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**BREAKING  
NEWS**

February 2022 - Week 2

# WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Stay Updated on all the important news of the second week of February 2022

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## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. **Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL)** has delivered the 5th and final vessel of the 5 Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Vehicle (CGOPV) Project ahead of contractual schedule. The vessel is named **ICGS 'Saksham'**.
  - The contract for 5 CGOPVs was signed by GSL with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) on 26th Aug 2016.
2. Indian army has conducted a first-of-its-kind Hackathon named **"Sainya Ranakshetram"**. The hackathon is conducted in the Military College of Telecommunication Engineering (MCTE), Mhow under the overall guidance of the Shimla-based Army Training Command (ARTRAC), one of the seven commands of the Indian Army. The event is conducted in collaboration with the Rashtriya Raksha University.
3. The President of India, **Ram Nath Kovind** has inaugurated the new **Darbar Hall** at Raj Bhavan, **Mumbai**. The reconstructed Darbar Hall of Raj Bhavan in Mumbai stands on the same place where the Old Darbar Hall stood. However, it has a seating capacity of **750**. Earlier, it had a seating capacity of 225.
4. **Agricultural Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)**, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has celebrated its **36th Foundation Day** on *13<sup>th</sup> February 2022*.
  - APEDA was established by the Government of India under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act passed by the Parliament in **December, 1985**. The Act came into effect from **13th February, 1986**.
  - The target given to APEDA in 2021-22 is 23.7 billion dollar, out of which more than 70 percent has been achieved till January 2022.
5. Senior bureaucrat **S. Kishore** has been appointed as Chairman, **Staff Selection Commission (SSC)** in the rank and pay of Secretary to Government of India by temporarily upgrading the post and keeping the Recruitment Rules of the post in abeyance. Currently, he is working as Special Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
6. **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**, **NITI Aayog**, and the **U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)** have announced a new partnership under the Sustainable Access to Markets and Resources for Innovative Delivery of Healthcare (SAMRIDH) initiative.  
**Objectives:**
  - To focus on innovation across the healthcare landscape.

- To improve access to affordable and quality healthcare for vulnerable populations in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, and rural and tribal regions.
- To mobilize a capital pool of \$100+ million from the private sector and bilateral organizations. It leverages this fund to offer both grant and debt financing provision to support the expansion of market-based health solutions.

7. The Central Government has recently approved the umbrella scheme of **Modernisation of State Police Forces (MPF)** for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26. The scheme has a total financial outlay of **Rs. 26,275 crore**.

- Under the MPF scheme, provision has been made for law & order, internal security, adoption of modern technology by police, assisting states and union territories for narcotics control.
- It also aims to “strengthen the criminal justice system by developing a robust forensic set-up in India”.
- Central government will provide Rs 4,846 crore to modernize state police forces.

8. The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry **Piyush Goyal** and **Australian** Minister of Trade, Tourism and Investment, **Dan Tehan** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote tourism that has been severely hit by the coronavirus pandemic between two countries.

9. **Seven AAI airports** namely **Chennai, Kolkata, Goa, Pune, Patna, Bhubaneswar and Chandigarh** that participated in ACI-ASQ (Airport Service Quality) survey in 2021 have been chosen for **Voice of Customer Recognition 2021** under Airports Council International (ACI) World's Voice of the Customer initiative.

10. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has signed an agreement with a Bengaluru-based NewSpace Research & Technologies to develop a **High Altitude Pseudo Satellite (HAPS)**. HAPS will be able to conduct surveillance operations and support communications by staying airborne for months at a stretch.

- The project is mentored under MoD's Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) initiative, the program has been supported by the armed forces and will see Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) as the lead prototype development partner.
- HAPS UAV will fly in the stratosphere for months.
- The estimated budget to develop the system is upwards of Rs.700 crore and it will be part of HALs Combat Air Teaming System (CATS)



11. Scientists from **Space Applications Centre (SAC)** and **Physical Research Laboratory (PRL)** have successfully demonstrated quantum entanglement using real-time **Quantum Key Distribution (QKD)**, a major step forward towards satellite-based quantum communication.
- The demonstration for hack-proof quantum communication has been conducted at SAC between two places separated by 300 meters.
12. The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has successfully launched the **Earth Observation Satellite (EOS) – 04**, also known as Radar Imaging Satellite (RISAT), from the First Launch Pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- The **PSLV- C52 rocket** carried two small satellites and Earth Observation Satellite (EOS) – 04.
    - The two small satellites are **INSPIRESat – 1** and **INS – 2TD**.
  - This is the first launch of 2022.
13. Professor **Dinesh Prasad Saklani** has been appointed as the new Director of the **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)** for a period of 5 years with effect from the date of assumption of charge of the post, or till he attains the age of 65 years, or until further orders, whichever is earlier. He has succeeded Hrushikesh Senapaty, who finished his term a year ago.
14. **India** has become the first country in the world to administer a DNA vaccine against COVID-19. The **ZyCoV-D** which is the World's first plasmid DNA vaccine has been produced by Ahmedabad-based vaccine manufacturer Zydus Cadila and it is administered for the first time in Patna.
- It is a painless and needleless vaccine given at intervals of 28 days and 56 days.
  - It is the second India-made vaccine to get emergency authorization in India after Bharat Biotech's Covaxin.
15. The Ministry of Education (MoE) has appointed **Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit** as the new Vice-Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) for a period of 5 years. She is the first women Vice-Chancellor of JNU. She has succeeded M Jagadesh Kumar, who has been appointed as Chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

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16. Union Minister for Power and New Renewable Energy R K Singh has virtually launched '**Powerthon-2022**', a hackathon competition under RDSS (Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme) to find technology driven solutions to solve the complex problems in power distribution and to ensure quality and reliable power supply.
- **REC Limited** has signed an MoU with the **Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SINE)** under **IIT Bombay** as 'Incubator cum Technology Partner' for organizing Powerthon-2022.
17. Union Health Minister, Mansukh Mandaviya has virtually launched the **Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 4.0** that aims to protect children and pregnant women from life-threatening diseases. India is running the largest inoculation drive globally in which more than **3 crore pregnant women** and **2.6 crore children** are covered through Universal Immunisation Programme annually.
- The IMI 4.0 will have three rounds and it will be conducted across **416 districts**, across 33 states and UTs. It also includes 75 districts identified for Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.
  - Mission Indradhanush is a health mission of the Government of India. It was launched by Union Health Minister J. P. Nadda on **25th December 2014**. It was launched for covering partially and unvaccinated children and pregnant women, in pockets of high-risk, hard-to-reach and low immunisation coverage areas.
18. The Union Cabinet has recently approved the continuation of the **Indian Footwear and Leather Development Programme (IFLDP)** for five years from **2021-22 to 2025-26**.
- The total financial outlay sanctioned for the programme is **Rs.1700 crore**.
  - The programme will provide **Rs 500 crores** of financial assistance for technological up gradation. The sectoral units shall use this amount for their modernisation.
  - The programme will also provide **Rs 100 crores** of financial assistance for developing design studios.
  - **Objective:** To develop infrastructure for the leather sector, which can address environmental concerns specific to the leather sector, facilitate additional investments, employment generation and increase in production.
  - The scheme is implemented by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
19. The **Ministry of Finance** has released the monthly **Post Devolution Revenue Deficit (PDRD)** Grant of **Rs.9,871 crore** to 17 States. This is the 11th installment of the PDRD grant released to the States.
- The Fifteenth Finance Commission has recommended a total Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant of **Rs. 1,18,452 crore** to 17 States in the financial year 2021-22.

