

PRACTICE **MOCK**



JANUARY 2022

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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**.
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.

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- 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 Sahasrabudde**
 - 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.
31. The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has recently constituted a 3-member committee to probe the serious lapse in security arrangements during Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visit to Ferozepur, Punjab.
- The three-member committee will be led by **Sudhir Kumar Saxena**, Secretary (Security), Cabinet Secretariat, and would comprise Balbir Singh, Joint Director of the Intelligence Bureau, and S Suresh, IG, Special Protection Group.

32. **Kochi** has become India's first city to have a **water metro project** after the launch of its first boat, namely '**Muziris**', among the 23- battery-powered electric boats. This project is operated by **Kochi Water Metro Rail Ltd (KWML)** while its boats are called Water Metros.
- It is a ferry transport project which provides feeder service to the suburbs.
 - The transport system is powered by LTO battery technology. LTO is *Linear Titanium Oxide* is a rechargeable battery.
 - The total cost of the project is **Rs 819 crores**. The major part of the project is financed by Indo – German Cooperation.
 - The project will reduce traffic congestions and pollution.
33. The Ministry of Railways has approved the renaming of the **Kevadiya railway station** in the **Narmada** district of Gujarat, as **Ekta Nagar railway station**. The Statue of Unity's Kevadiya railway station falls under the Vadodara division. The station code of Ekta Nagar railway station will be **EKNR**. The numerical code of the station will be **08224620**.
34. India has successfully test-fired an advanced **sea to sea** variant of **BrahMos supersonic cruise missile** from **INS Visakhapatnam** warship off the west coast. The missile hit the designated target ship precisely at the maximum range.
35. The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of the Western Railways zone of Indian Railways has launched a new initiative called "**Mission Amanat**" to make it easier for railway passengers to get back their lost luggage. This will help the passengers in tracking and getting back their lost belongings as well as ensure the safety and security of passengers and their luggage and belongings.
36. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated **Kalpana Chawla Centre for Research in Space Science and Technology (KCCRSST)** at **Chandigarh University**.
- It has been established with the objective of training students in space science and satellite development and to meet future challenges in the area of space research.
 - He has also launched Chandigarh University's Defence Scholarship Scheme, worth Rs 10 Crore, for the wards of Defence Personnel of the three services.
 - *Kalpana Chawla was the first woman of Indian origin to go to space.*
37. The Supreme Court of India has recently constituted a 5-member committee to probe the security breach during the recent visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Punjab. The committee will be headed by former apex court judge Justice **Indu Malhotra**.
- Other members of the panel include the Inspector General of the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the Director-General of Police of Chandigarh, the Registrar General of the Punjab and Haryana High Court and the Additional DGP (Security) of Punjab.
38. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently inaugurated the second campus of the **Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute (CNCI)** in Rajarhat New Town area of **Kolkata, West Bengal**. It has been built at a cost of **Rs 530 crore**.

39. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry have recently organized a week-long virtual innovation celebration called ‘**Startup India Innovation Week**’ to showcase the spread and depth of entrepreneurship across India.
- It has been organized from **10th January to 16th January 2022**.
 - It aims to commemorate the 75th year of India’s independence ‘*Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*’.
40. Indian Naval Ships **Kadmatt and Shivalik** has recently participated in a Maritime Partnership Exercise with Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force Ships Uruga and Hirado in the Bay of Bengal on 13th January 2022. The maritime exercise included a wide range of operations including flying operations, tactical maneuvers and replenishment approaches.
41. The Department of Fisheries, Government of India in association with Startup India, Ministry of Commerce and Industry has inaugurated the “**Fisheries Startup Grand Challenge**” on 13th January 2022. The challenge has been launched with an objective to provide a platform to start-ups within the country to showcase their innovative solutions within the Fisheries and Aquaculture sector.
42. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully conducted the qualification test of Cryogenic Engine for the **Human Space Programme –Gaganyaan** programme for a duration of 720 seconds at ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), **Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu**.
- According to the space agency, the performance of the engine met the test objectives and the engine parameters were closely matching with the predictions during the entire duration of the test.
43. Minister of State for Education, **Subhas Sarkar**, has recently launched the **Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar (SVP) 2021 – 2022** to promote sustainable practices of improved Water, Sanitation & Hygiene across schools. The schools will be assessed by an online portal & mobile app across **6 sub-categories**- Water, Hand Washing with soap, Sanitation, Operation & Maintenance, Capacity Building and Behaviour Change, and COVID-19 Preparedness and Response.
- The Ministry has increased the award money this year from Rs. 50,000 to **Rs. 60,000** per school.
 - The award was first instituted in 2016-17 by the Department of School Education & Literacy.
44. Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has flagged off India's first **multi-dimensional adventure sports expedition** in **France**. It has been conducted by the National Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports (NIMAS).
- The expedition was organised as part of ‘*Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*’.
 - It was conducted in November 2021 and the team was led by Director NIMAS Colonel Sarfaraz Singh, comprising 12 people – eight Army personnel and four youths of Arunachal Pradesh.
 - It included activities like **250 kilometres of winter trekking in the Alps Mountain Ranges**, cycling from Alps Mountain Ranges to English Channel near Dunkirk via France, Switzerland and Belgium and also scuba diving in Mediterranean Sea.
45. **The Election Commission of India (ECI)** has recently raised the expenditure limit for candidates in Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies, due to the rise in inflation. The new limits will be applicable in all upcoming elections in the country.
- Parliamentary constituencies poll expenditure ceiling:**

- The ceiling on parliamentary poll expenditure has been raised from 70 lakh to **95 lakh rupees** in bigger states and 54 lakh to **75 lakhs** in smaller states.
 - The bigger states include Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Karnataka.
 - The smaller states include Goa, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and UTs.
 - The ceiling on poll expenditure in UT of **Jammu and Kashmir** has been raised to **95 lakhs**.
46. Union Minister of Science and Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh has recently inaugurated the **24th National Conference on e-Governance in Hyderabad, Telangana**.
- The theme of the two-day Conference is **‘India’s Techade: Digital Governance in a Post Pandemic World’**.
 - The conference has been organized by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) and the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), in association with the State Government of Telangana.

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47. Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) Chairman, **Vinai Kumar Saxena** has launched the country’s first **Mobile Honey Processing Van** at **Village Sirora in Ghaziabad**.
- It has been designed in-house by KVIC at its Multi-disciplinary Training Centre, Panjokehra, at a cost of **Rs 15 lakh**.
 - This mobile honey processing unit can process up to 300 KG of honey in 8 hours.
 - The van is also equipped with a testing laboratory, that would instantly examine the quality of honey
48. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully flight tested the final deliverable configuration of the **Man-Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM)** at a range in Southern India.
49. Union Minister of Science & Technology Dr Jitendra Singh has recently launched an **Artificial Intelligence (AI) driven Start-Up** by IIT alumni for **water purification** through innovative technology. It has been started to provide clean drinking water at a low cost against the market price.
- The Technology Development Board (a statutory body of Science & Technology department) has also signed a MoU with Swajal Water Private Limited which is a tech Start Up Company founded by ex-IITians.
 - *India has set an ambitious target of providing **clean drinking water to all** by 2024.*
50. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently inaugurated an **MSME Technology Centre** at **Pondicherry** on the occasion of National Youth Day (12th January).
- It is set up with an investment of about **Rs. 122 crore** and is spread across 10 acres
 - It will train 20,000 youth, support 2000 MSMEs and incubate 200 Start Ups.
 - It will function under the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME).

51. Union Minister of State for Science & Technology, Jitendra Singh has launched a first-of-its-kind Mobile Covid testing facility, **Mobile Diagnostic Laboratory (I-LAB)**, capable of performing both Reverse Transcriptase-Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) & Enzyme-linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA) for North-East region.
- The mobile facility is first launched in **Mizoram** in the virtual presence of Mizoram Chief Minister Pu Zoramthanga.
 - The lab has been developed by the **AMTZ (Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone)** with support from the **Department of Biotechnology (DBT)** under the Ministry of Science & Technology.
 - It can also be utilised for testing other infectious diseases like TB, HIV, etc.
52. Indian Armed Forces has recently selected **Swedish defence company Saab** for the supply of single-shot anti-armour weapon **AT4**. AT4 will be used by the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force.
- AT4-**
- AT4 will be operated by a single soldier.
 - The AT4 systems are combat-proven across the world.
 - They are lightweight, single-shot, and fully disposable.
 - It weighs around 9 kg and has an effective range of 200m.
53. The Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently approved the infusion of **Rs 1,500 crore** in the **Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA)**. This will enable IREDA to lend Rs 12,000 crore to the renewable energy sector and will help IREDA to create renewable energy capacity of 3,500 to 4,000 MW.
- IREDA is a mini ratna company under the *Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)*.
 - It was set up in **1987** as a specialised non-banking finance agency for the renewable energy sector.
54. Minister of State for Culture, **Meenakashi Lekhi** has launched the ‘**North East on Wheels Expedition**’ in New Delhi to promote the Culture of the North-eastern States.
- The Bike Expedition will be organized from 8th to 16th April 2022.
 - 75 Bikers participating in this expedition will be selected from all over the country and will cover about 9000 km in the North East Region in 6 groups.
 - The expedition will also promote the ‘**Dekho Apna Desh**’ initiative of the Ministry of Tourism.
55. Union Health Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya has released a **Commemorative Postal Stamp** on COVID-19 Vaccine to mark the **first anniversary** of India's National Covid-19 Vaccination program, which began on **16th January 2021**. This stamp signifies the remarkable work done by the frontline healthcare workers and scientific community across the country in protecting the people against the COVID pandemic.
- The stamp of denomination **500 paise (Rs 5)** features a health worker inoculating a senior citizen with Covaxin, a vaccine of Covid-19.
 - **Covaxin and Covishield** are India's indigenous vaccine for COVID-19.
56. Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari has recently inaugurated **Madhavbaug's (Vaidya Sane Ayurved Labs Ltd)**, Power MAP, during a virtual ceremony. It is **India's first Intelligent Chronic Disease Patients Habit Tracking System**. It integrates various medical services like pathology

labs, exercise experts, and other specialized consultants through mibPULSE, an all-in-1 health monitoring app built for patients.

- 57. National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR)**, Hyderabad has recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG), New Delhi to promote inclusive good governance, strengthening of local institutions, and effective implementation of government programmes.
- 58. Indian Army** has recently signed its first contract worth **Rs 96 crore** with **Anadron Systems Pvt Ltd** under Make-II for Maneuverable Expendable Aerial Target.
- 59.** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has recently initiated a new project called the **Digital Government Mission** to speed up citizen services delivery through the help of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML). The reason behind this project is to offer government services to citizens without them having to apply or wait for it.
- 60.** The International Co-Operative Alliance Asia And Pacific (ICAAP) and National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) have released a policy recommendation handbook on **SAHAKAR PRAGYA Good Practices for Cooperatives**.
- The handbook has been developed by Laxmanrao Inamdar National Academy for Cooperative Research and Development (LINAC) of NCDC.
 - The Handbook is a compendium of guidelines, resources, methodologies, key learning, case studies of the best performing cooperatives in India and abroad and the outcome and impact.
- 61.** The Indian Navy's long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft **P8I** has recently participated in the multinational anti-submarine warfare exercise '**Sea Dragon-22**' that concluded at **Guam, USA**.
- The exercise is aimed to enhance interoperability among participating nations by evolving common tactics in response to emerging traditional and non-traditional security challenges in maritime domain.
 - Aircraft from six navies -- the US, India, Japan, Canada, Australia and South Korea have participated in the exercise. These aircraft included P8A, P8I, P1, CP140 Aurora and P3C Orion maritime reconnaissance aircraft.
- 62.** The Government of India has merged the flame of the **Amar Jawan Jyoti** at Delhi's India Gate with the flame at the adjoining **National War Memorial** on 21st January 2022. The ceremony was conducted by the Integrated Defence Staff chief, Air Marshal **Balabadhra Radha Krishna**.
- The decision to merge the two flames is taken keeping in mind that flame at Amar Jawan Jyoti payed homage to the **martyrs of 1971** but none of their names are present there, while names of all Indian martyrs from all the wars, including 1971 and wars before and after it are housed at the National War Memorial.
 - ❖ **Amar Jawan Jyoti:** It was inaugurated on the **Republic Day of 1972** by the then Prime Minister **Indira Gandhi**. It was lit in memory of soldiers who laid their lives during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war.
 - ❖ **National War Memorial:** It was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on **25th February 2019**. The eternal torch of this memorial burns at the heart of the Smarak Stambh, the main pillar of the memorial, inside the Amar Chakra. The names of **25,942 soldiers** have been inscribed in golden letters on granite tablets.

63. Union Minister of Commerce & Industry **Piyush Goyal** has recently addressed the **16th edition of India Digital Summit, 2022** through a video conference. It has been organized by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) under the theme "**Supercharging Startups**".
- He has also unveiled '**LEAP**' - "Leverage, Encourage, Access & Promote" as the way forward for Startups.
64. **Ministry of Defence** has recently launched an online portal named "**Raksha Pension Shikayat Nivaran Portal**" to resolve pension-related grievances of ex-servicemen (ESM) and their dependents. The portal will allow them to lodge grievances directly with the Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (DESW).
- Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh has also announced that the DESW has allotted **Rs 320 crore to Armed Forces Flag Day Fund (AFFDF)** to clear all backlog of pending applications for welfare schemes, especially education and marriage grants for widows or dependent children of ESM.
65. **Common Services Centres (CSC)** has launched the "**Yogyata**" mobile phone application to provide vocational education and skill enhancement opportunities to youth and citizens in rural areas.
- The app will leverage CSCs massive reach and penetration in the target group while providing an opportunity to access courses that add skills and educational qualifications to increase employability by offering courses like Cyber Security, CAD, and 3D printing etc.
 - It will help in providing industry-based skills to youth in rural areas.
66. The **Open Data Week** has been observed by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** from **17th January to 21st January 2022** to promote the significance of data in the current digital world.
- The Open data Week has showed the benefits of open data such as innovation, transparency and efficiency.
 - The week is divided into 2 segments.
 - During the **first segment**, the ministry has uploaded Application Programming Interface (APIs), dataset visualization and data blogs on the smart city open data portal between 17th January and 20th January.
 - During the **second segment**, Data Day has been celebrated i.e. on 21st January.
 - All the 100 smart cities of India have participated in the event.

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67. **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** has recently organised a 6-day long **26th CISO Deep Dive Training program** under Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative. The training is aimed to equip participants with better understanding of emerging cyber threat landscape, understand best practices in cyber security.
- This program has been organized from 17th January to 22nd January 2022 for Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs) and frontline IT officials from various Ministries & Departments, Government & Semi-Government organisations from Central and State Governments, PSUs, banks, among others.

- It will cover topics such as Governance Risk and Compliance and Data Privacy, Network Security, End Point Security, Application and Data Security, Cloud Security, Mobile Security, Cryptography, Cyber Security related provisions in IT Act.
- 68.** The **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)** to link vocational education and training with higher education.
- The agreement has been made to align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4.4 and National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to increase the gross enrolment ratio in higher education including vocational education to 50% by 2035.
 - The memorandum has been signed for a period of **ten years** and is subject to renewal on mutual agreement.
 - The beneficiaries of the programme include trainees attached to the National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs), Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKKs) and Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS).
 - With this partnership, a total of 32 NSTIs, more than 3,000 Government ITIs, 500 PMKKs and nearly 300 JSS will be associated with IGNOU as registration centres, examination centres and work centres for hands-on training.
 - A Project Steering Committee with representatives from both MSDE and IGNOU will monitor and review the progress of the programme.
- 69.** The Department of Food and Public Distribution under Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution with its principal agency, Food Corporation of India (FCI), has developed a roadmap for the development of **Online Storage Management (OSM)** in the country.
- **Aim:** To provide a single source of information for the food grains stored in the country for central pool through integrating State portals with the central portal.
 - It will develop an ecosystem of storage management applications across the DCP (Decentralised Procurement) States, each being capable of capturing the Minimum Storage Specifications (MSS).
 - A total of **16 States** (viz. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand and West Bengal) have reassured of their commitment to develop/implement storage management applications with Minimum Storage Specifications (MSSs) and integrate them with the central portal.
- 70.** Union Minister of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, **Bhupender Yadav** has recently represented India at the **4th Asia Ministerial Conference (AMC) on Tiger Conservation** held in a hybrid mode. The conference was organized by **Global Tiger Forum (GTF) and Malaysia**.
- The AMC has adopted the Kuala Lumpur Joint Statement which listed 14 commitments.
- 71.** Union Minister for Chemical and Fertilizers, **Mansukh Mandaviya** has virtually launched the Research Portal of the **National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER)** in New Delhi to facilitate innovation and research in the pharmaceutical sector.
- The NIPER Research portal will provide the information about the research activities of NIPER.
 - The portal will also list out the patents and publication information of NIPER.
 - It will hold the research details of all the NIPERs in one place.
 - The portal will also benefit the MSMEs largely.

72. The **2nd ASEAN Digital Ministers (ADGMIN)** meeting has been held virtually with India. The meeting has been co-chaired by India's Minister of State for Communications Devusinh Chauhan and Myanmar's Minister of Transport and Communications Admiral Tin Aung San.
- The Ministers meeting has approved the **India-ASEAN Digital Work Plan 2022**.
 - The work plan includes system for combating the use of stolen and counterfeit mobile handsets, WiFi Access network interface for nationwide public internet. It also includes capacity building and knowledge sharing in emerging areas in Information and Communication Technologies such as Internet of Things, 5G, Advanced Satellite Communication and Cyber Forensics.
73. The Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry **Som Parkash** has launched India's first virtual platform for spice exports named '**Spice Xchange India**' at a hybrid event held in Kochi, Kerala.
- It is launched by Spices Board India.
 - It is an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based 3D virtual platform aimed at connecting India's spice exporters with buyers from around the world.
74. Union home minister Amit Shah has recently launched the **District Good Governance Index (DGGI)** in **Jammu and Kashmir**, which is the first Union Territory to have such an index.
- The top 5 districts in the index are **(1) Jammu, (2) Doda, (3) Samba, (4) Pulwama and (5) Srinagar**.
 - The District Good Governance Index, which has been launched for 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir, has been prepared by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in partnership with the Union Territory's administration.
 - The District Good Governance Index (DGGI) is a framework document comprising of performance under ten governance sectors having 58 indicators with 116 data points.
75. The **Kerala Bird Atlas (KBA)**, the first-of-its-kind State-level bird atlas in India, has created solid baseline data about the distribution and abundance of bird species across all major habitats, giving an impetus to futuristic studies.
- It has been prepared based on systematic surveys held twice over 60 days a year during the wet (July to September) and dry (January to March) seasons between 2015 and 2020.
 - It accounted for nearly 3 lakh records of 361 species, including 94 very rare species, 103 rare species, 110 common species, 44 very common species, and 10 most abundant species.
 - Species count was higher during the dry season than in the wet season.
 - Species richness and evenness were higher in the northern and central districts than in the southern districts.
- It is Asia's largest bird atlas in terms of geographical extent, sampling effort and species coverage derived from the aggregation of 25,000 checklists.
76. Lok Sabha Speaker **Om Birla** has recently launched the official mobile application of the Parliament named '**Digital Sansad App**' to allow citizens to access live proceedings of the House, including the Union Budget 2022 live. The app will make the Parliament and Parliamentary proceedings accessible not only to the members but also to the public of the country.
- Through the Digital Sansad App, citizens can check what their members of Parliament are doing, what debates they are participating in and what they are saying.

- Using the app, parliamentarians can also digitally log their attendance.
- The app contains information on budget speeches **since 1947** as well as House discussions from the **12th Lok Sabha to 17th Lok Sabha**.
- The app will also help members of parliament to access services like checking personal updates viz., House bulletins, the status of their notices, etc.

77. The Indian Space & Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully test-fired the **Vikas engine** that will power the ambitious Gaganyaan mission into space. The High Thrust Vikas Engine for the Gaganyaan mission has successfully undergone a qualification test for a duration of 25 seconds at ISRO's Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri in Tamil Nadu.

The test has been conducted to check the robustness of the engine by operating beyond its nominal operating conditions.

Gaganyaan Mission:

- Gaganyaan is a mission by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- Under the Gaganyaan schedule:
 - Three flights will be sent into orbit.
 - There will be two unmanned flights and one human spaceflight.
- The Gaganyaan system module, called the Orbital Module will have three Indian astronauts, including a woman.
- It will circle Earth at a low-earth-orbit at an altitude of 300-400 km from earth for 5-7 days.
- It will be officially launched in **2023**.

78. India has recently crossed the **USD 200 million mark** of export of agricultural processed product, - **pickling cucumber**, which is globally referred as **gherkins or cornichons**, in the last financial year. With this, India has become the largest exporter of 'gherkins' in the world.

In 2020-21, India had shipped 2,23,515 Metric Tonnes of cucumber and gherkins with a value of USD 223 million.

About Gherkins:

- It is a term generally used to refer to a **savoury pickled cucumber**.
- Gherkins and commercial cucumbers belong to the same species (*Cucumis sativus*), but are from different cultivar groups.
- It is a little cucumber that's been pickled in a brine, vinegar, or other solution and left to ferment for a period of time.

79. The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change** has recently launched "**Star Rating System**" to incentivise states for quick disposal of environment clearance applications for development projects. The system provides environmental clearance in short duration.

