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January 2022 - Week 1

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** has launched the '**India Semiconductor Mission**' to build a vibrant semiconductor and display ecosystem to enable India's emergence as a global hub for electronics manufacturing and design.
 - Under the scheme, interested companies which seek to tap the **Rs 76,000-crore** incentives earmarked by the Central government for developing semiconductors and displaying the manufacturing ecosystem in India will be able to start applying for it from **January 1, 2022**.
2. Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Pashupati Kumar Paras has recently launched **six food products of 'One District-One Product' (ODOP) brands** under the *Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro food processing Enterprises Scheme* (PMFMES).
 - The six brands launched are **Amrit Phal, Cori Gold, Kashmiri Mantra, Madhu Mantra, Somdana, and Whole Wheat Cookies of Dilli Bakes**.
 - These six brands are out of 10 that the ministry has signed up with cooperative NAFED for branding and marketing of ODOPs.
 - The six brands have been launched under selected districts in Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Jammu and Kashmir.

*The central scheme PMFMES aims to provide financial, technical and business support for upgradation/ setting up of 2 lakh micro food processing units based on the ODOP approach in a period of 5 years from 2020-21 to 2024-25 with an outlay of **Rs 10,000 crore**.*
3. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has recently chaired the 46th meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council in New Delhi. The GST Council has decided to retain the status quo on GST rate on textile to **5%** and not raise it to 12%.
4. The **Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS)**, the largest Research Council under the Ministry of Ayush, has launched '**eOffice**' for its official purposes.
 - The eOffice platform is a digital workplace solution comprising a suite of products and features that support efficient and transparent governance by streamlining all workflow and making all procedures paperless. It has been developed by **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
5. The festival of Losar is being celebrated across **Ladakh region**. The 15 daylong celebration of Losar festival, mark the beginning of the New Year.
 - It is a festival of **Tibetan Buddhism**.
 - It is celebrated on **lunisolar** (a calendar in many cultures whose date indicates both the Moon phase and the time of the solar year) Tibetan calendar.

- Losar is a Tibetan word which means 'New Year'.

6. The Union Cabinet has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between **India and Nepal** to build a bridge over **Mahakali River** at Dharchula, Uttarakhand.

7. **Important approvals by Cabinet (January 2022):**

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between **India and Turkmenistan** on Cooperation in the field of **Disaster Management**.
- The Cabinet has also approved the signing of agreement between **India and Spain** on cooperation and mutual assistance in **Customs Matters**.
- The Cabinet has approved the **Green Energy Corridor (GEC) Phase-II** scheme for the Intra-State Transmission System (InSTS). The scheme is intended to add approximately 10,750 circuit kilometres (ckm) of transmission lines and approx. 27,500 mega volt-amperes (MVA) transformation capacity of substations with central financial support.
 - The total cost of the transmission system is estimated to be **INR 12,031.33 crore** (US\$1.6 billion), with central financial assistance (CFA) covering **33%** of the project cost, i.e., INR 3,970.34 crore (US\$534 million).
 - The beneficiary states include **Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh**.
 - It will be developed over a period of five years, from financial year **2021-22 to 2025-26**.

8. Union Ayush Minister, Sarbananda Sonowal has recently laid the foundation stone of the **Heartfulness International Yoga Academy** in **Hyderabad, Telangana**. The academy tries to reach all levels of society through training programmes and these will be overseen by an international team.

- He has also launched **75 crores suryanamaskar initiative** as part of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. Surya Namaskar's practice of sun salutation' literally means the sun salutation and the project will continue until February 20.
- The programme is supported by some central ministries and is led by five international organizations – Patanjali Yogpeeth, Heartfulness Institute, NYSF- National Yogasana Sports Federation, Geeta Parivar and Kreedha Bharati.

9. Union Minister of State for Science and Technology (S&T) Dr. Jitendra Singh has recently launched the theme of **National Science Day (NSD) 2022** in New Delhi.

- The theme of this year is '**Integrated Approach in Science and Technology for Sustainable Future**'.

- The National Science Day is observed annually on **28th February** to mark the discovery of the Raman Effect.
 - The *Department of Science and Technology (DST)* acts as a nodal agency to support, catalyse, and coordinate the celebration of NSD across India.
- 10.** TRIFED has signed an Memorandum of Understanding with **Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini-Nation First Policy Research Centre** for a collaborative effort in leveraging knowledge, expertise and institutional strengths.
- 11.** As per the recent data, the gross GST revenue collected in December 2021 is **Rs 1,29,780 crore**, of which CGST is Rs 22,578 crore, SGST is Rs 28,658 crore, IGST is Rs 69,155 crore (including Rs 37,527 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is Rs 9,389 crore (including Rs 614 crore collected on import of goods). It is **13%** higher than the same month in 2020.
- 12.** Science and Technology Minister Dr Jitendra Singh has recently released a Special Postage Stamp to commemorate the **75th Platinum Jubilee** year of **CSIR-National Physical Laboratory** in New Delhi. He has also dedicated the '**LED Photometry Laboratory**' to develop energy-efficient illumination technology.
- 13.** The Telecommunication Engineering Centre (TEC) under the Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications has released a report titled "**Code of Practice for Securing Consumer Internet of Things (IoT)**". As per the projections, there may be **26 billion** IoT devices in service globally by **2026**. Out of this approximately 20% will be on cellular technologies.
- 14.** The **Akshaya Patra Foundation (TAPF)** and the United Nations **World Food Programme (WFP)** have entered into a partnership to enhance the effectiveness of the Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (formerly mid-day meal scheme).
- 15.** The 19th Meeting of National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has been held under the chairmanship of Union Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change Bhupendra Yadav.
- Key highlights:
- Currently, India has **51 Tiger Reserves** and more than 35 rivers originate from these areas, which are crucial for water security.
 - **Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary** (Rajasthan) is set to be the 52nd Tiger Reserve in India.

