Current Events

June 2022

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

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

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

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

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

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1. Sports and Games

India set to host Chess Olympiad for the first time ever
India, for the first time, will host FIDE Chess Olympiad (44th). The event was originally scheduled in Russia.

India is considered as the birthplace of chess. Its origin can be traced back nearly 1500 years to its earliest known predecessor, called '*chaturanga*', in India, from where, it spread to Persia. The game evolved roughly into its current form by about 1500 CE.

India wins bronze at the Men's Hockey Asia Cup 2022
The Indian Men's Hockey team has beaten Japan and settled for the bronze medal at the Asia Cup 2022 held in Jakarta, Indonesia. From India, Rajkumar Pal scored the solitary goal of the match. Indian captain was Birendra Lakra. Note that, India failed to reach the finals after drawing with South Korea.

Sakshi Malik wins Gold medal at the UWW Ranking Series Event in Kazakhstan
Indian wrestler Sakshi Malik has won her first international gold medal in almost 5 years at the UWW Ranking Series event held in Kazakhstan. India's Mansi and Divya Kakran too won the Gold in their respective weight categories.

The World Ranking Series events are the main International Tournaments supervised by United World Wrestling. These events are fully integrated into the Ranking System. These events provide points to each athlete in order to establish the World Ranking at the end of the year.

Indian Cricketer Virat Kohli crosses 200 million followers' mark on Instagram
Indian Cricketer Virat Kohli has crossed the 200 million followers mark on the social media site Instagram. With this, he became the first Indian to have 200 million followers on Instagram. Kohli is also the third most followed sportsperson on Instagram. Portugal footballer Cristiano Ronaldo tops the chart with 451 million followers.

Neeraj Chopra set a new national record at the Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland
Tokyo Olympics Gold Medalist Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has set a new national record of 89.30 metres at Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland. He won the silver medal with his throw at the event. Finland's Oliver Helander won the gold medal at the event with a throw of 89.83 metres.

Neeraj Chopra is India's first-ever Olympic gold medallist in athletics and only the second individual gold medallist at Olympics.

Navjeet Dhillon won the Gold medal at the Qosanov Memorial 2022
Indian Women's Discus Thrower Navjeet Dhillon has won the Gold medal at the Qosanov Memorial 2022 athletics meet held in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Mexican racing driver Sergio Pérez wins the F1 Grand Prix De Monaco 2022
The Red Bull racing driver Sergio Pérez (Mexican) has won the Formula 1 (F1) Grand Prix (GP) De Monaco 2022, held in Monaco, Europe. With this victory, Sergio Pérez becomes the first Mexican to win the Monaco Grand Prix and also the first North American to win it since Gilles Villeneuve in 1981. It was his third career win which also makes him the most successful Mexican driver in F1.

2. Science and Technology

India successfully tested ABHYAS aircraft – to eliminate air borne threats
ABHYAS – High-speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) was successfully flight-tested from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.

Key Points
- The performance of the aircraft at low altitude including sustained level and high manoeuvrability was demonstrated during the test flight.
- The air vehicle was launched using twin under-slung boosters which provide the initial acceleration to the vehicle.
- It is powered by a small gas turbine engine to sustain a long endurance flight at high subsonic speed.
- The target aircraft is equipped with Micro-Electromechanical Systems-based Inertial Navigation System for navigation along with the Flight Control Computer for guidance and control along with Indigenous Radio Altimeter for very low altitude flight.

ABHYAS is an indigenous unmanned aerial target system to meet the requirement of Indian Armed Forces to eliminate air-borne threats. It is designed and developed by Aeronautical Development Establishment of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Rajasthan issues Letter of Intent for Uranium Mining
Rajasthan Government has issued the Letter of Intent for Uranium mining. A Letter of Intent of mining lease has been issued to the Uranium Corporation of India (UCI) for mining of Uranium deposits, which were discovered at Rohil (Khandela Tehsil) in Sikar district.

Uranium is a naturally occurring radioactive mineral and is vital to India's nuclear power programme. Uranium is not a rare element on Earth and occurs in fairly large quantities in various geological settings. It is more abundant than gold, silver, or mercury. Vast amounts of uranium also occur in the world's oceans, but in very low concentrations. Kazakhstan has the world's largest Uranium reserves and also the largest producer (45% of world supply), followed by Namibia and Canada. All isotopes of uranium are radioactive and over time they decay to other lighter elements.

Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL) was incorporated in October 1967. It is a Public Sector Enterprise under the Department of Atomic Energy.

C-DOT signs agreement for Indigenous development of 5G Open RAN
Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), WiSig Networks Private Limited and VVDN Technologies Private Limited have signed an agreement for developing 5G Open RAN and other products together. Collaboration aims to leverage the complementary strengths of Telecom R&D and industry to accelerate the indigenous design, development & deployment of end-to-end 5G solutions.

Open Radio Access Network, or Open RAN, is a key part of a mobile network system that uses cellular radio connections to link individual devices to other parts of a network. It comprises antennae, which transmits and receives signals to and from our smartphones or other compatible devices. The signal is then digitised in the RAN-base station and connected to the network. O-RAN uses software to make hardware manufactured by different companies work together.

Radio Access Network (RAN) is a part of a mobile telecommunication system. It implements a radio access technology. Conceptually, it resides between a device such as a mobile phone, a computer, or any remotely controlled machine and provides connection with its core network. RAN functionality is typically provided by a silicon chip residing in both the core network as well as the user equipment.

Liquid Mirror Telescope commissioned at Nainital, Uttarakhand
LMT, India's first and Asia's largest liquid-mirror telescope, is commissioned at the Devasthal Observatory of Aryabhatta Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES) in Nainital, Uttarakhand, an autonomous institute under Department of Science and Technology. LMT is set for operations every night during nine months a year for the next 5 years starting October 2022. It is the world's first liquid-mirror telescope to be commissioned for astronomy.

Liquid Mirror Telescope will observe asteroids, supernovae, space debris and all other celestial objects. LMT employs a rotating mirror made up of a thin film of liquid mercury (a reflective liquid) to collect and focus light.

Difference between LMT and Conventional Telescope: A conventional telescope is steered to point towards the celestial source of interest in the sky for observations. The liquid-mirror telescopes, on the other hand, are stationary telescopes that image a strip of the sky which is at the zenith at a given point of time in the night. In other words, a liquid-mirror telescope will survey and capture any and all possible celestial objects — from stars, galaxies, supernovae explosions, asteroids to space debris.

India, Belgium, Canada, Poland and Uzbekistan are the main countries who have collaborated to set up the ILMT. The telescope was designed and built at the Advanced Mechanical and Optical Systems Corporation and the Centre Spatial de Liège in Belgium.

Government inaugurates country's first Steel Slag made Highway at Surat, Gujrat
Government of India has inaugurated the first six-lane highway road made by using Steel Slag at Surat, Gujarat.

Steel slag: It is a by-product of steel making, produced during the separation of the molten steel from impurities in steel-making furnaces. Steel slags is also used in the agricultural sector due to its ability to correct soil acidity. It contains some nutrients for the plants and also as silicate fertilizer that is capable of providing silicon to the plants.

RFID to be introduced at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport
Baggage tags equipped with Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) will soon be available at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, marking a first of its kind for the country.

Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) is a technology that uses radio waves to automatically identify various tagged objects. The RFID reader continually sends radio waves of a specific frequency in RFID system. If the object to which the RFID tag is attached is within the range of the radio waves, it provides feedback to the RFID reader, which then identifies the object based on the feedback. The tags can carry encrypted information, serial numbers and short descriptions.

A *barcode* is a printed series of parallel bars or lines of varying width used for entering data into a computer system. The bars are black on a white background and vary in width and quantity depending on the application. The bars represent the binary digits zero and one, which represent the digits zero to nine processed by a digital computer.

What are Captive Networks?

The Cellular Operators Associa-tion of India (COAI) has told the government there is no reason for its members to roll out 5G networks as they will be unviable if 'captive private wireless networks' are allowed to be run by enterprises.

Captive Networks are public networks that you subscribe to or pay for. Captive networks are also called "subscription" networks. A private captive 5G network is basically a network set up by a private entity for the use of just one organisation. These networks can be found in coffee shops, Internet cafes, hotels, airports, and other public locations.

For a business unit, a captive unit is a business unit of a company (subsidiary) functioning offshore as an entity of its own while retaining the work and close operational tie-ups within the parent company.

NSIL launches GSAT-24

NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) has launched GSAT-24 in its first "*demand-driven*" communication satellite mission post space sector reforms, leasing the entire capacity on board to Direct-to-Home (DTH) service provider Tata Play. Built by Indian Space Research Organisation for NSIL, the satellite was successfully placed into geostationary orbit by the Ariane 5 rocket, operated by French company Arianespace, from Kourou in French Guiana (South America).

GSAT-24 is a 24-Ku band communication satellite weighing 4180 kg with pan-India coverage for meeting DTH application needs. The GSAT (Geosynchronous satellites) are India's indigenously developed communications satellites, used for digital audio, data and video broadcasting.

NSIL (incorporated in March 2019), is a Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE), under the Department of Space (DOS) and is the commercial arm of ISRO. It has the responsibility to build, launch, own & operate satellites and provide services to its committed customer.

Latest Spyware in the News – Hermit

'Hermit' is the latest sophisticated spyware in the news, and it is believed to have targeted iPhones and Android devices in Italy and Kazakhstan.

Spyware Invades a computer and, as its name implies, monitors a user's activities without consent. Spywares are usually forwarded through unsuspecting e-mails with bonafide e-mail IDs.

VL – SRSAM Missile System successfully flight tested by DRDO and the Indian Navy

The indigenously developed shipborne weapon system, Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM), was successfully flight tested by DRDO and the Indian Navy. It is designed to strike at the high-speed airborne targets at the range of 40 km to 50 km and at an altitude of around 15 km. VL-SRSAM is a canisterised system, which means it is stored and operated from specially designed compartments. In the canister, the inside environment is controlled, thus making its transport and storage easier and improving the shelf life of weapons.

3. Environment

Stockholm+50 meeting held in Sweden to commemorate the 50 Years
Stockholm+50 meeting was held at Stockholm, Sweden to commemorate the 50 years since the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (also known as the Stockholm Conference), which made the environment a pressing global issue for the first time.

Stockholm+50 theme: *"A healthy planet for the prosperity of all — our responsibility, our opportunity"*

Stockholm+50 agenda:
- To share experiences and initiatives to protect the planet.
- Sustainable recovery from the COVID -19 pandemic

Stockholm Conference: It was the UN's first major conference on international environmental issues and marked a turning point in the development of international environmental politics. It was organized in 1972 to coordinate global efforts to promote sustainability and safeguard the natural environment with the theme '*Only One Earth'*.

The 3 dimensions of this conference were:
- Countries agreeing not to harm each other's environment or the areas beyond national jurisdiction;
- Action plan to study the threat to Earth's environment; and
- Establishment of an international body called the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) to bring in cooperation among countries.

India intervenes in Bonn Climate Conference stating about Climate Equity
India made an intervention during the closing plenary of the Bonn Climate Conference stating that equity is being overlooked in climate negotiations.

The Bonn Climate Change Conference has been the first opportunity for all Parties to the UNFCCC to meet since the adoption of the Glasgow Climate Pact at COP26 last year (2021). In Glasgow, governments agreed a package of decisions that pave the way for full implementation of the Paris Agreement.

Note that, UN Climate Change Conference COP27 will take place in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in November 2022.

Climate Equity ensures the just distribution of the benefits of climate protection efforts and alleviates unequal burdens created by climate change. It ensures that the climate goals are achieved in a sustainable manner, without unjust burden or fallouts on certain sections.

CBDR/RC: The principle of equity has been interpreted synonymously with the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR/RC) which acknowledges the different capabilities and differing responsibilities of individual countries in addressing climate change. According to the principle, higher responsibility of climate action, including contribution in climate finance, emission reduction targets etc., is to be placed upon developed countries since they have been historically responsible for large share of GHG emissions, exhausting the carbon budget.

MoEF&CC notified Forest (Conservation) Rules 2022

Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate change has notified the Forest Conservation Rules, 2022. These rules are notified under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, and will replace the Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2003.

Key Features

1. The rules establish certain committees to perform various functions:

(i) Project Screening Committee
- To be constituted by State or UT.
- It shall meet atleast twice every month to recommend projects to State/UTs administration.
- It shall examine the proposal received from the State Government or Union territory Administration, except proposals involving forest land of 5 hectares or less.