- The star rating system provides marks to the states on a scale of seven. The states receive two marks for clearing a project in less than 80 days. One mark for clearing in 105 days. Zero for clearing more than this duration. If the state has less than 10% of projects for scrutiny, then one mark is provided and so on.
- It introduces conditions for **State Environment Impact Assessment Authorities (SEIAA)**. These conditions are based on the following:
 - Proposals waiting for more than thirty days
 - Terms of Reference proposals waiting for more than thirty days
 - Percentage of disposal of fresh terms of reference

- Environmental Clearances waiting for more than 105 days
 - Complaints reassessed
 - The system will provide star rating to the SEIAA. The rating is provided based on the performance of the authority in the past six months. The ratings are updated in the month end. The average time taken to grant the clearance has been decreased to **75 days**. Earlier it was 105 days.
 - The system says that the infrastructure projects should be approved first by the SEIAA. For this the SEIAA shall constitute committees with environmental experts and state officers. The Category A projects, that is, those that involve forest land should be cleared by the committee constituted by the centre.
- 80.** The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA), in partnership with Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and Agence Française de Development (AFD) has launched the “Swachhata Start-Up Challenge”.
- It has been launched to provide an impetus to innovative start-ups to come forward and drive catalytic transformation in the sanitation and waste management sector.
 - It is launched under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0.
 - Both **Indian and French start-ups** can participate in the challenge.
 - The participants have to find solutions in four areas. They are **zero dump (solid waste management), social inclusion, plastic waste management and transparency through digital enablement**.
 - Vilgro is an implementing partner of the challenge.

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- 81.** The Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has amended the guidelines of **Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)** to provide 40-100 per cent subsidy until **March 2023**.
- After the amendment, Farm Machinery Training & Testing Institutes, ICAR institutes, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, and State Agriculture Universities for large-scale demonstrations of this technology on farmers’ fields would be eligible for a grant of up to **100%** of the cost of an agriculture drone or **Rs.10 lakh**, whichever is less.
 - Agriculture graduates establishing Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs) would be eligible for a grant of up to **Rs.5 lakh** or **50%** of the basic cost of the drone and its attachments.
 - Existing CHCs or new ones, already or to be set up by a cooperative society of farmers, farmer producers organizations (FPOs) and rural entrepreneurs are entitled to receive **40%** subsidy or up to **Rs.4 lakh**.
- 82.** **Western Naval Command** of the Indian Navy has recently conducted a joint maritime exercise **Paschim Lehar (XPL-2022)** off the West Coast at the **Arabian Sea**. It has been organized for 20 days with an aim to enhance Inter-Service synergy among the Indian Navy, IAF, Indian Army and Coast Guard.
- 83.** The Government of India has recently launched the revamped **CGHS (Central Government Health Scheme)** website (www.cghs.gov.in) and mobile app, “**MyCGHS**”.
- Key Highlights:**

- The Website has been developed in accordance with GIGW (Guidelines for Indian Government Websites).
- These standards and guidelines make the website 3U compliant i.e., Usable, User-Centric and Universally Accessible.
- With the newly provided feature of tele-consultation, CGHS beneficiaries can seek expert advice directly through tele-consultation.

CGHS is a comprehensive health scheme to serve pensioners, employees, ex-MPs, Members of Parliament and dependent family members.

84. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) Ashwini Vaishnaw has recently released a **five-year** roadmap and vision document for the electronics sector titled “**\$300 bn Sustainable Electronics Manufacturing & Exports by 2026**”.
- It has been released in association with India Cellular & Electronics Association (ICEA).
 - It aims to increase India’s electronics export from the projected US \$15 billion in 2021-22 to **US \$120 billion** by **2026**.
 - The domestic market is expected to increase from US \$65 billion to US \$180 billion over the next 5 years.
 - Mobile manufacturing is expected to cross **US \$100 billion** annual production in 2025-26 from the current US \$30 billion. It will constitute nearly 40 percent in the target.

This roadmap is the second volume of a two-part vision document – the first of which titled “**Increasing India’s Electronics Exports and Share in GVCs**” was released in November 2021.

85. The Digital University Kerala (DUK) has recently partnered with the Centre for Materials for Electronics Technology (C-MET) in Thrissur, Kerala to establish India’s first innovation centre for graphene in **Kerala**.
- The project will receive a funding of Rs. 86.41 crore (over USD\$11.5 million) from the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
 - The chief investigators of the project are Dr. AP James of DUK and Dr. A Seema of C-MET.
 - Tata Steel Limited is set to be the industrial partner of the centre.
86. **INS Khukri**, the lead ship of the Indian Navy’s Khukri class corvettes and an indigenous surface-to-surface missile fitted vessel, has been handed over to **Diu administration** to be converted into a museum. The ship was decommissioned in December 2021 and sent to Diu, for public display in INS Khukri Memorial. It is set to be developed as a full-scale museum in memory of the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War Heroes.
- It was commissioned on **23rd August 1989** in Mumbai by the then Defence Minister Krishna Chandra Pant and Ms. Sudha Mulla, wife of late Capt. Mahendra Nath Mulla, MVC.
 - It was built by **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders, Mumbai**.

87. The Prime Minister of India **Narendra Modi** has recently hosted the **first India-Central Asia Summit** in a virtual format with the Presidents of **5 Central Asian countries** namely, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan. This first India-

Central Asia summit coincided with the **30th anniversary** of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Central Asian countries.

- During the summit, the Leaders agreed to institutionalize the Summit mechanism by deciding to hold it every **2 years**.
- They also agreed on regular meetings of Foreign Ministers, Trade Ministers, Culture Ministers and Secretaries of the Security Council to prepare the groundwork for the Summit meetings.
- An **India-Central Asia Secretariat** in **New Delhi** would be set up to support the new mechanism.
- Leaders agreed to set up a **Joint Working Groups** at senior official level on **Afghanistan** and use of **Chabahar Port**.

88. The indigenous **Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) MK III aircraft** has been formally inducted at **INS Utkrosh** by Commander-in-Chief, Andaman and Nicobar Command (CINCAN), Lieutenant General Ajai Singh at Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar to boost maritime security.

- The ALH MK III aircraft is manufactured in India by **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited**.
- It is a major variant of indigenously designed and developed Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH-DHRUV).
- It is a twin-engine, multi-role, multi-mission new generation helicopter, certified for military and civil operations.
- It is specifically suited for defence services, especially in high-altitude operations.
- Major systems of ALH MK III Helicopter include: Shakti engine, IADS with Digital Moving Map, Electronic Warfare Suite, Electro Optical pod, Counter Measure Dispensing system, Infra-Red Suppressor, Health & Usage Monitoring system, Solid State Digital Video Recorder (SSDVR), and Engine Particle Separator.

89. The Central Government has decided to convert **150 villages** into 'Villages of Excellence' in 12 States with technical assistance from the **Israel** government. Out of 150 villages, 75 villages will be taken up in the first year to commemorate the 75th year of India's Independence.

India and Israel has completed its 30 years of diplomatic relations in 2022.

90. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently launched the '**Pandit Jasraj Cultural Foundation**' virtually on the occasion of the **92nd birth anniversary** of late Indian classical vocalist Pandit Jasraj.

- Pandit Jasraj Cultural Foundation has been founded by Pandit Jasraj's son, Shaarang Dev Pandit and his daughter, Durga Jasraj.
- It has been launched with the objective of protecting, preserving, developing and promoting the National Heritage, Art & Culture of India.

*The International Astronomical Union (IAU) named an asteroid after Pandit Jasraj, formally known as 2006 VP32, as **Panditjasraj**. He was the first Indian musician to receive this honour.*

91. The Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, **Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman** presented the Economic Survey 2021-22 in Parliament.

*The central theme of this year's Economic Survey is the "**Agile approach**", implemented through India's economic response to the COVID-19 Pandemic shock.*

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92. 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.
93. **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.
94. **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.
95. 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.
96. 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.
97. **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.

98. **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.
99. The government of Haryana in collaboration with the Ministry of Civil Aviation has decided to set up **India's first Heli Hub in Gurugram, Haryana**. It will be used for services like air taxis, chartered helicopters, maintenance of the helicopters, among other things. The proposed hub will be developed on 10-20 acres of land well connected with the Dwarka Expressway and National Highway (NH) 8.
100. The government of **Jammu and Kashmir** has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UAE's pioneering financial services company, Century Financial to invest **100 million dollars** in the Union Territory. This MoU will strengthen the Hospitality & Tourism Industry in Jammu & Kashmir.
101. **National Health Mission, Assam**, in collaboration with **Piramal Swasthya** and **Cisco**, has recently launched project "**Niramay**" to demonstrate the integration of digital health technology and to strengthen the public health care delivery in Assam.
- This initiative is based on Piramal Swasthya's indigenous integrated health technology platform '**AMRIT**'- *Accessible Medical Records via Integrated Technologies*.
 - It will cover health and wellness centres, block primary health centres, and district hospitals at three local districts of Barpeta, Darrang and Baksa.
102. Karnataka's Minister for Youth Empowerment and Sports K.C. Narayana Gowda has announced that **Karnataka** will host the next Khelo India Games in **2023**. He has also announced that over 75 sports students are being trained in the State to take part in the next Olympics.
103. The 18th edition of the two days long **Kachai Lemon Festival** has recently begun in **Manipur** at the Local Ground of Kachai Village in Ukhrul district. It is organised annually to promote this unique kind of lemon fruit and to encourage the lemon farmers.
- **Theme 2022:** 'Organic Kachai Lemon for Safe Environment and Rural Transformation'
 - Kachai Lemon of Manipur has been accorded Geographical Indication (GI) registration tag and widely grown in the Kachai Village of Ukhrul district.
104. Kachai Lemon is considered to be unique as it is a rich source of ascorbic acid and famous for its juice content. It contains **51 percent ascorbic acid**, which is the highest so far available in any Citrus fruit that is grown in India. The juice content in Kachai Lemon is about **36-56 ml**.
105. The **9th** edition of the **North East Festival** has been held in **Guwahati, Assam** from 7th January to 9th January 2022. It has been inaugurated by Jagdish Mukhi, Governor of Assam. The aim is to promote and highlight the commercial and tourism potential of the North-East region.
106. The state government of **Gujarat** has recently launched the "**Student Start-ups and Innovation Policy 2.0 (SSIP-2.0)**" for the next five years. The policy aims to cover 50 lakh students across 1,000 higher education institutes and 10,000 schools of innovation and entrepreneurship. The policy also aims to give

assistance to 10,000 proof of concepts and prototypes developed by the students and to 1,000 proof of concepts developed by school children.

- 107. Telangana's Forest Minister A Indrakaran Reddy** has recently launched the first of its kind mobile app “**Urban Forest Parks**”. The app provides all the information about the parks, including entry ticket fee, special features of the park, distance from the app user, route app etc. It has been developed by PamTen Software Solutions Private Limited.
- 108.** The state government of **Assam** has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)** for dairy development.
- As per the MoU, a joint venture company will be set up for **Rs 2,000 crore** with a target of processing 10 lakh litres of milk through six new units in 7 years.
- 109.** The state government of **Uttar Pradesh** has recently declared **four villages** located near the Nepal border in the district as **revenue villages**. These four villages are Bhavanipur, Tedhia, Dhakia and Bichhia located in Mihinpurwa tehsil of the district.
- All these villages are Vantangiya villages. The Vantangiya’ community comprises people brought from Myanmar during the colonial rule to plant trees.
 - There are around 225 families in these four villages consisting of over 1,500 members.
- 110.** Karnataka Government has recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Singapore-based LNG Alliance Company to set up the State’s first LNG Terminal in **Mangaluru**, Karnataka. It will be set up in collaboration with New Mangalore Port Trust (NMPT) with an investment of **Rs. 2, 250 crores**.
- 111. Lasoong festival**, also known as Namsoong, is celebrated annually across the Indian state of **Sikkim** on the 18th day of the tenth Tibetan lunar month. It is the Sikkimese New Year. It is usually the time when the farmers rejoice and celebrate their harvest.
- It is celebrated as Sonam Lasoong by the Bhutias, and as Namsoong by the Lepchas.
 - It is also celebrated in Nepal and Bhutan.
 - During the festival of Lasoong, often dance forms depict tales from the life of Padmasambhava (or Guru Ugyen).
 - This year, the Lasoong kick starts on **3rd January 2022**.
- 112.** The Chief Minister of **Himachal Pradesh** Jai Ram Thakur has recently launched **Apna Kangra App** and Apna Kangra hamper, a product handcrafted by self-help groups, at Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh. The app aims to provide a hassle-free experience for tourists and to boost sales of local handicrafts.
- He has also inaugurated **Radhe Krishna Cow Sanctuary** at Luthan in Jawalamukhi Vidhan Sabha area of Kangra district.
- 113.** The Government of **Odisha** has recently partnered with the United Nations (UN) **World Food Programme (WFP)** to improve the food security of small and marginal farmers of India by enhancing their resilience to climate change.

- 114.** The administration of **Jammu & Kashmir** has recently declared **Jerri settlement or Jerri hamlet** in Reasi district as the **first ‘Milk Village’** of the Union Territory. The administration has also sanctioned 57 more dairy farms under the Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS) for the hamlet. The village, which houses 73 individual dairy units with 370 cows, will give the local farmers financial security.
- Under the IDDS, dairy units of five animals are provided with a 50 percent subsidy.
 - The scheme also has a provision for milking machine, bulk milk cooling unit at 50 percent subsidy (maximum Rs 5 lakh), paneer making machine, khoya making, Dahi making, cream separator, ice cream making machine, butter and ghee making machine (max subsidy Rs 3.5 lakh), milk van (maximum subsidy Rs 2 lakh), milk ATM subsidy of Rs 5 lakh.
- 115.** The state government of **Karnataka** has recently launched **India's first AVGC (animation, visual effects, gaming, and comics) Centre of Excellence** in Mahadevapura, Bangalore, Karnataka.
- Karnataka, which is the first in India to bring an AVGC policy in 2012, also became the first state to set up the first center of excellence in AVGC.
- 116.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently inaugurated the **new Circuit House** near **Somnath Temple** in **Gujarat** via video conferencing. The new facility has been built at a cost of **Rs.30 crore**. This new facility has VIP and deluxe rooms, suites, conference room, auditorium hall, etc.
- 117.** **Kumbalangi** village of Kerala has recently become **India's first sanitary-napkin-free village**. It is also India's first model tourism village situated in the Ernakulam district of Kerala.
- The achievement is part of a unique campaign underway in the Ernakulam constituency. The initiative titled **‘Avalkayi’**, meaning 'for her' is being implemented in the constituency, following a tie-up with HLL Management Academy's **‘Thingal’** scheme and Indian Oil Corporation. In this initiative, menstrual cups, a total of 5000 will be distributed to women aged 18 and above.
- 118.** **Delhi Police** has recently launched its first podcast **'Kissa Khaki Ka'** to celebrate the extraordinary services rendered by members of Delhi Police personnel cutting across all ranks. It aims to establish communication with the masses through its unheard stories of crimes, investigations, heart and humanity.
- The podcast will be narrated by well-known media educator **Vartika Nanda**, who has also been working on prison reforms through her radio program initiatives.
 - It will be available on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.
- 119.** **Haryana** and **Himachal Pradesh** governments have recently inked an agreement to build a dam at **Adi Badri** in **Yamunanagar** district, which will rejuvenate the mythical **Saraswati River**. Adi Badri, situated in Haryana near the Himachal Pradesh border, is believed to be the river's origin point.
- The dam will be built on 31.66 hectares of land in Himachal Pradesh and an amount of Rs 215.33 crore will be spent for the same.
 - The width of the dam will be 101.06 metres and height 20.5 metres.
 - It will store 224.58 hectare metres of water every year.
 - It will also get water from the Somb River that falls in the Yamuna near Adi Badri in Yamunanagar.

Adi Badri is a place in the foothills of the Shivalik range, 90 km east of Kurukshetra.

- 120.** **Himachal Pradesh** has observed its **52nd statehood day** on **25th January**, as it was formed as the 18th Indian state on the same day in 1971, with Dr. Yashwant Singh Parmar as its first Chief Minister.

- Himachal Pradesh is the northernmost state of India and shares borders with the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh to the north.
- 121.** The **Delhi** government has recently launched ‘**one-stop e-vehicle website**’ to promote electric vehicles. The website is *ev.delhi.gov.in*. The website is open for manufacturers, buyers, charging station explorers. The main features of the website are EV search, EV calculator and EV dashboard.
- 122.** The government of **Telangana** has recently launched ‘**Mana Ooru Mana Badi**’ programme to improve the existing infrastructure and the quality of education in government schools.
- It will be implemented at a cost of **Rs 7,289 crores**.
 - It will be implemented in 3 years and in the first phase, the programme will be implemented in 9,123 local body schools and government.

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- 123.** The state government of **Karnataka** has recently launched '**Brain Health Initiative**', a first-of-its-kind in the country, undertaken by the **National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS)** in association with **NITI Aayog** in the state.
- Under this program, the doctors will be trained in screening and treating mental health patients.
 - The initiative is being rolled out in Bengaluru, Kolar, and Chikkaballapur districts on a pilot basis.
- Karnataka Government has also launched ‘**Grama One**’ in 12 districts of Karnataka, which seeks to provide a host of government services under the same roof in rural areas.*
- 124.** The state government of **Andhra Pradesh** has recently approved the creation of **13 more districts** in the state for better administration and development of the areas. The process for the creation of **13 new districts** will be completed by Telugu New Year Day i.e. on 2nd April 2022. With this, the total number of districts in the state will go up to **26 districts**.
- The new names of the new 13 districts are as follows: Manyam, Alluri Sitharama Raju, Anakapalli, Kakinada, Kona Seema, Eluru, NTR district, Bapatla, Palnadu, Nandyal, Sri Satyasai, Annamayya and Sri Balaji district.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

- 125.** 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.
- 126.** **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.

- 127. 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.
- 128.** 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.
- 129. 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.
- 130.** 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.
- 131. 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.
- 132.** 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.
- 133. Russia** has successfully test-fired new '**Tsirkon**' (Zircon) hypersonic cruise missiles from a frigate and two more from a submarine.
- 134. Sri Lanka** has recently signed an agreement with **India** to jointly redevelop the strategic World War II-era **Trincomalee Oil Tank Complex** in Sri Lanka's eastern port district of Trincomalee for a lease period of **50 years**.
- Now, 85 of the 99 tanks will be under the Sri Lankan control which had previously remained under Indian control.
 - The Cabinet has also approved the proposal to allocate 24 and 14 oil tanks of Trincomalee Oil Tank Complex to Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) and the local operators of the Indian Oil Company (LIOC) respectively while remaining 61 oil tanks are to be developed under Trinco Petroleum Terminal Pvt. Ltd, with shares of CPC (51%) & LIOC (49%).
- 135.** The **Sea Dragon 22** exercise has been held at **Andersen Air Force Base, Guam** in the western Pacific. The exercise is a multinational exercise led by the **US Navy**. The countries that are participating in the exercise are **India, Australia, Canada, US, South Korea, and Japan**.

- 136.** Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has nominated **Alikhan Smailov** as the new Prime Minister of the country. He served as the first Deputy Prime Minister in the previous cabinet which Mr. Tokayev dismissed last week amid violent unrest in the oil-rich Central Asian nation.
- 137. Daniel Ortega**, leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), has been sworn in for the 4th consecutive term as the **President of Nicaragua**. He will remain in the office until January 2027.
- 138.** According to Indian poet and diplomat Abhay K., the **Madagascar epic of Ibonia** is similar to Indian epic of Ramayana in its grand plot.
- Similarities between Ibonia and Ramayana-**
- Abduction of Ibonia's betrothed wife Rampela by Ravato, is similar to abduction of Rama's wife Sita by Ravana.
 - Ibonia's fight with Rabato to get his wife Rampela back is similar to Rama's fight with Ravana to get back Sita.
 - 300 words in Malagasy language from Sanskrit.

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- 139.** Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov has recently ordered experts to find a method to extinguish a fire in the Darvaza gas crater.
- About Darvaza gas crater:**
- It is also known as the 'Gateway to Hell', it is a huge natural gas crater.
 - It is located in the **Karakum desert**, 260 kilometres away from **Turkmenistan's** capital, Ashgabat.
 - The Gas Crater has been burning for the last 50 years.
 - In 2018, the president officially renamed it to the "**Shining of Karakum**"
- 140. Mark Rutte** has recently become the Prime Minister of Netherlands for the fourth term. He was first sworn in as Prime Minister of the Netherlands on 14 October 2010.
- 141. Japan and Australia** have recently (January 2022) signed the **Reciprocal Assessment Agreement** to allow faster deployment of defence personnel to each other's facilities and ease restrictions on transporting weapons and supplies for joint training and disaster relief operations.
- 142.** Recently, the five permanent United Nations Security Council members (**China, France, Russia, the U.K. and US**) have pledged to prevent atomic weapons spreading and to avoid nuclear conflict. The pledge is made in a rare joint statement ahead of a review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) 1970.
- 143. Israel and the United States** have recently completed a successful flight test of the **Arrow-3 ballistic missile system** outside the Earth's atmosphere.

