



FEBRUARY 2022

BAZOOKA

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Contents

NATIONAL AFFAIRS	2
STATES AFFAIRS.....	21
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.....	29
REPORTS & INDICES	33
BUSINESS & ECONOMY	41
BANKING & FINANCE	48
AWARDS & RECOGNITION	59
BOOKS & AUTHORS.....	62
PERSON IN NEWS	64
OBITUARIES.....	68
SPORTS.....	70
IMPORTANT DAYS	74

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. The Home Delivery or Self Pickup of Medicines to patients seeking consultation on Services e-Health Assistance and Teleconsultation (SeHAT) has started from 1st February 2022.

About SeHAT:

- It is the tri-services teleconsultation service of the **Ministry of Defence**.
 - It was launched on **27th May 2021**.
 - The portal provides tele-medicine services to the serving Armed Forces personnel, veterans and their families.
 - SeHAT stay home OPD is a patient-to-doctor system where the patient can consult a doctor remotely through the internet using his Smartphone, laptop, Desktop or Tablet.
 - The consultation occurs through video, audio and chat at the same time.
 - It aims to provide quality healthcare services to patients from the comfort of their homes.
 - The user does not need to pay anything to seek teleconsultation
2. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has recently announced to set up a web portal named “**DESH-Stack e-portal**”, during Budget 2022 speech.
 - DESH stands for “**Digital Ecosystem for Skilling and Livelihood**”.
 - This portal will be launched for **empowering citizens to skill, upskill or re-skill through online training**.
 3. The Indian Navy’s new submarine, **Vagir**, the fifth of six French-designed Scorpene-class submarines (Kalvari-class), built as part of Project 75 has commenced its first sea trials.

- The submarine was launched in November 2020 from the Kanhoji Angre Wet Basin of Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL).
4. Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology, Jitendra Singh has recently felicitated "**Beating Retreat**" **Drone Light Show "StartUps"**, funded by the Union Ministry of Science & Technology.
- **Botlab Dynamics Private Limited**, a start-up supported by Technology Development Board, under DST and incubated at Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi in association with Ministry of Defence has conceptualized the novel 'Drone Show'.
 - India has become the **4th country in the world** after UK, Russia and China to carry out a large scale show with **1000 drones**.
5. The Government of India has recently approved the renaming of three places in Madhya Pradesh namely,
- **Hoshangabad** as "Narmadapuram"
 - **Shivpuri** as "Kundeshwar Dham"
 - **Babai** as "Makhan Nagar"
6. The gross GST collections for the month of January 2022 are **Rs.1, 40,986 crores** which is the highest since the inception of GST. According to the Ministry of Finance, the GST revenue for January 2018 stood at Rs.86,318 crores and Rs.1,02,503 crore in January 2019.
7. The **Ministry of Jal Shakti** along with the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** has launched the **River Cities Alliance (RCA)**. It is a dedicated platform for river cities in India to ideate, discuss and exchange information for sustainable management of urban rivers.
8. **Punaura Dham of Bihar** has been included in the Ramayana circuit of the Swadesh Darshan scheme and also in the Prasad scheme of the Ministry of Tourism.
- Bihar has several tourist places in the scheme including Thirthankar Circuit in Vaishali- Arrah- Masad- Patna- Rajgir- Pawapuri- Champapuri, Spiritual Circuit at Sultanganj – Dharmshala – Deoghar and Buddhist circuit at Bodh Gaya.
9. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently paid tribute to the heroes of freedom struggle on completion of the **100 years of Chauri Chaura incident**.
- Chauri Chaura is a town in Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh.
 - On **4th February 1922**, this town witnessed a violent incident - a large crowd of peasants set fire to a police station that killed 22 policemen.
 - Due to this incident, Mahatma Gandhi called off the Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22).