- **Guru Ghasidas National Park** of Chhattisgarh will be 53rd Tiger Reserve of India, approved by National Tiger Conservation Authority.
- Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in India: As part of the plan, the ministry will be translocating around 8-12 cheetahs from South Africa, Namibia and Botswana to **Kuno Palpur National Park in Madhya Pradesh**.
- The ministry has also released a Water Atlas for mapping all the water bodies in the tiger-bearing areas of India.

16. The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoPNG) has constituted an **Energy Transition Advisory Committee (ETAC)** to lay down the policy framework for moving the country and the economy from fossil fuels to clean energy.

- The committee will be headed by former petroleum secretary **Tarun Kapoor**.

17. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communication, has recently constituted a six task force under the Technology Innovation Group (TIG) to explore sixth-generation or **6G technology**. The task forces will enable research and development, manufacturing, prepare pre-standardization, and market readiness framework.

Six task forces:

1) Task force on Multi-Platform for Next-Generation Networks Bhaskar Ramamurthy, Director, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Chennai.

2) Task force on Spectrum policy - Abhay Karandikar, Director, IIT-Kanpur.

3) Task force on Multi-Disciplinary Innovative Solutions and Devices - Bharadwaj Amrutur, director, Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore.

4) Task force on Devices - Kiran Kumar Kuchi, director, IIT-Hyderabad.

5) Task force on Group for financing research and development - Ashok Kumar Tiwari, Member (Technology), Digital Communications Commission (DCC).

6) Task force on international standards - NG Subramaniam, chairman of the Telecommunications Standards Development Society, India (TSDSI).

18. Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has recently unveiled **24 bridges projects** and **3 roads projects** implemented and managed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in **four states** and **two union territories**.

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19. The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has observed the 64th Foundation Day of its establishment on **1st January 2022**. Presently, DRDO is working in multiple cutting edge military technology areas, which include aeronautics, armaments, combat vehicles, electronics, instrumentation, engineering systems, missiles, materials, naval systems, advanced computing, simulation, cyber, life sciences, and other technologies for defense.
20. **Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan** has recently launched a **100-day** Reading Campaign called '**Padhe Bharat**'. It has been launched to improve the learning of students levels because it develops creativity, critical thinking, vocabulary as well as ability to express in writing & verbal forms.
- The campaign will focus on children studying in **Balvatika to Grade 8**.
 - It will be organized for 100 days (14 weeks) starting from **1st January 2022 to 10th April 2022**.
 - Under the 100 days campaign, one activity has been designed per week per group, to make reading enjoyable and build a lifelong association with the joy of reading.
 - It has also been aligned with the goals and vision of "**Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Mission**".
 - It will also focus on Indian languages including mother tongue/local/regional languages.
21. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently laid the foundation stone of *Major Dhyan Chand Sports University* in **Meerut, Uttar Pradesh**. It will be established in the Salawa and Kaili villages of Sardhana town in Meerut.
- It will be built at a cost of **Rs. 700 crores**.
 - It will be equipped with modern and state of the art sports infrastructure including synthetic Hockey ground, Football ground, Basketball / Volleyball / Handball / Kabaddi ground, Lawn tennis court, Gymnasium hall, Synthetic running stadium, Swimming pool, Multipurpose hall and a Cycling velodrome.
 - It will also house facilities for Shooting, Squash, Gymnastics, Weightlifting, Archery, Canoeing, and Kayaking, among other facilities.
 - It will have the capacity of training **1080 sports persons** including 540 female and 540 male sportspersons.
22. The 31-member Parliamentary panel has been constituted to examine "**The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021**", piloted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development which seeks to raise the legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years.
- **Chairperson: Vinay Sahasrabuddhe**

- Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP **Sushmita Dev** is the only woman among the 31 members.

23. Telangana has been ranked first in the country in the list of highest number of **open defecation free (ODF Plus) villages** under the **Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase-II programme** till 31st December 2021. As many as 13,737 out of 14,200 villages in the State are in the ODF Plus list, which is 96.74%. It is followed by Tamil Nadu with 4,432 villages (35.39%), and Karnataka with 1,511 villages (5.59%).

24. Union Education Minister and Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has recently launched **NEAT 3.0**, a single platform to provide the best-developed ed-tech solutions and courses to students of the country.

- NEAT stands for **National Education Alliance for Technology**.
- **58** global and Indian startups are onboard offering 100 courses and e-resources to boost employability of the youth.
- **AICTE** acts as facilitator and also ensure that solutions are freely available to a large number of socially and economically backward students.

25. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently released the **10th instalment** of financial benefit under the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme**. Under the scheme, an amount of over **Rs. 20, 000 crore** have been transferred to more than 10 crore beneficiary farmer families across the country.

26. The **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** has recorded **126 tiger deaths** in India in 2021. This is the highest number of annual deaths recorded in a decade.

- **Madhya Pradesh (44)** has reported the maximum number of tiger deaths, followed by Maharashtra with 26 and Karnataka with 14.

27. According to the recent data from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India's exports have increased by **37%** in December 2021 on an annual basis to **USD 37.29 billion**. Whereas, imports in December 2021 have increased by **38%** to **USD 59.27 billion** on account of an increase in oil imports.

- The trade deficit in December 2021 is at **USD 21.99 billion**.

28. Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh has recently launched the Web Portal for **PM's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration** for 2021-22.

- The total number of Awards will be **18**.

- The prize money for the award is **Rs. 20 lakh** (earlier it was Rs.10 lakh)

29. The Smart Cities Mission, Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has recently launched the “**Smart cities and Academia Towards Action & Research (SAAR)**” program.
- It is a joint initiative of MoHUA, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and leading Indian academic institutions of the country.
 - Under the program, 15 premier architecture & planning institutes of the country will be working with Smart Cities to document landmark projects undertaken by the Smart Cities Mission.
 - The first activity envisaged under SAAR is to prepare a compendium of 75 landmark urban projects distributed across 47 smart cities.
30. The **Ministry of Culture** has partnered with the **Common Services Centres (CSC)**, a special purpose vehicle under the Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY), to undertake the first-ever cultural survey of **India's villages**.
- The survey titled '**Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar**' seeks to document the cultural identity at the village level by involving citizens to share what makes their village, block, or district unique.

STATES AFFAIRS

31. The Chairperson of the Supreme Court's e-Committee, Justice D Y Chandrachud has recently inaugurated the e-filing module of the Kerala High Court. With this, **Kerala High Court** has become the first paperless court in the country.
- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has inaugurated the paperless court initiative and Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court Justice S Manikumar has inaugurated the e-office initiative.
32. **Ganjam district** of Odisha has recently declared itself a **child marriage free district**. The district administration has been able to stop as many as 450 child marriages and video-record 48,383 marriages in two years (2020 and 2021). The district administration launched **Nirbhaya Kadhi**, an innovative awareness campaign for the empowerment of adolescents and to prevent child marriage, in September 2019.
33. **Himachal Pradesh** Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has launched the **UNNATI portal** and the mobile app of HP State Industrial Development Corporation (HPSIDC). This portal will give users the ability to work in collaboration with others and focus on individual projects.

34. The state government of **Jharkhand** has recently collaborated with the Indian School of Business (ISB) for a unique initiative to empower the state's forest economy. The Department of Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste, Minority, and Backward Class Welfare along with the Department of Forests, Jharkhand, has signed an MoU with the Bharti Institute of Public Policy at the Indian School of Business to develop scalable and sustainable solutions focusing on forest-based industrial value chains.

35. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently (Jan 2022) visited **Manipur** and has inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of **22 projects** worth over **Rs.4,800 crore** in Imphal, Manipur.

Key projects:

- He has laid the foundation stone of the construction of five National Highway Projects with a cumulative length of more than 110 kilometres.
- He has inaugurated the **Steel Bridge** built over **Barak River** on NH-37 at a cost of over Rs.75 crore. The bridge is expected to enhance year-round connectivity to Silchar from Imphal and reduce traffic congestion.
- He has also dedicated 2,387 mobile towers built at a cost of around Rs.1, 100 crores.

36. **Pondicherry** has been selected by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to host the **25th National Youth Festival**. The festival is going to be held in Pondicherry from 12th to 16th January 2022. The festival has been organised as part of the Azadi ki Amrit Mahotsav marking the 75th year of Independence.

37. **Himachal Pradesh** has become the first LPG-enabled and smoke-free state in the country. This milestone has been achieved due to the Ujjwala Scheme and Grahini Suvidha Yojana by Centre.

- The Ujjwala scheme was introduced by the government to get rid of the smoke. The Grahini Suvidha Scheme was introduced to assist the women of rural areas.

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

38. The EAST- Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak, which is also known as **the Chinese Artificial Sun** has achieved continuous high-temperature plasma operation for

1056 seconds at a stunning 70 million degree Celsius. This sets a new world record for the longest time of operation of its kind in the world.

