypto coins. Cryptojackers co-opt devices, servers, and cloud infrastructure, and use their resources for mining. The use of ‘stolen’ or cryptojacked resources slashes the cost involved in mining.

### **WHO issues Report on Accelerating Access to Genomics for Global Health**

WHO’s Science Council has issued its first Report on ‘*Accelerating Access to Genomics for Global Health*’. The Report calls for expanding access to genomic technologies, particularly in low- and middle-income nations, by addressing shortfalls in financing, laboratory infrastructure, materials, and highly trained personnel. In other words, it calls for equitable expansion of Genomics.

WHO constituted the Science Council of experts in April 2021 to provide guidance on the Science and Research strategy of the organisation.

*Genomics* refers to the study of the entire genome of organisms and the large amounts of corresponding data generated from it. Note that, Genetics, on the other hand, is concerned with study of heredity.

#### *Genomics related Initiatives in India*

- ‘GenomeIndia: Cataloguing the Genetic Variation in Indians’ project by Department of Biotechnology (DBT) in January 2020.
- IndiGen Program by Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR).
- Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG)

### **What is CRISPR – Cas9 gene editing?**

It’s been 10 years since Microbiologist ‘Emmanuelle Charpentier’ and Biochemist ‘Jennifer Doudna’ published the research that paved the way for CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing.

*CRISPR technology* is basically a gene-editing technology that can be used for the purpose of altering genetic expression or changing the genome of an organism. The technology can be used for targeting specific stretches of an entire genetic code or editing the DNA at particular locations.

The technology behaves like a cut-and-paste mechanism on DNA strands that contain genetic information. The specific location of the genetic codes that need to be changed, or “edited”, is identified on the DNA strand, and then, using the Cas9 protein, which acts like a pair of scissors, that location is cut off from the strand. A DNA strand, when broken, has a natural tendency to repair itself. Scientists intervene during this auto-repair process, supplying the desired sequence of genetic codes that binds itself with the broken DNA strand.

CRISPR stands for *Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats*.

#### *Important definitions*

- *DNA*: DNA or deoxyribonucleic acid, is the hereditary material in most of the living beings.
- *RNA*: RNA or Ribonucleic acid molecules are single-stranded nucleic acids. They are hereditary material in some viruses.
- *Genes*: A gene is a ‘specific’ section of DNA. It is involved in making RNA (transcription) or protein (translation).
- *Genome*: A genome is an organism’s complete set of DNA. It includes all chromosomes, which house the DNA, and genes.
- *Molecular scissors*: It act as the scissors that cut out the unwanted DNA. They are also called Restriction Enzymes. It is because of their ability to restrict the unwanted genes at the site identified by the Guided RNA.

#### **Gregor Mendel’s 200<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary**

This year marked the 200<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Gregor Mendel, Father of Genetics. He was born on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1822 in present-day Czech Republic. He is best known for discovering the basic principles of heredity through cross breeding and careful examination of over 10,000 garden peas.

*Mendel Principle of Inheritance*: By experimenting with pea plant breeding, Mendel developed 3 principles of inheritance that described the transmission of genetic traits, before anyone knew genes existed. To this day, Scientists use Mendel’s principles to explain the most basic phenomena of inheritance. Mendel’s laws of inheritance together with the discovery of DNA and genes and Darwinian evolutionary theory has revolutionized genetics.

*Genetics* is the study of genes, genetic variation, and heredity in organisms. It was first experimentally established by Gregor Mendel (1822 to 1884).

#### **NIXI establishes 2 new Internet Exchange Points in West Bengal**

National Internet Exchange of India has established 2 new Internet Exchange Points (IXP) of NIXI at Durgapur and Bardhaman (West Bengal).

An *Internet Exchange Point (IXP)* is a physical access point that Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and Content Delivery Networks (CDNs) connect to for the purpose of exchanging traffic. They are essentially large local area networks that are built with interconnected Ethernet switches. Connecting to one of these colocations gives organizations the advantage of being able to optimize data flow within their network. The process by which networks connect and exchange their traffic at an IXP is called peering.

NIXI is a not-for-profit organization under section 8 of the Companies Act 2013 and was registered in June 2003. NIXI was set up for peering of ISPs among themselves for the purpose of routing the domestic traffic within the country, instead of taking it all the way to US/Abroad, thereby resulting in better quality of service (reduced latency) and reduced bandwidth charges for ISPs by saving on International Bandwidth.

### **World's First Locomotion Trials of Deep-Sea Mining System**

Scientists from the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) has conducted the world's deepest underwater locomotion trials of the Deep-Sea Mining System in the Central Indian Ocean at depth of 5270 m. This is a part of the Government of India's Deep Ocean Mission. NIOT is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

*Deep Ocean Mission (2021-26):* The focus of the mission will be on deep-sea mining, ocean climate change advisory services, underwater vehicles and underwater robotics related technologies.

#### *Key Components of the Mission*

- A manned submersible will be developed to carry 3 people to a depth of 6000 metres in the ocean to mine polymetallic nodules at those depths in the central Indian Ocean.
- Development of Ocean Climate Change Advisory Services.
- Development of a component for searching deep sea flora and fauna, including microbes, and studying ways to sustainably utilise them.
- A component to explore and identify potential sources of hydrothermal minerals that are sources of precious metals formed from the earth's crust along the Indian Ocean mid-oceanic ridges.
- A component for studying and preparing detailed engineering design for offshore Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) powered desalination plants.

### **MoES develops LTTD Technology to convert seawater to potable water**

Ministry of Earth Sciences, through its autonomous Institute National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), has developed Low-Temperature Thermal Desalination (LTTD) technology for conversion of seawater to potable water which has been successfully demonstrated in Lakshadweep islands. LTTD technology was suitable for Lakshadweep islands, because there is a temperature difference of 15 degrees Celsius between sea surface water and deep-sea water, as required by the technology.

Note that, 3 desalination plants based on the LTTD technology have been developed and demonstrated at Kavaratti, Agati and Minicoy Islands of Union Territory of Lakshadweep.

The LTTD is a process under which the warm surface sea water is flash evaporated at low pressure and the vapour is condensed with cold deep-sea water. The LTTD technology does not require any chemical pre- and post-treatment of seawater and thus the pollution problems are minimal and suitable for island territories. The LTTD technology is completely indigenous, robust and environment friendly.

Note that, the Reverse Osmosis, a membrane process, is globally accepted technology suitable for desalination of saline water, which is quite different from LTTD technology developed by the ministry.

### **Finnish Researchers install world's first Sand Battery**

Researchers from Finland have installed the world's first fully working "sand battery" which can store green power for months at a time. The sand stores the heat at around 500 degrees C, which can then warm homes in

winter when energy is more expensive. Note that, ‘Markku Ylönen’ and ‘Tommi Eronen’ came up with the idea of Sand Batteries.

*Storage:* The heat storage structure is simple. It is an insulated tank made of steel filled with low-grade sand and pipes that converts electricity from solar or wind electricity to heat and stores it for later use. As a material, sand is durable, inexpensive, and can store a lot of heat in a small volume at a temperature of around 500 degrees Celsius.

Renewable energy sources like wind turbines and solar panels pose the challenge of intermittency, they only work when the wind is blowing and the sun is shining, respectively. To solve this problem, many renewable energy sources use large-scale batteries made of lithium-ion to store and balance energy demands. However, lithium-ion batteries are expensive, require extensive resources to be mined and hard to recycle.

### **Guardian Newspaper leaks ‘The Uber Files’**

The Guardian Newspaper has leaked – The Uber Files – which is a leak of 182 Gigabytes of data that were obtained by them from an anonymous source and shared with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and its media partners from 30 countries.

The leaked records contain sensitive emails, iMessages and WhatsApp conversations between top Uber executives, bureaucrats and world leaders in nearly 30 countries between 2013 and 2017 – a period when Uber expanded aggressively. The data allegedly reveal how the company circumvented the law, misled police and regulators, exploited violence against drivers and secretly lobbied governments around the world.

The investigation found that Uber used a so-called “*kill switch*” to prevent police and regulators from accessing its sensitive data from its IT systems during raids.

*Kill Switch:* Kill Switch is an in-house label for a process that shuts down local systems to firewall them from any probe. The company used tools like “Greyball” and “Geofencing” to keep Uber rides away from prying policemen and Government officials.

### **What is Facial Recognition Technology?**

Two retail chains in Australia, Bunnings and Kmart, are being investigated for using facial recognition technology and storing data of their customers without their knowledge.

Facial recognition technology works by capturing people’s faces from photographs or video footage as a unique faceprint. The image is then saved and can be compared to other faceprints stored in a common database. While this technology can help verify a person’s face, it also raises several privacy issues. Most commonly, one encounters facial recognition technology while unlocking their smartphone.

#### *Used in India*

- Telangana police launched their own facial recognition facility (2018).
- Ministry of Civil Aviation’s “DigiYatra” has used the facial recognition system at Hyderabad Airport.
- NCRB’s Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) uses automated facial recognition.

### **CeNS develops low-power memory device using Hafnium oxide**

Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences (CeNS) has developed a low-power memory device with excellent switching characteristics made from the chemical hafnium oxide, a replacement for silicon oxide, for data storage applications.

*Hafnium Oxide (HfO<sub>2</sub>)* is an insulator which can be polarized on application of electric current as an insulating layer. They prepared with by a method called sputtering deposition method. It is a good absorber of neutrons and is used to make control rods, such as those found in nuclear submarines. It also has a very high melting point and because of this is used in plasma welding torches.

Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences, Bangalore is an autonomous institution of the Department of Science and Technology.

### **Indian Navy launches Y-3023 Dunagiri under Project 17A frigate**

Indian Navy has launched Y-3023 Dunagiri, Project 17A frigate built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders Limited (GRSE) in Kolkata. *P17A Frigates* are follow-on class of the P17 (Shivalik Class) Frigates with improved stealth features, advanced weapons and sensors and platform management systems.

*Project 17Alfa* frigates are a design derivative and upgrade of the existing Shivalik class frigates with advanced features and indigenous weapons and sensors for improved survivability, sea keeping, stealth and ship manoeuvrability.

### **Indian Navy de-commissioned INS Sindhudhvaj – Kilo Class Submarine**

Indian Navy has de-commissioned INS Sindhudhvaj, Navy's Kilo-class submarine, from service after 35 years in service. Commissioned into the Navy in June 1987, Sindhudhvaj, was one of the 10 Kilo-class submarines India acquired from Russia between 1986 and 2000. It was the only submarine awarded the CNS Rolling trophy for Innovation by the Prime Minister.

With its decommissioning, Navy's sub-surface fleet now includes 7 Russian Kilo-class submarines, 4 German HDW submarines, 4 French Scorpene submarines, and the indigenous nuclear ballistic missile submarine INS Arihant.

*Project 75I*: Under the Project 75, India aims to build 6 Scorpene class submarines in collaboration with France's Transfer of Technology from Naval Group.

### **India's first indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant handed over to Indian Navy**

India's first indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant was handed over to the Indian Navy. It is built by Cochin Shipyard Ltd. (CSL) – a public sector shipyard. It is named after India's first aircraft carrier, the Indian Naval Ship (INS) Vikrant, which played a significant role in the 1971 war. The 262-metre-long carrier has a full displacement of close to 45,000 tonnes, much larger and advanced than her predecessor.

### **ISRO inaugurates World's first facility to monitor space debris – IS4OM**

ISRO has inaugurated the world's first-ever facility dedicated to monitoring space debris and safeguarding assets in space, which is expected to significantly help combat the growing threat to orbiting satellites and space stations. It is named as "The ISRO System for Safe and Sustainable Space Operations & Management (IS4OM)". The system will safeguard all Indian space assets by mitigating the collision threats from space objects through specific orbit manoeuvres and comply with international guidelines on post-mission disposal and satellite's end-of-life operations.

### **Astrome signs contract with DoT for GigaMesh Project**

Astrome has signed a contract with the Department of Telecommunication to start the pilot project called “GigaMesh Network Solution” with 15 villages in India. GigaMesh, developed by Astrome, will address congestion issues in rural 4G infrastructure and provide high-tech and affordable internet connectivity.

*GigaMesh* is an innovative wireless product that gives fibre like bandwidth at fraction of cost of fibre to help telecom operators deliver reliable low-cost internet services to suburban and rural areas. The startup is supported by AI & Robotics Technology Park (ARTPARK), the Technology Innovation Hub (TIH) at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc).

*ARTPARK* is a not-for-profit foundation promoted by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru to promote technology innovations in artificial intelligence (AI) & Robotics.

### **BMC tied up with IIT-B for treatment of Sewage through N Treat Technology**

BMC has tied up with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT-B) for in-situ treatment of sewage in nullahs in the city. This is done by using IIT-B's N-treat technology.

IIT-B's N-Treat technology uses a seven-stage process to treat sewage in nullahs with the help of screens, gates, silt traps, curtains of coconut fibres for filtration, and disinfection using sodium hypochlorite, without the requirement of additional space.

### 3. Environment

#### **IPBES Assessment Report on ‘Sustainable Use of Wild Species’**

Inter-governmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has released an Assessment Report on the ‘Sustainable use of Wild Species’.

*IPBES Assessment Report* offers insights, analysis, and tools to establish more sustainable use of wild species of plants, animals, fungi and algae around the world. It is the first-of-its-kind and has been conceived after a period of 4 years. It identifies five broad categories of ‘practices’ in the use of wild species i.e., fishing, gathering, logging, terrestrial animal harvesting (including hunting), and non-extractive practices such as observing.

*Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)*: Established in 2012, it is an independent intergovernmental body committed to strengthen science-policy interface for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development. Its secretariat is located in Bonn, Germany. Although, it is not a United Nations body, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provides secretariat services to IPBES. India is a member. All States Members of the United Nations are eligible for IPBES membership.

#### **UNICEF, IOM launches Guiding Principles for Children on the Move in the Context of Climate Change**

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Georgetown University, and the United Nations University have launched ‘Guiding Principles for Children on the Move in the Context of Climate Change’. It is the first-ever global policy framework that will help protect, include, and empower children on the move in the context of climate change. The Guiding principles provides a set of 9 principles that address the unique and layered vulnerabilities of children on the move both internally and across borders as a result of the adverse impacts of climate change.

*International Organization for Migration (IOM)* is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. Originally known as the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME), it was formed in 1951 out of the chaos and displacement of Western Europe following the Second World War.

IOM Headquarter: *Geneva, Switzerland*

UNICEF Headquarter: *New York, USA*

United Nations University Headquarter: *Tokyo, Japan*

#### **MNRE releases Strategy Paper for Establishment of Offshore Wind Energy Projects**

Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) has released Strategy Paper for ‘Establishment of Offshore Wind Energy Projects’. The Strategy Paper identifies 16 zones in total, off the coasts of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu for harnessing offshore wind energy.

The Government of India notified National Offshore Wind Energy Policy 2015 in October 2015 for the development of offshore wind power in the country. The policy provides for offshore wind power development up to a seaward distance of 200 nautical miles from the baseline, i.e., up to the country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) is the Nodal Ministry, and the National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE) is the Nodal Agency for the development of Offshore Wind Energy in India.

#### **World Bank Report on Groundwater Quality**

World Bank has launched a report titled ‘Seeing the Invisible: A Strategic Report on Groundwater Quality’.

*Steps taken in India to ensure Groundwater Quality:*

- Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) regularly monitors ground water quality of shallow aquifers on a regional scale, once every year through a network of about 15,000 observation wells.
- Atal Bhujal Yojana, a central sector scheme, with focus on community participation, demand side interventions and convergence of ongoing schemes for sustainable ground water management.
- Bureau of Indian Standards has prescribed limits for contaminants in drinking water.
- Control of industrial pollution under the provision of Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.
- Establishment of Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs) for cluster of Small-Scale Industrial units.

**IMD releases Aridity Anomaly Index**

Indian Meteorological Department has released the Aridity Anomaly Outlook (AAO) Index, which says at least 85% of districts face arid conditions across India.

*Aridity Anomaly Index* is the departure of aridity index value from normal (expressed in percentage). Aridity Index refers to the water stress suffered by a growing plant due to shortage of available moisture (both rainfall and soil moisture), calculated as the percentage of annual water deficit to annual water need or annual potential evapotranspiration.