(ii) Regional Empowered Committee
- To be setup by Central Government in each of the regional offices.
- To meet atleast twice every month to examine every referred project for approval or rejection.

(iii) Advisory Committee
- To be setup by the Central Government consisting of 6 members to meet every month.
- The role of the Advisory Committee is to advise with regards to grant of approval under various sections of rules.

2. Time frame:
- Non-mining projects between 5-40 hectares – reviewed within 60 days.
- Mining projects between 5-40 hectares – reviewed within 75 days.
- For projects involving a larger area – 120 days for non-mining projects involving more than 100 hectares. 150 days for mining projects involving more than 100 hectares.

3. Proposals for Prior Approval of the Central Government:
- In-Principle' approval after considering the recommendation of the Advisory Committee.
- Final approval: The Nodal Officer may, after receipt of the 'In-Principle' approval from the Central Government.

4. Compensatory Afforestation:
- Land for compensatory afforestation shall be provided which is neither notified as forest under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 or any other law nor managed as forest by the Forest Department.

Forest Conservation Act 1980: It came into force to address deforestation. Though the Indian Forest Act has been in force since 1927, it was geared to allow the colonial British administration to control the extraction of timber. There have been at least 2 major amendments to the FCA — in 1988 and 1996 to incorporate the Supreme court judgment in the Godavarman case relating to definition of forest.

Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016: Compensatory Afforestation (CA) refers to afforestation and regeneration activities carried out as a way of compensating for forest land diverted to non-forest purposes. The Act establishes National and State Funds for the same purpose.

SC directions regarding Economic Sensitive Zone – ESZ

The Supreme Court has directed that every protected forest, national park and wildlife sanctuary in the country should mandatorily have a minimum 1 km Economic Sensitive Zone, from their demarcated boundaries. The directions were passed in reference to applications filed under the TN Godavarman Thirumalpad versus Union of India case. The order would apply in all such states/UTs where the minimum ESZ is not prescribed.

ESZ or Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA) are ecologically important and fragile areas around protected areas designated to be protected from industrial pollution and unregulated development under the Environment Protection Act (EPA), 1986. It is notified by Central Government, i.e., Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), under Environment Protection Act, 1986.

2022 marks the 30th anniversary of UNECE's Water Convention

Ministry of the Environment of Estonia, together with United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and in cooperation with Finland, have hosted a special event to mark the 30th anniversary of the Water Convention.

Water Convention (Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes 1992): It is an international legal instrument and intergovernmental platform which requires Parties to use transboundary waters in a reasonable and equitable way and ensure their sustainable management. Parties bordering the same transboundary waters have to cooperate by entering into specific agreements and establishing joint bodies.

This UNECE's Water Convention was adopted in Helsinki in 1992 and entered into force in 1996. Initially negotiated as a regional instrument, it was opened globally for accession to all UN Member States in 2016. It is a powerful tool to achieve the objectives of SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) and its target 6.5, which calls upon all States to implement integrated water resources management at all levels by 2030, including through transboundary cooperation.

First Geneva Water Dialogue held in Geneva, Switzerland

The First Geneva Water Dialogue was co-organized by the Permanent Missions of the Netherlands, Tajikistan and Egypt was held in Geneva, Switzerland. The event was supported by the WMO, UN-Water, UNDRR, OHCHR, and the Geneva Water Hub, and attended by heads and representatives of the diplomatic missions, as well as high level representatives of the UN system organizations.

Objective: The objective is to prepare a substantive input from the Geneva-based organizations and missions to the UN 2023 Water Conference, as well as to identify and propose concrete solutions to accelerate the achievement of SDG 6, also beyond 2030.

What is Land Subsidence?

According to new research conducted by IIT Bombay experts, Mumbai is sinking at a pace of 2mm per year due to a geographical phenomenon known as land subsidence.

Land subsidence is the gradual settling or sudden sinking of the earth's surface due to removal or displacement of subsurface earth materials (lying below the land). It is considered a natural-anthropogenic hazard and is irreversible.

NIUA and WRI jointly announced Leaders in Climate Change Management
National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and World Resources Institute (WRI) have jointly announced 'Leaders in Climate Change Management' (LCCM) on the occasion of World Environment Day held on 5th June 2022. The programme is designed with the collaboration of United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP), and Indian School of Business (ISB).

LCCM is a practice-based learning program that aims at building capacity among urban professionals to lead climate action across sectors and geographies in India. LCCM envisions capacitating 5,000 professionals and preparing them to champion climate change adaptation and mitigation solutions.

Also, Administrative Training Institute (ATI), Mysuru became the first delivery partner of LCCM program.

WEF releases Environment Performance Index 2022
World Economic Forum has released the latest Environment Performance Index 2022. According to it, India ranked at 180th with a score of 18.9 EPI in EPI 2022.

Environmental Performance Index, a biennial index, was started in 2002 as Environmental Sustainability Index. It is prepared by World Economic Forum (WEF) in collaboration with Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy and Columbia University Center for International Earth Science Information Network. EPI ranks 180 countries on climate change performance, environmental health, and ecosystem vitality.

What is Living Land Charter?
The Commonwealth members have agreed to voluntarily dedicate 'living land' in their respective countries to future generations, in line with the strategy set for the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The 'Living land' charter was announced at the conclusion of the 2022 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Kigali (Rwanda).

Living Land Charter: The non-binding 'Living Lands Charter' mandates that member countries will safeguard global land resources and arrest land degradation while acting against climate change, biodiversity loss and towards sustainable management. It aims to support member countries to deliver their commitments under the three Rio conventions i.e.,
       (i) UN Convention on Biological Diversity.
       (ii) UN Convention to Combat Desertification.
       (iii) UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

Commonwealth Nations: It is an international intergovernmental organization of countries that were mostly former territories of the British Empire and dependencies. It was established by the London Declaration in 1949.

The United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration runs from 2021 to 2030. Its purpose is to promote the United Nation's environmental goals. It calls for protection and revival of ecosystems across the world.

CAQM bans use of coal in Delhi-NCR
Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has issued directions to ban the use of coal in industrial, domestic and other miscellaneous applications in the entire Delhi-NCR region from 1st January 2023. This step is taken to bring down greenhouse gas emissions in Delhi NCR. However, use of low-sulphur coal in thermal power plants has been exempted from the ban.

CAQM: It is a statutory body established under the Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas Act, 2021. It was first established in 2020 through an Ordinance.

Chairperson: It is headed by Chairperson with at least 15 years' experience in the field of environment and pollution or 25 years of administrative experience.

Appeal: CAQM orders, directions etc. can be challenged at the National Green Tribunal.

India Achieved 10% Ethanol blending target in Petrol
India has achieved the target of 10 % ethanol blending, 5 months ahead of schedule. The original target for 10% ethanol blending in petrol was November 2022. Central Government has also set the target of 20% ethanol blending in petrol (also called as E20), by 2025.

An *ethanol blend* is defined as a blended motor fuel containing ethyl alcohol that is at least 99% pure, derived from agricultural products, and blended exclusively with gasoline. Since it is plant-based, it is considered to be a renewable fuel. India is world's fifth largest producer of ethanol after the US, Brazil, European Union and China.

REN21 publishes Renewable 2022 Global Status Report
According to a Renewable 2022 Global Status Report, published by REN21 (Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century), India added around 15.4 GW of renewable power capacity in 2021, third highest after China (136 GW) and the US (43 GW). The report noted that India is now the third-largest market in the world for new solar PV capacity and ranked fourth in the world for total solar energy installations following China.

REN21 is the only global community of actors from science, governments, NGOs and industry working collectively to drive the rapid uptake of renewables. It was created in 2004 as an outcome of the Bonn 2004 International Conference on Renewable Energy.

Government approves categorization of CDRI as 'International Organization'
Union Cabinet has approved Categorization of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) as an 'International Organization'. It has also approved signing of Headquarters Agreement (HQA) with CDRI for granting it the exemptions, immunities and privileges under Section-3 of United Nations (Privileges & Immunities) Act, 1947. It will provide CDRI an independent and international legal persona, allowing it to carry out its functions on a global scale efficiently and effectively.

The United Nations (Privileges & Immunities) Act 1947 was enacted in India to give effect to the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1946.

CDRI (Secretariat: New Delhi): CDRI is a multi-stakeholder global partnership of national Governments, UN agencies and programmes, multilateral development banks and financing mechanisms, the private sector, academic and knowledge institutions. It was launched in 2019 by the Prime Minister of India at the UN Climate Action Summit (New York) to promote the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks, thereby ensuring sustainable development.

NITI Aayog releases Report on Green Hydrogen
A report 'Green Hydrogen: Opportunities for Deep Decarbonization in India' was released by NITI Aayog that highlights that green hydrogen is critical to India's net-zero ambitions by 2070.

Green Hydrogen is hydrogen produced from electrolysis (splitting of water into oxygen and hydrogen) by passing electricity from renewable sources resulting in no carbon emissions. Alkaline, Polymer Electrolyte Membrane (PEM) and Solid Oxide Electrolyzers are commercially available technologies for Green Hydrogen production.

National Hydrogen Mission was launched in August 2021. The Mission aims to aid the government in meeting its climate targets and making India a green hydrogen hub to meet the target of production of 5 million tonnes of green hydrogen by 2030.

Desert in Tamil Nadu in News – Theri Desert
Recent news has highlighted the desert in Tamil Nadu named – Theri Desert. It is a small desert situated in the State of Tamil Nadu. It consists of red sand dunes and is confined to Thoothukudi district, Tamil Nadu. The red dunes are called '*theri*' in Tamil.

State of Environment Report 2022 releases by CSE
State of Environment Report, 2022 was released by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), an environmental NGO. According to the Report, 3 of every 4 river monitoring stations in India posted alarming levels of heavy toxic metals such as lead, iron, nickel, cadmium, arsenic, chromium and copper. The report is an annual compendium of environment-development data and is derived from public sources.

Red List of Birds in Kerala
Kerala Government has decided to have its own red list of birds. The Kerala Bird Monitoring Collective led by Kerala Agricultural University and the Bird Count India will conduct the regional red list assessment. Once it gets ready, Kerala will be the first State to have a region-specific red list of birds.

Note that, the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species (founded in 1964) is the world's most comprehensive inventory of the global conservation status of biological species.

Proposed Etalin Hydroelectric Project in Dibang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh
Wildlife scientists and conservationists in Arunachal Pradesh have flagged threats to local biodiversity from the proposed Etalin Hydroelectric Project. The dam is located in Arunachal Pradesh's Dibang Valley. It is proposed to be developed as a combination of two run-of-the-river schemes and involves the construction of concrete gravity dams on the Tangon and Dri rivers.

India attends a virtual meeting of Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate
Government of India has attended a virtual meeting of the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate (MEF), hosted by U.S.A. The meeting was aimed at galvanizing actions that are to strengthen energy security and tackle the climate crisis thereby building momentum for COP27. India called upon the members of MEF to launch a global movement on LIFE i.e., Lifestyle for Environment as espoused by the current Prime Minister of India at the COP26 in Glasgow.

MEF, launched in 2009 by the then USA President Obama, is aimed at facilitating dialogue among major emitting countries, both developed and developing, to advance efforts against climate change.

Summit on Decarbonization held in New Delhi
'Industrial Decarbonization Summit 2022' (IDS-2022) - Road Map for Carbon Neutrality by 2070' was held in New Delhi.

4. Scheme and Programmes

NIPUN Initiative of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched the 'National Initiative for Promotion of Upskilling of Nirman workers' (NIPUN) project to train 1,00,000 construction workers. The project is an initiative under MoHUA's flagship scheme, Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM).

Its implementation is divided into 3 parts:

(i) Training through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) at construction sites. Under RPL, the prior learning experience or skills are assessed and certified.
(ii) Training through Fresh Skilling by Plumbing and Infrastructure Sector Skill Council (SSC); and
(iii) International Placements through industries, builders and contractors.

The courses are aligned with National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) and will be imparted at accredited and affiliated training centres. NSQF is a nationally integrated education and competency-based framework that enables persons to acquire desired competency level.

National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) is its implementation partner, and it will be responsible for overall execution of training, monitoring and candidate tracking. NSDC is a Public Private Partnership mandated to involve the private sector in skilling 150 million Indians by 2022. Trainees will be provided with '*Kaushal Bima*', a three-year accidental insurance with coverage of Rs. 2 lakhs along with necessary digital skills such as cashless transactions and the BHIM app, orientation about entrepreneurship etc.