- The Arrow 3 is a U.S.-Israeli-built missile defence interceptor designed to defeat medium-range ballistic missiles.
 - The Arrow system is partly financed by the United States.
 - It was developed and produced by Israeli Aerospace Industries in partnership with Boeing.
- 144.** India has recently offered a new Line of Credit (LOC) of **USD 500 million** to Sri Lanka for the purchase of **petroleum products** as the country is struggling with fuel and energy crisis.
- 145. Denmark** has signed an agreement with **India** to initiate joint research and development on **green fuels** including green hydrogen during the Joint Science and Technology Committee meeting held virtually.
- 146.** The Oxford University Press (OUP) has recently declared '**Anxiety**' as the Children's Word of the Year 2021, based on their recent research. Apart from "anxiety" (21%), "Challenging" (19%), "isolate" (14%), "Wellbeing" (13%) and "resilience" (12%) were the children's top five words.
- 147.** Indonesia has recently passed a law to shift its capital from **Jakarta to East Kalimantan**, and will be called '**Nusantara**' (situated to the east of Borneo Island). The plan to shift the capital was announced in 2019 by President Joko Widodo.
- Nusantara means '**archipelago**'. It represents philosophical, sociological and historical aspects.
 - Nusantara is rich in biodiversity.
 - The new capital will be located in the North Penajam Paser and Kutai Kartanegara regions.
- 148.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently addressed the **World Economic Forum's (WEF's) Davos Agenda Summit 2022** via video-conferencing.
- He has proposed the 'P-3' approach i.e. '**Pro Planet People**' that underlines India's climate change commitments at the global forum.
 - He further said that making LIFE into a mass movement can be a strong foundation for P-3.
 - LIFE i.e. '**Lifestyle for Environment**', is a vision of resilient and sustainable lifestyle that will come handy in dealing with the climate crisis and other unpredictable challenges of the future.
- 149.** The week-long digital summit has begun with a special address by Chinese President Xi Jinping.
- Davos Agenda 2022 summit:**
- It is being held digitally from 17th January to 21st January 2022, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
 - The theme of the event is "**The State of the World.**"
 - It will be the first global platform for Heads of state and government as well as CEOs and other leaders to share their visions for 2022 on critical collective challenges and how to address them.
 - The three main areas of concern at the summit are Climate Action, Pandemic Recovery, and Economic and Social Resilience.
- 150.** The **Russian** defence forces has recently unveiled a new **Tupolev Tu-160M** strategic missile-carrying bomber. It is also known as "**White Swan**". The bomber has been designed to carry nuclear war heads. It is one of the most heaviest supersonic military aircraft.

- 151.** Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and Prime Minister of Mauritius **Pravind Jugnauth** have virtually inaugurated India-assisted social housing units' projects in Mauritius and virtually laid the foundation stone for the Civil Service College and 8 MW Solar PV Farm project in Mauritius.
- MoU between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius regarding Indian Grant Assistance for Implementation of Small Development Projects.
 - Agreement for **USD 190 million** Line of Credit between **Export Import Bank of India (EXIM)** and **SBM (Mauritius)** Infrastructure Development Company Ltd for the ongoing Metro Express Project and other Infrastructure projects.
- 152.** *The Government of the Republic of **Mauritius** has also decided to name one of the major metro stations as **Mahatma Gandhi station** in order to pay gratitude to India's support for the Metro Express project.*
- 153.** The US Treasury has recently minted coins, featuring the late American author and activist **Maya Angelou**, the first black woman to appear on the **US 25-cent coin** known as a quarter. The new coin features George Washington's visage on the "heads" side, while the "tails" side honours Angelou by evoking one of her most famous works, the autobiography "**I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.**"
- 154.** India has recently granted a **USD 900 million** loan to **Sri Lanka** to build up its depleted foreign reserves and for food imports, amidst a shortage of almost all essential commodities in the island nation.
- Sri Lanka is currently experiencing a shortage of almost all essentials due to a shortage of dollars to pay for the imports.
- 155.** **Philippines** has become the first foreign country to place an order for the purchase of the **BrahMos Shore-Based cruise Missile System** for its navy. The estimated deal cost is worth **\$374.9 million**. The BrahMos Aerospace Pvt Ltd will supply the missile, under the Shore-Based Anti-Ship Missile System Acquisition Project, for Philippine Navy. This agreement will give a big boost to India's defence manufacturing system.
- 156.** The government of **United Kingdom** has launched the formal Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations with India. This negotiation is described as a 'golden opportunity' to put British businesses at the "front of the queue" of the Indian economy.
- Both countries agreed to an early harvest scheme or a limited trade agreement to lower tariffs on a small set of goods apart from easing rules for select services.
 - Further, they agreed to avoid "sensitive issues" and focus on areas where there is more complementarity.
 - Also, a target of doubling the trade between India and the United Kingdom (UK) by 2030 has also been set.
- 157.** **South Africa** has recently launched the indigenously developed first **Maritime Domain Awareness Satellite constellation (MDASat)** from Cape Canaveral in the United States (US) as part of SpaceX's Transporter-3 mission.
- 158.** **Indian Navy** and **Russian Navy** have recently participated in the **PASSEX exercise** held at the port of Cochin, in the Arabian Sea.
- The Indian Navy's indigenously designed and built guided-missile destroyer, **INS Kochi**, has participated in the exercise.

- Russian Federation Navy has been represented by RFS Admiral Tributs, Russian Naval Missile Cruiser Varyag, and Russian Tanker Boris Butoma.

159. Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard has recently launched its **first** solid-fuel satellite carrier rocket into space that is made of a cost-efficient composite material instead of metal. It is the first time Iran used a solid-fuel rocket rather than a liquid-fuel one.

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160. The 15th meeting of the BRICS Science Technology Innovation (STI) Steering Committee has decided that India will host five high level events:

- BRICS Startups Forum's
- Working Groups meeting on Energy, Biotechnology & Biomedicine
- ICT & High-Performance Computing
- Launching of BRICS innovation Launchpad as a microsite (Knowledge Hub)
- STIEP (Science, Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Partnership) Working Group Meeting

161. During the meeting, India has handed over the chairmanship to China. **China** will be the **Chair for 2022** and will host the **14th BRICS Summit** in 2022. The theme for BRICS 2022 is "**Foster High-Quality BRICS Partnership Usher in a New Era for Global Development**".

- India was the chair of the BRICS for 2021.
- The **first BRICS Sherpas meeting** of 2022 has been held virtually from 18th to 19th January 2022. Presently, **Sanjay Bhattacharya** is the BRICS Sherpa of India.

162. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the University of Oxford has released the report titled '**G20 People's Climate Vote 2021**'.

- As per the report, about **67 percent** of the population under the age of 18 years consider climate change a global emergency as compared to about **58 percent** of adults in India.
- In the age group of 18-35 years, 61 percent believe in a climate emergency while it goes down to 59 percent in the age group of 36-59 years and further reduces to 49 percent in over 60 years age group.

163. The **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** and **Institut Pasteur, France** have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a scope for cooperation in **health research**. Both will jointly research and focus on emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases and inherited disorders and enable delivery of effective and affordable healthcare solutions not only for the people of India and France but for the global good.

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- 164. China** has built an '**Artificial Moon**' research facility that is capable of simulating low-gravity conditions using magnetism.
- The research facility, located in the city of Xuzhou, is scheduled to officially launch in 2022.
 - The facility has a vacuum chamber that houses a mini 'Moon' measuring 60cm (about 2 feet) in diameter.
 - The low-gravity levels in the chamber can last for "as long as you want".
 - The facility is also expected to help determine the possibility of human settlement on the lunar surface.

Earlier, China successfully created an 'artificial Sun' which is a nuclear fusion reactor that superheated to a temperature five times hotter than the sun and for over 17 minutes.

- 165.** The country of **Peru** has recently declared a 90-day **environmental emergency** in the coastal area of Lima which has been affected by a recent oil spill that saw 6,000 barrels of crude oil pour into the sea. The spill has caused the death of marine wildlife and raised concerns around the livelihood of local fishermen and the economic consequences from the loss of tourism.
- **Environmental emergency:** It is defined as a “sudden-onset disaster or accident resulting from natural, technological or human-induced factors, or a combination of these, that causes or threatens to cause severe environmental damage as well as loss of human lives and property”.

- 166. Russia** has recently handed over the first batch of **70,000 AK-203** Kalashnikov assault rifles to the Indian Armed Forces.
- The Indian Armed Forces had placed an order for 670,000 rifles, for which the contract was signed on 6th December 2021, between India and Kalashnikov (Russian defence manufacturing unit).
 - The total cost of the contract is around **Rs 5,124 crore**.
 - The remaining 600,000 rifles will be manufactured by an Indo-Russian joint venture company, Indo-Russia Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL), based at Amethi, Uttar Pradesh India under transfer of technology (ToT).
 - The lightweight AK-203 Rifles will replace the military's in-service INSAS (Indian Small Arms System) Rifle.

- 167.** NASA Citizen Scientist **Tom Jacobs** has discovered a new exoplanet named "**TOI-2180 b**" from NASA's Transitioning Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS).
- It is a **gas giant exoplanet** made of hydrogen and helium.
 - The new exoplanet takes **261 days** to revolve around its star.
 - The planet is of the size of Jupiter.
 - The new planet is 379 light years away from the earth.
 - It is 105 times denser than the earth.

- 168.** The United States and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) member countries have partnered to conduct a 12-day maritime exercise in the Mediterranean Sea from 24th January 2022. The name of the maritime exercise is "**Neptune Strike '22**". The naval drill will end on 4th February 2022. The main purpose of this exercise is to demonstrate and test NATO's wide range of maritime capabilities.

- 169. India and Israel** have recently launched a commemorative logo to mark the **30 years of diplomatic relations**. The logo has Ashoka Chakra and Star of David. It also has the numeral 30, featuring 30th anniversary of the countries.
- India is the largest buyer of Israeli military equipment.
 - India is also the tenth largest trade partner of Israel.
 - India is the second largest defence supplier of Israel.
- 170.** The naval exercise '**CHIRU-2022**' has been jointly organized by the navies of **Russia, China, and Iran** in the **Gulf of Oman**. It is aimed at deepening practical cooperation among the navies of the three countries. The participants have practised various tactics and operations, such as rescuing ablaze vessels, saving hijacked vessels, shooting at targets, nocturnal shooting at aerial targets, and other tactical manoeuvres as a part of the drill.

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REPORTS & INDICES

- 171.** The First Advance Estimates (FAE) of National Income at both Constant (2011-12) and Current prices, for the financial year 2021-22 has been released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- Real GDP or GDP at Constant Prices (2011-12) in the year 2021-22 is estimated at **Rs.147.54 lakh crore**, as against the Provisional Estimate of GDP for the year 2020-21 of **Rs.135.13 lakh crore**.
 - The growth in real GDP during 2021-22 is estimated at **9.2 per cent** as compared to the contraction of 7.3 per cent in 2020-21.
 - Real GVA is estimated at Rs.135.22 lakh crore in 2021-22, as against Rs.124.53 lakh crore in 2020-21, showing a growth of 8.6%.
 - The growth in nominal GDP during 2021-22 is estimated at 17.6%, while nominal GVA is estimated at Rs.210.37 lakh crore in 2021-22, as against Rs.179.15 lakh crore in 2020-21.
 - The agriculture sector is estimated to see a growth of **3.9%** in FY22, higher than the 3.6% expansion recorded in the previous financial year.
- 172.** World Bank has recently released the Global Economic Prospects Report.
- Key highlights:**
- The report states that, Global economic growth will decrease sharply to **4.1% in 2022** and **3.2% in 2023**, from **5.5% in 2021**.
 - It projects India's annual growth to be **8.3%** in the fiscal year **2021-2022**, **8.7%** in **2022-23**, while **6.8%** in **2023-24**.
 - It also flagged the risks posed by rising inflation and growing inequality.
 - It noted that, after having recovered in 2021, global economy is headed towards "pronounced slowdown", because of new Covid-19 variants, increasing inflation, debt & income inequality, reducing fiscal & monetary support and decreasing demand.

173. Chennai International Airport has been ranked **8th** for on-time performance among large international airports globally for 2021 by Cirium — a provider of aviation data to the travel, finance, aerospace and aviation industries. It is the only Indian airport ranked in the top 10.

- According to the latest traffic figures of Chennai Airport, it has done recovery of 80 % in domestic traffic.
- It is the sixth busiest airport in India.

Top-3 Airports in the list:

Rank	Airports
1st	Miami Airport (United States)
2nd	Fukuoka Airport (Japan)
3rd	Haneda Airport (Japan)

174. As per the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the Consumer Price Index (CPI) based **retail inflation** has risen to **5.59%** in December 2021 due to a sharp rise in food prices. It was 4.91 percent in November 2021 and 4.59 percent in December 2020. The food inflation for the period has stood at 4.05 percent in December 2021 as compared to 1.87 per cent in November 2021.

175. Ministry of Labour and Employment has recently released July-Sept. 2021 employment figures under the **second round of the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES).**

Key highlights:

- **Nine sectors** that account for about 85% of total employment in establishments with 10 or more workers hired 2 lakh more people in **July-September 2021** compared to April-June 2021.
- The estimated total employment in the nine selected sectors is **3.10 crore** approximately, which is 2 lakh higher than the first round of QES (April 1, 2021). It was 3.08 crore in April-June 2021.
 - The report covers manufacturing, construction, trade, transport, education, health, accommodation and restaurants, IT/BPOs and financial services sectors.
 - 90% of the establishments had less than 100 workers, while 30% of the IT/BPO establishments had at least 100 workers.
- The overall percentage of female workers stood at **32.1%**, higher than 29.3% reported during the first round of QES.
- In the construction sector, 20% of the workers were contractual and 6.4% were casual workers.
- While most of the vacancies (65.8%) were for unspecified reasons, 23% were due to resignation and 11.7% due to retirement of employees.

176. The Henley & Partners has recently released the 'Henley Passport Index: Q1 2022 Global Ranking'.

Henley Passport Index: Q1 2022 Global Ranking		
Top-3		
Rank	Country	Visa-free score
1	Japan and Singapore	192
2	Germany and South Korea	190
3	Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, and Spain	189
Bottom-3		

109	Syria	29
110	Iraq	28
111	Afghanistan	26

177. According to the global rating survey released by the Morning Consult Political Intelligence, Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has topped the list of Most Popular World Leaders with an approval rating of **71 percent**. Andrés Manuel López Obrador, President of Mexico has ranked 2nd with 66% rating, followed by Mario Draghi, Prime Minister of Italy with 60% rating.

178. The **National Stock Exchange of India** has emerged as the world's largest derivatives exchange for the third consecutive year in 2021 in terms of the number of contracts traded, based on the statistics maintained by the Futures Industry Association (FIA).

- NSE is also ranked **fourth** by the number of trades in cash equities, as per the statistics maintained by the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE) for 2021.

Rank	Stock Exchange	Country	Total trading volume
1	National Stock Exchange (NSE)	India	17.26 billion
2	B3 Exchange	Brazil	8.76 billion
3	CME Group	United States	4.94 billion

NSE has also launched **Nifty India Defence index**, which aims to track the performance of portfolio of stocks that broadly represent the Defence theme.

- The base date of the Index is 2nd April 2018 and the base value is 100.

179. According to Oxfam India, “**Inequality Kills**” report, the wealth of India’s richest families reached to a record high in 2021. In the report, India was described as a ‘**very unequal**,’ country, as the top 10 people in India holds **57 percent** of the wealth. On the other hand, the share of the bottom half is **13 percent**.

- The report states that 84% of Indian households witnessed an income decline amid the covid-19 pandemic.
- The richest 98 Indians own the same wealth as the bottom 552 million people.
- The number of Indian billionaires increased from 102 to 142, during 2021.
- The wealth of the top 100 families is Rs 57.3 trillion.

180. The **Global Risks Report 2022**, an annual report, has been released by the **World Economic Forum**. It tracks global risk perceptions among risk experts and world leaders in business, government, and civil society.

- It examines risks across five categories: economic, environmental, geopolitical, societal, and technological.
- As per the report, Cyber security, pandemic, climate change and space advancements are the emerging risks to the global economy.

181. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently released the **Annual Report of the Ombudsman Schemes** for the year 2020-21, which has been prepared for the nine-month period from **1st July 2020, to 31st March 2021**, in alignment with the change in the financial year of the RBI from 'July-June' to 'April-March' with effect from 1st July 2020.

It covers the activities under the Banking Ombudsman Scheme, 2006 (BOS), the Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies, 2018 (OSNBFC), and the Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions, 2019 (OSDT).

Key highlights:

- The **Chandigarh** office of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Ombudsman Scheme has received the highest banking-related complaints, followed by Kanpur and Delhi. Most of the complaints from customers are related to ATM and debit cards, mobile and online banking, and credit cards.
- As per the report, the volume of complaints received under all the three ombudsman schemes has increased **22.27 percent** on an annualized basis and has stood at 3,03,107 during the reported period.
- The banking ombudsman scheme has accounted for **90.13 percent** of the total complaints (2,73,204) received under the three ombudsman schemes.
- The disposal rate has improved significantly to 96.67 percent during the July-March 2020-21 period, a five-year high.
- The scheme for NBFCs has seen an approx. 39% jump. The major areas of complaints were non-adherence to Fair Practices Code, non-observance to RBI directions and levy of charges without prior notice, accounting for 75.32 percent of the complaints
- Around 74% of the complaints are settled through mutual settlement or through ombudsman mediation process.

182. The United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2022 report has projected India's GDP to grow at **6.5% in FY22**, a decline from the 8.4% GDP estimate in FY21. UN has projected the growth rate for **FY23 at 5.9%**.

On a calendar year basis, UN has projected India's GDP as follows:

- 2021 – 9.0 percent
- 2022 – 6.7 percent
- 2023 – 6.1 percent

183. The **International Labour Organisation (ILO)** has recently released its report titled **“World Employment and Social Outlook”**.

Key highlights:

- As per the report, Global unemployment is projected to stand at **207 million in 2022** falling from 214 million in 2021. It is almost 21 million more than 2019.
- Total hours worked in 2022 will be about 2% below than the pre-pandemic level.
- There will be deficiency of **52 million** full-time equivalent jobs in 2022.
- Estimates suggest that the pandemic has pushed as many as 77 million children and adults into extreme poverty (living on less than \$1.90 per day in purchasing power parity) with the number of children's accounting for 50%.
- Lower middle-income countries saw the largest decline in manufacturing employment.

- 184.** The **UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** has recently published ‘**Investment Trends Monitor**’. As per the report, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows to India have decreased by **26 percent** in 2021 mainly because large Mergers & Acquisition deals recorded in 2020 were not repeated.
- Global FDI flows showed a strong rebound in 2021, growing **77 percent** to an estimated USD 1.65 trillion, from USD 929 billion in 2020. Of the total increase in global FDI flows in 2021 (USD 718 billion), more than USD 500 billion, or almost three quarters, was recorded in developed economies.
 - FDI flows in developing economies has increased by 30 percent to nearly USD 870 billion.
 - FDI flows to South Asia has decreased 24 percent to USD 54 billion in 2021 from USD 71 billion in 2020.

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- 185.** The early 2022 edition of bi-annual **Electricity Market Report** has been published by the **International Energy Agency (IEA)**. As per the report, India's annual power consumption will grow at an annual rate of **6.5%** during **2022-24**.
- India clocked the highest **10%** Y-o-Y growth in power demand during the 2021 calendar year (CY).
 - The global electricity demand rose **6%** year-on-year in 2021.
 - Nations are largely turning to fossil fuels to meet the increase in electricity demand as Covid-19 lockdown restrictions are lifting.
 - Global energy intensity fell 1.9% year-on-year – a drop only half as steep as the level needed to lay the foundation for net-zero by 2050.
 - While electricity generation from renewables was up 6% year-on-year in 2021, generation from coal was up by 9%, led by markets including China and India, with coal serving more than half of the increase in demand.

As per the report of IEA, India is expected to overtake China as the world's **third-largest ethanol consumer** after the US and Brazil by **2026** as it accelerates the transformation towards a clean energy ecosystem.

- Ethanol demand has tripled in India between 2017 and 2021.
 - India in 2021 has brought forward its 20% ethanol blending target (current blending of ethanol with petrol is 8.5%) with gasoline from 2030 to 2025 and aims to start selling 20% blends in 2023.
- 186.** The **world's largest canal lock** has been inaugurated at **Ijmuiden**, a small port city, in the Port of Amsterdam, The **Netherlands**. The sea lock has been inaugurated by Dutch King Willen-Alexander.
- It is 500-meter (1,640-feet) long and 70-meter wide.
 - It is designed to allow large, modern cargo ships to reach the port of Amsterdam.
 - With almost nine meters above the sea level, the structure is also a defence against the threat of flooding.
- 187.** As per recent findings from a study published by **The Brookings Institution**, India is among the **top 10 nations** in the world in terms of technological advancements and findings in Artificial Intelligence.
- **India** has been ranked **sixth** in terms of spending and investments on AI made by the public, governmental initiatives, as well as private institutions and organisations.

- The study highlights that India is ‘well-positioned from the funding standpoint’ apart from increasing the adoption of new generation technologies.
- India is ahead in AI from countries like Canada, South Korea and Italy but lags behind countries like the US, China, the UK, France, Japan and Germany.
- India is outside the top 10 in terms of commercial and research initiatives.
- ❖ Another study published by **McKinsey Analytics** in December 2021 highlighted that India was the leading adopter of AI among emerging economies from a commercial, business standpoint.

188. Recently, **NITI Aayog, Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), and RMI India** have released a report, titled ‘**Banking on Electric Vehicles in India**’, which outlines the importance of priority-sector recognition for retail lending in the electric mobility ecosystem.