*Initiatives for Drought Management in India*

- National Agricultural Drought Assessment and Monitoring System (NADAMS), provides near real-time information on prevalence, severity level and persistence of agricultural drought at state/district/sub-district level.
- Drought Early Warning System (DEWS), a real-time drought monitoring platform, managed by the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar.
- AtmaNirbhar Krishi app to equip farmers with actionable agricultural insights and early weather alerts.
- National Water Policy 2012 emphasizes on preparedness for flood / drought.
- Relief measures: Compensation through National and State Disaster Response Funds, Crop insurance under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) etc.
- Drought Mitigation Programmes: Atal Bhujal Yojana for Groundwater Conservation; Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain campaign for Rainwater harvesting; Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) for promotion of micro irrigation techniques; Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) to develop rainfed/degraded areas and wastelands; etc.

**UN Ocean Conference held in Lisbon, Portugal**

UN Ocean Conference was held in Lisbon, Portugal. It was ended with world leaders adopting an action-oriented Political Declaration titled “Our Ocean, Our Future, Our Responsibility”, to save the ocean from existing and future threats, including marine pollution, harmful fishing practices, biodiversity loss, and acidification. It is in line with Sustainable Development Goal 14 - life below water.

The Conference was co-hosted by Kenya and Portugal at Lisbon. In 2017, first UNOC was held at UN Headquarters in New York, co-hosted by the Governments of Fiji and Sweden.

The Conference also witnessed the first edition of UNESCO’s “State of the Ocean Report” (StOR). The State of the Ocean Report compiles the most up-to-date knowledge on the state of the world’s oceans, from pollution to biodiversity, to assist key policymakers in making informed decisions on ocean protection and sustainable planning.



### *Other Related Initiatives*

1. *Clean Sea Campaign*: UN Environment (UNEP) launched Clean Seas (#CleanSeas) in February 2017, with the aim of engaging governments, the general public and the private sector in the fight against marine plastic pollution. It aims to ban single-use plastics and microbeads within 5 years.
2. *One Ocean Summit*: The goal of the One Ocean Summit is to raise the collective level of ambition of the international community on marine issues. India supports the French initiative of a “High Ambition Coalition on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction”.
3. *The BBNJ Treaty* (Treaty of the High Seas): It is an international agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, currently under negotiation at the United Nation.
4. *GloLitter Partnerships Project*: It is launched by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the FAO and initial funding from the Government of Norway. It is aimed to prevent and reduce marine plastic litter from shipping and fisheries.

The UN has proclaimed a Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) to support efforts to reverse the cycle of decline in ocean health.

### **India designates 5 new Wetlands of International Importance**

India has designated 5 new Wetlands of International Importance which include 3 wetlands (*Karikili Bird Sanctuary, Pallikaranai Marsh Reserve Forest & Pichavaram Mangrove*) in Tamil Nadu, 1 (*Pala wetland*) in Mizoram and 1 wetland (*Sakhya Sagar*) in Madhya Pradesh. The Ramsar sites have been increased from 49 to 54 Ramsar sites.

A ‘*wetland*’ is defined as any land area that is saturated or flooded with water, either seasonally or permanently such as lakes, aquifers and marshes, mangroves, peatlands, estuaries, coral reefs, etc.

### **Ministry of Power notified Rules for Green Energy Open Access**

Ministry of Power notified Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy Through Green Energy Open Access) Rules, 2022 in June 2022. Further in July 2022, Ministry of Power has notified Power System Operation Corporation (POSOCO) as Central Nodal Agency to set up and operate a single window green energy open access system for renewable energy under these Rules.

### *Salient Features*

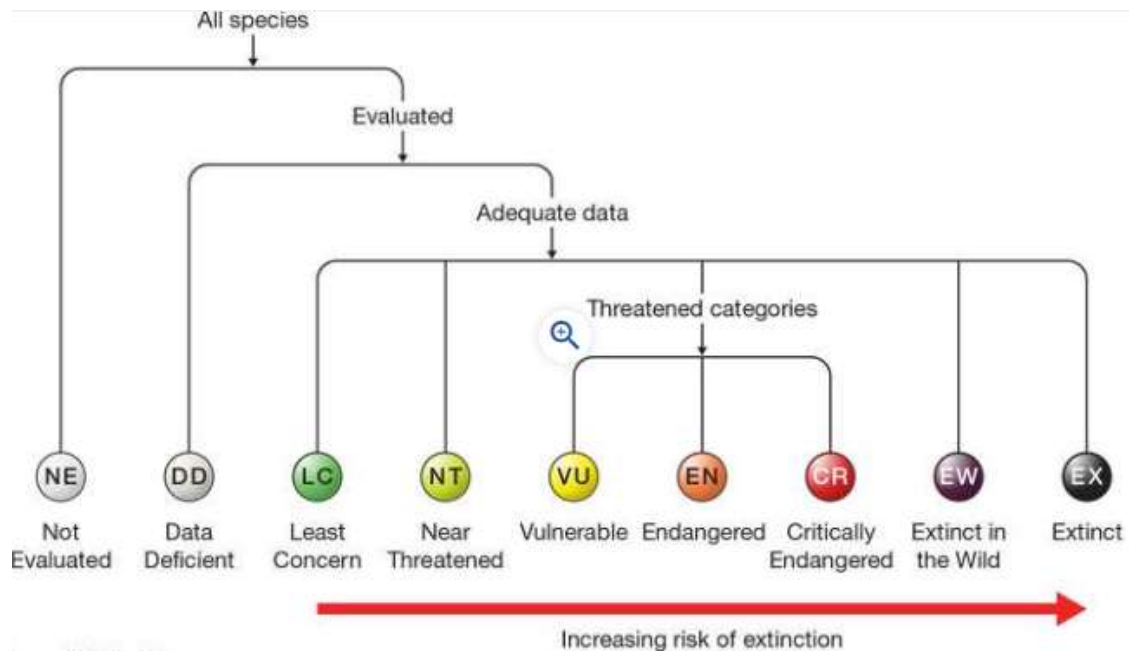
- Green Open Access is allowed to any consumer and the limit of Open Access Transaction has been reduced from 1 MW to 100 kW for green energy, to enable small consumers also to purchase renewable power through open access.
- Consumers are entitled to demand supply of Green Power from DISCOMS.
- Commercial and Industrial consumers are allowed to purchase green power on voluntarily basis.
- There shall be a uniform Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO), on all obligated entities in area of a distribution licensees. Green Hydrogen/Green Ammonia has also been included for fulfilment of its RPO.
- Consumers will be given Green Certificates if they consume green power.

Note that, as per the Electricity Act 2003, the tariff is determined by the Appropriate Commission. Accordingly, the tariff for the green energy shall be determined by Appropriate Commission.

**IUCN added Monarch Butterfly to its Red List of Threatened Species – categorized endangered**

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has added the migrating ‘monarch butterfly’ for the first time to its ‘Red List of Threatened Species’ and categorized it as “endangered”. This is one of the most recognizable butterflies in the world. It is known to travel nearly 3000 miles from the northern US and southern Canada to its overwintering destination in Mexico.

The *IUCN Red List Categories* define the extinction risk of species assessed under 9 categories extend from NE (Not Evaluated) to EX (Extinct). Critically Endangered (CR), Endangered (EN) and Vulnerable (VU) species are considered to be threatened with extinction. IUCN Red List was established in 1964.



**7<sup>th</sup> Session of UNDRR’s Global Platform held in Bali, Indonesia**

The 7<sup>th</sup> session of the Global Platform (GP2022) was held in Bali, Indonesia. It was organized by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction is the main global forum to assess and discuss progress on the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

*UNDRR:* It is the United Nations system’s focal point for disaster risk reduction and the custodian of the Sendai Framework, supporting countries and societies in its implementation, monitoring and review of progress.

*Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction:* It was the first major agreement of the post-2015 development agenda and provides Member States with concrete actions to protect development gains from the risk of disaster.

**NTPC commissioned India’s Largest Floating Solar Power Project at Ramagundam, Telangana**

NTPC has commissioned India’s largest (100 MW) Floating Solar Power Project. It is now fully functional at Ramagundam in Telangana. It has been constructed through Bharat Heavy Electricals (BHEL) under Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contract.

**UN declares clean environment as ‘human right’**

At a meeting of the UN General Assembly, India has voted in favour of the UNGA resolution for a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a ‘human right’.

The resolution recognizes the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a human right and "affirms that the promotion of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment requires the full implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements under the principles of international environmental law.

*Related Constitutional Provision in India*

- Article 21: Right to life (clean environment, free of disease),
- Article 48A: Protect the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife,
- Article 51-A(g): Duty to protect and improve the natural environment.

**Red Panda to be released in Singalila National Park**

Singalila National Park has launched a programme that aims to release about 20 Red Pandas into the forest in a period of 5 year from Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park in Darjeeling. It is the first attempt to re-wild endangered mammals in India. Note that, Red Panda is the state animal of Sikkim.

**GASAB prepares Concept Paper on Natural Resource Accounting**

Government Accounting Standards Advisory Board (GASAB), constituted by the CAG in 2002, has prepared a Concept Paper on Natural Resource Accounting (NRA) envisaging short, medium, and long-term goals starting from 2020.

*Natural Resource Accounting* is a process of estimating the value of natural resource depletion and environment degradation due to economic activities. The concept of NRA was emerged to capture the intimate interplay between the various components of the natural environment and the economic progress of a country.

**BIRAC releases Indian Bioeconomy Report (IBER) 2022**

Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) has released the Indian Bioeconomy Report (IBER) 2022. During the release, the government launched a special Biotech Ignition Grant call for North-East Region (BIG-NER).

*Bio-Economics:* According to United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), bioeconomy is the production, utilization, conservation, and regeneration of biological resources, including related knowledge, S&T, and innovation, to provide sustainable solutions (information, products, processes, and services) within and across all relevant sectors and enable a transformation to a sustainable economy.

Example: *Bioplastics, biofuels, biodegradable clothing, biomass (for energy), natural farming (for food) etc.*

BIRAC is a not-for-profit Public Sector Enterprise set up by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT).

**International Conventions related to Ozone layer**

Scientists have revealed a large, all-season ozone hole in the lower stratosphere over the tropics comparable in-depth to that of the Antarctic hole, but roughly 7 times greater in area.

Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) is a highly reactive gas composed of 3 oxygen atoms. It is both a natural and a man-made product that occurs in the Earth's upper atmosphere (the stratosphere) and lower atmosphere (the troposphere).

*Conventions:*

1. *Vienna Convention:* The Vienna Convention is the first international agreement dedicated to the protection of the ozone layer. The Convention commits all countries to take measures to protect human health and the environment resulting from modifications to the ozone layer.

2. *Montreal Protocol*: The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer was designed to reduce the production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances in order to reduce their abundance in the atmosphere and thereby protect the earth's fragile ozone Layer.

3. *Kigali Agreement*: Around 197 countries, including India, China and the USA, agreed at Kigali to reduce the use of Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) by roughly 85% of their baselines by 2045, by amending the 1987 Montreal Protocol.

### **What is Cloudburst?**

Sudden, "highly-localized rains" in Amarnath, Jammu and Kashmir, has caused flooding with fatalities.

A 'cloudburst' refers to an extreme amount of rain that happens in a short period, sometimes accompanied by hail and thunder. The India Meteorological Department defines it as unexpected precipitation exceeding 100 mm (or 10 cm) per hour over a geographical region of approximately 20 to 30 square km.

### **Parliament passes Indian Antarctica Bill 2022**

Parliament has passed the Indian Antarctica Bill, 2022 under its obligations as a signatory to the Antarctic Treaty. Antarctica is all of the land and ice shelves south of 60° S latitude. Antarctic Treaty is the only example of a single treaty that governs a whole continent. The treaty, signed in 1959 and implemented in 1961, made it mandatory for the 54 signatory countries to specific laws governing territories on which their stations are located. India signed the treaty in 1983.

*India's Nodal Agency*: National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCPOR) (Estb. 1998) under Ministry of Earth Science.

### **India's Key Programmes**

- India's Antarctic Programme Dakshin Gangotri: It was first Indian scientific research base station (*now just a supply base*).
- Maitri (*finished in 1989*): Situated near Schirmacher Oasis; India has also built a freshwater lake around it called Lake Priyadarshini.
- Sagar Nidhi (*2008*): It is first Indian vessel to navigate Antarctic waters
- Bharti (*2012*): Research Facility

The Treaty parties have also negotiated 3 international agreements which govern activities in Antarctica, collectively known as the:

(i) Antarctic Treaty System Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals, 1972

(ii) Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), 1980 (ratified by India in 1985)

(iii) Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (Madrid Protocol), 1991 (signed by India in 1998)

### **MoEF&CC celebrates Hariyali Mahotsav**

Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change has celebrated Hariyali Mahotsav to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> year of "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav".

*Hariyali Mahotsav* is being organized to create awareness about the importance of trees and green cover to protect our environment against air pollution and global warming.

*Van Mahotsav* – “celebrate the forest”: The history of Van Mahotsav Day goes back to July 1947, when it was first organised by the Punjabi Botanist, M.S. Randhawa. It is a pan-India tree planting festival celebrated in July every year.

The span 2021-2030 is the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, emphasizing efforts to restore degraded terrestrial ecosystems including forests.

*Bonn Challenge (2011)* was launched with a global goal to restore 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030. India joined the Bonn Challenge in 2015, pledging to restore 26 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by 2030.

### **MoEF&CC notifies amendment to EIA Rules to exempt construction near border**

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has notified amendment to the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Rules, exempting highway projects of strategic and defence importance, which are 100 km from the Line of Control, among other locations, from an environmental clearance before construction.

The *Environment Impact Assessment* is a process of evaluating the likely environmental impacts of a proposed project or development. This assessment also takes into account human health and socioeconomic impact on the community living in the proposed project area.

### **What is Heat Index?**

On the evening of 8<sup>th</sup> July, the temperature of Delhi felt like 52°C even though the actual temperature was 39°C. This is mainly because of high humidity and lack of rain. The phenomena can be understood by knowing Heat Index or ‘Real Feel’.

The heat index, also known as the ‘real feel’ or ‘apparent temperature’, is what the temperature feels like to the human body when relative humidity is combined with the air temperature. This has important considerations for the human body’s comfort. It tells us the impact of weather on people. It takes into account wind speed, cloud cover, dew point, humidity and the amount of sunlight.

#### 4. Scheme and Programmes

##### **MoWCD's Umbrella Programme – Mission Vatsalya**

The Ministry of Women and Child Development is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme “Mission Vatsalya” erstwhile Child Protection Services (CPS) Scheme, since 2009-10 for the welfare and rehabilitation of children.

The objective of Mission Vatsalya is to secure a healthy and happy childhood for each and every child in India, ensure opportunities to enable them to discover their full potential and assist them in flourishing in all respects, in a sustained manner, foster a sensitive, supportive and synchronized ecosystem for development of children, assist States/UTs in delivering the mandate of the Juvenile Justice Act 2015 and achieve the SDG goals.

Components under Mission Vatsalya include - Improve functioning of statutory bodies; Strengthen service delivery structures; Upscale institutional care/services; Encourage non-institutional community-based care; emergency outreach services; Training and capacity building.

Note that, in March 2021, for effective implementation of various schemes and programmes of the MoW&CD, all major schemes of the Ministry have been classified under 3 umbrella schemes viz. *Mission Poshan 2.0*, *Mission VATSALYA* and *Mission Shakti*.

##### **Govt. formulated NAMASTE Scheme for Sanitation Ecosystem**

The Government of India has formulated a scheme “National Action Plan for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)”. The NAMASTE project is a joint project of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

The project aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Zero fatalities in sanitation work in India.
- All sanitation work to be performed by skilled workers.
- No sanitation workers should come in direct contact with human faecal matter.
- Sanitation workers are to be collectivized into SHGs and are empowered to run sanitation enterprises.
- All Sewer and Septic tank sanitation workers (SSWs) have access to alternative livelihoods.
- Strengthened supervisory and monitoring systems at national, state and ULB levels to ensure enforcement and monitoring of safe sanitation work.
- Increased awareness amongst sanitation services seekers (individuals and institutions) to seek services from registered and skilled sanitation workers.