Union Cabinet approves Agnipath Scheme

Union Cabinet has approved Agnipath Scheme – a recruitment scheme for Indian youth to serve in the Armed Forces.

Key Features

- The Scheme is a major defence policy reform to usher in a new era in the Human Resource policy of the 3 Services.
- Idea of a short-term recruitment model or 'Tour of Duty' (ToD) was first mooted around 2 years back for the selection of officers and jawans, for a limited number of vacancies.
- Youth (from 17.5 years to 23 age group) selected under this scheme will be known as '*Agniveers*' who will be enrolled for a period of four years.
- They would form a distinct rank in the Armed Forces, different from any other existing ranks.
- Upon the completion of 4 years of service, Agniveers will be offered an opportunity to apply for permanent enrolment in the Armed Forces.
- Up to 25% of each specific batch will be enrolled in regular cadre based on objective criteria including performance during their four-year engagement period.

MoSJ&E launches SHRESHTHA Scheme

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched the SHRESHTHA – Scheme for Residential Education for Students in High schools in Targeted Areas.

SHRESTHA provides level playing field and high quality free residential education to poor and meritorious Scheduled Caste students from class 9th to class 12th. Students (approximately 3,000) in States / UTs are selected through National Entrance Test for SHRESHTA (NETS) conducted by National Testing Agency (NTA).

MoE launches PARAKH Scheme

PARAKH, national assessment centre, has launched by Ministry of Education for all AICTE (All India Council of Technical Education) approved institutes. PARAKH survey will help colleges to identify learning gaps so that students can be industry ready. It facilitates a platform for students for self-assessment of learning outcomes and 21st century life skills acquired by students. It helps to improve higher order thinking skills among students. It was introduced under National Education Policy 2020.

NCC launches Puneet Sagar Abhiyan

National Cadet Corps (NCC) has launched the latest phase of its nationwide flagship campaign 'Puneet Sagar Abhiyan'. The objective is to clean Sea Shores/Beaches and other water bodies including rivers & lakes, of plastic & other waste and increase awareness amongst the local population about the importance of keeping the beaches and river fronts clean.

MoPSW formulates Scheme - Sagarmala Young Professional

Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has formulated scheme - Sagarmala Young Professional Scheme - to engage young professionals in various divisions of the Ministry. Professionals will be required to deliver high-quality inputs in areas such as infrastructure, data analysis, project management, start-up, innovation, skill development, digital transformation and the environment, among others, in order to meet Ministry's needs.

Professionals will be required to have qualification in B.E/B.Tech, B. Planning and/or MBA or equivalent degree in relevant subject/ field and minimum three year of relevant work experience. Professionals in Accountancy, Finance, Legal, Statistics, Economics/Commerce, Data Analytics. The initial period of engagement shall be 2 years which can be extended to additional 2 years on the basis of performance.

5. Polity

What is Inter-State Council?
Tamil Nadu Chief Minister has written to Prime Minister that Inter-State Council (ISC) meetings should be held thrice a year.

Inter-State Council is established under Article 263 of the Constitution, which states that the President may constitute such a body if a need is felt for it. In 1988, the Sarkaria Commission suggested the Council should exist as a permanent body, and in 1990 it came into existence through a Presidential Order.

Rajya Sabha Elections in India
Rajya Sabha is a permanent House and cannot be dissolved. Maximum strength of Rajya Sabha is fixed at 250 (presently 245), out of which, 238 (Presently 233) are representatives of States and UTs (elected indirectly) and 12 are nominated by President. Term of a member is 6 years.

Notable Points
- Rajya Sabha polls have a system of open ballot, but it is a limited form of openness.
- To check cross-voting, each party MLA shows his or her marked ballots to party's authorised agent, before they are put into the ballot box.
- Showing a marked ballot to anyone other than one's own party's authorised agent will render vote invalid.
- 'None of the above (NOTA)' option is not applicable in Rajya Sabha polls.
- Not voting for the party candidate will not attract disqualification under the anti-defection law.

Presidential Elections in India
Consultations on putting up a joint candidate for the Presidential election, 17 Opposition parties attended a meeting hosted by West Bengal Chief Minister.

The President's election is held in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote and the voting is by secret ballot.

Constitutional provisions regarding President
- *Article 54:* Election of President
- *Article 55:* Manner of election of President.
- *Article 56:* Term of office of President
- *Article 57:* Eligibility for re-election.
- *Article 58:* Qualifications for election as President

The Indian President is elected through an electoral college system, wherein the votes are cast by national and State-level lawmakers. The elections are conducted and overseen by the Election Commission (EC) of India.

The Electoral College is made up of:
- All the elected members of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament (Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha MPs)
- Elected Members of the Legislative Assemblies of States and Union Territories (MLAs).

Note that, nominated members of Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha and the Assemblies, and members of State Legislative Councils, are not part of the Electoral College.

Value of each Vote

A vote cast by each MP or MLA is not calculated as one vote. The fixed value of each vote by an MP of the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha is 708. Meanwhile, the vote value of each MLA differs from State to State based on a calculation that factors in its population vis-a-vis the number of members in its legislative Assembly. The value of each MLAs vote is determined by dividing the population of the State by the number of MLAs in its legislative Assembly, and the quotient achieved is further divided by 1000. Uttar Pradesh has the highest vote value for each of its MLAs, at 208. The value of one MLAs vote in Maharashtra is 175, while that in Arunachal Pradesh is just 8.

Requirement to secure victory

A nominated candidate does not secure victory based on a simple majority but through a system of bagging a specific quota of votes. While counting, the EC totals up all the valid votes cast by the electoral college through paper ballots and to win, the candidate must secure 50% of the total votes cast + 1. Anti-defection law is not applicable in the Presidential election; thus, electors are not bound to vote along party lines.

Speaker's Power in Legislative Assembly; Article 212

West Bengal Legislative Assembly Speaker has revoked the suspension of 7 MLAs, including that of Leader of the Opposition.

Rules of House

The Speaker may direct any member who refuses to obey his decision, or whose conduct is, in his opinion, grossly disorderly, to withdraw immediately from the Assembly. The member must absent himself during the remainder of the day's meeting. Should any member be ordered to withdraw for a second time in the same session, the Speaker may direct the member to absent himself for any period not longer than the remainder of the Session.

Article 212 (1): It states that "the validity of any proceedings in the Legislature of a State shall not be called in question on the ground of any alleged irregularity of procedure."

6. Governance

Odisha High Court first to provide insight into Judicial Accountability
The Orissa High Court has become the first in the country to publish an annual report that gives insights into the performance of the State's judiciary. *Judicial accountability* is defined as the set of mechanisms aimed at making judges and courts personally or institutionally responsible for behaviours and decisions contrary to constitutional or legal standards.

Under Article 235, Constitution provides for '*control*' of the High Court over the subordinate judiciary clearly indicating the provision of an effective mechanism to enforce accountability.

Internet Suspension in India
United Nations has called on countries to stop imposing Internet shutdowns.

Currently, in India, suspension of telecom services (including internet shutdowns) is governed by the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency & Public Safety) Rules, 2017, notified under the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885. The 2017 Rules provide for a temporary shutdown of telecom services in a region on grounds of public emergency (up to 15 days at once).

What is National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA)?
A delegation of MLAs from Gujarat has visited the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly to learn about the novel e-Vidhan system for paperless proceedings that has been adopted by the UP Legislative Assembly.

The National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) is a system for digitizing the legislative bodies of all Indian states and the Parliament through a single platform on which house proceedings, starred/unstarred questions and answers, committee reports etc. will be available. The NeVA system has been developed to make all the work and data related to legislative bodies available online for the use of both citizens and the members of Assemblies. Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs is the nodal Ministry for rolling out NeVA

Contesting Elections from Multiple Seats
Chief Election Commissioner has made a fresh push for amending the Representation of People's Act, 1951 (RPA) to bar people from contesting from more than one seat.

Dinesh Goswami Committee Report (1990) and the 170th Report of the Law Commission on Electoral Reforms (1999) had also included recommendations for restricting one contestant to one seat. As per Section 33(7) of the RPA 1951, one candidate can contest from a maximum of two constituencies (more constituencies were allowed until 1996 when the RPA was amended to set the cap at two constituencies).

The Legislative Department, Ministry of Law and Justice, is the nodal agency in the government to deal with issues related to the Elections Commission.

MoD broadens the eligibility scope for Chief of Defence Staff Post
Ministry of Defense has issued a notification which broadens the scope of eligible Officers for the post of the Chief of Defence Staff.

Notification specifies the professional qualifications and age limitations for Military Generals to be eligible for appointment as CDS. Officers from all 3 services are required to meet broadly the same 2 qualifications:
- First, an officer must be either serving, or retired, in the rank of general or lieutenant general (three-star generals).

- Second, his age should be below 62 years on the date of his appointment.

Also, the Central Government has reserved the right to extend the tenure of the CDS to a maximum of 65 years.

Duties and functions of CDS
- To head the Department of Military Affairs in Ministry of Defence and function as its Secretary.
- To act as the Principal Military Advisor to Defence Minister on all Tri-Service matters.
- To function as the Permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee and to administer the Tri-Service organizations/agencies/commands.
- To be a member of Defence Acquisition Council (chaired by Defence Minister) and function as the Military Advisor to the Nuclear Command Authority.
- To ensure optimal utilisation of infrastructure and rationalize it through jointness among the Services.
- To implement Five-Year Defence Capital Acquisition Plan and Two-Year roll-on Annual Acquisition Plans, as a follow up of Integrated Capability Development Plan.
- Bring about reforms in the functioning of three Services aimed at augmenting combat capabilities of the Armed Forces.

Govt. declares ICICI, HDFC, NPCI's IT Resources as Critical Infrastructure
Government has declared ICICI, HDFC and NPCI's IT resources as Critical Infrastructure, also known as Critical Information Infrastructure (CII).

CII refers to a physical or cyber-based system, incapacitation or destruction of which shall have debilitating impact on national security, economy, public health or safety. Government, under Information Technology Act, 2000, has the power to declare any data, database, IT network or communications infrastructure as CII (or CI) to protect that digital asset.

Measures taken to protect CII
- National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC) is the nodal agency for taking all measures to protect CIIs.
- Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) is nodal agency for responding to computer security incidents.
- National Cyber Security Coordinator (NCSC) to coordinate with different agencies at the national level for cyber security matters.
- National Cyber Security Policy 2013 to build a secure and resilient cyberspace.

Census Exercise pushed to FY 2023-24
The census exercise, which was originally scheduled to take place in 2021, has been further pushed to 2023-24. Normally, before every Census, states are required to provide information on changes in the number of notified districts, villages, towns and other administrative units such as tehsils, talukas and police stations to the Registrar General of India (RGI). After this RGI freezes the administrative boundaries so that census tasks can begin. However, this time, RGI has extended the deadline for freezing administrative boundaries to December 31, 2022.

Key Points
- Population Census is the total process of collecting, compiling, analysing and disseminating demographic, economic and social data pertaining, at a specific time, of all persons in a country or a well-defined part of a country.
- The first non-synchronous census was conducted in India in 1872 during the reign of Governor-General Lord Mayo.

- The first synchronous census was taken under British rule in February 1881, by C. Plowden (Census Commissioner of India).
- The decennial Census is conducted by the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Until 1951, the Census Organization was set up on an ad-hoc basis for each Census.
- The population census is a Union subject under Article 246 of Indian Constitution.
- Census is conducted under the provisions of the Census Act, 1948.
- Under this Act, the information collected during the population Census is considered confidential and is not even accessible to the courts of law.
- The law specifies penalties for both public and census officials for non-compliance or violation of any provision of the Act.

Just Transition Division – Ministry of Coal

For the first time ever, the Ministry of coal will have a 'just transition' division, which will draft sustainable coal mine closure plans for areas economically dependent on the dry fuel. The World Bank will provide an aid of $1.15 million and also prepare a 'Detailed Project Report' in consultation with various stakeholders. Just transition ensures safe livelihood, land restoration and reclamation near mining areas. It also paves the way for re-employability of communities and economic stability of regions dependent on coal and allied industries, once a mine is shut.

BIS publishes performance standards for EV Batteries

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has published the "performance standards for electronic vehicle Li-ion batteries" in a bid to keep a strict control over the manufacturing of EV batteries.