- The report has proposed the government to include **Electric Vehicle (EVs)** in the Reserve Bank of India’s **priority-sector lending (PSL)** guidelines to boost retail lending for EVs and to support the decarbonisation of road transport.
- As per the report, Banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) in India have the potential to achieve an electric vehicle (EV) financing market size of **Rs 40,000 crore (USD 5 billion)** by **2025** and **Rs 3.7 lakh crore (USD 50 billion)** by **2030**.
- The report highlights that the RBI may consider various EV segments and use cases based on five parameters:
 - Socio-economic potential,
 - Livelihood generation potential,
 - Scalability,
 - Techno-economic viability, and
 - Stakeholder acceptability.
- The report indicates that electric two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and commercial four-wheelers are early segments to prioritise under PSL.

189. The World Economic Forum (WEF) has recently published the **Global Cyber security Outlook 2022**.
Key highlights:

- As per the report, the **ransom ware attacks** have increased by **151%** in **2021**. Each organization faced 270 cyber-attacks on an average.
- A successful organization that breached cyber-attacks spent 3.6 million USD.
- 59% of the cyber leaders believe that there is not difference between cyber resilience and cyber security.
- According to the report, the following two factors have the highest influence on cyber security
 - **Automation and machine learning:** 48%
 - **Remote and hybrid work environment:** 28%
- 42% infrastructure is broken down by cyber-attacks. 24% cyber-attacks are identity thefts. 20% cyber-attacks are ransom ware attacks. 10% of personal assets are lost.
- 55% of the organizations in the world were affected by cyber-attacks in 2021.

190. Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2021 has been released by Transparency International. The index ranks 180 countries and territories by the perceived level of public sector corruption according to experts and business people. It uses a scale of zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).

- **Top Performers:**
 - The top countries on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2021 are **Denmark, Finland and New Zealand**, with scores of 88, followed by Norway with score of 85.

- **Poor Performers:**
 - South Sudan has ranked last on the index with the CPI score of 11, followed by Syria (13), Somalia (13) and Venezuela (14).
- **India's ranking:**
 - India has ranked **85th** on the index with score of 40.
 - Maldives has also scored 40 in the index.

Note: India's rank has slipped from 80th in 2019 to 86th in 2020.

191. According to the Brand Finance 2022 Global 500 report, **Apple** has emerged as the most valuable brand in 2022 with brand valuation of **\$355.1 billion** in 2022, which is an increase of 35% from last year. This is the highest brand value ever recorded in the Brand Finance Global 500 ranking history.

- **TikTok (18th)** has been named the world's fastest-growing brand in the list. Its brand value increased from \$18.7 billion in 2021 to \$59.0 billion in 2022.
- **Tech** has remained the most valuable industry in the list in terms of sector, followed by Retail, Banking, Media and Telecoms.
- **Tata Group (78th)** has emerged as the most valuable brand from India and also in South Asia. The brand value of Tata Group is \$23.9 billion.

Top-10 Brands:

- ❖ Apple
- ❖ Amazon
- ❖ Google
- ❖ Microsoft
- ❖ Walmart
- ❖ Samsung
- ❖ Facebook
- ❖ Industrial and Commercial Bank of China
- ❖ Huawei
- ❖ Verizon

192. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has released its World Economic Outlook January 2022 assessment. As per the update, India is estimated to grow at **9%** in **FY22**, down from 9.5% projected in October 2021.

- It also projects **9%** growth for the Indian economy in **FY23** from 8.5% earlier and to **7.1%** from 6.6% for **FY24**.
- Global economic growth will dip from 5.9% in 2021 to 4.4% in 2022.

193. According to the latest report of the World Steel Association, **India's** crude steel production has increased by nearly 18 percent to **118 million tonne (MT)** in 2021, while world leader **China** has recorded a 3 percent decline to **1032.8 MT**.

- India, which is the second largest steel producing nation, had manufactured 100.3 MT steel in 2020 and China had produced 1 064.7 MT of steel in 2020.
- Total world crude steel production is **1,950.5 MT** in 2021, a 3.7 percent increase as compared to 1 880.4 MT in 2020.

194. Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav, has released the ‘**India State of Forest Report 2021**’. This report has been prepared by the Forest Survey of India (FSI).

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Key Findings of the Report:

- 1) The total forest and tree cover in India is now **8, 09,537 sq km** (24.62% of the geographical area)
- 2) Top five states in terms of increase in forest cover are **Andhra Pradesh** (647 sq km), Telangana (632 sq km), Odisha (537 sq. km), Karnataka (155 sq. km) and Jharkhand (110 sq km).
- 3) **Arunachal Pradesh** lost the maximum forest cover of 257 sq km, followed by Manipur which lost 249 sq km, Nagaland 235 sq. km, Mizoram 186 sq. km and Meghalaya 73 sq km.
- 4) Area-wise, **Madhya Pradesh** has the largest forest cover in the country followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra.
- 5) Top five states in terms of forest cover as a percentage of total geographical area are **Mizoram** (84.53%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.33%), Meghalaya (76.00%), Manipur (74.34%) and Nagaland (73.90%).

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

- 195.** 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).
- 196.** **Reliance New Energy Solar Ltd (RNESL)** has recently signed a definitive agreement to acquire UK-based sodium-ion battery technology company Faradion for an enterprise value of **GBP 100 million**. RNESL will acquire **100%** shareholding in Faradion Limited.
- 197.** 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.
- 198.** **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.

- 199.** 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.
- 200. 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%**.
- 201.** 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.
- 202. 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).
- 203.** 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.
- 204. 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.
- 205.** The **Flipkart Group**, owned by Walmart Inc, has recently acquired electronics reverse commerce (or recommerce) company **Yaantra** to strengthen its recommerce business as well as enhance after sale offerings for its customers in the smartphones segment.
- Yaantra was incorporated in 2013 by Jayant Jha, Ankit Saraf and Anmol Gupta. It is engaged in repairing and selling refurbished consumer tech products.
- 206.** The rating agency **India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra)** has recently lowered India's GDP growth forecast by **10 basis points** to **9.3%** y-o-y in **FY22**. Earlier, this estimate was 9.4%. The rapid spread of the Omicron variant is the main driver to downgrade GDP growth projections.

207. Reliance Industrial Investments and Holdings Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), has entered into an agreement to acquire the entire share capital of Columbus Centre Corporation, Cayman Islands, for an equity consideration of **\$98.15 million (Rs 735 crore)**. Columbus Centre is the indirect owner of a **73.37%** stake in Mandarin Oriental New York, one of the premium luxury hotels in New York City.

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- 208. POSCO of South Korea** has tied up with **Adani Group** to set up a **\$5 billion** integrated steel plant at **Mundra in Gujarat**. This partnership will contribute to the growth of India's manufacturing industry and the Government of India's ambitious self-reliant India plan. It will also help in strengthening India's position in green enterprises.
- 209.** The Board of Directors of **Adani Power Limited** has recently approved the appointment of **Shersingh B Khyalia** as a chief executive officer (CEO) of the company with effect from 11th January 2022. He is a Chartered Accountant, who has worked as managing director in Gujarat Power Corporation.
- 210. Tata group** has replaced Chinese mobile phone manufacturer **Vivo** as the title sponsor of the Indian Premier League (IPL) for the **2022 and 2023 seasons**. The multinational conglomerate will pay Rs. 300 crore per year as the title sponsor of IPL for the next two seasons. This is about 60% of what Vivo would have paid. The league will now be known as 'Tata IPL' from the 2022 season.
- 211.** As per the IHS Markit report, **India** will overtake **Japan** to become **Asia's second-largest economy** by 2030. India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is also projected to surpass that of Germany and the UK to rank as world's No.3.
- India's nominal GDP measured in USD terms projected an increase from \$2.7 trillion in 2021 to \$8.4 trillion by 2030.
 - India's consumption expenditure will double from \$1.5 trillion in 2020 to \$3 trillion by 2030.
- 212. SJVN** has been granted a category 'T' licence for **inter-state trading in electricity** in the whole of India by the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC). SJVN has a portfolio of more than 16,000 MW, out of which 2,016.5 MW is under operation.
- If the licensee fails to undertake trading in electricity within one year from the date of licence, the licence will be liable for revocation in accordance with the provisions of the Act and Trading Licence Regulations.
 - According to the trading licence regulations, an entity or person applying for a Category 'T' trading licence should have net worth of **Rs.50 crore** and should have maintained minimum current ratio and liquidity ratio of **1:1**.

- 213. Nepal Power Exchange Limited** has signed a trading agreement with India's **Manikaran Power Limited** to sell electricity produced by the domestic private sector to India through India's Manikaran Power.
- The agreement will allow Nepal to sell **500 MW** of electricity to India in the initial phase.
 - Under the agreement, Manikaran Power will invest in 15 percent of shares belonging to NPEL, which is equivalent to Rs 300 million.
- 214.** The Government of India (GoI) has recently decided to hold a **35.8%** stake of **Vodafone-Idea (Vi)** in the form of equity after the financially-stressed telco has decided to convert interest on the deferred spectrum and adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues into equity. This makes the Union government the single-largest shareholder in Vi, a joint venture between the Aditya Birla group and UK-headquartered Vodafone, followed by Vodafone Group (28.5%) and Aditya Birla Group (17.8%).
- Currently, the Aditya Birla group holds around 27.7 percent while Vodafone Group holds 44.3 percent in Vi.
 - **Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR)** is the usage and licensing fee that telecom operators are charged by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT)
- 215. National Stock Exchange (NSE)** has recently received SEBI approval to launch **derivatives** on **Nifty Midcap Select Index**. The index will be available for trading from **24th January 2022**.
- Nifty Midcap Select Index aims to track the performance of a focused portfolio of 25 stocks within the Nifty Midcap 150 index. The midcap stocks account for around 17% of market capitalization.
- 216. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** has partnered with the Canada Running Series (CRS) as the new title sponsor and official IT services and technology consulting partner of the **Toronto Waterfront Marathon** and Virtual Race through November 2026.
- This partnership aims to modernise marathon running in Canada through a new official Toronto Waterfront Marathon race app, which will offer a carbon footprint calculator for attendees to track and offset their impact on the environment when attending the race.
- 217.** Bharti Group-backed low earth satellite (LEO) firm **OneWeb and Hughes Network Systems** have signed a strategic **six-year** pact to provide satellite broadband services in India. The services will be provided by Hughes Communications India Private Ltd (HCIPL), which is a joint venture between Hughes and Bharti Airtel.
- 218. AgNext Technologies** has collaborated with **National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED)** to organise a virtual training and awareness programme on quality assessment of pulses for Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) of **Maharashtra**.
- The programme aimed to train FPOs about the different market quality standards for toor dal.
 - AgNext used its 'SpecX Visio' device for physical quality assessment of the pulses.
 - AgNext has engaged with five FPOs in the state to create awareness about quality standards of pulses, particularly toor, for the upcoming procurement season.
 - **Amazon India** has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **NIF Incubation and Entrepreneurship Council (NIFientreC)**, a Technology Business Incubator (TBI) hosted by the National Innovation Foundation (NIF), an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology, to accelerate grassroots innovation, local economy, and livelihoods across rural India.

- India Energy Exchange (IEX) has recently divested **4.93%** equity stake in Indian Gas Exchange (IGX) to Indian Oil Corporation (IOC).
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- 221.** Union Minister for Heavy Industries, Dr. Mahendra Nath Pandey has recently launched **India's first Coal to Methanol (CTM)** pilot plant in the **Hyderabad** unit of **Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL)**.
- The plant has a capacity of 0.25 TPD (tonnes per day).
 - It has been indigenously designed, developed and installed by BHEL.
 - It is currently producing methanol with purity of more than 99 percent from high-ash Indian coal.
 - This conversion of high-ash Indian coal to methanol through the gasification route is the first-of-its-kind technology demonstration in India.
- 222.** The **International Financial Services Centers Authority (IFSCA)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Insurance Institute of India (III) for capacity building of professionals in the insurance sector in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs).
- 223.** **Flipkart** has recently announced the evolution of its flagship startup accelerator programme, Flipkart Leap. It has launched two new programmes - **Flipkart Leap Ahead (FLA)** and **Flipkart Leap Innovation Network (FLIN)** on the occasion of National Start-up Day (16th January).
- Flipkart Leap Ahead will invest in seed-stage start-ups that have disruptive business models and are innovating in areas that are a priority for the Flipkart group.
 - The Flipkart Leap Innovation Network program has been designed to enable a broader set of start-ups to engage with Flipkart's product and tech teams.
- The Flipkart Leap program graduated its first cohort in July 2021 with eight startups.*
- 224.** **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** has recently signed a contract with the **Government of Mauritius** for the export of one **Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH Mk-III)** for the Mauritius police force. ALH Mk-III is a multi-role, multi-mission versatile helicopter in 5.5 tonne category.
- 225.** **ReNew Power** has signed an agreement with US headquartered **Fluence** to form a new Joint Venture (JV) which will provide energy storage solutions in India. The 50:50 JV will target the country's storage market, which is estimated to grow to 27 GW by 2030. The first project the JV will cater to is a **150 MWh** battery-based energy storage system (BESS) for ReNew Powers' 300 MW Peak Power Project in Karnataka.

226. Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd has signed a joint development agreement with **Africa50**, a pan-African infrastructure investment platform, to develop Africa's first public-private partnership (PPP) mode transmission project in Kenya, "**Kenya Transmission Project**".

- The project involves the development, financing, construction, and operation of the 400kV Lessos - Loosuk and 220kV Kisumu - Musaga transmission lines under a PPP framework.

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227. Reliance Industries (RIL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of **Gujarat** for a total investment of **Rs 5.955 lakh crore** as part of Investment Promotion Activity for Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2022.

- RIL has proposed to invest Rs 5 lakh crore in the State over the span of 10 to 15 years to set up 100 GW Renewable Energy Power Plant and Green Hydrogen Eco-System development.
- RIL will develop an eco-system for assisting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and encourage entrepreneurs to embrace new technologies and innovations leading to captive use of Renewable Energy and Green Hydrogen.

228. MSME lending platform **Indifi Technologies** has recently collaborated with **Google Pay** to provide instant loans to eligible medium, small and micro enterprises (MSMEs) merchants on the Google Pay platform.

- This collaboration aims to address the problem of meeting the working capital management of MSMEs and to help small merchants thrive in their business journey.
- The loans will be in the range of **Rs 2.5 to Rs 3 lakh**.

229. The bilateral trade between **India and China** has crossed **\$125.6 billion** in 2021 from \$92.8 billion in 2019.

- India's imports from China - **\$97.5 billion** (greater than the total trade in 2019) and **exports** -\$28.9 billion.
- Medical supplies from Oxygen concentrators to PPEs, over last 2 years have contributed to the surge in import.
- Exports (56%) have risen much greater than imports (30%) (as compared to 2019)

India's major imports from China:

- Electrical and mechanical machinery
- Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs)
- Auto Components

India's major exports to China:

- Iron Ore
- Cotton
- Other raw material based commodities

- 230. Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd**, the retail unit of Reliance Industries Ltd, has acquired **54% stake** in robotics start-up **Addverb Technologies** for **\$132 million** (Rs.983 crore approximately).
- 231. Meta** has recently introduced the **AI Research Super Cluster (RSC)**. According to Meta, its new “artificial intelligence supercomputer” will be the fastest across the world, by the middle of year 2022.
- RSC will help in building new and improved AI models. It will also allow to work across hundreds of different languages.
 - It will also help in building technologies for next major computing platform called “the metaverse”, where AI-driven applications and products will play a significant role.
- 232.** The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has recently approved the acquisition of **100%** of the equity share capital of **GlaxoSmithKline Asia Private by GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare Overseas and GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare UK Trading**.
- CCI has also approved Italian firm Generali Group's proposal to raise its shareholding in **Future Generali India Life Insurance** to **71%** from the current **49%**.
- 233. AirAsia Group Berhad** based in Malaysia has changed the name of its listed holding company to **Capital A Berhad** to reflect the diversity of its business portfolio as it seeks to grow its non-airline revenue.
- The airline retains the AirAsia brand name.
- 234.** The **Indian Naval Placement Agency (INPA)** has recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with **IIFL Home Finance Limited (IIFL HFL)** to explore opportunities for the recruitment of naval veterans within the company. Through this MoU, the INPA will identify a pool of ex-servicemen/dependents candidates for relevant roles in IIFL HFL.
- 235.** NHEV (National Highway for Electric Vehicle) has inaugurated **India’s largest electric vehicle (EV) charging station** in **Gurugram, Haryana**. This charging station has been installed and operated by Alektrify.
- This smart EV charging station gets 100 charging points for four-wheelers, out of which 72 units are AC slow chargers while 24 units consist of DC fast chargers.
 - It is located in Sector 52 of Gurugram.
- Prior to this, the country’s largest EV charging station was located in Navi Mumbai that houses 16 AC and 4 DC chargers.
- 236.** The **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** has recently committed **USD 150 million** to invest in the development of data centres that mostly serve emerging Asia through the Keppel Data Centre Fund II (KDCF II), a closed-end private equity vehicle managed by Alpha Investment Partners Limited (Alpha). This is AIIB’s first data centre project.
- 237.** Food-ordering and instant grocery delivery platform, **Swiggy** has recently signed a \$700 million funding round led by asset manager Invesco. With this, the total valuation of Swiggy has reached to **\$10.7 billion** i.e. it is now a decacorn.

- Swiggy has also emerged as the second most valuable privately held startup after educational technology firm Byju's.
- A **decacorn** is a startup with a valuation of more than **\$10 billion**. Whereas, Unicorn is a privately held startup company valued at over \$1 billion.

238. Pencilton, a teen-focused fintech startup, has launched **PencilCard**, a debit card with NCMC (National Common Mobility Card) for teens. It has been launched in partnership with Transcorp.

- PencilCard is an NCMC-compliant RuPay debit card specially designed for the teenager segment to serve as an all-in-card (debit card, metro card, and bus card) for multiple needs for both online and offline payments.
- It is also a Platinum RuPay card with additional benefits like free access to lounges at all airports in India.

239. India has recently paid **USD 29.9 million** in **United Nations** regular budget assessments for the year 2022. With this, India joins the 2022 Honour Roll of 24 Member States out of 193 that have paid their UN Regular Budget Assessments in full.

- *India is currently a non-permanent member of the 15-nation UN Security Council and its two-year term will end on 31st December 2022.*

240. Agritech start-up **FAARMS** has recently tied up with **Reliance General Insurance Company Ltd** to provide health and cattle insurance for the rural population, including farmers, through its mobile application FAARMS App. Under this collaboration, not just the farmers but any individual can access and choose from a range of health and cattle insurance on the FAARMS app

241. **Google** has planned to invest up to **\$1 billion** in **Bharti Airtel** to develop India's digital ecosystem. This fund is a part of the Google for India Digitization Fund of USD 10 billion.

- The \$1-billion commitment includes an equity investment of \$700 million (Rs 5,224 crore).
- Shares will be issued to Google on a preferential basis at Rs 734 apiece and will give Google a **1.28 per cent stake** in the company.
- Additionally, Google will set aside \$300 million for potential investment in areas like smart phone access, networks, and cloud.

242. **Meta** has partnered with the **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)** to enable and support **5 lakh** women-led small businesses across India under its #SheMeansBusiness programme, initiated in 2016. Under this partnership, Meta will support via three initiatives namely, Facebook Business Coach, Grow your Business Hub, and Meta's Commerce Partners Program.

- The announcement has been made during Meta's 1st National Women Entrepreneurship Summit 2022 to encourage industry dialogue around supporting the MSMEs across sectors

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BANKING & FINANCE

- 243.** 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.
- 244.** 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**.
- 245.** 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.
- 246.** **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.
- 247.** 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.
- 248.** 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.
- 249.** **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.

- 250.** 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.
- 251.** **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.
- 252.** 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.
- 253.** 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.
- 254.** 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.
- 255.** 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.
- 256.** 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.

- 257.** 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.
- 258. 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.
- 259. 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.
- 260.** 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.
- 261. 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.
- 262.** 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**.
- 263.** 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.

264. 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.

265. 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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266. The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has introduced limits for cash withdrawals and mini statements to make Aadhaar enabled payment system (AEPS) more standardized.

Key Highlights:

- Standardized limit of a minimum of **five approved cash withdrawal transactions** per month for every customer. Post five transactions, issuer banks can either decline the request or charge a fee.
- A limit of a minimum of **five mini statement transactions** per customer per month will also be implemented.
- Limits have to be implemented by **15th January 2022**.
- Acquirers must implement two-factor authentication for login of business correspondents, agents and merchants at least once a day with one of the factors as Aadhaar based biometric authentication.

267. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently extended the validity of its Directions **for Sri Guru Raghavendra Sahakara Bank Niyamitha, Bengaluru**, by **4 months** i.e. till **May 2022**.

- The directions have been issued under **Section 35A** read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- The bank has been under RBI Directions with effect from close of business on 10th January 2020.
- The withdrawal limit for depositors of the bank is capped at Rs. 1 lakh per depositor during the entire duration.

268. Axis Bank, India's third-largest private sector bank, has recently partnered with **MinkasuPay** to offer the smoothest net banking payment experience for its customers through a **biometric authentication solution**.

- This partnership will enable customers to make net banking payments in merchant apps using Fingerprint or Face ID, without the need of usernames, passwords, and OTPs.
- Transaction time will reduce from the current 50-60 seconds to just 2-3 seconds.