20. The **Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIMK)** and the **Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO)**, **NITI Aayog** have recently inked a Statement of Intent (Sol) on Institutional Partnership to strengthen the overall monitoring and evaluation environment in India, with special focus on building a data monitoring and evaluation stack.
21. Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways **Nitin Gadkari** has been felicitated with the **18th Late Madhavrao Limaye award** in the category of **Karyaksham Khaasdar** (Efficient Member of Parliament) for the year 2020-21
- **Late Madhavrao Limaye:** He was a journalist, writer and social, educational guide and activist from Nashik, Maharashtra. He had a close relationship with the Sarvajanic Vachanalay.
22. The Indian Space & Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully decommissioned the **INSAT-4B**, an Indian communications satellite that forms part of the Indian National Satellite System through **11<sup>th</sup> re-orbiting manoeuvres** that pushed the satellite into the desired orbit mandated by the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) guidelines.
- The INSAT-4B has completed around **14 years** of on-orbit operations.
  - This is the **21<sup>st</sup> Indian Geostationary Earth Orbit (GEO) satellite** to undergo post-mission disposal.
23. The **Indian Institute of Technology, Madras** has recently established '**AquaMAP**', an interdisciplinary water management and policy centre to solve water problems in India.
- AquaMAP aims to develop the capability to address complex real-life water problems through consortia approach and set up a hydro-informatics laboratory.
  - It proposes to address at least three chronic water issues and conduct pilot studies in **six water innovation villages** and towns that can be showcased as replicable models for water management and policy implementation within the country.
24. The **Indian Railway Protection Force** has launched a nationwide operation to **curb human trafficking** named '**Operation AAHT**'. The Railways, which operate about 21,000 trains across the country daily, is the most reliable mode of transportation for the traffickers who often move their victims on long-distance trains.
- As part of "Operation AAHT", special teams will be deployed on all long-distance trains/routes with focus on rescuing victims, particularly women and children, from the clutches of traffickers.
  - The infrastructure and intelligence network of the force could be utilised to collect, collate and analyse clues on victims, source, route, destination, popular trains used by suspects, identity of carriers/agents, kingpins etc. and shared with other law-enforcing agencies.

25. The Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has recently decided to develop **five Light houses** in the state of **Odisha**. The Light Houses are to be built in Public – Private Partnership mode in the 4 districts of Odisha. They are:

- Gopalpur Lighthouse – District Ganjam
- Puri Lighthouse – District Puri
- Chandrabhaga Lighthouse – District Puri
- Paradip Lighthouse – District Jagatsinghpur
- False Point Lighthouse – District Kendrapara

The lighthouses are maintained by the Directorate General of Lighthouses and lightships under the Ministry of Shipping.

26. India's first commercial-scale biomass-based hydrogen plant will be set up in the **Khandwa** district of **Madhya Pradesh**. The plant will produce a tonne of hydrogen per day, from 30 tonnes of biomass feedstock. It will also produce biochar and methane.

- The plant is being put up by a joint venture of **Watomo Energies Ltd** and **Biezel Green Energy**.
- It will be set up with an investment of **Rs.24 crore**.
- Biezel Green is the technology partner.

27. **Atal Tunnel** has officially been certified by World Book of Records as the '**World's Longest Highway Tunnel above 10,000 Feet**'. It was built by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO). **Atal Tunnel:**

- The **9.02-km tunnel** is the longest highway tunnel in the world above the height of 3,000 metres.
- It is present on the **Pir Panjal Range** of Himalayas.
- It connects **Manali**, Himachal Pradesh to **Lahaul-Spiti valley**, Himachal Pradesh.

28. NITI Aayog has announced the five most improved aspirational districts in the Agriculture and Water Resources sector for Champions of Change Delta Ranking, December 2021.

- **Malkangiri in Odisha** has topped NITI Aayog's list of 'Most Improved Aspirational Districts in Agriculture and Water Resources Sector' for the month of December, 2021.
- It is followed by Chhatarpur in Madhya Pradesh, Baramulla in J&K, Ramgarh in Jharkhand and Begusarai in Bihar.

29. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has launched the **first colour souvenir coin** on '**Panchtantra**' on the occasion of 17th foundation day of Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Limited (SPMCIL).



- Panchtantra is an ancient Indian collection of animal fables or stories. It was written by **Vishnu Sharma** during the period of Gupta rule. The book was originally written in the Sanskrit language.
- 30.** The central government has set a target to replace diesel with renewable energy in the agriculture sector by **2024**. The aim is to ensure the State's participation in fulfilling India's climate commitments and each State and UT can be assigned an energy savings target.
- This is done in line with the government's commitment to increase the share of non-fossil fuels by 2030 and become a net-zero emitter by **2070**.
- 31.** The FICCI's Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy (CASCADE) has announced to observe **11<sup>th</sup> February** as **Anti-Smuggling Day** every year.
- The day will gather momentum and bring together policymakers, international institutions, enforcement agencies, industry members, media, and consumers for their commitment to take action to fight against the global menace of smuggling.
  - The day will represent a major step in the fight against the global menace of smuggling.
- 32.** Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, has inaugurated the **14.5-kilometre** long 'Rail-cum-Road-Bridge' over the Ganga River at **Munger** in Bihar. The bridge has been constructed on NH 333B at the cost of **Rs.696 crore**.
- The new bridge will reduce travel time, give a boost to tourism, agriculture as well as generate employment opportunities.
  - With the construction of this bridge, the distance from Munger to Khagaria will be less than 100 km and the distance from Munger to Begusarai will be less than 20 km.

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## STATES AFFAIRS

- 33.** The **Rajasthan government** has signed a Memorandum of understanding (MoU) and letters of intent (LOI) with major players in the renewable energy sector capturing investment of **Rs 3.05 lakh crore** under the **Invest Rajasthan Campaign**.
- With this investment, more than **90,000 MW** of renewable energy will be produced in the state.

- The companies included 5 PSUs -- NTPC, NHPC, SJVN Limited, THDC India Ltd and SECI -- and private players such as Reliance, Axis and SAEL.
  - Reliance New Energy Solar Limited, a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Limited, has signed an Lol for investing **Rs 1 lakh crore** for the generation of **20,000 MW** solar power.
  - NTPC has signed an Lol for investment of **Rs 40,000 crore** to generate **10 GW**.

**34. Maharashtra's Health Minister Rajesh Tope** has recently announced to launch **"Hope Express"** to prevent cancer. The government promised to take initiative to start Hope Express in every district of the state through district planning.

