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December 2021 - Week 3

# WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. The National Conference on Investment Opportunities in Highway, Transport and Logistics has been held in **Mumbai, Maharashtra** under the chairmanship of the Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, **Nitin Gadkari**.
2. Chief Justice of India, NV Ramana and the Chief Minister of Telangana, K Chandrasekhar Rao has recently inaugurated *India's first International Arbitration and Mediation Centre* (IAMC) in **Hyderabad, Telangana**. It has been established to quickly resolve the issues that arise due to the lack of sufficient judges.
3. The Union Home Minister **Amit Shah** has recently laid the foundation stone of **Umiya Mata Temple** as well as its premises at Umiya Campus in Sola in **Ahmedabad, Gujarat** along with several developmental projects including a railway bridge.
  - The temple and other buildings, will be developed at a cost of **Rs 1,500 crore** on 74,000 square yards of land.
4. **IIT Delhi** has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Air Force** (IAF) to support requirements towards indigenous solutions in various weapon systems. Under this MoU, the IAF has identified key focus areas involving technology development and finding indigenous solutions towards sustenance of various weapon systems.
5. National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) has awarded a standalone fuel-cell based Green Hydrogen Microgrid Project at **Simhadri** in **Andhra Pradesh**. It is India's first green hydrogen-based energy storage project and one of the world's largest.
  - *India has set a target to become carbon neutral by 2070.*
6. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has recently issued new rules named '**e-Verification Scheme, 2021**' for faceless collection of information from taxpayers, where mismatches are detected.
  - The scheme is notified under a provision in **Income Tax Act 135A** that proposes faceless information gathering aimed at imparting efficiency, transparency, and accountability by eliminating the interface between the income-tax authority and the assess.
7. **Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)** has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND), Ministry of Finance

for data exchange between the two organizations. It is on line of vision of MCA and FIU-INDIA to harness data capabilities to ensure effective enforcement.

8. **NITI Aayog** has signed a Statement of Intent (Sol) with **United Nations World Food Program (WFP)** to address issues related to inclusion of **millet**s in government programmes. Under the agreement, the focus will be on mainstreaming millets and strengthening of climate resilient agriculture for enhanced food and nutrition security in India.
9. Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur has recently signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with Nguyen Manh Hung, Minister of Information and Communication, **Vietnam**, to enable collaboration in the field of digital media and strengthen the partnership between both the nations.
10. The Union Cabinet has recently approved an incentive scheme to promote the use of RuPay Debit cards and low-value (up to Rs 2000) BHIM-UPI digital transactions (person to merchants P2M) in the country. The total financial outlay of the scheme is **Rs 1,300 crore** for **1 year** i.e. FY22.
  - Under the scheme, the acquiring banks will get small amounts of incentives from the Government for transactions that have been done through RuPay Debit Cards and low-value BHIM-UPI modes of payments.

#### Other approvals (December 2021):

##### 1. **Marriage Age of Women:**

Cabinet has approved the proposal to raise the legal age of marriage of women from **18 to 21 years**. The proposal is based on recommendations made by the Centre's Task Force, headed by Jaya Jaitley.

##### 2. **Semi-conductor:**

Cabinet has approved a Production Linked Incentive scheme with an outlay of **Rs 76,000 crore** to boost semiconductor and display manufacturing in India.

##### 3. **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)-**

Cabinet has approved the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) for 2021-26 with an outlay of **Rs 93,068 crore** that aims to benefit about 22 lakh farmers including 2.5 lakh Scheduled Caste (SC) and 2 lakh Scheduled Tribe (ST) farmers in the country.

4. Cabinet has also approved a treaty between **India and Poland** over legal assistance in criminal matters.

11. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry has launched the Unified Logistics Interface Platform's (ULIP) Hackathon – '**LogiXtics**' with an aim to crowdsource more ideas which will benefit the logistics industry.
- LogiXtics is organised by NITI Aayog and Atal Innovation Mission and supported by National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation (NICDC) and NICDC Logistics Data Bank Services Limited (NLDSL).
  - The hackathon is open for all and is divided into two stages - ideation stage & prototype stage.
12. The central government has recently given 'in-principle' approval to set-up 6 Nuclear Reactors at **Jaitapur** in **Maharashtra**. These nuclear power reactors will have a capacity of **1,650 MW** each.
- It will be the country's largest nuclear power generating site with a total capacity of **9,900 MW**.
  - The technical cooperation will be provided by the French firm 'EDF'.
  - The present installed nuclear power capacity in India is **6,780 MW** and the share of nuclear power in the total electricity generation in 2020-21 is about **3.1%**.
13. The Union Minister for Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Giriraj Singh has recently launched MIS (Management Information System) portal named '**Vikas Portal**' for rankings of States/UTs in Land Acquisition Projects under the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (RFCTLARR) Act, 2013.
- MIS portal has been developed by the **Department of Land Resources**.
14. The Government of India (GoI) and Germany Development Bank – KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau) have signed a loan agreement of **442.26 million Euro** for the development of the **Surat Metro Rail Project** in Gujarat.
- The total cost of the project is estimated to be Euro 1.50 billion, of which KfW is financing Euro 442.26 million.
  - The project is being co-financed by French Development Agency, AFD (Agence Française de Développement), for which the agreement for Euro 250 million was signed on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021.
15. The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and Generation India Foundation (GIF) have launched Project AMBER i.e. '**Accelerated Mission for Better Employment**



**and Retention'** at Indian Habitat Centre, New Delhi to empower youth with industry-relevant skills.

- The project will be equally funded by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) under the *Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion* (SANKALP) programme. The project is supported by the BlackRock Foundation and McKinsey and Company.

16. Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal has recently chaired an interaction with the heads of Indian industry and Export Promotion Councils in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

- During the meeting, it has been revealed that **UAE** has committed **\$100 Billion** for investment and infrastructure creation in India.
- Dubai's DP World is setting up **India Mart Traders Market**, a dedicated market for Indian businesses which would enable traders and manufacturers to trade with the UAE local market and regional market.
- UAE has also allotted a land for India to set up a temple.

17. India has recently successfully test-fired a short range surface-to-surface ballistic missile named '**Pralay**' from APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha.

- It is developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation** (DRDO).
- The missile is powered by a solid-propellant rocket motor and many new technologies.
- The missile has a range of **150-500 kilometres** and can be launched from a mobile launcher.
- It has the ability to defeat interceptor missiles.

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18. The **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)** under the NITI Aayog has launched a **vernacular innovation programme (VIP)** to empower innovators and entrepreneurs across the country by removing the language barrier.

- Under the programme, AIM will be training a vernacular task force (VTF) in each of the **22 scheduled languages** with each task force consisting of vernacular language teachers, subject experts and technical writers.
- The AIM will launch a '**train-the-trainer program**' where it will collaborate with the design department of IIT Delhi to coach the VTF in design thinking and

entrepreneurship and the adaptation of these subjects in the 22 languages and cultures.

- The task force will be trained over the period of December 2021 to April 2022

19. Ice Hockey Association of India's general secretary, **Harjinder Singh** has been appointed as the Chef de Mission of India for the upcoming 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing by the Indian Olympic Association of India (IOA). He has also led the Indian contingent at the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

## STATES AFFAIRS

20. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and **Tamil Nadu's** Health and Family Welfare Department have recently signed a Record of Discussions (RoD) for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases in the state.
21. According to the gazette of India issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, an area of 454.65 sq km around the boundary of Askot Wildlife Sanctuary in the **Pithoragarh district** of **Uttarakhand** has been declared as the **Askot Wildlife Sanctuary Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ)**.
22. The first "Drone Mela" in the country has been held in **Gwalior**, Madhya Pradesh. It has been organised jointly by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Government of Madhya Pradesh, and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI).
- During the fair, Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Jyotiraditya Scindia has announced that five Drone Schools will be opened in Gwalior, Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Satna in Madhya Pradesh.
23. The Chief Minister of **Punjab** Charanjit Singh Channi has recently declared '**Krishna Balram Rath Yatra**' as an annual state festival. He has also announced a grant of Rs. 2.51 crore for the ISKCON Temple in Ludhiana, Punjab.
24. The state government of **Odisha** has recently launched a new initiative, Mukhyamantri Vayu Swasthya Seva (Air Health Service) at the Biju Patnaik International Airport to provide health services to the people from remote and backward areas of the state. The service will be made available to people of four districts, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, and Nuapada in the first phase.

25. The state government of **Maharashtra** has recently launched 'Chalo Mobile App' and 'Chalo Smart Cards' to facilitate digital and advance purchase of Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) bus tickets.
26. Minister of State for Labour and Employment, Rameswar Teli has announced that the state of **Maharashtra** has the highest number of beneficiaries under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY). Maharashtra has 0.64 million beneficiaries followed by 0.44 million in Gujarat, 0.53 million in Tamil Nadu, 0.31 million in Karnataka and 0.27 million in Uttar Pradesh.
- As on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2021, the total beneficiaries under the scheme stands at 3.97 million spread across 0.11 million establishments and the total benefits granted stands at Rs 2612.10 crore.
27. Solar EPC player Rays Power Infra has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Rajasthan** government for constructing an avant-garde PV Photovoltaic (PV) Power Station (commonly referred to as solar power plant) and to generate 500 MW of green electricity.
28. The Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik has inaugurated the longest bridge in the state named '**T-Setu**'. It is built on the **Mahanadi River** in the Cuttack district.
29. The union territory of **Jammu & Kashmir** has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with University College Birmingham (UCB) at India Global Forum, Dubai to facilitate J&K students with wider opportunities in education.
30. The Government of **Andhra Pradesh** has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** and **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)**, New Delhi on the Technical Cooperation Project (TCP) for strengthening the capacities to support the farmers for adopting the sustainable Agri-food systems.
31. **Kolkata's Durga Puja** has been included in UNESCO's 2021 list of 'Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity'.
- Durga Puja is a ten-day festival celebrated in the month of Ashvina (September or October).