- 269. Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank (KVGB)** has recently partnered with the Bengaluru-based Mecwin Technologies Ltd to introduce farmer-friendly solar-powered pump-sets using bank finance.
- **Note:** KVGB was the first bank to introduce solar loan schemes. It has been in the forefront in financing solar lights and sustainable energy solutions to underserved households and businesses in association with SELCO for the last 25 years.
- 270. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** has recently collaborated with **Arthimpact Digital Loans (ARTH)** to provide end-to-end fintech solutions including skilling, micro-financial services, and forward linkage support to self-help group members.
- 271. RBL Bank** has recently collaborated with **Google** to improve the Bank's customer experience strategy through its digital platform, Abacus 2.0. This collaboration will enable better customer data management, and analytics, enabling effective cross-selling within the Bank's large customer base and subsequently reducing the cost of customer acquisition, significantly.
- 272. Federal Bank** has recently launched an online lending platform **federalinstaloans.com** to facilitate quick and hassle-free credit approvals for **micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** across India.
- The platform enables MSME borrowers to avail loans in less than 30 minutes digitally, by uploading their income tax returns, bank account statements, and online verification of goods and services tax (GST) details.
 - Eligible borrowers can avail of up to **Rs.50 lakh** through the platform at present.
- 273. UCO Bank**, in association with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has recently launched a **RuPay Select contactless debit card** for its premium customer segment. The card offers an ATM withdrawal limit of **Rs.50, 000** along with a purchase of up to **Rs.2 lakh** at Point of Sale (PoS) or e-commerce.
- 274. Edelweiss Housing Finance Ltd (EHFL) and ECL Finance Ltd (ECLF)** have recently entered into a co-lending partnership with **Indian Bank** for lending to priority sector areas. This partnership will help in expanding the portfolio of lending products available to the target customers and will also increase their access to credit.
- 275. Sova Capital**, a London-based emerging markets broker-dealer, has recently collaborated with **India International Exchange (IFSC) Limited (India INX)** to allow Indian investors to access the **Russian market**. This partnership will create a cost-effective bridge for Indian investors to access trading on the Moscow Exchange (MOEX), Russia's main trading venue for equities, bonds, derivatives, FX and money markets.
- 276. As per the latest Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data**, the foreign currency reserves of India have **declined by \$1.466 billion to \$633.614 billion**, in the last week of 2021, which ended 31st December 2021.
- Gold reserves have raised by USD 14 million to USD 39.405 billion.
 - Foreign currency assets, which show the change in the valuation, have declined by \$1.480 billion to \$569.89 billion.

- India's forex touched a lifetime high of USD 642.453 billion in the week ended September 03, 2021.

- 277. AIC STPINEXT Initiatives**, a special purpose vehicle of Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), an organisation under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), has recently signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MoU), one with **HDFC Bank** and the other with **Excelpoint Systems India Pvt. Ltd.** to strengthen the tech startup ecosystem in India.
- 278.** Chennai-headquartered NBFC **Shrinithi Capital**, which is primarily into commercial vehicle and two-wheeler loans, has recently raised **Rs 300 crore** as co-lending facility from **IndoStar Capital Finance**.
- Through this arrangement, Shrinithi Capital has planned to disburse Rs 400 crore in 2022 to small truck transporters and owner-cum-drivers who are unable to take loans from banks and leading NBFCs.
- 279.** As per the weekly Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, the **foreign exchange reserves of India** has declined by **USD 878 million** to **USD 632.736 billion** in the week ended 7th January 2022. The decline is mainly due to a fall in gold reserves and foreign currency assets (FCA).
- In the reporting week, FCAs has declined by \$497 million to \$569.392 billion.
 - Gold reserves has declined by \$360 million to \$39.044 billion.
 - The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) fell by \$16 million to \$19.098 billion.
 - India's reserve position with the IMF has lowered by \$5 million to \$5.202 billion.
 - In the previous week ended 31st December 2021, India's reserves has dropped by \$1.466 billion to \$633.614 billion.
- 280.** The Reserve Bank of India has recently (January 2022) upped the threshold limit for Banks to maintain **Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR)** on deposits and other extension of funds received from non-financial small business customers from **Rs.5 crore to Rs.7.5 crore**. Therefore, all commercial banks (other than regional rural banks, local area banks and payments banks) will be required to maintain LCR if they receive deposits of Rs.7.5 crore and above from non-financial small business customers against Rs.5 crore earlier.
- 281.** The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has decided to set up two hubs on **motor insurance and property insurance** and also an advisory committee with the overall objective to promote loss prevention measures in the general insurance industry.
- To form a hub on property insurance at '**National Insurance Academy (NIA)**' and one on motor insurance at '**Institute of Insurance and Risk Management (IIRM)**'.
 - There will be an **advisory committee** under the chairmanship of the NIA director, which among other things will create a repository of past risk inspection reports and developing standard survey/inspection report formats. The committee has a term of **2 years**. There will be two sub-committees within the advisory committee.
 - The sub-committee on property insurance will create a repository of past risk inspection reports and developing standard survey/inspection report formats.
 - The sub-committee on motor insurance will develop guidelines on inspection of vehicles and standard operating processes to be followed by vehicle owners in the event of a loss.

282. Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has released final guidelines to ensure the orderly development of the surety insurance business in India. The **IRDAI (Surety Insurance Contracts) Guidelines, 2022** will come into effect from **1st April 2022**.

New Guidelines:

- According to new guidelines Insurance companies can launch the much-anticipated surety bonds now.
- The premium charged for all surety insurance policies underwritten in a financial year, including all installments due in subsequent years for those policies, **should not exceed 10 percent** of the total gross written premium of that year, subject to a maximum of **Rs 500 crore**.
- As per IRDAI, insurers can issue contract bonds, which provide assurance to the public entity, developers, subcontractors, and suppliers that the contractor will fulfil its contractual obligation when undertaking the project.
- The limit of guarantee **should not exceed 30 percent** of the contract value. Surety Insurance contracts should be issued only to specific projects and not clubbed for multiple projects.

283. **LazyPay**, a Buy Now Pay Later solution by PayU Finance, has partnered with **SBM Bank** India to launch LazyCard, a prepaid payment instrument backed by a credit line that works on the Visa payment network.

- **Aim:** To empower financially underserved Indians, who struggle with limited credit options, with easy access to credit.
- The card is available to the 62 million pre-approved users of LazyPay, with a credit limit of up to **Rs.5 lakh**.

284. **Airtel Payments Bank** has tied up with **Park+** to offer FASTag-based smart parking solutions to marquee commercial and residential properties across the country. This partnership aims to leverage the distribution reach and digital payments stack of Airtel Payments Bank to digitize the parking ecosystem using FASTag associated with the vehicle.

285. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has selected **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** for the second phase of the **Passport Seva Programme**, the country's largest mission-critical e-governance programme.

- TCS has been involved as a service provider in the Passport Seva Project for over 10 years.
- In the second phase, TCS will refresh existing facilities and systems, and develop innovative new solutions to enable the issuance of e-passports.
- It will also enhance the citizen experience using technologies such as biometrics, artificial intelligence, advanced data analytics, chatbots, auto-response, natural language processing, and the cloud.

286. **Central Depository Services (India) Ltd (CDSL)** has recently announced that its wholly-owned subsidiary CDSL Ventures Ltd (CVL) has received approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to set up an accreditation agency for accreditation of eligible Investors. This accreditation agency will be valid for a period of **three years** with effect from **1st February 2022**.

- *Accredited investors may avail of flexibility in minimum investment amount (lower ticket size) or concessions from specific regulatory requirements applicable to investment products, subject to conditions applicable for specific products or services.*

- 287. Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited (KMBL)** has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **GIFT SEZ Limited**, a wholly owned subsidiary of Gujarat International Finance Tech-City Co. Ltd, to enable both to work together towards greater enhancement of the financial services eco-system for alternative investment funds and global custody services.
- The aim will be to ease market access and cross-border activities for the fund management community.
 - Both KMBL and GIFT SEZ will jointly work to promote GIFT IFSC jurisdiction for AIF fund structures, hold seminars and knowledge series, expand financial infrastructure including custodian activities like setting up of global custody services
- 288. Indian Bank** has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IIM-Kozhikode's Business incubator Laboratory for Innovation Venturing and Entrepreneurship (LIVE) to financially support early-stage startups.
- Under the MoU, a startup funding scheme, '**IndSpring Board**' has been launched.
 - Under this scheme loans up to **Rs, 50 Crore** will be disbursed to the startups.
- 289. Yes Asset Management Company** has been renamed as **White Oak Capital Asset Management Company** with effect from 12th January 2022. In accordance with this, YES Mutual Fund schemes have been changed to White Oak Capital schemes. YES MF has three schemes – YES Overnight Fund, YES Liquid Fund and YES Ultra Short-term Fund.
- 290. Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL)** has become the largest and fastest-growing Unified Payments Interface (UPI) beneficiary bank in India. It becomes the first beneficiary bank in the country to achieve the landmark of over 926 million UPI transactions in a single month.
- Beneficiary banks are the banks of the account holder who is receiving money. Paytm Payments Bank has also gained rapid traction as a remitter bank for UPI payments.
 - While **State Bank of India (SBI)** has topped the chart of being the biggest remitter in December 2021, according to data released by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). State Bank of India followed PPBL as the second-largest beneficiary with 664.89 million transactions.
- 291. Torus Kling Blockchain IFSC**, a joint venture between Cosmea Financial Holdings and Kling Trading India, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with **India INX** to launch the first **bitcoin and ethereum futures exchange-traded funds (ETFs)** in India.
- 292. Marwadi Financial Services (MFS)** has partnered with **NSDL Payments Bank** to offer its clients an integrated 3-in-1 savings account that combines the features of savings, demat and trading accounts.
- Using this account, investors will be able to transfer funds in real time and execute trades in almost no time.
 - It will provide the additional advantage to users of availing savings interest on funds lying idle in their trading account.
- 293. ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company** has recently partnered with the US-based First Trust Advisors to launch a slew of global Fund of Funds (FoF).
- Under the agreement, ICICI Prudential AMC will first launch a strategic metal & energy equity fund of funds, which will invest in an offshore fund managed by First Trust Advisors.

- The fund will open for subscription on 17th January 2022 and will close on 31st January 2022.

294. Axis Bank, one of the largest private bank in Asia, and **CRMNEXT**, the leading CRM for banks, have won the IBS Intelligence Global FinTech Innovation Awards 2021 for the "Best CRM (Customer Relationship Management) System Implementation".

- The bank has implemented CRMNEXT for sales and service modernisation and it also enables smarter lead processing automated routing, complete tracking, and visibility.
- With CRMNEXT, the bank can now generate dynamic personalized offers with real-time visibility on eligibility.

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295. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has recently amended the **SEBI (Settlements Proceedings) Regulations, 2018**, called the SEBI (Settlement Proceedings) (Amendment) Regulations, 2022 and has reduced the timeline for filing settlement applications to just **60 days** from the current 180 days in its effort to make the system more efficient.

Thus, a settlement application can be filed within 60 days of the date of receipt of the show-cause notice. However, an additional 120 days can be availed by the applicants in case they pay an additional 25% over the settlement charges.

Note: The settlement mechanism is a tool for ensuring speedy and efficient resolution of disputes. Under this, an alleged wrongdoer can settle a pending case with the regulator without admission or denial of guilt by paying a settlement fee.

Other Amendments (January 2022):

- The time period for submission of revised settlement terms form, after the internal committee (IC), has been rationalised to **15 days**. This will be from the date of the IC meeting. The current rule allows 10 days plus additional 20 days.
- SEBI has rationalised the proceeding conversion factor (PCF) values range as **0.40 to 1.50**. Currently, the PCF values range from 0.65 to 1.20 depending upon the stage at which an application for settlement is filed.
- SEBI has also amended norms governing foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) and stated that it could provide an exemption from strict enforcement of the regulations in other cases.

296. E-commerce platform **Snapdeal** has partnered with Bank of Baroda subsidiary **BoB Financial Solutions** and **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** to launch a co-branded contactless RuPay credit card.

- This partnership aims to popularise the adoption & usage of credit cards among the growing number of online buyers from India's smaller cities and towns.
- The Snapdeal-BoB co-branded contactless card, powered by RuPay, will be rolled out to users by March 2022.

- 297.** Fintech company **Lendingkart** has recently collaborated with **Canara Bank** to provide low-cost business loans of up to **Rs.10 lakh** to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) across the country.
- **Aim:** To broaden the support provided to the MSME borrowers for enhancing financial inclusion under the Reserve Bank's Priority Sector initiative.
 - The loans will be provided through the digital platform "Lendingkart 2gthr" platform using 'zero touch' technology.
- 298.** Fintech firm **MobiKwik** has recently collaborated with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) **Bharat BillPay** to launch '**ClickPay**' for its customers. With this, the MobiKwik customers will be able to pay recurring online bills, such as mobile, gas, water, electricity, DTH, insurance and loan EMIs using their mobile phones.
- ClickPay is a two-step payment feature wherein the billers generate a unique payment link within the bill-pay message and send it to the customer allowing them to make payments directly on the payment page.
- 299.** The **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** has recently sanctioned financial assistance of **Rs.650 crore** to **AU Small Finance Bank** and **Jana Small Finance Bank**. The Small Finance Banks (SFBs) will use this assistance to support small-sized non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), microfinance institutions (MFIs), and micro entrepreneurs.
- 300.** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has conducted a **variable rate repo (VRR) auctions** on 20th January 2022 for infusing liquidity, instead of using variable rate reverse repo operations (VRRR) to suck out cash. This measure has been taken because larger goods and services tax (GST) collection tightened liquidity recently.
- RBI has proposed to lend the banking system **Rs 50,000 crore** in a day, while it received bids for Rs 65,700 crore.
 - Cut-off rate was **4.06 percent** and weighted average rate **4.10 percent**.
 - Both are higher than repo rate of 4 percent.
 - Weighted average call money rate reached to **4.3587 percent** on January 20, showing liquidity stress in banking system.
 - This rate is used by banks for the purpose of interbank lending.
- 301.** The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has recently launched a mobile app '**Saaṛthi**' based on **investor education** in Mumbai. Maharashtra.
- It will create awareness among the investors about the basics of the security market.
 - The purpose of this app will be to provide investors with information on securities market fundamentals, KYC procedure, trading and settlement, mutual funds, latest market developments.
 - The app will be available in **Hindi and English** languages.
- 302.** **Federal Bank and Equirus Wealth** have recently launched a '**US dollar offshore fund**' for their customers. This is in collaboration with SCUBE Capital, a global fund management company based out of Singapore.
- NRI and resident customers of Federal Bank can invest in this fund that offers a portfolio return (IRR) guidance of ~ **\$6.50%** per annum with a fund tenor of **three years** from the date of fund closure with an option to extend by one year.

- 303.** The Reserve Bank of India has recently released the Digital Payment Index (DPI) for September 2021. As per the index, the digital payments has increased by **39.64%** to **304.06** in **September 2021** as against 270.59 in March 2021 and 217.74 in September 2020.
- 304.** The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has recently listed its **USD 300 million Formosa bonds** on India International Exchange IFSC (India INX). With this, SBI has become the first Indian entity to raise money through Formosa Bond.
- SBI has raised \$300 million of “Regulation S” Formosa bonds at a coupon rate of **2.49 percent**.
 - The bond is benchmarked against the 5 years US Treasury and priced at a spread of 100 bps over the benchmark.
 - *A Formosa bond is a bond issued in Taiwan but denominated in a currency other than the New Taiwan Dollar.*
- 305.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently imposed several restrictions on **Indian Mercantile Cooperative Bank**, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, including a cap of **Rs.1 lakh** on withdrawals.
- The bank will not, without RBI’s prior approval, grant or renew any loans and advances, or make any investment.
 - The restrictions also includes withdrawal restriction of Rs.1 lakh across all savings or current accounts or any other account of a depositor in the bank.
 - The restrictions will remain in force for a period of **6 months** from the close of business on 28th January 2022 and are subject to review.
- 306.** The **Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Limited (SPMCIL)**, under its modernisation initiatives, has set up 'new bank note printing lines' at Currency Note Press, **Nashik**, Maharashtra and Bank Note Press, **Dewas**, Madhya Pradesh.
- **Note: Currency Note Press (CNP), Nasik**, Maharashtra was established in **1928**. It was the first printing press for bank notes in India.
- 307.** **Ujjivan Small Finance Bank** has recently launched ‘**Platina Fixed Deposit**’, which offers interest of **15 basis points** in addition to the regular Ujjivan SFB term deposit rates.
- The Platina FD is a non-callable deposit, partial & pre-mature withdrawal is not applicable to this scheme.
 - The interest payout options can be availed on the monthly, quarterly and also at the end of the maturity period.
 - The deposit tenure ranges from one year to a maximum of five years.
 - The minimum FD amount is Rs.20 lakh and the maximum amount is less than Rs.2 crore.
- 308.** **Tata Group** has chosen **State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda** and **HDFC Bank** as preferred bankers for Air India. Tata Sons have availed of an Rs.10, 000-crore loan from SBI and an Rs.5, 000-crore loan from BoB. The loan from HDFC Bank is not known yet. The loans are unrated, unsecured, and pegged at 4.25% interest rate annually. The new debt availed by the Tata Group will be used to refinance Air India’s debt availed at over 10%.

- 309.** The Reserve Bank of India has recently conducted an overnight **variable rate repo (VRR) auction** under liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) for an amount of **Rs 75,000 crore** against which banks bid for up to Rs 1.38 trillion. At the same time, the RBI would conduct a 28-day variable rate reverse repo (VRRR) auction of Rs 50,000 crore and an Rs 2 trillion VRRR for three days.
- 310. Max Life Insurance** has launched 'Max Life Smart Secure Plus Plan' in partnership with **Policybazaar** to provide insurance cover to Indian homemakers. This plan will be available to consumers where household income is a minimum of **Rs. 5 Lakhs** per annum between the age group of **18 to 50 years**.
- Max Life Insurance Company Limited is a Joint Venture between Max Financial Services Limited and Axis Bank Limited.
- 311.** HCL Founder and Chairman-Start-up Committee, FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry), **Dr Ajai Chowdhry** has launched the **India-United Arab Emirates (UAE) VC (venture capital) Fund of \$150 million** from the India Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai.
- The VC Fund is a first of its kind to be set up in the UAE with a purpose to source, invest, and nurture promising start-ups through an accelerator to fuel the growth of India-UAE start-ups. It will target to invest in a minimum of 50 demonstrated and validated start-ups based in India and the UAE over a period of 5 years, turning 10 unicorns by 2025.
- 312. NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL)**, an international arm of National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **TerraPay**, Netherlands-based global payments Infrastructure Company to allow Indians with an active UPI ID to receive real-time, international payments into their bank accounts via TerraPay's secure payments technology.
- 313.** Fintech Company **Alphaniti** has recently partnered with **IIFL Securities** to allow investors to invest and trade in stock offerings. The aim is to allow direct investments with by offering high-quality products at affordable costs through big data, deep domain expertise and technology for both India and the USA markets across multiple asset classes.
- The customers of IIFL Securities can invest and trade in Alphaniti's wide range of offerings such as its unique single stock recommendation engine '**Alphagenie**' for the Indian market.
 - The platform also has an extensive range of high-quality stock portfolios called '**Alphamatter**' that covers a wide range of secular themes and diverse portfolio strategies with strong performance track records.
- 314. Paytm Money**, a wholly owned subsidiary of the digital finance platform 'Paytm', has recently introduced "India's first" intelligent messenger called '**Pops**' to provide instant updates to track users investments in the stock market.
- The platform will serve as a marketplace to offer sophisticated stock recommendations, news insights, and other services.
 - The customers can receive specific information related to their stocks, analysis about their portfolio, market news, and important market movements in an easy to consume format, all in one place.
- Partnership:**
- Paytm Money has partnered with **InvestorAi** to offer stock recommendations based on signals generated using artificial intelligence.

- The company has also partnered with **Daily Brief**, which simplifies news by parsing through multiple sources and offering key takeaways.
- 315.** Non-banking financial company (NBFC) **Fullerton India** and **One97 Communications Limited**, which owns the brand Paytm, have announced a partnership to provide lending products to merchant partners and consumers.
- With the partnership, the two established institutions will leverage data-driven insights and wide reach to bring credit to new-to-credit users. This will expand digital lending to MSMEs and consumers from smaller cities and towns.
- 316.** **Indipaisa** has recently tied up with **Hitachi Payments Service** to develop a new Fintech platform for India's MSMEs. Under this partnership, Indipaisa will offer a range of payment solutions to match the specific needs of Indian MSME owners and operators, to help them grow their businesses, comply with government tax laws, and build a better future for themselves and their families.
- 317.** **City Union Bank**, the oldest Private Sector Bank in India, in association with smart-tech-enabled preventive healthcare platform **GOQii** and powered by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has launched a wearable payment solution called **CUB Easy Pay Debit Card in a Fitness Watch**.
- The introductory price of a smart watch debit card is **Rs 3,499** (as compared to an actual cost of Rs 6,499).
 - For payments above Rs 5,000, customers need to tap and enter their PIN.
 - It enables the wearer to monitor their Oxygen Level (SpO2), Body Temperature, Heart Rate, Blood Pressure and 18 Exercise Modes.
 - The first watch was received by **V R Venkataachalam**, Chancellor of Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research in Chennai on 24th January 2022.
- 318.** The Government of India has recently sanctioned and notified the scheme for the amalgamation of the **Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank Limited** with **Unity Small Finance Bank**. The amalgamation will come into force with effect from the date of the notification of the scheme i.e. **25th January 2022**. All the branches of the PMC Bank will function as branches of Unity Small Finance Bank Ltd with effect from this date.
- After the amalgamation of PMC Bank with Unity SFB, Unity SFB will pay the customers of PMC Bank the amount it receives from Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) (maximum up to amount insured by DICGC i.e. Rs.5 Lakh) in instalments of 10 years.
 - **Section 45** of the Banking Regulation Act 1949 empowers the Reserve Bank of India to prepare a scheme of reconstruction or amalgamation of banking companies (which include co-operative banks).

