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# Current Events

November 2021

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

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

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

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## November 2021

### 1. Sports and Games

#### **National Sports Awards 2021 announced**

The National Sports Awards for the year 2021 were announced by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports. The National Sports Awards are given every year to recognize and reward excellence in sports.

*'Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award'* is given for the spectacular and most outstanding performance in the field of sports by a sportsperson over a period of previous 4 years.

*'Arjuna Award for outstanding performance in Sports and Games'* is given for good performance over a period of previous 4 years and showing qualities of leadership, sportsmanship and a sense of discipline.

*'Dronacharya Award for outstanding coaches in Sports and Games'* is given to coaches for doing outstanding and meritorious work on a consistent basis and enabling sportspersons to excel in international events.

*'Dhyan Chand Award for Lifetime achievement in Sports and Games'* is given to honour sportspersons who have contributed to sports by their performance and continue to contribute to promotion of sports event after their retirement.

*'Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar'* is given to corporate entities (both in private and public sector), sports control boards, NGOs including sports bodies at the State and National level who have played a visible role in the area of sports promotion and development.

Overall top performing university in inter-university tournaments is given *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy*.

Note that, Olympic Gold Medalist Neeraj Chopra has received the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna award. He won the Gold Medal in the Javelin Throw event at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. He also received Padma Shree, the fourth-highest civilian award of India.

#### **First-ever National Yogasana Championship held in Bhubaneswar**

First-ever National Yogasana Championship was held in Bhubaneswar. It has been organized by National Yogasana Sports Federation (NYSF) in association with the Odisha Government. Yogasana sport for both male and female categories have also been included in Khelo India Youth Games 2021.

#### **Akash Kumar Won Bronze at World Boxing Championship**

Debutant Akash Kumar (54 Kg) has won a bronze medal in 2021 AIBA World Boxing Championship (held in Serbia). Akash became the only 7<sup>th</sup> Indian male boxer to secure a medal. He also claimed a prize money of \$25,000.

At semi-final level, he was defeated against Kazakhstan's Makhmud Sabyrkhan.

#### **Women's Cricket T20 tournament to make debut in 2022 Commonwealth Games**

Women's cricket T20 tournament will be making its debut in 2022 Commonwealth Games scheduled in Birmingham, England. It will only be the second time that Cricket features in the multi-discipline event after a men's competition was part of the Games in Kuala Lumpur in 1998.

**Tamil Nadu won Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy**

Tamil Nadu Cricket team has won the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy by defeating Karnataka. It was its 3<sup>rd</sup> title which make Tamil Nadu, the most successful team in the history of Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy. The Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy is a domestic Twenty-20 Cricket Championship organized by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

**Australia Won T20 World Cup title**

Australia has won their maiden T20 World Cup title as they defeated New Zealand in the Finals. Mitchell Marsh was named as the Player of the Match.

*ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021* was held in UAE and Oman. The event which was to be held in India shifted to UAE and Oman due to the COVID-19 situation in India. BCCI, however, was continued to be the host of the event.

## 2. Science and Technology

### 5G Technology

Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea have received a 6-month extension from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to conduct 5G trials till May 2022.

5G is the 5<sup>th</sup> Generation of cellular technology. It is designed to increase speed, reduce latency, and improve flexibility of wireless services. It enables a new kind of network that is designed to connect virtually everyone and everything together including machines, objects, and devices. While earlier Generations of cellular technology (such as 4G LTE) focused on ensuring connectivity, 5G takes connectivity to the next level by delivering connected experiences from the cloud to clients. 5G networks are virtualized and software-driven, and they exploit cloud technologies.

The previous generations of mobile networks are 1G, 2G, 3G and 4G.

1. *First Generation*: 1G 1980s: 1G delivered analog voice.
2. *Second Generation*: 2G Early 1990s: 2G introduced digital voice (for example – CDMA- Code Division Multiple Access).
3. *Third Generation*: 3G Early 2000s: 3G brought mobile data (for example – CDMA2000).
4. *Fourth Generation*: 4G LTE 2010s: 4G LTE ushered in the era of mobile broadband.

1G, 2G, 3G and 4G, all led to 5G, which is designed to provide more connectivity than was ever available before.

### LIGO Project in India

Hingoli Revenue Department (Maharashtra) has handed over land for Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) project for setting up a laboratory along with some other related infrastructure. Earlier in 2016, the Central Government had given approval to LIGO-India (a Joint India-US detector) for research on gravitational waves. The Project is to be funded by Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and Department of Science and Technology (DST).

LIGO was designed for direct detection of gravitational waves predicted by Einstein's General Theory of Relativity. It is being operated at 2 sites in US (Washington and Louisiana). Also, there are 3 LIGO's sisters' facilities: Virgo in Italy, GEO600 in Germany and KAGRA (Kamioka Gravitational wave Detector) in Japan and then in India (LIGO).

*General Theory of Relativity*: It holds that what we perceive as the force of gravity arises from the curvature or warping of space and time. The more massive an object, the more it warps the space around it.

### ISRO's Prevents Collision of Chandrayaan-2 and NASA's Robotic spacecraft orbiter (LRO)

A Collision Avoidance Manoeuvre (CAM) was performed by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to avoid a "critically close approach" of the orbiter of its moon mission Chandrayaan-2 and NASA's robotic spacecraft of Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO). It is common for satellites in Earth Orbit to undergo CAMs to mitigate collision risk due to space objects including space debris and operational spacecraft.

*Chandrayaan-2*: Mission was launched in 2019 with the aims of studying all areas of the Moon combining exosphere, the surface as well as the sub-surface of the moon in a single mission. Chandrayaan-2 comprised an Orbiter, Lander (Vikram) and Rover (Pragyan) to explore the unexplored South Pole of the Moon. Though mission spacecraft failed its soft landing on the Moon's surface, its Orbiter (which forms a significant chunk of the mission) continues to successfully collect and relay crucial insights about the Moon to date.

LRO is a NASA's Robotic spacecraft currently orbiting the moon in an eccentric polar mapping orbit.

### **Annual Leonids Meteor Shower**

Every year in November, an annual meteor shower called the *Leonids* radiate out from the direction of the constellation of Leo in the sky. They can be seen with the naked eye when the sky is clear and there is no moonlight. The meteors originate from the Comet 55P/Tempel-Tuttle, which orbits the sun every 33 years and intersects the Earth's orbit directly in its path. It leaves behind a trail every time it intersects the Earth's orbit, once in 33 years. But the Earth passes through this trail each year as it revolves around the sun, causing meteor showers to occur.

*Meteor shower:* Meteors are bits of rock and ice that are ejected from comets as they manoeuvre around their orbits around the sun. Meteor showers are witnessed when Earth passes through the trail of debris left behind by a comet or an asteroid.

Difference between an Asteroid, Comet, Meteoroid, Meteor and Meteorite:

1. *Asteroid:* A relatively small, inactive, rocky body orbiting the Sun.
2. *Comet:* A relatively small, at times active, object whose ices can vaporize in sunlight forming an atmosphere (coma) of dust and gas and, sometimes, a tail of dust and/or gas.
3. *Meteoroid:* A small particle from a comet or asteroid orbiting the Sun.
4. *Meteor:* The light phenomena which results when a meteoroid enters the Earth's atmosphere and vaporizes; a shooting star.
5. *Meteorite:* A meteoroid that survives its passage through the Earth's atmosphere and lands upon the Earth's surface.

