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December 2021 - Week 2

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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Contents

NATIONAL AFFAIRS	2
STATES AFFAIRS.....	6
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.....	7
REPORTS & INDICES	9
BUSINESS & ECONOMY	14
BANKING & FINANCE	15
AWARDS & RECOGNITION	19
BOOKS & AUTHORS.....	21
PERSON IN NEWS	21
OBITUARIES.....	22
SPORTS.....	22
IMPORTANT DAYS	24

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. Army Service Corps (ASC), oldest and largest administrative service in the Indian Army, has recently observed its **261st Raising Day** on 8th December 2021.
 - ASC was established by the East India Company (EIC) in 1760 as a part of the administrative components of the EIC's armies in the Bombay, Madras, and Bengal Presidencies. It was renamed as 'Royal Indian Army Service Corps (RIASC)' in 1935. On **8th December 1950**, after the Independence of India, the prefix Royal was dropped from the corps name.
2. The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** has recently launched the 'Swachh Technology Challenge' under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (SBM-U 2.0). The Challenge seeks to harness the entrepreneurial potential of the waste management sector in India and promote an enabling environment for enterprise development under SBM-U 2.0.

It is scheduled from 6th December 2021 to 15th January 2022 in four thematic categories, viz.

 1. Social inclusion
 2. Zero dump (solid waste management)
 3. Plastic waste management
 4. Transparency through digital enablement
3. The National Commission for Women (NCW) has recently launched a pan-India capacity building programme named **"She is a Changemaker"** for women representatives at all levels, gram panchayats to parliament members and political workers including office bearers of National/State political parties. The aim is to improve leadership skills of grassroots women political leaders.
 - The official launch of training programmes under the 'She is a Changemaker' series has been held in collaboration with **Rhambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini**, Thane, Maharashtra. The three-day capacity building programme for 'Women in Municipal Corporation' has been organised from 7th to 9th December 2021.
4. India has recently successfully test-fired the air version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from the Indian Air Force's (IAF) **Sukhoi 30 MKI** supersonic fighter aircraft from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), based in **Chandipur**, off the coast of Odisha.

5. The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** has recently hosted a unique event '**Digital Payment Utsav**' at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi as a part of the week-long 'Azadi Ka Digital Mahotsav'.
- During the utsav following have been launched:
- The DIGIDHAN logo
 - Digital Payments Sandesh Yatra: an awareness campaign.
 - Digital payments anthem titled 'Chutki Baja ke' (cashless, touchless, paperless)
 - **Inclusive Credit for All:** India Post Payments Bank-Punjab National Bank, Kotak Bank, YES Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, ICICI Bank, Indian Bank, Bank of Maharashtra, and City Union Bank have launched Contactless Credit cards on the RuPay network.
 - **Payments On the Go:** Bank of Baroda and City Union Bank have launched Rupay-on-the-Go.
6. **NITI Aayog** has recently launched an 'e-Sawaari India Electric Bus Coalition' in partnership with Convergence Energy Service Ltd (CESL) and *World Resources Institute* (WRI), India, and with the support from Transformative Urban Mobility Initiative (TUMI). It has been launched with the aim to share knowledge and learnings on e-bus adoption in India.
7. The Union Cabinet has recently approved the funding and implementation of Ken-Betwa River interlinking project with an outlay of **Rs 44, 605 crores** at 2020-21 price levels. This will cover the states of **Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh**.
- Ken-Betwa River interlinking project is the **first project** under the National Perspective Plan for interlinking of rivers.
 - **Aim:** To transfer surplus water from Ken River in MP to Betwa River in UP in a bid to irrigate the drought-prone Bundelkhand region.
8. The Ministry of Power has recently observed Energy Conservation Week under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav from **8th to 14th December 2021**.
- It has been organized by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency and includes three major activities i.e. National Painting Competition for school children, National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA) for Industries and establishments and National Energy Efficiency Innovation Awards (NEEIA) to recognize innovative energy efficiency technologies.