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AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- 319.** 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.
- 320.** 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.
- 321.** 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.
- 322.** **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.
- 323.** Bajrangi Bhaijaan (2015) fame actress, **Harshaali Malhotra** has been awarded the **12th Bharat Ratna Dr Ambedkar Award 2022**. She has received the award from Shri Bhagat Singh Koshyari, Governor of Maharashtra, for her commendable performance in the movie and contribution in the field of Indian Cinema.
- 324.** The Government of Maharashtra has organised the Bharat Ratna Dr Ambedkar national Awards 2022 ceremony in the memory of Dr Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar as a part of the upcoming 73rd Republic Day.
- 325.** **HDFC Bank** has been named as the '**Best Private Bank in India**' at the Global Private Banking Awards 2021 for contributing to accelerate key trends, including digitalisation, communication, investment in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) strategies. The award has been organised by Professional Wealth Management (PWM).

326. Winners of SKOCH Literature Award 2021:

- 1) **Ajit Ranade**, Executive President & Chief Economist, Aditya Birla Group, for the book titled "**Rising to the China Challenge: Winning Through Strategic Patience and Flexible Policies**".
- The book was published in 2021 by Rupa Publications India Ltd.
 - The book was based on the 2020 Galwan Valley clash provoked by China.

2) **Tamal Bandyopadhyay**, Consulting Editor, Business Standard & Senior Adviser, Jana Small Finance Bank, for the book titled "**Pandemonium: The Great Indian Banking Tragedy**".

3) **Manish Tewari**, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha, for the book titled "**10 Flash Points 20 Years**".

4) **Amar Patnaik**, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, for the book titled "**Institutional Change and Power Asymmetry in the Context of Rural India**".

5) The **Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) – Forensic Service, Delhi**, has won the SKOCH Award 2021 (Silver) in the Governance category for its work towards combating Crime and Violence against Children. It has been presented on the 78th SKOCH Summit organised with theme of "State of Governance".

327. Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has declared the winners of the third **National Water Awards** for the year 2020. The award comes with a citation, trophy, and cash prize.

- **Uttar Pradesh** has received the **Best State** award in water conservation efforts in the National Water Awards 2020. It is followed by Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu respectively.
- **Muzaffarnagar** in Uttar Pradesh has received the **Best District** award in the northern zone followed by Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar in Punjab.

Category	Winners
"Best State"	Uttar Pradesh
"Best District" – North Zone	Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh
"Best District" – South Zone	Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
"Best District" – East Zone	East Champaran, Bihar and Godda, Jharkhand
"Best District" – West Zone	Indore, Madhya Pradesh
"Best District" – North-East Zone	Goalpara, Assam
"Best Village Panchayat" – North Zone	Dhaspad, Almora, Uttarakhand
"Best Village Panchayat" – South Zone	Yelerampura Panchayat, Tumakuru District, Karnataka
"Best Village Panchayat" – East Zone	Telari Panchayat, Gaya District, Bihar
"Best Village Panchayat" – West Zone	Takhatgadh, Sabarkantha, Gujarat
"Best Village Panchayat" – North-East Zone	Sialsir, Sirchip, Mizoram
"Best Urban Local Body"	Vapi Urban Local Body, Gujarat
"Best Media (Print & Electronic)"	Mission Paani (Network 18)
"Best School"	Govt. Girls Hr. Secondary School, Kaveripattinam, Tamil Nadu

“Best Industry”	Welspun India Textile Ltd., Gujarat
“Best Water User Association”	Panchgachiya MDTW WUA, Hooghly, West Bengal
“Best Industry for CSR activities”	ITC Limited, Kolkata, West Bengal

328. The Professor in Clinical Embryology at Kasturba Medical College (KMC) **Dr. Satish Adiga** has been selected by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for its National Award for the year 2020. He will receive **Dr. Subhas Mukherjee Award** from ICMR in recognition for his outstanding contribution to the field of in-vitro fertilization (IVF). He has contributed significantly to both clinical IVF and fertility research.

- Dr. Subhas Mukherjee is the creator of India’s first IVF baby and ICMR has instituted the award in his name to recognize the outstanding contribution of IVF experts in the country.

329. The **Kerala Arts and Crafts Village** near Kovalam has won the **2021 International Craft Award** for the **Best Craft Village** of the year by the World Crafts Council International. It is the only award India received in the non-individual category.

330. The **Golden Globe Awards 2022** ceremony has been held to recognize excellence in film, both American and international, and American television. This is the **79th edition** of the annual event, which honored the best in American television, as well as film in 2021 as chosen by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association.

Category	Winner
Best Motion Picture – Drama	The Power of the Dog
Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy	West Side Story
Best Actress in a Motion Picture – Drama	Nicole Kidman for Being the Ricardos
Best Actor in a Motion Picture – Drama	Will Smith for King Richard
Best Actress in a Motion Picture — Musical or Comedy	Rachel Zegler for West Side Story
Best Actor in a Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy	Andrew Garfield for Tick, Tick... BOOM!
Best Actress in a Supporting Role in Any Motion Picture	Ariana DeBose for West Side Story
Best Actor in a Supporting Role in Any Motion Picture	Kodi Smit-McPhee for The Power of the Dog
Best Director – Motion Picture	Jane Campion for The Power of the Dog
Best Screenplay — Motion Picture	Kenneth Branagh for Belfast
Best Picture — Animated	Encanto
Best Picture — Non-English Language	Drive My Car (Japan)

Best Original Score – Motion Picture	Dune
Best Song Motion Picture	No Time to Die, "No Time To Die"
Best Television Series — Drama	Succession
Best Television Series — Musical or Comedy	Hacks
Best Television Motion Picture	The Underground Railroad
Best Actress — Television Motion Picture	Kate Winslet for Mare of Easttown
Best Actor – Television Motion Picture	Michael Keaton for Dopesick
Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series — Drama	Michaela Jaé Rodriguez for Pose
Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series — Drama	Jeremy Strong for Succession
Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series — Musical or Comedy	Jean Smart for Hacks
Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series — Musical or Comedy	Jason Sudeikis for Ted Lasso
Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role on Television	Sarah Snook for Succession
Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role on Television	Oh Yeong-su for Squid Game

331. NIRAMAI Health Analytix Pvt. Ltd. and InnAccel Technologies Pvt. Ltd., two Department of Biotechnology (DBT) - Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)-supported start-ups based in India, have recently received the World Bank Group and Consumer Technology Association's Global Women's Health Tech Awards 2022.

The winners have been announced at the Consumer Electronic Show 2022, held in Las Vegas, USA.

- NIRAMAI Health Analytix Pvt. Ltd has won this award for its novel software-based medical device that detects early-stage **breast cancer** in a simple and private way on women of all age groups and breast densities, addressing a critical unmet need in cancer screening.
- InnAccel Technologies Pvt Ltd. has won this prestigious award for developing **Fetal Lite**, a next-generation, AI-powered fetal heart rate (FHR) monitor based on fetal ECG signal extraction technology for mothers in labour or post 37 weeks of gestation.

332. A young Lavni artist from Maharashtra, **Sumit Bhale** of Fulbari taluka has recently won a gold medal at the International Folk Art Festival in Dubai.

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333. The Genesis Prize Foundation has named **Dr Albert Bourla**, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chairman of Pfizer, as the **2022 Genesis Prize** Laureate for his efforts in leading the development of the

COVID-19 vaccine. The President of Israel Isaac Herzog will present the Genesis Prize to Dr Albert Bourla at a ceremony in Jerusalem which is set to be held on 29th June 2022.

334. Legendary **West Indies Captain Sir Clive Lloyd** has received the **knighthood** from Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge at Windsor Castle, for his services towards the game of cricket.

- He led the West Indies to victory over Australia at Lords in the final of the inaugural Cricket World Cup tournament in 1975.
- He was inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame in 2009.

335. India's **Navdeep Kaur** has won the award for the **Best National Costume** at the prestigious Mrs World 2022 beauty pageant in Las Vegas, USA. She has represented India at the international stage after winning the title of Mrs India World in 2021. She hails from **Kansbahal**, a small town near **Odisha's Steel City Rourkela**.

336. Chennai-based **Rhapsody Music Foundation** has won the QS-Wharton Reimagine Education Awards 2021 under the Arts and Humanities category (Gold).

- Rhapsody Music Foundation was founded by Anil Srinivasan, an acclaimed classical pianist, in 2013.
- The foundation focussed on Educational technology space with its proprietary platform "Cocoon" to offer creative intelligence to children.
- **Lockdown Learning** of Tata Steel Foundation has received a Bronze award in Regional-award Asia.

337. The Government of India has recently announced the winners of the **2nd edition** of the **National Startup Awards 2021**. A total of **46 Startups** have been recognized as winners of the National Startup Awards 2021 along with 1 incubator and 1 accelerator. They have been felicitated for their contribution in their respective sectors.

Key highlights:

- State-wise, **Karnataka** has bagged the highest number of awards, which included 14 out of 46 national startup awards.
- In fintech category's financial inclusion sub-sector, Bengaluru-based **Naffa Innovations Private Limited** (ToneTag) has been declared the winner.
- In fintech category's insurance sub-sector, **Umbo Idtech Private Limited** has won the award.
- In Robotics sub-sector, Sagar Defence has won the award.
- In the women-led start-up category, Jaipur-headquartered **Frontier Markets** has won the award.
- In Industry 4.0 category's Internet of things sub-category, **Repos Iot India Private Limited** has won the award.

The second edition of the awards invited applications across **15 sectors** and **49 sub-sectors**.

- The award has been conceived by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**.
- The 2021 edition of the awards has also recognized exceptional Startups innovating solutions to promote Indic languages and to compliment national efforts to combat Covid-19 pandemic.
- All applicants have been evaluated against six broad parameters namely Innovation, Scalability, Economic Impact, Social Impact, Environmental Impact, and Inclusiveness and Diversity.
- The winning startup founders will get a cash prize of **Rs. 5 lakh** and an opportunity to present their solutions to relevant public authorities and corporates. Incubators and accelerators will get **Rs. 15 lakh** as the winning amount.

- 338.** The government of Assam has recently conferred its highest civilian award ‘**Asom Baibhav Award**’ to Industrialist **Ratan Tata** for his contribution in setting up cancer treatment facilities in the state.
- 339.** Bollywood actress **Sushmita Sen** has been conferred with the International Association of Working Women Award at the Washington DC South Asian Film Festival (DCSAFF) 2021. She has been felicitated for outstanding performance in her show ‘Aarya 2’. The Aarya 2 series is created by Ram Madhvani and had released on 10th December 2021, on Disney+Hotstar.
- **Note:** Sushmita Sen was the first Indian to win the Miss Universe title in 1994.
- 340. Friendship Hospital**, in the southwestern town of Satkhira in **Bangladesh**, has been adjudged the most transformative building of the world for the year 2021 by the **Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)**.
- The 80 bed community hospital is designed by the Bangladeshi architect **Kasef Chowdhury**.
 - It is designed to collect the rainwater as it is a valuable commodity in this area where water has become saline due to the impact of cyclone Sidr of 2007 and rising sea level.
 - *RIBA International Prize is awarded biennially to a project that demonstrates design excellence and social impact.*
- 341.** The **Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve** in **Tamil Nadu** has been awarded the prestigious international TX2 Award for doubling its tiger population to **80 tigers** since 2010. **Nepal's Bardia National Park** has also jointly conferred the award, for doubling its population of wild tigers.
- The TX2 goal is a global commitment to double the world's wild tigers by 2022.
- 342. South Maubuang** has been declared as **Mizoram's first ODF Plus village**. It has fulfilled all the criteria as per the guidelines of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBM-G) Phase II.
- All the three schools in the village and two Anganwadi centres have good arrangements for toilets.
 - Schools have separate toilets for boys and girls.
 - 98% of the total households of the village have arrangements for biodegradable waste material.
 - The village has constructed community compost pits and plastic waste is collected from house to house by the Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC).
- South Maubuang was awarded the **National Panchayat Award** in 2021.
- 343.** As per the list, of 189 Police Medal for Gallantry, **Jammu and Kashmir Police** has been honoured with 115 medals, the highest number of medals among all the States, Union Territories, Central Armed Police Forces and other organisations of India. It is followed by CRPF with 30, Chhattisgarh Police with 10, Odisha Police with 9, and Maharashtra Police with 7.
- 344.** The **Maharashtra National Cadet Corps (NCC) Directorate** has won the prestigious Prime Minister Banner at the Republic Day Camp (RDC) 2022. Major General **Y P Khanduri**, Additional Director General, NCC Directorate, Maharashtra has received the PM Banner from PM Narendra Modi. The last time the state won the banner was in 2014.
- Senior Under Officer Siddhesh Jadhav was the banner bearer and Cadet Captain Nikita Khot was the trophy bearer.

- Maharashtra state directorate fielded a contingent of 57 cadets, both boys and girls, drawn from various districts of the state.
 - The 2022 RDC for the NCC culminated with a rally at the Carriappa Parade Ground, Delhi.
- 345.** Professor **Vinod Sharma**, the founder co-ordinator of the National Centre of Disaster Management, has won the Subhas Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2022 in the individual category for working tirelessly towards bringing disaster risk reduction (DRR) to the forefront of the national agenda.
- The **Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management (GIDM)** has won the award in the institutional category.
- 346.** **29 Children** have been honoured with the **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP) 2022**, selected from all regions of the country for their exceptional achievements in Innovation (7), Social Service (4), Scholastic (1), Sports (8), Art & Culture (6) and Bravery (3) categories. There are 15 Boys and 14 Girls among the awardees belonging to 21 States and UTs. The cash prize of **Rs.1 lakh** has been given to the awardees of PMRBP 2022.
- 347.** Indian Movie's **Jai Bhim and Marakkar: Arabikadalinte Simham** have been officially shortlisted for the Oscars 2022. Jai Bhim is the fourth Indian film to get nominated for Oscars after Mother India, Salaam Bombay, and Lagaan.
- Marakkar Arabikadalinte Simham has been also nominated for the Global Community Oscar Awards 2021.
 - **Writing with Fire**, a film about a newspaper run by Dalit women, has been shortlisted in the Best Documentary Feature category at the Oscars 2022.
 - *The 94th Academy Awards (Oscar Awards) will be held on 27th March 2022.*
- 348.** Former Japan Prime Minister **Shinzo Abe** has been honoured with Netaji Award 2022 by Netaji Research Bureau. Consul General of Japan in Kolkata Nakamura Yutaka has received the honour on behalf of Shinzo Abe at a function at the Elgin Road residence of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his 125th birth anniversary.
- In January 2021, India honoured former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe with the **Padma Vibhushan**, the country's second-highest civilian honour.
- 349.** The **World Bank** has recently sanctioned a loan of **USD 125 million** (Rs 1,000 crore) to **West Bengal** for several development projects related to social protection. The loan under the 'West Bengal Building State Capability for Inclusive Social Protection' operation will strengthen the capability of the state to expand coverage and access to social assistance and targeted service for poor and vulnerable groups of the state.
- 350.** Indian movie titled '**Koozhangal**' (**Tamil**) has recently won the **Best Film Award** in the Asian Film Competition category at the 20th Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF) 2022 held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from 15th to 23rd January 2022. The film is directed by **P S Vinothraj**.

Other winners:

- Indian actor **Jayasurya** has won the **Best Actor award** for the Ranjith Sankar-directed film 'Sunny'.

- The **Best Script Writer award** is given to Indranil Roychowdhury and Sugata Sinha for India-Bangladesh film *Mayar Jonjal*. The movie is directed by Indranil Roychowdhury.
- Indian film, **Semkhor (Dimasa language)**, directed by Assamese actor Aimee Baruah, has won the Special Audience Award.
 - The film *Semkhor* was also selected as the opening film of Indian Panorama 2021 of 52nd International Film Festival of India (IFFI), which was held in Goa.
- Nepal's *Aina Jhyal Ko Putali* directed by Sujit Bidari has won the **Best Director Award**.
- In the Women film maker's section, the **Best Feature Film** award has been accorded to Maryam Bahrololumi-directed film *Shahrbanoo (Lady from the City)* from Iran.
- Two Bangladeshi films, Nurul Alam Atique-directed *Lal Moroger Jhuti* and N Rashed Chowdhury-directed *Chandrabati Kotha* have won the **Audience Award**.

351. The Ministry of Home Affairs has recently announced the Padma Awards 2022 on the eve of 73rd Republic Day. The Awards are given in three categories: Padma Vibhushan (for exceptional and distinguished service), Padma Bhushan (distinguished service of higher-order) and Padma Shri (distinguished service).

These awards are conferred by the President of India at ceremonial functions which are held at Rashtrapati Bhawan usually around March/ April every year. This year the President has approved conferment of **128 Padma Awards** including **2 duo cases** (in a duo case, the Award is counted as one).

- **Padma Vibhushan - 4**
- **Padma Bhushan - 17**
- **Padma Shri - 107**

Of these, 34 of the awardees are women, 10 awardees from the category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI and 13 posthumous awardees.

Padma Vibhushan 2022

S.No	Name	Field	State/Country
1.	Ms. Prabha Atre	Art	Maharashtra
2.	Shri Radheyshyam Khemka (Posthumous)	Literature and Education	Uttar Pradesh
3.	General Bipin Rawat (Posthumous)	Civil Service	Uttarakhand
4.	Shri Kalyan Singh (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Uttar Pradesh

Padma Bhushan 2022

S. No	Name	Field	State / Country
1	Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad	Public Affairs	Jammu and Kashmir
2	Shri Victor Banerjee	Art	West Bengal
3	Ms. Gurmeet Bawa (Posthumous)	Art	Punjab
4	Shri Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee	Public Affairs	West Bengal
5	Shri Natarajan Chandrasekaran	Trade and Industry	Maharashtra

6	Shri Krishna Ella and Smt. Suchitra Ella* (Duo)	Trade and Industry	Telangana
7	Ms. Madhur Jaffery	Others-Culinary	USA
8	Shri Devendra Jhajharia	Sports	Rajasthan
9	Shri Rashid Khan	Art	Uttar Pradesh
10	Shri Rajiv Mehrishi	Civil Service	Rajasthan
11	Shri Satya Narayana Nadella	Trade and Industry	USA
12	Shri Sundararajan Pichai	Trade and Industry	USA
13	Shri Cyrus Poonawalla	Trade and Industry	Maharashtra
14	Shri Sanjaya Rajaram (Posthumous)	Sci and Engg	Mexico
15	Ms. Pratibha Ray	Literature and Education	Odisha
16	Swami Sachidanand	Literature and Education	Gujarat
17	Shri Vashishth Tripathi	Literature and Education	Uttar Pradesh

352. Olympian **Neeraj Chopra** has been honoured with **Param Vishisht Seva Medal** on the eve of Republic Day by President Ram Nath Kovind. He is the first track and field athlete to win a gold medal for India at the Olympics. He is a Subedar in the Indian Army.

353. India is celebrating the 73rd Republic Day on 26 January 2022. Republic Day marks the date on which the Constitution of India came into effect on 26 January 1950.

Republic Day parade 2022:

- **12 states** and **Union territories** and **9 ministries and departments** have been selected to showcase their tableaux. These include Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Meghalaya, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, and Maharashtra.
- **Ministry of Civil Aviation's** tableau has participated for the first time. It showcased Regional Connectivity Scheme UDAN.
- India's first woman Rafale fighter jet pilot **Shivangi Singh** was part of the Indian Air Force tableau at the parade.
- For the first time, a grand flypast by **75 aircraft or helicopters** have been showcased by Indian Air Force.
- Dancers from the Kunbi community, the original inhabitants of Goa, and glimpses from the liberation struggle were the highlight of the tableau of the coastal state.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

354. 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.

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.

355. A new book titled “**Ratan N. Tata: The Authorized Biography**” has been authored by **Thomas Matthew**. The book chronicles the life of one of India's biggest industrialists and philanthropists. It is an authoritative biography with copious details about 84-years-old Ratan Tata's childhood, college years, and his early influences.

- The book will be published by HarperCollins.
- The book will be released in all formats in November 2022.

356. A new book titled “**Indomitable: A Working Woman's Notes on Work, Life and Leadership**” is the autobiography of **Arundhati Bhattacharya**, retired Indian Banker and former Chairperson of State Bank of India (SBI). The book depicts the story of Arundhati’s life as a banker and the challenges she faced in a male-dominated bastion. The book is published by HarperCollins India.

357. A new biography titled “**Bose: The Untold Story of an Inconvenient Nationalist**” has been authored by **Chandrachur Ghose**. It is published by Penguin Random House India under its Viking imprint. It will be released in February 2022.

358. Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari has released the book '**The Legend of Birsa Munda**'. The book is authored by **Tuhin A Sinha** and co-authored by **Ankita Verma**. The book depicts the story of a lesser tribal hero, Birsa Munda, who courageously fought against the oppressive British Raj for the rights of his tribal community.

359. A new book titled “**Liberty After Freedom: A History of Article 21, Due Process and the Constitution of India**” has been authored by **Rohan J. Alva**. The book is published by HarperCollins India. The book features the origin of Article 21: Protection of Life and Personal Liberty, one of the important fundamental rights in the Indian constitution.

360. A new book titled '**Operation Khatma**' has been released. It is an eyewitness account by two journalists **RC Ganjoo and Ashwini Bhatnagar**. The book is published by Locksley Hall Publishing LLP. The book is based upon the operation by Special Operations Group of Jammu and Kashmir Police which led to the killing of 22 terrorists of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF).

361. A new book titled “**A Little Book of India: Celebrating 75 Years of Independence**” has been authored by **Ruskin Bond**. The book is published by Penguin Viking. The book is the blend of physical and spiritual attributes of India and also highlights the last 75 years of India’s progress as a nation.

- 362.** A new book titled ‘**Fearless Governance**’ has been authored by **Dr Kiran Bedi**. This book is based on the ground realities of nearly five years of service of Dr Kiran Bedi as Lt. Governor of Pondicherry and her vast experience of 40 years in the Indian Police Service. The book is published by Diamond Books.
- 363.** Minister of State for Culture **Meenakashi Lekhi** has recently released the first edition of pictorial comic book ‘**India’s Women Unsung Heroes**’ in New Delhi. The book has been prepared by Culture Ministry in partnership with **Amar Chitra Katha**.
- The Ministry of Culture will release three pictorial books on 75 unsung heroes of the freedom struggle.
 - The book comprises of stories of queens who battled against British powers. These women dedicated and laid down their lives for the cause of the motherland.

First part is dedicated to 20 women, whose contributions is largely unrecognised. Among 20 women include:

- **Rani Abbakka**– She was the **first Tuluva Queen** of Ullal. She fought the Portuguese in latter half of 16th century. She belonged to the Chowta dynasty who ruled over parts of coastal Karnataka.
- **Matangini Hazra**– She was **Bengali** revolutionary. She was popularly known as **Gandhi Buri** (Old Lady Gandhi). In September 1942, she was shot dead by the British Indian police.
- **Chakali Ilamma**– Her act of defiance against the local zamindar inspired many during the rebellion in **Telangana** region.
- **Parbati Giri**– She is nicknamed as **Mother Teresa of western Odisha**. She was a prominent female freedom fighter from Odisha.
- **Gulab Kaur**– She was a freedom fighter, who abandoned her dreams of a life abroad for mobilising Indians against the British Raj.
- **Padmaja Naidu**– She was the daughter of Sarojini Naidu and a freedom fighter. She later became Governor of **West Bengal**.
- **Bishni Devi Shah**– She inspired a large number of people in **Uttarakhand** for joining the freedom movement.

Second edition of the series will comprise of stories of 25 unsung tribal freedom fighters. Third and final edition of the series will contain stories of 30 unsung heroes.

- 364.** The former finance secretary of India, **Subhash Chandra Garg** has announced his debut book named “**The \$10 Trillion Dream**”. The book will be released at the end of February 2022. The new book explores the critical policy issues that India faces today and suggests reforms for it to become a USD 10 trillion economy by the mid-2030s. It is published by Penguin Random House India (PRHI).
- Subhash Chandra Garg is a 1983 batch IAS officer of Rajasthan cadre. He was designated finance secretary in March 2019.

PERSON IN NEWS

- 365.** **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.
- 366.** 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**.

- 367.** Director-General **Virender Singh Pathania** has been appointed as the 24th Chief of the Indian Coast Guard. He has succeeded Krishnaswamy Natarajan.
- 368. 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.
- 369.** 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.
- 370. 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**.
- 371. 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.
- 372. 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.
- 373.** 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.
- 374.** 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).
- 375. 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.
- 376.** The patient, **David Bennett (USA)** has recently become the first person in the world to get a heart transplant from a **genetically-modified pig**. The surgery was conducted by University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM) faculty at the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC). This organ transplant demonstrated for the first time that a genetically-modified animal heart can function like a

human heart without immediate rejection by the body.

- 377. Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** has recently appointed Kuwaiti oil executive **Haitham Al Ghais** as its new secretary-general. He will take the group's reins in August 2022, replacing Mohammad Barkindo.
- 378. Sri Lanka batter Danushka Gunathilaka** has recently announced his retirement from Tests cricket to focus on white-ball cricket. He played his last Test game in 2018 with his eight appearances bringing him 299 runs.
- He along with Kusal Mendis and Niroshan Dickwella faced a one-year suspension from playing International Cricket for breaching the bio-bubble protocols, across all three formats.
- 379. RenewBuy**, an online insurance platform, has launched its first 360-degree ad campaign with its brand proposition of "Smart Tech, Right Advice". The company has roped in Indian actor, **Rajkummar Rao**, as its first brand ambassador for the campaign.
- The campaign has been designed and conceptualized by Havas Worldwide India.
 - The campaign ensures consumer's insurance needs through digital led insurance POSP (Point of Sale Person) advisor network.
- 380. Australian wine brand, Jacob's Creek** has recently appointed captain of the Indian women's cricket team and Padma Shri awardee **Mithali Raj** as its brand ambassador. Jacob's Creek is the official wine partner for the upcoming ICC Women's World Cup 2022 in New Zealand.
- 381. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has set up a separate **department for Fintech** (Financial Technology) to further focus and facilitate innovation in the Indian fintech sector. It has been created with effect from 4th January 2022, by subsuming the fintech division of DPSS (Department of Payment and Settlement Systems), Central Office (CO).
- **Ajay Kumar Choudhary**, Executive Director of RBI, will head the department.
 - The department will be administratively attached to the centralized administration division (CAD) of RBI.
- 382. Eminent rocket scientist Dr. S Somanath**, who is at present Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), has been appointed as the **10th Chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and Space Secretary.
- His appointment as the Space Secretary and the ISRO Chairman is for a combined tenure of **three years** from the date of joining of the post.
 - He has succeeded Kailasavadivoo Sivan who has completed his extended tenure on 14th January 2022.
- 383. The Government of India** has extended the tenure of **Navrang Saini** as interim Chairperson of **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)** for three more months till 5th March 2022.
- Mr. Saini, who is a Whole Time Member of IBBI, was assigned additional charge of Chairperson in addition to his existing duties in October 2021 for three months till 13th January 2022. The post of full-time Chairperson has been lying vacant after M.S. Sahoo retired upon completing a five-year tenure on 30th September 2021.

- 384.** Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor **Urjit Patel** has been appointed as the **Vice-President** of the Beijing-based **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)** for a term of 3-years. He will succeed outgoing Vice President D J Pandian, who is in charge of sovereign and non-sovereign lending of the AIIB in South Asia, the Pacific Islands and South-East Asia.
- Urjit Patel served as the **24th Governor** of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) succeeding Raghuram Rajan on September 5, 2016.
- 385.** The International Monetary Fund has recently appointed **Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas** as its next Chief Economist. A French-born University of California- Berkley Economist will succeed **Gita Gopinath** as the IMF's Chief Economist who will be joining the IMF management team in January 2022.
- Initially, P Gourinchas will join the IMF on a part-time basis from 24th January 2022. He will take upon a role on a full-time basis from April 1, 2022.
- 386.** China's senior diplomat **Zhang Ming** has been appointed as the new Secretary-General of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** for a term of 3 years. He has succeeded Vladimir Norov.
- India will assume the presidency of SCO for the first time for 2022-23. India will also host the SCO summit in 2023.
- 387.** **Legends League Cricket (LLC)** has recently appointed cricketer **Jhulan Goswami** as an ambassador to its 'All Women Match Official Team' to promote women's empowerment initiative of the LLC.
- Shandre Frtiz from South Africa will be the match referee for the entire League.
 - Umpires: Shubdha Bhosle Gaikwad, the youngest female umpire in India, Lauren Agenbag from South Africa, Humaira Farah from Pakistan, and Renee Montgomery from Hong Kong.
 - *In 2021, Actor **Amitabh Bachchan** was appointed as the Brand Ambassador of LLC and former head coach Ravi Shastri is officiating as Commissioner of the league.*
- 388.** **Chanchal Kumar** has been appointed as the Managing Director of National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL), under the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH). He is appointed in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary. He is a 1992 batch IAS officer of Bihar cadre, presently Principal Secretary of Bihar's Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.
- 389.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently approved the appointment of **Ittira Davis** as the managing director and chief executive officer (MD & CEO) of **Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (SFB)** for a one-year term with effect from 14th January 2022. The post had been lying vacant since three-month following the sudden exit of incumbent Nitin Chugh.
- 390.** **North Macedonia's** parliament has recently elected **Dimitar Kovacevski**, leader of the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), as prime minister after two months of political crisis. The new coalition cabinet, composed of Kovacevski's Social Democrats and two ethnic Albanian parties as junior partners.
- 391.** The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has recently approved the appointment of senior bureaucrat **Vikram Dev Dutt** as the chairman and managing director (CMD) of Air India Limited.

- He is an Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officer from the 1993 batch officer of the Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT) cadre.
- He will succeed **Rajiv Bansal**.

392. Roberta Metsola, a Christian Democrat from **Malta**, has been elected as the **President of the European Union (EU) Parliament**. She is only the third woman elected to the post. She is the European Parliament's youngest president. She has succeeded David Sassoli, who passed away at the age of 65 years.

393. The Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG) has recently appointed Paytm founder & CEO **Vijay Shekhar Sharma** as its UA Ambassador.

- UASG is an international organization that works on developing and recommending standards for languages script which are not currently used for assessing the internet.
- The group is supported by the global internet body, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN).

394. Former Cabinet Minister of Gujarat, **Dileep Sanghani** has been elected as the **17th Chairman** of the Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative (IFFCO). He has been serving as the IFFCO vice-chairman since 2019.

395. Professor emeritus, Kurukshetra University **Raghuvendra Tanwar** has been appointed as chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR). He has been appointed for a period of three years from the day he assumes the office of the Chairman of the Council or until further order.

396. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently appointed former comptroller and auditor general (CAG) chief **Vinod Rai** as the independent chairman of the Unity Small Finance Bank (USFB).

Other appointed board members include former RBI official Sandip Ghose, former Syndicate Bank CMD Basant Seth and former RBL Bank chairman Subhash Kutte.

397. Eastern Army Commander Lieutenant General **Manoj Pande** has been appointed as the next Vice Chief of Army Staff. He will be the successor to Lt Gen CP Mohanty who is scheduled to superannuate on 31st January 2022.

398. 37-year old **Shaylyn Ford** of USA has been crowned as the winner of **Mrs World 2022** beauty pageant held in Las Vegas, United States. She has been crowned by the outgoing queen Kate Schneider from Ireland.

- Mrs Jordan Jaclyn Stapp & Mrs UAE Debanjali Kamstra are the runner up.
- This is the 8th time an American representative won the title of Mrs World.
- **Note:** Mrs Sri Lanka Rosy Senanayake became the first Mrs World in 1984 while Aditi Govitrikar is the first and only Mrs World from India who was crowned in 2001.

399. Narendra Kumar Goenka has been appointed as the new chairman of Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC). He has succeeded A Sakthivel.

- 400.** The Government of India has appointed **Dr V Anantha Nageswaran** as the new Chief Economic Adviser (CEA). He has replaced Krishnamurthy Subramanian, who returned to academia in December 2021 after a three-year tenure as CEA. He is a former member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC).
- 401.** Ministry of Finance has recently appointed **Vinodanand Jha**, a 1983-batch retired IRS officer, as the chairman of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) Adjudicating Authority, New Delhi till the completion of his tenure i.e. up to 22nd June 2023. He has been serving as the Member (Finance and Accounts) in the Authority since September 2018.
- 402.** **Armenian President Armen Sarkissian** has recently announced his resignation, citing the inability of his office to influence policy during times of national crisis. He became President in 2018.
- 403.** **Sergio Mattarella** has been re-elected as the **President of Italy** for a second term. He has been re-elected with a broad majority, namely 759 votes in favour from a total of 983 lawmakers and regional representatives.
- 404.** Justice **Ayesha Malik** has been sworn in as the first female judge of **Pakistan's Supreme Court** in Islamabad, Pakistan. Pakistan's Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed administered the oath of office to Ayesha Malik.
- 405.** **Jahnvi Dangeti**, a young girl from **Andhra Pradesh**, has recently created history by becoming the only Indian to undergo and complete the **International Air and Space Program (IASP)** at NASA Launch Operations' Kennedy Space Centre in Alabama, the U.S.
- During the training program, she was appointed as the mission director for 'Team Kennedy', where she led a group of 16 people from several countries.
 - She is a vice-president of Space Magica, a startup astronaut training centre for students and the general public.
 - She has been a campus ambassador for numerous of organisations, including Star (Space Technology and Aeronautical Rocketry), an Indian private aerospace company.
 - She is a member of International Organization of Aspiring Astronauts (IOAA).
- 406.** **Mia Amor Mottley** has become the new **Prime Minister of Barbados** for the second term. She has become Barbados eighth and first female Prime Minister elected in 2018. She is also the first female PM of Barbados to lead a 2nd term as the PM.
- 407.** Content creator and actress **Prajakta Koli** has recently become *India's first UN Development Programme (UNDP) Youth Climate Champion*. The title has been conferred to her because of her contribution towards mental health, girl child education and women's rights through various global social campaigns. She won the title under her partnership with the UNDP.
- Prajakta Koli is an Indian YouTuber and actress, known by her YouTube Channel "**Mostlysane**". She makes comedy videos, focusing mostly on observational comedy related to daily life situations.

- 408. GoodDot**, leading plant-based meat company of India, has recently appointed Olympic gold medallist (Javelin Throw) **Neeraj Chopra** as its brand ambassador. With this association, the company wants to create awareness about the new category of plant-based meats. It also wants to send out a message that small changes in lifestyle and food choices can go a long way in making the world a better place.
- 409. IIFL Finance**, Fairfax and Capital Group-backed non-banking finance company, has recently appointed former State Bank of India (SBI) Head **Arun Kumar Purwar** as chairman of its board effective from 1st April 2022.
- He served as the Chairman of the country's largest bank - State Bank of India from November 2002 to May 2006.
- 410. Pushp Kumar Joshi** has been selected by the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) as the new chairman and managing director of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), the nation's third largest oil refining and fuel marketing company.
- He will succeed **Mukesh Kumar Surana**, who superannuates on 30th April 2022.
 - The PESB recommendation will now go to the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. ACC will decide on his selection after getting reports from anti-corruption agencies such as CVC and CBI.

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OBITUARIES

- 411.** 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.
- 412. 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.
- 413. 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).
- 414. 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.

- 415.** 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.
- 416.** **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.
- 417.** **Kannada writer Chandrashekhara Patil**, popularly known as “Champa”, has passed away recently in Bangalore, Karnataka. He was born on 18th June 1939 in Hattimattur, Karnataka. He also served as President of the Kannada Sahitya Parishat (KSP) and Chairman of the Kannada Development Authority.
- 418.** India’s oldest female **sloth bear**, whose name was **Gulabo**, has passed away at the Van Vihar National Park and Zoo, located in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Gulabo was the oldest sloth bear of the country. She died at the age of 40. She was rescued from a street performer (Madaari) in May 2006, when she was 25 years. Gulabo was one of the star attractions in the park.
- *Van Vihar National Park is situated next to the famous **Upper Lake** of Bhopal also known as the “Bada Talab” which is a Ramsar Site and one of the two lakes of Bhoj Wetland.*
- 419.** **Marilyn Bergman**, the Oscar, Emmy, and Grammy-winning **American lyricist** and songwriter has passed away recently in Los Angeles, USA.
- She collaborated with her husband, Alan Bergman for songwriting. Some famous hits are “The Way We Were,” “The Windmills of Your Mind,” “In the Heat of the Night” and the songs from “Yentl”. The pair were nominated for Oscars 16 times and won three times.
- 420.** The president of the European Parliament, **David Sassoli** has passed away recently in Italy. He was born on 30th May 1956, in Florence, Italy.
- 421.** Olympic athlete **Deon Lendore** has passed away recently in an unfortunate car crash in Texas, USA. He won a **bronze medal** in the 4 × 400 metres relay event at the **2012 London Olympics**. He also participated in the 400 meter race at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.
- 422.** **Legendary Hollywood actor Sidney Poitier** has passed away recently in California, USA. He was born on 20th February 1927 in Florida, USA. He was a trailblazing actor and a respected humanitarian and diplomat. He was the **first Black man to win the Oscar Award** for best actor for Lilies of the Field in 1963.
- 423.** Noted Bengali Cartoonist **Narayan Debnath** has passed away recently in Kolkata, West Bengal. He was born on 25th November 1925 in Howrah, West Bengal.
- He was known for creating Bengali comic characters ‘Bantul The Great’, ‘Handa Bhonda’, ‘Bahadur Beral’, and ‘Nonte Phonte’.
 - He was the first and the only comics’ artist from the country to have received the **D.Litt. degree**.

- He was awarded the **Padma Shri** in 2021.
- Other creations: Rabi Chobi, Rajar Raja, etc.

424. Saturnino de la Fuente García (Spain), the world's oldest man, has passed away at the age of **112 years and 341 days**. Guinness World Records named De la Fuente García as the world's oldest person living (male) in September 2021, when he was 112 years and 211 days. He was born on 11th February 1909 in the Puente Castro neighbourhood of León in Spain.

425. Noted environmentalist **Prof M K Prasad** has passed away recently in Kochi, Kerala. He was born in 1932 in Kochi, Kerala. He led the national movement against the Kerala government's move to set up a hydro-power project in Silent Valley in Palakkad district in the 1970s.

426. Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, the former president of Mali, who led the West African country from 2013 until he was ousted in a coup in 2020, has passed away recently in Bamako, Mali.

427. Founder of the Indian Spinal Injuries Centre (ISIC), professional mountaineer, and Padma Shri recipient Major **HPS Ahluwalia** has passed away recently.

- He was part of the first Indian expedition to summit Mount Everest in 1965.
- He was awarded the Padma Bhushan (2002) and Padma Shri (1965) for his contributions and received India's second-highest sporting honour, the Arjuna Award (1965).
- Autobiography: "**Higher Than Everest**"

428. Renowned theatre actress **Saoli Mitra** has passed away recently in South Kolkata, West Bengal. She had been suffering from heart related ailments.

- She was the daughter of legendary actor Sombhu Mitra and Tripti Mitra.
- She played Draupadi in Naathvati Anaathbat (which she also wrote and directed), and as Sita on Sitakatha or Bitata Bitangso.
- She founded the Bengali theatre group named 'Pancham Baidik'.

429. Social worker and Padma Shri awardee **Shanti Devi** has passed away recently in Gunupur, in Rayagada district of Odisha. She was born in 1934 in Balasore district of Odisha.

- She was also known as Lugdi Devi.
- She founded the Seva Samaj ashram at Gunupur in Odisha.
- She worked towards the education of tribal girls.

430. Award-winning journalist **Kamal Khan** has passed away recently due to heart attack in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

- He was associated with news channel **NDTV** as Executive Director for over 30 years.
- He had received the **Ramnath Goenka Award** in **2010** and the Ganesh Shanker Vidyarthi Award from the President of India.

431. Toshiki Kaifu, the former Prime Minister of Japan, has passed away recently in Japan. He was born on 2nd January 1931 in Nagoya, Aichi, Japan. He served as the PM from 1989 to 1991.

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- 432.** Renowned **Kathak dancer** Brij Mohan Nath Mishra, popularly known as **Pandit Birju Maharaj**, has passed away recently due to heart attack in New Delhi. He was born on 4th February 1938 in Handia, Uttar Pradesh.
- He was awarded the **Padma Vibhushan**, the country's second-highest civilian award, in **1986**.
 - He was a drummer and also a singer par excellence, having command over Thumri, Dadra, Bhajan and Ghazal.
- 433.** **T15 or Collarwali**, the legendary tigress of Madhya Pradesh's **Pench Tiger Reserve** in Chhindwara district who earned the title of "super mom", has passed away recently at the age of 16 due to prolonged illness.
- 434.** Renowned social worker and Padma Shri awardee **Baba Iqbal Singh** has passed away recently in Sirmaur district of Himachal Pradesh. He was born on 1st May 1926 in Bharyal Lehri, Gurdaspur district of Punjab.
- He was the founder President of The Kalgidhar Trust, The Kalgidhar Society and Baru Sahib.
 - He was the founder of Akal Academy.
 - He was conferred with the **Padma Shri** for his contributions in the field of social work in **2022**.
- 435.** Former India footballer and coach **Subhash Bhowmik** has passed away recently due to prolonged illness in Ekbalpur, South Kolkata, West Bengal. He was born on 2nd October 1950 in Malda, West Bengal.
- He represented India at the **Bronze medal** winning **1970 Asian Games**.
 - He represented two famous football clubs of Kolkata named **East Bengal FC (Football Club)** and **Mohun Bagan AC (Athletic Club)**.
 - He also coached the East Bengal football team that won the 2003 ASEAN Cup.
- 436.** Former Indian hockey team captain and Olympian, **Charanjit Singh** has passed away recently in Una, Himachal Pradesh. He was born on 20th November 1929 in Una, Himachal Pradesh.
- He was the captain of Indian hockey team that won the **gold medal** in the **1964 Summer Olympics** at Tokyo, Japan.
 - He was honoured with the **Padma Shri** in **1964** and **Arjuna Award** in **1963**.
- 437.** Renowned Marathi author and social activist, **Anil Awachat**, popularly known as Baba, has passed away recently in Pune, Maharashtra.
- He was the founder-director of the Muktangan Rehabilitation Centre in Pune.
 - **Books by him:** "Manasa", "Swatahavishayi", "Gard", "Karyarat", "Karyamagna", "Kutuhalapoti", etc.

