

PRACTICE **MOCK**



December 2021

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has recently constituted a three-member committee to review the criteria for reservation for the *Economically Weaker Sections* (EWS) category in terms of the provisions of the explanation to **Article 15** of the Constitution. The committee will be headed by former finance secretary **Ajay Bhushan Pandey**.
2. The Ministry of Tourism has recently organized the three-day long 9th '*International Tourism Mart for the North East Region*' in **Kohima, Nagaland**. The aim is to highlight the tourism potential of the region in the domestic and international markets.
 - Minister of State for Tourism and Defence Ajay Bhatt has participated in the inaugural session of the event.
3. Union Commerce and Industry Minister, Piyush Goyal has recently inaugurated the 40th India International Trade Fair (IITF) at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi under the theme "Aatmanirbhar Bharat".
 - **Bihar** has won the Gold medal for "excellence in display" in state government/union territory pavilion category.
 - Assam has won the Silver medal.
4. Union External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** has recently participated in the 5th Indian Ocean Conference held in Abu Dhabi, UAE.
 - The conference has been chaired by Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.
 - The theme of the Indian Ocean Conference 2021 is "Indian Ocean: Ecology, Economy, Epidemic".
 - It has been organised by the India foundation
5. The Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) has recently been awarded a project on "Future Refrigeration India" named **INDEE+**, aimed at spearheading the fuel transition in the seafood sector. It is an umbrella project covering several dedicated schemes supporting the Indian refrigeration and air-conditioning sector in the transition towards cleaner and green technologies.
 - This project is coordinated by Norwegian University of Science and Technology, and the Indian partners are CIFT Kochi, IIT Chennai, BITS Pilani, and IISc Bengaluru.
6. **NITI Aayog** has recently released a report on Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) titled "Designing the future of dispute Resolution: the ODR Policy Plan for India" to advance access to justice and ensure that cases do not end up before higher courts.
 - The report has been developed by a committee constituted by NITI Aayog on ODR in 2020. It is chaired by Supreme Court Justice (Retd) **AK Sikri**.

- As per the report, government litigation contributes to **46%** of all litigations in the country and burdens the courts while imposing a huge cost on the public exchequer.
 - The report has proposed measures at three levels namely, Structural, Behavioural, and Operational Challenges, to address the challenges in adopting ODR.
7. The Central Government has recently approved the continuation of the Scheme for Investment Promotion (SIP) for **5 years** from 2021-22 till 2025-26 with a financial outlay of **Rs 970 crore**. The newly extended SIP has added few components- investor targeting and facilitation; project management activities; and foreign travel.
8. The Union Government has recently approved the sale of Central Electronics Limited (CEL) to Nandal Finance and Leasing for **Rs 210 crore**. The Alternative Mechanism has approved the highest price bid of M/s Nandal Finance and Leasing Pvt Ltd for sale of **100%** equity shareholding of GoI in Central Electronics Ltd (CEL) - a CPSE under the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR).
9. The 10th Quarterly Bulletin of the Periodic Labour Force Survey has been released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).
- As per the survey, India's urban unemployment rate has increased to **9.3%** in January-March 2021 from 9.1% in the same period of 2020.
 - The unemployment rate among males of all ages is 8.6% and for women it is 11.8%.
10. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has recently extended the timeline for the implementation of Smart Cities Mission to **June 2023** due to the Covid-19 pandemic and other factors. Now, all the 100 smart cities that have been selected in 2016 or 2018 will have to complete their projects under the mission by June 2023.
- According to an earlier deadline, the cities were expected to complete their projects within 5 years of being selected under the Smart Cities Mission.
11. Minister of State for Communications Devusinh Chauhan has recently released a commemorative postage stamp to mark **75th anniversary** of the Mahindra group.
- Kailash Chandra Mahindra & his brother JC Mahindra founded Mahindra & Mahindra in 1945 with Malik Ghulam Mohammed.
12. Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar has recently launched the first indigenous server named '**RUDRA**'. It has been developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).

- This will be used for manufacturing classical standalone commercial servers and also as building blocks for building large supercomputing systems of tens of petaflops of computing performance.

13. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently laid the foundation stone of the **Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor** from Eastern Peripheral Expressway Junction to Dehradun.

- Total outlay: **Rs 8,300 crore**
- It will reduce the travel time from Delhi to Dehradun from six hours to around 2.5 hours.
- It will have seven major interchanges for connectivity to Haridwar, Muzaffarnagar, Shamli, Yamunagar, Baghpat, Meerut and Baraut.
- It will have Asia's largest wildlife elevated corridor (12 kilometres) for unrestricted wildlife movement.
- It also includes the 340 metres long tunnel near Dat Kaali temple, Dehradun to reduce the impact on wildlife.

14. Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Giriraj Singh, has recently launched the National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS) and **Banadhikar app** in Tripura. With this, **Tripura** has become the first state in the country to introduce Banadhikar App.

- Banadhikar App is a GPS-based mobile application for demarcation of forest 'patta' (land rights) for the landless indigenous people under the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

15. The Central Government has recently expanded the SCALE Committee (Steering Committee for Advancing Local Value-Add and Exports) by adding three new members.

- Manish Sharma - Panasonic India Chairman and CEO
- Vikram S Kirloskar - Toyota Kirloskar Vice-Chairman
- Jalaj Dani - Asian Paints co-promoter and Chairman Addverb Technologies

16. The Indian Navy has recently launched '**Sandhayak**', the first of the four Survey Vessels (Large) project, in **Kolkata** in the presence of Minister of State Ajay Bhatt, Ministry of Defence. The primary role of these survey ships would be to conduct full-scale coastal and deep-water hydrographic survey of ports and harbours, and determination of navigational channels and routes. This will replace the existing Sandhayak-class survey ships.

- These vessels have been designed and developed by Defence Public Sector Undertaking, Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Limited.

17. Union Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment Virendra Kumar has recently launched the '**SRESHTA**' scheme for the upliftment and development of **scheduled castes (SC)** students by providing quality residential education in reputed private schools.

- SRESHTA stands for 'Residential Education for Students in High Schools in Targeted Areas'.
- He has also launched a National Fellowship Management and Grievance redressal Portal. This initiative aims at integrated development of Scheduled Castes majority villages.

18. 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.

19. 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

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. 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.

23. **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.

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24. 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.

25. 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.

26. 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.

27. 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.

28. 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**'.

29. 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.
30. 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.
31. 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.
32. 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.
33. 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%.
34. 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**.

35. 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.
36. 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.
37. **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.
38. 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.*
39. 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.
40. **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.
41. **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.

42. 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.
43. 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.
44. 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.
45. 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%**.
46. 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**.

47. 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 28th January 2021.

48. 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.

49. 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.

50. 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.

51. 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

52. 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.

53. Nadi Utsav 2021 has been collectively organized by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism, and National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) from **16 to 23 December 2021**.

- It has been organized to recognise the mystical and cultural river Ganga by storytelling, folklore, quizzes, dialogues with eminent personalities, dance & music performances, displaying traditional art forms, photo galleries and exhibitions.
- It is being observed in India across **16 states and 41 districts** from Uttarkashi to Kerala.
- It has been organized under 4 chosen themes namely,
 - ✚ Cleanliness
 - ✚ Nature & Ecology
 - ✚ Patriotism
 - ✚ Devotion & Spirituality

54. Union Ministers Hardeep Singh Puri & Dr. Jitendra Singh have attended the first ever **'J&K Real Estate Summit- 2021-Unlocking Opportunities'** at Convention Centre, Jammu.

- It has been organized by the Department of Housing & Urban Development Department, Government of Jammu and Kashmir in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India.
- During the summit, Jammu and Kashmir administration has signed **39 MoUs** (Memorandum of Understanding) worth **Rs 18,300 crore** with the country's real investors for the development of housing and commercial projects in the union territory.
- The next 'Real Estate Summit' will be organised in **Srinagar** on 21st May and 22nd May 2022.

55. Praveen Kumar, IAS, Former Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, has been appointed as Director General & Chief Executive Officer, **Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA)**. He is a 1987 batch retired IAS officer of Tamil Nadu cadre.

- IICA was approved by Planning Commission in the year 2007. It was established in 2008 at **Manesar, Haryana**.

56. According to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), India's green energy industry received foreign direct investment (FDI) worth **\$7.27 billion** from 2014-15 till June 2021. Of this \$797.21 million came during 2020-21.

- India's installed Renewable Energy (RE) capacity stands at **150.54 GW** (solar: 48.55 GW, wind: 40.03 GW, Small hydro Power: 4.83, Bio-power: 10.62, Large Hydro: 46.51 GW) as on 30.11.2021 while its nuclear energy based installed electricity capacity stands at **6.78 GW**.
- The total non-fossil based installed energy capacity is **157.32 GW** which is 40.1% of the total installed electricity capacity of 392.01 GW.

57. The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has selected **Paras Defence and Space Technologies** for handing over the technology of border surveillance systems as developed by Instruments Research & Development Establishment and DRDO.

58. The Indian Army has launched a messaging application named '**Army Secure IndiGeneous Messaging Application (ASIGMA)**'. It is a new generation, state-of-the-art, web-based application developed by a team of officers of the Corps of Signals of the Army. It is positioned as a replacement for the Army Wide Area Network messaging application, which has been in service for over 15 years.

- 59. South Korea's Men's Hockey team** has recently won the Men's Asian Champions Trophy Hockey tournament 2021 by defeating Japan in the finals held at Mawlana Bhashani Hockey Stadium, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- Indian Men's Hockey team under the captaincy of Manpreet Singh has won a **bronze medal** in the tournament after defeating Pakistan.
 - **Best goalkeeper:** Suraj Karkera (India)
 - **Best player of the tournament:** Kanta Tanaka (Japan)
- 60.** The Central Government has declared the whole of the state of **Nagaland** to be 'disturbed area' and extended the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act 1958 (AFSPA) for a period of **six months** with effect from 30th December 2021.
- 61.** 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.
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- 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 from December 2021 to April 2022
- *Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) was set up in **2016** to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.*

64. The Indian Air Force (IAF) has deployed the first **S-400** air defence missile system in the **Punjab sector** which will take care of aerial threats from Pakistan and China.

- In October 2018, India had signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) with **Russia** to procure the S-400 defence system in a deal worth around **Rs 35000 crores**. Under the deal, five squadrons would be provided to India for tackling air threats from up to 400 km.
- The S-400 air defence system is equipped with four different missiles which can engage enemy aircraft, ballistic missiles, and AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) planes at 400 km, 250 km, the medium-range 120 km and the short-range 40 km.

65. The **Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS)** has been selected to join a research project backed by the Space Application Centre of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) under a NASA-ISRO research programme.

- The project will be headed by **Girish Gopinath**, Associate Professor of Remote Sensing and GIS at KUFOS and U. Surendran, senior scientist at CWRDM.
- KUFOS has been selected as one of the nodal agencies in South India to implement the project.

NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR):

- NASA and ISRO are jointly developing a space-borne synthetic aperture radar (NISAR), to be launched in January 2023.
- It will produce high resolution data for large areas with the capability for systematic observation of earth resources.
- It will provide time-series data for eco-systems applications benefiting several operational activities related to agriculture, forestry, wetlands, and soil moisture estimation.

66. **NITI Aayog** has signed a Statement of Intent (Sol) with **United Nations World Food Program (WFP)** to address issues related to inclusion of **millets** 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.

67. Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) have launched the first **AgriTech Challenge** cohort 2021 under South-South Innovation platform.
Aim: To help smallholder farmers across Asia and Africa to address their challenges in the aftermath of the pandemic.
68. AIM, NITI Aayog in partnership with UNCDF, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Rabo Foundation have launched a South-South innovation platform to enable cross-border exchange of innovations, insights and investments in July 2021.
69. The Government of India (GoI) has recently signed a contract with European Investment Bank (EIB) for the first tranche loan of **Euro 250 million** for the **Agra Metro Rail Project** in Uttar Pradesh.
- This project is under the control of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, and Uttar Pradesh Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (UPMRCL) is the implementing agency.
 - **Aim:** To provide a safe, reliable, affordable and environment-friendly public Mass Rapid Transit System for Agra city.
70. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently (Dec 2021) approved the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for copra for the 2022 season.
- The MSP for fair average quality of milling copra has been increased to **Rs.10, 590** per quintal for the 2022 season from Rs.10, 335 in 2021.
 - The minimum price for ball copra has been increased to **Rs.11, 000** per quintal for the 2022 season from Rs.10, 600 in 2021.
71. **INS Khukri** (Pennant number 49), the first of the indigenously built missile corvettes, has been decommissioned by the Indian Navy after 32 years of service at **Visakhapatnam**.
- The ship was built by the Mazagaon Dock Shipbuilders
 - It was commissioned on 23rd August 1989.
72. The Central Government has recently declared '**Soya Meal**' as an Essential Commodity up to **30th June 2022** by amending the Schedule of the *Essential Commodities Act, 1955*.
73. The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari has launched the first 'Intelligent Transport System' on **Eastern Peripheral Expressway** (Length: 135 km) at Dasna, Ghaziabad to minimize traffic problems and enhance safety of commuters.

- He has also laid the foundation stone of National Highway projects of 240 km worth **Rs. 9, 119 crore** in Meerut and Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh.

74. The Central Government has appointed two separate groups of experts to suggest suitable working models with cost benefit analysis that will lower crop insurance premium and technology in crop yield estimation under the flagship **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana** (PMFBY). The sub-committees will submit their report by 10th January 2021.

First Committee	Second Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members – 10 • Chairman - KR Manjunath, Scientist of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) • Aim- To explore the feasibility of adoption of various technology-based approaches developed through pilot projects by ISRO and its arm National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) as well as Mahalanobis National Crop Forecast Centre (MNCFC). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members – 4 • Chairman - Saurabh Mishra, joint secretary in Ministry of Finance • It will conduct cost benefit analysis of all “accepted models – agriculture insurance pool, cup and cap 80-110 per cent and co-insurance 20-80 per cent” as well as any profit-loss sharing model.

75. The Government of India has recently constituted a ‘5-member’ high-level committee to examine the possibility of lifting the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in **Nagaland**. The committee will submit its recommendations within 45 days.

- **Chairman:** Vivek Joshi, the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India
- **Secretary:** Piyush Goyal, Additional Secretary in the Union Home Ministry
- **Other members:** Chief Secretary and Director General of Police (DGP) of Nagaland, DGP of Assam Rifles (North) and a representative of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

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76. Union Defence minister, Rajnath Singh has recently laid the foundation stone of the Defence Technology and Test Centre (DTTC) and BrahMos Manufacturing Centre. These centres will be established by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in **Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh**.
77. **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)** of NITI Aayog has recently released the second edition of digital books named 'Innovations For You' & 'The Ingenious Tinkerers'.
- **'Innovations For You' (2nd edition)** is a compendium of innovations focused on **agriculture** featuring 70 startups supported by Atal incubation Centers (AICs) of AIM. The first edition of this book was focused on innovations in Health Care.
 - **'The Ingenious Tinkerers'** is a compendium on the innovations on technology featuring 41 innovations from the Atal Tinkering Lab (ATL) of India.
78. The Indian Army in collaboration with National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) has established **Quantum Lab** at Military College of Telecommunication Engineering, **Mhow** in Madhya Pradesh to spearhead research and training in key thrust areas - Quantum Key Distribution, Quantum Communication, Quantum Computing and Post Quantum Cryptography.

STATES AFFAIRS

79. **Nagaland Police** has officially launched the '*Call your Cop*' mobile App at the Police Headquarters in Kohima. This app will enable all citizens in the state, including those in distress, to get in touch with the police directly, as police will be available easily, with just one click away.
- Nagaland has recently observed its *59th Statehood Day on 1 December 2021*.
80. The 22nd edition of the Hornbill festival, also known as the "festival of festivals", has been held in Naga Heritage village Kisama, Kohima, **Nagaland**. The annual 10-day cultural and tourism festival begins in early December and coincides with the Statehood Day of Nagaland. This year diplomatic representatives of the US, Germany, and Israel are the guests.
81. The Government of Assam has recently decided to confer its highest civilian award, 'Asom Baibhav Award', to **Ratan Tata**, Chairman TATA Trusts for his exceptional contribution towards furthering cancer care in Assam. It has been announced on the occasion of Assam Day.

82. Bollywood actor **Sanjay Dutt** has recently been roped in as the brand ambassador for the month-long celebrations of the 50th year of **Arunachal Pradesh**. Along with him, filmmaker Rahul Mittra has been roped in as the brand advisor.
- It is noteworthy that next year is the 50th anniversary of Arunachal Pradesh, which will be celebrated with a month-long celebration from 20 January 2022 to 20 February 2022 at Ziro in Lower Subansiri district.
83. **Jharkhand** Chief Minister, Hemant Soren has recently launched a web portal named '**Hamar Apan Budget**'. Through this portal, the general public of the state can share their suggestions for the 2022-23 budget.
84. The Project 'Reducing Elephant Human – Attacks using Bees' (RE-HAB) has recently been launched in **Assam**. Under this, around 15 to 20 bee boxes are placed in the premises of human habitation. They are placed as fences. They dissuade the elephants without harming them.
85. 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
86. 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**.
87. 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.
88. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently inaugurated several development projects worth **Rs 10,000 crore** in **Gorakhpur**, Uttar Pradesh.
- Fertilizer Plant, Gorakhpur

- AllMS, 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.

89. 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.

90. 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**.

91. 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.

92. 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.

93. 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)**.

94. 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.

95. 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.
96. 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.
97. 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.
98. 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 4th 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.
99. 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.
100. 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.
101. 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.
102. 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.

- 103. 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.
- 104.** 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.
- 105.** 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.
- 106.** 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.
- 107.** 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.
- 108.** 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 26th December 2021.

109. 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 1st December 2021.

110. 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.

111. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has launched the '**Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam**' portal and announced to set up Atal Park and Memorial Centre in Gurugram.

112. The Uttar Pradesh government has recently renamed Jhansi Railway Station as 'Veerangana Laxmibai Railway Station' after Rani Laxmi Bai.

113. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently inaugurated and laid foundation stone of **23 projects** worth **17,500 crore** rupees at Haldwani in **Uttarakhand**.

Key projects:

- Lakhwar Multipurpose Project, a hydropower facility in Pithoragarh.
- Tanakpur-Pithoragarh Road project to improve the connectivity of Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.
- Aroma Park at Kashipur and Plastic Industrial Park at Sitarganj.
- All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Rishikesh Satellite Centre at Udham Singh Nagar and Jagjivan Ram Government Medical College at Pithoragarh.

114. 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.

- 115.** 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.
- 116.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has laid the foundation stone of 27 development projects worth **Rs 2,095 crore** in **Varanasi**, Uttar Pradesh.
- Key Projects:**
- Banas Dairy Sankul – It will be built at a cost of about Rs 475 crore and would process about 5 lakh litre milk per day.
 - Biogas-based electricity generation plant.
 - Launched a portal and a logo dedicated to the Conformity Assessment Scheme of milk products developed by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) with the help of the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB).
 - **Union Education Ministry's Inter University Centre for Teachers Education – It will be built at a cost of around Rs 107 crore.**
- 117.** HOP Electric has recently entered into a preliminary agreement with the Rajasthan government to set up an Electric Vehicle (EV) manufacturing plant in **Jaipur**, Rajasthan with a capacity to produce 1.8 lakh vehicles per annum.
- 118.** The state government of Tamil Nadu has recently launched the '**Meendum Manjappai**' scheme to promote the use of **cloth bags** by the public and discourage the use of plastic bags.
- This awareness campaign on using '**yellow**' cloth bag or 'manjappai' as it is called in Tamil, is aimed at encouraging the people to return to the use of this eco-friendly bag and discard the plastic bags. Manjal means turmeric in Tamil which has curative power.
 - Tamil Nadu government had enforced a ban on the production, use, storage, distribution, transportation or sale of 14 types of plastics with effect from 1st January 2019.
- 119.** The Chief Minister of **Gujarat**, Bhupendra Patel has recently launched a **Health Service Management Centre (HSMC)** for monitoring various national and state-level health schemes. It will also monitor and review the free diagnostic treatment given to patients such as screening for non-communicable diseases.
- 120.** The state government of **Karnataka** has recently partnered with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and the State Bank of India (SBI) to enable and implement 'e-

RUPI, a cashless and contactless payment solution to students under its scholarship programme.

- 121.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently presided over the second groundbreaking ceremony of Himachal Pradesh Global Investors' Meet in **Mandi, Himachal Pradesh**. He has also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of hydropower projects worth over **Rs.11, 000 crore**.
- 122.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently inaugurated the completed section of Kanpur Metro Rail Project, **Bina-Panki multi-product pipeline project**, and has attended the 54th Convocation Ceremony of IIT Kanpur in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh.
- 123.** Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad has recently inaugurated the '**Narendra Modi Marg**', a road named after Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is the 2nd road connecting the **Tsomgo lake** and Nathula border pass with Gangtok, Sikkim. The older route is called **Jawaharlal Nehru Road**.
- 124. Odisha** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has recently launched an online service for verification of identity and submission of life certificates for the pensioners of the state government. It will be of immense help to the pensioners as they can submit their identification and life certificates digitally, without visiting any government office.
- With this, Odisha has become the first state to implement such a digital service for the pensioners.