- 39. China** has announced a five-year roadmap to achieve its goal of becoming a **global robotics innovation** hub by the year **2025**. China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology has revealed that operating income from the country's robotics industry is expected to grow by around 20% per year between 2021 and 2025.
- 40. IHU or B.1.640.2** is another variant of COVID-19 inducing coronavirus. It was first discovered in **France**. It has **46 mutations** (more than Omicron) and 37 deletions resulting in 30 amino acid substitutions and 12 deletions. Fourteen amino acid substitutions, including N501Y and E484K, and 9 deletions are located in the spike protein.
- 41.** The president of **Somalia** Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo has suspended the powers of prime minister **Mohammed Hussein Roble** over allegations of corruption, misuse of public land, and trade allegations over holding up of parliamentary elections.
- 42. Sudan's Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok** has recently resigned amid political deadlock and widespread protests following a military coup that derailed the country's fragile transition to democracy.
- 43.** The Government of **Antigua and Barbuda** has recently joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA) as the **102nd member** by signing the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement, the India-led global green energy initiative.
- 44. Maria Elisa Quinteros** has been appointed as the new President of the **Chilean constitutional assembly**. She will replace Indigenous Mapuche professor and activist Elisa Loncon.
- 45.** The world's longest Metro Line has been opened in **Shanghai, China**. The city opened two new metro lines – Line 14 and Phase One of Line 18. With this, the total length of the metro network in Shanghai has extended to **831 km**. It continues to be the longest network across the world.
- 46. Russia** has successfully test-fired new '**Tsirkon**' (Zircon) hypersonic cruise missiles from a frigate and two more from a submarine.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

1. Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) programme:

Ministry of Power has recently completed **7 years** of distributing and selling LED lights under its flagship **Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) programme**.

Achievements:

- More than 36 crore 70 lakh LEDs have been distributed across the country so far.
- Over 47 thousand Million Kilowatt-hour per annum energy has been saved.
- 9,565 megawatts of peak demand has been avoided.
- There has been a substantial reduction in carbon dioxide emissions.
- Domestic manufacturing of LED bulbs has increased from 1 lakh per month to 4 crore per month.

Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA):

- It is a zero-subsidy scheme.
- It was launched on **5th January 2015**.
- It is implemented by the **Ministry of Power**.
- It is touted as the **world's largest domestic lighting project**.
- It is also known as the LED-based Domestic Efficient Lighting Programme (DELP).
- It aims to promote the efficient usage of energy for all i.e., its consumption, savings and lighting.
- Every domestic household having a metered connection from their respective Electricity Distribution Company is eligible to get the LED bulbs under the Scheme.

2. PM Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN):

- It is a **Centrally-Sponsored Scheme** that aims to enhance the nutrition levels of school children.
- It is a revamped version of **Mid-Day Meal scheme**. It was launched by the central government in 1995 to provide free cooked meals to children in primary schools (classes 1-5; age 6–10 years).
- It comes under the **Ministry of Education**.
- **Eligibility** - All school going students of **classes I to VIII** studying in government and government-aided schools are eligible to avail the benefits.
- **Duration** - For a period of five years (2021-22 to 2025-26)
- The total budget of the scheme will amount to Rs. 1, 30,794.90 crore.
- The concept of TithiBhojan (community participation programme in which people provide special food to children on special occasions) will be encouraged extensively.
- Government is also promoting the development of Nutrition Gardens in schools.
- Social Audit of the scheme is made mandatory in all the districts.

3. Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN):

- It was launched in **February 2019**.
- It is implemented by the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**.
- It is a **Central Sector Scheme** with 100% funding from the Government of India.
- It provides financial benefits of **Rs. 6, 000 per year**, in three equal instalments, directly into the bank accounts of all landholding farmers irrespective of the size of their land holdings.

4. Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM):

- The announcement for the launch of SBM was made by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 15th August 2014, with the Mission being formally launched on **2nd October 2014**.

- The objectives of the Mission were-Eradication of open defecation in all statutory towns; 100% scientific management of municipal solid waste in all statutory towns; and effecting behaviour change through Jan Andolan.
- SBM is being implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and by the Ministry of Jal Shakti for urban and rural areas, respectively.

Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban 2.0:

The Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban 2.0 (**SBM-U 2.0**) was launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on **1st October 2021**.

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved the continuation of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) till **2025-26**, with focus on sustainability of **Open Defecation Free (ODF)** outcomes, achieving scientific processing of Solid Waste in all cities, and managing Wastewater in cities with less than 1 lakh population in Census 2011.

Financial Outlay under SBM-Urban 2.0:

A financial outlay of **₹ 1, 41,600** crores has been finalized for SBM-U 2.0, including the central share of ₹ 36,465 for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26 which is over 2.5 times the financial outlay of ₹ 62,009 crores in the last phase of the Mission.

Fund sharing ratio between Centre and States is as follows:	
Cities with a million-plus population	25:75
Cities with a population between 1-10 lakhs	33:67
Cities with less than one lakh population	50:50
Union territories without legislature	100:0
Union territories with legislature	80:20

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

- 47.** IT company Tech Mahindra has acquired **100% stake** in Activus Connect, which provides work-at-home customer experience management solutions, for \$62 million (about ₹466 crore).
- 48.** **Reliance New Energy Solar Ltd (RNE SL)** has recently signed a definitive agreement to acquire UK-based sodium-ion battery technology company Faradion for an enterprise value of **GBP 100 million**. RNE SL will acquire **100%** shareholding in Faradion Limited.
- 49.** According to the recent data released by the **Controller General of Accounts (CGA)**, the central government's fiscal deficit from April to November 2021 has decreased to **46.2%** of the full-year target, boosted by a rise in tax collections. It was **135.1%** in **November 2020**.
- The fiscal deficit for the April-November 2021 touched **Rs.6.96 trillion**, remaining at a much lower level than the previous year.