### **What is UV-C Technology?**

UV-C water purification is one of the most effective methods to disinfect water. In this technique, special "germicidal" UV-C lamps, emitting high-intensity ultraviolet light, purifies the water without the use of harsh chemicals that are harmful to the environment.

UV radiation is the portion of the Electromagnetic spectrum between X-rays and Visible light. The most common form of UV radiation is sunlight, which produces 3 main types of UV rays: (i) UVA, (ii) UVB, (iii) UVC.

UV radiations are normally used to kill microorganisms. Particularly, UVC, also known as Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI) is a disinfection method that uses short-wavelength ultraviolet light to kill or inactivate microorganisms by destroying their nucleic acids and disrupting their DNA, leaving them unable to perform vital cellular functions and stops their replication. UVGI is used in a variety of applications, such as food, air, and water disinfection.

### **India launched first Manned Ocean Mission - Samudrayan**

India has launched First Manned Ocean Mission 'Samudrayan' at Chennai. With this, India joins the elite club of nations such as USA, Russia, Japan, France and China to have such underwater vehicles for carrying out subsea activities. The Mission shall facilitate in carrying out deep ocean exploration of the non-living resources such as polymetallic manganese, hydro-thermal sulphides, cobalt crusts, located at a depth between 1000-5500 meters.

### **India's largest landfill gas-to-compressed biogas plant inaugurated in Hyderabad**

Ramky Enviro Engineers Limited has inaugurated one of the world's first and India's largest landfill gas-to-compressed biogas plant in Hyderabad. The project is focused on the conversion of landfill gas into compressed



biogas as an automotive fuel. The project offers significant benefits such as carbon sequestration and reduced emissions of GHGs (Green House Gases) into the environment and contributes to the greening of the automotive industry. The end product (Biogas) of the plant will be sold to Bhagyanagar Gas Limited (BGL).

#### **INS Visakhapatnam commissioned into Indian Navy**

INS Visakhapatnam, a P-15B stealth guided missile destroyer, was commissioned into the Indian Navy. The event marks the formal induction of the first of the 4 ‘Visakhapatnam’ class destroyers indigenously designed by the Indian Navy’s in-house organisation Directorate of Naval Design and constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, Mumbai. Under the P-15B (Visakhapatnam Class), a total of 4 warships are planned (Visakhapatnam, Mormugao, Imphal, Surat).

Note that, India’s indigenous Destroyer Construction Programme was commenced in the late 1990s with 3 Delhi class (P-15 class) warships and was followed by 3 Kolkata class (P-15A) destroyers commissioned a decade later.

#### **Project 75 fourth submarine Vela delivered to Indian Navy**

INS Vela, the 4<sup>th</sup> submarine in the series of 6 submarines of Project-75, was commissioned into Indian Navy. These Scorpene Class submarines are being built in India by the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) Mumbai, under collaboration with France. These Submarines have advanced stealth features and are also equipped with both long-range guided torpedoes as well as anti-ship missiles. These submarines have a state-of-the-art SONAR and sensor suite permitting outstanding operational capabilities. They also have an advanced Permanent Magnetic Synchronous motor (PERMASYN) as its propulsion motor.

#### **Rashtra Raksha Samparpan Parv held in Jhansi, UP**

Rashtra Raksha Samparpan Parv is being held in Jhansi as part of ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahaotsav’ celebrations. Prime Minister also lays the foundation stone of the project at Jhansi node of UP Defence Industrial Corridor. The project is being executed by Bharat Dynamics Ltd. for setting up a plant to produce propulsion systems for Anti-Tank Guided Missiles.

### 3. Environment

#### **26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP) of UNFCCC concluded**

The 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP 26) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Glasgow, hosted by the UK, was concluded. The Conference also included the:

- 16<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 16), and
- 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 3).

The COP 26 holds significance as it aims to finalise the Paris rulebook, following the 2019 COP25 summit in Madrid, where many issues had not been agreed and had been pushed into the next year under the “Rule 16” of the UN climate process.

#### *Key Outcomes:*

- The conference ended with all 197 parties to the UNFCCC agreeing to Glasgow Climate Pact (GCP), the global agreement which will accelerate action on climate this decade and completes the Paris Rulebook.
  - The *GCP* aims to limit global warming to 1.5 degree Celsius by 2030, as agreed under the 2015 Paris Agreement. This calls for global greenhouse gas emissions to be cut 45 % by 2030 and to zero overall by 2050 to achieve the Paris goal.
- First-ever COP decision to explicitly target action against fossil fuels, calling for a “phase-down of unabated coal” and “phase-out” of inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies.
- Article 6 (International Carbon Markets) which covers Market and non-market-based mechanisms of the Paris Agreement, was finalized.
  - Mechanism contains 3 separate mechanisms for “voluntary cooperation” towards climate goals, with the overarching aim of raising ambition. Two of the mechanisms are based on markets and a 3<sup>rd</sup> one is based on “non-market approaches”.

#### *Agenda/Pledges launched during the COP26 of which India is signatory*

- *Breakthrough Agenda*: It commits countries to work together to make clean technologies and sustainable solutions the most affordable, accessible and attractive option in each emitting sector (power, road transport, steel, agriculture etc.) globally before 2030.
- *Declaration on “accelerating the transition to 100% zero-emission cars and vans”*: It aims to work towards all sales of new cars and vans being zero emission globally by 2040, and by no later than 2035 in leading markets.

*Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (GFANZ)*: GFANZ was originally unveiled in April 2021 as a forum for leading financial institutions to accelerate transition to a net-zero global economy through de-carbonization of the economy in line with the Paris agreement. It was now launched by UN Special Envoy for Climate Action and Finance, along with UNFCCC Climate Action Champions, and the COP26 Presidency.

*Global Resilience Index Initiative (GRII)*: It was launched during COP26 by 10 global organisations including United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), Insurance Development Forum (IDF), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) etc. It will provide a globally consistent model for the assessment of resilience across all sectors and geographies.

Note that, at the end of the conference, the council decided that the 2022 edition of the Conference of Parties, or the 27<sup>th</sup> COP, will take place at Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, and the 28<sup>th</sup> edition in 2023 will be held in UAE.

### **Global Methane Pledge launched at COP26**

As many as 104 countries have promised to cut their methane emissions by at least 30 % by 2030 at the 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties (COP26) to UNFCCC summit in Glasgow, United Kingdom. The initiative was announced by the United States and European Union in September 2021. The pledge is called *Global Methane Pledge*. India, the third-largest source of methane emissions, is not a signatory.

### **E-Amrit Portal**

‘E-Amrit’, a web portal on Electric Vehicles (EVs) was launched by India at the COP26 Summit in Glasgow, UK. It is a one-stop destination for all information on electric vehicles—busting myths around the adoption of EVs and complement initiatives of government on raising awareness on EVs. The portal has been developed and hosted by NITI Aayog under a collaborative knowledge exchange programme with the UK government and as part of the UK–India Joint Roadmap 2030.

### **Clydebank Declaration for Green Shipping Corridors**

Coalition of 22 countries have agreed to create zero emissions shipping trade routes between ports to speed up the decarbonisation of the global maritime industry. The signatory countries signed the 'Clydebank Declaration for Green Shipping Corridors' (launched at the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow) and agreed to support the establishment of at least 6 green corridors by 2025. The strategy for going carbon neutral will include using ships that run on zero-carbon fuels and updating port infrastructure.

India is not the signatory of the declaration. However, India is a member of International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and signatory to International Convention on Prevention of Marine Pollution (MARPOL).