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

- 125. Eva Magdalena Andersson**, leader of the Social Democrats, has recently won her 2nd election and become the 1st female Prime Minister of **Sweden**. Earlier, she was first elected as the PM but later resigned after her coalition partner quit the government.
- *Sweden' Parliament is known as '**Riksdag**'.*

- 126. China** has recently launched a new communication satellite named 'Zhongxing-1D' by a Long March-3B carrier rocket from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in southwest China's Sichuan Province. This launch marked the 399th mission for the Long March series carrier rockets.
- 127.** The 27th edition of the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) maritime exercise has been conducted virtually between the US military personnel and **Bangladesh Navy (BN)** in the Bay of Bengal.
- Since 2011, the Bangladesh Navy has been participating in the CARAT exercise.
- 128.** The UNESCO has recently presented UNESCO Asia-Pacific Award for Cultural Heritage Conservation to the **Nizamuddin Basti** Project. The project has been awarded for its conservation efforts under the Special Recognition for Sustainable Award and Award of Excellence categories.
- 129.** Cambridge Dictionary has recently chosen '**Perseverance**' as the Word of the Year 2021. The word is inspired by NASA's mission to Mars, as data showed that users across the globe searched for the word online more than 243,000 times throughout the year.
- Perseverance is defined by Cambridge Dictionary as "continued effort to do or achieve something, even when this is difficult or takes a long time".
 - Dictionary.com has named '**Allyship**' as the Word of the Year for 2021.
- 130.** The 11th edition of joint military exercise Ekuverin has recently been conducted between **India and Maldives** from 6th- 19th December 2021 at Kadhdhoo Island, Maldives. The aim of the exercise is to enhance synergy and inter-operability between Armed Forces of both the nations.
- In 2019, the exercise was held in Pune, Maharashtra.
- 131.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently inaugurated a leadership Forum on Financial Technology (FinTech) named '**InFinity Forum**'.
- It has been hosted by International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) under the aegis of Government of India in collaboration with GIFT City and Bloomberg.
 - Indonesia, South Africa and the U.K. are partner countries in the first edition of the Forum.
 - **Theme:** 'Beyond'
- 132.** The 21st India-Russia Annual Summit has been held between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to enhance the special and privileged strategic partnership between the two countries. During the summit, India and Russia have signed **28 agreements**.

- 133.** 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.
- 134.** **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.
- 135.** 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**.
- 136.** **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.
- 137.** 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.
- 138.** 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.

- 139.** 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
- 140.** 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.
- 141.** 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.
- 142.** 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'.
- 143.** **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.
- 144.** 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.
- 145.** 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.

- 146.** 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.
- 147. 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.
- 148. 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.
- 149. 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.
- 150. Typhoon Rai**, known in the Philippines as Typhoon Odette, has destroyed the central Philippines in mid-December 2021. It has become the third Category 5 super typhoon to form in South China Sea after Pamela of 1954 and Rammasun of 2014.
- 151. 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**.
- In August 2021, Pakistan has launched 'Fatah-1', a guided multi-launch rocket system capable of delivering conventional warheads.
- 152.** India and **Maldives** have recently launched a pilot project on Pre-Arrival Customs Data Exchange. This will help in faster Export-Import clearances, fast-track customs payments and help identify frauds.
- 153.** The Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) has recently partnered with the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** to launch the "Tribal Samvaad network".
- It is a Tribal network for Social and Behaviour Change (A people-to-people 'prosperity' platform built on the emergent digital, social, alternate and mobile revolution).
 - The mantra of the campaign is "**Samvad se Sambandh.**"

- 154. Japan** has launched the **world's first dual-mode vehicle (DMV)** that can run on roads and tracks. The DMV has made its public debut in the town of Kaiyo in Japan's Tokushima prefecture. It runs on diesel.
- 155.** As per the latest survey, **Telangana** has secured the first position in the implementation of the Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM). **Tamil Nadu** and **Gujarat** have secured the second and third positions respectively.
- In the Ranking of the Cluster, the **Ryakal cluster** of Sangareddy and the **Jukkal cluster** of Kamareddy in Telangana have secured the 1st and 2nd position respectively. The **Aibawk cluster** of Aizawl in Mizoram has secured the 3rd position.
- 156.** The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has recently launched the world's largest and most powerful space telescope named '**James Webb Space Telescope**'. It has been launched from Europe's Spaceport, the Guiana Space Centre in Kourou, French Guiana.
- 157. Japan** has launched the communication satellite '**Inmarsat-6F1**' through a Mitsubishi Heavy Industries H-2A rocket from Japan's Tanegashima Space Centre that will enter geostationary orbit, about 22,240 miles (35,790 kilometres) above earth.
- 158.** The **China National Space Administration (CNSA)** has recently launched a new camera satellite named "**Ziyuan-1 02E**" or "five-meter optical satellite 02" by a Long March-4C rocket from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre in north China's Shanxi province.
- The cameras can take full-colour panchromatic images of the Earth.
 - The satellite will work with the five-meter optical satellite 01 and shorten the revisit time of Chinese territory from three days to two days.
- 159.** India has recently (December 2021) welcomed **Egypt** as the new member of BRICS New Development Bank (NDB). With this, Egypt has become a **fourth new member** to be admitted to BRICS NDB.
- **Note:** In September 2021, Bangladesh, Uruguay and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have become the new members of the BRICS New Development Bank.
- 160. Russia** has recently launched its first in the series Project 22220 versatile nuclear icebreaker named '**Sibir**'. It will contribute to the rapidly growing fleet of lethal icebreakers to keep the Northern Sea Route open for year-round shipping through the Arctic enabling wider presence of India in the region.

- Russia has a fleet of six nuclear-powered icebreakers: "Taymyr", "Vaygash", "50 Let Pobedy", "Yamal", "Arktika" and "Sibir".

REPORTS & INDICES

161. The **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** has recently released the Global Trade Report (November 2021). As per the report, global trade is expected to grow by 23% to \$28 trillion in 2021.

- India's trade growth has accelerated in Q3 CY2021 both in goods and services.
- India's goods exports has shown a rise of 27% and 5%, and services has increased by 7% and 17% in Q3 of the current fiscal compared to the 2019 average and Q2 2021, respectively.

162. Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has recently released the Worldwide Cost of Living Index 2021. As per the index, **Tel Aviv** has been listed as the costliest city in the world while **Damascus** has been found to be the cheapest city to live in the world.

- The Worldwide Cost of Living index examines the cost of living in 173 cities and is measured against "impactful global events".
- **Ahmedabad** in Gujarat is the cheapest city to live in from India. This is the only city that has found a place in the index.

Worldwide Cost of Living Index 2021			
Rank	Expensive City	Rank	Cheapest City
1	Tel Aviv (Israel)	1	Damascus (Syria)
2	Paris (France) , and Singapore	2	Tripoli (Libya)
4	Zurich (Switzerland)	3	Tashkent (Uzbekistan)

163. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has recently released its annual report titled "**State Finances: A Study of Budgets of 2021-22**". As per the report,

- The combined debt to GDP ratio of states is expected to remain at **31%** by the end of March 2022, which is higher than the target of 20% to be achieved by FY23.
- For 2021-22, States have budgeted their consolidated gross fiscal deficit (GFD) to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio at 3.7%, a marked improvement from the level of 4.7% in the revised estimates for 2020-21.
- This report is an annual publication that provides information, analysis and an assessment of the finances of State governments for 2021-22 against the backdrop of actual and revised (or provisional accounts) outcomes for 2019-20 and 2020-21, respectively.

- The theme of this year's Report is **"Coping with the Pandemic: A Third-Tier Dimension"**.

164. 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%	

165. 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.

166. 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.

167. 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

168. 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)

169. 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%.

170. 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.

171. 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.

172. 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.

173. 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	
Ran k	Country
1	Switzerland
2	Sweden
3	Luxembourg
4	Norway
5	Denmark

174. 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.

- 175.** 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.
- 176.** 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.
- 177.** 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

178. 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 (12th), Shah Rukh Khan (14th), Amitabh Bachchan (15th) and Virat Kohli (18th).
- **Most admired Indian women:** Priyanka Chopra (10th), Aishwarya Rai Bachchan (13th) and Sudha Murty (14th).

World's most admired Personality		
Rank	Men	Women
1	Barack Obama	Michelle Obama
2	Bill Gates	Angelina Jolie
3	Xi Jinping	Queen Elizabeth II

179. Truecaller has recently published the 5th 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 9th in 2020 to **4th in 2021** due to a significant increase in sales and telemarketing calls.

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180. 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**.

181. 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.
- *In 2020, IIT Roorkee was adjudged as 'The Most Innovative Institute of the Year' for its innovation quotient.*

182. Hurun Research Institute has recently released the Global Unicorn Index 2021. In the index, India has been placed at the **third** position with **54 unicorns**, displacing the United Kingdom (UK).

- In 2020, India was ranked at 4th spot.
- Byju's (15th rank), InMobi, OYO, Razorpay and Ola are also ranked in the top 100 unicorns in the world.

Global Unicorn Index 2021		
Rank	Country	No. of Unicorns
1	USA	487 (254 unicorns added newly)
2	China	301 (74 unicorns added newly)
3	India	54 (33 unicorns added newly)
4	UK	39 (15 unicorns added newly)
5	Germany	26 (16 unicorns added newly)

183. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has recently published its report titled "2019 Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRVs) Report'.

- **Russia** is the biggest dope violator in the world with 167 ADRVs, followed by Italy (157).
- Brazil (78) is at fourth and Iran (70) is at fifth positions.
- India has been **ranked 3rd** with 152 ADRVs.
- The maximum dope offenders are from bodybuilding (57) followed by weightlifting (25), athletics (20), wrestling (10), and boxing.

184. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has released a report titled '**Coal 2021 Analysis and Forecast to 2024**'. As per the report, the global coal demand is expected to grow by **6%** in **2021** with coal consumption to 7,906 million tonnes and is set to rise to 8,025 million tonnes in 2022.

185. Union Minister of Home Affairs Amit Shah has released the Good Governance Index (GGI) 2021. It is prepared by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)**.

Gujarat has topped the composite ranking in the 58 indicator index, followed by Maharashtra and Goa.

- In the North-East and Hill States category, **Mizoram and Jammu and Kashmir** have registered an overall increase of 10.4% and 3.7% respectively over GGI 2019.
- In the Union Territories category, **Delhi** has topped the composite ranking (14 percent increase).

186. The Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR), one of the UK's leading economics consultancies, has published its annual World Economic League Table (WELT) 2022.

As per the WELT 2022:

- The world economy is set to surpass **\$100 trillion** for the first time in 2022.
- India will become the **6th largest** economy by overtaking France in **2022** and will become the **3rd largest** economy in **2031**.

World Economic League Table (WELT) 2022					
Count ry	202 1	202 2	202 6	203 1	2036
USA	1	1	1	2	2
China	2	2	2	1	1
Japan	3	3	3	4	5
India	7	6	5	3	3

187. NITI Aayog has released the fourth edition of the **State Health Index for 2019–20** in the report titled “Healthy States, Progressive India”.