- The festival celebrates the victory of the goddess Durga over the demon king Mahishasura.
  - It is mainly celebrated in West Bengal, Assam, and other parts of India.
32. The Chief Minister of **Jharkhand** Hemant Soren has recently launched a **Sports Action toward Harnessing Aspiration of Youth (SAHAY)** scheme aimed at nurturing young sporting talents in Naxal affected districts of the state.
33. The Government of **Haryana** has recently launched a '**Khel Nursery Scheme 2022-23**' to promote sports in the state. Under the scheme, sports nurseries will be started in government, private educational institutions and private sports institutions.
34. The state government of **Maharashtra** has recently signed an MoU with **Tata Motors Limited** to support the establishment of a Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSF) in the state. The facility will have a capacity of recycling around 35000 vehicles a year.
35. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently laid the foundation stone of the **Ganga Expressway**, the longest highway in India, in **Shahjahanpur**, Uttar Pradesh. The 594-kilometre long expressway will be built at a cost of around **Rs 36, 200 crore**.
- It will connect Meerut with Prayagraj.
  - The expressway will have a 3.5-kilometer long air-strip for assisting emergency take-off and landing of Air Force planes in Shahjahanpur.
  - An industrial corridor is proposed to be built along the Ganga Expressway.
  - It will reduce the travel time between Delhi and Prayagraj to just 7 hours.
36. Rajasthan's Art and Culture Minister, Dr. Bulaki Das Kalla has recently inaugurated the 11-day long 24th 'Lokrang- 2021', an annual festival of folk artists, at Jawahar Kala Kendra (JKK) in **Jaipur, Rajasthan**.
- The function has been organized by JKK, Art and Culture Department, and RUDA (*Rural Non-Agriculture Development Agency*) under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
  - The festival will conclude on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2021.
37. The **National Cadet Corps (NCC)** has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to reuse plastic wastes collected by NCC cadets during Puneet Sagar Abhiyan and other cleanliness activities in country-wide road construction by NHAI.

- Puneet Sagar is a nationwide campaign to free seashores/beaches from plastic & other waste materials and increase awareness about the importance of keeping these clean. It was initiated on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

38. India has recently successfully test-fired the new generation nuclear-capable '**Agni Prime**' ballistic missile from *Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam island* off the coast of Odisha.

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## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

39. India and **USA** have launched a new programme named 'Technology-based Energy Solutions: Innovations for Net Zero' to support innovations to tackle climate and clean energy challenges.
40. The Government of **Bhutan** has recently honoured Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** with its highest civilian award, **Ngadag Pel gi Khorlo** for India's friendly approach to Bhutan under PM Modi's governance. During the pandemic, India has extended support to the neighbouring country in the form of vaccines, medicines and other emergency services.
41. The third meeting of India-Central Asia Dialogue 2021 has been held in **New Delhi** under the chairmanship of Dr S Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister (EAM) of India. It has been attended by the foreign ministers of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
42. **H.E. Nguyen Van Hung**, Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism, **Vietnam**, has recently visited India from 15 December to 19 December 2021 to strengthen cooperation.
43. **Malta** has recently become the first European country to allow limited cultivation and possession of 'cannabis' for personal use. Now, adults will be allowed to grow four plants at home and carry seven grams of cannabis, with smoking in public or in front of children remaining illegal.

44. **Pakistan** has successfully test-fired an enhanced range version of the indigenously developed surface-to-surface '**Babur Cruise Missile 1B**' that can strike targets up to 900 kilometres.

## REPORTS & INDICES

45. The Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) has released the report on the State of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy in India which highlights the importance of early education years in the overall development of a child. The report has been prepared by the **Institute for Competitiveness**.

### Index on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy:

- In the Index, **West Bengal (58.95)** has topped the ranking in the large state category followed by Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra.
- **Kerala (67.95)** has the best performance in the small state category followed by Himachal Pradesh, and Punjab.
- **Lakshadweep (52.69)** has topped the ranking in the Union Territory category and **Mizoram (51.64)** in the North-East category.

The '**Index on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy**' is the first step in this direction, establishing an understanding of the overall state of Foundational Learning across children aged below 10 years in Indian states and Union territories.

The Index includes **5 pillars** comprising 41 indicators:

- Educational infrastructure
- Access to education
- Basic health
- Learning outcomes
- Governance

46. Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has recently ranked **8th** on the list of the world's top 20 most admired men, in a survey carried out by data analytics company YouGov. The list has been compiled taking feedback from 42,000 people in 38 countries.

### Other Indian personalities on the list:

- **Most admired Indian men:** Sachin Tendulkar (12<sup>th</sup>), Shah Rukh Khan (14<sup>th</sup>), Amitabh Bachchan (15<sup>th</sup>) and Virat Kohli (18<sup>th</sup>).
- **Most admired Indian women:** Priyanka Chopra (10<sup>th</sup>), Aishwarya Rai Bachchan (13<sup>th</sup>) and Sudha Murty (14<sup>th</sup>).