EVs are powered by battery electric power. Different types of batteries are available Li-ion, Solid state, Nickel-Metal Hydride etc. However, Li-ion batteries are most preferred because of their high power-to-weight ratio, high energy efficiency, low self-discharge etc.

BIS came into existence, through BIS Act, 1986. It was established into National Standard Body of India under BIS Act 2016. It comes under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution.

BIS is involved in various activities such as:
- *Certification:* a manufacturer is given the self-marking rights of BIS standards mark (ISI mark).
- *Hallmarking:* of gold, silver jewellery, gold bullion etc.
- *ECO mark:* to environmentally friendly products.
- *Compulsory Registration Scheme:* for categories of electronics items.
- *Laboratory services:* to cater to the testing need of samples generated from conformity assessment schemes.

Ministry of Finance launches SNA Dashboard of PFMS

The Single Nodal Agency (SNA) Dashboard of PFMS (Public Financial Management System) was launched by the Ministry of Finance.

SNA Dashboard is a major reform initiated in 2021 with regards to the manner in which funds for Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) are released, disbursed and monitored. Under this system, each State is required to identify and designate an SNA for every scheme. All funds for that State in a particular scheme will be credited in this bank account and all expenses by all other Implementing Agencies involved are affected from this account.

Public Financial Management System: It is a web-based online software application developed and implemented by the Office of Controller General of Accounts (CGA), Ministry of Finance. The objective is to facilitate a sound Public Financial Management System for the Government of India by establishing an efficient fund flow system as well as a payment cum accounting network. It was previously known as Central Plan Schemes Monitoring System (CPSMS).

7. International Relations

12ᵗʰ Ministerial Conference of WTO held in Geneva – Geneva Package
12ᵗʰ Ministerial Conference of the WTO was held in Geneva, Switzerland. A series of deals on contemporary issues was agreed to under the "Geneva Package". The deal includes 6 major issues of importance for developing countries including - global food Security, balanced outcome fisheries subsidies, response to pandemic and patents waiver on COVID-19 vaccines, E-commerce transmissions like music, e-books, films etc., and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Declaration.

Alternative to BRI –Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII)
Group of Seven (G7) leaders have pledged to raise $600 billion in private and public funds over 5 years to finance needed infrastructure in developing countries and counter China's Belt and Road Project.

The announcement is an official launch and a rebranding of what had been rolled out in 2021 at the G7 in the UK as "Build Back Better World" (B3W). The effort is now called the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, or PGII

Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) seeks to provide an alternative to China's estimated $1 trillion in hard infrastructure investment around the world in the last decade.

This G7 initiative is funding projects in 4 major categories:
> (i) clean energy,
> (ii) health systems,
> (iii) gender equality,
> (iv) information and communications technology.

At the centre of PGII is a different approach to financing infrastructure projects: using limited government funding to catalyze greater volumes of private capital (pension funds, private equity funds and insurance funds, among others).

Belt and Road Initiative: It is a transcontinental long-term policy and investment program which aims at infrastructure development and acceleration of the economic integration of countries along the route of the historic Silk Road. It was unveiled in 2013 by China and until 2016, was known as OBOR (One Belt One Road).

LiFE Campaign: At the recent G7 summit, India also highlighted Global Initiative for LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) campaign with the goal to encourage an eco-friendly lifestyle. The idea of LiFE was introduced by the Prime Minister during the 26ᵗʰ UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), 2021 at Glasgow. The Mission seeks to create an ecosystem that will reinforce and enable environmentally friendly behaviours to be self-sustainable.

NATO Summit held in Madrid, Spain
NATO Summit was held in Madrid, Spain amid Russia-Ukraine War. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance established by Washington Treaty that was signed on 4ᵗʰ April 1949. It is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium.

Virtual BRICS Summit held under the Chairmanship of China
BRICS Leaders has adopted the 'Beijing Declaration' in 14ᵗʰ BRICS Summit, convened under the Chairmanship of China, in virtual format. The declaration states that BRICS supports talks between Russia and Ukraine.
Theme: *"Foster High-quality BRICS Partnership, Usher in a New Era for Global Development"*

BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa): The BRICS grouping aims to promote peace, security, development and cooperation in the world. It also aims at making a positive impact on the development of humanity and establishing a more equitable and fairer world. The notion behind the coinage of BRICS was that the nations' economies would come to collectively dominate global growth by 2050. India's notable contribution to BRICS is proposal of the New Development Bank which was put on the BRICS agenda by India in 2012.

BRICS Areas of Cooperation
- Economic Cooperation
- People-to-People exchange
- Political and Security Cooperation
- Cooperation Mechanism

New Development Bank (NDB) is headquartered in Shanghai. During the 6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (2014) the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the New Development Bank (NDB) by the Fortaleza Declaration. The NDB functions on a consultative mechanism among the BRICS members with all the member countries possessing equal rights.

118th Meeting of Permanent Indus Commission held in New Delhi
The 118th meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC), was held in New Delhi.

Indus Water Treaty was signed in 1960, between India and Pakistan and brokered by the World Bank. The treaty fixed and delimited the rights and obligations of both countries concerning the use of the waters of the Indus River system. The treaty required the creation of a Permanent Indus Commission, with a Commissioner from each country, to maintain a channel for communication and to try to resolve questions about implementation of the treaty. In addition, a mechanism for resolving disputes was provided.

Other similar arrangements of India with neighbours:
- *India-Nepal* - Kosi Treaty 1954 for Kosi river; Mahakali Treaty for Mahakali river
- *India-China* - MoU for Brahmaputra river; MoU for Sutlej river
- *India-Bangladesh* - Ganges Treaty; System of flood forecasting data on major rivers - Ganga, Teesta, Brahmaputra and Barak
- *India-Bhutan* - Joint Group of Expert (JGE) on Flood Management; Comprehensive Scheme for Establishment of Hydro-meteorological and Flood Forecasting Network on rivers Common to India and Bhutan.

India decides to take over West Seti Power Project in Nepal
India has decided to take over West Seti hydropower project in Nepal nearly 4 years after China withdrew from it. It is planned on Seti-river in Nepal's far west region. Nepal is rich in power sources with an estimated potential for 83,000 MW.

What is International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC)?
Iran has started transfer of Russia goods to India by using International North-South Transit Corridor (INSTC).

INSTC is a multi-modal transportation network, first envisaged in 2000 by Russia, India and Iran, to promote transportation cooperation among the Member States. It connects Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf to Caspian Sea via Iran and is then connected to Saint Petersburg and North European via Russia. Currently, it has 13 members: India, Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Turkey, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Oman, Ukraine and Syria.

TRIPS Agreement; Difference between Process and Product Patent

A group of Non-Governmental Organisations has written to Prime Minister of India, urging him to "proactively engage" with a draught proposal at the World Trade Organization-TRIPS in Geneva to waive intellectual property rights governing COVID vaccines, drugs, and diagnostics.

The Intellectual Property waiver might open up space for production of COVID-19 vaccines with Emergency Use Authorizations (EUA) – such as those developed by Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, Novavax, Johnson & Johnson and Bharat Biotech – on a larger scale in middle-income countries.

A *patent* represents a powerful intellectual property right, and is an exclusive monopoly granted by a government to an inventor for a limited, pre-specified time. It provides an enforceable legal right to prevent others from copying the invention.

Patents can be either process patents or product patents:

> 1. A *product patent* ensures that the rights to the final product is protected, and anyone other than the patent holder can be restrained from manufacturing it during a specified period, even if they were to use a different process.
> 2. A *process patent* enables any person other than the patent holder to manufacture the patented product by modifying certain processes in the manufacturing exercise.

India moved from product patenting to process patenting in the 1970s, which enabled India to become a significant producer of generic drugs at global scale and allowed companies like Cipla to provide Africa with anti-HIV drugs in the 1990s. But due to obligations arising out of the TRIPS Agreement, India had to amend the Patents Act in 2005, and switch to a product patents regime across the pharma, chemicals, and biotech sectors.

TRIPS Agreement

The TRIPS Agreement was negotiated in 1995 at the WTO. It requires all its signatory countries to enact domestic law. It guarantees minimum standards of IP protection. Such legal consistency enables innovators to monetize their intellectual property in multiple countries. In 2001, the WTO signed the Doha Declaration, which clarified that in a public health emergency, governments could compel companies to license their patents to manufacturers, even if they did not think the offered price was acceptable. This provision, commonly referred to as "compulsory licensing", was already built into the TRIPS Agreement and the Doha declaration only clarified its usage.

What is UN Habitat?

UN-Habitat has identified various pressing issues posing challenges for urban planners of Jaipur.

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN–Habitat) is the United Nations agency for human settlements and sustainable urban development. It was established in 1978 as an outcome of the First UN Conference on Human Settlements and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat I) held in Vancouver, Canada in 1976. It is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. It is a member of the United Nations Development Group. UN-Habitat reports to the United Nations General Assembly.

25th Anniversary of BIMSTEC

June 6 marked the completion of 25 years since the 1997 Bangkok Declaration launched a modest grouping (of Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand), with the acronym, BIST-EC. Later, 3 countries (Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar) joined it to make it the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic

Cooperation (BIMSTEC). In other words, it has 5 countries from South Asia and 2 countries from South-East Asia (Myanmar and Thailand).

Note that, in March 2022, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) grouping's fifth summit took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka (Host for the Fifth Summit).

90th INTERPOL General Assembly scheduled to be held in New Delhi
Preparations are going on for the 90th Interpol General Assembly, to be held in New Delhi.

The International Criminal Police Organisation, or Interpol, is a 194-member intergovernmental organisation. It is headquartered in Lyon, France. Formed in 1923 as the International Criminal Police Commission and renamed as Interpol in 1956. India joined the organisation in 1949 and is one of its oldest members. The CBI is the designated nodal body for the Interpol in India.

USA launches Partners in the Blue Pacific
The US and its allies — Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the United Kingdom — have launched a new initiative called 'Partners in the Blue Pacific' for "effective and efficient cooperation" with the region's small island nations. The initiative is a 5-nation "informal mechanism" to support Pacific islands and boost diplomatic, and economic ties in the region.

Israel singed first-of-its-kind FTA with Arab nation – UAE
Israel and the United Arab Emirates have signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA). This is the first of its kind that Israel has concluded with an Arab country. The UAE was the first Gulf country to normalize ties with Israel and only the third Arab nation to do so after Egypt and Jordan.

India attended World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2022
India has attended the opening ceremony of the World Summit of Information Society (WSIS) 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland, where India showcased its telecom prowess during multilateral & bilateral engagements. The participation comes with India contesting the re-election to the ITU (International Telecommunication Union) Council, for the term 2023-2026. India has been a member of ITU, since 1869.

The World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2022 represents the world's largest annual gathering of the 'ICT for development' community. It was co-organized by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD in close collaboration with all WSIS Action Line facilitators.
Theme for 2022: *"ICTs for Well-Being, Inclusion and Resilience: WSIS Cooperation for Accelerating Progress on the SDGs"*

India participates in 5-day UN Ocean Conference
India has participated in the 5-day UN Ocean Conference held with the Governments of Kenya and Portugal being the co-hosts. It aims to find an international agreement on protecting the world's oceans, seas and marine resources.

11th World Urban Forum (WUF) 2022 held in Poland
11th World Urban Forum (WUF) 2022 was held at Katowice, Poland. It was co-organized by Government of Poland and UN-Habitat.

WUF was established in 2001 by the United Nations to examine rapid urbanization and its impact on communities, cities, economies, climate change and policies. The first WUF was held in Nairobi, Kenya in 2002.

At 11th WUF, the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) Climate Centre for Cities (NIUA C-Cube), World Resources Institute India (WRI India) etc. launched India's first national coalition platform for urban Nature-based Solutions (NbS).

India-Bangladesh first physical JCC Meeting held in New Delhi

India and Bangladesh have held the first physical Joint Consultative Commission Meeting in New Delhi. It was the 7th meeting and co-chaired by respective External Affairs Ministers. JCC reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations, including cooperation in the wake of COVID-19, border management and security, trade and investment, connectivity, energy, water resources, development partnership and regional and multilateral issues.

Defence Exercises in News

EX SAMPRITI-X: It is a joint military training exercise between India and Bangladesh held in Bangladesh. It is a bilateral defence cooperation endeavour conducted alternately by both countries which aims to strengthen and widen the aspects of interoperability and cooperation between both the armies.

Ex Khaan Quest 2022: It is a multinational Peacekeeping exercise featuring participation from military contingents from 16 countries (including India) that conducted in Mongolia.