9. **India** has assumed the Chairmanship of Council of Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of SCO (RATS SCO) from October 28, 2021 for a period of **one year**.
- The National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) in association with Data Security Council of India (DSCI), as a Knowledge Partner, organized a two-day Practical Seminar on "Securing Cyberspace in the Contemporary Threat Environment" for delegates from Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Member States.
10. **North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFi)** has recently introduced a new scheme named 'Atmanirbhar Hastshilpkar Scheme' to the grass root artisans of the North-Eastern region under the Ministry of Development of North-East Region (Doner). During the launching ceremony, a total of 17 artisans have been provided with credit assistance of Rs.1 lakh per artisan.
- The credit facility is collateral-free and carries a subsidized interest rate of **6% p.a.**, which is repayable in 24 months.
11. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has recently signed an MoU with the Indian Institute of Teacher Education (IITE), Gandhinagar to facilitate training for teachers of Sainik Schools. The MoU has been signed for a period of **5 years** starting from January 2022.
- **Aim:** To nurture the teachers of tomorrow with the transformative knowledge of Indian traditions and usher in a new era of teacher education focusing upon the integral development of teachers.
 - As per the MoU, **800** plus teachers of all Sainik Schools will be trained through courses named '**Gurudiksha**' & '**Pratibaddhta**'.
12. Union Road, Transport and Highways minister Nitin Gadkari has recently released the list of top Indian states in EV (electric vehicle) sales. As per the data, **Uttar Pradesh** has the highest number of EV registrations at **255,700** units, followed by Delhi at 125,347 units and Karnataka at 72,544 EVs.
- A total of **870,141** electric vehicles have been registered in India.
13. NITI Aayog has recently launched 'Convoke 2021-22' in partnership with **Bharti Foundation**, the philanthropic arm of Bharti Enterprises. Convoke is a National research Symposium.
- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Indian Air Force (IAF) have successfully flight-tested the **Stand-off Anti-Tank (SANT)** missile from the Pokhran range, Rajasthan.

14. Lokpal Chairperson Justice **Pinaki Chandra Ghose** has recently launched a digital platform called '**LokpalOnline**' for Indian citizens. It is a web-based facility, which will quicken the disposal of complaints in an accountable, transparent and efficient manner with benefits to all the stakeholders.
15. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently inaugurated the first phase of the **Kashi Vishwanath Corridor** project that connects the temple town's two iconic landmarks – Kashi Vishwanath temple and Ganga ghats.
- It has been built at the cost of **Rs 339 crore**.
 - It is spread over a massive area of about **5 lakh square feet**, whereas earlier premises was limited to just around 3000 square feet.
 - A total of 23 new buildings have been constructed that will provide diverse facilities to the pilgrims and devotees.
16. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently addressed the '*Depositors First: Guaranteed Time-bound Deposit Insurance Payment up to Rs 5 Lakh*' programme in New Delhi.
- With the hike of the deposit insurance coverage to Rs. 5 lakh per depositor per bank, the number of fully protected accounts at end of FY21 constituted **98.1%** of the total number of accounts, as against the international benchmark of 80%.

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STATES AFFAIRS

17. Police Commissioner of Delhi, Rakesh Asthana has recently launched an e-learning platform '**Unnati**' under the **Delhi** Police's flagship scheme 'YUVA' at the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) Auditorium in New Delhi.
- Unnati is an e-learning initiative by the southwest district of the police force to help educate youths and impart skill training to school dropouts from the weaker sections of society

18. The Geographical Indications Registry (GIR) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has accepted the plea to rename Bihar Makhana as **Mithila Makhana** and protecting the product's Geographical Indications (GI) rights.
- The Sabour based Bihar Agriculture University (BAU) filed an application on behalf of the Mithilanchal Makhana Utpadak Sangh (MMUS) to name their produce as Mithila Makhana for the welfare of fox nut growers in the Mithila region of **Bihar**.
19. The **Tamil Nadu** government has recently declared the Kazhuveli wetland in Vanur and Marakkanam taluks of Villupuram district as the state's **16th bird sanctuary**. It has been declared under sub-section (1) of section 18 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
20. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently inaugurated several development projects worth **Rs 10,000 crore** in **Gorakhpur**, Uttar Pradesh.
- Fertilizer Plant, Gorakhpur
 - AIIMS, Gorakhpur – Established under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojna
 - Regional Centre of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Gorakhpur – It will support in eradicating Japanese Encephalitis from the Purvanchal.
21. The Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Pushkar Singh Dhami has recently launched the 'Milk Price Incentive Scheme' in Dehradun. It will provide incentive benefits to around 53,000 people of Uttarakhand.
- Dairy Sector in India accounts for **4.2%** of the National Gross Domestic Product.
 - Uttar Pradesh is the top milk producing state of India.
22. The **Haiderpur Wetland**, abutting the Madhya Ganga barrage, about 10 km from Bijnor in western **Uttar Pradesh**, has been recognised under the 1971 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Uttar Pradesh is now home to **9 Ramsar wetlands**.
- With this, the total number of Ramsar sites in India has gone up to **47**.
23. The **Karnataka** Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports has recently signed a Letter of Understanding (LoU) with UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) as a part of 'Code-Unnati' to improve entrepreneurship and employment opportunities among the youths, including women.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