- The index has been developed by NITI Aayog, World Bank, and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).
- The report ranks states and Union Territories on their year-on-year incremental performance in health outcomes as well as their overall status.
- It is a weighted composite index based on 24 indicators grouped under the domains of ‘Health Outcomes’, ‘Governance and Information’, and ‘Key Inputs/Processes’.
- The index is being compiled and published since 2017.
- It has covered 19 larger states, 8 smaller states, and 7 UTs.

Category	In terms of annual incremental performance	In terms of overall performance	Worst performers (in terms of overall performance and incremental performance)
Larger States	Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Telangana	Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana	Rajasthan
Smaller States	Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland	Mizoram, Tripura, and Sikkim	Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur
Union Territory	Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, and Lakshadweep	Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Chandigarh and Lakshadweep	_____

188. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently released a report on "**Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2020-21**".

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently released a report on "**Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2020-21**". This report presents the performance of the banking sector, including co-operative banks, and non-banking financial institutions during 2020-21 and 2021-22 so far.

Highlights of the Report are:

- During 2020-21, the consolidated balance sheet of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) expanded in size, notwithstanding the pandemic and the resultant contraction in economic activity. In 2021-22 so far, nascent signs of recovery are visible in credit growth. Deposits grew by **10.1 per cent** at end-September 2021 as compared with 11.0 per cent a year ago.
- **Capital to risk weighted assets (CRAR) ratio** of SCBs strengthened from 14.8 per cent at end-March 2020 to **16.3 per cent** at end-March 2021 and further to **16.6 per cent** at end-September 2021, partly aided by higher retained earnings, recapitalisation of public sector banks (PSBs) and capital raising from the market by both PSBs and private sector banks (PVBs).
- SCBs' **gross non-performing assets (GNPA)** ratio declined from 8.2 per cent at end-March 2020 to 7.3 per cent at end-March 2021 and further to **6.9 per cent** at end-September 2021.

- Return on assets (RoA) of SCBs improved from 0.2 per cent at end-March 2020 to **0.7 per cent** at end-March 2021, aided by stable income and decline in expenditure.
- Some of the policy measures taken by the RBI in response to the COVID-19 pandemic reached the pre-announced sunset dates in 2021-22. Certain liquidity measures have been wound down as a result, while other regulatory measures, including deferment of implementation of **net stable funding ratio** (NSFR), restrictions on dividend payouts by banks, deferment of implementation of the last tranche of capital conservation buffer, have been realigned to avoid extended forbearance and risks to financial stability while providing targeted support to needy sectors.
- Even though initiation of fresh insolvency proceedings under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) was suspended for a year till March 2021, it constituted one of the major modes of recovery in terms of amount recovered.
- The balance sheet growth of urban co-operatives banks (UCBs) in 2020-21 was driven by deposits, while subdued credit growth led to acceleration in investments. Their financial indicators, including capital position and profitability, improved.
- The profitability of state co-operative banks and district central co-operative banks improved in 2019-20, while their asset quality deteriorated.
- The consolidated balance sheet of NBFCs expanded during 2020-21, driven by credit and investments of non-deposit taking systemically important NBFCs (NBFCs-ND-SI). Their asset quality and capital buffers also improved.
- The Report also offers some perspectives on the evolving outlook for India's financial sector.

189. On Dec 29, 2021, the Reserve Bank has released the **24th issue** of the Financial Stability Report (FSR).

The Reserve Bank of India published the first **Financial Stability Report** (FSR) in **March 2010**. To be published every six months, these reports are an attempt at institutionalizing the implicit focus and making financial stability an integral driver of the policy framework.

The FSR reflects the collective assessment of the Sub-Committee of the *Financial Stability and Development Council* (FSDC) on risks to financial stability, as also the resilience of the

financial system. The Report also discusses issues relating to the development and regulation of the financial sector.

On Dec 29, 2021, the Reserve Bank has released the **24th issue** of the Financial Stability Report (FSR)

Highlights of the 24th issue of the Financial Stability Report (FSR):

- 1) The global economic recovery has been losing momentum in the second half of 2021 in the face of resurfacing COVID-19 infections, the new variant Omicron, supply disruptions and bottlenecks, elevated inflationary levels, and shifts in monetary policy stances and actions across advanced economies and emerging market economies.
- 2) On the domestic front, progress in vaccination has enabled the recovery to regain traction after the debilitating second wave of the pandemic, notwithstanding signs of slowing pace more recently; the corporate sector is gaining strength and bank credit growth is improving.
- 3) The capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRAR) of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) rose to a new peak of 16.6 percent and their provisioning coverage ratio (PCR) stood at **68.1 percent** in September 2021.
- 4) Macro stress tests for credit risk indicate that the gross non-performing asset (GNPA) ratio of SCBs may increase from **6.9 percent in September 2021 to 8.1 percent by September 2022** under the baseline scenario and to 9.5 percent under a severe stress scenario. SCBs would, however, have sufficient capital, both at the aggregate and individual levels, even under stress conditions.
- 5) Emerging signs of stress in micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) as also in the micro-finance segment call for close monitoring of these portfolios going forward.
- 6) The GNPA ratio of NBFCs, which had declined in September 2020 reflecting the standstill on asset classification prevalent then rose to reach **6.5 percent** as at the end of September 2021.

- 190.** The Ministry of Education's innovation cell has released the 3rd edition of the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) 2021. ARIIA 2021 classifies participating institutions into two major categories; technical and non-technical.
- In the technical ranking, the **Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras)** has been recognised as the Most Innovative Educational Institute in India. This is the third time that IIT Madras has secured the first rank.
 - IIT Bombay and IIT Delhi have been placed at the second and third ranks respectively.

Category	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
CFTIs/Central University/Institute of National Importance (Technical)	Indian Institute of Technology Madras	Indian Institute of Technology Bombay	Indian Institute of Technology Delhi
State University & Deemed University (Govt. & Govt. Aided) (Technical)	Punjab University	Delhi Technological University	Netaji Subhas University of Technology
Govt. College/Institution (Govt. & Govt. Aided) (Technical)	College of Engineering Pune	PSG College of Technology	L. D. College of Engineering
University & Deemed University (Self-Finance/Private) (Technical)	Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology Khordha	Chitkara University	Lovely Professional University
Private College/Institute (Self-Finance/Private) (Technical)	G H Rasoni College of Engineering, Nagpur	R.M.K. Engineering College	KIET Group of Institutions
Institute of National Importance, Central University & CFIs (Non-Technical)	Indira Gandhi National Open University	Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode	_____
General (Non-Technical)	Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India	Sree Narayana College	Mahatma Gandhi University

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

- 191.** Online bus ticketing platform **redBus** has recently collaborated with Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) to launch 'redRail', a rail ticketing service that can be accessed through the redBus mobile app.
- 192.** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has recently approved a **\$125 million** loan to improve access to quality water supply and sanitation services in **Uttarakhand**. The project will construct 136 km of water pipe system to replace defective water networks in South Dehradun. It will also establish sewage treatment plants in Dehradun.
- 193.** The Singapore-based DBS Bank's economic research team has recently revised India's FY23 growth forecast upwards to **7%** year-on-year (y-o-y) (CY2022 6.5%) from 6% earlier.

- 194.** Rating agency India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has recently projected India's GDP in Q2 of FY22 at **8.3%** and in FY22 at **9.4%**.
- 195.** The National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, has recently released the estimates of GDP for the second quarter (July-September) of FY22.
- As per the data, India's GDP has grown by **8.4%** in the second quarter of FY 2022 as compared to **7.4%** in FY 2021.
 - The gross domestic product (GDP) at constant prices in Q2 FY22 is estimated at Rs 35.73 lakh crore, as against Rs 32.97 lakh crore in Q2 FY21.
 - GDP at Constant (2011-12) Prices in April-September 2021-22 (H1 FY22) is estimated at Rs 68.11 lakh crore as against Rs 59.92 lakh crore in H1 FY21, showing a growth of 13.7% in H1 FY22 as against a contraction of 15.9% in H1 FY21.
- 196. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** has recently approved a USD 135 million loan to West Bengal to improve the operational efficiency and reliability of electricity supply in select pockets in the state.
- The IBRD and the International Development Association (IDA) are collectively referred to as the World Bank.
- 197.** The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has recently (December 2021) projected India's GDP to be **9.4%** for FY22 from **9.7%** projected in September 2021. It has projected the Indian economy to grow at 8.1% in FY23, and moderate to 5.5% in FY24.
- 198.** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has recently sanctioned a **\$500-million loan** to India to help improve the quality of school education and to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 on students' learning.
- The loan supports the Integrated Scheme for School Education (Samagra Shiksha) and the new Exemplar School Initiative of the Ministry of Education (MOE).
 - Around 1,800 government schools will be transformed into exemplar schools in the states of Assam, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, and Uttarakhand.
 - ADB has also received a grant of nearly **Rs 15 crore** from Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR) to enhance urban primary healthcare usage across India.
- 199.** The **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)** has recently signed an agreement with Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) to scale up its clean energy projects and to strengthen footprint in renewables, especially in solar.
- ONGC has set a target of producing a minimum of 10 GW of renewable power by 2040 and focus on the core exploration and production (E&P) business.

200. RailTel Corporation of India has recently partnered with CSC e-Governance Services to increase broadband penetration in rural and semi-urban areas for minimising the digital divide.

- The CSC e-Governance Services India Limited is a special purpose vehicle under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

201. 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**.

202. 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.

203. 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.

204. 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.

205. 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.

206. 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.

207. 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'.

208. 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.*

209. 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.

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- 210.** 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.
- 211. 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.
- 212.** 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.
- 213.** 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.
- 214.** 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.
- 215.** 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**.

- 216.** 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.
- 217.** 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.
- 218.** 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.
- 219.** The **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** has recently partnered with UdeMy 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.
- 220.** 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.
- 221.** **ITC Limited** has collaborated with **Invest India**, a non-profit venture by the central government for national investment promotion and facilitation, to crowdsource innovative ideas for single-use plastic substitution and automate waste segregation.
- Under this collaboration, ITC Paperboards and Specialty Papers Division (PSPD) has launched the ITC Sustainability Innovation Challenge, which would support innovative start-up ideas on sustainable packaging and smart waste management solutions.

- **Theme for challenge:** Sustainable Solution

222. 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.

Other acquisitions:

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of up to 16.94% equity share capital of IRB Infrastructure Developers (IRB) by Bricklayers Investment (controlled by GIC Investor).
- CCI has also approved the acquisition of a controlling stake in Forbes Enviro Solutions by Lunolux Limited.

223. 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.
- The Chairperson and Managing Director must be different and the Board members of these companies cannot serve on the boards of more than 5 listed companies.

224. 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.

225. REC Limited has recently entered into an agreement with KfW Development Bank of Germany for availing ODA (Official Development Assistance) term loan of **USD 169.5 million** under Indo-German bilateral partnership for the power sector and renewable energy projects.