In addition, for safe and sustainable sanitation, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has issued the Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) Policy, 2017 which emphasizes implementation of legal prohibition of manual scavenging under the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 and have also prescribed the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for safe cleaning of sewer and septic tanks in November 2018.

##### **Ministry of Minority Affairs' various Schemes**

Ministry of Minority Affairs has informed that ‘Seekho Aur Kamao’ scheme has met its target of earmarking 33 % of the total trained beneficiaries for female beneficiaries. The scheme aims at upgrading the skills of minority youths in various modern/ traditional vocations depending upon their educational qualification, present economic trends and the market potential.

*Other Schemes of Ministry of Minority Affairs*

- Naya Savera Scheme: to provide free coaching to minority students for the various competitive exam.
- Pardesh Scheme: interest subsidy on educational loans for overseas higher studies.
- Nai Udaan Scheme: supports students clearing Prelims of UPSC, SPSC or other exams.
- Nai Roshni Scheme: Leadership development of women belonging to minority communities.
- USTTAD: Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development.
- Nai Manzil Scheme: for formal school education & skilling of school dropouts.
- Hamari Dharohar: to preserve the rich heritage of minority communities of India.

As per notification of the Government of India, there are 6 notified religious minority communities – Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist, Parsi and Jain. No linguistic minority has been notified by the Central Government till date.

## 5. Polity

### What is Right to be Forgotten?

The Supreme Court has directed its registry to remove details of a couple from search engines and Internet. Petitioner contented that her name in the public domain causes embarrassment, social stigma and infringes her privacy. Petitioner had raised the ‘Right to be Forgotten (RTBF)’ and ‘Right of Eraser’ being rights of privacy. This direction expands the ambit of right to privacy and RTBF.

*Right to be Forgotten* is the right to have publicly available personal information removed from the internet, search, databases, websites, or any other public platforms, once the personal information in question is no longer necessary. RTBF traces its origin to the ‘*right to oblivion*’ in the French jurisprudence.

In India, Information Technology Rules, 2011 – which is the current regime governing digital data – also does not have any provisions relating to the RTBF.

Supreme Court, in the landmark case of ‘K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India’, recognised RTBF as part of the Right to Life under Article 21. However, SC states that the RTBF was subject to certain restrictions.

### Key Points related to Model Tenancy Act 2021

4 States (Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Assam) have revised their tenancy laws to be in line with the Model Tenancy Act 2021, notified by Central Government in June 2021. The Model Act is aimed to enforce a transparent ecosystem for renting premises, minimize litigations and reduce tenant-landlord disputes.

#### *Model Tenancy Act (MTA), 2021*

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has approved MTA, 2021 to streamline the process of renting property in all State and Union Territory (UTs) and aid rent economy in real estate sector. In 2021, Jammu and Kashmir has become the first Union Territory to adopt the MTA. Since housing is a part of the State List under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, Model Act is only a suggestive framework (not binding) for states to follow while regulating rental housing and agreements. It replaces existing tenancy provisions of more than 70 years old East Punjab Urban Rent Restriction Act, 1949.

#### *Other Initiatives taken for Affordable housing*

- *Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs)*: MoHUA has initiated an ARHCs for urban migrants/poor as a sub-scheme under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY- Urban). It seeks to fulfill the vision of ‘AtmaNirbhar Bharat’.
- *PMAY-U*: Implemented by MoHUA, it addresses urban housing shortage among the EWS/LIG (Low Income Group) and MIG (Middle income group) categories including slum dwellers by ensuring a pucca house to all eligible urban households by 2022.
- *Global Housing Technology Challenge – India (GHTC-India)*: Initiated by MoHUA to identify and mainstream a basket of innovative construction technologies from across the globe for housing construction sector that are sustainable, eco-friendly and disaster-resilient.

### First-ever study on ‘System Improvement’ in the Rajya Sabha Secretariat

The first ever comprehensive study on ‘System Improvement’ in the Rajya Sabha Secretariat has been conducted by the panel headed by Dr. P. P. K. Ramacharyulu. The panel submitted its report to RS Chairman and recommended a makeover for quick decision making and delivery of services in a transparent, monitorable and accountable manner.



*Article 98:* Rajya Sabha Secretariat was set up pursuant to provisions contained in Article 98, which provide for separate secretarial staff for each House of Parliament. It functions under the guidance and control of the Rajya Sabha Chairman.

#### *Key Points*

- *Rajya Sabha First Constituted:* 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1952
- *First Meeting:* 13<sup>th</sup> May 1952
- *Rajya Sabha named:* On 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1954, the Chairman, Rajya Sabha made an announcement in the House that the Council of States would now be called 'Rajya Sabha' in Hindi.
- *First Chairman of Rajya Sabha:* Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.
- *Two consecutive terms as Chairman:* Dr. S. Radhakrishnan was the first Chairman of Rajya Sabha for two consecutive terms (13.5.1952 to 12.5.1962). Shri Mohammad Hamid Ansari was also the Vice-President of India for two consecutive terms (11.08.2007 to 10.08.2012 and again from 11.08.2012 to 10.08.2017).
- *First Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha:* Shri S.V. Krishnamoorthy Rao.

#### **Election Commission initiates changes related to Registration of Elections**

Election Commission, in pursuance of legal amendments in Representation of People Act 1950 and modifications in Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, has initiated following changes:

- Those above 17 years of age can apply in advance for getting enrolled in voters' list.
- Electoral roll will be updated every quarter and eligible youngster can be registered in next quarter of year in which they have attained qualifying age of 18 years.
- Optional provision to link Aadhaar details with the form has been added.

#### **First-ever National level meet of DLSAs held**

The first-ever national level meet of District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs) has been organised in New Delhi.

DLSAs are established under Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 to:

- provide free legal aid, organize Lok Adalats, Legal literacy camps etc.
- secure that opportunities for securing justice and fundamental rights are not denied to any citizens by reasons of poor economic conditions.

DLSA are headed by District Judge who acts as Chairman of DLSA. DLSAs also contribute towards reducing burden on courts by regulating Lok Adalats conducted by National Legal Services Authority (NALSA). Lok Adalat is an Alternative Disputes Resolution Mechanisms. It has been given statutory status under LSA.

#### **Parliament passes the Family Courts (Amendment) Act 2022**

Parliament has passed the Family Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2022 that seeks to amend the Family Courts Act, 1984 to establish family courts in Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland. The Act allows State Governments to establish Family Courts.

The Act amends the Family Courts Act, 1984 which provided an establishment of family courts by States to deal with disputes related to family and marriage. The Central Government is empowered to notify dates for the Act to come into force in different states.

### **Constitutional Provisions for ‘Prohibition’**

Growing alcohol consumption in India is becoming a major health hazard and a social menace. Recent incidents in Gujarat highlights the limitations of prohibition in addressing it, calling for a change in approach to address growing alcohol consumption.

*Prohibition* is the action of forbidding something, especially by law. In India, under Article 47 of the Constitution of India, as part of the public health – prohibition of the consumption of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health (except for medicinal purposes) is among the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs).

Under the *Seventh Schedule* – production, manufacture, possession, transport, purchase and sale of intoxicating liquors and excise duties comes under the List II (State List). Presently, 4 States and one Union Territory in India prohibit alcohol state-wide as- Gujarat, Bihar, Mizoram, Nagaland and Lakshadweep Islands. Maharashtra has prohibited liquor in 3 districts.

### **What is Twiplomacy?**

It has been observed that many world leaders use Twitter as a means to communicate and put out their views to the public. Twitter diplomacy, also called “Twiplomacy” or “# diplomacy” is the use of the social media website Twitter by heads of state, leaders of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and their diplomats to conduct diplomatic outreach and public diplomacy.

### **Vice President Elections**

The opposition has named former Governor and former Union Minister Margaret Alva as its candidate for Vice President.

As per Article 68 of the Constitution of India, an election to fill the vacancy caused by the expiration of the term of office of the outgoing Vice-President is required to be completed before the expiration of the term.

#### *Office of the Vice President*

- Article 63: It states that “there shall be a Vice-President of India”.
- Article 64: The Vice-President “shall be ex officio Chairman of the Council of the States” (Rajya Sabha).
- Article 65: It says that “in the event of the occurrence of any vacancy in the office of the President by reason of his death, resignation or removal, or otherwise, the Vice-President shall act as President until the date on which a new President enters upon his office”.
- The Vice-President shall also discharge the functions of the President when the latter is unable to do so “owing to absence, illness or any other cause.”

*Article 324* of the Constitution read with the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Act, 1952 and the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Rules, 1974, vests the superintendence, direction and control of the conduct of election to the office of the Vice-President of India in the Election Commission of India.

The notification for election shall be issued on or after the sixtieth day before the expiration of term of office of the outgoing Vice-President.

As per Article 66 of the Constitution of India, the Vice-President is elected by the members of the Electoral College.

Electoral College consists of:

1. Elected members of Rajya Sabha.
2. Nominated members of Rajya Sabha.
3. Elected members of Lok Sabha.

Since, all the electors are members of both Houses of Parliament, the value of the vote of each Member of Parliament would be the same i.e., 1 (one). The Election Commission, in consultation with the Central Government, appoints the Secretary General of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, by rotation, as the Returning Officer.

### **Minority Status in India**

The Supreme Court has observed that every person in India can be a minority in one State or the other. The minority status of religious and linguistic communities is “state-dependent”.

#### *Constitutional Provisions for Minority*

- *Article 29:* It provides that any section of the citizens residing in any part of India having a distinct language, script or culture of its own, shall have the right to conserve the same. It grants protection to both religious minorities as well as linguistic minorities. However, the Supreme Court held that the scope of this Article is not necessarily restricted to minorities only, as the use of the word ‘section of citizens’ in the Article includes minorities as well as the majority.
- *Article 30:* All minorities shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. The protection under Article 30 is confined only to minorities (religious or linguistic) and does not extend to any section of citizens (as under Article 29).
- *Article 350-B:* The Seventh Constitutional (Amendment) Act 1956 inserted this article which provides for a Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities appointed by the President of India. It would be the duty of the Special Officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under the Constitution.

### **Smt. Droupadi Murmu elected as 15<sup>th</sup> President of India**

Smt. Droupadi Murmu is elected as the first Tribal President and second women President of India (*after Pratibha Patil, 12<sup>th</sup> President, 2007-12*). Hailing from Odisha’s Mayurbhanj district and coming from a Santali tribal community, she started out as a teacher and then entered into Odisha politics. In 2015, she was sworn in as the first woman Governor of Jharkhand. She also became the first woman tribal leader from Odisha to be appointed as the Governor of a State.

The President of India is elected by the elected representatives of the Parliament and the State Legislature. The electoral college elects the President of India, and the representation of its members is proportionate. The term of the President of India is of 5 years and no law can be implemented in India without the President’s signature.

After results of Presidential Poll 2022 are out, Election Commissioners (along with CEC) sign certification of the election. A copy of the certification is handed over to Union Home Secretary and the certificate is read out at the oath ceremony of the President.

*Santhal* is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest scheduled tribe community in the country after ‘Gond’ and ‘Bhil’ spread across Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal. Santhals speak Santhali which has its own script called ‘*OL chiki*’ which has been included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution.

## 6. Governance

### **Central Government notifies Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Rules 2022**

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has amended foreign funding rules giving certain relaxations such as allowing relatives to send more money under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) and giving more time to the organisations to inform the government about opening of bank accounts for utilization of funds received under ‘registration’ or ‘prior permission’ category. These amendments aim to reduce compliance burden on citizens.

Accordingly, the Central Government has notified the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2022 to further amend the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Rules, 2011 (FCRR, 2011) under FCRA.

#### *Relevant changes*

- Now, any person receiving Foreign Contribution (FC) more than Rs. 10 Lakh in a financial year from relatives has to intimate to Central Government within 3 months of receipt of FC.
- Earlier such monetary threshold limit was Rs 1 Lakh and intimation to Central Government was required within 30 days.
- The Rules provides that an organization making FCRA registration or taking prior permission must have an FCRA Bank account. The Amendment Rules 2022 has increased the time limit for intimating MHA, regarding the opening of FCRA Bank account from 15 days to 45 days. The said timeline has been increased in both cases i.e., for FCRA registration or FCRA prior permission.
- The time limit prescribed for intimation to Central Government for application of obtaining ‘registration’ or ‘prior permission’ under the FCRA to receive funds has been increased from 15 days to 45 days.
- The list of compoundable offences under FCRA was increased to 12 from 7.

*Compoundable offences* are those where the complainant can agree to take back the charges levied against the accused.

### **Govt. launches National Standards for Civil Service Training Institutions (NSCSTI)**

Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions has launched the National Standards for Civil Service Training Institutions (NSCSTI). By doing this, India became the first country in the world to come out with a unique model to create standards for civil service training institutions at national level.

NSCSTI creates a baseline for Central Training Institutions (CTIs) on their current capacity for elevating their quality and capacity of training delivery and to harmonize standards for training. It is developed at Capacity Building Commission (CBC) headquarters.

*Capacity Building Commission* was constituted through Gazette of India in 2021. The core purpose of the Commission is to build credibility and shape a uniform approach to capacity building on a collaborative and co-sharing basis. It was established as an independent body with complete executive and financial autonomy. CBC comprises 3 Members and is supported by an internal Secretariat. Secretariat is headed by an officer in the grade of Joint Secretary to Government of India.

#### Initiatives taken to improve Functioning of Civil Servants

- *Mission Karamyogi*: It is an Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT) Platform which allow all government servants irrespective of their rank to undergo continuous training, depending on their

domain areas. It aims at building a future-ready civil service with the right attitude, skills and knowledge, aligned to the vision of New India.

- *Aarambh*: Launched by Government of India, it is first ever common foundation course for civil servants training.
- *National Training Policy*: It was adopted in 1996 and reviewed in 2012 to develop a professional, impartial and efficient civil servants that is responsible to needs of citizens and ensuring that they possess requisite knowledge, skills and attitude to make them able to perform the functions they are entrusted with.
- *Lateral Entry*: Direct induction of domain experts at the middle or senior levels of administrative hierarchy, rather than only appointing regular civil servants through promotion.

### **MoD to set up Joint Theatre Commands**

Minister of Defence has announced the setting up of 'Joint Theatre Commands' (JTC) of the tri-services to enhance coordination among the armed forces.

*Theaterisation or Theatre Command* means putting specific number of personnel from the 3 services – army, navy and air force – under a common Commander in a specified geographical territory. Idea of Theatre Commands has been proposed by both the Kargil Review Committee as well as D B Shekatkar Committee.

### **SC upheld amendment to the PMLA 2002**

Supreme Court has upheld the core amendments made to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. The verdict came on challenge raised against amendments introduced to PMLA, 2002 by way of Finance Act in 2019.

Amendments to PMLA provided Enforcement Directorate (ED) extensive powers of summons, arrest and raids, and makes bail provisions difficult while shifting the burden of proof of innocence onto the accused rather than prosecution.

*Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002*: It was introduced in 2002 and enforced in 2005 to tackle the problem of money laundering. Through the process of money laundering a person converts illegal money into a legal entity. The Act was enacted in response to India's global commitment (including Vienna Convention) to combat the menace of money laundering, stemming from the trade of drugs and narcotics and organised crime that goes with it. Under the Act, ED is empowered to conduct money laundering investigation. As stated by the Supreme Court, money laundering is an offence against the sovereignty and integrity of the country.

*Directorate of Enforcement* is a specialized financial investigation agency under the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance. It is mandated with the task of enforcing the provisions of 2 special fiscal laws:

- (i) Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA) and
- (ii) Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA).

It also processes cases of fugitive(s) from India under Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018. FEMA is a civil law while PMLA is criminal law. Note that, in 2021, Parliament has passed a bill to extend the tenure of Director of ED to a maximum of 5 years.

*Fugitive Economic Offender (FEO)* is a person against whom an arrest warrant has been issued for committing an offence listed in the Act and the value of the offence is at least Rs. 100 crores.

### **Dept. of Fertilizer institutes Fertilizer Flying Squad**

Department of Fertilizers has instituted a dedicated officer known as a ‘fertilizer flying squad’ to check any diversion, black marketing or adulteration of fertilizers.