IND-INDO CORPAT: It is a joint Coordinated Patrol between Indian and Indonesian Navy. Indian Naval Ship INS Karmuk, along with a Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft, has participated in the exercise.

RIMPAC: Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) is the largest naval exercise including four Quad countries (including India) and others in the pacific rim. It is held biennially from June-July and is administered by US Navy's Indo-Pacific Command. It aims to train countries to ensure the safety of sea lanes and security on the world's oceans.

G7 Meeting held under Presidentship of Germany

G7 meeting was held under the current President of Germany. Germany also invited the leaders of India, Indonesia, South Africa, Argentina and Senegal to the summit in an effort to strengthen global collaboration on issues such as climate action, health and energy security.

Indian Prime Minister in his speech, also highlighted the issue of '*energy poverty*' and the need for equal energy access for the impoverished global south and the rich global north.

Energy poverty, also referred as fuel poverty, is usually defined in two ways as - Energy Accessibility, i.e., lack of access to electricity, and Energy Affordability, i.e., household dependence on inefficient and polluting energy sources such as burning of solid biomass.

8. Awards and Recognition

Rashtriya Puruskar Portal launches under Ministry of Home Affairs
A common Rashtriya Puruskar Portal has been launched under the Ministry of Home Affair to bring together all the Awards of the various Ministries/Departments/Agencies of the Government of India under one digital platform to ensure transparency and public partnership. This Portal aims to facilitate citizens to nominate individuals/organizations for various Awards instituted by the Government of India including Padma Awards, Sardar Patel National Unity Award, Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award, Jeevan Raksha Padak series of Awards.

Father Stan Swamy, tribal activist, awarded Martin Ennals Awards posthumously
Martin Ennals Awards is an award given by the Martin Ennals Foundation, based in Geneva, Switzerland. It is regarded as the Nobel Prize for human rights defenders. This year it was awarded posthumously to pay homage to Father Stan Swamy, a Jesuit priest and tribal rights activist from Jharkhand who had been arrested in the Bhima Koregaon case.

Martin Ennals: He was a British activist who spent his life working to secure human rights across the world. He was Secretary-General of Amnesty International from 1968 to 1980.

PM e-Vidya wins UNESCO's Recognition
Use of ICT under a comprehensive initiative called PM e-VIDYA by the Department of School education, Ministry of Education, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic wins UNESCO's recognition. This is in particular with Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET), a constituent unit of NCERT, has been awarded with the UNESCO's *King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize* for the Use of ICT in Education for the year 2021.

The *PM e-VIDYA* has been initiated as part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan by the Ministry of Education in May 2020, which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access for imparting education by using technology to minimise learning losses.

The *King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize* recognizes innovative approaches in leveraging new technologies to expand educational and lifelong learning opportunities for all, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Goal 4 on Education. Established in 2005 with the support of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Prize rewards individuals and organizations that are implementing outstanding projects and promoting the creative use of technologies to enhance learning, teaching and overall educational performance in the digital age.

India's ASHA received WHO Global Health Leaders Award
India's ASHAs are among the 6 recipients of the WHO Director-General's Global Health Leaders Award. The honour recognizes contributions to advancing global health, leadership, and commitment to regional health issues. The other recipients include – Dr. Paul Farmer, Dr. Ahmed Hankir, Ludmila Sofia Oliveira Varela, Polio workers in Afghanistan, and Yōhei Sasakawa.

Note that, India has 3 cadres of Community Health Workers:
　　1. *Auxiliary Nurse-Midwife (ANM),* based at a sub-center and visits villages in addition to providing care at the sub-center.
　　2. *Anganwadi Worker (AWW)*, who works solely in her village and focuses on provision of food supplements to young children, adolescent girls, and lactating women.

3. *Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA),* instituted as Part of National Rural Health Mission, who focus on promotion of immunizations and institutional-based deliveries, for which they receive a performance-related fee.

Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) Workers: ASHA workers are female community health workers instituted as community-based health functionaries under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) launched in 2005. With launch of National Urban Health Mission in 2013, it was extended to urban settings. The core of the ASHA programme has been an intention to build the capacity of community members in taking care of their own health and being partners in health services.

According to the guidelines laid down by the National Health Mission, these women are preferably between 25 and 45 years of age and preference is given to candidates who have qualified up to the tenth standard.

Natarajan Sundar appointed as MD and CEO of NARCL
Natarajan Sundar has been appointed as a Managing Director and CEO of National Assets Reconstruction Company Ltd (NARCL).

Indian Businessman Gautam Adani to donate Rs 60,000 crore
Indian businessman Gautam Adani has pledged to donate Rs 60,000 crore to a range of social causes to celebrate the 60th birthday on June 24.

Indian American wins 2022 Scripps National Spelling Bee – Harini Logan
Indian American girl, Harini Logan has won the 2022 Scripps National Spelling Bee. She defeated Vikram Raju. Her final winning word was '*moorhen*'.

'All That Breathes' won L'Oeil d'Or at Cannes 2022
Delhi-based filmmaker Shaunak Sen's documentary "*All That Breathes*" has won the L'OEil D'Or or 'Golden Eye' – the top documentary award at the Cannes Film Festival.

All That Breathes revolves around the lives of brothers Mohammad Saud and Nadeem Shehzad, who rescue and deal with injured birds, particularly the black kites. Recently, the film was screened at Cannes. It was India's sole entry at the festival.

RJ Umar Nasir wins Radio4Child Awards 2022
Radio Jockey Umar Nisar has awarded the '01 Best Content Award' and the Immunization Champion award by UNICEF at the annual Radio4Child 2022 Awards held in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

9. Social Development

Government notified Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules 2022
The government has issued Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022 under Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021. Rules provide form and manner for registration and fee for a surrogacy clinic and the requirement, and qualification for persons employed, at a registered surrogacy clinic.

The rules make it mandatory for couples who wish to become parents through surrogacy to buy health insurance plans for surrogate mothers for a period of 36 months.

Other Important Provisions
- *Limited attempts:* The government has ensured that the number of attempts of any surrogacy procedure on the surrogate mother shall not be more than three times.
- *Allowed abortion:* A surrogate mother may be allowed for abortion during the process of surrogacy in case of any complication as advised by the doctors.
- *Regulation of private clinics:* Every private surrogacy clinic has to file an application for registration with a fee of Rs 2 lakh which is non-refundable. However, facilities under Government-run Institutes are exempt from such fees.
- *Specialist availability:* Surrogacy clinics shall have at least – one Gynecologist, one anesthetist, one embryologist and one counsellor.
- *Marriage period:* The couple should be married for more than 5 years.
- *Consent of Surrogate:* A surrogate mother has to give her consent through an agreement for giving up all her rights over the child and shall hand over the child/children as soon as she is permitted to do so by the hospital.

Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 defines '*surrogacy*' as a practice whereby one woman bears and gives birth to a child for an intending couple with the intention of handing over such child to the intending couple after the birth. It allows altruistic surrogacy which involves no monetary incentives or rewards to the surrogate mother other than the medical expenses incurred and insurance coverage. Also, it seeks to prohibit commercial surrogacy, which includes trading human embryos and gametes and buying and selling of the services of a surrogate by a monetary reward except for insurance.

Govt. releases first-ever Performance Grading Index for Districts for the year 2018-19 and 2019-20
The first-ever report on the Performance Grading Index for Districts (PGI-D) for 2018-19 & 2019- 20 has been released by the Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSE&L) under the Ministry of Education. PGI-D objective is to help the district to prioritize areas for intervention in school education and thus improve to reach the highest grade.

Highlights
- PGI-D grades the districts into 10 grades;
- Highest achievable grade is called *Daksh* – for districts scoring more than 90% of the total points in that category or overall;
- Lowest grade is called *Akanshi-3* which scores up to 10% of the total points;
- The in-between grades are '*Utkarsh*' (81-90%), '*AtiUttam*' (71-80%), '*Uttam*' (61-70%), '*Prachesta-1*', '*Prachesta-2*' (41-50%), etc.

Performance
- The top 5 achievers are – Chandigarh, Gujarat, Kerala, Delhi, and Maharashtra.
- No district achieved the '*Daksh*' rating in both years.
- 3 Rajasthan districts i.e., Sikar, Jhunjhunu, and Jaipur have emerged as best performers.

UNHCR publishes Global Trends Report 2022
The 2022 annual Global Trends Report was published by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The report presents key statistical trends and the latest numbers of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced and stateless persons worldwide as well as numbers of people who have returned to their countries or areas of origin. The report is published once a year and reflects on the previous year.

June 20 is designated as World Refugee Day by the United Nations. The theme for World Refugee Day 2022 is whoever, whatever, whenever. Everyone has got a right to seek safety.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): A global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people. It was created in 1950, during the aftermath of the Second World War.

UN launches Action Agenda on Internal Displacement
United Nation Secretary-General has launched "Action Agenda on Internal Displacement". The Action Agenda sets out 31 commitments by the UN system to better resolve, prevent and address internal displacement crises. It also includes calls to member states, international financial institutions, the private sector and other actors.

Internally Displaced Persons are people who are forced to flee their homes due to armed conflict, generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters, climate change impacts but who remain within their own country.

National Tribal Research Institute inaugurated in New Delhi
Minister of Home Affairs has inaugurated the National Tribal Research Institute (NTRI) in New Delhi. The institute will work as a premier national level institute and nerve-centre of tribal concerns, issues and matters in academic, executive and legislative fields. It will provide policy inputs to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and State Welfare Departments with studies and programs to showcase tribal cultural heritage under one umbrella.

Swacch Bharat Mission launches revised Swacch Certification Protocols to sustain ODF status
SBM-U 2.0 has launched the revised Swachh Certification Protocols for Open Defecation Free (ODF), ODF+, ODF++, and Water+ certifications.

Key interventions against each certification are:
- *ODF:* Robust monitoring mechanism ensured by increasing the number of survey sample size and location types.
- *ODF+:* Focus on functionality of CT/PT and innovative O&M business model for their sustainability in long run.
- *ODF++:* Emphasis on mechanized cleaning of septic tanks and sewers. Safe collection & treatment of used water as well as safe management of faecal sludge.
- *Water+:* The focus is on collection, transportation, treatment, and reuse of both used water and faecal sludge to prevent environmental pollution. For towns having population more than 20,000, a minimum of 25% households to be connected to sewerage network.

In October 2021, SBM-U 2.0 (2021-22 to 2025-26) was launched with focus on sustaining sanitation and solid waste management outcomes achieved during SBM.

Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U)
- To make all cities 100% 'garbage free' from current 70%.
- Ensure grey and black water management in all cities other than those covered under AMRUT.
- Make all urban local bodies as ODF+ and those with a population of less than 1 lakh as ODF++.
- Focus on source segregation of solid waste by utilizing the principles of 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle).
- Scientific processing of all types of municipal solid waste and remediation of legacy dumpsites for effective solid waste management.

SBM-U was launched in 2014 in all Urban Local Bodies, to achieve 100% ODF status through construction of Individual Household Latrines (IHHLs) and Community/ Public Toilets (CT/PTs).

What is Habitus?
Habitus refers to a collective entity by and into which dominant social and cultural conditions of a society are established and reproduced. What one considers, 'natural', 'taboo', 'neutral' and 'good' or 'bad' is constructed by one's habitus. It was popularized by French Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in his book "Outline of a Theory of Practice" (1977). It helps instill a sense of the world in individuals by attributing cultural value to material or immaterial objects. It explains how inequality is reproduced through the dominant social and cultural conditions that an individual is accustomed to.

What is Buffalopox?
The spread of Monkeypox to non-endemic countries has trained the spotlight on reemerging viruses such as buffalopox, which was first isolated in India. Since the first case in 1934 globally recorded in India, the country has seen several sporadic outbreaks.

Buffalopox is a zoonotic disease endemic to India. It has its root in smallpox vaccines. Live virus used to inoculate buffaloes to produce the smallpox vaccine in India evolved into buffalopox over time. It is caused by buffalopox virus (BPXV); it is a Poxviridae for which the natural host is buffalo. It is classified in the Orthopoxvirus (OPV).

BIS develops Indian Standards for 'Non-electric cooling cabinet made of clay' – Mitticool
Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the National Standards Body of India, has developed an Indian Standard, IS 17693: 2022 for 'non-electric cooling cabinet made of clay' named – Mitticool.