- He has also launched a state-of-the-art Mosaic-3D radiation machine at a private hospital in Kolhapur.
  - This is the first such machine in India.
- He has also inaugurated the Oncoprime Cancer Centre online at the Hattarki Hospital in Gadhinglaj.

**35. Bollywood star Akshay Kumar** has been appointed as the brand ambassador of the state of Uttarakhand ahead of the 2022 Assembly Elections. Earlier, he was appointed as Uttarakhand's brand ambassador for 'Swachhata Abhiyan' in 2017.

- In December 2021, Indian cricketer Rishabh Pant has been appointed as the brand ambassador of the state of Uttarakhand.

**36. The ancient festival of 'Kanchoth' or 'Gauri Tritya'** is observed annually by the **Nag followers** during the Shukla Paksha of Magh month which usually falls in January or February. The festival is observed with religious fervour across the **Chenab valley** region of **Jammu & Kashmir**.

- The **3-day festival** is celebrated by married women who pray for the long life of their husbands.
- The festival is mainly celebrated by Nag followers, who believe that on this day, Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati got married.

**37. The state government of West Bengal** has recently launched an open-air classroom programme **Paray Shikshalaya (Neighbourhood Schools)** for primary and pre-primary students.

- Under the 'Paray Shikshalaya' project, primary and pre-primary students of government schools will be taught in open spaces.
- The state government will also provide mid-day meals to the students of 'Paray Shikshalaya'.
- The para teachers and primary school teachers will be part of this project.

- They will provide elementary education to children of Class 1-5.

- 38.** The **British Council**, a UK Government agency that promotes educational opportunities and cultural exchange, has signed a **3-year** Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Telangana Government** to renew the partnership in the areas of education, English language and arts.
- The British Council has also signed an agreement with **Research and Innovation Circle of Hyderabad (RICH)** to work closely to engineer new partnerships between universities, research institutions and centres of excellence in the UK and in Telangana.
- 39.** The government of **Jammu and Kashmir** has signed an agreement with **New Zealand** for the transformation of the sheep farming sector in the Union Territory. This collaboration aims to improve farmers' remuneration, transfer of technology in research and development as well as marketing and value addition of sheep products of Jammu and Kashmir.
- 40.** Lieutenant Governor of J&K Manoj Sinha has launched the Quick Response (QR) Code-based mechanism to certify handmade carpets in the Union Territory of **Jammu & Kashmir**.
- The handmade carpets in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) will now get QR code-based certification, which is a first-of-its-kind in India.
  - With the QR-based application, customers can check and verify authenticity and other requisite details of carpets produced in Jammu and Kashmir.
- 41.** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has recently launched the **J & K Single Window Clearance System** integrated with the National Single Window system to facilitate investments in Jammu and Kashmir.
- With this, **J&K** has become the first UT to be integrated with the National Single Window System.
  - Now global investors can apply for all their business approvals in J&K through the National Single Window system.
  - As many as 130 industrial services have been made online on a single window system & more than 160 services will be integrated this year.
- 42.** The **UN Environment Programme (UNEP)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Maharashtra government** to support its 'Majhi Vasundhara' campaign, an initiative about the energy and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.
- **'Majhi Vasundhara' (literally, My Earth)** is an initiative of the Government of Maharashtra's Environment and Climate Change Department.

- **Objective:** To empower citizens with knowledge on the impacts of climate change and environmental issues and encourage them to make a conscious effort towards the improvement of the environment.
43. The state government of **Gujarat** has recently announced a new **IT/ITeS policy** for the next five years providing financial incentives of up to **Rs. 200 crores** to the entities willing to incur capital expenditures.
- **Objective:** To generate employment for about 1 lakh people during the next five years.
  - It also seeks to increase Gujarat's IT-ITeS exports from the current Rs. 3,000 crore annually to Rs.25,000 crore over the next five years.
  - The operative period of the new policy will start from the day of notification till 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027.
  - The policy provides support for both capital (CAPEX) and operational (OPEX) expenditures.

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## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

44. **India** has agreed to provide a grant to **Sri Lanka** to implement a '**Unitary Digital Identity Framework**' (**UDIF**), apparently modelled on the Aadhaar Card.
- Under the Unitary Digital Identity Framework, a personal identity verification device will be introduced, based on biometric data, which is a digital tool to represent identities of individuals in cyberspace. Identification of individual identities can be accurately verified in physical and digital environments by combining two devices.
45. The **ASEAN-India High-Level Conference on Renewable Energy** has been organized by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India on February 7-8, 2022. The conference has been held under the theme "**Experience and Innovations for Integrated Renewables Market**".
- On the occasion, Union Minister of Power and New & Renewable Energy R K Singh has highlighted that India and ASEAN can together develop an entire ecosystem for renewable energy (RE).
  - Both will also explore the joint initiative to build RE manufacturing hubs in the region.



46. The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** has selected two science missions named '**Multi-slit Solar Explorer (MUSE)**' and '**HelioSwarm**' to help better understand the dynamics of the Sun, the **Sun-Earth** connection, and the constantly changing space environment.
- Both the mission will provide deeper insights into the universe as well as offer critical information, for protecting astronauts, satellites, and communications signals like GPS.
47. **Israel** has become the first country to allow drones to operate in civilian airspace. The Ministry of Transport and Road Safety of Israel has announced the certification for unmanned aircraft vehicles (UAVs) to operate in civilian airspace.
- Hermes Starliner Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) is the first UAV to receive such a certification.
48. Peruvian President Pedro Castillo has recently appointed **Anibal Torres** as the new **Prime Minister of Peru**. He has succeeded Hector Valer who served as PM for just 3-days.
49. **One Ocean Summit 2022** has been organized by **France** from 9<sup>th</sup> February to 11<sup>th</sup> February 2022, in cooperation with the World Bank and United Nations in Brest. It has been held in light of French Presidency of the Council of European Union. It has been organised with the objective of mobilising international community to take tangible action to support and preserve healthy and sustainable ocean ecosystems.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also participated virtually and addressed the high-level segment of the One Ocean Summit.
  - The summit is also addressed by several other heads of states and governments from the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, South Korea, and Canada.
  - During the summit, UNESCO pledges to have at least 80% of the seabed mapped by 2030.

## REPORTS & INDICES

50. The **National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog** has released a report titled '**Reimagining Healthcare in India through Blended Finance**'.
- As per the report, around **65 percent of hospital beds** in the country cater to almost **50 percent of the population** concentrated in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, West Bengal and Kerala.
  - The report added that the other 50 percent of the country's population living in the remaining 21 states and 8 Union Territories (UTs) has access to only 35 percent of hospital beds.
  - The report stressed that the number of beds must be increased by at least 30 percent to ensure equitable access to healthcare facilities for people.