World's most admired Personality		
Rank	Men	Women
1	Barack Obama	Michelle Obama

2	Bill Gates	Angelina Jolie
3	Xi Jinping	Queen Elizabeth II

47. Truecaller has recently published the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of '2021 Global Scam & Scam Report', which lists the Top 20 countries affected by spam calls in 2021.
- **Brazil** has been the most affected country by spam calls in 2021. It has been followed by Peru and Ukraine.
  - Interestingly, the USA has dropped from 2nd place in 2020 to 20th in 2021.
  - **India** has moved up in rankings from 9<sup>th</sup> in 2020 to **4<sup>th</sup> in 2021** due to a significant increase in sales and telemarketing calls.

## BUSINESS & ECONOMY

48. **WhatsApp** has recently launched the Digital Payments Utsav for 500 villages in India. It is a pilot program that is going to adopt 500 villages in **Karnataka** and **Maharashtra** in an effort to empower villagers with access to digital payments via the 'payments on WhatsApp'.
49. **Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)** has recently collaborated with Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) to scale up Alkaline Electrolyser technology for Green Hydrogen production. Presently, Electrolyser Plants are imported.
- *India has set a target towards zero-emission cars by 2040.*
50. **Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL)**, the renewable energy arm of diversified Adani Group, has recently signed an agreement with the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) to supply **4,667 MW** of green power. This is the world's largest ever green power purchase agreement.
- This is a part of a manufacturing-linked solar tender of 8,000 MW awarded to AGEL by SECI in June 2020.
51. Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) has recently acquired a **4.93% stake** in Indian Gas Exchange Limited, the country's first automated national level exchange for the trading of natural gas. IOCL has acquired 36, 93,750 equity shares of the face value of Rs.10 each.
52. **Reliance Industries**, India's largest corporate by revenues, profits and market value, has recently topped the 2021 Wizikey News Score ranking as India's most-visible corporate in media. It is followed by State Bank of India (SBI), Bharti Airtel, Infosys and Tata Motors.

- Globally, **Facebook** is ranked No.1 on the index, followed by Alphabet Inc., Amazon, Apple Inc., Samsung Electronics, Netflix and Microsoft.
- Reliance is ranked at **No.8** on the global ranking.
- The highest-ranked state-owned firm is National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC), at rank 13.

53. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has recently approved a **\$112 million loan** to strengthen skills education and training through the establishment of the Assam Skill University.
54. An additional **\$1 million** grant from the **Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction** will support the introduction of technologies for smart campus management and integrated teaching, learning, and career development management.
55. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has announced that the Global debt has increased to **\$226 trillion** in 2020 as the world was hit by the raging Covid-19 pandemic and a deep recession. The Global debt has raised by 28 percentage points to 256 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020.
- According to the IMF, the public debt has raised from around 70% of GDP in 2007 to **124% of GDP in 2020** and the private debt has raised at a moderate pace from 164 to 178 percent of GDP in 2020.
56. Power Finance Corporation (PFC) has recently inked an agreement with GreenCell Mobility to lend **Rs 275 crore** for deployment of **350 electric buses** across nine cities of **Uttar Pradesh**. The buses will be deployed in key cities of UP including Agra, Meerut, Aligarh, Bareilly, Ghaziabad & Mathura. The initiative is part of the FAME-II scheme.
- **Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid) Electric Vehicles in India** (FAME-II) scheme was launched in **2015**.
57. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has recently signed a **Rs 2,400 crore** contract with **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** for development and supply of 20 types of systems for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas Mk1A fighter aircraft programme. The duration of the contract is **5 years** i.e. from 2023 to 2028.
58. The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) has recently constituted a committee for creating a framework for the transfer of stressed loans from domestic lenders to financial institutions in IFSC.



- Former executive director of RBI **G Padmanabhan** will head the committee which will also include representative from law firm and other market participants possessing expertise in banking and legal issues. The committee will submit its report to the chairperson, IFSCA, within one month from the date of its first meeting.

59. The GAIL (India) Limited and Gujarat Alkalies & Chemicals Limited (GACL) have signed an agreement to set up **500 Kilo litre/Day** capacity **Bio Ethanol Plant** in Gujarat and explore other business opportunities of mutual interest.
60. The **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** has recently partnered with Udeemy Business to encourage innovative learning and skill development for employees of NPCI. It is a 3-year partnership that will offer courses on in-demand skills such as tech, domain, behavioural, and leadership skills to all NPCI employees.
61. National Stock Exchange (NSE) has launched a new corporate governance initiative named '**NSE Prime**' to raise the bar for corporate governance standards in India.
- All the NSE-listed companies can adopt NSE Prime voluntarily. However, they need to comply with pre-defined norms on an ongoing basis, which will be monitored by NSE.
  - An NSE Prime company needs at least **40%** public shareholding as against 25% under SEBI regulations.

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## **BANKING & FINANCE**

62. The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has recently introduced a new plan '**Dhan Rekha**' which is a Non-Linked, Non-Participating, Individual Savings Life Insurance Plan.
- Features:**
- The plan provides special premium rates for female lives.
  - The plan is allowed to **Third Gender**.
  - The minimum sum assured under this plan is **Rs 2 lakh** and there is **no limit** for the maximum sum assured.