Mitticool is a clay-based natural refrigerator to store fruits, vegetables, and milk, and cooling water. Stored foodstuffs can be kept cool naturally without using electricity. Shri Mansukh Bhai Prajapati from Gujarat is the innovator behind the refrigerator which projects an eco-friendly technology.

Government measures to tackle water crisis
According to some estimates, annual per capita availability of water in India has declined by 75% – from 1947 to 2021, making India a highly water insecure nation.

Water Insecurity: It can be defined as the lack of availability of sufficient water of good quality to meet basic human requirements, livelihoods and ecosystem functions, and an increased risk of water-linked disasters.

According to the 'Falkenmark indicator' (the world's mostly used index for estimating water scarcity), if the water availability in a country is below 1,700 m^3 per person per year, the country is said to be experiencing water stress; below 1,000 m^3 it is said to be experiencing water scarcity; and below 500 m^3, absolute water scarcity."

Government initiatives to tackle the water crisis:

- *Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA):* A campaign for water conservation and water security, with focus on water stressed districts and blocks. "Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain campaign" focuses on saving and conserving rainwater.
- *Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)* aims to make provision of tap water supply to every rural household of the country by 2024.
- *National Water Mission* aims to ensure integrated water resource management helping to conserve water, minimize wastage and ensure more equitable distribution both across and within states.
- *Mission Amrit Sarovar* is aimed at developing and rejuvenating 75 water bodies in each district of the country.
- *Atal Bhujal Yojana (ATAL JAL)* lays emphasis on community participation and demand side interventions for sustainable ground water management in identified water stressed areas in 7 States of the country.
- *New guidelines on Groundwater Extraction of CPCB* with provisions like- mandatory requirement of applying for NOC for new and existing industries, group housing societies, and private water supply tankers.
- *Composite Water Management Index (CWMI)* developed by NITI Aayog to enable effective water management in Indian States.

10. Economy

What is GDP, GVA, GDP-GVA Gap?
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross Value Added (GVA), two measures of India's economy, yet again grew at widely different paces leading to a gap between them.

GDP is the market value of all final goods and services produced within the territorial boundaries of a country for a given period. It is measured by the output, income, and expenditure approaches. GDP is an internationally accepted measure of overall economic growth in a country.

GVA is the total value of goods and services produced within a country after deducting the cost of inputs and raw materials. It is measured by output reach and used as a proxy for GDP. GVA is used to measure sector-wise details of economic activity from the production side.

GDP = ΣGVA + Net taxes on Products – Net Subsidies on Products.

GDP-GVA Gap: Though GVA is used as a proxy for GDP, but they are not same because of the basic difference of GDP being calculated at market prices while GVA is calculated at basic prices. It leads to gap between GDP and GVA.

In 2015, as part of comprehensive review of GDP measurement approach, GVA at basic prices (base year 2011-12) became the primary measure of output across the economy's various sectors in India to conform with the UN System of National Accounts (SNA), 2008. Earlier, India used GVA at factor cost to measure overall economic output.

The System of National Accounts (SNA), 2008: It is the latest version of the international statistical standard for the national accounts adopted by United Nation Statistical Commission (UNSC). It gives recommendations on how to compile measures of economic in a coherent, consistent, and integrated set of macroeconomic accounts based on internationally agreed concepts, definitions, classifications, and accounting rules.

NITI Aayog Report on Gig Workers
NITI Aayog has released the report on Gig workers titled – 'India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy'. NITI Aayog, in the report, projected that the Gig workforce in India may hit 23.5 million by FY30.

As described by Code on Social Security 2020, *'Gig worker'* is a person who performs work or participates in a work arrangement and earns from such activities outside of traditional employer-employee relationship. They can be broadly classified into 2 categories as:
- *Platform Gig Workers:* Workers whose work is based on online software apps or digital platforms such as food aggregator platforms Zomato, Ola, Swiggy etc.
- *Non-platform Gig Workers:* Casual wage workers and own-account workers in the conventional sectors, working part-time or full time. E.g., Construction.

RBI's Asset Classification
According to RBI, the Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPAs) of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) fell to a 6-year low of 5.9% in March 2022 and Net NPAs reduced to 1.7% during the same period.

Non-Performing Assets: Money or loans provided by banks are considered as '*Assets*', as it generates income for the bank. If it has no problem or does not carry more than normal risk it is called 'Standard Asset'. If it ceases to generate income it becomes Non-Performing Asset (NPA).

Asset Classification as per RBI:

1. *SMA-0:* Principal or interest payment not overdue for more than 30 days but account showing signs of incipient stress.
2. *SMA-1:* Principal or interest payment overdue between 31-60 days.
3. *SMA-2:* Principal or interest payment overdue between 61-90 days.
4. *NPA:* Principal or interest payment overdue for a period of more than 90 days (or 2 crop seasons for short duration crops and 1 crop season for long duration crops).
5. *Substandard Assets:* Asset that has remained NPA for a period less than or equal to 12 months.
6. *Doubtful Assets:* Asset that has remained in the substandard category for a period of 12 months.
7. *Loss Assets:* An asset where loss has been identified by the bank or internal or external auditors or by RBI inspection, but the amount has not been written off wholly.

Government launches EASE 5.0 Reforms

Government has launched Enhanced Access and Service Excellence-EASE (EASE 5.0). 'Common reforms agenda' of EASE Next program has been developed for Public Sector Banks. Under EASE 5.0, PSBs will continue to invest in new-age capabilities and deepen the ongoing reforms to respond to evolving customer needs, changing competition and the technology environment. EASE 5.0 will focus on digital customer experience, and integrated & inclusive banking, with emphasis on supporting small businesses and agriculture. Also, All PSBs will also create a bank-specific three-year strategic roadmap.

EASE Reforms has been evolved over 4 annual editions from FY-19 to FY-22 and has catalyzed reforms in diverse areas in Public Sector Banks.

Ministry of Tourism launches National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism

Ministry of Tourism, in partnership with United Environment Program (UNEP) and Responsible Tourism Society of India (RTSOI), has organized the 'National Summit on Developing Sustainable & Responsible Tourist Destinations'. On the occasion, the Ministry has launched the National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism and Responsible Traveler Campaign.

The Strategy document has identified the strategic pillars for development of sustainable tourism such as – Promoting Environmental Sustainability, Protecting Biodiversity, Promoting Economic Sustainability, Promoting Socio-Cultural Sustainability, Scheme for Certification of Sustainable Tourism, IEC and Capacity Building and Governance.

As per United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Sustainable tourism should follow 3 basic principles – Environment Sustainability, Socio-Culture Sustainability, Economic Sustainability.

Note that, India stood at 96th position (191 countries) in Adventure Tourism Competitive Index 2020. Since 2008, the Adventure Travel Trade Association has ranked countries across 10 pillars.

Twin Deficit Problem in the Economy

Ministry of Finance, in its Monthly Economic Review, has cautioned the re-emergence of the twin deficit problem in the economy, with higher commodity prices and rising subsidy burden. It's also the first time the government has explicitly talked about the possibility of fiscal slippage in the current fiscal year. According to it, however, India is at low risk of stagflation, owing to its prudent stabilisation policies.

Twin deficit refers to a nation's current account deficit and a simultaneous fiscal deficit.

Stagflation refers to a situation of persistent high inflation combined with high unemployment and stagnant demand in a country's economy.

Fiscal Deficit is the shortfall in a government's income compared with its spending. Some of the reasons for Fiscal Deficit are – *increasing expenditures (e.g., fertiliser subsidy), reduced revenues due to pandemic, excise duty cuts on diesel and petrol etc.*

Govt. extends GST compensation cess levy till March 2026
Ministry of Finance has extended the time for levy of GST compensation cess by nearly 4 years till 31st March 2026. This was done by notifying Goods and Services Tax (Period of Levy and Collection of Cess) Rules, 2022. Levy of cess was to end on 30th June 2022, but GST Council (*chaired by Union Finance Minister*) decided to extend it to repay borrowings that were done earlier to compensate States for GST revenue loss.

GST (introduced in 2017) is a destination-based tax on consumption of goods and services. States were assured compensation for loss of any revenue arising on account of implementation of GST as per provisions of GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017 for a period of 5 years. It was paid bi-monthly, and a GST Compensation Cess is collected on supply of select goods or services or both. This includes luxury, demerit and sin goods. E.g., pan Masala, various tobacco products etc.

European Commission accorded Equivalence status to CCPs supervised by IFSCA
European Commission has given '*equivalence status*' to Central Counter Parties (CCPs) supervised by IFSCA. This is in accordance with the terms of the requirements laid down in European Market Infrastructure Regulation (EMIR).

Central Counter Parties interpose themselves between counterparties to contracts traded, becoming the buyer to every seller and the seller to every buyer.

International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) was established in October 2020 under the International Financial Services Centres Authority Act, 2019. IFSCA is a unified authority for development and regulation of financial products, financial services and financial institutions in the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in India. Prior to IFSCA – RBI, SEBI, PFRDA and IRDAI regulated the business in IFSC.
Headquarters: GIFT City, Gandhinagar

What are Neobanks?
The Reserve Bank of India is taking a hard look at the Neobank business model where FinTechs (Financial Technology) plug into a conventional bank's network and become customer-facing banking service providers. The concern is that the digital model business can scale up very fast and could grow to be bigger than the underlying bank in terms of customers. Although Neobank customers continue to be accountholders of the underlying bank, the only channel available to these users is the fintech-owned digital platform.

A *Neobank* is a kind of digital bank without any branches. Rather than being physically present at a specific location, Neobanking is entirely online. In India, these firms don't have a bank licence of their own but rely on bank partners to offer licensed services. That's because RBI doesn't allow banks to be 100 % digital yet.

Different Operating Banking Models
- Non-licensed FinTech firms: that collaborate with conventional banks to have a mobile/Web platform and a wrapper around their partner banks' products.

- Traditional banks: that are undertaking their digital initiatives.
- Licensed Neobanks: usually with digital banking licences in those countries that allow it.

Difference between Digital Banks and Neobanks
While the terms are sometimes used mutually, digital banks are often the online-only subsidiary of an established and regulated player in the banking sector, a Neobank, on the other hand, exists solely online without any physical branches and independently or in partnership with traditional banks. E.g., RazorpayX.

SEBI notified new guidelines for "Large Value Fund" for Accredited Investors
SEBI has notified new guidelines for 'Large Value Fund' for accredited investors by amending SEBI (Alternative Investment Funds) Regulations, 2012.

Large Value Fund (LVF) for accredited investors means an AIF or scheme of an AIF in which each investor (other than the manager, sponsor, employees or directors or employees or directors of the manager) is an accredited investor and invests at least Rs 70 crore. The AIF rules permit LVF to extend its tenure beyond 2 years, subject to terms of the contribution agreement and other fund documents.

Accredited investors
SEBI introduced the concept of 'accredited investors' in August 2021, in the Indian securities market in a bid to open up a new channel for raising funds. A person or entity will be identified as an accredited investor on the basis of net worth or income.

Criteria for Accreditation
- An individual, HUF, family trust or sole proprietorship, can be an accredited investor if their annual income is at least Rs. 2 crore or net worth is at least Rs. 7.50 crore, with at least half of it in financial assets.
- Such entities with a combination of at least Rs 1 crore annual income and a net worth of Rs 5 crore, with at least half in financial assets can also become an accredited investor.
- For trusts other than family trusts, a net worth of at least Rs 50 crore would be required to qualify as accredited investors while for corporates, a net worth of Rs 50 crore will be mandatory.
- In case of a partnership firm, each partner independently will have to meet the eligibility criteria for accreditation.
- The Central as well State Governments, funds set up by them, developmental agencies, qualified institutional buyers, Category I FPIs, sovereign wealth funds and multilateral agencies will be accredited investors and may not be required to obtain a certificate of accreditation.

Alternative Investment Fund means any fund established or incorporated in India which is a privately pooled investment vehicle which collects funds from sophisticated investors, whether Indian or foreign, for investing it in accordance with a defined investment policy for the benefit of its investors.

SEBI sets up a Committee for Hybrid Securities
The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has set up a 20-member committee under K V Kamath on Hybrid Securities. It will make recommendations on issues related to development and regulation of primary and secondary markets of hybrid securities. The purpose is to boost the growth of hybrid securities, ease of issuance and attracting domestic and global capital.

Hybrid Securities are investment instruments that combine two or more different financial instruments, commonly the equities and bonds (debt) characteristics. For example, Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs), Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), Preferred Stocks etc.