24. The Permanent Mission of India to the World Trade Organization (WTO) has recently inked an MoU with the Centre for Trade and Investment Law, New Delhi (CTIL), Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, and the Centre for Trade and Economic Integration of The Graduate Institute, Geneva (CTEI) for research and capacity-building in the field of international trade law and policy.
25. **India** has been re-elected to International Maritime Organization (IMO) Council after the elections held at the General Assembly in London for the **2022-2023** biennium under Category B states.
26. The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** has recently announced to change its existing 5-day workweek to a **four-and-a-half day** starting from 1st January 2022. With this, it will become the world's first country to make the employee-friendly transition as part of its efforts to improve productivity and work-life balance.
- **Note:** In December 2021, **Dubai** has become the world's first government to turn **100% paperless**.
27. **Iris Xiomara Castro Sarmiento** has recently won the presidential election of **Honduras** by defeating right-wing opponent Nasry Asfura in the General Election. With this, she has become the first female President of Honduras.
- She will succeed previous President Juan Orlando Hernández.
28. The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** has recently launched the Laser Communications Relay Demonstration (LCRD) from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida. It is the first-ever laser communications system of NASA. It will help NASA in test optical communication in space.
29. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief exercise, PANEX-21 has been planned to be conducted from 20-22 December 2021 at **Pune, Maharashtra**. It is a multi-national disaster relief exercise held among the BIMSTEC countries. The main aim of the exercise is to build regional cooperation in responding to natural disasters.
30. The Defence Ministry of **South Korea** has recently unveiled a model for a hypersonic weapon prototype named 'Hycore' through an animated video. Its testing is expected to begin in 2022.

- Hycore is a ground-launched cruise missile with two-stage solid-fuelled rocket and scramjet engine.
 - Hypersonic weapons are capable of traveling faster than Mach 5, or five times the speed of sound, and have maneuvering capabilities
31. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has recently granted Observer Status to **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** by adopting resolution 76/123. This decision has been taken based on the UNGA's 6th Committee report.
32. The Government of India has recently signed a bilateral air bubble agreement with **Australia**, under which all eligible passengers will be allowed to travel between both the countries.
33. The first 'Summit For Democracy' has recently been hosted by the **United States of America (USA)** "to renew democracy at home and confront autocracies abroad".
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has virtually addressed the summit saying that 'democratic spirit' and 'pluralistic ethos' are ingrained in Indians. A total of 100 nations participated in this 'Summit for Democracy'.
34. **China** has successfully launched a group of satellites 'Shijian-6 05' by a launch vehicle Long March-4B. It has been launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre (Northwest China's Gansu Province). This marks the 400th mission of Long March series carrier rockets.

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REPORTS & INDICES

35. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has recently released a report titled 'Top 100 arms-producing and military services companies, 2020'.
As per the report,

- The 3 Indian defence manufactures companies such as **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited** (HAL) (42nd), **Indian Ordnance Factories** (60th) and **Bharat Electronics Limited** (BEL) (66th) have been ranked among the top 100 manufactures globally.
- **United States of America (USA)** has the largest share in total arms sales of companies in the SIPRI Top 100 for 2020.

Top arms-producing and military services companies in the world, 2020			
Rank	Company	Country	Arms sales (2020)
1	Lockheed Martin	USA	58210
2	Raytheon Technologies	USA	36780
3	Boeing	USA	32130
Top countries with highest share of total arms sales of companies in 2020			
Rank	Country	Share	
1	USA	54%	
2	China	13%	
3	UK	7.1%	

36. **NITI Aayog and Centre for Science and Environment (CSE)** have recently released a report titled "Waste-Wise Cities: Best Practices in Municipal Solid Waste Management". It has been released by NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Rajiv Kumar, CEO Amitabh Kant, and special secretary K Rajeswara Rao, along with Sunita Narain, Director-General, CSE.

- The report documents best practices from 28 cities in 15 states of India.
- The new report is the result of five months of extensive on-ground collective research that was initiated in July 2021.
- The report includes - source segregation, material recovery, and technological innovations to the management of different kinds of wastes and systems such as biodegradables, plastics, e-waste, C&D waste, and landfills.

37. Finance Minister of India, **Nirmala Sitharaman** has been ranked 37th in Forbes' list of the 100 Most Powerful Women in the world. She has been ranked on the list for the 3rd year in a row.

Other Indian women on the list:

- Falguni Nayar, founder and CEO of Nykaa, has been ranked 88th on the list.

- Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Chairperson of HCL Technology, has been ranked 52nd on the list.
- Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, executive chairperson and founder of Biocon, has been ranked 72nd on the list.

38. Asia Power Index 2021 has been released by Lowy Institute. As per the index, India has been ranked **4th** most powerful country in Asia with an overall score of 37.7 out of 100. India's overall score has declined by 2 points as compared to 2020. **USA** has topped the index.