- The minimum age at entry ranges from 90 days to 8 years as per chosen policy term.
- The maximum age at entry ranges from 35 years to 55 years depending upon the chosen policy term.

63. SBI Card has recently launched a first-of-a-kind credit card '**SBI Card PULSE**' that offers a host of fitness and health-related benefits.

- The card provides an annual membership fee of Rs 1,499 that has been launched on the Visa Signature platform. The renewal fee waiver is applicable on achieving an annual spend milestone of Rs 2 lakh within the card membership year.
- The card provides the customers Noise ColorFit Pulse Smart watch worth Rs 4,999 as a welcome gift on payment of the joining fee.

64. **Axis Bank** has recently collaborated with Swift to provide a comprehensive digital solution to clients. The bank is integrating with different digitisation initiatives by government bodies and service providers to extend an end-to-end service to business clients.

65. **Equitas Small Finance Bank** has recently partnered with Cholamandalam MS General Insurance to launch the 'Chola Sarva Shakti Policy', a women-specific health insurance policy to empower Indian women with good health and finances.

- According to a recent survey among 1,009 women, only **39%** of them had a health cover.

66. Bank of Baroda (BoB) has recently launched a wearable payment solution called "**bob World Wave**" in partnership with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to ensure seamless and convenient digital payments for customers.

- This payment solution will allow customers to monitor their body temperature, heart rate, SpO2 and blood pressure.
- It will provide contactless payments of up to **Rs 5000** across all NFC-enabled PoS devices. Payment above Rs 5000 can be made using a pin.

67. **Paytm** has recently launched the Artificial Intelligence-powered educational technology platform named '**Paytm Wealth Academy**' for traders and investors. It will offer courses and webinars on trading and financial concepts according to the needs of individuals.

68. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has recently constituted a 7-member committee to enhance technological capabilities and explore appropriate technology solutions for early detection of market anomalies.
- The *Advisory Committee for Leveraging Regulatory and Technology Solutions* (ALeRTS) will be headed by SEBI's ex-whole time member **Madhabi Puri Buch**.
69. **CSB Bank** has recently launched a Hyperlocal Banking Services to boost financial inclusion in partnership with Financial Software and Systems (FSS). Under this partnership, CSB Bank and FSS plan to open 1,000 Smart Cash franchisees in semi-urban and rural areas across the country to expand the adoption of financial services among the underserved segments.
70. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently introduced a Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework for large non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) to strengthen the supervisory tools applicable to NBFCs. The PCA framework for NBFCs will be effective from **1<sup>st</sup> October 2022** based on the financial position of NBFCs on or after March 31, 2022.
- The PCA framework will be applicable to:**
- All Deposit-Taking NBFCs (Excluding government companies)
  - All Non-Deposit-Taking NBFCs in Middle, Upper, and Top Layers. However, those NBFCs not taking deposits and with an asset size of less than Rs 1,000 crore, primary dealers, government-owned NBFCs, and housing finance companies are exempt from this framework.
71. Edtech platform firm **Adda247** has recently acquired StudyIQ Education for **\$20 million** (150 crores) in a cash and stock deal. This will give Adda247 an edge in the UPSC segment.
- *StudyIQ YouTube channel is India's largest educational Youtube channel in terms of monthly viewership*, while it is the second largest in terms of subscribers' base after Wifistudy.
72. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a **Rs 1.80 crore** penalty on **Punjab National Bank** for contravention of sub-section (2) of section 19 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 (the Act).
73. NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL), the international payments arm of National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has recently partnered with **Western Union** to bolster real-time money transfer to bank accounts in India from foreign countries.

74. Pine Labs, a merchant commerce platform, has recently collaborated with **AU Small Finance Bank** to enable the bank's credit cardholders to avail of **equated monthly installments** (EMI) offers at the point of sale and convert their regular purchase into interest-free EMIs.
75. **Catholic Syrian Bank (CSB) Bank** has recently collaborated with online tax filing platform Clear (formerly ClearTax) to launch an online and free-of-cost income tax e-filing facility for its NRI customers.
76. **ICICI Prudential Life Insurance** has recently become the first Indian insurance company to sign the United Nations-supported Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI), to demonstrate commitment towards the Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) issues.
77. Home First Finance Company India Ltd (HomeFirst) has recently entered into a strategic co-lending partnership with **Union Bank of India (UBI)** to offer home loans to customers. HomeFirst will retain a minimum of 20% of the loan while 80% will be retained by UBI.
78. **ICICI Lombard General Insurance** has recently partnered with Clove Dental, India's largest network of oral clinics to offer dental insurance. This partnership will provide oral health support to Clove Dental's consumers that will encompass all necessary dental treatment expenses under the (Out Patient Department) OPD benefit of ICICI Lombard.
79. **Wipro** has signed an agreement to acquire Edgile, a transformational cyber security consulting provider, for \$230 million. This will enhance Wipro's cyber security and risk consulting capabilities for the benefit of its customers.
- Both will develop Wipro CyberTransform, an integrated suite that will help enterprises enhance boardroom governance of cyber security risk, invest in robust cyber strategies, and reap the value of practical security in action.
80. **Karnataka Gramin Bank (KGB)**, sponsored by Canara Bank, has recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Care Health Insurance to market health insurance products for customers of the bank across 22 districts of Karnataka.
81. Mastercard has recently collaborated with **Google Pay** on tokenization for card-based payments. This will enable Google Pay users to safely transact using their Mastercard credit and debit cards without having to share their credit or debit card details such as card number and expiry date with a merchant.