- The total receipts of the govt. stood at **Rs.13.79 trillion** or 69.8% of the budget estimates.
- The total expenditure of the govt. stood at **Rs.20.74 trillion**, or 59.6% of the full-year target.

50. Apple has recently become the first company to reach a market cap of **\$ 3 trillion**. On the first day of trading in 2022 (January 2022), the company's shares hit an intraday record high of USD 182.88.

51. The State-owned Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd (PGCIL) has recently celebrated the **first anniversary of One Nation-One Grid-One Frequency** by organizing a number of events. 70 Sub-stations across India along with Regional Headquarters have been lit up in tricolour to mark this momentous achievement.

- The state-run Power System Operation Corp Ltd (Posoco) oversees the country's critical electricity load management functions through the National Load Dispatch Centre (NLDC) and a set of regional load dispatch centres (RLDCs) and state load despatch centres (SLDCs).
- India has **33 SLDCs, five RLDCs**--for the five regional grids that form the national grid--and one NLDC.

52. Hughes Communications India Pvt Ltd (HCIPL), a majority-owned subsidiary of Hughes Network Systems LLC, and **Bharti Airtel** have announced the creation of a joint venture to provide satellite broadband services in India.

- HCIPL will hold a **67% stake** in the joint venture, while Airtel will hold a **33%**.

53. To help its customers, **Reliance Jio** has partnered with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to introduce UPI Autopay. Under this partnership, the telecom operator has launched autopay facilities for all prepaid and postpaid users, which makes Reliance Jio the **first player** to offer a unique e-mandate feature.

54. Reliance Retail Ventures Limited (RRVL), a retail arm of Reliance Industries, has recently acquired a **25.8% stake** in Bengaluru-based online delivery platform **Dunzo**, with an investment of \$200 million (around ₹1,488 crore).

55. State-owned power generation company **NTPC Limited** has planned to acquire a **5% equity stake** in **Power Exchange of India Ltd (PXIL)**. The government intends to expand the share of the spot power market in total electricity supply in the country to 25 per cent by 2023-24.

- 56. Industrial Promotion and Investment Corporation of Odisha (IPICOL) and GAIL (India) Limited** has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation in the areas of green hydrogen, green ammonia and renewable energy (solar/wind) for the production of eco-friendly fuels in Odisha.

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BANKING & FINANCE

- 57.** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the authorisation certificates of **Muthoot Vehicle and Asset Finance Ltd** and **Eko India Financial Services Private Ltd** for non-compliance with regulatory requirements. Now, these companies cannot transact the business of issuance and operation of prepaid payment instruments.
- 58.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently appointed **Deepak Kumar**, Chief General Manager, Department of Information Technology of the RBI, and **Ajay Kumar Choudhary**, Chief General Manager-in-Charge, Department of Supervision, RBI, as the new **Executive Directors of RBI** with effect from **3rd January 2022**.
- 59.** The Union Government has recently approved the issuance of the 19th installment of electoral bonds before the assembly elections in 5 states namely, **Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Goa**. The sale of electoral bonds will be open from January 1 to 10, 2022. **State Bank of India (SBI)** has been authorized to issue and encash the bonds through its 29 Authorized Branches.
- 60.** **Axis Bank** has launched a pre-qualified program for personal loans in partnership with **Paisabazaar**, a PolicyBazaar.com venture. The program involves deep technology and analytics collaboration with banks and non-bank financiers, which enables select customers to view customized and pre-qualified lending offers.
- 61.** NPCI **Bharat BillPay Limited (NBBL)** has launched a **Unified Presentment Management System (UPMS)** to enable users to set up standing instructions on their recurring bill payments across all channels and modes of digital payments. Under the system, bills will be

automatically fetched from the billers and presented to customers to take action in terms of auto-debit and bill payment management.

62. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has recently re-constituted 20-members **Advisory Committee on Market Data** that recommends policy measures pertaining to areas like securities market data access and privacy. The committee will now be chaired by **S Sahoo**, Professor at National Law University, Delhi, and former chairperson, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI).

- It was earlier headed by **Madhabi Puri Buch**, ex-whole time member of SEBI.
- The scope of the work of the committee includes identifying segment-wise data perimeters, data needs and gaps, recommending data privacy and data access regulations applicable to market data. It is responsible for recommending appropriate policy for access to securities market data.

63. **Syntizen**, a Digital Identity Solutions provider, has recently partnered with the **Odisha government** to provide a Video KYC solution to help them offer life certificates to pensioners. This AI-powered solution seeks to provide an amicable remedy to the issues faced by many pensioners every year.

- Odisha has become the **first State in the country** to deploy a digital process which includes Aadhaar Validation for smoothening the process of obtaining a life certificate.

64. The **Jammu and Kashmir** government has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with hypermarket and retail giant LuLu Group to set up a food processing and logistics hub in Srinagar.

- The world-famous GI tagged saffron of Jammu and Kashmir was launched at LuLu Hypermarket.

65. **Azure Power** has recently commissioned a **600 MW** Interstate Transmission System (ISTS) connected solar project, allocated by Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), in **Bikaner, Rajasthan**. This is the largest solar power project in India, owned and operated at a single location by any developer.

- Now, Azure Power has 2,510 MW of high-performing operational solar assets across India.