A *green corridor* is defined as a shipping route between 2 major port hubs on which the technological, economic and regulatory feasibility of zero-emissions ships is accelerated by public and private action.

### **Climate Change Performance Index**

The 17<sup>th</sup> edition of the Climate Change Performance Index was released.

*Climate Change Performance Index* is an independent monitoring tool for tracking countries’ climate protection performance. It aims to enable comparison of climate protection efforts and progress made by individual countries. The Index covers 57 countries and the EU. In 2017, the underlying methodology of the CCPI was revised and adapted to the new climate policy framework of the Paris Agreement from 2015. The CCPI was extended in order to include the measurement of a country’s progress towards the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the country’s 2030 targets.

The ranking results are defined by a country’s aggregated performance in 14 indicators within the 4 categories:

- (i) GHG Emission- 40%
- (ii) Renewable Energy – 20%
- (iii) Energy Use- 20%
- (iv) Climate Policy- 20%

In the overall rankings, India is at number 10 with a score of 69.22. It is a high performer except in the renewable energy category, in which it is ranked “medium”. The first 3 ranks of the overall rankings were kept empty

because no country had performed well enough in all index categories to achieve an overall very high rating. The first 3 ranks in the greenhouse gas emissions category, too, were kept empty.

### **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)**

States in the National Capital Region were directed to be ready to implement actions under the ‘emergency’ category of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) to control air pollution.

GRAP is essentially a step-by-step guide for what to do when air in Delhi-NCR gets heavily polluted. It was approved by the Supreme Court in 2016. It includes extreme measures such as shutting down schools and implementing the odd-even road-space rationing scheme in case of severe degradation of air quality.

### **National Coal Gasification Mission blueprint prepared by Ministry of Coal**

A blueprint for the ‘National Coal Gasification Mission’ was prepared by the Union Coal Ministry. The government aims to achieve gasification of 100 Million Tonnes (MT) of coal by 2030 and this is the first time that a mission document has been released.

*Coal gasification* is the process of converting coal into synthesis gas (also called syngas), which is a mixture of hydrogen (H<sub>2</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO) and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). The syngas technology allows conversion of non-mineable coal/lignite into combustible gases through in situ gasification of the material. Coal gasification is considered as cleaner option compared to burning of coal. The decision will help the country meet its Paris Agreement (COP 21) commitments.

### **CEEW released first-of-its-kind Climate Vulnerability Index**

Environmental think tank, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) has carried a first-of-its-kind district-level climate vulnerability assessment, or Climate Vulnerability Index (CVI). Under this, it has analysed 640 districts in India to assess their vulnerability to extreme weather events such as cyclones, floods, heatwaves, droughts, etc.

### **Government set Net Zero Emissions target by 2070 – COP 26**

In an effort to battle climate change, the Government of India has made the following announcements at the COP26 summit in Glasgow:

1. India will achieve net zero emissions latest by 2070.
2. By 2030, India will ensure 50% of its energy will be sourced from renewable sources.
3. India will also reduce its carbon emissions until 2030 by a billion tonnes.
4. India will also reduce its emissions intensity per unit of GDP by less than 45%.
5. India would also install systems to generate 500 GigaWatt of renewable energy by 2030, a 50 GW increase from its existing target.

*Net-zero*, which is also referred to as carbon-neutrality, does not mean that a country would bring down its emissions to zero. That would be gross-zero, which means reaching a state where there are no emissions at all. Basically, net-zero is a state in which a country’s emissions are compensated by absorption and removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

### **Ganga Mission in Guinness Records**

The National Mission for Clean Ganga has set a Guinness World Record on the first day of the Ganga Utsav for the highest number of photos of handwritten notes uploaded on Facebook in an hour. The event was held to raise awareness on Ganga rejuvenation and to expand the reach of the festival. People posted poems or articles on ‘Maa Ganga’ on the Namami Gange Facebook page.

### **One Sun, One World, One Grid**

One Sun, One World, One Grid initiative (OSOWOG) was announced on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of COP26 by India and the United Kingdom to tap solar energy and have it travel seamlessly across borders. The initiative brings together the International Solar Alliance and the UK's green grid initiative and complements India's focus on harnessing the sun's energy. The grid will be set up over the next few years by the International Solar Alliance (ISA), another initiative authored by India initially, to transport solar power to different countries. The vision behind the OSOWOG is '*The Sun Never Sets*' and is a constant at some geographical location, globally, at any given point of time.

*One Sun Declaration:* The announcement was accompanied by the One Sun Declaration, which stated that, "realising the vision of 'One Sun One World One Grid' through interconnected green grids can be transformational, enabling all of us to meet the targets of the Paris Agreement to prevent dangerous climate change, to accelerate the clean energy transition, and to achieve the sustainable development goals". The declaration has been endorsed by 80 ISA member countries.

*OSOWOG* aims to connect 140 countries through a common grid that will be used to transfer solar power. Idea was first presented by India in 2018 during the first assembly of International Solar Alliance (ISA). The underlying logic is that a grid spread across multiple time zones could balance intermittent renewables with other renewables.

### **BASIC Countries Grouping to fight climate change**

During the plenary session of the UN-led COP26 summit on climate change in Glasgow, Scotland, BASIC countries have underlined climate finance goals for the developed countries.

The *BASIC countries* are the grouping of 4 countries - Brazil, South Africa, India and China. The group was formed as a result of an agreement signed by the 4 countries in November 2009.

## 4. Schemes and Programmes

### **Two Schemes launched by Reserve Bank**

RBI has launched the following schemes - RBI Retail Direct Scheme and Reserve Bank-Integrated Ombudsman Scheme.

*RBI Retail Direct Scheme:* The Scheme aims to ease retail investor access to the government bond market. It offers a portal to invest in Central Government securities, Treasury Bills, State Development Loans and Sovereign Gold Bonds. Individual investors can access the online portal to open a securities account with RBI, bid in primary auctions and buy and sell securities in the market. No fee will be charged for any of the services provided under the scheme.

*Reserve Bank-Integrated Ombudsman Scheme:* The Scheme integrates the existing 3 Ombudsman schemes of RBI namely, (i) the Banking Ombudsman Scheme, 2006; (ii) the Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies, 2018; and (iii) the Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions, 2019. It is aimed at further improving the grievance redress mechanism for resolving customer complaints against entities regulated by the central bank. The central theme of the scheme is based on 'One Nation-One Ombudsman' with one portal, one email and one address for the customers to lodge their complaints.

### **Ministry of Jal Shakti launches River Cities Allowance**

Minister for Jal Shakti has launched the River Cities Allowance (RCA).

RCA is a dedicated platform for river cities to ideate, discuss and exchange information for sustainable management of urban rivers. It will focus on 3 broad themes – Networking, Capacity Building and Technical Support. RCA includes cities from both Ganga basin and non-Ganga basin states.

### **Ministry of Cooperation launches Dairy Sahakar Scheme**

Ministry of Cooperation has launched the “Dairy Sahakar” scheme at Anand, Gujarat. Under it, the dairy sector would get loans through National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) which is under the administrative control of Ministry of Cooperation. The period of loan will normally be 5 to 8 years, including 1 to 3 years of moratorium on repayment of principal, depending on type of project and revenue streams.

### **Rashtriya Gokul Mission**

A review meeting on the performance of the Rashtriya Gokul Mission was held. The Mission was launched in 2014 to conserve and develop indigenous bovine breeds, under the National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development (NPBBD).