82. **Bank of Baroda** has recently won the top position in the overall digital transactions among large banks for FY20-21. It has been felicitated by the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) at the Digital Payments Utsav. As a part of the celebration, Bank of Baroda has been conferred with 5 DigiDhan awards for FY 2019-20 & 2020-21 in various categories.
83. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has recently acquired a minority stake in JSW Cement Limited for an investment of Rs 100 crore through compulsorily convertible preference shares (CCPS).
84. **Bajaj Allianz General Insurance** has recently launched a '**Health Prime**' wellness rider, which can be availed along with the insurer's health insurance and personal accident policies. It covers **four key areas** including tele-consultation cover, doctor consultation cover, investigations cover for pathology or radiology expenses and annual preventive health check-up cover in a cashless manner.
85. Private sector lender **RBL Bank** has been authorized by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to collect indirect taxes on behalf of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC).
- In November 2021, RBI has given permission to RBL Bank to collect direct taxes.
86. Edelweiss General Insurance has recently partnered with **PhonePe** for digital motor insurance products. This partnership will offer PhonePe customers simple, and end-to-end digital solutions in the motor insurance segment.
87. **Liberty General Insurance** has recently partnered with CSC e-Governance Services India under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to strengthen insurance penetration in rural areas across India by selling insurance products through the CSC network.
88. **Equitas Small Finance Bank** has become the banking partner of the Government of Maharashtra with an aim to offer its services to the state government employees.
- This will enable Equitas Small Finance Bank to distribute salaries and allowances to the existing employees apart from making provision of pension to pensioners.
  - **Bandhan Bank, Karur Vysya Bank and The South Indian Bank** have been assigned the role of distributing salaries and allowances to the government employees.



89. **Axis Bank** has announced the approval to reclassify the **Oriental Insurance Company Limited (OICL)** from promoter category to public category shareholder in the bank.
90. **HDFC Life Insurance** has recently won the '**Best Governed Company Listed Segment: Large Category**' at the 21st edition of the ICSI National Awards for Excellence in Corporate Governance. The award has been presented by Union Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah.

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## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

91. Silicon Valley-based The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) has conferred the Global Entrepreneur of the Year Award- Business Transformation on **Kumar Mangalam Birla**, Chairman Aditya Birla Group. He is the first Indian industrialist to receive this award for his leadership of a globally diversified conglomerate during the pandemic.
92. British racing driver **Lewis Hamilton**, who has won the Formula One (F1) Championship 7 times, has recently been awarded **Britain's Knight Bachelor or Knighthood** for services to Motorsport. He is the 4<sup>th</sup> F1 driver to receive the knighthood, the honorary title 'Sir' in Britain after Jack Brabham (Australian), Stirling Moss and Jackie Stewart.
93. The **Steel Authority of India (SAIL)** has been awarded the prestigious **Golden Peacock Environment Management Award** for the year 2021 in the steel sector by the Institute of Directors. It has been the winner of this award for successive three years.
94. British Tennis player **Emma Raducanu** has recently won the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year award for 2021. She has been ranked No. 19 by the Women's Tennis Association (WTA).
- In 2021, Emma Raducanu has won the women's singles tennis title at the 2021 US Open.

**Other award winners at BBC Sports Personality 2021:**

Categories	Winners
Helen Rollason Award	Jen Beattie
Coach of the Year	Gareth Southgate
Team of the Year	England men's football team
World Sport Star	Rachael Blackmore
Lifetime Achievement	Simone Biles
Unsung Hero	Sam Barlow
Young Sports Personality of the Year	Sky Brown

95. Indian climate action entrepreneur, **Divya Hegde** from Udupi, Karnataka, has recently won the UN Women's Award for Leadership Commitment at the 2021 Regional Asia-Pacific Women's Empowerment Principles Awards ceremony. She has been recognised for her sustained efforts in advancing gender equality through climate action efforts.
96. **Jindal Global University (JGU)** has recently won the "**Digital Innovation of the Year**" award at the Times Higher Education (THE) Asia Awards 2021. It is the only Indian University to be shortlisted for the "Digital Innovation of the Year" award under the Technological or Digital Innovation of the Year category.
- **Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology** has bagged the award for Asia's '**Leadership and Management Team of the Year**' category at THE Asia Awards 2021.
97. **IIT Roorkee** has been recognized as the top innovative research institution by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). IIT Roorkee has bagged the first position under the Most Innovative Research Institutions category.
- The second and third positions have gone to IIT Madras and the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services, Hyderabad (INCOIS), respectively.