- 438. Milena Salvini**, an Italy-born dancer who was a great enthusiast of Indian classical art, especially **Kathakali**, has passed away recently in Paris, France. She was born in 1938 at Milan in Italy.
- She arrived in Kerala in 1965 to learn Kathakali.
 - She had established Centre Mandapa, a school of Indian dance forms in Paris.
 - In 1980, she arranged a European tour for the Kalamandalam's Kutiyattam troupe with funding from UNESCO.
 - Her efforts helped UNESCO recognise **Koodiyattam** as an ancient art form and include it in the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity programme in **May 2001**.
 - She was awarded the **Padma Shri** in **2019**.
- 439.** Eminent archaeologist and epigraphist **R. Nagaswamy**, the first Director of the Department of Archaeology, has passed away recently. He was born on 10th August 1930 in Madras Presidency.
- He was a great scholar in Tamil and Sanskrit and was known as the '**Father of Tamil Archaeology**'.
 - He started the annual Chidambaram Natyanjali festival in 1980.
 - He was awarded the **Padma Bhushan** in 2018.
 - He penned a book, **Masterpieces of Early South Indian Bronzes**, in 1983.

SPORTS

- 440. 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.
- 441. 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.
- 442. 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.
- 443. 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.
- 444. 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.
- 445. 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.

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- 446.** 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.
- 447. 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.
- 448. 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.
- 449.** The All India Sports Council of the Deaf has recently received the approval from the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD) to host the first **World Deaf T20 Cricket Championship** in **Thiruvananthapuram**, Kerala from **January 10 to 20, 2023**. A minimum of eight countries are expected to take part in the championship.
- 450.** Fourteen-year old **Bharath Subramaniyam** (Chennai) has recently become India's **73rd chess Grandmaster**, securing the third and final GM norm at the Vergani Cup Open 2022 held in Cattolica, Italy. He scored 6.5 points and ranked 7th overall.
- 451. South African all-rounder Chris Morris** has recently announced his retirement from all forms of cricket and has decided to take up a coaching role with South African domestic side Titans.
- 452.** India-born New Zealand cricketer **Ajaz Patel** has recently won the ICC Player of the Month award for December 2021 following his stupendous 10-wicket haul against Virat Kohli and Co. in the second Test in Mumbai.
- He picked up 14 wickets in the Mumbai Test match in early December 2021 against India, including all 10 in the first innings, to become only the third player in Test history, after Jim Laker and Anil Kumble, to achieve the remarkable milestone.

- 453. IndiaSkills 2021 National Competition** has been organised by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) under the guidance of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in New Delhi from 7th January to 9th January 2022.
- The closed-door competition witnessed participation in 54 skills such as concrete construction work, beauty therapy, car painting, health and social care, visual merchandising, graphic design technology, wall & floor tiling, welding, among others.
 - **Odisha** has secured first place among the 26 states/ union territories with **51 medals**, followed by Maharashtra (30 medals) and Kerala (25 medals).
 - The winners of IndiaSkills 2021 Nationals will get a chance to represent the country at World Skills International Competition to be held in Shanghai, China in October 2022.
- 454.** Young shuttler **Tasnim Mir** from Gujarat has recently become the first Indian shuttler to grab the world's no 1 ranking in the under-19 girls singles in the latest BWF junior rankings. She is currently ranked a lowly 602 in the women's singles.
- In Boys singles, Lakshya Sen, Siril Verma, and Aditya Joshi have become the world no 1.
- 455. Rafael Nadal (Spain)** has won the men's singles title by defeating Maxim Cressy in the final of the 2022 Melbourne Summer Set 1, ATP 250 in Hard Court, at Melbourne's Rod Laver Arena. It is his **89th career ATP title** and his first title since 2009 in Australia. The tournament has been organized by Tennis Australia at Melbourne Park in Melbourne, Australia.
- Whereas, **Simona Halep (Romania)** has won the women's singles tennis title. It is her 23rd career WTA title and first title in Australia.
- 456. Kolkata Knight Riders** has recently appointed former Indian team bowling coach **Bharat Arun** as its bowling coach for the forthcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) 2022 season. He has replaced Kyle Mills. He also worked with Royal Challengers Bangalore from 2015 to 2017.
- 457.** The Indian Olympic Association has recently appointed senior vice president of the Indian Olympic Association **Rakesh Anand** as India's Chef de Mission for **Commonwealth Games (CWG) 2022**. The Commonwealth Games (CWG) 2022 will be organized in **Birmingham, UK** from July 28-August 8.
- 458.** The Boxing Federation of India has recently decided to pull out of the **Asian Under-22 Boxing Championship** for men and women in Tashkent, Uzbekistan due to the global surge in COVID-19 cases.
- Asian Under-22 Boxing Championship will be held from **20th January to 30th January 2022** in **Tashkent, Uzbekistan**.
 - It will be organized by the Asian Boxing Confederation.
- 459.** Goalkeeper **Savita Punia** has been named captain of India Women's Hockey team at the upcoming Women's Hockey Asia Cup 2022. Since regular skipper Rani Rampal is recovering from an injury in Bengaluru.
- 460. India** will host the 20th edition of the **AFC Women's football Asian Cup 2022** from 20th January 2022 to 6th February 2022.
- **Host cities:** Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, and Pune
 - **Teams:** 12

461. Indian tennis player **Sania Mirza** has recently announced that she will retire at the end of 2022 season. Her last headline-grabbing win came with Chinese partner Shuai Zhang in women's doubles at the Ostrava Open on 26th September 2021.

462. The 2022 India Open (badminton), officially Yonex-Sunrise India Open 2022, has been held at K. D. Jadhav Indoor Hall in New Delhi, from 11 to 16 January 2022.

Indian badminton player **Lakshya Sen** has defeated World Champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore, in the men's singles final of India Open 2022 to secure his maiden Super 500 title. Whereas, **Busanan Ongbamrunghan (Thailand)** has won the women's singles title in the tournament.

Other winners of India Open 2022:

Category	Winners
Men's Double	Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy (India)
Women's Double	Benyapa Aimsaard and Nuntakarn Aimsaard (Thailand)
Mixed Double	Terry Hee and Tan Wei Han (Singapore)

463. The 2022 Sydney International has been held in Sydney, New South Wales, Australia from 10th to 15th January 2022. This is the 128th edition of the tournament.

Category	Winners
Men's Singles	Aslan Karatsev (Russia)
Women's Singles	Paula Badosa (Spain)
Men's Double	John Peers and Filip Polášek
Women's Double	Anna Danilina and Beatriz Haddad Maia

464. The **Best FIFA Football Awards 2021** ceremony has been held as a virtual TV show from the Home of FIFA in Zurich, Switzerland.

- Poland's **Robert Lewandowski**, Bayern Munich player, has won the **Best FIFA Men's Player Award 2021** after beating out Lionel Messi and Mohamed Salah.
- Spain's **Alexia Putellas** has won the **Best FIFA Women's Player Award 2021** after beating out the Chelsea Superstar Sam Kerr, and her own Barcelona teammate Jenni Hermoso.

Categories	Winners
The Best FIFA Men's Player	Robert Lewandowski (Poland)
The Best FIFA Women's Player	Alexia Putellas (Spain)
FIFA Fan Award	Denmark and Finland Fans
The Best FIFA Men's Coach	Thomas Tuchel (Germany)
The FIFA Best Women's Coach	Emma Hayes (United Kingdom)
FIFA Fair Play Award	Denmark National Team and Staff
Puskas Award	Erik Lamela (Argentina)
The Best FIFA Men's Goalkeeper	Edouard Mendy (France)

The Best FIFA Women's Goalkeeper	Christiane Endler (Chile)
FIFA Best Special Award	Christine Sinclair (Canada)
FIFA Best Special Award	Cristiano Ronaldo (Portugal)

465. Indian cricketer **Smriti Mandhana** has been named in the ICC Women's T20I Team of the Year 2021. She has made in the list for third time in the T20I team of the year after 2018 (opener) and 2019 (number three).

ICC Women's T20I Team of the Year 2021:

Smriti Mandhana (India), Tammy Beaumont (England), Danni Wyatt (England), Gaby Lewis (Ireland), **Nat Sciver (captain) (England)**, Amy Jones (England), Laura Wolvaardt (South Africa), Marizanne Kapp (South Africa), Sophie Ecclestone (England), Loryn Phiri (Zimbabwe), Shabnim Ismail (South Africa).

466. India's first state-of-the-art, high-performance **para-badminton academy** with advanced equipment and facilities has been set up in **Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh**. The badminton centre has been launched by the head national coach of the Indian para-badminton team, Gaurav Khanna, in association with Ageas Federal Life Insurance.

- It will improve India's medal prospects at the **2024 Paralympics** to be held in Paris, France at Stade de France stadium.

467. Hungarian gymnast **Szilveszter Csollány**, who won the gold in the men's rings at the **2000 Summer Olympics** in Sydney, has passed away due to a COVID-19 infection. He was born on 13th April 1970 in Sopron, Hungary.

- He had also won the silver in the men's rings at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta.

468. **Japan women's hockey team** has won the **2022 Women's Hockey Asia Cup title** after defeating South Korea in the finals held at Muscat, Oman. With this, Japan has won its third title.

- **India** has won the **bronze medal** by defeating China in the tournament.

469. The **Chennai Super Kings (CSK)** has become the **first Indian sports enterprise** to gain **unicorn status** with its market cap surpassing **INR 7,600 crore** and the share value in the market trading entering INR 210-225 price band.

- The team is owned by Chennai Super Kings Cricket Ltd and India Cements is the major stakeholder. It is captained by Mahendra Singh Dhoni and coached by Stephen Fleming. It has won the IPL title four times i.e. in 2010, 2011, 2018, and 2021.

470. **Ladakh women's ice hockey team** has won the **9th National Women's Ice Hockey Championship 2022**. The championship has been organised by the Ice Hockey Association of India at Ice Skating Rink, Kaza in Lahaul Spiti district of **Himachal Pradesh** from 15th to 21st January 2021.

- It is for the first time that the national-level ice hockey competition and development camp is being held in Himachal Pradesh.
- **Participants:** Delhi, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Telangana and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police.

471. Indian shuttler, **PV Sindhu** has won the women's singles title at the Syed Modi International Tournament 2022 after defeating fellow Indian Malvika Bansod in the finals held at Babu Banarasi Das Indoor Stadium in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. It is her second Syed Modi title after 2017.

Other winners:

- **Men's singles:** 'No Match' between Arnaud Merkle and Lucas Claerbout, after one of the finalists tested positive for Covid-19.
- **Men's doubles:** Man Wei Chong and Tee Kai Wun (Malaysia)
- **Women's doubles:** Anna Cheong and Teoh Mei Xing (Malaysia)
- **Mixed Doubles:** Ishaan Bhatnagar and Tanisha Castro (India).

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472. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has recently announced the winners of the **17th edition** of **ICC Awards for the year 2021** to recognise and honour the best international cricket players of the previous 12 months, between 1st January 2021 and 31st December 2021.

ICC Awards 2021

Category	Winners
Rachael Heyhoe Flint Trophy for ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year	Smriti Mandhana (India)
Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Men's Cricketer of the Year	Shaheen Afridi (Pakistan)
ICC Umpire of the Year	Marais Erasmus
ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year	Mohammad Rizwan (Pakistan)
ICC Women's T20I Cricketer of the Year	Tammy Beaumont (England)
ICC Emerging Men's Cricketer of the Year	Janneman Malan (South Africa)
ICC Emerging Women's Cricketer of the Year	Fatima Sana (Pakistan)
ICC Men's Associate Cricketer of the Year	Zeeshan Maqsood (Oman)
ICC Women's Associate Cricketer of the Year	Andrea-Mae Zepeda (Austria)
ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year	Babar Azam (Pakistan)
ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year	Lizelle Lee (South Africa)

ICC Men's Test Cricketer of the Year

Joe Root (England)

473. Rafael Nadal (Spain) has defeated Daniill Medvedev (Russia) to win the Men's Singles title at the **Australian Open 2022**. This is his 21st Major title, becoming the first male player to do so.

Ashleigh Barty of Australia has defeated Danielle Collins of the US to win Women's Singles title at the Australian Open 2022.

Australian Open 2022

Events	Winners
Men's Singles	Rafael Nadal
Women's Singles	Ashleigh Barty
Men's Doubles	Thanasi Kokkinakis and Nick Kyrgios
Women's Doubles	Barbora Krejčíková and Kateřina Siniaková
Mixed Doubles	Kristina Mladenovic and Ivan Dodig

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IMPORTANT DAYS

474. 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.

475. 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**.

476. 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**.

477. 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.

478. Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD), also known as Non-Resident Indian Day, is observed annually on **9th January** to strengthen the engagement of the overseas Indian community with the Government of India and reconnect them with their roots. The year 2022 marks the **17th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD)**.

Background:

- In the year 1915, Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa on this day. Following his return, the father of the nation began and headed India's freedom struggle and changed the lives of millions of Indians forever.
- The year 2015 marked 100 years of the return of Mahatma Gandhi.

479. World Hindi Day is observed annually on **10th January** to promote the language at the global stage. The day also marks the anniversary of the first World Hindi Conference which was inaugurated on 10th January 1975 in Nagpur, by the then prime minister Indira Gandhi.

- The celebration of first World Hindi Day was commenced on **10th January 2006** by former Prime Minister **Dr. Manmohan Singh**. This was also the first time that the ministry of external affairs started celebrating the day abroad.

480. National Youth Day is observed annually on **12th January** to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Swami Vivekananda** who always motivated the youth of the country and spoke about the right use of the youth in the development of the country.

- The year 2022 marks the **25th National Youth Day** and the **159th birth anniversary** of Swami Vivekananda (12 January 1863).
- **Theme 2022:** It's all in the mind
- The decision to celebrate Vivekananda's birthday as National Youth Day was taken in 1984, and it was first observed on 12th January 1985.

481. Armed Forces Veterans Day is observed annually across India on **14th January** to acknowledge and honour the selfless devotion and sacrifice of our veterans in the service of the nation. It is observed as a mark of respect and recognition of the services rendered by **Field Marshal KM Cariappa OBE**, the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Armed Forces who retired on 14 January 1953.

- The year 2022 marks the **6th Armed Forces Veterans Day**.
- The day was first observed in 2017.

482. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently announced to celebrate **26th December** annually as '**Veer Baal Diwas**' as a tribute to the 10th Sikh guru Gobind Singh's four sons who were executed by the Mughals. It has been announced on 9th January 2022 on the occasion of Prakash Parv of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

483. National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is observed annually on **11th January** to raise awareness about the prevention of illegal practice of human trafficking and slavery. The day was established by the United States Senate in 2007.

- *In 2010, President Obama dedicated the entire month of January to awareness and prevention of human trafficking.*

- 484.** Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) has observed ‘**Agri Nutri Garden Week**’ from **10th to 17th January 2022** through awareness campaign and encouraging establishment of ‘Agri Nutri Gardens’ in the rural households.
- **Aim:** To support every rural poor household to have Agri Nutri Garden to fulfill the need of the family’s nutrition and any excess production can also be sold for income generation.
 - A total of 76,664 ‘Agri Nutri Gardens’ were established in this week against the target of 7500.
- 485.** **Army Day** is observed annually across India on **15th January** to salute the valiant soldiers who sacrificed their lives to protect the country and its citizens. The day is also marked to commemorate the day when General (later Field Marshal) **KM Cariappa** took over the command of the Army from General Sir FRR Bucher, the last British Commander-in-Chief in 1949 and became the first Commander-in-Chief of Indian Army post Independence.
- The year 2022 marks the **74th Indian Army Day**.
- 486.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently announced to celebrate **16th January** annually as ‘**National Start-up Day**’. In 2022, the National Startup Day is celebrated on six themes. They are sustainable development, technology of future, from local to global, building champions in manufacturing, nudging the DNA and growing from roots.
- The day is focused on data collection mechanism in agriculture, healthcare through use of technology, creating agricultural business hubs, tackling issues related to mental health, improving health care related technologies, space sector and job identification.
- 487.** The **NDRF Raising Day** is observed annually on **19th January** by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) in India to highlight the role of the NDRF personnel for their help and assistance during disaster situations in India. In 2022, the day marks the celebration of the **17th NDRF Raising Day**.
- 488.** **Kokborok Day** (Tripuri language Day) is observed annually in the Indian state of **Tripura** to celebrate the development of the Kokborok language. It is observed on **19 January** every year.
- The Kokborok language is an official language in Tripura.
 - This day is chosen to commemorate its initial recognition as an official language in 1979.
 - The year 2022 marks the observance of the 44th Kokborok Day.
- 489.** **International Day of Education** is observed annually on **24th January** to celebrate the role of education in bringing global peace and sustainable development. The day is organized by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- **Theme 2022:** Changing Course, Transforming Education.
 - The first-ever International Day of Education was observed on **24 January 2019** as per the resolution passed by the United Nations General Assembly on 3rd December 2018 to celebrate the role of education in development.
- 490.** **National Tourism Day** is observed annually on **25th January** to raise awareness about the importance of tourism for the country’s economy. The day is observed to cultivate awareness among the global community on the importance of tourism and its social, political, financial and cultural worth.
- **Theme 2022:** ‘Rural and Community Centric Tourism’

- A national-level programme to mark 'National Tourism Day' has been held at Telangana's **Pochampally**, a village on the outskirts of Hyderabad known for its famous hand-woven Ikat saris.
- *Pochampally was selected as one of the best tourism villages by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) in November 2021.*

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- 491. World Leprosy Day** is observed globally on the **last Sunday of January** to raise global awareness of this deadly ancient disease and call attention to the fact that it can be prevented, treated and cured. In 2022, the World Leprosy Day falls on **30th January 2022**.
- The day was initiated in 1954 by French philanthropist and writer, **Raoul Follereau**, as a tribute to the life of Mahatma Gandhi who had compassion for people afflicted with leprosy.
 - **Theme 2022:** "United for Dignity"
 - As per the latest data, India accounts for almost **60 percent** of the world's new leprosy patients despite being declared leprosy-free in 2005.
In India, World Leprosy Day is celebrated every year on 30 January, the anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's death.
- 492. 'Parakram Diwas' (Courage Day)** is observed annually across India on **23rd January** to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose**. The day is celebrated to honour and remember Netaji's indomitable spirit and selfless service to the nation. The year 2022 marks the **125th** birth anniversary of him.
- 493. The National Girl Child Day (NGCD)** is observed annually across India on **24th January** to focus on the inequalities faced by girls, to promote the education, health & nutrition of the girl child, and to spread awareness about the rights of a girl child.
- The day was observed for the first time in 2008 as an initiative by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Government of India.
- 494. National Voters Day** is observed annually on **25th January** to create awareness about the need to participate electoral process. The day aims to encourage especially the new voters to register themselves as voters. The day was first observed in 2011.
- The day is also observed to commemorate the foundation day of the Election Commission of India (25th January 1950). This year, the Election Commission of India is celebrating the **12th National Voters Day**.
 - **Theme 2022:** 'Making Elections Inclusive, Accessible and Participative'
 - *Sushil Chandra is the current 24th Chief Election Commissioner of India.*

- 495. International Customs Day** is observed annually on **26th January** to commemorate the inaugural session of the World Customs Organisation (WCO), which was held on this day in 1953. The day also raises awareness about the importance of customs authorities and their role in the smooth movement of goods across borders.
- **Theme 2022:** “Scaling up Customs Digital Transformation by Embracing a Data Culture and Building a Data Ecosystem”.
- 496. International Holocaust Remembrance Day** is observed annually on **27th January** to commemorate the anniversary of the tragedy of the Holocaust, also known as the Shoah, which was the genocide of European Jews during World War II.
- **Theme 2022:** “Memory, Dignity and Justice”.
 - United Nations designated the day in 2005 to serve as a date for official commemoration of the victims of the Nazi regime and to promote Holocaust education throughout the world.
- 497. Data Privacy Day** is observed annually on **28th January** to sensitize individuals and disseminate privacy practices and principles. It encourages everyone to own their privacy responsibilities to create a culture of privacy.
- **Theme 2022:** ‘Privacy Matters’
- 498. World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day** is observed annually on **30th January** to raise awareness about neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) as a critical public health challenge so that we can progress towards their elimination. The 2022 slogan is “From neglect to care”.
- **Theme 2022:** “Achieving health equity to end the neglect of poverty-related diseases”
 - The day was first observed in 2020. The proposal to recognise the day was made by the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- 499. Martyr’s Day or Shaheed Diwas** is observed annually on **30th January** to mark the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The year 2022 marks the **74th death anniversary** of Mahatma Gandhi. The day is observed to remember the sacrifices made by freedom fighters in the struggle for India’s independence and to pay our respects to them.
- The **Raj Ghat** is a memorial site to honour Mahatma Gandhi.

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