66. Kerala-based lender **South Indian Bank (SIB)** has won the UiPath Automation Excellence Awards 2021 for best automation under crisis for business continuity. The bank has been awarded for tackling a situation, strategically using Robotic Process Automation.

67. Alphabet Inc-owned, **Google** has recently acquired Israeli cybersecurity startup **Siemplify**, in a deal worth **\$500 million**. This acquisition will expand the U.S. tech giant's security offerings in the country amid rising cyber-attacks. Siemplify will be integrated into Google Cloud's Chronicle operation.
68. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently (January 2022) released a **framework for small value offline transactions** in digital mode using any channel or means such as cards, wallets or mobile devices, but they will be done in close proximity, or only in face-to-face mode, the framework prescribed.
- The upper limit for offline payment transactions will be **Rs 200**.
 - The total limit for offline transactions on any payment instrument will be **Rs 2,000** at any point in time.
 - Such transactions would not require an Additional factor of Authentication.
 - Authorized Payment System Operators (PSOs) and Payment System Participants (PSPs) banks, as well as non-banks who wish to offer payments in offline mode, will have to comply with the requirements under the framework.
69. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has decided to acquire around **10% stake** in India International Clearing Corporation (IICC). SBI has decided to complete up to a 9.95% stake, subject to a maximum investment of Rs 34.03 crore, by March 2022, in IICC.
- IICC is the first international clearing corporation set up at GIFT-IFSC that acts as a central counterparty providing clearing and settlement and risk management services.
70. SBI Cards and Payment Services Ltd has recently partnered with **Paytm** to enable cardholders to tokenise their cards on devices and make payments through the latter.
- Tokenisation is the process of replacing credit or debit card details with a unique set of characters – or a 'token' – that enables payments to be processed without exposing any sensitive account details that could potentially breach the security and privacy of the consumers. It generates **16 random characters**, also called as 'token', to replace the original credit card number.
71. The **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)** of India has recently launched '**Digi Zone**' as part of its effort to enhance its digital footprint. Customers can use LIC's Digi Zone to buy policies online, pay the premium, and avail of other services.

72. Nippon Life India Asset Management Limited (NAM India), the asset manager of Nippon India Mutual Fund (NIMF), has launched India's first auto exchange-traded fund named **Nippon India Nifty Auto ETF**.

- The New Fund Offer (NFO) will open on 5 January 2022 and close on 14 January 2022 and the minimum investment amount required is ₹1,000. Investors can add in multiples of Re 1 thereafter.
- It will provide a simple and low-cost (in terms of total expense ratio) portfolio building block to participate in the auto sector.

73. Fino Payments Bank has recently received the Reserve Bank of India's approval for commencing international remittance business under the Money Transfer Service Scheme (MTSS). It will enable the customers of Fino Payments Bank to receive money sent from foreign countries.

74. The Reserve Bank of India has retained **State Bank of India, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank** as **Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) 2022** and therefore will have to maintain additional common equity tier 1 (CET1) capital ratios in the same manner prescribed in 2020. For SBI, the additional CET1 requirement is maintained at 0.6% of the bank's risk weighted assets, while for HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank, the requirement is kept at 0.2%.

- SBI and ICICI Bank were first named as D-SIBs in 2015 and 2016 respectively. HDFC Bank was also classified as a D-SIB, along with the two others, based on the data on 31st March 2017.

75. Airtel Payments Bank has announced that it has been granted the status of a **scheduled bank** by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). It can now apply for government-issued requests for proposals (RFPs) and primary auctions. In addition to this, it can also take up central and state government-level businesses and also participate in government-operated welfare schemes.

- With this, it becomes the **4th payment bank** to get this status.

76. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has introduced the market making scheme to promote retail participation in **government securities** by providing prices/quotes to **Retail Direct Gilt (RDG) Account holders** enabling them to buy and sell securities under the **RBI Retail Direct Scheme**.

- To provide liquidity in the secondary market, a market making arrangement, wherein the primary dealers shall be present on the NDS-OM platform (odd-lot and Request for Quotes segments) throughout market hours and respond to buy/sell requests from Retail Direct Gilt Account Holders (RDGAHs) has been notified.

- According to the market making scheme, primary dealers will rely on the **Know Your Customer** (KYC) verification of the RDG account holders done under the retail direct scheme.
- No further KYC verification is required for transacting with RDG account holders on the **RFQ** segment of **NDS-OM**.

- 77.** The Reserve Bank of India has recently released the eligibility criteria for entities to be categorised as '**Specified User**' of **Credit Information Companies (CICs)**. The eligible criteria are issued under clause (j) of Regulation 3 of the CICs (Amendment) Regulations, 2021.
- 78. SBI General Insurance** has recently launched an awareness campaign named "**Bahane Chhodo Tax Bachao**" to increase awareness of Indians around the need to buy health insurance to save tax. The campaign is in a quirky Vox Pop format featuring anchor Rudraksh Singh aka Rudy.
- 79.** The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has identified Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC), and New India Assurance as **domestic systemically important insurers (D-SIIs)** for 2021-22.
- **D-SIIs:** It refers to insurers of such size, market importance, and domestic and global inter connectedness, whose distress or failure would cause significant dislocation in the domestic financial system.