### **What is Chicago Convention?**

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued a show-cause notice to SpiceJet in light of the rising number of air safety incidents witnessed by the low-cost airline. Globally, countries observe Chicago Convention for

*The Convention on International Civil Aviation*, also known as the Chicago Convention (developed in 1940s), established the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a specialized agency of the UN charged with coordinating international air travel. The Convention establishes rules of airspace, aircraft registration and safety, security, and sustainability, and details the rights of the signatories in relation to air travel.

### **CCPA completes 2 years of Establishment**

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has completed 2 years of its establishment. The CCPA was constituted to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers under the Consumer Protection Act (CPA), 2019. CPA 2019 replaced the CPA 1986 and widen its scope in addressing consumer concerns.

CCPA protects the rights of the consumer by cracking down on unfair trade practices, and false and misleading advertisements that are detrimental to the interests of the public.

It is empowered to:

- conduct investigations into violation of consumer rights,
- order recalls of unsafe goods and services,
- order discontinuation of unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements,
- impose penalties on manufacturers/endorsers/publishers of misleading advertisements.

Appeal against any order of the CCPA may be filed before the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission within a period of 30 days from the date of receipt of such order.

### **CCPA announces New Guidelines to prevent Unfair Trade Practices**

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has announced 5 guidelines to prevent unfair trade practices and to protect consumer interests regarding the levy of service charges in hotels and restaurants. The guidelines are in addition to the Government’s 2017 guidelines which prohibit the levy of service charges on consumers by hotels and restaurants, and terms the charging for anything other than “the price displayed on the menu card along with the applicable taxes” without “express consent” of the customer as “unfair trade practices”.

#### *New Guidelines*

1. Prohibition from levying extra charges.
2. No forced service charges.
3. No restriction on entry based on service charges.
4. No addition of service charges and GST on total.
5. Tips or donations no longer permitted.

*Unfair Trade Practice:* Guidelines now consider charging a customer other than the price of food items displayed on the menu along with applicable taxes, as an unfair trade practice’ under the Consumer Protection Act 2019.

*Service charge* is a tip or a direct transaction between the customer and the restaurant staff, specifically the wait staff. It is a fee collected to pay for services associated with the purchase of a primary product or service. It is collected by hospitality sectors and food and beverage industries as a fee for serving customers.

### **Parliament passes National Anti-Doping Bill, 2022**

Parliament has passed the National Anti-Doping Bill, 2022. The Bill provides statutory framework in the form of legislation for prohibition of doping in sports and enforcing anti-doping activities in the country.

#### *Key Objectives*

- Protecting rights of all sportspersons,
- Reinforcing India's commitment to international obligations for clean sports,
- Independent mechanism for anti-doping adjudication,
- Providing legal sanctity to National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) & National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL),
- Establishing more Dope Testing Labs,
- Creating opportunities for academic research, science and manufacturing relating to Anti-Doping,
- Establishing standards for the manufacturing of nutritional supplements for sports in India.

*National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL)* was established with an aim to get permanently accredited by International Olympic Committee (IOC) and WADA to do the testing for the banned drugs in human sports. NDTL has regained WADA accreditation (earlier suspended in 2019). The restoration of accreditation is a boost to India's efforts to achieve the highest global standards of excellence in sport.

In November 1999, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) was set up under the International Olympic Committee. WADA is recognised by the UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport (2005). WADA's primary role is to develop, harmonize, and coordinate anti-doping regulations across all sports and countries.

### **Dept. of Consumer Affairs sets up Committee on Right to Repair**

Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) has set up committee on the Right to Repair to emphasize on the LiFE (Lifestyle for the Environment) movement through sustainable consumption. Key sectors identified for this framework include Farming Equipment, Mobile Phones/ Tablets, Consumer Durables and Automobiles & Automobile Equipment.

*Right to Repair* movement calls for manufacturers to make authentic parts available to consumers so that they can get their device repaired from independent shops as well, if they so desire. Right to Repair has been recognised in many countries including the US, UK and European Union.

*'Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE) Movement'*: The idea of LiFE was introduced by the Indian Prime Minister during the 26<sup>th</sup> UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), 2021 at Glasgow. Its vision is to live a lifestyle that is in tune with our planet and does not harm it. People living such a lifestyle are called "*Pro-Planet People (P3)*". The Mission seeks to create an ecosystem that will reinforce and enable environmentally friendly behaviours to be self-sustainable.

### **PM unveils Sprint Challenges for Indian Navy – Sprint Project**

Prime Minister has unveiled 'Sprint Challenges' for Indian Navy at a naval seminar 'Swavlamban', organized to engage stakeholders towards self-reliance (Indigenisation) in the defence sector.

Naval Innovation and Indigenisation Organisation (NIIO) in cooperation with the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO), aims to induct at least 75 new indigenous technologies/products into the Indian Navy. The collaborative project is named SPRINT — Supporting Pole-Vaulting in R&D through iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence), NIIO and TDAC (Technology Development Acceleration Cell).

*Other initiatives for indigenization of Defence:*

- *Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020:* Prioritized capital investment from domestic manufacturers.
- *New FDI Policy:* Preference to ‘Buy (Indian)’, ‘Buy & Make (Indian)’ & ‘Make’ categories of acquisition over ‘Buy (Global)’. FDI through automatic approval is increased from 49% to 74%.
- *E- Biz Portal:* A one-stop shop for providing G2B services to investors and business communities.
- *Mission Raksha Gyanshakti:* This is initiated with the objective of creating greater Intellectual Property in the Defence Production Ecosystem.
- *Artificial Intelligence in Defence:* Creation of Defence Artificial Intelligence Project Agency (DAIPA) in 2019 for greater thrust on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Defence.
- *Strategic Partnership Policy:* This is to promote Joint Ventures (JV) between global defence majors and the indigenous private sector.

### **What are Tele-Law Services?**

Government is planning to provide Tele-Law service free of cost for citizens in the country.

Tele-Law mainstreams legal aid to the marginalized seeking legal help by connecting them with the Panel Lawyers through the tele/video-conferencing infrastructure available at Common Service Centers (CSCs) across Gram Panchayats. For easy and direct access, Tele- Law Mobile Application has also been launched in 2021 and it is presently available in 22 scheduled languages.

### **Ministry of Power notifies POSOCO to run green energy system**

Ministry of Power has notified Power System Operation Corporation Ltd. (POSOCO) as the central nodal agency to set up and run a single window green energy system. The Electricity Act, 2003 allowed consumers to buy power directly from the generators by using the grid under Open Access Arrangement.

*POSOCO* is CPSE under the Ministry of Power to monitor and ensure round-the-clock integrated operation of the Indian Power System in a reliable, efficient and secure manner thus serving a mission-critical activity.

*Green Energy* is that which comes from natural sources, such as the sun.



## 7. International Relations

### **First Leaders' Summit of I2U2 held virtually**

The first Leaders' Summit of I2U2 (India, Israel, United Arab Emirates, and United States) was held virtually.

I2U2 was first mentioned in October 2021, following the Abraham Accords between Israel and UAE, to deal with issues concerning maritime security, infrastructure, and transport in region. It was established as an international discussion forum. I2U2 lacks a military angle and focuses on the economy. It has identified 6 areas of cooperation in water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security. The I2U2 is referred to as the 'West Asian QUAD'.

*Abraham Accords* is a series of peace agreements between Israel and several Arab countries, UAE being the first. In 2020, it was mediated by USA between UAE, Bahrain and Israel. The name "Abraham" refers to the great Father of the faith of the 3 Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It's a symbolic title that promotes unity between Arabic and Jewish people by recognizing the shared patriarch.

#### *Some more notable points*

1. The United Arab Emirates announced an investment of USD 2 billion to develop a series of integrated food parks across India as part of efforts by the four-nation grouping I2U2 (India-Israel-UAE-USA) to help tackle food insecurity in South Asia and the Middle East.

2. India, UAE and France held their maiden Trilateral meeting. Objective of the meet is to explore potential cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region including in Maritime Security, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), Blue Economy, Regional Connectivity, Cooperation in Multilateral Fora, Energy and Food Security, Startups etc.

### **Former Japan Prime Minister 'Shinzo Abe' Assassinated**

Former Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has been assassinated. Shinzo Abe was Japan's longest-serving PM who pushed for more assertive policies to revitalize Japan economically and rebuild its role on the global stage. He was known for his hawkish foreign policy and a signature economic strategy that popularly came to be known as "Abenomics". India finds a special mention in his book "*Utsukushii Kuni E*" (Toward a Beautiful Country).

### **USA exempts India from CAATSA**

The US House of Representatives has passed a legislative amendment that exempts India from economic sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) for purchasing the S-400 missile defence system from Russia in 2018 in order to help deter aggressors like China.

CAATSA is a law that came into effect in the US in 2017 and was meant to punish countries having deep engagements with Russia, North Korea, and Iran using economic sanctions.

The S-400 Triumf is a mobile, surface-to-air missile system developed in the 1990s. It is the most dangerous operationally deployed modern long-range SAM (MLR SAM) in the world, considered much ahead of the US-developed Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD). India signed a USD 5 billion deal with Russia (in 2018) to buy 5 units of the S-400 air defence missile systems. S-400 Triumf has the capability to protect against almost all sorts of aerial attacks, including drones, missiles, rockets and even fighter jets.

### **India adopted 2022 Supply Chain Ministerial Forum joint statement**

India has adopted USA' joint statement of the 2022 Supply Chain Ministerial Forum on cooperation of global supply chains. A partnership of 18 economies, including India, USA and European Union has unveiled a 4-point roadmap for building collective, long-term Resilient Supply Chains (RSC) to counter risks arising from supply dependencies and vulnerabilities.

India, Japan and Australia have also launched *Supply Chain Resilience Initiative* (SCRI) in April 2021 to counter China's dominance of supply chain in the Indo-Pacific region. The SCRI aims to create a virtuous cycle of enhancing supply chain resilience with a view to eventually attaining strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth in the Indo-Pacific region.

### **India-Africa Trade and Investment Agreement**

Government has reiterated the need for India-Africa Trade and Investment Agreement (IATIA) to strengthen the India-Africa partnership under the African continent Free Trade Area (AfFTA).

#### *Other initiatives for Africa*

- PIDA (Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa): India is implementing it with help from African Development Bank
- 'Focus Africa' Programme
- Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program: for technical assistance and training
- Pan-African e-Network to bridge the digital divide in Africa
- Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (2017): India-Japan partnership for linking Indian ports with those in Africa.

### **LAC and LoC**

The Line of Actual Control (LAC) is the demarcation that separates Indian-controlled territory from Chinese-controlled territory.

LAC is different from the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan. LoC emerged from the 1948 ceasefire line negotiated by the United Nations (UN) after the Kashmir War. It was designated as the LoC in 1972, following the Shimla Agreement between the two countries. It is delineated on a map signed by the Director-General of Military Operations (DGMO) of both armies and has the international sanctity of a legal agreement.

The LAC, in contrast, is only a concept – it is not agreed upon by the 2 countries, neither delineated on a map nor demarcated on the ground. India considers the LAC to be 3488 km long, while the Chinese consider it to be only around 2000 km.

### **USA announces Indo-Pacific Economic Framework**

The USA has announced the formation of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) at the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) Summit meeting in Tokyo. It is a US-led initiative that aims to strengthen economic partnership among participating countries to enhance resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness, and competitiveness in the Indo-Pacific region.

*IPEF Members:* 4 QUAD countries, South Korea, New Zealand, Fiji and 7 out of the 10 members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The IPEF framework has following pillars: Supply-chain resilience, clean energy, decarbonization & infrastructure, Taxation & anti-corruption, and Fair & resilient trade.

**Defence Exercise in News**

*India Japan Maritime Partnership Exercise:* It was conducted between Japan Maritime Self Defence Force and Indian Navy in Andaman Sea. It aimed at enhancing interoperability and streamlining seamanship and communication procedures.

## 8. Awards and Recognition

### **Field Medal in Mathematics – awarded to Maryna Viazovska**

Ukrainian Mathematician ‘Maryna Viazovska’ has become the second woman to win prestigious Fields Medal in Mathematics. It is one of the highest honours in Mathematics that is conventionally awarded to people aged under 40. The other winners are James Maynard, June Huh, and Hugo Duminil Copin.

Fields Medal is often described as Nobel Prize in mathematics. It is administered by International Mathematics Union (IMU), an international non-governmental and non-profit scientific organisation to promote international cooperation in mathematics. It is awarded every 4 years to Mathematicians under the age of 40. Honour carries a physical medal of 14K gold. There is also cash award of Canadian dollars 15,000.

#### *Indian Origin winners:*

- Akshay Venkatesh of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton (2018)
- Manjul Bhargava of the Department of Mathematics at Princeton University (2014)

### **Govt. to set up Dr. Rajendra Prasad Award**

Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) has announced the setting up of Dr. Rajendra Prasad Memorial Award in Public Administration in the field of academic excellence, in memory of the first President of India who had also laid the foundation stone of the IIPA building complex in the national capital.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was an Indian Freedom Activist, Lawyer, and Scholar too. He served as the Food and Agriculture Minister in the Central Government after the 1946 elections. He also served as the President of the Constituent Assembly of India.

#### *Literary Works*

- Satyagraha at Champaran (1922)
- India Divided (1946)
- Atmakatha (1946) his autobiography written during his 3-year prison term in Bankipur Jail.
- Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar, Some Reminiscences (1949)
- Babu Ke Kadmon Mein (1954)
- Since Independence (1960)

### **Directorate of Film Festivals 68<sup>th</sup> National Film Awards**

The winners of the 68<sup>th</sup> National Film Awards were announced in New Delhi. This year’s awards ceremony honoured films from 2020 as well due to COVID-19- related delays. The event is organised by the Directorate of Film Festivals, which comes under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

#### *Winners*

- Best Feature Film: *Soorarai Pottru* (Tamil)
- Best Director: *Sachidanandan KR, Ayyappanum Koshiyum*
- Best Actor: *Suriya for Soorarai Pottru and Ajay Devgan for Tanhaji*
- Best Actress: *Aparna Balamurali (Soorarai Pottru)*

#### *Other Awards*

- Madhya Pradesh (Rajat Kamal & Certificate) wins the Most Film Friendly State award while Uttarakhand (Certificate) and Uttar Pradesh (Certificate) get Special Mention.

- The Longest Kiss' by Kishwar Desai wins Best Book on Cinema for the year while Malayalam book 'MT Anunahvangelude Pusthakam' and Odia book 'Kali Paine Kalira Cinema' win special mention.

The National Film Awards is the most prominent film award ceremony in India. Established in 1954, it has been administered, along with the International Film Festival of India and the Indian Panorama, by the Indian Government's Directorate of Film Festivals since 1973.

### **Ranil Wickremesinghe becomes 8<sup>th</sup> President of Sri Lanka**

Ranil Wickremesinghe has been sworn-in as the 8<sup>th</sup> President of Sri Lanka. He will have a mandate to serve out the rest of earlier President Mahinda Rajapaksa's term, which ends in November 2024.

### **Sini Shetty wins Femina Miss World 2022**

Sini Shetty (Karnataka) has been crowned as the Femina Miss India World 2022 title.

First Runner-up: *Rubal Shekhawat (Rajasthan)*

Second Runner-up: *Shinata Chauhan (Uttar Pradesh)*

### **NTPC recognized as Most Preferred Workplace**

NTPC has been recognized as the "Most Preferred Workplaces of 2022" in the premier edition of "Most Preferred Workplaces 2022". The event was organized by the Team Marksmen in association with India Today. The one-of-kind industry-led initiative is informed and driven by insights drawn from an industry-wide, in-depth research and survey conducted by Team Marksmen.

### **Gita Gopinath, first woman to feature on Wall of Former Chief Economists**

Gita Gopinath has become the first woman and second Indian to feature on the "Wall of Former Chief Economists" of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). She was served as IMF Chief Economist for 3 years, since October 2018. Note that, Former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan, was the first Indian who was featured on the IMF's Wall of Former Chief Economists. He served as IMF's Chief Economist and Director of Research between 2003 and 2006.

### **Japan to honour Late Shinzo Abe with highest Order of Nation**

Japan has decided to award former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe with the highest order of nation, "the Supreme Order of the Chrysanthemum" posthumously. Note that, Shinzo Abe was also conferred with the Padma Vibhushan (2021) for "exceptional and distinguished service" in the field of public affairs.