- The report pointed that India's health care spending is **3.6% of GDP**, including out-of-pocket and public expenditure and the combined total government expenditure of both central and state is **1.29 percent of GDP**.
  - **India spends the least among BRICS countries.**
- According to the report, the hospital sector in India accounts for **80 percent** of the total healthcare market.
  - It was valued at **USD 61.79 billion** in **FY17** and is expected to reach **USD 132 billion** by **2023**, growing at a CAGR of **16-17 percent**.
- The market size for telemedicine in India (USD 830 million, as of 2019) is projected to increase to **USD 5.5 billion** by **2025**, growing at a CAGR of **31 percent** during 2020-25.

- 51.** As per the data (2020 data) released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India is the **Fifth largest exporter of millets** in the world, with exports continuously increasing at around **3 percent CAGR** in the last five years ending with 2020.
- India is the world leader in the production of millets with a share of around **41 percent** of total world production in 2020.
  - India produces around 12 million MT of millets annually, according to Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare data.
  - In 2020-21, India has exported millets worth **\$26.97 million** as against \$28.5 million in 2019-20.
    - The top three importers of millets from India in 2020-21 are **Nepal** (\$6.09 million), **UAE** (\$4.84 million), and **Saudi Arabia** (\$3.84 million).
  - World export of millet has increased from \$380 million in 2019 to **\$402.7 million** in 2020.
    - Globally, major exporters of millets are the USA, Russian Federation, Ukraine, India, China, Netherlands, France, Poland and Argentina.
    - Global exports of millets in 2020 stood at \$466.284 million.
- 52.** The **US Green Building Council (USGBC)** has released the 9<sup>th</sup> annual ranking of top 10 countries outside of the United States for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) in 2021.
- As per the ranking, **China** has topped the list with **1,077 LEED projects** certified in 2021, followed by Canada at 2<sup>nd</sup> position with 205 projects.
  - **India** has been ranked **third** in the list with **146 projects**, representing nearly 2.8 million gross area square meters (GSM) of space.
    - This marks a nearly 10 percent increase in LEED-certified space in India from 2020.
- 53.** Geo-location technology specialist TomTom has released the 11th edition of its annual TomTom Traffic Index 2021. It is a report analysing traffic trends seen in 404 cities in 58 countries, during 2021.

- As per the index, **Istanbul, Turkey** has been declared as the most congested city in the world, followed by Moscow, Russia.
- In India, **Mumbai** has been declared as the most congested city. It has been ranked **5<sup>th</sup>** in the index.
  - Bengaluru – 10<sup>th</sup>
  - Delhi – 11<sup>th</sup>
  - Pune – 21<sup>st</sup>
- As per the report, India's congestion level in 2021 was 23% lower than pre-Covid times, with a decrease of 31% specifically during peak hours.

**54.** The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2021/2022 report has been unveiled at the Dubai Expo. The report has gathered data via a survey of at least 2,000 respondents across each of 47 high, medium and low-income economies.

- As per the report, **India** is among the top five easiest places to start a new business. It has been **ranked 4<sup>th</sup>** globally.
- It is topped by **Saudi Arabia** and followed by Netherlands, & Sweden.

*GEM began in 1999 as a joint project between Babson College (USA) and London Business School (UK). It is headquartered in London, UK.*

**55. Democracy Index 2021:** The **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)** has released its report on the state of democracy in 2021 across 165 independent countries and two territories.

- The report is based on five categories – electoral process and pluralism, Functioning of the government, Political participation, Political culture, and Civil liberties.
- The report has been further bifurcated into a full democracy, flawed democracy, hybrid regime, and authoritarian.

#### Highlights of the Democracy Index 2021:

Top 5	Country	Score	Bottom 5	Country	Score
1	Norway	9.75	163	Central African Republic	1.43
2	New Zealand	9.37	164	Dem. Republic of Congo	1.40
3	Finland	9.27	165	North Korea	1.08
4	Sweden	9.26	166	Myanmar	1.02
5	Iceland	9.18	167	Afghanistan	0.32

- Asia remains the fourth-ranked region in the Democracy Index 2021, after North America, Western Europe and Latin America.

**India's ranking:** India has been ranked **46th** on the global index in the **flawed democracy category** with an overall score of **6.91**.

- It has the lowest score of 5 on political culture and the highest score of 8.67 on electoral process and pluralism. It scores 6.18 on civil liberties, 7.22 on political participation, and 7.50 on the functioning of government.
- *India was ranked 53<sup>rd</sup> in the 2020 Democracy Index.*

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## GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

### 1) Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY):

The Central government has recently extended the '**Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)**' till **March 2026** with an allocation of **Rs 4,600 crore**. It has been extended for a period of 2021-22 to 2025-26.

- It is a **Central Sector Umbrella Scheme**.
- It was launched in **2016** as "Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters" or SAMPADA, which was proposed to be implemented with an allocation of Rs 6,000 crore for 2016-20. The scheme was renamed as Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY) in August 2017.
- It is implemented by the **Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)**.
- **Objectives:**
  - To supplement agriculture.
  - To create processing and preservation capacities.
  - To modernise and expand existing food processing units with a view to increasing the level of processing.
  - To add value leading to the reduction of wastage.

### 2) PM-CARES Fund:

According to the latest audited statement of **Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM-CARES Fund)**, the total corpus under the PM CARES Funds in



FY 2020-21 is **Rs 10,990.17 crore**. While Rs 3,976.17 crore is spent from the fund in FY 2020-21.

- As on March 31, 2021, the Fund had an unspent balance of **Rs 7,013.99 crore**.
- The government has used a part of the money to buy medical equipment, including ventilators, to boost the battle against the COVID-19 and has also provided relief to migrants.
- The highest amount is spent on Procurement of 6.6 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccine i.e. **Rs 1,392.82 crore**.
- The fund recorded nearly Rs 494.91 crore as foreign contributions and over Rs 7,183 crore as voluntary contributions during the fiscal.
- PM CARES fund is a dedicated national fund with the primary objective of dealing with any kind of emergency or distress situation like posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It was established on **27<sup>th</sup> March 2020**.
- **Prime Minister** is the ex-officio Chairman of the PM CARES Fund.

### 3) Voluntary Retention Route (VRR) Scheme:

The Reserve Bank of India introduced the Voluntary Retention Route (VRR) for investments by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) on March 01, 2019. An amount of ₹ 1,50,000 crore was offered for investment through VRR, in three tranches so far; of which around ₹1,49,995 crore have been availed as on February 10, 2022.

The RBI has increased the investment limits available under the VRR. The increased investment limits shall be open for allotment from April 01, 2022 as per the following details:-

- The investment limit under VRR has been increased to **₹ 2,50,000 crore**.
- The investment limit available for fresh allotment shall accordingly be ₹1,04,800 crore (net of extant allotments and adjustments); and shall be allotted under the VRR–Combined category.
- The minimum retention period shall be **three years**.
- Investment limits shall be available **‘on tap’** and allotted on **‘first come, first served’** basis.
- The ‘tap’ shall be kept open till the limit is fully allotted.
- FPIs may apply for investment limits online to **Clearing Corporation of India Ltd. (CCIL)** through their respective custodians.