226. The Government of India has signed an agreement with the German-based KfW Development Bank for a **140 million Euro** reduced interest loan and a **2 million Euro** grant for an energy reform program in **Madhya Pradesh**.

- The project comprises two components, implementation of smart meters and Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI); and separation of agriculture and non-agriculture feeders.

227. The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the government of **West Bengal** to develop the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) ecosystem in the state. Under this MoU, a project management unit (PMU) of SIDBI will work with the state government.

228. The Information and Credit Rating agency (ICRA) has projected India's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of **9%** in **FY22 and FY23** amid the Omicron uncertainty. The agency is expecting the CPI inflation to an average of 4.5-5.0% in FY23 from 5.5% in FY22.

BANKING & FINANCE

229. The Reserve Bank of India has recently superseded the board of industrialist Anil Ambani-promoted **Reliance Capital**, a non-banking financial company (NBFC), by exercising its power conferred under **Section 45-IE (1)** of the RBI Act 1934, owing to payment defaults and governance issues. **Nageswara Rao Y**, a former executive director of Bank of Maharashtra, has been named the company's administrator.

230. RBI has also formed a **3-member committee** to assist the administrator under Section 45-IE (5) (a) of the RBI Act 1934. The members include:

- Sanjeev Nautiyal - ex-deputy managing director (DMD), State Bank of India
- Srinivasan Varadarajan - ex-DMD, Axis Bank
- Praveen P Kadle - ex-MD and chief executive officer, Tata Capital

231. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has signed an agreement with Usha International Limited (UIL) to empower women entrepreneurs by providing financial assistance named "**NAVCHETNA**" by SBI. The financial assistance will be provided under the joint responsibility group model.

- Under this agreement, bank branches in Uttarakhand, Delhi, Western UP and NCR Haryana will fund women entrepreneurs to Usha Silai School to purchase sewing machines to enhance and upgrade their technical sewing skills or to buy threads of clothes, etc.

232. ESAF Small Finance Bank has recently received the Honourable mention in the **Best Bank for Women Entrepreneurs** category in the 4th Global SME Finance Awards 2021.

The award has been organized by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the United States-based SME Finance Forum.

- 233.** Agriwise Finserv Limited, an agri-focussed NBFC, has recently entered into a co-lending agreement with **Central Bank of India** for agri-loan disbursal to undeserved and unserved rural customers of India.
- 234.** Public sector lender **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** will become the promoter of Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) by investing over 9.5% stake in the company.
- 235.** The IPO-bound **India1 Payments**, promoted by the Banktech Group of Australia and formerly known as BTI Payments, has recently crossed a milestone of installing 10,000-white-label ATMs. With this, India1 ATM has become the second-largest white label ATM brand in the semi-urban and rural areas.
- 236. IDFC First Bank** has recently launched India's first standalone metal debit card or black card 'FIRST Private Infinite' in partnership with Visa. It is a lifetime free card designed specifically for customers who are part of the Bank's FIRST Private program, a premium savings and wealth offering.
- 237. Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company** has recently launched India's first Nifty Alpha 50 Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) named 'Kotak Nifty Alpha 50 ETF'. This will track the performance of 50 stocks listed with NSE with high Alpha's in the last one year. The new fund is open for subscription from 1st December 2021 to 15th December 2021.
- 238. DBS Bank India** has recently introduced a paperless proposition for the financing of domestic invoices by buyers and sellers. The bank has also executed its first paperless domestic trade financing transaction with Lincon Polymers Pvt. Ltd to reduce processing turn-around time and for efficient business.
- 239. Kotak Mahindra Bank** has recently tied up with Europe-based payment and transactional service firm, Worldline, to enable equated monthly instalments (EMIs) payments via Kotak debit cards in India.
- The minimum purchase to be done to avail EMIs on the Kotak debit cards facility is Rs 5,000.
 - Customers have the flexibility to repay the loan over tenures between three months and 12 months.
- 240. Paytm** has recently signed an MoU with the Directorate of General Training (DGT), Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to train 6000 individuals over a period of three years in the Fintech industry.

- The selected individuals will undertake a six-month program.
- It is a part of DGT's Flexi-MoU scheme wherein industry partners provide an opportunity to the youth to acquire skills related to industries with high job potential through a 'Learn and Earn' approach.

241. State Bank of India has recently partnered with Adani Capital Private Ltd (Adani Capital), the NBFC arm of Adani Group, for co-lending to farmers for purchase of tractor and farm implements.

- SBI has recently (Nov 2021) listed its \$ 650-million green bonds simultaneously on the India International Exchange (India INX) and the Luxembourg Stock Exchange.

242. Private sector lender **Federal Bank** has launched a feature-rich savings bank product for women named 'Mahila Mitra Plus' scheme. The scheme will provide exclusive preferential interest rates on housing loans, processing fee waiver for home loans, complimentary and customised insurance cover.

243. Paytm Money, the wholly owned subsidiary of Paytm, has recently launched Portfolio Management Services (PMS) Marketplace for HNI (High Networth Individuals) investors in association with PMS Bazaar.

244. KreditBee, a fintech lending platform, has recently collaborated with Mswipe to offer 'cardless EMI' at leading retail stores. Under the cardless EMI segment, KreditBee will provide the 'Pay Later' option for purchases up to Rs 1 lakh, which can be converted into EMI ranging from three to 12 months.

245. As per the recently released RBI data, **Gujarat** has become the largest manufacturing hub of the country. It has pushed Maharashtra to the second position. Gujarat's Gross Value Added (GVA) has grown at an average rate of 15.9% to Rs 5.11 lakh crore from FY12 to FY20.

- Maharashtra is followed by Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh.
- In terms of service sector, Maharashtra has topped with the GVA growing by 12.6% annually to Rs 15.1 lakh crore in 2020.

246. Punjab National Bank (PNB) has recently launched the 'PNB Pride-CRMD module tool', an Android-based application for **differently-abled employees** to monitor and effectively follow up with the special mention account (SMA) borrowers.

247. Paytm has recently collaborated with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to offer Paytm Startup Toolkit with exclusive payment services to early-stage Indian startups. Paytm startup toolkit is a single-stop platform that offers solutions in the domain of payments, payouts, banking and distribution.

- 248. Aditya Birla Health Insurance Co. Ltd. (ABHICL)**, the health insurance subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital Limited (ABCL), has launched a new plan called '**Activ Health Essential**', an affordable health solution plan for the special health needs of senior citizens.
- 249. Jammu & Kashmir Bank** has recently launched its revised and refurbished Mobile Banking App - 'J&K Bank mPay Delight' for public. The app was initially launched in July 2021.
- 250.** 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.
- 251.** 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.
- 252. Shivalik Small Finance Bank** has recently partnered with fintech firm Inddiagold 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%.
- 253. 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.

- 254.** 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.
- 255. 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.
- 256.** 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.
- 257.** 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.
- 258. 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.
- 259. City Union Bank (CUB)**, in collaboration with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and its manufacturing partner Seshaasai, 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.

260. 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.

261. 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'.

262. 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.

263. 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.

264. 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.

265. 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).

- 266. 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.
- 267. 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.
- 268.** 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.
- 269.** 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.
- 270. 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.
- 271.** 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.

272. 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.

273. 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.

274. 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.

275. 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.

276. 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.

277. 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**.

278. 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.

279. 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 **1st 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.

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280. 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).

281. 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.

- 282.** 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.
- 283. 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.
- 284. 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.
- 285.** 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.
- 286. 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.
- 287. 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.
- 288. 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.
- 289.** 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.

- 290. 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.
- 291. 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).
- 292. 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.
- 293. 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.
- 294. 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.
- 295. 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.
- 296. 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.

- 297. Axis Bank** has announced the approval to reclassify the **Oriental Insurance Company Limited (OICL)** from promoter category to public category shareholder in the bank.
- 298. 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.
- 299. 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.
- 300.** 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.
- *Google Pay is a digital wallet platform and online payment system developed by Google. It was initially launched in 2018.*
- 301.** The board of Equitas Small Finance Bank Limited has recently approved the proposal for re-appointment of **Vasudevan Pathangi Narasimhan (PN)** as the MD & CEO for three years, with effect from 23rd July 2022, up to 22nd July 2025, subject to the RBI and shareholders' approval.
- 302. 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, the Bank of Baroda has been conferred with 5 DigiDhan awards for FY 2019-20 & 2020-21 in various categories.
- 303.** 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).
- 304. Axis Bank** has announced the approval to reclassify the **Oriental Insurance Company Limited (OICL)** from promoter category to public category shareholder in the bank.

- *Axis Bank was incorporated in the year 1993 with the name UTI Bank Ltd. In July 2007, it was renamed as 'Axis Bank'.*

305. CSB Bank has been empanelled as an '**agency bank**' by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to undertake general banking business of central and state governments which may be entrusted by the RBI. It will also enable the bank to handle a broad range of transactions related to government business, such as TDS, GST, stamp duty, registration, property tax, value-added tax and professional tax.

306. 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 the Union Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Cooperation, Amit Shah.

307. Punjab National Bank (PNB) has recently entered into the 4th co-lending arrangement with Lendingkart Finance Limited as part of its efforts to improve the flow of credit to the unserved and underserved sector of the economy.

- *As per RBI's co-lending model, banks and NBFCs will co-lend the customers in the ratio of 80% and 20% respectively.*

308. Paytm Payments Bank, an associate entity of Paytm, has recently partnered with MoneyGram to enable international fund transfer directly to Paytm Wallet.

- With this partnership, MoneyGram users abroad can now conveniently transfer money to full KYC Paytm wallet users in India.
- This is MoneyGram's first mobile wallet partnership in India.

309. HDFC Bank has been selected under the 'Most Innovative Best Practices' at the coveted Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Digital Transformation Awards 2021 or CII DX Award 2021 for its efforts in furthering financial inclusion through a partnership with the Common Service Centres (CSCs) of the Government of India.

310. Indipaisa, a member of the Nexxo Network, has recently partnered with **NSDL Payments Bank** to launch a new Financial Technology (Fintech) solutions targeting India's flourishing 63 million Small & Mid-sized Enterprise (SME) sector.

311. The Reserve Bank of India has recently extended the deadline for periodic Know Your Customer (KYC) updation in bank accounts till **31st March 2022**, from the previous deadline of 31st December 2021, due to the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 in India.