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10. The Ministry of Heavy Industries has notified the second phase of the '**Scheme on Enhancement of Competitiveness in the Indian Capital Goods Sector**' with a financial outlay of **Rs.1,207 crore** to promote competition in the sector.
- The objective of phase II of the scheme is to expand and enlarge the impact created by phase I pilot scheme, thereby providing greater impetus through creation of a strong and globally competitive capital goods sector that contributes at least **25%** to the manufacturing sector.
 - The overall financial outlay will consist of a budgetary support from the government of **Rs.975 crore** and the rest of **Rs.232 crore** will come through the industry contribution.
 - The scheme will involve identification of technologies through technology innovation portals, setting up of four new advanced centres of excellence and augmentation of existing centres of excellence, promotion of skilling in capital goods sector—creation of qualification packages for skill levels 6 and above.
 - This will also include setting up of four Common Engineering Facility Centres (CEFCs) and expansion of existing CEFCs as well as expansion of existing testing and certification centres and setting up of ten industry accelerators for technology development.
11. The Union Government has recently approved the continuation of the **Scheme of Assistance to National Sports Federations (NSFs)** with an outlay of **Rs 1575 crore** for 15th Finance Commission Cycle (2021-22 to 2025-26).
12. India, represented by TIFR – National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA), has recently signed a Cooperation Arrangement with Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO) to confirm its commitment to work on the mega science project, **Square Kilometre Array (SKA)**.
- SKA is proposed to be the **world's largest radio telescope**, which will be established in South Africa and Australia.
 - The agreement will be valid for **one year**.
13. The **Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA)** will establish the country's **first research chair in ESG (environmental, social, and governance)** in collaboration with the **National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)**, India's sovereign linked alternative assets manager.
- The newly formed 'NIIF Chair in ESG at IIMA' will work closely with the Arun Duggal ESG Centre for Research and Innovation at IIMA.
 - It will function as the principal hub of knowledge and insights that allows businesses and policy makers incorporate ESG principles in their long-term business and governance decisions.
14. The Indian Navy has successfully flight-tested the marine version of the French-made **Rafale-Maritime (Rafale-M) fighter jet** at a shore-based facility in **Goa** where conditions similar to that on the indigenously-developed aircraft carrier **INS Vikrant** were simulated.
15. Union Minister of State Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr **Jitendra Singh** has recently inaugurated "**Innovations in Public Administration**" programme of Capacity Building Commission of Mission Karmayogi to identify successful innovations in public service pioneered by civil servants.
- This will serve as case studies for capacity building of present and future civil servants.

- A **CBC Knowledge Repository** will be created to be accessed by all to scale up successful innovations in the whole country.
- 16. Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** has recently cancelled the “Khadi Certification” of its oldest Khadi Institution named **Mumbai Khadi & Village Industries Association (MKVIA)**. This MKVIA was running the popular “Khadi Emporium” at Metropolitan Insurance House, Mumbai since 1954. KVIC has cancelled the license of MKVIA as the latter had started selling fake Khadi products, which was against the “zero-tolerance” policy of KVIC against the sale of spurious/non-Khadi products.
- 17. 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.
- 18.** 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.
- 19.** 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.
- 20. Agricultural Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)**, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has celebrated its **36th Foundation Day** on *13th 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.

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- 21.** 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.

22. **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.

23. 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.

24. 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.

25. **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.

26. 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)

27. 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.

28. 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.
29. 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.
30. **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.
31. 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).
32. 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.
33. 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.
34. 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.
- 35.** 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.
- 36.** The **Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIMK)** and the **Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO)**, **NITI Aayog** have recently inked a Statement of Intent (SoI) on Institutional Partnership to strengthen the overall monitoring and evaluation environment in India, with special focus on building a data monitoring and evaluation stack.
- 37.** 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 Sarvajanik Vachanalay.
- 38.** 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 **11th 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 **21st Indian Geostationary Earth Orbit (GEO) satellite** to undergo post-mission disposal.
- 39.** The **Indian Institute of Technology, Madras** has recently established '**AquaMAP**', an inter-disciplinary 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.

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- 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.

40. 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.

41. 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.

42. 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.

43. **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.

44. 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.
45. 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.
46. 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**.
47. The FICCI's Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy (CASCADE) has announced to observe **11th 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.
48. 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.
49. The Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways has sanctioned **Rs. 24.53 crores** for cleaning the **Gomati River**, a trans boundary river between India and Bangladesh, and setting up **10 jetties** for a waterway project to boost the Indo-Bangla waterway project.
- Of the total 93-km proposed waterway from Sonamura in Tripura's Sepahijala district to Daudkandi in Bangladesh, around 15.5-km stretch needs dredging to operationalize the route. Out of 15.5 km of river, only 1.5-km stretch is in India and 14-km is in Bangladesh.
 - A permanent jetty will come up near Srimantapur Land Customs Station in Sonamura with an estimated cost of Rs 5.04 crore.
 - The Centre has set a goal to bring vessels with a carrying capacity of 200-300 tonnes from Daudkandi to Sonamura by May 2022.
50. The Ministry of Railways has recently approved to set up a state-of-art **World Class Wrestling Academy** in Indian Railways, at **Kishanganj, Delhi**.
- It will be set up at an estimated cost of **Rs 30.76 crores**.