Asia Power Index 2021		
Rank	Country	Score
1	USA	82.2
2	China	74.6
3	Japan	38.7

39. Fortune India has recently released the list of most powerful women in India 2021. As per the list, Union Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs, **Nirmala Sitharaman** has ranked 1st in the list.

Fortune India's Most Powerful Women List 2021		
Rank	Name	Position
1	Nirmala Sitharaman	Union Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs
2	Nita Ambani	Reliance Foundation Chairman and Goodwill Ambassador
3	Soumya Swaminathan	Chief Scientist, World Health Organization (WHO)

40. France-based World Inequality Lab has recently published its report titled "**World Inequality Report 2022**". This report has been authored by Lucas Chancel, who is the co-director of World Inequality Lab. It has been coordinated by French economist Thomas Piketty.

As per the report, India stands out as a poor and very unequal country.

- The top 1% of the population hold more than **one-fifth of the total national income** in 2021 and the bottom half just 13%.
- The economic reforms and liberalization adopted by India have mostly benefited the top 1%.

- The average national income of the Indian adult population is **Rs 204,200** in 2021, on the basis of purchasing power parity.
- The poorest half of the global population “barely owns any wealth” possessing just **2%** of the total, whereas the richest 10% of the global population own 76% of all wealth. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have the most level of inequality in the world, whereas **Europe** has the lowest inequality levels. In Europe, the top 10% income share is around 36%, whereas in MENA it is 58%.

41. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has recently released its World Malaria Report 2021. The 2021 edition of the report analysed the impact of disruptions to malaria prevention, diagnosis, and treatment during the COVID-19.

- In 2020, there were an estimated **627,000** malaria deaths (increased by 12% as compared to 2019).
- Around 47,000 (accounting for 68%) of the additional 69000 deaths were linked to disruptions in provision of malaria diagnosis, treatment, and prevention amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 241 million malaria cases were reported in 85 malaria-endemic countries in 2020. This figure increased from 227 million in 2019.
- Most of the increase in the number of cases were reported from countries in the **African Region**.
- India accounts for 1.7% of malaria deaths in the world in 2020.
- **India** is responsible for the highest number (83%) of malaria cases in the South-East Asia Region.

42. The 9th edition of **India Skills Report (ISR) 2022** has been released by Wheebox in partnership with CII, AICTE, AIU, Taggd, Sunstone Eduversity and UNDP. The theme of ISR 2022 is “*Reengineering Education and Skilling-Building for Future of Work*”.

- The overall employability in India has improved with **46.2%** of youth being found to be highly employable compared to 45.97% last year.
- 51.44% of women are highly employable, whereas 45.97% of men are highly employable.
- **Maharashtra** has topped the list of states with 66.1% employability. Uttar Pradesh and Kerala have been ranked 2nd and 3rd, respectively.
- **Pune, Maharashtra** has topped the list of cities with 78.11% employability. Lucknow (UP) and Trivandrum (Kerala) have been ranked 2nd and 3rd, respectively.

43. As per the Global Health Security (GHS) Index 2021, the world's average overall GHS Index score has been reduced to **38.9** (out of 100) in 2021. In 2019, the score was 40.2.
- **United States of America (USA)** has topped the index with a score of 75.9. It is followed by Australia (71.1) and Finland (70.9).
 - The worst performing country in the index is **North Korea** (16.1), followed by Yemen and Somalia.
 - India has been ranked **66th** with a score of 42.8 (out of 100). In 2019, India was ranked at 57th with a score of 46.5.
44. International Institute for Management Development (IMD) World Competitive Centre has published its "World Talent Ranking Report" 2021.
- **Switzerland** has topped the list.
 - India has been ranked at **56th position**.
 - In the Middle East & North Africa region, Israel has topped the list with 22nd position.
 - UAE has maintained its position to 23rd.

World Talent Ranking Report 2021	
Rank	Country
1	Switzerland
2	Sweden
3	Luxembourg
4	Norway
5	Denmark

45. The **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** has recently released a report titled 'State Focus Paper for 2022-23'. The report focuses on the priority sectors to ensure integrated and sustainable rural prosperity.
- As per the report,**
- Around 52% of the total projected credit potential is estimated for agriculture and allied activities, and 36% for MSMEs.
 - It has projected a **12% increase** in credit potential of **Assam** to Rs 36,292 crore for the 2022-23 financial year.

46. The **World Bank** in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**), and United Nations Children's Fund (**UNICEF**) has released a report titled "The State of the Global Education Crisis: A Path to Recovery".

- The report states that COVID-19 has brought education systems across the globe to a halt, with school closures affecting more than 1.6 billion learners. As per the report, the present generation of student's risks losing **USD 17 trillion** in lifetime earnings in present value, or **about 14%** of today's global GDP due to COVID-19 related school closures.