#### *Key Objectives of the Mission:*

- Development and conservation of indigenous breeds.
- Undertake breed improvement programme for indigenous cattle breeds so as to improve the genetic makeup and increase the stock.
- Enhance milk production and productivity.
- Upgrade nondescript cattle using elite indigenous breeds like Gir, Sahiwal, Rathi, Deoni, Tharparkar, Red Sindhi.
- Distribute disease free high genetic merit bulls for natural service.

It is being implemented through the ‘State Implementing Agency’ Livestock Development Boards, i.e., SIA’s (LDB’s).

*Gokul Grams:* The Rashtriya Gokul Mission envisages the establishment of integrated cattle development centers, called ‘Gokul Grams’ to develop indigenous breeds including up to 40% nondescript breeds (belonging or appearing to belong to no particular class or kind). Gokul Grams will be established in:

- the native breeding tracts and
- near metropolitan cities for housing the urban cattle.

### **Railways announced Bharat Gaurav scheme**

To tap the huge potential of tourism, the Railways has announced the ‘Bharat Gaurav’ Scheme. Under this Scheme, theme-based tourist circuit trains, on the lines of the Ramayana Express, can be run either by private or state-owned operators.

According to the Bharat Gaurav policy, any operator or service provider, or virtually anyone, can lease trains from Indian Railways to run on a theme-based circuit as a special tourism package. The tenure of the arrangement is a minimum of 2 years and maximum of the codal life of the coach. The operator has the freedom to decide the route, the halts, the services provided, and, most importantly, the tariff.

## 5. Polity

### Seventh Schedule

15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission chairman N. K. Singh has called for a thorough review of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution in the wake of current challenges of climate change and the pandemic.

*Article 246* of the Constitution confers legislative powers on the Parliament and the State Legislatures on the subjects enumerated in the Seventh Schedule. Broadly, entries that are related to national importance were allocated to the Union and entries of local concern were allocated to the States. As per Sarkaria Commission, concurrent list subjects are neither exclusively of national concern nor of local concern and hence occupy a constitutional ‘grey’ area.

### Government to repeal Farm Laws

The Government of India has announced the repeal of 3 contentious farm laws. Repealing a law is one of the ways to nullify a law. A law is reversed when Parliament thinks there is no longer a need for the law to exist. Legislation can also have a “sunset” clause, a particular date after which they cease to exist.

These laws are:

1. The Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, which is aimed at allowing trade in agricultural produce outside the existing APMC (Agricultural Produce Market Committee) mandis.
2. The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, which seeks to provide a framework for contract farming.
3. The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020, which is aimed at removing commodities such as cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion and potato from the list of essential commodities.

The government can repeal the laws in 2 ways – (i) it can either bring a Bill to repeal the 3 laws or (ii) promulgate an ordinance that will have to be subsequently replaced with a Bill within 6 months. Article 245 of the Constitution which gives Parliament the power to make laws also gives the legislative body the power to repeal them through the Repealing and Amending Act. A law can be repealed either in its entirety, in part, or even just to the extent that it is in contravention of other laws.



## 6. Governance

### **Mysuru Declaration signed for Common Minimum Service delivery by Panchayats**

In a workshop organised by Ministry of Panchayat Raj, Mysuru Declaration on Service Delivery by Panchayats was signed.

Mysuru Declaration was signed by participants from 16 States and resolved to roll out the Common Minimum Service delivery by Panchayats across the country from April 1, 2022. The declaration recognises citizen centric services that could be provided by the Panchayats as the Heart of Governance. It aims to foster institution-building at the grassroots level that empowers and delivers services for citizens thereby improving quality of life specifically for the vulnerable and marginalized sections of society.

### **CBI, ED Director's tenure extended through Ordinance**

The President has promulgated 2 ordinances that would allow the Central Government to extend the tenures of the directors of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorates (ED) from 2 years to up to 5 years. The Government amended the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 (For CBI Director) and Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003 (For ED director). Both have fixed 2-year tenure, but ordinance allows for 3 annual extensions.

*Enforcement Directorate:* The origin of this Directorate goes back to May 1956, when an 'Enforcement Unit' was formed, in the Department of Economic Affairs, for handling Exchange Control Laws violations under Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947. In the year 1957, this Unit was renamed as 'Enforcement Directorate'. Presently, it is part of the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance. The Organization is mandated with the task of enforcing the provisions of 2 special fiscal laws – Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA) and Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA).

### **What is Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN)?**

'Bhumi Samvaad' – a National Workshop on Digital India Land Record Modernisation Programme (DILRMP) – was held at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. Here, the Minister of Rural Development talks about the importance of Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN).

*ULPIN:* Under the scheme, a 14-digit identification number will be issued to every plot of land in the country. It is being described as "*the Aadhaar for land*" — a number that would uniquely identify every surveyed parcel of land and prevent land fraud, especially in rural India, where land records are outdated and disputed. The identification will be based on the longitude and latitude of the land parcel and is dependent on detailed surveys and geo-referenced cadastral maps.

National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS) was also launched on the occasion. *NGDRS* is an in-house advanced software application for the registration system developed by NIC. It aims to ensure transparency, accountability of the officials executing the documents and reduction in cost, time and number of visits and procedures required for the execution of the registration documents.

### **Public Affairs Index 2021 announced**

The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of Public Affairs Index was released by the Bengaluru-based non-profit think tank – Public Affairs Centre. As per it, the top 3 slots have been taken by Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana among 18 large states. This year index also highlighted State's Government involvement over the curb of COVID-19. *Public Affairs Index* is the study is an annual assessment of the adequacy and quality of governance in states

**Ministry of Coal to establish Sustainable Development Cell**

The Ministry of Coal has decided to establish a ‘Sustainable Development Cell’ in order to promote environmentally sustainable coal mining in the country and address environmental concerns during the decommissioning or closure of mines.

## 7. International Relations

### **Report of Standing Committee of External Affairs on Bilateral Investment Treaties**

The Standing Committee on External Affairs has submitted its report on ‘India and Bilateral Investment Treaties’.

*Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs):* BITs are international agreements establishing the terms and conditions for private investment by nationals and companies of one state in another state to promote and protect foreign private investments in each other’s territories. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) maintains a database of all BITs between all nations.

### **21<sup>st</sup> India-Russia Summit held in New Delhi**

21<sup>st</sup> India-Russia Summit was held in New Delhi. At the Summit, both nations signed a 10-year defence cooperation pact in the background of ongoing deliveries of the S-400 air defence systems. The Summit also involved first 2+2 dialogue of Foreign and Defence Ministers to exchange views in global and regional political-security developments.

Russia started delivering its long-range S-400 surface-to-air missile defence systems to India, based on a deal the 2 countries signed in 2018. The S-400 Air Defence System is one of the most advanced mobile air defence missile systems in the world. It is equipped with 4 different missiles, and it can engage enemy aircraft, ballistic missiles, and Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) planes at multiple ranges.

### **2021 G20 Summit held in Italy**

2021 G20 Summit was held in Rome, Italy. The G20 is an annual meeting of leaders from the countries with the largest and fastest-growing economies. The G20 Summit is formally known as the “Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy”. The group has no permanent staff of its own, so every year in December, a G20 country from a rotating region takes on the Presidency. The first G20 meeting took place in Berlin in 1999, after a financial crisis in East Asia affected many countries around the world.