### **Tanuja Nesari was awarded the Ayurveda Ratna Award by the UK Parliament**

Tanuja Nesari, Director of All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) was awarded with the Ayurveda Ratna Award by the UK Parliament, recognising her contribution to furthering the growth of Ayurveda in India and abroad.

The UK's All-Party Parliamentary Group on Indian Traditional Sciences (*ITSappg*) conferred the Ayurveda Ratna award on Dr Nesari for her exceptional service of the highest order for the promotion of Ayurveda. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Indian Traditional Sciences was formed in 2014 with an aim to spread the knowledge of Ayurveda, Yoga, Jyotish, Vastu, Unani and Sangeetam in the United Kingdom and abroad.

## 9. Social Development

### **Bajaj Healthcare Limited, first private entity to use Opium for extracting API**

Pharmaceutical company Bajaj Healthcare Limited has become the first private player in India to be awarded a government contract for the highly regulated opium processing sector. It means the company can use opium to extract Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) used in medicines such as painkillers, cough syrups, and even cancer drugs.

*Opium* is a natural substance obtained from poppy seeds and its derivatives. Alkaloids obtained from opium are used to make cough syrups, cancer medicines and pain-management medicines. Only 12 countries including India allow its cultivation legally for medicinal use.

In India, opium poppy cultivation is prohibited under Section 8 of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, except under a licence issued by the Central Bureau of Narcotics under Rule 8 of NDPS Rules, 1985.

The Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN) procures opium poppy from farmers and transfers it to the Government Opium and Alkaloid Works (GOAWs) factories at Ghazipur and Neemuch for further processing to extract alkaloids for medical use. The CBN and GOAW both come under the Ministry of Finance.

### **Govt. releases first State Ranking Index for implementation of NFSA 2013**

Government has released the first State Ranking Index (SRI) for implementation of the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013. Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh secured the top 3 positions in the Index. Tripura, Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim obtained the top positions among the special category states (north-eastern, Himalayan, and Island states).

The Index for ranking the states and UTs is built on 3 key pillars which covers the end-to-end implementation of NFSA through TPDS. These pillars are: (i) NFSA – Coverage, targeting and provisions of the Act, (ii) Delivery platform, and (iii) Nutrition initiatives.

*National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:* Enactment of National Food Security Act, (NFSA) 2013 marked a paradigm shift in the approach to food security from welfare to rights-based approach. NFSA envisages using the existing platform of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) for foodgrain distribution. TPDS (1997) is the revamped Public Distribution System (PDS) to target poor households. NFSA's objective is to provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantities of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity. It is now implemented in all 36 states/ UTs covering about 81 crore persons.

### **The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) Report 2022 released**

The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) Report 2022 was released. The 2022 edition presents updates on the food security and nutrition situation around the world, including the latest estimates of the cost and affordability of a healthy diet. It also examines ways governments can repurpose their current support to agriculture to help make healthy and nutritious food cheaper, mindful of the limited public resources available in many parts of the world.

The Report is a joint publication by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

### **WEF releases Global Gender Gap Report 2022**

World Economic Forum has released the Global Gender Gap Report 2022. The Index ranked India at 135 out of 146 countries as compared to 140 out of 156 countries in 2021. India's overall score has improved from 0.625 (in 2021) to 0.629, which is its seventh-highest score in the last 16 years. Note that, Iceland has retained its position as the world's most gender-equal country, among 146 nations on the Index.

*Global Gender Gap index* was instituted in 2006 and it aims to support the identification of the most effective policies to close gender gaps. The index benchmarks the current state and evolution of gender parity across 4 key dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity; Educational Attainment; Health and Survival; and Political Empowerment. On each of the four sub-indices as well as on the overall index the GGG index provides scores between 0 and 1, where 1 shows full gender parity and 0 is complete imparity.

Recent Initiatives by the Government:

1. *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*: It ensures the protection, survival and education of the girl child.
2. *Mahila Shakti Kendra*: Aims to empower rural women with opportunities for skill development and employment.
3. *Mahila Police Volunteers*: It envisages engagement of Mahila Police Volunteers in States/UTs who act as a link between police and community and facilitates women in distress.
4. *Rashtriya Mahila Kosh*: It is an apex micro-finance organization that provides micro-credit at concessional terms to poor women for various livelihood and income generating activities.
5. *Sukanya Samridhi Yojna*: Under this scheme, girls have been economically empowered by opening their bank accounts.
6. *Female Entrepreneurship*: To promote female entrepreneurship, the Government has initiated Programmes like Stand-Up India and Mahila e-Haat (online marketing platform to support women entrepreneurs/SHGs/NGOs), Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Programme (ESSDP).
7. *Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya*: They have been opened in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs).
8. *Capacity Building of Elected Women Representatives*: It is conducted with a view to empowering women to participate effectively in the governance processes.

*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*.

### **What is Replacement Level Fertility?**

According to the Government, India has achieved Replacement Level Fertility, with as many as 31 states/ UTs having achieved a Total Fertility Rate of 2.1 or less.

*Replacement Level Fertility (RLF)* is the level of fertility at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next.

*Relationship between RLF and zero population growth:* Replacement level fertility is not associated with a unique set of age-specific birth rates. Replacement level fertility will lead to zero population growth only if mortality rates remain constant and migration has no effect.

### **Government initiatives to prevent child labour**

Parliament Standing Committee on labour has informed that the Central Government has no new data on child labour. It is for the first time that a Parliamentary Panel is engaged in a detailed examination of the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) scheme.

#### *Government Initiatives*

- India ratified ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and Convention 138 on the Minimum Age of Employment.
- Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act 2016 prohibits the ‘engagement of children (under 14 years of age) in all occupations and of adolescents (under 18 years of age) in hazardous occupations.
- PENCiL (Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labour) Portal tool in rescuing and rehabilitating victims of child labour.

#### *Constitutional provisions on Child labour*

- Article 21(A) and Article 45 provides for free and compulsory education to all children from 6-14 years.
- Article 23 prohibits and criminalizes human trafficking and forced labour.
- Article 24 prohibits employment of children below the age of 14 years in factories, mines & hazardous employment.
- Articles 39 directs the State to ensure health and strengths of workers and tender age of children are not abused.

### **Gavi announces international support for Africa First Malaria Vaccine**

Gavi, the global vaccine alliance, has announced \$160 million in international support for the rollout of the first malaria vaccine in Africa from 2022-2025. Kenya, Ghana and Malawi were chosen for the pilot programme because they continue to have high numbers of malaria cases despite having strong prevention and vaccination programmes.

*Malaria* is an acute febrile illness caused by Plasmodium parasites, which are spread to people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes. WHO also publishes World Malaria Report (WMR) 2021.

*Gavi* is an international organisation created in 2000 to improve access to new and underused vaccines for children living in the world's poorest countries.

### **Government to introduce 75 Bhartiya Games in school under Indian Knowledge System Initiative**

Central Government has announced that it will introduce traditional Indian Games (75 Bhartiya Games) in schools such as “*Raja Mantri Chor Sipahi*”, “*Posham pa*”, “*gilli danda*”, “*yubi lakpi*”, different forms of “*kabaddi*” and “*kanche*” under the Ministry of Education's initiative - Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS).

*Indian Knowledge Systems* is an innovative cell under Ministry of Education at All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). It is established to promote interdisciplinary research on all aspects of IKS, preserve and disseminate IKS for further research and societal applications. It aims to spread rich heritage and traditional knowledge in field of Arts and Literature, Agriculture, Basic Sciences, Engineering & Technology, Architecture, Management, Economics, etc.



### **Govt. signed MoU with ILO on Chemical Safety at workplace**

Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals (Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Labour Organization on International Chemical Safety Cards (ICSCS). ICSCS (by WHO, ILO and EU) will provide essential safety and health information about the safe use of chemicals in the workplace.

### **DoCA launches Jagriti – a Mascot to empower Consumers**

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) has launched “Jagriti”, a mascot for empowering consumers and generating awareness of their rights. Jagriti will be projected as an empowered consumer who is spreading awareness about consumer rights & addressing solutions to the problems faced by the consumers.

The “Jagriti” mascot will be used to generate consumer awareness about various themes of the Department like provisions of Consumer Protection Act 2019, Hallmarking, National Consumer Helpline toll free number 1915, the Standards of Weights & Measures Act, decisions of the Central Consumer Protection Authority and testimonials by consumers on grievance redressal.

Other Initiative: *Jago Grahak Jago campaign; National Consumer Helpline (NCH); Consumer Welfare Fund*

### **WHO declares Monkeypox as Public Health Emergency**

WHO has declared the global Monkeypox outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). PHEIC is the highest level of alert the global health body can issue. Only Polio and COVID-19 were ongoing PHEIC prior to Monkeypox.

WHO Director-General: *Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus*

*Monkeypox* is an illness caused by the monkeypox virus. It is a viral zoonotic infection, meaning that it can spread from animals to humans. It can also spread from humans to other humans and from the environment to humans.

### **Anthrax Outbreak in Kerala**

An outbreak of Anthrax has been declared in Athirappilly of Thrissur district, after finding several carcasses of wild boar.

*Anthrax* is a serious infectious disease, which is caused by spore-forming bacteria. Anthrax is also called woolsorter’s disease or malignant pustule. It is a rare but serious disease, caused due to rod-shaped bacteria called *bacillus anthracis*. These bacteria occur naturally in soil. As per WHO, Anthrax is a disease of herbivores, affecting wild as well as domestic animals. It is a zoonotic disease; thus, it is transmissible from animals to humans.

### **Indonesia announces Digital Nomad Visas**

Indonesian Government has announced “Digital Nomad Visas” for travellers, to attract more foreign tourists.

*Digital Nomads* are people who work remotely while travelling to different places and spending their earned income in the country they are travelling to. Unlike regular remote workers, who tend to stay in one geographic area, digital nomads travel and explore while working.

### **What is Gender Budgeting?**

Development, Monitoring, and Evaluation Office, an attached office of NITI Aayog, has pitched for finalizing a national policy for women and mainstreaming of gender-based budgeting across all Ministries and States through formulation of the Gender Budgeting Act.

*Gender Budgeting* means preparing budgets or analyzing them from a gender perspective. It is not an accounting exercise but an ongoing process of keeping a gender perspective in policy/ programme formulation, its implementation and review. GB entails dissection of the Government budgets to establish its gender differential impacts and to ensure that gender commitments are translated into budgetary commitment.

### **ICMR planning to launch study on prevalence of bovine tuberculosis**

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is planning to launch an extensive study to check the prevalence of bovine tuberculosis (TB) in household cattle across the country after it found evidence of human-to-cattle (*reverse zoonosis*) TB transmission in farm animals in southern India. Reverse zoonosis is a case in which a disease transmits from humans to animals.

Bacteria Mycobacteria cause diseases like TB and Leprosy in humans and others infect a wide range of animals. In humans, TB most commonly affects the lungs (pulmonary TB), but it can also affect other organs (extra-pulmonary TB). TB is a treatable and curable disease.

India is committed to eliminating tuberculosis from the country by 2025, 5 years ahead of the global target by the World Health Organisation (WHO) i.e., 2030.

*National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP)*: It is the state-run Tuberculosis control initiative of the Government of India. NTEP incorporates the principles of Directly Observed Treatment-Short course (DOTS). DOTS is a systematic strategy which has 5 components: Political commitment; Diagnosis by microscopy; Adequate supply of Short course drugs; Directly observed treatment; and Accountability.

### **Ministry of Education releases NIRF 2022**

Government has released the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) Rankings 2022. NIRF was launched in 2015.

The ranking is broadly based on 5 major parameters including – Teaching, Learning and Resources, Research and Professional Practice, Graduation Outcomes, Outreach and Inclusivity and Peer Perception.

The Ranking was announced for 11 categories. This includes Overall, University, Management, College, Pharmacy, Medical, Engineering, Architecture, ARIIA (Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements), Law and Research Institutions.

#### *Key Highlights*

- IIT Madras retains its 1<sup>st</sup> position in Overall Category for 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year and in Engineering for 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.
- IISc, Bengaluru tops the Universities Category for 7<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. It stood 1<sup>st</sup> in Research Institutions Category for 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year.
- IIM Ahmedabad tops in Management subject retaining its first position for 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year.
- All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi occupies the top slot in Medical for the 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.
- Jamia Hamdard tops the ranking in Pharmacy for 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.

- Miranda House retains the 1<sup>st</sup> position amongst Colleges for the 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.
- IIT Roorkee stands at 1<sup>st</sup> position in Architecture subject for 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive year.
- National Law School of India University, Bengaluru retains its first position in Law for the fifth consecutive year.
- The Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences takes the top slot for the first time in Dental Subject displacing Manipal College of Dental Sciences, Manipal.

### **Multiple States urges Central Government to hold caste census**

Multiple States are demanding the Central Government to hold nationwide cast census to enumerate the Socially Economically Backward Classes and OBCs.

However, legal and constitutional experts are of the opinion that since the Census operation comes under the Union list, states are not empowered to conduct the same. They can only collect statistics or data of the population. The decennial census is conducted by the Census Commissioner of India under the Census of India Act, 1948.

#### *Important Commissions on Reservation*

1. Hunter Commission (1882): The Hunter Commission was appointed in 1882. Mahatma Jyotirao Phule made a demand for free and compulsory education for all along with proportionate reservation/representation in government jobs.
2. Kelkar Commission (1953): The Commission was established in 1953 to assess the situation of the socially and educationally backward class. The report was accepted as far as SCs and STs were concerned. However, recommendations for OBCs were rejected.
3. Mandal Commission (1979): Mandal Commission was established in 1979 to assess the situation of the socially and educationally backward.
4. Sachar Committee (2003): The Sachar Committee headed by Justice Rajinder Sachar, was appointed for preparation of a report on the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community of India. The Committee, gave its report in 2006 and it clearly found that the Muslim community was really “seriously lagging behind in terms of most of the human development indicators.”

### **WHO releases first-ever Report on Anti-Microbial Resistance vaccine**

WHO has released the first-ever Report on the pipeline of the vaccines currently in development to prevent infections caused by Anti-Microbial Resistant (AMR) bacterial pathogens. WHO’s analysis points to the need to accelerate trials for AMR related vaccines in late-stage development and maximize the use of existing vaccines.

*Anti-Microbial Resistance* occurs when microbes evolve mechanisms that protect them from the effects of anti-microbials drugs. This makes infections harder to treat. All classes of microbes can evolve resistance. Fungi evolve antifungal resistance. Viruses evolve antiviral resistance.

### **Govt. launches NDDDB’s subsidiary for Manure Management**

Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has launched NDDDB MRIDA Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary company of National Dairy Development Board to take forward Manure Management initiatives across the country.

NDDDB MRIDA Limited will work in manure management initiatives across the country. It has been established as an Unlisted Public Limited Company under Companies Act, 2013 on July 1, 2022. It’ll set up manure value chain, biogas based CNG and energy generation for dairy plants.

*Manure Management* is the process in which animal excretion is captured, stored, treated, and used.

The *National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)* was founded in 1965 to transform dairying into an instrument for the development of India's rural people. Board, initially registered as a society under the Societies Act 1860, was merged with the erstwhile Indian Dairy Corporation, a company formed and registered under the Companies Act 1956, by the NDDB Act 1987. The new body corporate was also declared an institution of national importance by the Act.

NDDB has registered a trademark named “*SuDhan*” to provide common identity to dung based organic fertilisers.

### **NITI Aayog – WFP initiative for mainstreaming millets in Asia and Africa**

NITI Aayog and the World Food Programme, India have launched the ‘Mapping and Exchange of Good Practices’ initiative for mainstreaming millets in Asia and Africa. NITI Aayog and WFP will prepare a compendium of good practices for scaling up the production and consumption of millets in India and abroad.

#### *Key Points*

- Millets are coarse grains and a repository of protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals.
- 3 major millet crops currently growing in India are – jowar (sorghum), bajra (pearl millet) and ragi (finger millet). Major producers include Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Haryana.
- Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has endorsed India’s call for declaring 2023 as the “International Year of Millets”.