## BOOKS & AUTHORS

98. A book titled 'Rewinding of First 25 years of Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology: A perspective on Computer and Software' has been authored by **SS Oberoi**,

the former adviser at the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). The book consists of life experience, challenges working as an advisor under the MeitY.

99. Former Union Minister and Lok Sabha Member of Parliament, **Shashi Tharoor** has authored a new book titled 'Pride, Prejudice and Punditry'. The book is published by Aleph Book Company. There are 10 sections in this book, each devoted to a particular topic such as modern Indian history, Indian politics, etc.

**Other books by him:** Inglorious Empire, The Paradoxical Prime Minister, Why I am a Hindu, The Great Indian Novel, An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India, etc.

100. The state government of **Odisha** has recently partnered with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) to launch 'Mission Shakti Living Lab' empowering women economically and drive gender equality.

101. Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu has recently released a book titled "Raj Kapoor: The Master At Work". It has been authored by filmmaker **Rahul Rawail**, who served as an assistant director to Raj Kapoor on films like Bobby, Anjaam, etc.

- The book is published by Bloomsbury India. The book is dedicated to Raj Kapoor's second son and father of Ranbir Kapoor, Rishi Kapoor, who passed away in April 2020 after a two-year battle with cancer.

102. Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu has recently released the Telugu book titled 'Gandhi Topi Governor'. It has been authored by Padma Awardee **Dr Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad**. The book chronicles the life of Barrister Idpuganti Raghavendra Rao. The book is published by Emesco Books.

- Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad was honoured with **Padma Shri** in 2003 and **Padma Bhushan** in 2016.

103. A new book titled 'The Monk who Transformed Uttar Pradesh: How Yogi Adityanath changed 'UP Waala Bhaiya' Abuse to a Badge of Honour' has been authored by **Shantanu Gupta**. It is published by Garuda Prakashan.

104. A new book titled "India's Ancient Legacy of Wellness" has been authored by **Rekha Chaudhari**. It has been launched on the occasion of World Digital Day (WDD) celebration. The book highlights how important it is for human beings to be close to nature which helps to revive and recharge to do productive work.

105. Actor-producer **Tusshar Kapoor** has recently authored his debut book titled '**Bachelor Dad**'. The actor became a single father to son Lakshya Kapoor via surrogacy in June 2016. He has shared his journey of being a single father in the new book. The book is published by Penguin India.

## PERSON IN NEWS

106. **USA** artistic gymnast **Simone Biles** has been named Time's 2021 Athlete of the Year by the Time Magazine. She is the most decorated gymnast in the world and a four-time Olympic gold medallist. The athlete has been praised for putting her mental health first after pulling out from the final at four events during the Tokyo Olympics.
107. CEO of Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), **Ravinder Bhakar** has been appointed as the new head of the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), Films Division, and Children Films Society of India (CFSI). He is a 1999-batch officer of the Indian Railway Stores Service (IRSS).
108. Former TRAI advisor **Arvind Kumar** has recently been appointed as the new Director-General of the Software Technology Parks of India (STPI). He has succeeded Omkar Rai.
109. British-Indian **Leena Nair**, former Chief Human Resources Officer of Unilever, has recently been appointed as the new global CEO of French fashion house **Chanel**. She will replace Alain Wertheimer who temporarily took the job of CEO in 2016.
110. The Chief of Army Staff, General **Manoj Mukund Naravane** has been appointed as the chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (CoSC) as he is the senior-most among the three service chiefs. He has succeeded General Bipin Rawat, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) passed away in an accident in Tamil Nadu.  
**Note:** Before the creation of the post of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), the senior-most among the three service chiefs used to be the chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.
111. Senior DRDO scientist **Atul Dinkar Rane** has been appointed as the Director-General (DG) of the BrahMos Aerospace Pvt Ltd, which manufactures the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile.
112. **Karl Nehammer** has become the new Chancellor of **Austria**. He has succeeded Alexander Schallenberg.

113. Leftist millennial **Gabriel Boric** has been elected as the new President of **Chile** by winning the election with 56% of the vote. He will succeed Sebastián Piñera.
114. The state government of **Uttarakhand** has recently appointed Indian cricketer **Rishabh Pant** as the 'State Brand Ambassador' with the aim of encouraging the youth of the state towards sports and public health.

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## OBITUARIES

115. Former **Supreme Court judge**, Justice Girish Thakorlal Nanavati has passed away recently in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. He was born on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1935 in Jambusar, Gujarat. He headed two inquiry commissions formed to probe into the 2002 Godhra Riots & 1984 Anti-Sikh Riots.
116. American gothic-fiction **writer** Anne Rice has passed away recently in Rancho Mirage, California, USA. She was born on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1941 in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA.
- She was best known for **The Vampire Chronicles** novel series. Her other writings include: Pandora, Violin, Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt, The Witching Hour etc.
117. Veteran **politician** of Indian National Congress (INC), RL Jalappa has passed away recently in Kolar, Karnataka. He was born on 19<sup>th</sup> October 1925 in Bangalore, Karnataka.
- He served as the Union Minister of Textiles from 1996 to 1998 under the premiership of HD Deve Gowda and Inder Kumar Gujral.
118. **Italian-British architect Richard Rogers** has passed away recently in London, UK. He was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1933 in Italy. He designed a series of landmark buildings around the world, including London's "Cheesegrater" and the famous multi-coloured, pipe-covered Pompidou arts centre in Paris.
- He received the prestigious **Pritzker prize**, known as the Nobel Prize of Architecture, in **2007**.