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47. According to the latest survey released by the Indian Institute of Human Brands (IIHB), Chairman of Reliance Industries, **Mukesh Ambani** and his wife **Nita Ambani** have topped the list of power couples with a 94% score.
- Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone have been ranked at Number 2 with a 86% score.
 - Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma have been ranked at Number 3 with a 79% score.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

48. The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have recently signed a **\$150 million** loan agreement to provide affordable housing for the urban poor in **Tamil Nadu**.
- ADB has also signed a **\$125 million** loan to improve access to safe and affordable drinking water supply and citywide inclusive sanitation services in Dehradun and Nainital cities in **Uttarakhand**.
49. **Reliance Industries (RIL)** has recently partnered with Abu Dhabi Chemical Derivatives Company RSC (trading as TA'ZIZ) to launch TA'ZIZ EDC & PVC, a chemical production partnership at the TA'ZIZ Industrial Chemicals Zone in Ruwais, Abu Dhabi.
- This new joint venture (JV) will construct and operate a chlor-alkali, ethylene dichloride (EDC), and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) production facility, with an investment of more than \$2 billion.

50. **Bharti Airtel** has recently launched 'Airtel India Startup Innovation Challenge' in partnership with Invest India for early-stage Indian startups to demonstrate solutions for 5G, IoT, Cloud Communications, Digital Advertising and Digital Entertainment.
51. **Asian Development Bank** (ADB) has recently approved a **Rs 2,644.85 crore** (USD 350 million) loan for India to help improve its urban services.
- It is a part of the recently launched national programme Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) 2.0 and to provide affordable housing to all, including poor, urban migrant and industrial workers, under the flagship mission Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.
52. **Microsoft** has recently launched a "first-of-its-kind" Cyber-Security Skilling Program in India that aims to skill over **1 lakh** learners by **2022**. This program is meant to give students hands-on experience with security, compliance, and identity fundamentals.
- Courses will be conducted by Microsoft in collaboration with its strategic partners CloudThat, Koenig, RPS, and Synergetics Learning.
 - This is a part of Microsoft's global skilling program, which aims to help 25 million individuals learn new digital skills throughout the world.
53. The Indian Space Research Organisation has recently signed a pact with **Oppo India** to strengthen the Research and Development (R&D) of NavIC or the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) messaging service.
- As per the pact, both ISRO and Oppo India will exchange technical information of NavIC messaging services to build rapid, ready-to-use, end-to-end application-specific solutions. This will enable integrating NavIC messaging service with the mobile handset platform keeping in mind the need of Indian users.

BANKING & FINANCE

54. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently imposed several restrictions on Nagar Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd, **Ahmednagar, Maharashtra**, including a cap of **Rs 10,000** on withdrawals for customers. The bank shall not, without prior approval of RBI, grant or renew any loans and advances, make any investment, incur any liability, disburse any payment, transfer or otherwise dispose of any of its properties or assets.
- It has been imposed through directions under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, shall remain in force for a period of six months from the close of business on 6th

December 2021.

55. The Ministry of Finance has recently announced that the number of ATMs in India has increased to around **2.13 lakh** by the end of September 2021. Out of these, **47.4%** of the ATMs have been installed in the rural and semi-urban centres.
- According to the RBI data, scheduled commercial banks have installed 2, 13,145 ATMs (automated teller machines) up to September 2021. In addition to this, 27,837 White Label ATMs (WLA) have been installed by WLA operators up to September 2021.
56. **Shivalik Small Finance Bank** has recently partnered with fintech firm Indiagold to launch India's first loan against 'Digital Gold'. This collaboration will enable customers to use their digital gold balance to avail instant and digital loans up to Rs 60,000 and also seamlessly access gold loans starting at a monthly interest of just 1%.
57. **ICICI Bank** has recently partnered with Flipkart to offer a digital overdraft facility of up to Rs. 25 lakh to individual sellers and businesses registered on Flipkart.
58. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has recently chosen Intellect Design Arena Limited's Intellect Wealth Qube, a Digital Wealth Management suite, for its digital wealth management transformation agenda.
59. **Ujjivan Small Finance Bank** has recently appointed **Ittira Davis** as managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO) of the bank for a period of three years. He has succeeded Nitin Chugh.
- The bank has also appointed Rajesh Kumar Jogi, Harish Devarajan, and Umesh Bellur as additional directors.
60. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently given nod to **Paytm Payments Bank** to function as scheduled payments bank. It has been included in the **second schedule** to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act, 1934.
- With the scheduled bank status, the payments bank can now participate in government- and other large corporations-issued requests for proposal, primary auctions, fixed-rate and variable rate repos, and reverse repos, along with participation in marginal standing facility. Also, the bank will now be eligible to partner in the government's financial inclusion scheme.