Govt. launches Jan Samarth Portal
Government has launched the Jan Samarth Portal.

Jan Samarth Portal is a digital portal linking 13 Credit Linked Government schemes on a single platform, for ease of access to all the beneficiaries and related stakeholders. It provides intuitive guidance to beneficiaries for checking subsidy eligibility and auto recommendation system offers best suitable schemes as per Beneficiary's requirements and credentials. It is having multiple integrations within the platform with UIDAI, CBDT, NSDL etc.

Govt. launches NIRYAT Portal – one stop place for foreign trade
Government has launched NIRYAT portal – a one-stop place for all info needed on India's foreign trade. It will help in breaking silos by providing real time data to all stakeholders.
NIRYAT – *National Import-Export Record for Yearly Analysis of Trade Portal*

IMD releases latest edition of World Competitiveness Index
Institute for Management Development (IMD) has released the latest annual edition of World Competitiveness Index (WCI)).

Key Highlights
- India has witnessed the sharpest rise among the Asian economies, with a 6-position jump from 43rd to 37th rank, largely due to gains in economic performance.
- Denmark has moved to the top of the 63-nation list; Switzerland 2nd; Singapore 3rd.
- 3 most important trends found to be impacting businesses in 2022 are – inflationary pressures, geopolitical conflicts and supply chain bottlenecks with COVID being the fourth.

The IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook (WCY), first published in 1989, is a comprehensive annual report and worldwide reference point on the competitiveness of countries. It analyzes and ranks countries according to how they manage their competencies to achieve long-term value creation. It measures the prosperity and competitiveness of countries by examining the Four factors (334 competitiveness criteria):
1. Economic performance
2. Government efficiency
3. Business efficiency
4. Infrastructure

IMD is a Swiss foundation, based in Switzerland, dedicated to the development of international business executives at each stage of their careers.

Note that WCI is different from Global Competitiveness Report of World Economic Forum.

Govt. enhanced funding under TDF Scheme for defence manufacturing to Rs. 50 crores
Government of India has approved enhancement of funding under Technology Development Fund (TDF) scheme of Ministry of Defence to Rs 50 crore per project from Rs 10 crore. Note that, 25% of defence R&D budget was earmarked for private industry, start-ups and academia in Union Budget 2022-23.

The TDF scheme, executed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), supports indigenous development of components, products, systems and technologies by MSMEs and start-ups. The scheme facilitates up to 90% of the total project cost and allows industry to work in consortium with another industry/academia.

Steps taken for defence production and indigenization
- *Defence Acquisition Procedure, 2020* aims to empower Indian domestic industry through 'Make in India' projects with the aim of turning India into a global manufacturing hub.
- *SRIJAN Portal* is a 'one stop shop' online portal that provides access to the vendors to take up items that can be taken up for indigenization.
- *iDEX (Innovation for Defence Excellence)* aimed at creation of an ecosystem to foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace.
- *Technology Development Fund (TDF) Scheme* has been established to promote self-reliance in defence technology as a part of the 'Make in India' initiative.

SDSN releases latest Sustainable Development Report 2022
Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) has released Sustainable Development Report 202 titled "From Crisis to Sustainable Development: The SDGs as Roadmap to 2030 and Beyond".

In the 2022 Finland topped, while India ranked 121st out of the 163 countries compared to 117th in 2020 and 120th in 2021. According to report India is facing major challenges in achieving 11 of 17 Sustainable Development Goals, while it mentioned India is on track to achieving SDG 13 on climate action.

Sustainable development is an overarching paradigm of the United Nations. The concept of sustainable development was described by the 1987 '*Brundtland Commission Report*' as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The adoption of 3 major international agreements in 2015 – *the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, the Paris Climate Agreement, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development* – represented major global breakthroughs for the international community.

EIU releases Global Liveability Index
The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has released its annual Global Livability Index 2022, which ranks cities across the world on their 'livability' quotient, based on a range of criteria. The livability of a city is determined by 5 factors – stability (25%), healthcare (20%), culture and environment (25%), education (10%) and infrastructure (20%).

Key Highlights
- The first place on the list is yet again acquired by Vienna, followed by Copenhagen in second place.
- Before 2022, only Delhi and Mumbai featured among the total of 173 cities ranked in the index. For the first time, the ranking has included Chennai, Bengaluru and Ahmedabad.
- All the five Indian cities surveyed in the index have been ranked between 140 and 146.
- Delhi: 140; Mumbai: 141; Chennai: 142; Ahmedabad: 143; Bengaluru: 146
- Note that, in May 2022, Bengaluru was ranked the most liveable among 111 cities in the government's '*Ease of Living Index*'.
- The Pakistani city of Karachi and Bangladesh's capital Dhaka are among the least liveable cities in the world.

UNCTAD releases annual World Investment Report
UNCTAD has released the annual World Investment Report. According to it, India is ranked seventh despite a 30% decline in foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country. US remains the top recipients.

The *World Investment Report* focuses on trends in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) worldwide, at the regional and country levels and emerging measures to improve its contribution to development. It also provides analysis on global value chains and the operations of multinational enterprises, with special attention to their development implications.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is a permanent intergovernmental body established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1964. It is part of the UN Secretariat. It reports to the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, but has its own membership, leadership, and budget. It is also a part of the United Nations Development Group.

Reports published by UNCTAD are – *Trade and Development Report; World Investment Report; Technology and Innovation Report; Digital Economy Report*

Govt. clears proposal allowing cooperatives to sell products on GeM platform
The Union Cabinet has cleared a proposal allowing cooperatives to sell products on the Government-e-Marketplace (GeM) platform.

Government-e-Marketplace: It was started in 2017. It is a one stop portal to facilitate online procurement of common use Goods and Services. The portal is open for all government buyers— Central and State Ministries, Departments, Public Sector Enterprises etc. However, private buyers cannot buy on the platform but private people can sell products to government bodies through the portal. Ministry of Commerce and Industry is the nodal ministry for its operations.

What is Green Bond?
India is likely to face an uphill battle if it goes ahead with its first 'sovereign green bond' sale as it aims to issue the securities in rupees, putting off most overseas investors.

A *green bond* is a type of fixed-income instrument that is specifically earmarked to raise money for climate and environmental projects. These bonds are typically asset-linked and backed by the issuing entity's balance sheet, so they usually carry the same credit rating as their issuers' other debt obligations. Green bonds may come with tax incentives to enhance their attractiveness to investors. The World Bank is a major issuer of green bonds.

Green Bond Vs Blue Bond: Blue bonds are sustainability bonds to finance projects that protect the ocean and related ecosystems. This can include projects to support sustainable fisheries, protection of coral reefs and other fragile ecosystems, or reducing pollution and acidification. All blue bonds are green bonds, but not all green bonds are blue bond.

Green Bonds Vs Climate Bonds: "Green bonds" and "climate bonds" are sometimes used interchangeably, but some authorities use the latter term specifically for projects focusing on reducing carbon emissions or alleviating the effects of climate change.

What is Current Account Deficit?
Current Account Deficit in India has decreased to 1.5% of GDP from 2.6% of GDP in Q3 FY 2021-22.

The *Current Account Deficit* is a measurement of a country's trade where the value of the goods and services it imports exceeds the value of the products it exports. The Current Account represents a country's foreign transactions and, like the capital account, is a component of a country's Balance of Payments (BOP).

Govt. approves digitization of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies
Union Cabinet has approved the digitization of 63,000 Primary Agricultural Credit Societies. PACS is a village-level institution that works directly with rural residents. It encourages agriculturists to save, accepts deposits from them, makes loans to deserving borrowers, and collects repayments.

PACS are the lowest unit in a three-tier structure: The other two tiers — State Cooperative Banks (StCB) and District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCB) — have already been automated by the NABARD and brought on the Common Banking Software (CBS).

BIRAC launches Biotech Startup Expo – 2022 on its 10ᵗʰ Anniversary
To mark the completion of 10 years of setting up of Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), Biotech Startup Expo – 2022 was launched with the theme '*Biotech Startup Innovations: Towards AatmaNirbhar Bharat.*'

BIRAC is a not-for-profit Public Sector Enterprise, set up by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT). The objective is to strengthen and empower the emerging BioTech Enterprise to undertake strategic research and innovation, addressing nationally relevant product development needs.

What is Black Swan Event?
As per the latest RBI study, capital outflows to the tune of $100 billion (around Rs 7,80,000 crore) are likely to take place from India in case of a major global risk scenario or a "black swan" event.

A *black swan* is a rare, unpredictable event that comes as a surprise and has a significant impact on society or the world. These events are said to have three distinguishing characteristics – they are extremely rare and outside the realm of regular expectations; they have a severe impact after they hit; and they seem probable in hindsight when plausible explanations appear.

The black swan theory was put forward by author and investor Nassim Nicholas Taleb in 2001, and later popularized in his 2007 book – *"The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable"*.

What is Dutch Disease?
Dutch Disease in economics refers to a phenomenon wherein a country witnesses' uneven growth across sectors due to the discovery of natural resources, especially large oil reserves.

When a country discovers natural resources and starts exporting them to the rest of the world, it causes the exchange rate of the currency to appreciate significantly and this, in turn, discourages the exports from other sectors while encouraging the import of cheaper alternatives. E.g., the Netherlands (1960s) discovered gas reserves in the North Sea.

The term '*Dutch Disease*' was first coined by 'The Economist' in 1977 to describe the decline of the manufacturing industry in the Netherlands.

RBI extends deadline for Card-on-File Tokenisation till 30ᵗʰ September 2022
RBI has extended the timeline for tokenisation of debit and credit cards till 30th September 2022 to avoid disruption and inconvenience to cardholders.

The word '*tokenisation*' refers to the replacement of an actual card number with an alternative code which will be converted into a token. It is considered safer as the actual card details are not shared with the merchant during transaction processing.

Card-on-File: A CoF transaction is a transaction where a cardholder has authorised a merchant to store the cardholder's Mastercard or Visa payment details, e.g. e-commerce companies, and hotels generally do it.

MCA reworks rule for Winding up business
The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has revised the rules on the voluntary winding up of companies to give additional opportunities to companies for making the case for an exit through electronic filing after the initial request. This is done by notifying the Companies (Removal of names of companies from the register) Amendment Rules 2022. Company that does not commence operations after incorporation have the option to seek '*dormant status*' to avoid getting struck off by the regulator. The idea is to make the corporate exit process under the Companies Act provisions, outside the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), smoother.

Voluntary winding up offers an opportunity for companies with little economic activity to down their shutters outside the IBC process. This is vital for the industry as many entrepreneurs remain unable to commence business operations for various economic reasons after incorporating a company.

What is Shrinkflation?
During February-April 2022, data analytics noted that the average pack size of FMCG products in India shrank by nearly 15% year on year. *Shrinkflation* is the practice of reducing the size (or sometimes quality) of a product while the price of the product remains the same or slightly increases.

For example, the size of a chocolate bar is reduced from 60 grams to 55 grams with no resultant decrease in price. The pages of a notebook are changed from 1000 to 800 and price remains unaltered.

India signed 2022 Resilient Democracies Statement (RDS) along with G7 countries
India has signed the '2022 Resilient Democracies Statement (RDS)' along with G7 countries. The statement calls for guarding the freedom, independence and diversity of civil society actors and protecting the freedom of expression and opinion online and offline.

First Country in Asia to de-criminalize Cannabis - Thailand
Thailand has become the first country in Asia to decriminalize Marijuana which is also known as Cannabis. It has decriminalized Marijuana with the aim of boosting its agriculture and tourism sectors. Under decriminalization, it is no longer a crime in Thailand to grow and trade marijuana and hemp products or use parts of the plant to treat illnesses.

In 2018, Canada became the first G20 country to legalize the recreational use of cannabis. Uruguay legalized the recreational use of marijuana for all adults above the age of 18 in 2013.

India emerged as the 4ᵗʰ largest recycler of Gold – World Gold Council Report
According to the World Gold Council (WGC) latest report, India has emerged as the 4ᵗʰ largest recycler of Gold in the world. India's gold refining capacity increased by 1,500 tonnes (500%) in 2021. The scale of unorganised

refining has fallen, largely due to the government's tightening of pollution regulations. The report is titled – '*Gold refining and recycling*'. Recycling is driven by current gold price movements, future price expectations and the economic backdrop.