### **100<sup>th</sup> International Day of Cooperatives (CoopsDay) celebration organized by Ministry of Cooperation**

100<sup>th</sup> International Day of Cooperatives celebrations were organized by the Ministry of Cooperation and the National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) in New Delhi. The main theme of the event was “Building a Self-Reliant India and a Better World through Co-operatives”.

NCUI is the apex organisation representing the entire cooperative movement in the country. It was established in 1929 as an ‘All India Cooperative Institutes Association’ and was reorganized in 1961.

A co-operative society is a voluntary association of individuals having common needs who join hands for the achievement of common economic interest.

#### *Steps taken to strengthen the cooperative movement in India*

1. *Ministry of Cooperation*: The Ministry has been established to “provide a separate administrative, legal and policy framework for strengthening the cooperative movement”.
2. *The Banking Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2020*: It gives the RBI powers to supersede boards of the cooperative banks and allows cooperative banks to raise money via public issue and private placement, of equity or preference shares.
3. *The National Agricultural Co-operative Marketing Federation (NAFED)*: It is to assist the Marketing Co-operatives in the States to develop their marketing business and to help them render better services to their members.

4. *The National Co-operative Development Corporation (NCDC)*: It was set up in 1963. It provides assistance to schemes of marketing, processing, storage, and practicing in a share capital of cooperative sugar, cooperative spinning & weaving mills, in the form of loans and subsidies.

Note that in July 2021, the Supreme Court has annulled part of the 97<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act 2011 and Part IX B of the Constitution which governs the “Cooperative Societies” in the country. ‘Cooperatives’ is a ‘State’ subject. However, the 97<sup>th</sup> Amendment Act was passed by the Parliament without getting them ratified by State legislatures as required by the Constitution under Article 368.

### **Expat Insider Rankings for 2022**

InterNations has released Expat Insider Rankings 2022.

#### *Ranking*

- The index is topped by Mexico.
- India has been ranked on 36<sup>th</sup> position out of the 52 countries on the list, with a high affordability score.
- Hong Kong, New Zealand and Kuwait is the worst country for expats in the ranking.

The Expat Insider survey is conducted every year by InterNations, a community for expatriates. The survey takes a look at some of the best possible expat destinations around the world, which offer the best quality of life to the people who move abroad to improve their quality of life.

### **Henley & Partners releases Henley Passport Index**

Henley & Partners Passport Index of 2022 was released. The report is released by Henley & Partners (immigration consultancy), which uses exclusive data from the International Air Transport Authority to rank passports.

#### *Key Points*

- 3 Asian nations Japan, Singapore and South Korea bagged the top three positions on the list, reversing pre-pandemic rankings that were dominated by European nations.
- India is ranked 87<sup>th</sup> on the list (last year ranked 85<sup>th</sup>) out of 112 countries surveyed.
- Least rank – Afghanistan

### **Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya in Gujrat becomes Central University**

National Rail and Transportation Institute in Gujarat have been upgraded to a ‘Central University’ and renamed as the ‘Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya’. For this, the Union Cabinet gave its approval to introduce a Bill in Parliament, namely, the Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2022 to amend the Central Universities Act, 2009 for setting up of Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV). This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Central University in the State following the Central University of Gujarat.

### **QS Best Student Cities Ranking 2023 released**

QS Best Student Cities Ranking 2023 was released by global higher education consultancy QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) which shows Asia growing as a destination for higher education.

#### *Key Points*

- London city has emerged as the best city for students.
- India’s highest-ranked student city is Mumbai at 103 spot, followed by Bengaluru at 114 ranks.
- Chennai and Delhi have made their entries to the list this year at 125 and 129, respectively.

The QS Best Student Cities Ranking provides independent data to the students for help in their study decisions related to affordability, quality of life, the standard of university, and the experiences of previous students that have studied in that city.

## 10. Economy

### **Govt. to replace BBB from Financial Services Institutions Bureau**

Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved a government resolution for establishing the Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB) in place of the Banks Board Bureau (BBB). The new framework was proposed by the Department of Financial Service, Ministry of Finance. The Banks Board Bureau (BBB) has its genesis in the recommendations of 'The Committee to Review Governance of Boards of Banks in India, May 2014 (Chairman - P.J. Nayak)'.

The *Financial Services Institutions Bureau* will select the chiefs of Public Sector Banks and Insurance companies. The FSIB will have the clear mandate to issue guidelines and select General Managers and Directors of state-run non-life insurers, general insurers and Financial Institutions. FSIB will be the single entity for making recommendations for appointments of WTD (Whole-time Director) and NEC (Non-executive Chairman) in Public Sector Banks, and Financial Institutions.

The Department of Financial Services shall first carry out necessary modifications in the Nationalised Banks (Management and Miscellaneous Provisions) Scheme of 1970 (as amended).

The ACC has approved the appointment of Shri. Bhanu Pratap Sharma as initial Chairperson of FSIB for 2 years. He was the former Chairman of BBB. Also, G Rajkiran Rai has been recommended by the FSIB as Managing Director at the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID).

A *Financial Institution* is an umbrella term for a company dealing with financial and monetary transactions, including loans, deposits, and/or investments. All India Financial Institutions (AIFIs) are regulated and supervised by the Reserve Bank of India.

*Examples:* National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID); Export-Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank); National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD); National Housing Bank (NHB); Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).

### **Government releases 5<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report of BRAP 2020**

Central Government has released the 5<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report of States and Union Territories under Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP) 2020.

*Business Reform Action Plan* is prepared by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), since 2014, to steer Ease of Doing Business reforms across the country. It has categorized States/UTs into Top Achievers, Achievers, Aspirers and Emerging Business Ecosystems based on 301 reform points covering 15 business regulatory areas. This includes areas such as access to information, single-window system, labour, sectoral reforms, reforms spanning across the lifecycle of a business etc.

According to the Index, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Telangana are the Top Achievers.

*Ease of Doing Business (EoDB):* It is an indication of the business climate of a nation. It is based on belief that there is a positive correlation between the business regulatory environment and economic outcomes. World Bank started its promotion in 2002 through EoDB rankings; discontinued in 2021 due to data irregularities. India ranked 63rd in EoDB Rankings 2020.

*Few Government Initiatives to improve EoDB:*

- Launch of web-based SPICe+ and AGILE-PRO FORM to save time and effort in company incorporation.
- Online Building Permission System (OBPS) with defined timelines, online certifications etc.
- Dedicated Commercial Courts in Delhi and Mumbai and a modern insolvency regime through Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) to improve insolvency resolution.
- India Customs Electronic Gateway (ICEGATE) to reduce time and cost of export and import and fast-tracking clearances of consignments at ports.
- Co-operative Federalism by engaging States and UTs through BRAP, taxation reforms like GST, elimination of incorporation fees for small businesses etc.
- Reducing number of days required for getting electricity connection (from 105 days in 2014 to 53 days in 2019).
- Passage of the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021 which scrapped the retrospective taxation bringing certainty in taxation laws etc.

**Digital India Week held in Gandhinagar, Gujrat**

Digital India Week 2022 was held in Gandhinagar, Gujrat.

Theme of the Event: “*Catalyzing New India’s Techade*”

Digital India is a flagship programme launched in 2015 by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) with a vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. It will ensure digital access, digital inclusion, digital empowerment and bridge the digital divide. It is an umbrella programme that covers multiple projects of various Central Ministries/ Departments and States/UTs.

*Initiatives launched during the event*

*Digital India Bhashini:* It will enable easy access to internet and digital services in Indian languages.

*Digital India GENESIS (Gen-next Support for Innovative Startups):* It is a National Deep-tech Startup Platform, to discover, support, grow and make successful startups in Tier-II and Tier-III cities of India.

*Indiastack.global:* It is a global repository of key projects implemented under India Stack like Aadhaar, UPI, Digilocker, Cowin Vaccination Platform etc. India Stack is the name for a set of open APIs and digital public goods.

*myScheme:* It is a service discovery platform facilitating access to Government Schemes.

*C2S (Chips to Startup) Programme:* It aims to train specialized manpower in the area of design of semiconductor chips at Bachelors, Masters and Research levels, and act as a catalyst for growth of Startups involved in semiconductor design in India. It is part of the India Semiconductor Mission. The first cohort of 30 Institutions to be supported under C2S Programme was announced.

*Meri Pehchaan – National Single Sign-On (NSSO) for One Citizen Login:* It is a user authentication service in which a single set of credentials provide access to multiple online applications or services.

**Central Government tightens the criteria for use of DMFs**

The Central Government has tightened the criteria for use of District Mineral Foundations (DMFs) to ensure they are used for the specified purpose, that is redevelopment of areas and people affected by mining activities.



The DMFs will now have to prepare a 5-year perspective plan to ensure systematic development of the area affected by mining-related activities using the fund accrued from miners' contribution as a percentage of royalty.

District Mineral Foundations were instituted under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Amendment Act, 2015. They are non-profit trusts to work for the interest and benefit of persons and areas affected by mining-related operations. Its manner of operation comes under the jurisdiction of the relevant State Government. Each district has a separate trust. It is a special fund that is not tied to any particular scheme or area of work, and it does not lapse at the end of each financial year. The unused funds get accumulated over the years.

Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY) is meant to provide for the welfare of areas and people affected by mining related operations, using the funds generated by DMF. The scheme ensures mitigating the adverse impacts, during and after mining, on the environment, health and socio-economics of people in mining districts; and to ensure long-term sustainable livelihoods for the affected people in mining areas.

### **India registers Highest ever FDI in India**

India has recorded highest ever annual FDI inflow of USD 83.57 billion in the Financial Year 2021-22.

#### *Notable Points*

- Top sourcing nations for FDI – Singapore followed by USA and Mauritius.
- Top FDI receiving states – Karnataka followed by Maharashtra and Delhi.
- Top sectors receiving FDI – Computer Software & Hardware followed by Services Sector and Automobile Industry.

FDI is the investment through equity instruments by a resident outside India:

- either in an unlisted Indian company; or
- in 10% or more of the post-issue paid-up equity capital on a fully diluted basis of a listed Indian company.

#### *India's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Routes*

- Category 1 – 100% FDI through Automatic Route: no need for RBI's or government's approval e.g., 100% FDI allowed on medical devices and thermal powers.
- Category 2 – up to 100% FDI through Government Route: will need government's permission e.g., Core Investment Company (100%), Multi-brand Retail Trade (51%)
- Category 3 – Up to 100% FDI through Automatic + Government Route.

*Foreign Portfolio Investment* is another form of foreign investment defined as 'any investment made by a person resident outside India in equity instruments where such investment is:

- less than 10% of the post issue paid-up equity capital on a fully diluted basis of a listed Indian company, or
- less than 10% of the paid-up value of each series of equity instruments of a listed Indian company.

It is a form of portfolio diversification, achieved by purchasing the stocks or bonds of a foreign company.

### **What is Off-Budget Borrowings (O-BBS)?**

Central Government has eased norms for adjusting States' off-Budget Borrowings (O-BBs). Under the new norms, O-BBs done by States up to 2020-21 may not be adjusted and only those done in 2021-22 can be adjusted over up to 4 years till March 2026.

*Off-Budget Borrowings* by a State Government refer to loans taken by its entities, special purpose vehicles, etc., which are expected to eventually be serviced through the state government's own budget, instead of the cash flows or revenues generated by the borrowing entity. Such borrowings bypass the states' net borrowing ceiling fixed in a Financial Year by routing loans outside state budget. Such borrowings have an impact on the revenue deficit and fiscal deficit and thus surpassed the targets set for fiscal indicators under the state Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act 2003.

Note that, under *Article 293 (3)*, State Governments are required to take the Central Government's permission for fresh borrowing, if they are indebted to the Government of India.

### **MoSD&E announces DBT for National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)**

Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has announced that National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) will be a part of Direct Beneficiary Transfer (DBT) scheme, providing direct government benefits to all apprentices. Earlier companies used to pay apprentices the entire amount and then seek reimbursement from the government. With the launch of the DBT scheme, the government will directly transfer its contribution to bank accounts of apprentices through National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), 25% of the stipend payable up to Rs. 1500/- per month.

*National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)* was launched in August 2016 to promote apprenticeship training in the country and to provide financial support to establishments undertaking apprenticeship. The program aims to motivate employers to hire apprentices and aid them in discovering the right job roles while maximizing their potential through in-depth skill development. NAPS replaced Apprentice Protsahan Yojna (APY) which was launched in October 2014.

### **Government releases 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Ranking of States on Support to Startup Ecosystems**

Government of India has released 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Ranking of States on Support to Startup Ecosystems. For the purposes of the Ranking, States and Union Territories are classified into 5 Categories, viz., Best Performers, Top Performers, Leaders, Aspiring Leaders and Emerging Start-up Ecosystems.

According to Ranking, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Meghalaya emerged as Best Performers in their respective categories. Also, Jammu & Kashmir emerged as the Top Performer among UTs and North-Eastern States.

#### *Initiatives Taken*

- Startup India Initiative along with Startup India Seed Fund.
- Start-up Accelerators of MeitY for Product Innovation, Development and Growth (SAMRIDH) programme.
- Fund of Funds for Startups with a total corpus of Rs 10,000 crore.
- IPR benefits and Tax exemptions tailored for Startups.
- National Startup Awards to recognize and reward outstanding Startups and ecosystem enablers.

### **World Bank releases Global Findex Database 2021**

World Bank has released Global Findex Database 2021: Financial Inclusion, Digital Payments, and Resilience in the age of COVID-19.

*Global Findex* database surveyed how people in 123 economies use formal and informal financial services including use of cards, mobile phones, and internet to make and receive digital payment throughout 2021.

*Financial inclusion* means that individuals and businesses have access to useful and affordable financial products and services that meet their needs – transactions, payments, savings, credit and insurance – delivered in a responsible and sustainable way. Financial inclusion has been identified as an enabler for 7 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

### **What is RBI Digital Payment Index (RBI-DPI)?**

RBI-Digital Payment Index has demonstrated significant growth (between March 2021- March 2022) indicating rapid adoption and deepening of digital payments across the country.

*RBI Digital Payment Index*: Launched in January 2021, the DPI index indicates the extent of digitization of payments across the country. The DPI index comprises 5 broad parameters that enable the 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%).

### **NITI Aayog releases 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of India Innovation Index 2021**

NITI Aayog has released the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of India Innovation Index.

*India Innovation Index*: Prepared by NITI Aayog and the Institute for Competitiveness, the India Innovation Index is a comprehensive tool for the evaluation and development of the country's innovation ecosystem. It ranks the states and the union territories on their innovation performance to build healthy competition amongst them.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition highlights the scope of innovation analysis in the country by drawing on the framework of the Global Innovation Index. The number of indicators has increased from 36 (in the India Innovation Index 2020) to 66 (in the India Innovation Index 2021). The indicators are now distributed across 16 sub-pillars, which, in turn, form 7 key pillars.

7 pillars in the index – 5 'Enabler' pillars measure the inputs (*features that are crucial for promoting innovation*) and 2 'Performance' pillars measure the output (*represent a nation's benefits in knowledge creation and competitiveness*).

#### *Key Highlights*

- Karnataka (Major States); Manipur (North-Eastern and Hilly states); and Chandigarh (UTs and City-States) topped in their respective categories
- R&D investment in the country has declined from 0.8% of the GDP in 2008–09 to 0.7% in 2017-18. Low private participation in R&D.

India ranked 46<sup>th</sup> in GII 2021, released by World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

### **What is Windfall Tax?**

In July 2022, Central Government levied export duties on petrol, ATF (Aviation Turbine Fuel) and diesel and imposed a windfall tax on domestic crude production. The aim is to generate more revenue and limit export to address the fuel shortage in the country. However, later it has cut down the rate.

*Windfall Tax* is a one-off tax imposed by a government on a company. It is levied on an unforeseen or unexpectedly large profit, especially unfairly obtained. It is only levied in public interest. It was announced to control rising domestic oil price and to meet domestic need for petrol.

### **JNP becomes 100% Landlord Major Port of India**

Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNP) has become the first 100% Landlord Major Port of India.

*Landlord Port Model* is characterized by its mixed public-private orientation. Under this, the port authority acts as regulatory body and as landlord, while port operations (especially cargo handling) are carried out by private companies. It aims at decentralizing decision making and to infuse professionalism in governance of major ports.