61. The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has maintained status quo on key rates in its fifth bi-monthly policy statement for the ninth consecutive time i.e. it has been decided to continue with the '**accommodative stance**' to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and to revive and sustain growth on a durable basis. The meeting has been held from 6th December to 8th December 2021.
- RBI has retained the CPI inflation projection at 5.3% in FY22.
 - Real GDP growth is projected at 17.2% for Q1 and at 7.8% for Q2 of FY23.
 - RBI has retained the gross domestic product (GDP) growth target at 9.5% in FY22.
62. **Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank (KVGB)**, a regional rural bank, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Liberty General Insurance for selling general insurance products through 629 branches of KVGB. It will boost insurance penetration in Karnataka.
63. **City Union Bank (CUB)**, in collaboration with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and its manufacturing partner Sessaasai, has announced the launch of RuPay On-the-Go contactless wearable keychain for its debit card customers.
- This solution allows the bank's customers to carry payment cards on their keychains, making for fast and convenient payments up to Rs 5,000 at all Rupay-enabled point of sale devices (PoS) without entering a PIN.
64. **Aviva Life Insurance**, a private insurance company, has launched 'Aviva Nivesh Bima'. It is a non-linked, non-participating, individual savings life insurance plan that provides guaranteed money back at every fifth policy year, in addition to a lump sum payout at maturity.
- The minimum annualized premium for the policy is Rs 25,000 and a maximum of Rs 1, 00, 00,000.
 - It offers coverage tenures up to 20 years, policyholders are required to pay the premium only for a limited period.

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65. **Bank of Maharashtra (BoM)** has recently tied up with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to launch its first credit card on card payment network RuPay named 'BOM Platinum RuPay Contactless Credit Card'.
66. **State Bank of India (SBI)** has recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Kendriya Sainik Board to support and educate the children of war veterans, ex-servicemen, and war widows. The lender will provide a grant of Rs 1000 per month to 8,333 war veterans' children.
- Notably, the bank has contributed Rs10 crores to the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund.
67. **Bank of Baroda (BoB)** has recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Centrum Housing Finance (CHFL) for sourcing and financing housing loan borrowers under co-lending model. With this, the bank will be able to penetrate deep into markets in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities at competitive rates.
68. **Federal Bank** has recently entered into a bancassurance partnership with Star Health and Allied Insurance as a corporate agent to provide health insurance products to the lender's 8.9 million customers spread over 1,291 banking outlets across the country.
69. **Karnataka Bank** has recently been honoured with two DigiDhan awards for achieving the target with the highest percentage in BHIM-UPI transactions under the private sector bank category consecutively for two years – 2019-20 and 2020-21. The award has been instituted by the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
70. **India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)** and NPCI Bharat BillPay have recently partnered to facilitate cash-based assisted bill payments at the doorstep of customers. The service will benefit millions of unbanked customers in remote locations.
71. **Kotak Mahindra General Insurance** and Vasai Vikas Sahakari Bank have recently partnered to provide the bank's customers access to a range of insurance solutions. Under this, Vasai Vikas Sahakari Bank will offer Kotak General Insurance's comprehensive suite of general and health insurance products to its customers.
72. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently released the 2nd edition of BRICS Economic Bulletin 2021 on the theme 'Navigating the Ongoing Pandemic: The BRICS Experience of

Resilience and Recovery'. It has been prepared by the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) Research Group with members from BRICS central banks.

73. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently mandated companies to quote Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) for cross-border transactions for capital or current account transactions of **Rs 50 crore and above**, from **1st October 2022**.

- Now, banks will have to obtain the `LEI` number from the resident entities (non-individuals) undertaking any capital or current account transactions.
- For LEI holders, it would be mandatory to furnish the number in all transactions irrespective of the transaction size.

74. Bajaj Allianz General Insurance has recently launched '#Care4Hockey' campaign to support the development of Hockey in India from the grass-roots level. The company has also partnered with **Rani Rampal**, Indian Women's Hockey Team Captain, who will be the face of the campaign.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

75. Konkani novelist **Damodar Mauzo** has recently won the 57th Jnanpith Award 2021. He is known for his novels, such as Karmelin, and Tsunami Simon, and short stories Teresa's Man and Other Stories from Goa.

- Assamese poet **Nilmani Phookan Jr** has won the 56th Jnanpith Award 2020. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1990 and received the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship in 2002.