### **UNAMA held a meeting; What is Bonn Agreement?**

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has held a meeting with the women activists and applauded their courage and affirmed that the UN will continue to stand by the people of Afghanistan. UNAMA was established on 28 March 2002 by United Nations Security Council. Its original mandate was to support the implementation of the Bonn Agreement (December 2001).

Bonn was a closed-door negotiation which set an ambitious 3-year political and administrative roadmap for Afghanistan. The United Nations and several other international actors played major roles in pushing the negotiations forward. The Agreement was also blessed by the U.N. Security Council. The existing nominal head of Afghanistan (Burhanuddin Rabbani) was side-lined and did not participate, and the Taliban were completely excluded from the Bonn negotiations.

### **New Zealand to host APEC forum meeting**

New Zealand has hosted 2021 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. The theme was ‘*Join, Work, Grow*’. APEC is a regional economic forum established in 1989 to leverage the growing interdependence of the Asia-Pacific. It aims to create greater prosperity for the people of the region by promoting balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure growth and by accelerating regional economic integration.

### **SCO's 20<sup>th</sup> Head of the Council meeting**

20<sup>th</sup> meeting of SCO's Council of Heads of Government was held virtually. Both India and Pakistan joined SCO at the Astana Summit in 2017.

The *Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)* is an intergovernmental organization founded in Shanghai on 15 June 2001. The SCO currently comprises 8 Member States (China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan), 4 Observer States interested in acceding to full membership (Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, and Mongolia) and 6 "Dialogue Partners" (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Turkey).

### **India confers honorary rank of General on Nepal Army Chief**

Nepal Army Chief General, Prabhu Ram Sharma has been conferred the honorary rank of General of the Indian Army by President Ram Nath Kovind. It is a customary practice by the 2 countries to confer the honorary rank of General on each other's Army Chiefs.

### **India hosted Delhi Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan**

India has hosted the "Delhi Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan". This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Regional Security Dialogue (the earlier 2 meetings were held in Iran, in 2018 and 2019). The Conference was represented by the national security advisors of each country.

*Participants:* Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan

### **5<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit Conference held in Kolkata**

5<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit (EAS) Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation was held in Kolkata. The 2-day event was organized by India in partnership with Australia. During the conference, experts from both government and academia from the participating countries deliberated upon various aspects of maritime security cooperation under 4 thematic sessions.

### **Indian Navy hosted 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Goa Maritime Conclave**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC) – 2021 was hosted by the Indian Navy under the aegis of Naval War College, Goa. The conclave is a multinational platform that uses collective wisdom of international maritime security providers. Theme in the year 2021: "*Maritime Security and Emerging Non-Traditional Threats: A Case for Proactive Role for IOR Navies*"

### **French Navy hosted 7<sup>th</sup> edition of IONS Conclave of Chiefs**

7<sup>th</sup> edition of IONS Conclave of Chiefs was hosted by French Navy at Paris. *The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)* was conceived by the Indian Navy in 2008 as a forum which seeks to enhance maritime co-operation among Navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region. It provides an open and inclusive platform for discussions on regionally relevant maritime issues.

### **Indian Navy's Operation Sankalp**

Indian Navy's ship Trikanth is currently deployed in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman as part of Operation Sankalp. INS Trikanth is a state-of-the-art guided missile stealth frigate and is part of the Western Fleet.

### **Defence Exercises in News**

*CORPAT or Coordinated Patrol:* 32<sup>nd</sup> military exercise between India and Thailand (held since 2005).

*Shakti 2021:* 6<sup>th</sup> Edition of India-France military exercise held in France.

*SITMEX:* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Trilateral Maritime Exercise held between India, Singapore and Thailand.

*Sagar Shakti Exercise:* The ‘mega multi-agency military exercise’ conducted in Kutch to test India's combat readiness.

*Exercise Dosti:* 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the Maldives, India, and Sri Lanka biennial Trilateral Exercise (launched in 1991; Sri Lanka joined in 2012).

## 8. Awards and Recognition

### **International Emmy Awards 2021 announced**

International Emmy Awards 2021 was announced. This was the 49<sup>th</sup> edition of the annual ceremony held in New York City. The award recognised excellence in television programs produced and aired originally outside the U.S., and non-English language.

Winners:

- *Best Actor*: David Tennant for Des (UK)
- *Best Actress*: Hayley Squires for Adult Material (UK)
- *Best Drama Series*: Tehran (Israel)

Note that till date, the only Indian show to bag an Emmy is ‘Delhi Crime’, which won Best Drama in 2020.

### **52<sup>nd</sup> International Film Festival of India concluded in Goa**

The 52<sup>nd</sup> edition of the International Film Festival of India was concluded in Goa.

*List of award winners in IFFI Goa:*

- Most Friendly State for Film Shooting: Uttar Pradesh
- Silver Peacock for Best Actor (Male): Jitendra Bhikulal Joshi (Godavari)
- Best Actor (female): Angela Molina (Paraguay) for Charlotte
- Best Director: Vaclav Kadrnka (Czech Republic) for ‘Saving One Who Was Dead’
- Golden Peacock Award for Best Film: Japanese film Ring Wandering (Masakazu Kanyeko)

Also note that, the BRICS Film Festival having been held for the first time on the side-lines of IFFI.

### **UK unveils coin to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi**

United Kingdom has unveiled a coin to commemorate the life and legacy of Mahatma Gandhi. The special collectors’ coin was designed by Heena Glover. The coin features an image of a lotus, India’s national flower, alongside one of Gandhi’s most famous quotes – ‘*My life is my message.*’

### **Oxford English Dictionary’s 2021 Word of the Year – ‘Vax’**

Vax word has been selected as the Oxford English Dictionary’s 2021 Word of the Year. It is used as a short form for vaccine and means a substance put into a person’s body to prevent them from getting a disease.

### **2021 Booker Prize Winner – Damon Galgut**

Damon Galgut has won the prestigious Booker Prize 2021 for fiction for his novel ‘The Promise’. It was his 9<sup>th</sup> book that states the decline of one Dutch family in South Africa over 4 decades from the apartheid era to the present day.

*Booker Prize*: It is awarded every year to the best novel that was “written in English and published in the UK or Ireland”. It was launched in 1969 and was sponsored by Man Group. It carries an award of £50,000.

### **2021 Indira Gandhi Peace Prize Winner – Pratham Organization**

Pratham organization has been awarded with the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize 2021. It was awarded for its pioneering work to ensure that every child has access to quality education, digital technology for education, providing skills to young adults, for its regular evaluation of the quality of education, etc.

The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development was instituted in the memory of the former Prime Minister by a trust in her name in 1986. It consists of a monetary award of Rs 25 lakh along with a citation.

**Harshwanti Bisht elected as first woman President of IMF**

Harshwanti Bisht has been elected as the first woman President of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF). She scaled Nanda Devi peak in 1981 for which she was honoured with the Arjuna award.

*Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF)* is an apex national body to organize and support, mountaineering and rock-climbing expeditions at high altitudes in Himalayas. It was founded in 1958.

**India's first Food Museum launched in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu**

A Food Museum, first of its kind in the country, was opened in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu. The museum has been established by Food Corporation of India (FCI) in association with Visvesvaraya Industrial and Technological Museum (VITM), Bengaluru. Thanjavur is the birthplace of FCI as its first office was opened in the town and hence the museum has been established here.

## 9. Social Development

### India's first 'National Multidimensional Poverty Index released by NITI Aayog

India's first 'National Multidimensional Poverty Index: Baseline Report and Dashboard' was released by NITI Aayog in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI).