### 4) SMILE scheme:

The **Department of Social Justice & Empowerment** has recently launched the **SMILE** scheme to provide welfare measures to Transgender community and people engaged in begging.

- SMILE stands for **Support for Marginalized Individual for Livelihood and Enterprise**.
- It is a central sector scheme launched by Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment Dr Virendra Kumar.
- The scheme comprises of **two sub-schemes** namely,
  - Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons.
  - Central Sector Scheme for Comprehensive Rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of Begging.

- The sub-schemes will be implemented by National Coordinators along with a suitable ministry.
- The ministry has allocated **Rs. 365 crore** for the scheme for the financial year 2021-22 to 2025-26.

### 5) Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM):

The National Health Authority (NHA) under its flagship scheme of **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)** has announced the integration with health App - **Aarogya Setu**. This integration takes the benefits of **14-digit** unique Ayushman Bharat Health Account-ABHA number to the Aarogya Setu user base and beyond.

Under ABDM, a user can generate their unique ABHA number. They can use this ABHA number to link their existing and new medical records including doctor prescriptions, lab reports, and hospital records.

The **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)** is a digital health ecosystem under which every Indian citizen will now have unique health IDs, digitised health records with identifiers for doctors and health facilities.

- Initially, the pilot project of the mission was launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15th August 2020. The project is being implemented in the pilot phase in six States & Union Territories.
- It was launched nationwide in **September 2021**.
- It comes under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.
- The **National Health Authority** has been given the mandate to design, build, roll-out and implement the mission in the country.

## BUSINESS & ECONOMY

- 56.** The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of **athenahealth Group, Inc.** by funds managed and advised by Hellman & Friedman LLC (H&F), Bain Capital Investors LLC (Bain), GIC Special Investments Pte. Ltd. (GICSI), and Minerva Holdco, Inc.
- 57.** The **Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL)** has delivered the three **Floating Border Out-Post (FBOPs)** vessels to the Border Security Force (BSF) for its water wing.
- With this, the Shipyard has delivered **six vessels** out of nine FBOPs being built for the BSF.
  - These 3 vessels will be deployed at **Sundarbans** near Indo-Bangladesh border waters.
- 58.** The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of a certain stake in Sajjan India Ltd by Sona Company. The proposed transaction relates to investment in Sajjan India by way of the acquisition of equity shares of the Sajjan India Limited by Sona Company.

- 59. Reliance New Energy (RNEL)** has acquired an additional **10.37% stake** in **Sterling & Wilson Renewable Energy (SWREL)** for Rs.738 crore from its promoters. After the acquisition, RNEL holds **40.00%** of the total paid-up equity share capital of SWREL.
- 60. The Indian Institute of Management, Sambalpur (IIM-S)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Flipkart** to promote weavers and artisan business through digital platforms and start-up enterprises.
- Under this MoU, IIM Sambalpur will identify clusters of artisans and weavers within Odisha to onboard them with Flipkart's Samarth program, connecting their businesses to a pan-India customer base.
- 61. THDC India Ltd (THDCIL)** has signed the letter of intent (LoI) to build **10,000 MW** solar power projects in **Rajasthan** with an estimated investment of Rs 40,000 crore.
- The land bank will be allocated by the Government of Rajasthan through RRECL.
  - The RE parks will be implemented through a special purpose vehicle in the term of a joint venture with RRECL in the ratio of 74:26.
- This will also contribute towards the RE capacity addition target of 500 gigawatts (GW) by 2030.
- 62. The Bangladesh railways** will procure **420 broad-gauge wagons** from India. The agreement has been signed in Dhaka between the project director of Bangladesh railways Mizanur Rahman and the Hindustan Engineering and Industries Limited (HEIL).
- The total cost of the agreement is **Tk. 231 crores (Rs.200 crore)**.
  - The wagons will be delivered within 27 months of the signing of the contract.
- 63. NITI Aayog**, in collaboration with **PhonePe, AWS, and EY**, has organized a three-week-long virtual summit, '**Fintech Open**', from 7–28 February 2022.
- The summit has been inaugurated by Union Minister for Railways, Communications, and Electronics and IT, Ashwini Vaishnaw in the presence of NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Dr. Rajiv Kumar.
  - Fintech Open, a first-of-its-kind initiative, will bring together regulators, fintech professionals and enthusiasts, industry leaders, the start-up community, and developers to collaborate, exchange ideas, and innovate.
- 64. Instagram** has launched the '**Take a Break**' feature in all countries, including India, to empower people to make informed decisions about the way they are spending their time.
- This feature will be promoted in India through a campaign, in partnership with 'We The Young', called '**Break Zaroori Hai**'.

- This feature is an optional one and users can pick between 10-minute, 20-minute, or 30-minute intervals for reminders on the app to get off it.
- Instagram's younger users are the main target audience for this feature

**65. Microsoft India** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Larsen & Toubro (L&T)** to develop a cloud offering focused on the regulated sector.

- **Objective:** To modernise traditional data centres to potentially hybrid cloud architecture.
- Under the MoU, the companies will set up a joint governance group to define future platform designs, investments, and commercial/business models to help fulfil the emerging technology requirements of the regulated sector.
- The MoU will focus on customers in the Indian jurisdiction, with the potential to extend this partnership to other jurisdictions in the future.

**66. ReNew Power** has commissioned Gujarat's first wind-solar hybrid project of **17.6 MW** at the Chlor-Alkali unit of Grasim Industries Ltd in **Vilayat, Bharuch**, in southern Gujarat. The project is being developed by ReNew Green Solutions (RGS), the B2B arm of ReNew Power.

ReNeW Power and Grasim Industries have entered into a **25-year PPA** (power purchase agreement), which will see the project supply power for the plant at Vilayat, Bharuch, via an open access mechanism.

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## BANKING & FINANCE

**67. Airtel Payments Bank** has partnered with **ICICI Lombard General Insurance** to offer insurance solutions against cyber-crimes and financial frauds to its customers.

- The cyber insurance solution from ICICI Lombard provides financial protection to customers against potential financial fraud relating to banking, credit or debit card; identity theft; phishing or email spoofing, and more.
- Airtel Payments Bank customers can purchase this cyber insurance policy using the **Airtel Thanks app**.
- The policy will provide a **90-day** discovery period followed by a **seven-day** reporting period.