76. Women's Tennis Association (WTA) has recently announced the winners of the WTA Awards 2021.

WTA Awards 2021		
Category	Winners	Country
Player of the Year	Ashleigh Barty	Australia
Doubles Team of the Year	Barbora Krejcikova & Katerina Siniakova	Czech Republic
Most Improved Player of the Year	Barbora Krejcikova	Czech Republic

Newcomer of the Year	Emma Raducanu	UK
Comeback Player of the Year	Carla Suarez Navarro	Spain

77. IIT-Kanpur Scientist **Ropesh Goyal** has recently won the 'Young Geospatial Scientist' award in recognition of his unique contribution to developing the Indian Geoid Model and computation software.
78. The US-based rights group ChinaAid has recently awarded **Chinese journalist Zhang Zhan**, who was jailed by Chinese authorities for reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic. She has been awarded with the Lin Zhao Freedom Award for her work in promoting the Chinese civil society and advancing the rule of law.
- ChinaAid has also awarded Lin Zhao award to disappeared Chinese rights lawyer **Gao Zhisheng**.
79. Renowned Indian architect **Balkrishna Vithaldas Doshi** has been honoured with the Royal Gold Medal 2022, the world's highest honour for architecture.
- He became the first Indian architect to receive the Pritzker Architecture Prize in 2018.
80. Professor **Neena Gupta**, a mathematician at the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, has recently won the 2021 DST-ICTP-IMU Ramanujan Prize for 'Young Mathematicians from developing countries'. She has been conferred the prestigious award for her outstanding work in affine algebraic geometry & commutative algebra.
81. Founder & Chairman of Wipro Limited and Azim Premji Foundation, **Azim Premji** has recently received the 10th annual Dr Ida S. Scudder Humanitarian Oration for his contributions to society.
82. **DBS Bank** has been awarded at the ET BFSI Excellence Awards 2021. The lender has won two awards for the 'DBS Rapid (Real-time API)' solution in the 'Innovative API/Open Banking model' category and 'for 'Intelligent Banking' in the 'Best Digital Customer Experience initiative' category.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

83. A book titled "At Home in the Universe" is the auto-biography of **B. K. Madhur**, former Chief Executive Officer at DHFL Property Services Ltd., and one of the key personalities in establishing Dewan Housing. It has been published by Bookworld Enterprises of Mumbai.
84. Founder of Sundaram Climate Institute, **Mridula Ramesh** has recently authored a new book titled "'Watershed: How We Destroyed India's Water and How We Can Save It'". It is published by Hachette India.
- **Other books:** 'Climate Solution'

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PERSON IN NEWS

85. Former chief election commissioner (CEC) of India, **Sunil Arora**, has recently joined the board of advisers of the International Institute for Democracy & Electoral Assistance (IDEA).
86. German lawmakers has officially elected Social Democrat, **Olaf Scholz** as the new chancellor of Germany. He has succeeded **Angela Merkel**, who served 16 years (since 2005) as German Chancellor.
87. BYJU's has recently announced a 2-year partnership with Olympic medallists (Javelin Thrower) **Neeraj Chopra** and Shuttler **PV Sindhu** as the brand ambassador for Disney BYJU's Early Learn App.
88. The United-Nation Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has recently appointed **Catherine Russell** as the new Head of United Nations Children's Funds (UNICEF). She will succeed Henrietta H Fore.

89. Indian model **Harnaaz Sandhu** (Chandigarh), 21, has won the title of Miss Universe 2021 by beating contestants from 80 countries. The 70th edition of the event has been held in Eilat, Israel.
- Paraguay's **Nadia Ferreira**, 22, finished second
 - South Africa's **Lalela Mswane**, 24, finished third
90. **Elon Musk**, CEO of Tesla and founder of SpaceX, and the richest person in the world as of 2021, has been named Time's 2021 'Person of the Year' by Time Magazine.
- COVID-19 vaccine scientists Kizzmekia Corbett, Barney Graham, Katalin Kariko, and Drew Weissman have been named '**Heroes of the Year 2021**' by Time Magazine.
 - US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris were named Time's 2020 'Person of the Year'.

OBITUARIES

91. Former England **Cricketer Eileen Ash** has passed away recently in Norwich, United Kingdom. She was the world's oldest Test Cricketer. She was born on 30th October 1911, Highbury, London, United Kingdom.
- She made her debut in 1937 against Australia.
 - She was given the honour of ringing the bell at Lord's in the Finals of the 2017 ICC Women's World Cup
92. Padma Shri Awardee and **Teacher**, Nanda Kishore Prusty has passed away recently in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. He was popularly known as Nanda Sir. He was honoured with the **Padma Shri** in **2021** for his contribution to the field of education and social service.
93. General Bipin Laxman Singh Rawat, the *first Chief of Defence Staff* (CDS) of the Indian Armed Forces, has passed away recently in a helicopter crash near Coonoor in Tamil Nadu. He was on board an Indian Air Force (IAF) **Mi17 V5 Helicopter** along with his wife Madhulika Rawat, and 11 other defence personnel. He was born on 16th March 1958 in Pauri, **Uttarakhand**.