IIM Ahmedabad launches country's first Agri Land Price Index
In a unique initiative, IIM Ahmedabad has joined hands with an e-marketplace for agricultural land – SFarmsIndia, to develop a farm land price index based on the sales and purchases done on the platform. The index has been designed to record and present the "quality-controlled" data on prices of agricultural land in the country. It will be called IIM Ahmedabad-SFarmsIndia Land Price Index (ISALPI).

Reliance Jio first to provide 4G Network in Pangong Lake
Indian telecommunications company, Reliance Jio has become the first to provide 4G voice and data services at Spangmik village near Pangong lake in the Ladakh. This launch will help to boost the economy of the region besides providing seamless connectivity to the tourists and the troops in the area.

Zomato to acquire Grocery delivery company Blinkit
Zomato online food delivery platform has announced to acquire Blinkit, which was earlier known as Grofers.

11. Important Days

International Yoga Day
International Yoga Day is observed on June 21ˢᵗ every year.

The World Health Organization mentions *yoga* as a means to improve health in its Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018–2030: More active people for a healthier World. The UN proclaimed June 21 as International Day of Yoga by passing a resolution on December 11, 2014, during the 69ᵗʰ session of the General Assembly. This was done at the initiative of India with the support of 177 countries.
Theme for the year 2022: '*Yoga for Humanity'*

Yoga is an ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice that originated in India. The word 'yoga' derives from Sanskrit and means to join or to unite, symbolizing the union of body and consciousness.

On the occasion of International Yoga Day, the AYUSH Ministry has announced to give the 'Prime Minister's Award for Outstanding Contribution towards the Development and Promotion of Yoga' for 2022 to 2 individuals and 2 organisations in recognition of their contributions in the space.

Awardees: 2 individuals Bhikkhu Sanghasena from Ladakh, Marcus Vinicius Rojo Rodrigues from Brazil and 2 organisations, "The Divine Life Society" from Uttarakhand and the British Wheel of Yoga from United Kingdom. They will also receive Rs 25 lakh as cash prize, a trophy and a certificate.

Child Labour Day
The United Nations observes June 12 each year as the 'World Day Against Child Labour' to bring attention to the evil practices of child labour across the world. The International Labour Organisation launched this day in 2002 to tackle this global issue against child labour.
Theme: *"Universal Social Protection to End Child Labour"*

The ILO Convention No. 182, which deals with the worst forms of child labour as well as ILO Convention No. 138, that deals with the minimum age for employment, are the two main global conventions on the issue.

Indian Constitution provisions in this regard:
- Article 21(A) and Article 45 – The child has the right to Education i.e. the state shall provide compulsory and free education to the children of the age six to 14 years.
- Article 24 – There is a provision under which a child below the age of 14 years cannot be employed in any mine, factory or hazardous workplace.
- Article 39(f) – The child's youth and childhood are to be protected against moral and material abandonment and exploitation.

Government measures undertaken to eradicate child labour in India:
- Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986
- Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016
- National Policy on Child Labour, 1987
- Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act2000 and amendment of the JJ Act in 2006
- The Right to Education Act 2009

World Ocean Day
World Oceans Day is celebrated on June 8 every year. The concept of World Oceans Day was first proposed by the UN in 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.
Theme for 2022: *"Revitalization: collective action for the ocean"*

World Bicycle Day
World Bicycle Day is observed on the 3rd of June every year.

The day is marked to spread awareness about the benefits of using a bicycle. As per the United Nations, the day highlights the uniqueness, longevity and versatility of the bicycle. The day has been observed since 2018 after a resolution was passed by the United Nations, during its 72nd Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Juneteenth
Juneteenth completes a year as the first new federal holiday created in almost four decades. Juneteenth– the portmanteau of June and nineteenth– is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the US representing freedom for African Americans, observed on June 19 every year. It is also known as Emancipation Day or Juneteenth Independence Day.

World Milk Day
June 1 is observed as World Milk Day every year.

The aim is to achieve 'Dairy Net Zero' by reducing greenhouse gas emissions over the next 30 years and improving waste management in order to make the dairy sector sustainable. It was established by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations in 2001 to recognize the importance of milk as a global food. India is the world's largest milk producer.
The top 5 milk-producing states are: *Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh.*

The theme of World Milk Day 2022 is to bring attention to the climate change crisis and how the dairy sector can reduce its impact on the planet.

World Accreditation Day
World Accreditation Day is celebrated on 9th June every year.

WAD has been established by the joint efforts of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC).
Theme for the year 2022: *"Accreditation: Sustainability in Economic Growth and the Environment"*

International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, 2022
International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking day is observed every year on 26th June.

The date 'June 26' is to commemorate Lin Zexu's (Chinese Head of State under Emperor of the Qing dynasty) dismantling of the opium trade in Humen, Guangdong, ending in June 25, 1839, just before the First Opium War in China.
Theme for the year 2022: "*Addressing drug challenges in health and humanitarian crises*"

The *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)* is a United Nations Office that was established in 1997 as the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention by combining the United Nations International Drug

Control Program and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division in the United Nations Office at Vienna. It is Headquartered at Vienna, Austria.

Statistics Day
Statistics Day is celebrated on 29th June every year.

The day is observed in recognition of the notable contributions made by Late Professor 'Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis' in the fields of Statistics, Statistical system and Economic planning. The theme of National Statistics Day 2022 is 'Data for Sustainable Development'.

PC Mahalanobis (1893–1972): He is referred to as the Chief Architect of Indian Statistical System as well as Father of Statistical Science in India. He established the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) in 1931 in Kolkata. In 1959, it was made an autonomous body of Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation. He also helped in the establishment of Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), the National Sample Survey (NSS) and the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI). He introduced 3 key concepts to the theory and practice of Sample Surveys which are: Pilot surveys, Optimum survey design and Inter Penetrating Network of Sub-Samples technique (IPNS). The Mahalanobis Model was employed in the Second Five Year Plan, which worked towards the rapid industrialization of India.

World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought
World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought 2022 is observed every year on 17th June.

This day was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution in 1995, after the day when United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was drafted.
Theme for the year 2022: "*Rising up from drought together*"

Desertification is the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. It is caused primarily by human activities and climatic variations. Desertification does not refer to the expansion of existing deserts. It occurs because of dryland ecosystems, which cover over one third of the world's land area, are extremely vulnerable to overexploitation and inappropriate land use. Poverty, political instability, deforestation, overgrazing and bad irrigation practices can all undermine the productivity of the land.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD): It was established in 1994. It is the sole legally binding international agreement, linking environment and development to sustainable land management. It is the only Convention stemming from a direct recommendation of the Rio Conference's Agenda 21 (1992). Its 197 Parties aim, through partnerships, to implement the Convention and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The end goal is to protect land from over-use and drought, so it can continue to provide food, water and energy. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is the nodal Ministry in India for this Convention.

World Environment Day
World Environment Day is observed every year on 5th June 2022.

The Day was chosen to mark the first day of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment which was held in Stockholm, Sweden from June 5–16 in 1972. This year's host was Colombia in partnership with Germany. The theme for 2022 was '*Only One Earth*' focuses on our role as the citizens of the Earth, to protect the environment and to encourage sustainable living everywhere and every day. The World Environment Day is an initiative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Also, the 50th anniversary of the Stockholm conference was being observed this year.

Lifestyle for the Environment (LiFE) Movement
- It was launched by India on the occasion of World Environment Day (5th June).
- The idea of LiFE was introduced by the Indian Prime Minister during the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow in 2021.
- The idea promotes an environment-conscious lifestyle that focuses on 'mindful and deliberate utilisation' instead of 'mindless and destructive consumption'.
- The Movement aims to utilise the power of collective action and nudge individuals across the world to undertake simple climate-friendly actions in their daily lives. The Mission plans to create and nurture a global network of individuals, namely 'Pro-Planet People' (P3).

Canada Province to celebrate Turban Day on April 13
Manitoba in Canada has enacted the Turban Day Act. As per this Act, April 13 every year will now be celebrated as Turban Day across the Province. Manitoba felt it was necessary to have a day that officially recognises the turban as a part of Canada's diversity and multiculturalism.

The day of Baisakhi or Vaisakhi, which usually falls on April 13 or 14 each year, commemorates the birth of Khalsa Panth. It was on this day in 1699 that the tenth Guru Gobind Singh had laid the foundation of Khalsa Panth at Anandpur Sahib among his followers. Baisakhi is observed as a major festival to celebrate the birth of the Khalsa Panth.

Global Day of Parents
Global Day of Parents is observed every year on the 1st of June globally. The Global Day of Parents is an annual event that celebrates the importance of parents in children's lives. The theme for Global Parent Day 2022 was 'Family Awareness', awareness internationally.

World Refugee Day
World Refugee Day is celebrated every year on 20 June. World Refugee Day was designated as an International Day by the UN (United Nations).

International Olympic Day
International Olympic Day is celebrated on June 23rd across the globe. The day is primarily celebrated to commemorate the birth of modern Olympic games. This year, the theme for the International Olympic Day was "Together For A Peaceful World."

United Nations Public Service Day
June 23 is observed as United Nations Public Service Day. The theme for this year's event was "Building back better from COVID-19: Enhancing innovative partnerships to meet the Sustainable Development Goals."

12. *Culture*

Sangeet Natak Akademi organizes – Jyotirgamaya
As part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, on the occasion of World Music Day (21st June), Sangeet Natak Akademi has organized Jyotirgamaya – a festival to showcase the talent of rare musical instruments from across the country, including street performers, train entertainers, performers attached to temples, etc.

Ancient City in Iraq – unearthed
The ruins of a 3,400-year-old lost city have been unearthed in Iraq after extreme drought severely depleted water levels in the country's largest reservoir. The Archaeologists said the settlement is thought to be the ancient city of 'Zakhiku', once a buzzing political center in the region.

NMA planning for Rukmini-Krishna Yatra
National Monumental Authority (NMA) is planning to highlight Arunachal Pradesh age old cultural connect with Gujarat through Rukmini and Bhagwan Krishna story. For this, it is aiming for monument preservation and organising a Rukmini Krishna Yatra between Arunachal Pradesh and Gujarat on a large scale and to promote it at the national level. It aims to promote the concept of national unity and generate awareness on the initiative – 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat'. The saga of Rukmini's marriage to Lord Krishna is still sung by the local Idu Mishmi tribal community. In Porbandar, Krishna's marriage with Arunachal's Rukmini is also celebrated.

J&K people celebrated Zyestha Ashtami at the Mata Kheerbhawani temple
Hindu community in Jammu & Kashmir has celebrated Zyestha Ashtami at the Mata Kheerbhawani temple at Tulmulla in central Kashmir's Ganderbal. The temple is dedicated to the goddess Ragnya Devi. Situated 30 km from Srinagar city, it is one of the most sacred pilgrimage sites for Kashmiri Hindus. The temple gets its name from kheer, or milk and rice pudding, that pilgrims pour into the spring inside the temple complex as an offering to the goddess. The festival is the largest gathering of Hindus in Jammu & Kashmir after the annual Amarnath Yatra.

Ambubachi Mela in Guwahati, Assam
The Ambubachi Mela is an annual Hindu Mela held at Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati, Assam. This yearly Mela is celebrated during the monsoon season that happens to fall during the Assamese month *Ahaar*, around the middle of June. The festival marks the annual menstruation of the presiding Goddess. Note that, Kamakhya is one of 51 shakti peethasor holy sites for the followers of the Shakti cult.

Govt. inaugurates Sant Kabir Academy at Maghar under Swadesh Darshan Yojana
Kabirdas Jayanti, the birth anniversary of Sant Kabir Das, is observed on '*Jyeshtha Purnima tithi*' occurred during the month of June. On the occasion, Government has inaugurated the Sant Kabir Academy and Research Centre under Swadesh Darshan Yojana at Maghar, Uttar Pradesh.

Sant Kabir Das was a very renowned saint, poet and social reformer of India who lived during the 15th century. His esteemed works and poems describe the greatness and oneness of the Supreme Being. He was a proponent of the Bhakti Movement. Kabir Das' ideologies were greatly influenced by Vaishnava saint Swami Ramananda who accepted Kabir as his disciple. The hallmark of Sant Kabirdas' work consists of his two-line couplets, popularly known as *'Kabir Ke Dohe'*.

His famous literary works
- Bijak, Sakhi Granth, Kabir Granthawali and Anurag Sagar.

- His verses are found in Sikhism's scripture Guru Granth Sahib. A major part of his work was collected by the 5th Sikh guru, Guru Arjan Dev.