- 312.** Private lender **Federal Bank** has recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU), with Schwing Stetter (India) Ltd, a subsidiary of Schwing GMBH, Germany, one of the largest manufacturers of concrete and construction equipment in India. This MoU will enable both Federal Bank and Schwing Stetter to offer customized financial solutions to their customers
- 313.** The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has announced that insurance intermediaries and their entities can maintain **current accounts** in various banks to meet regulatory requirements and reinsurance business.
- 314.** Vayana Network, one of India's largest trade finance platform, and **Federal Bank**, a leading Private Sector Bank have recently been awarded the 'Most Effective Bank-Fintech Partnership: Agile and Adaptable' at the IBSi-Global Fintech Innovation Awards 2021.
- Federal Bank partnered with Vayana Network to provide a seamless on-boarding experience to dealers through their unique 'Full Stack' tech infrastructure.
 - This facilitates end to end digital solution including client supply chain account set up, monitoring, digital authentication of documents on the transaction platform and notification to customers at every step.
- 315.** The Reserve Bank of India has recently extended the card-on-file (CoF) tokenisation deadline by 6 months to **30th June 2022**. The earlier deadline was 31st December 2021.
- Background:**
- In September 2021, RBI has prohibited merchants from storing customer card details on their servers with effect from 1st January 2022, and mandated the adoption of CoF tokenization as an alternative to card storage.
 - card-on-file (CoF) refers to card information stored by payment gateway and merchants to process future transactions.
- 316.** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has recently restructured its advisory committees on secondary market, mutual funds, corporate bonds, and securitization.

Committee	Members	Chairman
Secondary Market Committee	17	Madhabi Puri Buch
Mutual Funds Committee	24	Usha Thorat
Corporate Bonds and Securitization Committee	23	G Mahalingam
Information Systems Security Committee	5	Prof H Krishnamurthy

- 317. BoB Financial Solutions Limited (BFSL)**, a wholly owned subsidiary of Bank of Baroda (BoB), and Indian Navy have recently launched a co-branded credit card for Indian Navy personnel.
- The credit card will be equipped with contactless features and will be offered on the RuPay platform.
 - A navy personnel up to the age of 64 years will be eligible to choose from three variants of the co-branded credit card.
- 318.** HSBC Asset Management Company has recently acquired the mutual fund business of L&T Finance Holdings for \$425 million (Rs 3,250 crore).
- 319. IndusInd Bank** has partnered with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) for offering real-time cross-border remittances to India using UPI IDs, for its Money Transfer Operator (MTO) partners.
- With this, IndusInd Bank has become the **first Indian bank** to go live on UPI for Cross Border Payments/NRI Remittances.
- 320. IndusInd Bank** has launched '**Green Fixed Deposits**' where the deposit proceeds will be used to finance projects and firms supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- 321.** HDFC Life Insurance has recently signed a bancassurance agreement with **South Indian Bank**. This will enable customers of the bank to avail a range of life insurance products of the insurer that include solutions for protection, savings and investment, retirement and critical illness.
- 322.** HDFC Bank has recently tied up with **India Post Payments Bank** to offer banking services to over 4.7 crore customers of IPPB in semi-urban and rural areas.
- 323.** Reserve Bank of India has recently (December 2021) imposed a penalty of **Rs 30 lakh** on **MUFG Bank** for non-compliance with the directions issued by it on "Loans and Advances - Statutory and Other Restrictions".
- 324. RBL Bank** has recently extended the co-brand credit card partnership with **Bajaj Finance** for a period of **5 years** to December 2026. The lender had entered into a partnership with Bajaj Finance in 2018.

- 325.** MAS Financial Services has recently entered into a strategic co-lending partnership with **Bank of Maharashtra** for lending to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME). This partnership is subject to compliance laws including applicable guidelines issued by RBI.
- 326.** The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of **Atul Kumar Goel**, MD & CEO of UCO Bank, as MD & CEO of **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** with effect from 1st February 2022 to 31st December 2024. He will succeed S.S. Mallikarjuna Rao.
- 327.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has extended its restrictions on scam-tainted **Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank Ltd.** for **three months** from 1st January 2022 to 31st March 2022.
- 328.** ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has recently launched a new term cover named '**ICICI Pru iProtect Return of Premium**'. The plan offers a return of **105%** of all premiums paid on survival, besides providing cover against 64 critical illnesses, one of the highest in the industry. It offers two variants – Life Stage Cover and Level Cover.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- 329.** Argentina's **Lionel Messi** has recently won the men's Ballon d'Or 2021. He has won this prestigious award for a record of 7 times in 2021. Barcelona's **Alexia Putellas** has won the women's Ballon d'Or 2021.
- The year 2021 marks the 65th edition of the Ballon d'Or ceremony held in Paris, France.
- 330.** **V Praveen Rao**, Vice-Chancellor of Prof. Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU), has won the 7th Dr MS Swaminathan Award for the period 2017-2019 for his contributions in the fields of agricultural research, teaching, extension and administration.
- 331.** The New India Foundation has recently announced the winner of the fourth edition of the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2021. **Dinyar Patel** has won the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2021 for a biography titled 'Naoroji: Pioneer of Indian Nationalism' (Harvard University Press).
- The book features the life events and legacy of Dada Bhai Naoroji, the nineteenth-century activist who founded the Indian National Congress, and was the first British MP of Indian origin.

332. India's former long jumper **Anju Bobby George** has been bestowed with the Woman of the Year Award 2021 by World Athletics for her efforts in advancing sports in the country and also acting as a constant voice for gender equality during her time as the Senior Vice President of the Indian Athletics Federation.

- With this, she has become the first Indian to be honoured with this award.

333. Eminent Indian-American **mathematician Nikhil Srivastava**, has been jointly selected for the inaugural \$5,000 Ciprian Foias Prize for the "highly original work" in Operator Theory by the American Mathematical Society (AMS).

- Along with him, the two other awardees are **Adam Marcus and Daniel Spielman**.
- The award will be presented to Professor Srivastava and his colleagues on 5th January at the 2022 Joint Mathematics Meeting in Seattle, USA described as "the largest mathematics gathering in the world."

334. 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.

335. 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 Krejčíková & Katerina Siniakova	Czech Republic
Most Improved Player of the Year	Barbora Krejčíková	Czech Republic
Newcomer of the Year	Emma Raducanu	UK
Comeback Player of the Year	Carla Suarez Navarro	Spain

- 336.** 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.
- 337.** 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**.
- 338.** Renowned Indian architect **Balkrishna Vitthal Das 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.
- 339.** 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.
- 340.** 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.
- 341.** **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.
- 342.** 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.

343. 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 4th F1 driver to receive the knighthood, the honorary title 'Sir' in Britain after Jack Brabham (Australian), Stirling Moss and Jackie Stewart.

344. 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.

345. 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

346. 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.

347. 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.

348. 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.

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351. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India has named Bollywood actress **Alia Bhatt** its 2021 Person of the Year. This year, Alia Bhatt invested in Phool, the company behind Fleather, which is a vegan leather made from discarded temple flowers. Her vegan kidswear line, **Ed-a-Mamma**, also won a 2021 PETA India fashion award for helping to nurture kids' love for animals and nature.

352. Sahitya Akademi has announced its prestigious Sahitya Akademi Awards, Yuva Puraskar and Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2021 in various languages.

Sahitya Akademi Award 2021:

- The winner of Gujarati, Maithili, Manipuri, and Urdu languages will be announced at a later date.
- Author, **Namita Gokhale (English)** has been awarded for her novel '**Things to Leave Behind**'.

Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar 2021:

- The award in Tamil will be declared later, there was no award given in Rajasthani language this year.
- Author, **Megha Majumdar (English)** has won the award for her debut book '**A Burning**', published in **2020**.

Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2021:

- No award was given in Gujarati and Punjabi languages this year.
- **Anita Vachharajani (English)** has won the award for the biography "**Amrita Sher-Gil: Rebel with a Paintbrush**".
- **Devendra Mewari (Hindi)** has won the award for his play titled "**Natak Natak me Vigyan**".

353. Harmony Foundation has hosted the Mother Teresa Memorial Awards for Social Justice 2021. The Awards in its 17th year is the only award endorsed by Sister Prema, the Superior General of the Missionaries of Charity, the organization started by Mother Teresa.

List of winners of Mother Teresa Memorial Awards for Social Justice 2021:

- **Dr. Anil Prakash Joshi** - For his efforts as a change maker in the environmental sustainability sector by impacting over 10,000 villages in the Himalayan region through his Himalayan Environmental Studies & Conservation Organisation. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2021.
- **Vidyut Mohan** - For his seminal and ingenious efforts in combating air pollution through his social enterprise Takachar. He is the winner of the Earth shot Prize.
- **Ridhima Pandey** - For her spectacular courage, and indomitable spirit as a youth environmental activist who has galvanized national participation to stop climate change.

354. Surat's noted industrialist **Viral Desai**, popularly known as '**Greenman of Gujarat**', has been awarded the prestigious Global Environment and Climate Action Citizen Award 2021 in Dubai.

355. Anukrti Upadhyay has won the Sushila Devi Award 2021 for the Best Book of Fiction for her novel, '**Kintsugi**'. The novel was published by the Fourth Estate imprint.

- The Ratanlal Foundation and the Bhopal Literature and Art Festival's organizing committee have announced the winner of this prestigious award for fiction written by a woman author and published in 2020.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

356. A book titled 'The Ambuja Story: How a Group of Ordinary Men Created an Extraordinary Company' is the autobiography of **Narotam Sekhsaria**, one of India's most successful industrialists of the modern era.

- The book features the story of his rise from a small-time cotton trader to setting up one of the largest cement companies in the country, Ambuja cements. The book has been published by Harper Collins India.

357. A new book titled "1971: Charge of the Gorkhas and Other Stories" has been authored by **Rachna Bisht Rawat**. The book will be released on 10th December 2021.

- It has been published by Penguin Random House India.

358. A new book titled 'The Midway Battle: Modi's Rollercoaster Second Term' has been authored by **Gautam Chintamani**. The book has been launched by Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu.

- It has been published by Bloomsbury India.

359. 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.

360. 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'

361. 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.

362. 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.

363. 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.

364. 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.

365. 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.

366. 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.

367. 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.

368. Economist and BJP national spokesperson, **Sanju Verma** has recently authored a new book titled 'The Modi Gambit: Decoding Modi 2.0'. The book features the various achievement in the last 2 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2nd term as PM of India.

The book is published by Gaurav Book Centre.

- 369.** A new book titled 'The Riddle of Kashmir The Quest for Peace in a Troubled Land' has been authored by former Indian Army Chief of Staff Gen. **Nirmal Chander Vij (ret)**. The book is published by HarperCollins India.
- 370.** 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.
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- 372.** Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu has recently released the autobiography of former NTPC and NBCC chief **Arup Roy Choudhury**, titled "The Turnover Wizard - Saviour Of Thousands".
- The book is published by HP Hamilton Limited.
 - The book is also endorsed by E Sreedharan, the 'Metro Man of India'.

PERSON IN NEWS

- 373.** GUVI, an IIT Madras incubated start-up, has recently signed Indian women's cricketer **Smriti Mandhana** as its brand ambassador. She will be the face of GUVI and will feature across the online campaigns to strengthen the importance & scope of technological education & IT skills.
- GUVI is India's first vernacular Ed-tech Startup to impart tech & programming skills to aspiring individuals in their preferred native languages.
- 374.** BJP spokesperson **Sambit Patra** has recently been appointed as the chairman of India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet for the next 3 years. Earlier, he had served as an independent Director of ONGC.
- IAS officer Ganji Kamala V. Rao has been appointed as the MD of ITDC.
- 375.** UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay has recently appointed **Japanese film director** Naomi Kawase as UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Cultural and Creative Industries. She has been recognized for her commitment to culture and creativity at the

service of the development of more just societies, especially for girls and women, and of her support for the Organization's objectives.