India was ranked at 62 out of 109 nations with 27.9% population as multidimensionally poor. This baseline report of India's first ever national MPI measure is based on the reference period of 2015-16 of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS).

#### Key Findings

- *National MPI*: 0.118; Rural MPI: 0.155; Urban MPI: 0.04 (MPI ranges from 0 to 1 and higher values imply higher poverty).
- *Highest Poverty States/UTs*: Bihar with 51.91 % of the population as poor, followed by Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.
- *Lowest Poverty States/UTs*: Kerala with 0.71 % of the population as poor, followed by Puducherry and Lakshadweep.

### Global Hunger Index 2021 released

Global Hunger Index 2021 was released. The report was prepared jointly by Irish aid agency Concern Worldwide and German organisation Welthungerhilfe.

#### Key Highlights:

- India was ranked 101 among 116 countries (ranked 94 in 2020).
- Global hunger, represented by a GHI score of 17.9, is in the moderate category.
- The world as a whole will fail to achieve a low level of hunger by 2030.
- Also, with a score of 27.5, India has a level of hunger that is serious.

The GHI is a peer-reviewed annual report designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at the global, regional, and country levels. GHI scores are based on the values of 4 component indicators – Undernourishment, Child wasting, Child stunting, Child mortality.

### What are Global Nutrition Targets?

According to the Global Nutrition Report 2021 released in November 2021, India has made no progress on anaemia and childhood wasting.

*Global Nutrition Targets*: In 2012, the World Health Assembly (the decision-making body of the World Health Organisation) identified 6 nutrition targets to be met by 2025. These are:

1. Reduce stunting by 40% in children under 5.
2. Reduce the prevalence of anaemia by 50% among women in the age group of 19-49 years.
3. Ensure 30% reduction in low-birth weight.
4. Ensure no increase in childhood overweight.
5. Increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months up to at least 50%.
6. Reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5%.



### **NITI Aayog released report on Health Insurance Coverage in India**

NITI Aayog has released a comprehensive report titled “Health Insurance for India’s Missing Middle”. It brings out the gaps in the health insurance coverage across the Indian population and offers solutions to address the situation.

### **MoLE’s flagged-off first ever AISDWs**

Ministry for Labour and Employment has flagged-off the first ever All India Survey of Domestic Workers (AISDWs). The survey is aimed at estimating the number and proportion of DWs at the national and state level, percentage distribution of domestic workers for live-in/live-out, formal/informal employment, and other socio-economic characteristics. It will plug-in the data gap and also aid evidence-based policy making processes.

The AISDWs is a part of the 5 All India Surveys being undertaken by the Labour Bureau. Other 4 are on:

- (i) Migrant Workers,
- (ii) Employment generated in Transport Sector,
- (iii) Employment Generated by Professionals, and
- (iv) All-India Quarterly Establishment based Employment Survey (AQEES).

India is a signatory to ILO’s 189<sup>th</sup> convention, known as Convention on the Domestic Workers; but has not ratified it yet.

### **MoH&FW releases National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) Phase II Findings**

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MOH&FW) has released the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) Phase II Findings. The findings of NFHS-5 in respect of 22 States & UTs covered in Phase-I were released in December 2020.

The previous 4 rounds of the NFHS were conducted in 1992-93, 1998-99, 2005-06 and 2015-16.

#### *Key Highlights*

- The Total Fertility Rates (TFR), an average number of children per women has further declined from 2.2 to 2.0 at the national level.
- Overall Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) has increased substantially from 54% to 67% at all-India level.
- Institutional births have increased substantially from 79 % to 89 % at all-India Level.
- Exclusive breastfeeding to children under age 6 months has shown an improvement in all-India level from 55 % in 2015-16 to 64 % in 2019-21.
- Child Nutrition indicators shows a slight improvement at all-India level as Stunting has declined from 38 % to 36 %, wasting from 21 % to 19 % and underweight from 36 % to 32 % at all-India level.
- Full immunization drive among children aged 12-23 months has recorded substantial improvement from 62 % to 76 % at all-India level.

### **National Health Account Estimates for India for 2017-18 released**

Report of National Health Account Estimates for India for 2017-18 was released by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive NHA report produced by National Health Accounts Technical Secretariat (NHATS). The NHA estimates are prepared by using an accounting framework based on internationally accepted System of Health Accounts 2011, provided by the World Health Organization (WHO).

### **6<sup>th</sup> Edition of Swachh Survekshan 2021 awarded by the President**

The President awarded the respective cities in the 6<sup>th</sup> Edition of Swachh Survekshan (SS) 2021 for their performance in maintaining cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation. It is an annual survey of cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation in cities and towns across India. It was launched as part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, which aimed to make India clean and free of open defecation. The first survey was undertaken in 2016. By 2020, it became the largest cleanliness survey in the world. The survey is conducted by Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs with Quality Council of India as its implementation partner.

Earlier, the Jal Shakti Ministry launched Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2021 or rural cleanliness survey 2021 under Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase-II.

Swachh Survekshan 2021 Categories:

- *Cleanest Cities (less than 1 lakh Population)*: Vita, Lonavala, and Saswad cities from Maharashtra
- *Cleanest Cities (more than 1 lakh Population)*: Indore (for 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive time), Surat and Vijayawada
- *Fastest Mover City*: Hoshangabad
- *Best Ganga Town*: Varanasi
- *Cleanest Cantonment*: Ahmedabad Cantonment
- *Cleanest State (More than 100 Urban Local Bodies)*: Chhattisgarh
- *Cleanest State (Less than 100 Urban Local Bodies)*: Jharkhand

*Prerak Daaur Samman*: This is a new performance category introduced under SS 2021. 5 cities – Indore, Surat, Navi Mumbai, New Delhi Municipal Council and Tirupati were categorized as ‘*Dīvyā*’ (Platinum).

### **Millets in Mid-Day meal scheme**

Flagging “critical” levels of malnutrition and anaemia among children, the Union Government has urged the states to explore the possibility of introducing millets in the mid-day meal scheme, now known as PM Poshan Scheme. Millets or nutri-cereals, which include Jowar, Bajra, and Ragi, are rich in minerals and B-complex vitamins, as well as proteins and antioxidants, making them an ideal choice for improving the nutritional outcome of children.

### **World Bank STARS’s Project Reviewed**

Performance of World Bank aided project STARS was reviewed. STARS project is being implemented as a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme under the Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education. It is a project to improve the quality and governance of school education in 6 Indian states – Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan. STARS stands for *Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program*.

*PARAKH*: A major component of the project is the establishment of PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development) as a National Assessment Centre.

### **Global State of Democracy Report, 2021 released**

The Global State of Democracy Report, 2021 was released by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). As per the report, India remained in the category of a mid-level performing democracy as it has since 2000. The report defines democracy as based on 5 core attributes: Representative Government, Fundamental Rights, Checks on Government, Impartial Administration and Participatory Engagement. *International IDEA* is an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide. It was founded in the year 1995.

**First-of-its-kind pod hotel inaugurated in Mumbai Central Railway Station**

First-of-its-kind pod hotel has been inaugurated in Mumbai Central railway station. A pod hotel has small bed-sized capsules providing overnight accommodation.

**QS Asia University Rankings 2022**

QS Quacquarelli Symonds, global higher education think-tank, has released the QS Asia University Rankings 2022. The first position was acquired by the National University of Singapore for the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. Total Universities – 687.