- 68. Amazon India** has recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with **Karnataka State Rural Livelihood Promotion Society (KSRLPS)** to support the growth of women entrepreneurs.
- Amazon India will launch **Sanjeevini-KSRLPS** in its platform and extend benefits of the **'Saheli' programme** to train and empower thousands of rural women entrepreneurs to come online and access a wider market for their products.
  - This association will boost the demand of indigenous unique products from categories like grocery, home, and fashion accessories made by over 30,000 women entrepreneurs and self-help groups (SHGs) associated with Sanjeevini-KSRLPS online.
- 69. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** has launched an agro ecology-based programme **JIVA** to promote natural farming under its existing watershed and wadi programmes in 11 states covering five agro ecological zones, which are in ecologically fragile and rain-fed areas.
- 70. Aditya Birla Health Insurance Co. Limited. (ABHICL)** has signed a bancassurance agreement with **Utkarsh Small Finance Bank** for the distribution of health insurance products through the lender's network of branches across India. With this new partnership, Aditya Birla Health now has 12 bancassurance partners with over 51,120+ direct selling agents all over India.
- 71. As per the Comscore report, Paytm** has the highest penetration in digital payments with over **45% penetration** in Fintech. It is followed by Google Pay at 43% penetration (reach as percentage of total digital population).
- Paytm's revenue from operations grew 89 percent Y-o-Y in Q3FY22 to Rs.1,456 crore. Revenue from financial services and payments grew 98 percent Y-o-Y in Q3FY22 to Rs.1,116.8 crore.
  - As per the Q3FY22 earnings report, Paytm's monthly transacting users (MTU) grew consistently to 64.4 million, up by 37 percent Y-o-Y and 12 percent quarter-on-quarter (Q-o-Q).
- 72. Bank of Baroda (BoB)** has recently decided to acquire **21% stake** in IndiaFirst Life Insurance Company from Union Bank of India.
- IndiaFirst Life Insurance Company is a joint venture between Bank of Baroda, Union Bank of India and Carmel Point Investments.
  - The acquisition is pursuant to a 'Right of First Offer' (ROFO) made by Union Bank of India (UBI) to the existing shareholders of IndiaFirst Life to divest 21% of its stake in the life insurance company.

- On completion of this acquisition, the shareholding in IndiaFirst Life Insurance Company will be Bank of Baroda-65%, Carmel Point Investments India-26% and Union Bank of India-9%.

- 73. Razorpay** has acquired a majority stake in Malaysian payments startup **Curlec** for over **\$19 million**. Razorpay expects to complete the full acquisition in the next one-and-a-half years. The Kuala Lumpur-based, Curlec builds solutions for recurring payments for businesses. This marks Razorpay's fourth acquisition overall and its first in the international markets.
- 74. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has emerged as the **second-largest buyer of gold** among the world's Central Banks in 2021. The largest buyer, the **Central Bank of Thailand**, has bought 90 metric tonnes of gold while RBI has bought 77.5 metric tonnes taking its total gold reserve to **754.1 tonnes** at the end of December 2021, which amounts to 6.22 percent of India's forex reserves.
- India's official gold reserves are the **ninth largest** in the world, as per Goldhub, the official website of the World Gold Council that maintains all the data regarding precious metals.
  - As per RBI data, India's total reserves at the end of December 31, 2021 stood at **\$633.61 billion**, including gold reserves worth **\$39.405 billion**.
- 75. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has extended the restrictions on **Millath Co-Operative Bank, Devangere (Karnataka)**, by another **three months** till 7<sup>th</sup> May 2022.
- As per the directions issued first on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019, withdrawals were capped at Rs.1,000 from any account. The directions have been periodically extended till now.
- 76. RBL Bank** has partnered with **Creditas Solutions** for its SaaS (software as a service) – based '**Neo Collections**' platform to automate loan collections. This platform, powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) technology, is a Do It Yourself (DIY) debt management platform, will help the customers seamlessly monitor, manage and pay their dues.
- 77. HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company** has launched a '**Cyber sachet insurance policy**' to mitigate cyber-related, digital risks for individual customers and keep their internet insured.
- HDFC ERGO General Insurance has also entered into a first-of-its-kind partnership with **Visa**, the global leader in digital payments to offer curated insurance covers for Visa's Platinum cardholders for select Public Sector banks.

78. **Paisabazaar.com**, a digital platform for consumer credit, has tied up with **RBL Bank** to offer '**Paisa on Demand**' (**PoD**), a credit card. The credit card will be exclusively available on the Paisabazaar platform. This is the third product under Paisabazaar's neo-lending strategy.
79. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been conducting Financial Literacy Week (FLW) every year since **2016** to propagate financial education messages on various themes among members of public across the country.
- The theme selected for current year FLW is "**Go Digital, Go Secure**" which will be observed between **February 14-18, 2022**. This theme is one of the strategic objectives of the National Strategy for Financial Education 2020-2025. Focus will be on creating awareness about (a) *Convenience of digital transactions*; (b) *Security of digital transactions*; and (c) *Protection of customers*.
  - Banks have been advised to disseminate the information and create awareness among their customers and general public. Further, RBI will undertake mass media campaign during the month of February 2022 to disseminate essential financial awareness messages to the general public.
80. **DBS Bank India** has partnered with **Stellapps Digital Network**, a leading dairy-tech startup, to promote digitisation amongst small dairies across India. This initiative aligns with DBS Bank's commitment to supporting lives and livelihoods through better business and responsible financing.
81. **BSE (Bombay Stock Exchange)** has received in-principle approval from the capital markets regulator **SEBI** (Securities and Exchange Board of India) for introducing Electronic Gold Receipt (EGR) on its platform.
- The Finance Ministry has specified EGR as '**securities**', under the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act 1956.
  - The instruments representing gold will be called EGRs and will be notified as securities, with trading, clearing and settlement features similar to other securities that are currently available in India.
82. The capital markets regulator **SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India)** has recently restructured its **advisory committee on Investor Protection and Education Fund (IPEF)**.
- The eight-member committee will now be chaired by **G Mahalingam**, former Whole Time Member of SEBI. The panel was earlier headed by Abraham Koshy, former professor of IIM-Ahmedabad.

- SEBI has listed Vijay Kumar Venkataraman, chief-trade services at Nurture.farm and former MD and CEO of NCDEX; and Mrin Agarwal, founder of Finsafe India among the new inductees.
- A Balasubramanian, MD and CEO at Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC, and M G Parameswaran, founder of brand-building.com, will continue as a member of the committee.
- The committee also comprises three SEBI officials — executive director GP Garg and chief general managers N Hariharan and Jayanta Jash.

- 83.** The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has recently partnered with **NSE Academy** to launch five online courses to promote financial literacy courses through the NSE Knowledge Hub platform, an online Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) platform.
- The five courses are Banking Fundamentals, MSME Lending, in a Nutshell, Electronic Payment System In India, Priority Sector Lending Norms, and NRI Business & Compliance.

- 84.** The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has maintained status quo on key rates in its sixth bi-monthly policy statement for FY22 (April 2021-March 2022). It has been decided to continue with the '**accommodative stance**' to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and to revive and sustain growth on a durable basis. The meeting has been held from 8th February to 10th February 2022.

- **GDP projection:** RBI has projected India's GDP to expand by **7.8%** in **FY23**.
  - Q1 FY23: 17.2%
  - Q2 FY23: 7%
  - Q3 FY23: 4.3%
  - Q4 FY23: 4.5%
- **CPI Inflation:**
  - CPI inflation forecast for FY22 is retained at **5.3%**.
  - CPI inflation for FY23 is forecasted at **4.5%**
- RBI has enhanced the maximum amount of **e-RUPI prepaid digital vouchers** from ₹10,000 currently to **₹1 lakh**. Now e-RUPI voucher can be used more than once until the amount is fully redeemed.
- MPC has been given the mandate to maintain annual inflation at **4 percent** until **31<sup>st</sup> March 2026**, with an upper tolerance of 6 percent and lower tolerance of 2 percent.