SPORTS

94. The 4th edition of the Asian Youth Para Games 2021 has recently been held in Manama, Bahrain.
- India is placed at **5th position** with **41 medals** (12 gold, 15 silver and 14 bronze).

Asian Youth Para Games 2021					
Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Iran	44	53	25	122
2	Thailand	33	25	17	75
3	Japan	30	11	14	55

95. Indian **weightlifter** Sanket Mahadev Sargar has recently won the gold medal in Men's 55 kg snatch category at the ongoing Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships 2021. He has created the national record by lifting 113kg in the men's 55kg snatch category.

- The Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships is a qualifying event for the Commonwealth Games 2022 in Birmingham. It is being held concurrently with the World Weightlifting Championships.

96. **Manipur** has recently won the Senior Women's National Football Championship 2021-22 by defeating Railways in the final at the EMS Stadium in Kozhikode, Kerala. With this, Manipur has won its 21st title.

97. Norway's **Magnus Carlsen** has recently won his 5th World Chess Championship 2021 after defeating Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi. It has been organized by the International Chess Federation (FIDE) during Expo 2020 at Dubai Exhibition Centre in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

98. The Asian Rowing Championships 2021 has been held at Ban Chang, Rayong in Thailand from 8th-12th December 2021. India has won **6 medals** (two gold and four silver) in the championship.

Asian Rowing Championships 2021		
Player	Event	Medal
Arvind Singh	Men's Single Sculls	Gold
Arjun Lal Jat and Ravi	Men's Double Sculls	Gold
Ashish Phugat and Sukhjinder Singh	Men's Double Sculls	Silver
Parminder Singh	Men's Single Sculls	Silver
Bittu Singh, Jakar Khan, Manjeet Kumar, and	Men's Quadruple Sculls	Silver

Sukhmeet Singh		
Jasveer Singh, Punit Kumar, Gurmeet Singh, and Charanjeet Singh	Men's Coxless Four	Silver

99. Red Bull's **Max Verstappen** (Netherlands) has recently won the Formula 1 Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2021 by defeating UK's Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton. It has been held at the Yas Marina Circuit on Yas Island in Abu Dhabi, UAE. With this, Max Verstappen has won his first F1 World Driver Championship.

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IMPORTANT DAYS

100. South-Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Charter Day is observed annually on **8th December** to mark the signing of the SAARC Charter in 1985 that established the regional group SAARC. The year 2021 marks the observance of 37th SAARC Charter Day.
101. International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime is observed on 9th December, recently.
- The International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime is observed annually on **9th December** to spread awareness of the Genocide Convention and its role in combating and preventing the crime of genocide, as defined in the Convention, and to commemorate and honour its victims.
102. International Anti-Corruption Day is observed annually on **9th December** to raise public awareness for anti-corruption. The day is observed since the passage of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption on 31 October 2003.
- Theme 2021:** "Your right, your role: say no to corruption."

103. Human Rights Day is observed annually on **10th December** to honour the day in 1948 when the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
- **Theme 2021:** 'Equality - Reducing inequalities, advancing human rights'
104. International Mountain Day is observed annually on **11th December** to spread awareness about the importance of mountains to life, to highlight the opportunities and constraints in mountain development and to build alliances that will bring positive change to mountain peoples and environments around the world.
- **Theme 2021:** 'Sustainable Mountain Tourism'
 - The day was established by the UN General Assembly in 2003.
105. United Nations Children's Funds (UNICEF) Day is observed annually on **11th December** to raise awareness about saving children's lives by defending and helping them to fulfil their wishes.
- The year 2021 marks the **75th anniversary** of UNICEF Day. This year's theme is, "to help children to recover from interruption and learning losses experienced through the pandemic in the last two years".
106. International Day of Neutrality is observed annually on **12th December** to raise public awareness of the value of neutrality in international relations. The day was first observed in 2017.
107. International Universal Health Coverage Day is observed annually on **12th December** to raise awareness of the need for strong and resilient health systems and universal health coverage with multi-stakeholder partners.
- **Theme 2021:** 'Leave No One Behind When It Comes to Health: Invest in Health Systems for All'
108. The United Nations proclaimed 12 December as International Universal Health Coverage Day on 12th December 2017.
109. National Energy Conservation Day, also known as Energy Efficiency Day, is observed annually across India on **14th December** to raise awareness regarding the conservation of

energy as it is the best way to have a greener and brighter future. The day is annually organized by the Ministry of Power.

- The day was first observed in 2001.

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