- This wrestling academy will be the biggest in India, equipped with advanced training facilities.
- 51.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has virtually inaugurated Asia's largest Bio-Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) **Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBAR- DHAN)** plant at the cost of **Rs. 150 crores** in **Indore, Madhya Pradesh**.
- It has been constructed under the overarching principles of “waste to wealth” and “circular economy” for maximizing resource recovery.
 - The plant has the capacity to treat 550 tonnes of segregated wet organic waste per day.
 - The plant will produce around 17,000 kg CNG and 100 tonnes of organic compost every day.
 - It is based on zero-landfill models.
 - The project has been implemented by Indore Clean Energy Pvt Ltd, a Special Purpose Vehicle set up by Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) and Indo Enviro Integrated Solutions Ltd. (IEISL).
- 52.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently inaugurated the ‘**Kisan Drone Yatra**’, an initiative by Garuda Aerospace and flagged off **100 ‘Kisan Drones’** in various cities and towns across India.
- Garuda Aerospace has set a target of manufacturing 1 lakh Made-in-India drones in the next 2 years.
 - These drones will be used for crop assessment, digitization of land records, and spraying of insecticides and nutrients.
 - They will also be used to carry vegetables, fruits, fish, etc. to the markets from the farms.
- 53.** The Central Government has recently launched a new doorstep crop insurance distribution campaign named ‘**Meri Policy Mere Hath**’ under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), entering the seventh year of implementation in the upcoming Kharif season.

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- 54.** The Union Cabinet has recently approved the implementation of the **Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS)** project under the guidance of the Ministry of Home Affairs at a total cost of **Rs.3,375 crore** during the period from **2022-23 to 2025-26**.
- The project will be implemented as a Central Sector Scheme.
 - Under Phase-II, the system is being built on the principle of ‘**one data one entry**’.
 - **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** will be responsible for the implementation of the project in association with **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**.
 - The project will be implemented in collaboration with the States and Union Territories.
- 55.** The Minister of State for Culture & Parliamentary Affairs Arjun Ram Meghwal has launched the career counselling workshop '**Pramarsh 2022**' for the students of the **Bikaner** district in Rajasthan.
- In this workshop, one lakh students participated from more than thousands of schools of Bikaner district mainly from the rural area.

- It has been organised jointly by The National Institute of Career Services (NICS), under the Ministry of Labour & Employment and Bengaluru-based educational start-up Edumilestones, with support from the Directorate of Education, Rajasthan.
- 56.** The **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the **Common Services Centres (CSCs)** to collaborate for the delivery of services related to various skill development programmes to the youth in rural and remote areas of the country.
- Under the partnership, the CSCs at the village level will act as a skill desk, creating awareness about the various available skill development programmes.
- 57.** **Dr. Ajay Kumar**, Defence Secretary of India, has co-chaired the ‘3rd India – Maldives Defence Cooperation Dialogue (DCD)’ in Maldives with Chief of Defence Force of the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF), Major General Abdulla Shamaal.
- Both India and Maldives have focussed on joint efforts and capacity-building measures to counter trans-national crimes and enhance security in the region.
- 58.** The Central government has recently constituted a **Ken-Betwa Link Project Authority (KBLPA)** for the implementation of the Ken-Betwa interlinking of rivers (ILRs) project. The government has also formed a **20-member national steering committee** which will monitor the implementation.
- The 20-member national steering committee will be headed by the secretary, Department of Water Resources, **Pankaj Kumar** with secretaries of Department of Environment and Forests, Expenditure, Power and Tribal Affairs, among other members.
 - The KBLPA will be headed by a chief executive officer at the level of additional secretary to the Government of India and assisted by five additional CEOs at the level of joint secretary/chief engineer and one director finance.
- 59.** **Renault India** has recently partnered with **CSC e-Governance Services** (Common Service Centres) to support the **Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyaan (PMGDISHA)**.
- The aim is to empower rural citizens in the age group of 15 to 60 years across the country to operate computers, laptops, browse internet, access websites as well as banking services and undertake digital payments.
 - The company has handed over five vehicles to help the government's drive to upskill people in rural and semi-urban areas of the country.
- 60.** The **Ministry of Culture** has recently organized the two-day global summit on '**Reimagining Museums in India**' in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- Union Culture and Tourism Minister **G. Kishan Reddy** has formally inaugurated the summit.
 - The summit is first of its kind to cultivate new practices and strategies to develop the Indian museums.
 - It has been organized by the ministry along with Bloomberg from 15th February to 16th February 2022.
- 61.** The **Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)** has launched “**Darkathon-2022**” to find solutions to counter drug trafficking through the darknet. The initiative aims at involving students, youth, and technical experts to find effective solutions to unravel the anonymity of darknet markets.