#### Policy rates as of February 2022

<b>Repo rate</b>	4%
<b>Reverse Repo Rate</b>	3.35%
<b>Marginal Standing Facility Rate</b>	4.25%
<b>Bank Rate</b>	4.25%
<b>Reserves Ratio as of February 2022</b>	

Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)	4%
Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR)	18%

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## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

**85.** Indian documentary '**Writing with Fire**' has been nominated in the 'Best Documentary Feature category' at the **94th Academy Awards**. It has been nominated alongside Ascension, Flee, Attica, and Summer of the Soul. Writing with Fire is the only Indian title, to be nominated at Oscar awards 2022.

- Writing with Fire is directed by filmmakers Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh.
- The film is about a rural newspaper run by Dalit women called Khabar Lahariya.
- The newspaper was started by Delhi based NGO Nirantar from Chitrakoot, Bundelkhand region in 2002.
- The documentary shows transition of Khabar Lahariya from print to digital in recent years.

**86.** India's wicket keeper-batsman **Rishabh Pant** has won the '**Test batting**' award for 2021 at the 15th Annual ESPNcricinfo awards for his series-winning knock of 89 against Australia in Brisbane last year.

**Other winners:**

### ESPNcricinfo Awards 2021

<b>Men's Test batting</b>	Rishabh Pant (India)
<b>Men's Test bowling</b>	Kyle Jamieson (New Zealand)
<b>Men's ODI batting</b>	Fakhar Zaman (Pakistan)
<b>Men's ODI bowling</b>	Saqib Mahmood (England)
<b>Men's T20I batting</b>	Jos Buttler (England)
<b>Men's T20I bowling</b>	Shaheen Afridi (Pakistan)
<b>Women's batting</b>	Beth Mooney (Australia)
<b>Women's bowling</b>	Kate Cross (England)
<b>Associate batting</b>	Gerhard Erasmus (Namibia)
<b>Associate bowling</b>	Ruben Trumpelmann (Namibia)
<b>Debutant of the year</b>	Ollie Robinson (England)
<b>Captain of the year</b>	Kane Williamson (New Zealand)



## BOOKS & AUTHORS

87. A new book titled **“India–Africa Relations: Changing Horizons”** has been authored by **Rajiv Bhatia**. The book explores the emergence and assertion of Africa as a significant actor and stakeholder in global affairs and the transformation of the relationship between India and Africa. The book is published by Routledge India.

**Other books by him:**

- India in Global Affairs: Perspectives from Sapru House (2015)
- India-Myanmar Relations: Changing contours (2016)

88. A new book titled **“Atal Bihari Vajpayee”** has been authored by **Sagarika Ghose**. It is a biography of the former Prime Minister of India.

Sagarika Ghose is an Indian journalist, columnist and author. She has also authored a book titled **“Indira: India’s Most Powerful Prime Minister”**.

## PERSON IN NEWS

89. **Justice Munishwar Nath Bhandari**, Acting Chief Justice (CJ) of the Madras High Court, has been appointed as the Chief Justice of the **Madras High Court**. He had taken over as the Acting Chief Justice of the Madras High Court after the transfer of Justice Sanjib Banerjee to the Meghalaya High Court in November 2021.

- The Law Ministry has also notified the appointment of a total of 13 advocates and three judicial officers as judges of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh High Courts.

90. **Debashis Mitra** has been elected as the President of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) for the year 2022-23. Whereas, Aniket Sunil Talati has been elected as Vice President of ICAI.

91. **Ruchir Sharma**, the former chief global strategist for Morgan Stanley Investment Management, has been appointed as the Managing Director (MD) & Chairman of Rockefeller Capital Management.

- Books by Ruchir Sharma: The 10 Rules of Successful Nations, The Rise and Fall of Nations: Forces of Change in a Post-Crisis World, and Breakout Nations.

- 92. Sanjay Malhotra** has been named as the Secretary in the Department of Financial Services (DFS) in the Ministry of Finance. He is a 1990 batch IAS officer of the Rajasthan cadre. He has succeeded Debashish Panda, who completed his term as DFS Secretary on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022.
- 93. Frank Walter Steinmeier** has been re-elected as the **President of Germany** for a second term of 5 years. He was elected with a big majority by a special assembly comprising of the members of lower house of parliament and representatives of 16 states of Germany.
- 94.** Footwear major Bata India Limited has roped in Bollywood actor **Disha Patani** as the new face of the brand. With this association, the actor will be seen promoting various popular labels under the Bata umbrella.
- 95.** Leading digital healthcare platform **MediBuddy** has recently appointed legendary Bollywood actor **Amitabh Bachchan** as its brand ambassador. As part of the deal, he will be seen endorsing various services available on the platform, while highlighting the need to prioritise one's health.
- 96. Zara Rutherford**, a 19-year-old Belgian-British pilot, has become the youngest woman to fly solo around the world. She has also become the first woman to circumnavigate the world in a micro light aircraft. She completed her 52,000 kilometres (28,000 nautical miles) journey covering 41 countries in a bespoke Shark UL plane.
- Earlier, American aviator **Shaesta Waiz** became the youngest woman to fly solo around the world in 2017.
- 97.** Scientist and launch vehicle specialist, **Dr S Unnikrishnan Nair** has been appointed as the new director of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC). He has succeeded S Somanath, who has taken over as chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- 98. Pradip Shah** has been appointed as the new chairman of **Pfizer India**. He has succeeded RA Shah who resigned on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022.
- Pradip Shah is the ex-managing director and a founding member of Crisil.
  - He assisted in founding HDFC in 1977.
  - He has also served as a consultant to USAID, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank.
  - He is currently the chairman of IndAsia Fund Advisors.

*Pfizer is an American multinational pharmaceutical and biotechnology corporation headquartered in Manhattan, New York, USA.*

- 99. S.R. Narasimhan**, Director (System Operations) of POSOCO, has assumed the additional charge of the post of Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Power System Operation Corporation Limited (POSOCO).
- Power System Operation Corporation Limited (POSOCO) is a CPSE under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Power. It was established in 2010. It is headquartered in New Delhi.
- 100. Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba**, lieutenant-colonel in the national armed forces of Burkina Faso, has become the new President of Burkina Faso. He has replaced elected President Roch Kaboré.
- 101.** Tata Sons Pvt Ltd board has approved the re-appointment of its executive chairman **N Chandrasekaran** for the period of another five years i.e. from 2022 to 2027.
- 102.** The Krishi Network, an agritech startup company, has appointed Bollywood actor **Pankaj Tripathi** as its Brand Ambassador and investor.