- 376. Gita Gopinath**, the first woman to serve as the IMF's chief economist, has been appointed as the First Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). She will succeed Geoffrey Okamoto.
- 377. Pradip Shah**, founder of IndAsia Fund Advisors, has recently been appointed as the chairman of National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARCL). In May 2021, Padmakumar Nair, chief general manager of SBI, was appointed as the MD of NARCL.
- 378.** Kinara Capital, an innovative fast-growing fintech serving India's MSMEs, has recently appointed Indian cricketer **Ravindra Jadeja**, as its official brand ambassador on the occasion of the company's 10th anniversary.
- 379.** Senior bureaucrat **Alka Upadhyaya** has been appointed as the chairman of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). She is a 1990-batch IAS officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre, and is currently serving as Additional Secretary, Department of Rural Development.
- 380.** The President of Gambia, **Adama Barrow** has recently won the 2nd term as President during Gambia's presidential election by achieving over 53% votes from 50 of 53 constituencies.
- 381.** Unix has recently appointed Indian International cricketer **Jasprit Bumrah** as their Brand Ambassador. The aim is to increase visibility of their products.
- 382.** The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has recently appointed Sanjiv Mehta, Chairman and Managing Director of Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), as the new President. He will succeed **Uday Shankar**.
- 383.** 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).
- 384.** 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.

- 385.** 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.
- 386.** 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.
- 387.** 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
- 388.** **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 Kamla Harris were named Time's 2020 'Person of the Year'.
- 389.** **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.
- 390.** 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).
- 391.** 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.

392. 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.

393. 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.

394. 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.

395. Indian Forest Service officer, **Chandra Prakash Goyal** has been appointed as the Director-General of Forests & Special Secretary (DGF&SS), Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change.

396. Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) Chief **Sanjay Arora** has been appointed to hold the additional charge of another border guarding force Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) as the latter's chief Kumar Rajesh Chandra has retired on 31st December 2021. He is a 1988-batch officer of Tamil Nadu cadre.

397. Indian origin **Narandran 'Jody' Kollapen** has been appointed to South Africa's highest judicial bench, the Constitutional Court. He has been appointed along with Rammaka Steven Mathopo. Both will take office from 1st January 2022.

398. **Vikram Misri**, former Indian envoy to China, has been appointed as the Deputy National Security Adviser (NSA) in the National Security Council secretariat. He will succeed **Pankaj Saran**, who will step down as Deputy National Security Advisor on 31st December 2021. He is a 1989 batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer.

- **Note:** **Ajit Doval** is the current NSA.

399. Senior Diplomat **Anupam Ray** has been appointed as the next Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations Conference on Disarmament, Geneva. He is an Indian Foreign Services (IFS) officer of the 1994 batch.

- 400. Dr Pankaj Sharma**, who is presently the Permanent Representative of India to the UN Conference on the Disarmament, has been appointed as the next **Ambassador of India to Mexico**.
- 401.** Senior DRDO scientist **Atul Dinkar Rane** has been appointed as the Director-General (DG) of the BrahMos Aerospace Pvt Ltd, which manufacturers the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile.
- *BrahMos Aerospace is a joint venture between India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and NPO Mashinostroyeniya of Russia. It is headquartered in New Delhi.*
- 402. Mohammed Ben Sulayem** of the **United Arab Emirates** has been elected as the new President of the International Automobile Federation (FIA). He has succeeded Jean Todt.
- 403.** EaseMyTrip, India's second-largest online travel platform, has appointed actors Vijay Raaz and Varun Sharma as its brand ambassadors. This is the first time that EaseMyTrip has appointed any brand ambassadors.
- 404.** The Board of Directors of the RBL Bank has recently appointed **Rajeev Ahuja**, who's currently working as the Executive Director at the bank, as interim Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of the bank with immediate effect, subject to the regulatory and other approvals. The board has accepted the request of Vishwavir Ahuja, Managing Director and CEO of the bank, to proceed on leave with immediate effect.
- 405.** RBI has also appointed its chief general manager **Yogesh K Dayal** as an additional director on the board of RBL Bank for a period of two years.
- 406.** 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.
- 407.** IFFCO-TOKIO General Insurance has recently appointed **H O Suri** as new Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The appointment is effective from 1st October 2021.

- 408.** Yamaha Motor India has appointed **Eishin Chihana** as its new chairman. He has been associated with Yamaha Motor Company and its group companies across the globe since 1991. He has replaced Motofumi Shitara.
- 409.** **Radhika Jha**, a 2002 Uttarakhand IAS, has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of **Energy Efficiency Services (EESL)**. EESL is a joint venture between NTPC, Power Grid, Power Finance Corp and REC, working to promote energy efficiency in the country
- 410.** **Karl Nehammer** has become the new Chancellor of **Austria**. He has succeeded Alexander Schallenberg.
- 411.** 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.
- 412.** 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.

OBITUARIES

- 413.** Award-winning **Telugu lyricist** and Padma Shri awardee Sirivennela Seetharama Sastry has passed away recently in Hyderabad, Telangana. He was born on 20th May 1955 near Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
- He made his debut as a lyricist with 'Janani Janmabhoomi' in 1984.
 - He was awarded the **Padma Shri** in **2019** for his contribution and excellence in the field of arts.
- 414.** Renowned scholar of **Bangladesh** Professor, Rafiqul Islam has passed away recently in Dhaka, Bangladesh. He was born on 1st January 1934 in Chandrapur, West Bengal.
- He was honoured with Swadhinta Padak and the Ekushey padak, which is the highest civilian award of Bangladesh.
- 415.** Former chief minister of undivided **Andhra Pradesh** and veteran Congress leader Konijeti Rosaiah has passed away recently in Hyderabad, Telangana. He was born on 4th July 1933 near Vemuru village, Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh.
- He had also served as the Governor of Tamil Nadu and the Acting Governor of Karnataka.

- 416.** Veteran **journalist** Vinod Dua has passed away recently in New Delhi. He was born on 11th March 1954 in New Delhi.
- 417. Sarada Menon**, India's first woman psychiatrist, has passed away recently in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. She was born in Mangalore, Karnataka.
- 418.** 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
- 419.** 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.
- 420.** 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**.
- 421.** Former **Supreme Court judge**, Justice Girish Thakorlal Nanavati has passed away recently in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. He was born on 17th February 1935 in Jambusar, Gujarat. He headed two inquiry commissions formed to probe into the 2002 Godhra Riots & 1984 Anti-Sikh Riots.
- 422.** American gothic-fiction **writer** Anne Rice has passed away recently in Rancho Mirage, California, USA. She was born on 4th 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.
- 423.** Veteran **politician** of Indian National Congress (INC), RL Jalappa has passed away recently in Kolar, Karnataka. He was born on 19th 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.

420. Italian-British architect Richard Rogers has passed away recently in London, UK. He was born on 23rd 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 art centre in Paris.

- He received the prestigious **Pritzker prize**, known as the Nobel Prize of Architecture, in **2007**.

421. Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and veteran of **South Africa's** struggle against white minority rule, has passed away recently in Capetown, South Africa. He was born on 7 October 1931 in Klerksdorp, South Africa.

- He was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize** in **1984** for his nonviolent protest against apartheid.

422. The former President of Greece, Karolos Papoulias has passed away recently in Athens, Greece. He was born on 4th June 1929 in Ioannina, Greece.

423. Former England cricketer, Ray Illingworth has passed away recently. He was born on 8 June 1932 in Pudsey, West Yorkshire, England.

- He played 61 Tests for England between 1958 and 1973 and captained the country 31 times, winning 12 matches and an Ashes series in Australia in 1970. He was the chairman of the England selectors between 1993 and 1996 and coached the team in 1995-96.

424. Edward Osborne Wilson, known as the "Father of Biodiversity" and the 'Father of Sociobiology', has passed away recently in Burlington, Massachusetts, USA. He was born on 10th June 1929 in Alabama, USA.

- He was the former Harvard University biologist and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner: On Human Nature in 1978, and The Ants in 1990. He is also known as '**Modern-day Darwin**'.

425. Rajya Sabha MP from Bihar and industrialist **Mahendra Prasad** has passed away recently in New Delhi. He was born on 8th January 1940 in Govindpur, Bihar.

- He represents the Janata Dal (United) party of Bihar in the Rajya Sabha.
- He was the founder of Aristo Pharmaceuticals and was a seven-term Rajya Sabha MP from Bihar and was also elected to the Lok Sabha once.
- His name was often prefixed with "**King**", as he remained in the Rajya Sabha since 1985 except for brief gaps.

426. Italian-British architect Richard Rogers has passed away recently in London, UK. He was born on 23rd 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

427. The Badminton World Federation (BWF) has recently named **Viktor Axelsen** of **Denmark** as the Male Player of the Year 2021. China's Taipei's **Tai Tzu Ying** has been named the Female Player of the Year 2021.

428. An Se-young (South Korea) has recently won the women's single title at the Badminton World Federation (BWF) World Tour Finals held in Bali, Indonesia by defeating PV Sindhu (India).

- Viktor Axelsen (Denmark) has won the men's single title by defeating Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn.

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429. Russian Tennis Federation (RTF) has recently won the Davis Cup 2021 by defeating Croatia in the finals held in Madrid, Spain. The Davis Cup finals has been held between Daniil Medvedev and Andrey Rublev of Russia. Daniil Medvedev has won the match bringing victory to the Russian Tennis Federation. Andrey Rublev has been named the Most Valuable Player.

- The tournament has been conducted by the International Tennis Federation.

430. New Zealand's Ajaz Patel has recently become the third bowler to take 10 wickets in an Innings during the second day of the second Test against India at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai.

- England bowler **Jim Laker** had taken 10 wickets in an innings against Australia in 1956, and India's **Anil Kumble** had achieved the incredible feat against Pakistan in 1999.

431. Argentina junior men's hockey team has recently won the 12th edition of the Men's FIH Hockey Junior World Cup 2021 by defeating Germany in the finals. It has been held at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Odisha from 24th November to 5th December 2021.

- With this win, Argentina has become the third team after Germany (six titles) and India (2001 & 2016) to win multiple titles in the tournament.
- India has finished fourth in the tournament by losing 1-3 to France.

432. Britain's Mercedes driver **Lewis Hamilton** has recently defeated Red Bulls driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands to win the inaugural edition of the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix (GP). It has been held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

433. 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

434. 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.

435. 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.

436. 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.