Ports in India are classified as Major (under Union Govt.) and Minor Ports (under State Govt.) as per the Indian Ports Act, 1908. JNP is at Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra), commissioned in 1989. It is a container handling 'major' port.

#### *Other Models*

*Service Port Model:* The port authority owns the land and all available assets – fixed and mobile – and performs all regulatory and port functions. Here, the port trust is both the landlord and the cargo terminal operator.

*Tool Port Model:* The port authority owns, develops, and maintains the port infrastructure as well as the superstructure, including cargo handling equipment such as quay cranes and forklift trucks.

*Corporatized Ports:* Ports are entirely being privatized, except that ownership remains public and often assumed as a majority shareholder.

### **Govt. launches the exercise of 11<sup>th</sup> Agriculture Census 2021-22**

Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has launched 11<sup>th</sup> Agriculture Census 2021-22.

India's Agricultural Census has been conducted since 1970-71 in collaboration with the States and Union Territories as part of a programme of World Census of Agriculture of FAO.

The Department of Agriculture, Co-operation and Farmers Welfare conducts agriculture census every 5 years to collect data on structural characteristics of the agricultural sector including size of agriculture land holdings in the country. The activities include restructured scheme of agricultural census, studies in agricultural economic policy and development & improvement in agricultural statistics etc. The last census was done in 2015-16.

*Operational holding* has been defined as all land used wholly or partly for agricultural production and is operated as one technical unit by one person alone or with others without regard to the title, legal form, size or location.

In Agriculture Census, the operational holdings are categorized in 5 size classes as follows:

1. Marginal – Below 1 hectare
2. Small – 1 to 2 hectares
3. Semi-Medium – 2 to 4 hectares

4. Medium – 4 to 10 hectares
5. Large – 10 hectares and above

The key highlights of the Agriculture Census 2015-16 are:

- Small and marginal holdings taken together (0-2 ha) constitute 86.21% of the total holdings in 2015-16.
- Total number of operational holdings in the country is 146.45 million in 2015-16. The highest number of operational holders belonged to Uttar Pradesh followed by Bihar.
- Total operated area in the country is 157.82 million hectares in 2015-16.
- Percentage share of female operational holders is 13.96% in 2015-16.

*World Census of Agriculture (WCA)*: The first WCA was carried out in 1930 by the International Institute of Agriculture. Beginning with 1950, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has been preparing and advocating the decennial WCA. The concept of agricultural operational holdings adopted in India differs to some extent with that of FAO, as it does not include those holdings which are not operating any agricultural land and are engaged exclusively in livestock, poultry and fishing etc.

### **What is Space Tourism?**

ISRO is in the process of developing indigenous capabilities towards ‘space tourism’ through the demonstration of human space flight capability to Low Earth Orbit (LEO).

Space tourism is a segment of space travel that allows lay people to travel to space for recreational, leisure or business purposes. Space Tourism aims to make space more accessible to those people who are not astronauts and want to travel to space for non-scientific reasons. 3 private companies – Blue Origin, Virgin Galactic and Elon Musk’s SpaceX — are some of the companies that have entered space tourism. It’s divided into different types, including orbital, suborbital, and lunar (moon) tourism.

### *India’s related Initiatives*

- Gaganyaan mission is expected to take off between 2024-25.
- Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) seeks to promote active participation of the private sector in carrying out end-to-end space activities, and this includes space tourism.
- IS4OM: World’s first facility to monitor space debris.

### **White Onion from Alibagh gets GI Tag**

White onion from Alibagh (*Maharashtra*) has got Geographic Indication (GI) tag.

Geographical indications registered as collective and certification marks are generally protected for renewable 10-year periods. GI of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 govern GI tags in India.

The registration of a geographical indication is valid for a period of 10 years. It can be renewed from time to time for a further period of 10 years each.

### **Andhra Pradesh's Markfed begins tobacco export to USA, first-ever**

Andhra Pradesh Government has become the first State in the country to export tobacco to the USA.

Note that, India is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest producer (first is China) and 2<sup>nd</sup> largest exporter (first is Brazil) of tobacco. Tobacco Board, Ministry of Commerce and Industry is the nodal agency.

### **Ministry of Finance chaired first meeting of Apex body for Industrial Corridor Project**

Ministry of Finance has chaired the first meeting of the Apex Monitoring Authority constituted to review the activities of National Industrial Corridor Development programme (NICDP). The Apex Monitoring Authority comprises of Finance Minister as Chairperson, Minister-in-charge, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Minister of Railways, Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Minister of Shipping, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, and Chief Minister(s) of States concerned.

NICDP aims to develop new industrial cities (as “smart Cities”) and industrial corridors) under the vision of PM Gati Shakti.

*National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC) Limited* is a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) under the administrative control of DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry which carries out project development activities and coordinates the implementation of the various Industrial Corridor projects under ‘National Industrial Corridor Programme’. Under this programme, NICDC has 4 greenfield smart cities namely: (i) Dholera Special Investment Region (DSIR) in Gujarat; (ii) Shendra Bidkin Industrial Area (SBIA), Aurangabad in Maharashtra; (iii) Integrated Industrial Township, Greater Noida (IITGN) in Uttar Pradesh; (iv) Integrated Industrial Township, Vikram Udyogpuri (IITVU) in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh.

*PM GatiShakti National Master Plan (PMGS-NMP)* was launched in October 2021 for providing multimodal connectivity infrastructure to various economic zones. It has united infrastructural initiatives planned and initiated by 16 central ministries and departments, including railways, roads and highways, petroleum and gas, power, telecom, shipping and aviation, etc.

Other plans under PM GatiShakti: *Freight corridor, PM Mitra parks, Logistics Park, etc.*

### **SAMARTH collaborates with NTPC to organize workshop on Biomass use in Thermal Power Plants**

National Mission on the use of Biomass in Thermal Power Plants (SAMARTH) has collaborated with NTPC and organized a one-day workshop in Chandigarh, on ex-Situ utilization of agricultural residue for co-firing in thermal power plants.

*Co-firing* is a term used to describe incorporating a secondary fuel with a primary fuel utilizing the same combustion equipment. A common application of cofiring is used in coal-fired power plants where coal use is supplemented with biomass.

*SAMARTH* was launched by the Ministry of Power in the year 2021 and mandates all thermal power plants in India use 5-10% of biomass alongside coal to produce power. Consequently, it promotes research on modern boilers which can handle a greater amount of silica and alkalis in biomass pellets.

### **What is Purchasing Managers’ Index?**

The Global Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI) for services has risen to highest level since April 2011. The data highlights a strong recovery in services.

*Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI)* is an indicator of business activity – both in the manufacturing and services sectors. It is calculated separately for the manufacturing and services sectors and then a composite index is also constructed. The PMI summarizes whether market conditions as viewed by purchasing managers are expanding, neutral, or contracting. The purpose of it is to provide information about current and future business conditions to company decision makers, analysts, and investors.

The PMI is a number from 0 to 100. PMI above 50 represents an expansion when compared to the previous month; PMI under 50 represents a contraction, and a reading at 50 indicates no change. It is usually released at the start of every month. It is, therefore, considered a good leading indicator of economic activity.

The Index is compiled by IHS Markit for more than 40 economies worldwide. IHS Markit is a global leader in information, analytics and solutions for the major industries and markets that drive economies worldwide.

### **Hurun India Future Unicorn Index 2022 released**

Hurun India Future Unicorn Index 2022 was released by Hurun Research Institute.

The index has classified companies as would-be unicorns (those founded after 2000 and valued at least \$1 billion), Gazelles (those most likely to become unicorns in the following 2 years), and Cheetahs (start-ups that could go unicorn in the next 4 years).

#### *Key Points*

- Startups – Shiprocket, Zepto, Turtlemint top the list of probable unicorns.
- Bengaluru continues to be the Start-up capital of India.

### **What is Sovereign Wealth Fund?**

High Crude Oil prices have been advantageous for the countries to invest through their Sovereign wealth funds.

A *Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF)* is a state-owned investment fund comprised of the money generated by the government, often derived from a country's surplus reserves. The funding for a SWF can come from a variety of sources. Popular sources are surplus reserves from state-owned natural resource revenues, trade surpluses, bank reserves that may accumulate from budgeting excesses, foreign currency operations, money from privatizations, and governmental transfer payments.

Oil-rich countries such as Norway, those in West Asia, and others such as China use SWFs to invest in businesses, both at home and abroad.

### **What is Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Model of PPP?**

National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) is planning to offer at least 2 highway upgradation projects to private players using the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) model under Public-Private Partnership, during the third quarter of 2022.

Under the *BOT Model*, a private player is granted a concession to finance, build and operate a project for a specified period of time (20- or 30-year concession period), with the developer recouping the investments by way of user charges or tolls charged from customers using the facility, and thereby taking on a certain amount of financial risk. It is a conventional Public-Private Partnership model in which a private partner is responsible to design, build, operate (during the contracted period) and transfer back the facility to the public sector.

*Public Private Partnership* is an arrangement between government and private sector for the provision of public assets and/or public services. Public-private partnerships allow large-scale government projects, such as roads, bridges, or hospitals, to be completed with private funding.

### **USA – top remittance source for India in FY-21**

RBI has provided the data in its monthly bulletin that USA becomes the top remittance source after UAE in FY-21 for India. Maharashtra has emerged as the top recipient state surpassing Kerala. In FY-21, remittances amounted to \$87 billion, nearly 2.75% of GDP.

According to the World Bank's Report on Migration and Remittances, Remittances are the second major source of external financing for low and middle-income countries after Foreign Direct Investment.

### **NITI Aayog releases Report to back Digital Bank**

NITI Aayog has released a report titled 'Digital Banks: A Proposal for Licensing & Regulatory Regime for India'. The Report suggested the introduction of a restricted Digital Business bank licence and a restricted Digital Consumer Bank licence.

The Digital Banking definition is banking done through the digital platform, doing away with all the paperwork like cheques, pay-in slips, Demand Drafts, and so on.

### **PM inaugurates India's first International Bullion Index at IFSC Gujrat**

Prime Minister of India has launched India's first International Bullion Index (IIBX) at International Financial Services Centres (IFSC) at GIFT City, Gujarat.

*Bullion Exchange* is a market through which buyers and sellers trade gold and silver as well as associated derivatives. E.g., London Bullion Market is known as the primary global market trading platform for gold and silver. Note that, 'Bullion' is a metal that has been refined to a high standard of elemental purity. The term is ordinarily applied to the bulk metal used in the production of coins and especially to precious metals such as gold and silver.

*Background:* IIBX was first introduced in Union Budget 2020 for easing gold import by Jewellers in India. Bullion can sometimes be considered legal tender and is often held as reserves by Central Banks or held by institutional investors.

Recently, Zimbabwe's Central Bank has introduced gold coins (*Mosi-oa-Tunya*) that it hopes will ease citizens' demands for foreign currency. India is the world's second biggest consumer of Gold after China.

### **MoPNG launches Open Acreage Licensing Programme Bid Round-VIII**

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has launched Open Acreage Licensing Programme Bid Round-VIII.

Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP), along with the National Data Repository, was launched in June 2017 as a key driver to accelerate the Exploration and Production (E&P) activities in India.

Under the OALP, once an explorer selects areas after evaluating the National Data Repository (NDR) and submits the request, it is to be put up for competitive bidding and the entity offering the maximum share of oil and gas to the government is awarded the block. Fields are offered under a revenue-sharing model and throw up marketing and pricing freedom for crude oil and natural gas produced.

The *Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP)* was approved in March 2016. It replaced the erstwhile New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP). The main features of HELP are Revenue Sharing Contract, single licence for exploration and production of conventional as well as unconventional hydrocarbon resources, marketing & pricing freedom etc.



*National Data Repository* (NDR) has been created to provide explorers' data on the country's repositories, allowing them to choose fields according to their capabilities. Data received through the National Seismic Programme, an in-depth study of 26 sedimentary basins, are continuously being added to the NDR.

### **Govt. sets up a committee to look into MSP and Natural Farming**

Union Government has set up a committee, headed by the former Union Agricultural Secretary Shri. Sanjay Agrawal to further look into the issues of Minimum Support Price (MSP) and Natural Farming.

*Minimum Support Price (MSP)* is a form of market intervention by the Government of India to insure agricultural producers against any sharp fall in farm prices.

The *Minimum Support Prices* are announced by the Government of India at the beginning of the sowing season for certain crops on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). Presently, the Government announces Minimum Support Prices for 23 crops.

Crops covered by MSPs include:

- 7 types of cereals (paddy, wheat, maize, bajra, jowar, ragi and barley),
- 5 types of pulses (chana, arhar/tur, urad, moong and masur),
- 7 oilseeds (rapeseed-mustard, groundnut, soyabean, sunflower, sesamum, safflower, nigerseed),
- 4 commercial crops (cotton, sugarcane, copra, raw jute).

### **What are NRE, NRO, FCNR Account?**

The Reserve Bank of India has announced a series of steps to arrest the rupee's slide against the dollar and boost foreign exchange inflows. One of the steps include – Exemption from Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) and Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) on Incremental FCNR(B) and NRE Term Deposits.

*Non-Resident External (NRE) Account:* NRIs can open an NRE account – introduced in 1970 – with funds remitted to India through a bank abroad. This is a repatriable account and transfer from another NRE account or Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) – FCNR(B) account is also permitted.

*Non-Resident Ordinary (NRO) Account:* NRO accounts may be opened / maintained in the form of savings, recurring or fixed deposit accounts. These are Rupee accounts opened for the purpose of depositing income earned in India. These accounts can be held jointly with NRI / resident Indians.

*Foreign Currency Non-Resident Account:* An FCNR account is a term deposit account that can be maintained by NRIs and PIOs in foreign currency. Thus, FCNRs are not savings accounts but fixed deposit accounts.

Note that, An NRE account is a bank account opened in India in the name of an NRI, to park his foreign earnings; whereas an NRO account is a bank account opened in India in the name of an NRI, to manage the income earned by him in India. These incomes include rent, dividend, pension, interest, etc.

### **Govt. to replace SEZ with DESH Bill**

Central Government is planning to table the Development of Enterprise and Service Hubs (DESH) Bill to overhaul the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) legislation. DESHs as the DESH Act will replace the current SEZ Act of 2005.

*Need for replacement:* WTO's dispute settlement panel has ruled that India's export-related schemes, including the SEZ Scheme, were inconsistent with WTO rules since they directly linked tax benefits to exports. Countries aren't allowed to directly subsidize exports as it can distort market prices.

### **What is Vostro, Nostro and Loro Account?**

In order to facilitate trade with sanctions-hit Russia, RBI has allowed global trade settlements in Indian rupees for domestic traders. Banks will need RBI approval to use the new system.

Russian banks will have to open Vostro accounts in India, and whenever exports or imports take place, that account will be debited or credited. Indian importers will make payments in rupees, to be credited to the Vostro account of the correspondent bank of the partner country. Indian exporters will be paid the export proceeds in rupees from the balances in.

#### *Vostro, Nostro and Loro Account*

There are 3 types of International Current Account – Nostro Account, Vostro Account, Loro Account.

A Vostro account is defined as an account that a correspondent bank holds on behalf of another bank. Vostro is a Latin word that means “your”, therefore, a vostro account implies that it is “your account”.

In a vostro account, it is the correspondent foreign bank point of view, whereas in a nostro account, it is the point of view of the domestic bank. Vostro accounts are maintained in the domestic currency whereas, nostro accounts in foreign currency.

A Loro account is a current account that is maintained by one domestic bank for another domestic bank in the form of a third-party account, unlike nostro and vostro which is bilateral correspondence.

Nostro Account: *Our money with you.*

Vostro Account: *Your money with us.*

Loro Account: *Their money.*

### **What is Randomized Controlled Trial?**

Nobel Laureate Michael R. Kremer has asked for Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) in India for better policy analysis and formulation. He, along with economists Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, was awarded the 2019 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty. They had made the use of RCT for their research on poverty.

*Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs)* involve dividing a population into smaller groups, in order to comparatively see the outcomes of an external stimulus. For example, if the aim of a study is to understand whether a free grains distribution scheme helped improve the nutrition levels among people living in a district, researchers will first create two groups within the population, and then put people into those groups randomly. One group (called the control group) does not receive the grains or the external stimulus, while the other group (treatment group) does. After a designated period of time, details of how both the groups are doing would be collected. In this way, the goal is to understand what the overall impact of introducing something new could be.

### **Bengaluru topped the Sustainability Index amongst the Indian cities**

Knight Frank – a Global property consultant – has released its latest report on Active Capital Asia-Pacific - Rising Capital in Uncertain Times, 2021. According to it, Bengaluru topped the Sustainability Index amongst

the Indian cities and ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in the Asia Pacific region. Also, India is the 6<sup>th</sup> largest country in Asia Pacific in terms of the total amount of green bonds issued in 2021.

The APAC Sustainably led cities Index features 36 cities based on urbanization pressure, climate risk, carbon emissions, and government initiatives.

### **What is Inflation Targeting?**

According to RBI, the CPI inflation rate is in excess of 6% in Q4: FY 2021-22, which called for RBI to explain why the Inflation Target was not maintained.

*Inflation Targeting Framework:* Price stability is a necessary precondition for macroeconomic and financial stability. Thus, price stability remains the dominant objective of the monetary policy. Under Inflation Targeting Framework, the central bank specifies an inflation rate as a goal and adjusts its monetary policy to achieve the specified annual inflation rate.

Based on the Urjit Patel Committee recommendation (2014), Government of India and RBI also signed the Monetary Policy Framework Agreement in 2015.

The RBI Act, 1934 was amended in 2016 to:

- Make inflation targeting the nominal anchor of RBI's monetary policy (Section 45ZA of RBI Act),
- Have a statutory and institutionalized framework for Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) (Section 45ZB).

### **AIIB Interim Hub in Abu Dhabi**

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has approved the establishment of an Interim Operational Hub in Abu Dhabi. The Hub aims to provide AIIB with a strong platform to enable effective supervision of its growing investment portfolio. India is the second-largest shareholder in AIIB after China.

### **Zimbabwe launches gold coin – Mosi-oa-Tunya**

Zimbabwe has launched gold coins named "Mosi-oa-Tunya" to control an inflation spike that has eroded the country's unstable currency. The move was announced by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (central bank), which has disbursed 2,000 coins to commercial banks. Coins have been given the status of liquid asset, which can be easily converted into cash. Coins can be used by Individuals or companies. They can purchase coins from banks and other authorised outlets.

## 11. Important Days

### **Earth Overshoot Day**

Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when humanity's demand for ecological resources and services in a given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate in that year. It is hosted and calculated by Global Footprint Network since 1970. This year it falls on 28<sup>th</sup> July (last year it was on 29<sup>th</sup> July).

### **World Population Day**

World Population Day is observed every year on 11<sup>th</sup> July.

Theme: "*A world of 8 billion: Towards a resilient future for all - Harnessing opportunities and ensuring rights and choices for all.*"

The Population Division of the UN has been publishing the World Population Prospectus (WPP) in a biennial cycle since 1951. Each revision of the WPP provides a historical time series of population indicators starting in 1950. It does so by taking into account newly released national data to revise estimates of past trends in fertility, mortality or international migration.

### **International Tiger Day; Project Tiger**

International Tiger Day is observed every year on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2022. The decision to celebrate the day was taken at the Saint Petersburg Declaration on Tiger conservation that was signed in 2010. Under it, world leaders envisaged 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.

Also, Project Tiger will complete 50 years in the year 2023.

*Project Tiger*: Launched in 1973, it is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. It provides central assistance to tiger range States for in-situ conservation of tigers in designated tiger reserves. Implementing Agency is National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) which was established through Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006 to provide statutory authority to Project Tiger.

*Global Tiger Initiative (GTI)* is a global alliance led by the 13 Tiger Range Countries (TRC), including India, and other organizations like the World Bank, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), etc.

*Global Tiger Forum*: India is one of the Founding members of the inter-governmental platform working exclusively for the conservation of Tigers in the wild.

### *Bilateral instruments*

- Protocol on conservation of tigers with China.
- MoU with Bangladesh on conservation of the Sundarbans
- MoU with Myanmar to combat timber trafficking and conservation of tigers and other wildlife.

*Indian Tiger or Royal Bengal Tiger (Panthera Tigris)*: It is the tiger species native to India. It is a flagship species of India and has been declared as the National Animal of India. Flagship species are selected to act as an ambassador, icon or symbol for a defined habitat, issue, campaign or environmental cause.

### **World Hepatitis Day**

World Hepatitis Day is observed every year on 28<sup>th</sup> July.

Theme for the year 2022: "*Bringing hepatitis care closer to you*"

*Hepatitis* means inflammation of the liver. The liver is a vital organ that processes nutrients, filters the blood, and fights infections. When the liver is inflamed or damaged, its function can be affected.

*Global Initiatives:*

- Global Target is to eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.
- Integrated Regional Action Plan for viral hepatitis, HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infection STIs 2022–2026 (by WHO).
- COBAS 6800: To detect viral Hepatitis B and C along with the Corona virus.
- India's neighbours, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Thailand have successfully controlled Hepatitis B.

**The Chartered Accountants' Day**

Annually on 1<sup>st</sup> July, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) celebrates the anniversary of the formation of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. The day is marked to commemorate the foundation of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1949.

For accounting and auditing professions in India, the ICAI is the only licensing and regulatory body.

**National Doctors' Day**

National Doctors' Day has been observed annually in India on 1<sup>st</sup> of July by the Indian Medical Association (IMA). First time, this day celebrated in 1991 on July 1 to honour Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, whose birth and death anniversary, both fall on 1<sup>st</sup> July.

Theme: "*Family Doctors on the Front Line*"

**World UFO Day**

The World Unidentified Flying Objects Day (WUD) is observed every year on 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

An Unidentified Flying Object is any aerial object or optical phenomenon not readily identifiable to the observer. UFOs became a major subject of interest following the development of rocketry after World War II and were thought by some researchers to be intelligent extra-terrestrial life visiting Earth.

**International Plastic Bag Free Day**

International Plastic Free Day is observed on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. The day is celebrated to raise the awareness about the issue of plastic pollution on the planet. This day was first observed on July 3, 2008, by a member of Zero Waste Europe (ZWE) Rezero in Catalonia.

**International Malala Day**

July 12 is observed as International Malala Day to salute the Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai, who works for women's right to education across the globe. At the age of 17, Malala received Nobel Peace Prize and became the youngest recipient to receive it. After the violent assassination attempt at her, Pakistan passed the first Right to Education Bill.

**World Day for International Justice**

International Justice day is observed every year on 17<sup>th</sup> of July.

The theme for this year is: "Achieving Social Justice through Formal Employment".

International Justice Day commemorates the historic adoption of the Rome Statute on 17 July 1998 and marks the importance of continuing the fight against impunity and bringing justice for the victims of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is the treaty that established the International Criminal Court. It was adopted at a diplomatic conference in Rome, Italy on 17 July 1998 and it entered into force on 1 July 2002.

#### **Nelson Mandela International Day**

The United Nations (UN) had declared July 18 as Nelson Mandela Day in 2009, a South African anti-apartheid activist who served as the first President from 1994 to 1999.

Theme: *“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are”*

#### **World Chess Day**

Every year, World Chess Day is observed on 20 July. World Chess Day is also known as International Chess Day because it is celebrated globally. The main reason behind International Chess Day being celebrated on 20 July is because on this date the International Chess Federation (FIDE) was founded in the year 1924.

#### **World Day Against Trafficking**

World Day Against Trafficking is observed annually on 30 July to aware people about the ordeal of human trafficking victims and the ways to safeguard their rights.

Theme: *“Use and abuse of technology”*

## 12. Culture

### Who is Alluri Sitarama Raju?

Prime Minister of India has launched year-long 125<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary celebration of legendary freedom fighter ‘Alluri Sitarama Raju’ in Bhimavaram, Andhra Pradesh by unveiling his bronze statue. He was born on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1897 and martyred on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1924.

Alluri Sitarama Raju was born in 1897, in Mogallu, a west Godavari district of Madras Presidency. He emerged as a holy man who supposedly had messianic powers. He is also referred to as ‘*Manyam Veerudu*’ – loosely translated to ‘*hero of the forests*’. Born in present-day Andhra Pradesh, he became involved in anti-British activities in response to the 1882 Madras Forest Act. He organized Adivasis against the atrocities by the police, the forest and revenue officials and extensively toured the ‘Manyam’ area.







*Rampa Rebellion (August 1922 – May 1924)*: The Rampa Rebellion of 1922, also known as the *Manyam Rebellion*, was a tribal uprising, led by Alluri Sitarama Raju in Godavari Agency of Madras Presidency, British India. It began in August 1922 and lasted until the capture and killing of Raju in May 1924.

*Cause*: The Muttadars who were the actual rulers of the region had their socio-economic status challenged as they were forcefully brought under the colonial structure.

### Government amends Flag Code of India

The Central Government has amended the Flag Code of India.

#### National Symbols

<b>National Flag</b>		<b>State Emblem</b> The state emblem is an adaptation from the Sarnath Lion Capital of Ashoka. The emblem represents the seal of the Republic of India.	
<b>National Anthem</b> The National Anthem of India Jana-gana-mana, composed originally in Bengali by Rabindranath Tagore, was adopted in its Hindi version by the Constituent Assembly as the National Anthem of India on 24 January 1950.	<b>National Song</b> Vande Mataram, composed in Sanskrit by Bankimchandra Chatterji. The song was a part of Bankimchandra’s Anand Math (1882).	<b>National Calendar</b> The national calendar based on the Saka Era, with Chaitra as its first month and a normal year of 365 days was adopted from 22 March 1957 along with the Gregorian calendar for official purposes.	
<b>National Bird:</b> The Indian peacock, PAVO  CRISTATUS.	<b>National Animal:</b> The tiger, <i>Panthera tigris</i> . 	<b>National Flower:</b> Lotus, <i>Nelumbo Nucifera Gaertn.</i> 	<b>National Tree:</b> Indian fig tree, <i>Ficus bengalensis</i> . 

The amendment allows the national flag to be flown both in day and at night if it is displayed in the open or on the House of a member of the public. Earlier, the tri-colour could be hoisted only between sunrise and sunset.

The Flag Code of India was earlier amended in December 2021, allowing the use of polyester, apart from cotton, wool, silk and khadi for making hand-spun, hand-woven and machine -made flags. The amendment is brought with regards to the ‘*Har Ghar Tiranga*’ campaign.

Har Ghar Tiranga is a campaign under the aegis of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to encourage people to bring the Tiranga home and hoist it to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> year of India's independence. Department of posts have been tasked with utilizing its reach and manpower across the country by making the people aware of the importance of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' Campaign.

The Flag Code of India is a set of laws and conventions about the use, display and hoisting of the Indian national flag. It was brought into effect on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2002. The National Flag was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of India on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1947.

### **India elects to Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO 2003 Convention for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage**

India was elected to Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO's 2003 Convention for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). India has been elected (overall third time) for 2022-2026 cycle. Earlier, India was also elected to UNESCO's World Heritage committee (2021-2025).

*UNESCO's 2003 Convention for safeguarding of ICH:* It aims for Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage along with traditions and living expression. It has 4 primary goals: safeguard ICH, ensure respect for ICH, raise awareness of the importance of ICH, provide for international cooperation and assistance.

*Intangible Cultural Heritage:* It means practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated with them that communities, groups, individuals recognize as a part of their cultural heritage. There are 14 Indian elements on ICH list with Durga Puja (2021), Kumbh Mela (2017), Yoga (2016) being the latest.

### **TIME Magazine list of World Greatest Places 2022**

The TIME magazine has unveiled its list of the 'World's Greatest Places' of 2022 which featured Ahmedabad and Kerala. Ahmedabad, the walled city, is India's first UNESCO World Heritage City.

The list also includes Ras Al Khaimah, UAE; Park City, Utah; Seoul; Great Barrier Reef, Australia; The Arctic; Valencia, Spain; Trans Bhutan Trail, Bhutan; International Space Station; Bogota; Lower Zambezi National Park, Zambia; Istanbul and Kigali, Rwanda.

### **Karnataka Janapada Vishwavidyalaya plans to expand globally**

Karnataka Janapada Vishwavidyalaya (*Karnataka Folklore University*), the only university in the world which offers courses in folk arts and culture, is planning to expand globally. It offers certificate courses in dodddata (*folk drama*), dollu kunitha, kamsale, thogalu bombeyata (*puppet show*), traditional embroidery, folk tourism, folk songs, folk dances, bamboo art, folk martial arts, folk sports, percussion instrument, and yoga.

### **Govt. unveiled National Emblem on the roof of new Parliament building**

Prime Minister has unveiled the National Emblem cast on the roof of the new Parliament building. The concept sketch and process of casting the National Emblem on the roof of the building went through 8 different stages of preparation from clay modelling/ computer graphics to bronze casting and polishing.

*National Emblem:* On 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950, a representation of the Lion Capital of Ashoka placed above the motto, Satyameva Jayate, was adopted as the State Emblem of India. It was chosen as a symbol of contemporary India's reaffirmation of its ancient commitment to world peace and goodwill. The state emblem is an adaptation from the Sarnath Lion Capital of Ashoka.



The Lion Capital was erected by Mauryan Emperor Ashoka during the year 250 BC to mark the spot where Buddha imparted *Dharmachakra Pravartana* (first sermon after Enlightenment, explaining the Four-Noble Truths). The National Emblem is the graphic representation of the Lion Capital that originally sits at the top of the Ashoka Pillar at Sarnath, along with the National Motto written below it.

The 4 lions, roaring and facing the 4 cardinal directions represent power, courage, pride, confidence. The 4 lions of the capital holistically symbolize stress on equality and justice in all spheres of life.

The 4 animals in between the chakras are regarded as the guardians of 4 directions. These animals appear to be rolling the chakras in the Abacus:

- The elephant represents the conception of Prince Siddhartha.
- The bull is the representative of Prince Siddhartha in his youth.
- The horse depicts Siddhartha renouncing his royal life in search of Enlightenment.
- The lion is the depiction of Siddhartha attaining Enlightenment under the Peepal tree and his transformation as Buddha.

Dharma Chakra or the Ashok Chakra is the ‘Wheel of Law’ that signifies Dharma (virtue). The 24 spokes of the Chakra represent the number of hours in a day and portray the passage of time. The spokes signify moving forward in life and thus one avoids stagnation of the mind.

#### **Anayoottu ritual performed in Thrissur, Kerala**

Anayoottu, an annual ritual at Sree Vadakkunnathan Temple, was performed in Thrissur, Kerala. The ritual involves feeding 50 elephants’ food. This is done to propitiate Lord Ganesha, who, according to Hindu belief, removes obstacles in one’s life.

#### **ASI to conserve Ancient Buddha site**

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has started work to conserve the Ancient Buddhist site on the bank of Bhima River near Kanaganahalli (forming part of Sannati site) in Kalaburagi district, Karnataka. The conservation project will reset the remains of Maha Stupa retrieved in the excavation to their original positions.

A ‘*Maha Stupa*’ was discovered which was referred to as Adholoka Maha Chaitya (the Great Stupa of the netherworlds) in the inscriptions and, more significantly, the stone-portrait of Emperor Ashoka, surrounded by his queens and female attendants. The Maha Stupa is believed to have been developed in 3 constructional phases – Maurya, Early Satavahana and Later Satavahana periods stretching from 3rd Century B.C. to 3rd Century A.D.

#### **Kharchi Puja celebrated in Tripura**

Kharchi Puja was celebrated in Tripura. It is a Hindu festival that involves the worship of the 14 Gods forming the dynasty deity of the Tripuri people. Tracing its etymology, ‘*khar*’ means sin and ‘*chi*’ means cleaning. Therefore, together the name translates to – cleaning of sins.

#### **What is ‘Johar’?**

Smt. Droupadi Murmu, 15<sup>th</sup> President of India, assumed office with a ‘Johar’ greeting to the country.

‘*Johar*’, which essentially means ‘*salutation and welcome*’, is used within the tribal communities of Jharkhand, and in parts of Chhattisgarh and Odisha. According to several tribal leaders from Jharkhand, the word ‘Johar’ also means ‘paying respect’.