- It has been organized in three phases starting from **15th February to 22nd April 2022**.

- 62.** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has banned **54 mobile applications** of Chinese origin that pose a threat to India's security. The ban is recommended by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- 63.** The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has recently approved a budget of **Rs.2.26 crores** for India's second-largest fair- "**Medaram Jathara 2022 Festivals**". This year, it will be held from 16th February 2022 to 19th February 2022.

About Medaram Jathara:

- It is also known as 'Sammakka Sarakka Jathara'.
 - It is the state festival of **Telangana** (since 1996).
 - It is the second-largest fair of India, after the Kumbh Mela.
- 64.** Under the Saubhagya scheme, **Rajasthan** has the maximum number of households electrified through the solar-based standalone system. As many as 1,23,682 households are electrified through the solar-based standalone system in Rajasthan, followed by Chhattisgarh (65,373), Uttar Pradesh (53,234), Assam (50,754), Bihar (39,100), Maharashtra (30,538), Odisha (13,735), and Madhya Pradesh (12,651).
- In hill states of Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has nil beneficiaries under the initiative.
 - Under the scheme, **2.817 crore households** were electrified up to March 2021, including 4.16 lakh through solar-based standalone systems.
- 65.** Hyderabad-based space startup **Navars Edutech** has recently collaborated with **Skyroot Aerospace** to launch **100** student-developed satellites constellation in the next 5 years.
- This partnership enables Navars Edutech to become India's first Space Education startup for K12 students to design and launch satellites to space, using an indigenously developed private launch vehicle of Skyroot Aerospace.
 - The first set of satellites will be launched to LEO (Low Earth Orbit) with Skyroot's maiden launch **Vikram-I in December-2022**.
- 66.** The main tunnel **T49**, the longest tunnel of Indian Railways, between Sumber and Arpinchala station of Katra-Banihal section of **Udhampur- Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL)** project has been connected successfully.
- T49 is a tunnel of length **12.758 km** long and has become the longest tunnel of Indian Railway surpassing Peer Panjal Tunnel of **11.2 km length** constructed by USBRL on the Banihal-Qazigund section.
- 67.** The Central Government has recently approved the proposal for the construction of more than **60,000 houses** under the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)** in **5 states** namely, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, and Rajasthan.
- It has been approved in the 58th meeting of the Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee (CSMC) chaired by **Manoj Joshi**, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

- The total number of sanctioned houses under PMAY (U) now stands at 114.04 lakh, of which around 93.25 lakh have been grounded for construction and around 54.78 Lakh have been completed and delivered to the beneficiaries.
 - The total investment under the mission stands at Rs 7.52 lakh crore, with central assistance of Rs 1.87 lakh crore.
 - During the meeting, a book titled '**Transformative Reforms Towards Housing for All**' has been released by Manoj Joshi, Secretary, MoHUA.
- 68.** The **Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment**, Dr. Virendra Kumar has launched a central sector scheme named the **Scheme for Economic Empowerment for DNTs (SEED)** at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.
- The total financial outlay for SEED Scheme is approximately **Rs 200 crore** to be spent over a period of 5 years starting Financial Year 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- 69.** Union Home Minister Amit Shah has recently launched the Delhi Police's '**Smart Card Arms Licence**' and '**Shastra Mobile Application**' on the occasion of the 75th Raising Day of the Delhi Police.
- With this, **Delhi Police** has become the first police force in the country to introduce 'Smart Card Arms Licence', replacing the arms license booklet.
 - The Delhi Police has developed the Shastra mobile app and smart card with the help of the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
 - The Shastra Mobile App has been linked with the 'E-Beat Book'.
- 70.** The 8th annual meeting of the **Indo-German Working Group on Quality Infrastructure** has been held virtually. It is led by the Indian Ministry for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy.

Key highlights:

- During the meeting, a **Work Plan for the Year 2022** has been signed by both the countries to strengthen quality infrastructure, reduce technical barriers to trade, enhance product safety and strengthen consumer protection.
- The Outcome of the **Global Quality Infrastructure Index (GQII)** study conducted by Germany has been shared during the meeting.
 - As per the GQII report, India is placed at 7th position on standardisation aspect, 9th for accreditation activities and 19th for metrology related activities.
 - India has scored 95.6 out of 100 and is ranked at **10th place** in the world for overall quality infrastructure environment in the country.