- 437.** 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 Sukhmeet Singh	Men's Quadruple Sculls	Silver
Jasveer Singh, Punit Kumar, Gurmeet Singh, and Charanjeet Singh	Men's Coxless Fours	Silver

- 438.** 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.
- 439.** 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.
- 440.** 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 75th anniversary of IBA.

- 441.** 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.
- 442.** 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.
- 443.** 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.
- 444.** 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.
- 426.** 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.
- 427.** Indian cricketer **Harbhajan Singh**, the first Indian bowler to claim a Test hat-trick, has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket. He made his cricket debut in 1998 in an ODI against Australia.
- He played 103 Tests, 236 ODIs and 28 T20Is for Team India. He was part of the winning squad of the 2011 Cricket World Cup and also the inaugural 2007 T20 World Cup in South Africa.
 - He was awarded the **Padma Shri**, India's fourth highest civilian honour, in **2009**.
- 428.** Ace Indian skier **Aanchal Thakur** has won a bronze medal in the giant slalom category at a Federation Internationale de Ski (FIS) Alpine skiing competition held at Kolasin, Montenegro.
- With this, she has become the **first Indian Ski athlete** to win two medals at international level. She has previously won a bronze medal in the 2018 FIS Alpine 3200 Cup held in Turkey.

429. Indian teenager **Anahat Singh** has recently won the prestigious Junior US Open Squash Tournament in the U-15 girls' category at the Arlen Spectre Centre in Philadelphia, USA. She has defeated Egypt's Jayda Marei in the final match.

- Anahat Singh is a 13 year old girl from Delhi. She is currently the No. 1 **squash player** in India, Asia and Europe in the girls Under-13 category and No. 4 in the Under-15 category.

430. Indian billiards player **Pankaj Advani** has recently won his 11th National Billiards title 2021. He has won the title after defeating his PSPB teammate Dhruv Sitwala. He represented the Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) team in the National Billiards Championship.

- The 88th edition of National Billiards and Snooker Championships 2021 has been held in **Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh**. It is organized by Cue Sports India.

431. Himachal Pradesh cricket team has won their maiden Vijay Hazare Trophy 2021 by defeating Tamil Nadu in the finals held at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium, Jaipur.

- **Most runs** - Ruturaj Gaikwad (Maharashtra)
- **Most wickets** - Yash Thakur (Vidarbha)

432. Bangladesh women team has recently won the SAFF U 19 Women's Championship by defeating India in the finals held at BSSS Mostafa Kamal Stadium, Dhaka in Bangladesh.

- **Shaheda Akter Ripa** of Bangladesh has scored the maximum number of goals in the tournament. She has received the 'most valuable player' award.

433. World No. 7 **Nitesh Kumar (Haryana)** has won the double gold at the 4th Para-Badminton National Championship 2021 held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

- He has won the gold medal in the Men's singles category.
- He along with his partner Tarun has defeated World No. 1 Paralympic Games gold medallist Pramod Bhagat and Manoj Sarkar in the Men's doubles category.

434. Uttar Pradesh hockey team has won the 11th Junior National Men's Hockey Championship 2021 by defeating Chandigarh in the finals held at Kovilpatti, Tamil Nadu. Tournament top scorer Sharda Nand Tiwari opened the scoring for Uttar Pradesh. It has been organized by the Hockey India.

435. Senior cricket player of **New Zealand, Ross Taylor** has recently announced his retirement from international cricket after the two-Test series against Bangladesh and the

ODI against Australia and the Netherlands in February and March 2022. He holds the nation's record in one-day international runs (8,581) and centuries (21), and was the world's first to play in 100 internationals in all formats.

IMPORTANT DAYS

445. Border Security Force (BSF) has recently observed its **57th Raising Day** on 1st December 2021. It was formed on 1st December 1965 as a unified central agency after the Indo-Pak and India-China wars for ensuring the security of the borders of India and for matters connected therewith. It has been termed as the First Line of Defence of Indian Territories.

446. World AIDS Day is observed annually on **1st December** to spread awareness about the disease and remember all those who lost their lives to it.

- The theme of World AIDS Day 2021 is: '**End inequalities. End AIDS**'.
- It was first observed in 1988.

447. World Computer Literacy Day is observed annually on **2nd December** to create awareness and drive digital literacy in underserved communities worldwide. The day was founded by the Indian computer company NIIT to mark its 20th anniversary in 2001.

- The day was first observed in 2001.

448. Arunachal Pradesh has recently observed Indigenous Faith Day (IFD) on 1st December to promote and preserve the indigenous faith and traditional practices of tribal communities of the state.

- The day was first observed in 2013 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Golgi Bote Talom Rukbo, who is known as the father of indigenous faith.

449. International Volunteer Day, also known as International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development, is observed annually on **5th December** to recognize and promote the tireless work of volunteers across the globe.

- **Theme 2021:** Volunteer now for our common future

450. National Armed Forces Flag Day is observed annually on **7th December** to distribute flags amongst the people and collect the funds from them for the betterment of the armed forces.

- A committee was constituted on 28th August 1949 under the then Defence Minister of India, which decided to observe 7th December as a Flag Day every year. India's Ministry of Defence consolidated all related welfare funds into one Armed Forces Flag Day Fund in 1993.

- 451.** International Day for the Abolition of Slavery is observed annually on **2nd December** to highlight the importance of eradicating contemporary forms of slavery including trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, child labour, forced marriage, and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.
- The day was first observed in 1986.
 - The day marks the date of the adoption, by the General Assembly, of the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (resolution 317(IV) of 2 December 1949).
- 452.** National Pollution Control Day is observed annually on **2nd December** to commemorate the lives of the people who died in the Bhopal gas tragedy. The main aim of this day is to educate the people and to make them aware of pollution control acts and industrial disasters. The year 2021 marks the **37th** anniversary of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy.
- 453.** International Day of Persons with Disabilities, also known as World Handicapped day, is observed annually on **3rd December** to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.
- **Theme 2021:** "Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world."
 - The day was proclaimed in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly.
- 454.** India and **Bangladesh** have decided to celebrate 6th December as "Maitri Diwas" (Friendship Day). On this day in 1971, India had formally recognised Bangladesh. India was one of the first countries to establish bilateral diplomatic ties with Bangladesh.
- 455.** National Navy Day is observed annually on **4th December** to mark Indian Navy's victory in Operation Trident. During the 1971 war, naval forces caused heavy damage to Pakistan's vessels. It was during this operation that an anti-ship missile was used for the first time. The Indian Navy has also observed Indian Navy Week from 1st to 7th December 2021.
- Theme 2021- '**Swarnim Vijay Varsh**'
 - The Maratha Emperor, Chhatrapati Shivaji Bhosle of the 17th century is considered as "Father of the Indian Navy".
- 456.** International Day of Banks is observed annually on **4th December** to highlight the importance of multilateral and international development banks in financing sustainable developments.

- 457.** World Soil Day is observed annually on **5th December** to spread awareness of the importance of soil quality for human well-being, food security and ecosystems.
- **Theme 2021:** "Halt soil salinization, enhance soil production"
 - The date of 5 December was chosen because it corresponds with the official birthday of the late **H.M. King Bhumibol Adulyadej**, King of Thailand, who was one of the main proponents of this initiative.
- 458.** Mahaparinirvan Divas is observed annually across India on **6th December**. This day is commemorated to mark the death anniversary of **Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar**, who fought for the economic and social empowerment of Dalits in the country.
- The year 2021 marks 66th death anniversary of him.
- 459.** International Civil Aviation Day is observed annually on **7th December** to highlight the importance of aviation to the social and economic development of the world. From now until 2023, the council has decided upon the theme: "Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development".
- The International Civil Aviation Day was established in 1994 to mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) based in Montreal, Canada. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the day in 1996.
- 460.** 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.
- 461.** 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.
- 462.** 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."

- 463.** 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'
- 464.** 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.
- 465.** 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".
- 466.** 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.
- 467.** 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'
- 468.** The United Nations proclaimed 12 December as International Universal Health Coverage Day on 12th December 2017.
- 469.** 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.

470. National Minorities Rights Day is observed annually on **18th 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.

471. Goa Liberation Day is observed annually on **19th 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.

472. Vijay Diwas is observed annually across India on **16th 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 **50th** Vijay Diwas.

- On 16th 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.

473. World Arabic Language Day is observed annually on 18th 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'

474. International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers is observed annually on **17th 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.

475. International Migrants Day is observed annually on **18th 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 70th anniversary of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

- **Theme 2021:** 'Harnessing the potential of human mobility'

476. International Human Solidarity Day is observed annually on **19th 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 21st century, and in that regard decided to proclaim 20 December of each year International Human Solidarity Day.

477. 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.

478. 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.

479. 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.
- Srinivasa Ramanujan was born on 22nd December 1887 in Erode, Tamil Nadu. He was one of the youngest members of Britain's Royal Society and the first Indian to be elected a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge University. He compiled around 3,900 results consisting of equations and identities. One of his most treasured findings was his infinite series for Pi. He died on 26th April 1920 in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu.

480. 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 his **119th** birth anniversary.

- 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.

Chaudhary Charan Singh:

- Chaudhary Charan Singh was born on 23rd December 1902 in Uttar Pradesh. He breathed his last on 28th May 1987 in New Delhi.
- He served as the **5th Prime Minister of India** from 28 July 1979 to 14 January 1980.
- A memorial dedicated to him was built at Raj Ghat and is called '**Kisan Ghat.**'
- He was the chief architect of land reforms in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Books written by him** are 'Abolition of Zamindari', 'Co-operative Farming X', 'Prevention of Division of Holdings Below a Certain Minimum', etc.

481. National Siddha Day has been observed on **23rd December 2021** to spread awareness about the Siddha system of medicine. The day is annually organized by the Ministry of AYUSH on the eve of the birthday of Siddhar Agathiyar, which falls during the Ayilyam star of Margazhi Month (Tamil). The first Siddha Day was observed on 4th January 2018.

- The year 2021 marks the celebration of the **5th Siddha Day**.
- **Theme 2021:** "Strength of Siddha Medicine for Communicable Diseases"
- *Agathiyar or Agastaya is considered as the 'Father of Tamil Literature'.*

482. National Consumer Rights Day is observed annually on **24th December** to highlight the importance of the consumer movement and spread awareness about the rights and responsibilities of every consumer. The day was first observed in 1986 under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

- In August 2019, the Consumer Protection Act 2019 was passed by parliament. It came into force in July 2020 and replaced the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.
- World Consumer Rights Day is observed annually on 15th March.

483. Good Governance Day is observed annually on **25th December** to commemorate the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna and former-Prime Minister **Atal Bihari Vajpayee**. Since 2014, the Good Governance Day has been celebrated every year on 25th December. The year 2021 marks the **97th birth anniversary** of Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

484. The United Nation's International Day of Epidemic Preparedness is observed annually on **27th December** to facilitate exchange of information, transmission of scientific knowledge and exchange best practices regionally, locally, and internationally.

- The day was first observed in 2020.

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