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AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- 80.** India's top numerologists **JC Chaudhry** has won the **first Guinness World Record in Numerology** and the first world record of 2022 by educating about ancient science to around 6000 participants, enthusiasts of numerology joined from USA, UK, Middle East, and India.
- 81.** The All India Co-ordinated Research Project (AICRP) on poultry breeding, Mannuthy, under the **Kerala Veterinary and Animal Science University (KVASU)**, has won the National Breed Conservation Award for 2021. The centre has received the prestigious award from

ICAR – The National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR) for the conservation and research activities on the Tellicherry breed, the only registered native chicken breed from the State.

82. Chief Justice of India N V Ramana has virtually presented the RedInk Awards for Excellence in Indian Journalism.

- Reuters' photojournalist **Danish Siddiqui** has been posthumously awarded as the '**Journalist of the Year**' for 2020 by the Mumbai Press Club for his spectrum of the investigative and impactful body of news photography ranging from the Rohingyas and anti-CAA protests to Covid-19 and the Afghanistan Civil War. He was the recipient of the *Pulitzer Prize in 2018 for Feature Photography* for his work documenting the Rohingya refugee crisis.
- Senior journalist and author, **Prem Shankar Jha**, has been honoured with the '**Lifetime Achievement Award**' for his long and distinguished career of incisive and analytical writing.

83. **Zishaan A Latif** has won the **Ramnath Goenka Award** in the **Photo Journalism category**. He has won the award for his photo essay, the arduous struggle for inclusion in the National Register of Citizens (NRC), which was published in The Caravan in October 2019. The award is administered by the Ramnath Goenka Memorial Foundation.

84. **Bank of Baroda** has recently appointed Indian women's cricketer **Shafali Verma** as the brand endorser of the bank.

- Shafali Verma hails from Haryana.
- In 2021, she became the first women cricketer to hit 3 sixes in test match.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

85. A new book titled '**Mamata: Beyond 2021**' has been authored by political journalist **Jayanta Ghosal**. It has been translated by **Arunava Sinha**. The book is published by HarperCollins India. The book examines why the BJP lost the 2021 West Bengal Election.

86. **Dhirendra K. Jha**, a Delhi-based journalist, has authored a new book titled '**Gandhi's Assassin: The Making of Nathuram Godse and His Idea of India**'. The book is published by Vintage Books.

PERSON IN NEWS

87. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has recently approved the appointment of **Vinay Kumar Tripathi**, General Manager, North Eastern Railway to the post of Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of **Railway Board**.
88. Director-General **Virender Singh Pathania** has been appointed as the 24th Chief of the Indian Coast Guard. He has succeeded Krishnaswamy Natarajan.
89. **Baldev Prakash** has been appointed as the Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO) of Jammu & Kashmir Bank for three years. His appointment will be effective from the date of taking charge or 10th April 2022, whichever is earlier.
- Whereas, **R K Chhibber** has been appointed as an additional director on the board of the bank.
90. Indian-origin British Sikh Army officer and physiotherapist **Captain Harpreet Chandi**, popularly known as Polar Preet, has become the first woman of colour to finish a solo unsupported walk to the South Pole.
91. **G Asok Kumar** has been appointed as the new Director-General of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) under the Ministry of Jal Shakti. He has succeeded **Rajiv Ranjan Mishra**.
92. **Alka Mittal** has been appointed as the interim Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)**. She is the first woman to head the country's largest oil and gas producer.
- She will hold the position as the CMD for 6 months or until a regular appointment for the post is announced.
93. **Vinod Kannan** has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of **Vistara Airlines**. He has succeeded Leslie Thng who was the CEO from July 2017 to December 2021.
- Vistara Airlines is a 51:49 joint venture between Tata Sons Private Limited and Singapore Airlines.
94. Indian-origin American diplomat **Atul Keshap** has been appointed as the President of the U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) by the US Chambers of Commerce. His term is effective from 5th January 2022. He has succeeded Nisha Desai Biswal.

95. The Central government has recently reappointed **Vijay Paul Sharma** as the chairman of Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) after he resigned in May 2021 completing his 5-year term (2016-2021).
96. **TS Tirumurti**, India's permanent representative to the United Nations, has been named the new Chair of the **UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) for 2022**.
- **Note:** India has assumed the chairmanship of the United Nations Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (UNSC-CTC) for one year, beginning from 1st January 2022.

OBITUARIES

97. Former Indian Navy admiral **Sree Harilal Sarma** (SH Sarma), who served as a Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet during the historic Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 which resulted in the creation of Bangladesh, has passed away recently in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. He published his autobiography titled '**My Years at Sea**' in 2017.
98. **Richard Leakey**, a **Kenyan conservationist and paleoanthropologist**, has passed away recently. He was born on 19th December 1944 in Nairobi, Kenya. He spearheaded campaigns against the ivory trade to save the dwindling African elephant population.
99. **Bollywood film producer Vijay Galani** has passed away recently in London, England due to organ failure. He was suffering from blood cancer.
- He is known for producing Bollywood films like Salman Khan's Suryavanshi (1992), Govinda and Manisha Koirala's Achanak (1998), Akshay Kumar's Ajnabee (2001), Paresh Rawal and Mallika Sherawat's Bachke Rehna Re Baba (2005), Salman Khan's Veer (2010). His last production venture was Vidyut Jammwal and Shruti Haasan's The Power (2021).
100. **Viktor Sanyev**, who won three Olympics in triple jumps in Soviet colours, has passed away recently in Sydney, Australia. He was born in Sukhumi, Georgia.
101. Renowned social worker **Sindhutai Sapkal**, also known as '**Anathanchi Maye**' or '**Mother of orphans**', has passed away recently in Pune, Maharashtra. She was known for her work in raising hundreds of orphans, abandoned and destitute children, as well as towards rehabilitation of women. She was born on 14th November 1948 in Wardha, Maharashtra.