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## OBITUARIES

- 103.** Professor **R Rajamohan**, who was an astronomer at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru, has passed away recently. He is best known for his **Kalki Project**, which aimed to discover asteroids using the 48-cm Schmidt telescope in Kavalur VBO and discovered a new asteroid, number 4130, from India. This was the first asteroid discovered in India in 104 years.
- 104. Praveen Kumar Sobti**, an actor who was well known for portraying the role of '**Bheem**' in BR Chopra's mythological series 'Mahabharata', has passed away recently in New Delhi due to heart attack. He was born on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1947 in Sarhali Kalan, Punjab.
- He was a **hammer and discus thrower** before he became an actor.
- 105. Luc Montagnier**, a French virologist who shared a Nobel Prize for discovering the virus that causes Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), has passed away recently in Paris, France.

- He shared the **2008 Nobel Prize** in Physiology or Medicine for discovery of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) with Francoise Barre-Sinoussi and Germany's Harald zur Hausen.

**106.** Veteran industrialist and head of the Bajaj group, **Rahul Bajaj**, has passed away recently in Pune, Maharashtra. He was born on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1938 in Kolkata, West Bengal.

- He joined the Bajaj group in 1965 and became the CEO of Bajaj Auto in 1968.
- He was a member of the Rajya Sabha for the 2006-2010 period.
- He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in **2001**.

## SPORTS

**107. China PR (People's Republic)** has recently defeated South Korea (Korea Republic) to win the **AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022** final title held at the D.Y. Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai. This is the 9th AFC Women's Asian Cup title won by China. With this, China has qualified for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup to be held in Australia and New Zealand.

- This is the 20th edition of the football AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022.
- It is hosted by India.
  - **Host city:** Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Pune

**108.** The 26<sup>th</sup> edition of the **Tata Open Maharashtra tennis tournament 2022** has been held in Pune, Maharashtra. It is the only ATP tournament played in India. It is annually organised by Maharashtra Lawn Tennis Association (MLTA).

Tata Open Maharashtra 2022	
<b>Men's Singles</b>	João Sousa (Portugal)
<b>Men's Doubles</b>	Rohan Bopanna & Ramkumar Ramanathan (India)

**109. Senegal football team** has won the **2021 Africa Cup of Nations** (AFCON 2021 or CAN 2021) after defeating Egypt in the finals held at Olembe Stadium in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

- It is the 33rd edition of the Africa Cup of Nations, the biennial international men's football championship of Africa organised by the Confederation of African Football (CAF).
- The tournament is hosted by Cameroon.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

**110. Safer Internet Day (SID)** is observed annually on the **second day of the second week of February** to promote the safe and positive use of digital technology, especially among children and young people.

- SID 2022 is observed on **8<sup>th</sup> February 2022**.
- The year 2022 marks the **19<sup>th</sup> edition** of Safer Internet Day.
- **Theme 2022:** Together for a better internet

*The day was started as an initiative of the European Union's (EU's) SafeBorders project in 2004 and was taken up by the Insafe network as one of its earliest actions in 2005.*

**111. World Pulses Day** is observed annually on **10<sup>th</sup> February**. The day has been established by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations to recognize the importance of pulses (dry beans, lentils, dry peas, chickpeas, lupins) as a global food.

- **Theme 2022:** "Pulses to empower youth in achieving sustainable agrifood systems"
- In 2018, the UN General Assembly decided to mark 10 February as World Pulses Day.
- The day was first observed in 2019.

**112. National Deworming Day** is observed annually on 10<sup>th</sup> February to create awareness about the importance of deworming all preschool and school-age children between the ages of 1-19 years.

- It is a bi-annual initiative of the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.
- Annually the **10<sup>th</sup> February** and **10<sup>th</sup> August** are observed as the National Deworming Day.
- The day was first observed in 2015.

*According to World Health Organisation (WHO), around 24 percent of the world population is infected with soil-transmitted helminths (worms). As a result, around 241 million children between the ages of 1 and 14 years are at risk of parasitic intestinal worms in India, known as **soil-transmitted helminths**.*

**113. World Unani Day** is observed annually on **11<sup>th</sup> February** to mark the birth anniversary of great Indian Unani scholar and social reformer **Hakim Ajmal Khan**. The main objective is to spread the awareness in masses and action about healthcare delivery through the Unani system of medicine worldwide through its preventive and curative philosophy.

- The day was first observed in **2017** at the Central Research Institute of Unani Medicine (CRIUM), Hyderabad.

**114. International Day of Women and Girls in Science** is observed annually on **11<sup>th</sup> February** to promote full and equal access to and participation in science for women and girls. The day is implemented by UNESCO and UN-Women in collaboration with institutions and civil society partners.



- **Theme 2022:** "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Water Unites Us"
- The year 2022 marks the **7<sup>th</sup>** International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

**115. National Productivity Day** is observed annually across India on **12<sup>th</sup> February** to encourage the implementation of productivity tools and techniques with contemporary relevant themes.

- The day is part of the National Productivity Week, which is observed from **12 to 18 February** by the National Productivity Council (NPC).
- This year, the theme of National Productivity Week is '**Self Reliance Through Productivity**'.

**116. Darwin Day** is observed annually on **12<sup>th</sup> February** to commemorate the birth anniversary of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century British naturalist, Charles Darwin. The day aims to inspire people to follow their intellectual curiosities. It urges us to explore truth through scientific means.

**Charles Darwin:**

- He was born on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1809 in Shrewsbury, England.
- He is well-known for his work "**The Theory of Natural Selection**".
- He published his thoughts on evolution and natural selection in "On the Origin of Species" in 1859.

**117. World Radio Day** is observed annually on **13<sup>th</sup> February** to recognize radio as a powerful medium, which brings people together from every corner of the globe, to promote diversity and help build a more peaceful and inclusive world.

- **Theme 2022:** "Radio & Trust"
- UNESCO marks the observance of the World Radio Day 2022 with three sub-themes:
  - **Trust in radio journalism:** Produce independent and high-quality content;
  - **Trust and accessibility:** Take care of your audience;
  - **Trust and viability of radio stations:** Ensure competitiveness.

*The day was proclaimed in 2011 by the Member States of UNESCO and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012.*

**118. National Women's Day** is observed annually across India on **13<sup>th</sup> February** to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Sarojini Naidu**. The year 2022 marks the **143rd** birth anniversary of her.

- She was born as Sarojini Chattopadhyay on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1879.
- She was named the '**Nightingale of India**' or '**Bharat Kokila**' by Mahatma Gandhi because of her poetic and lyrical genius.
- She became the president of the Indian National Congress in 1925.
- She became the Governor of the United Provinces in 1947, becoming the first woman to hold the office of Governor in the Dominion of India.

**119. International Epilepsy Day** is observed annually across globe on the **Second Monday of February** to spread awareness and educate the general public on the true facts about epilepsy and the urgent need for improved treatment, better care, and greater investment in research.

- In 2022, the day falls on **14<sup>th</sup> February 2022**.
- The day is organised jointly by the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) and the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE).

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