Overall Ranking:

1. IIT Bombay - 42nd
2. IIT Delhi - 45th
3. IIT Madras – 54th

## 10. Economy

### **G.N. Bajpai Committee Report on IBC 2016 released**

G.N. Bajpai Committee report on Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016 was released. The Committee was the Working Group on Tracking Outcomes of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016 (IBC) which was constituted in May 2019 by the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI).

The IBC, 2016 provides for resolution of stress assets of a company, a limited liability partnership, a proprietorship, or partnership firm, or an individual. Implementation of code consists of 4 pillars:

1. Adjudicating authorities (the National Company Law Tribunal or NCLT & the Debt Recovery Tribunal or DRT),
2. IBBI to exercise regulatory oversight over insolvency professional agencies,
3. Insolvency Professionals (IPs) and
4. Information Utilities (IUs).

### **FICCI organized event on the role of BRSR**

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has organized an event on the role of 'Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report' (BRSR) in driving climate actions in India at the COP26 (Glasgow).

BRSR includes essential (mandatory) and leadership (voluntary) disclosures related to ESG under the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. Presently, it is reported voluntarily by few companies. For instance, IndiGo became the first Indian carrier to show its efforts for sustainable aviation through ESG report.

### **RBI announced first global Hackathon – Harbinger 2021**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced its first global hackathon 'HARBINGER 2021 – Innovation for Transformation' with the theme "Smarter Digital Payments". The Hackathon aims to invite participants to identify and develop solutions that have the potential to make digital payments accessible to the under-served, enhance the ease of payments and user experience, while strengthening the security of digital payments and promoting customer protection.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> LEADS 2021 Report unveiled**

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has unveiled 3<sup>rd</sup> Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) report 2021. LEADS index was launched in 2018 with the main objective of ranking States and UTs on the efficiency of their logistics ecosystem with focuses on both international and domestic trade.

#### *Key Highlights of the Report*

- Gujarat, Haryana and Punjab have emerged as the top performers.
- Jammu and Kashmir is the top ranker among North-Eastern States and Himalayas followed by Sikkim and Meghalaya.
- Delhi stands at the top rank among Other UTs.
- Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand and have emerged as the top improvers.

### **What is Vehicle Scrappage Policy?**

The Government is considering a proposal to give buyers additional concessions on buying new vehicles after scrapping of their old vehicles.

*Vehicle Scrappage Policy:* Old vehicles will have to pass a fitness test before re-registration and as per the policy, government commercial vehicles more than 15 years old and private vehicles which are over 20 years old will be scrapped. As a disincentive, increased re-registration fees would be applicable for vehicles 15 years or older from the initial date registration. The state governments may be advised to offer a road-tax rebate of up to 25% for personal vehicles and up to 15% for commercial vehicles to provide incentive to owners of old vehicles to scrap old and unfit vehicles.

### **Edible Oil in India**

The prices of most major cooking oils have dropped and stabilised across the country in the run-up to Diwali.

India is the world's biggest vegetable oil importer. India imports about 60% of its edible oil needs, leaving the country's retail prices vulnerable to international pressures. It imports palm oil from Indonesia and Malaysia, soyoil from Brazil and Argentina, and sunflower oil, mainly from Russia and Ukraine.

*Primary sources of edible oil* – Soybean, Rapeseed & Mustard, Groundnut, Sunflower, Safflower & Niger.

*Secondary sources of edible oil* – Oil Palm, Coconut, Rice Bran, Cotton seeds & Tree Borne Oilseeds.

Also, the Government has announced the National Edible Oil Mission-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP) to boost domestic oilseed production and make the country self-sufficient in cooking oils.

### **What are Landraces?**

Among the winners of this year's Padma awards is Rahibai Popere, popularly known as Seed-mother, from Akole taluka of Ahmednagar, Maharashtra. Her Padma Shri is a recognition of her work that has helped save hundreds of landraces (wild varieties of commonly grown crops) at the village level.

*Landraces* refer to naturally occurring variants of commonly cultivated crops. These are as opposed to commercially grown crops, which are developed by selective breeding (hybrids) or through genetic engineering to express a certain trait over others.

### **What is Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)?**

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for provisioning of 4G mobile services in uncovered villages of Aspirational Districts across 5 States. The project will be funded by Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).

*Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)* ensures that there is universal non-discriminatory access to quality ICT services at economically efficient prices to people in rural and remote areas. The fund was created under the Department of Telecommunications in 2002 and is a non-lapsable fund, i.e., the unspent amount under a targeted financial year does not lapse and is accrued for next years' spending. All credits to this fund require Parliamentary approval and it has a statutory support under Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Act, 2003. The funds for the USOF comes from Universal Service Levy (USL). The USL is charged from all the telecom operators on their Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR).

### **IOCL to set up Green Hydrogen Generation Unit – National Hydrogen Mission**

The Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) has released a global tender to set up green hydrogen generation units at Mathura and Panipat — 2 of its big refineries in North India. This will kick-start the Central Government's National Hydrogen Mission. IOCL is India's largest commercial undertaking, operating the largest number of refineries in the country.

Note that, to produce hydrogen from renewable sources, Hydrogen Energy Mission was announced in the Union Budget in February 2021. Also, India and the US have set up a task force under the aegis of the Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP) to mobilise finance and speed up green energy development.

*Green Hydrogen:* Hydrogen when produced by electrolysis using renewable energy is known as Green Hydrogen which has no carbon footprint. The hydrogen that is in use today is produced using fossil fuels.

### **What are REITs, InvITs?**

Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board and Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan will be the anchor investors for the Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT) of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) with each picking up 25% stake. Besides, NHAI would retain a minimum of 15% equity and the rest would be offered to domestic institutional investors.

*Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs):* InvITs are like mutual fund, which enables direct investment into the infrastructure sector (for example – roads, power transmission etc.) by pooling money from individual and institutional investors to earn a portion of the income as return. It is regulated by SEBI (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) Regulations, 2014 and Indian Trust Act, 1882.

*Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs):* It is an investment vehicle that owns/manages investment grade and income-producing real estate properties such as offices, malls etc and almost any asset that can produce an annuity revenue stream. It is regulated by SEBI (Real Estate Investment Trusts) Regulations, 2014 and Indian Trust Act, 1882.

### **Report of RBI's Working Group on Digital Lending**

A Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Working Group (WG) on digital lending, has submitted its report. In January 2021, the RBI constituted a Working Group (WG) on digital lending, including lending through online platforms and mobile apps, with Jayant Kumar Dash as the Chairman.

### **MoLE notified new base year for Wage Rate Index – 2016**

The Central Government has revised the base year for Wage Rate Index (WRI) to 2016 (2016=100) which will replace the old series with a base of 1963-65. The Wage Rate Index Number measures the relative changes in wage rates over a period of time. It is compiled by the Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoLE).

#### *Key Points*

- It is based on the recommendations of the International Labour Organization and the National Statistical Commission.
- The New WRI Series would be compiled twice a year on point-to-point half yearly basis, as on 1<sup>st</sup> January and 1<sup>st</sup> July of every year.
- A total of 37 industries have been covered in the new WRI basket 2016 (as against 21 in the earlier one).
- The selected 37 industries in the new series are categorized as:
  - Manufacturing: 30
  - Mining: 04
  - Plantation: 03

*WRI 2020:* the All-India Wage Rate Index Number for all the 37 industries stood at 119.7 in 2020 (half yearly 2) which shows an increment of 1.6 % over the index in 2020 (half yearly 1).