## SPORTS

119. The Sports Journalists Federation of India (SJFI) has recently decided to confer the prestigious 'SJFI Medal' 2021 to former Indian cricketer and cricket commentator **Sunil Gavaskar** at SJFI Annual General Meeting in Guwahati, Assam.
120. The International Boxing Association has changed its acronym from **AIBA to IBA**, promising to adopt a set of governance reforms so as to keep the sport's inclusion at the 2028 Olympics.
- The year 2021 marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of IBA.
121. West Indies all-rounder **Hayley Matthews** has been named the ICC Women's Player of the Month for November 2021. Whereas, Australia opener David Warner has been named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for November 2021.
122. Indian shooter **Avani Lekhara**, who has won India's first Gold medal in shooting at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics, has recently won the 'Best Female Debut' honour at 2021 Paralympic Sport Awards. The awards have been announced by the International Paralympic Committee.
123. Indian **badminton** player **PV Sindhu** has been re-elected as a member of the Badminton World Federation's (BWF) Athletes' Commission. She has been named alongside five others who will serve as members till 2025.
124. Indian **Badminton** player **Kidambi Srikanth** has recently won a silver medal at BWF World Championships 2021 held from December 12 to 19, 2021 in Huelva, Spain. With this, he has become the first Indian to reach the final of the 2021 BWF World Championships in Men's singles and win a silver medal. India's **Lakshya Sen** has won a bronze medal (men's singles) at the championship.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

125. National Minorities Rights Day is observed annually on **18<sup>th</sup> December** to educate people about the right of minorities. In India, the day is organized by the National Commission for Minorities (NCM).
- The United Nations on 18th December, 1992 adopted the Statement on the individual's Rights belonging to religious or Linguistic National or Ethnic Minorities and declared December 18 as the Minorities Rights Day.

126. Goa Liberation Day is observed annually on **19<sup>th</sup> December** to mark the success of 'Operation Vijay' undertaken by the Indian Armed Forces in 1961 that liberated Goa from Portuguese rule. The year 2021 marks the 60 years of Goa's independence.
127. Vijay Diwas is observed annually across India on **16<sup>th</sup> December** to commemorate the service, valour, and sacrifices of the gallant men of the Indian Armed Forces' victory over Pakistan in the 1971 war. The year 2021 is observing the **50<sup>th</sup>** Vijay Diwas.
- On 16<sup>th</sup> December 1971, India had won the war against Pakistan after fighting for 13 days. The chief of the Pakistani forces, General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi surrendered to the joint forces of Indian Army and Bangladesh's Mukti Bahini, along with 93,000 Pakistani troops.
128. World Arabic Language Day is observed annually on 18<sup>th</sup> December to raise awareness of the history, culture, and development of the language by preparing a program of special activities and events.
- Theme 2021:** 'Arabic Language, a bridge between civilisations'
129. International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers is observed annually on **17<sup>th</sup> December** to focus attention on the hate crimes committed against sex workers across the world. The day was first observed in **2003**.
- Note:** 'Red Umbrella' is the symbol for sex workers' rights across the globe.
130. International Migrants Day is observed annually on **18<sup>th</sup> December** to spread awareness about the social and economic conditions as well as circumstances of migrants. The day is marked by the United Nations, through the UN-related agency International Organization for Migration (IOM). The year 2021 marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).
- Theme 2021:** 'Harnessing the potential of human mobility'
131. International Human Solidarity Day is observed annually on **19<sup>th</sup> December** to celebrate unity in diversity and raise awareness about the importance of solidarity.
- The UN General Assembly, on **22 December 2005**, by resolution 60/209 identified solidarity as one of the fundamental and universal values that should underlie relations between peoples in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and in that regard decided to proclaim 20 December of each year International Human Solidarity Day.

132. National Mathematics Day is observed annually on **22nd December** to commemorate the birth anniversary of Mathematician **Srinivasa Ramanujan**. The year 2021 marks **134th** birth anniversary of Srinivasa Ramanujan.

- The day was announced on 26 February 2012 by the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to mark the 125th anniversary of the birth of the Indian mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan. The year **2012** was also observed as National Mathematics Year.

133. National Farmers' Day or Kisan Diwas is observed annually on **23rd December** to commemorate the birth anniversary of the fifth Prime Minister of India, **Chaudhary Charan Singh**. The year 2021 marks **119th** birth anniversary of him.

- The government has decided to celebrate Chaudhary Charan Singh's birthday as Kisan Diwas in **2001** to recognise his contributions to the agriculture sector and the welfare of farmers.

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