- 102. Shillong Chamber Choir founder and renowned pianist Neil Nongkynrih** has passed away recently in Mumbai after a brief illness. He was born on 9 July 1970 in Shillong, Meghalaya. He won the reality show India's Got Talent in 2010.

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SPORTS

- 103. Mohammed Shami** has become the **11th Indian bowler** to claim 200 wickets in Test cricket in just 55 test matches. During this process, he became the only 5th Indian pacer to bag 200 wickets in the purest format of the game. Also, Shami is the third fastest Indian pacer to reach this milestone as Kapil Dev and Javagal Srinath bagged 200 Test wickets in 50 and 54 Tests respectively.
- 104. Jasprit Bumrah** has achieved the milestone of picking **100 wickets** away from home in 22 Test matches. With this, he has become the sixth Indian pacer to reach this feat, he joined the likes of Kapil Dev, Zaheer Khan, Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami and Javagal Srinath. He made his Test debut in South Africa in 2018. He has played 25 Tests and has bagged 105 wickets.
- 105. South Africa** wicketkeeper-batsman, **Quinton de Kock** has announced his retirement from Test cricket. He made his Test debut against Australia in Port Elizabeth in 2014. In 54 matches, he has scored 3300 runs with the highest score of 141 not-out, at an average of 38.82 and strike rate of 70.93.
- 106. Nodirbek Abdusattorov**, a 17-year-old from Uzbekistan, has won the World Rapid Chess Championship 2021 after defeating Magnus Carlsen in the finals held at Warsaw, Poland. With this, he has become the youngest ever world champion in open competition.
- GM Alexandra Kosteniuk has won the Women's World Rapid Chess Championship 2021.
- 107. Ekaterina Kazionova** of Russia has won the ITF women's tennis tournament 2021 after defeating Diana Marcinkevica of Latvia in the finals held at the Ganesh Naik Complex, Mumbai.

- 108. Sri Lanka batter Bhanuka Rajapaksa** has announced his retirement from international cricket from immediate effect, due to personal reasons. He has featured in 5 ODIs and 18 T20Is for Sri Lanka.
- 109. Former Pakistan all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez**, who captained his national team in every format of the game, has announced his retirement from international cricket.
- He represented Pakistan in 392 international matches in which he scored 12,789 runs and took 253 wickets.
 - He has played 55 Tests, 218 ODIs and 119 T20Is for the country including three ICC ODI World Cups and six T20 World Cups.
- 110. Indian cricket team** under the leadership of Yash Dhull has recently won the 8th edition of **Under-19 Asia Cricket Cup 2021** after defeating Sri Lanka by nine wickets in a rain-interrupted One-Day International final held in Dubai, UAE through the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method.
- Player of the match in U-19 Asia Cup Final: **Angkrish Raghuvanshi (India)**.
 - India has won this title eight times, which includes a shared trophy in 2012.
- 111. Rashmi Kumari** of Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) has recently won the women's category title in 26th All India Federation Cup Carrom Tournament 2021 after defeating S Appoorwa in the finals held in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. It is her third Federation Cup trophy, after the earlier triumph in 2012 and 2010.

IMPORTANT DAYS

- 112. World Braille Day** is observed annually on **4th January** to recognize the right of access to braille by blind people and raise awareness of the importance of braille as a means of communication in the full realization of the human rights for blind and partially sighted people. The day was first observed in **2019**.
- The day is also observed to mark the birth anniversary of **Louis Braille**, the inventor of Braille – for people with visual disabilities. Louis Braille was born on 4th January 1809 in the town of Coupvray in northern France. The year 2022 marks the **213th birth anniversary** of him.
- 113. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Foundation Day** is celebrated every year on **6 January** to commemorate the day on which BIS came into existence as the Indian Standards Institution (ISI) on 6th January 1947. The year 2022 marks the **75th BIS Foundation day**.

- 114. Power System Operation Corporation (POSOCO) Day** is observed annually on **3rd January** to commemorate its independent functioning that began on 3rd January 2017, under Ministry of Power as one of the Power PSUs after separating from POWERGRID as its subsidiary organization. The year 2022 marks the commemoration of the 5th POSOCO Day.
- 115. World Day of War Orphans** is observed annually on **6th January** to raise awareness about children who have been orphaned due to wars. The day was initiated by the French organization, SOS Enfants en Detresses.
- **Note:** UNICEF describes an orphan as a child who is under 18 years of age who has lost one or both parents to any cause of death.

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