**El Salvador build world's first "Bitcoin City"**

El Salvador Government is planning to build the world's first "Bitcoin City", funded initially by bitcoin-backed bonds.

**NITI Aayog releases inaugural SDG Urban Index and Dashboard 2021–22**

NITI Aayog, under the Indo-German Cooperation, has released inaugural SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) Urban Index and Dashboard 2021–22. The SDG Urban Index and Dashboard ranks 56 urban areas on 77 SDG indicators across 46 targets of the SDG framework. As per the Index, Shimla tops the Index followed by Coimbatore and Chandigarh.

**Noida International Airport at Jewar, UP**

The foundation stone for the Noida International Airport at Jewar in Uttar Pradesh was laid down. The Airport is expected to be operational by September 2024. With this, Uttar Pradesh, will poised to become the only state in India to have 5 international airports.

## 11. Important Days

### **November 15 declared as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas**

Union Cabinet has decided to declare November 15 as ‘Janjatiya Gaurav Divas’ to mark the birth anniversary of Birsa Munda and honour the contributions of Scheduled Tribes to Indian history and culture.

*Birsa Munda*, also known as Bhagwan Birsa Munda or DhartiAaba, was born in Munda tribe at Khunti district of Chotanagpur Plateau region (Jharkhand). He fought against the exploitation of local tribes from British and Zamindars, also known as Dikus or outsiders. He started a movement called ‘Ulgulan’, or ‘The Great Tumult’ against the exploitation and discrimination against tribals by the local authorities. It results into passing of Chotanagpur Tenancy (CNT) Act, 1908. Birsa Munda started the faith of ‘Birsait’. He wanted to reform the tribal society and so, he stressed on the importance of prayer, staying away from alcohol, having faith in God and observing a code of conduct. He died of cholera on June 9, 1900.

### **First Audit Diwas celebrated in India**

First Audit Diwas was celebrated on November 16. Audit Diwas is being celebrated to mark the historic origin of the institution of CAG and the contribution it has made to the governance, transparency, and accountability over the past several years. On the occasion, the statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was also unveiled at the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India. The CAG is mentioned in the Constitution of India under Article 148 – 151.

### **National Education Day**

Since 2008, India has been celebrating National Education Day on November 11, the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to honour his contributions to education in India. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad served as the first Minister of Education of independent India. He was awarded Bharat Ratna posthumously in 1992 for his contributions towards the field of education.

### **World Vegan Day**

World Vegan Day is celebrated every year on 1<sup>st</sup> November to promotes vegan diet. Vegan diet bars the consumption of animal-based food products. The event was started in 1994 by then Chair of The Vegan Society, Louise Wallis, in the United Kingdom.

### **UN declared 2021 as International Year of Fruits and Vegetables**

The UN General Assembly has designated 2021 as the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables (IYFV). Food and Agriculture Organization is the lead agency for celebrating the year in collaboration with other relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. The IYFV 2021 is a unique opportunity to raise awareness on the important role of fruits and vegetables in human nutrition, food security and health and as well in achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals.

### **International One Health Day**

The International One Health Day is annually observed across the globe on 3<sup>rd</sup> November. The day is observed to create awareness about the need for a One Health approach to address the shared health threats at the human-animal-environment interface.

*One Health* is the collaborative efforts of multiple disciplines working locally, nationally, and globally, to attain optimal health for people, animals and our environment, as defined by the One Health Initiative Task Force.



### **National Legal Services Day**

In India, the 'National Legal Services Day' is observed every year on 9<sup>th</sup> November. The Day is celebrated to make people aware of the various provisions under the Legal Services Authorities Act and the right of the litigants. On 11<sup>th</sup> October 1987, the Legal Services Authorities Act 1987 was enacted, while the Act took effect on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1995.

### **UN's International Day for Tolerance**

United Nations' International Day for Tolerance is observed every year on 16<sup>th</sup> November. The United Nations is committed to strengthening tolerance by fostering mutual understanding among cultures and people.

In 1994, UNESCO marked the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birth paving the way for the proclamation of 16 November as the International Day for Tolerance by the UN. This day pays tribute to the values of the Mahatma of peace, non-violence and equality.

### **World Children's Day**

World Children's Day is observed annually on November 20 to commemorate the day of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child by the UN General Assembly on the same day in 1959. The day is celebrated globally to promote the rights of children besides improving their standard of living. It also promotes international togetherness and raises awareness among children to improve their welfare.

Theme: *"A Better Future for Every Child"*

### **National Milk Day**

To commemorate the birth anniversary of Dr. Verghese Kurien, the National Milk Day is celebrated every year on 26<sup>th</sup> November. This year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Dr Verghese Kurien. He was also the brain behind '*Operation Flood*,' which led to dairy farming becoming the country's largest self-sustaining industry, as well as the largest rural employment sector.

## 12. Culture

### **Srinagar joins UCCN under crafts and folk arts category**

Srinagar has joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) under the crafts and folk arts category. Srinagar is the homeland to various decorative and renowned arts and crafts like Paper making, Kashmiri Shawl, Kashmiri Silk, Art of Woodwork, Kashmiri Carpets, Silverware work etc. From India other cities in UCCN includes:

- Jaipur (Crafts and Folk Arts)
- Varanasi and Chennai (Music)
- Mumbai (Film)
- Hyderabad (Gastronomy)

UCCN was created in 2004 to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.

### **Darjeeling Toy Train**

More than 2 decades after the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR) was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, India has registered the 2 logos of the iconic ‘Toy Train’ internationally as its intellectual property. The use of these logos anywhere in the world will now require written permission from India and the payment of a fee. This will put the Darjeeling Toy Train’s ‘Iron Sherpa’ blue steam locomotives of the Darjeeling heritage train on the same pedestal as the legendary transalpine Rhaetian Railway in Switzerland.

### **Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO**

Pochampally Village (Telangana) was selected as one of the Best Tourism Village (BTV) by United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). Pochampally is often referred to as Silk City of India for the exquisite sarees woven through Ikat style. Pochampally Ikat received Geographical Indication status in 2004. Acharya Vinobha Bhave launched Bhoodan Movement from Pochampally in 1951.

BTV is a global initiative to highlight those villages where tourism preserves cultures and traditions, celebrates diversity, provides opportunities and safeguards biodiversity.

### **Adi Shankaracharya statue unveiled at Kedarnath**

A 12-foot statue of Adi Shankaracharya has been unveiled at Kedarnath, where the Acharya is believed to have attained samadhi at the age of 32 in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Adi Shankaracharya is said to have been born in Kaladi village on the bank of the Periyar, the largest river in Kerala. He is believed to have established the ritual practices at the Badri and Kedar dhams and to have attained samadhi at Kedarnath. The 12-feet long statue weighing around 35 tonnes has been constructed by Mysore-based sculptor Arjun Yogiraj.

### **Habibganj Station to be named as Rani Kamlapati Station**

The name of Bhopal’s Habibganj railway station has been changed to Rani Kamlapati Station. The station has been redeveloped with private participation — a first such large-scale PPP model in station redevelopment in India.

*Rani Kamlapati* was the widow of Nizam Shah, whose Gond dynasty ruled the then Ginnorgarh, 55 km from Bhopal, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Kamlapati is known to have shown great bravery in facing aggressors during her reign after her husband was killed. She was the “last Hindu queen of Bhopal”, who did great work in the area of water management and set up parks and temples.

The Gond are one of the largest tribal communities in India, spread across Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Bihar and Odisha.