*A publication titled '**United in Quality and Safety**' has been released. This includes information about the quality infrastructure in Germany and the European Union.*

- 71.** The Government of India (GoI), the State Governments of Karnataka and Odisha, and the **World Bank** have signed a **\$115 million** (INR 869 crore) for the implementation of the "**Rejuvenating Watersheds for Agricultural Resilience through Innovative Development**" (**REWARD**) Project.
- The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the lending arm of World Bank, will support Karnataka with \$60 million (INR 453.5 crore), Odisha with \$49 million (INR 370 crore), and the remaining \$6 million (INR 45.5 crore) will be for the central government's Department of Land Resources.

- The loan has a maturity of 15 years, including a grace period of 4.5 years.
72. The Government of India (GoI) has approved the scheme of **Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)** for continuation till **31st March 2026** with an expenditure of **Rs 12,929.16 crore** out of which the central share is Rs 8,120.97 crores and the state share is of Rs 4,808.19 crores.
- It has been envisaged to support around 1,600 projects under the new phase of the scheme.
 - Under the new phase of the scheme, state governments will be supported for gender inclusion, equity initiatives, ICT, enhancing employability through vocationalisation and skill upgradation.
73. Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Dr. Bharti Pravin Pawar has recently inaugurated India's and South Asia's first **Biosafety Level-3 (BSL-3) Containment Mobile Laboratory** in **Nashik, Maharashtra**.
- **Objective:** To investigate newly emerging and re-emerging viral infections that are highly infectious and of lethal potential to human beings.
 - The laboratory has been designed and built by the Indian Council of Medical Research in collaboration with Mumbai-based bio-safety equipment maker Klenzaid.
 - The laboratory was built at a cost of **Rs. 25 crores**.
74. **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** has recently organized a two-day long **'Chintan Shivir-Heal by India'** to improve India's educational institutions in the health sector.
- 'Heal by India' initiative is meant to generate job opportunities abroad for India's trained professionals in the health sector and enhance education to churn out quality human resources in health, thus helping them become eligible to work anywhere in the world.
75. The Indian Navy has successfully test-fired an advanced sea-to-sea variant of the **BrahMos** supersonic cruise missile from **INS Visakhapatnam**.
- The warship INS Vishakhapatnam has now reached Visakhapatnam to participate in the President's Fleet Review on 21st February 2021.
76. **Ministry of Tourism (MoT)** has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with **Alliance Air Aviation Limited (AAAL)** to promote tourism throughout the country. Union minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbanand Sonowal has recently inaugurated **India's first water taxi** in **Mumbai** to enable faster connectivity between Mumbai and Navi Mumbai in Maharashtra.

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77. A bilateral air exercise named **Eastern Bridge-VI** has been organized between the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** and **Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO)** at Air Force Station **Jodhpur** in Rajasthan. The exercise will provide an opportunity to enhance operational capability and interoperability between the two Air Forces.

- 78. Four police stations in New Delhi** have been designated as ‘Eat Right Campus’ by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) for providing nutritious and wholesome meals daily to police personnel at their canteens and mess.
- The premises in Delhi are recognised as “Eat Right Campus” under the “**Sehatmand Delhi Programme**”.
 - Sehatmand Delhi Programme was launched as a part of “Eat Right India”, which is a flagship mission of FSSAI.
- 79. The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee** has recently launched the 'KISAN' mobile app for dissemination of Agromet Advisory Services under the Gramin Krishi Mausam Sewa (GKMS) project. The app provides farmers with easy access to weather forecasts and weather-based Agro-metrological Advisory Bulletins for all six blocks of Haridwar district (Uttarakhand) through phones.
- 80. India** has been elected for the new chairmanship of the International Rubber Study Group (IRSG). India has succeeded Cote d'Ivoire.
- **KN Raghavan** the head of the Indian delegation to IRSG and the Executive Director of the Indian Rubber Board, will serve as **Chairman of IRSG** for the next two years.
- 81. The Union Government** has approved the continuation of the Central Sector Umbrella Scheme of **Border Infrastructure and Management (BIM)** during the 15th Finance Commission cycle from 2021-22 to 2025-26 at a cost of **Rs. 13,020 crore**.
- The BIM scheme will help in the creation of infrastructures such as border fence, border floodlights, technological solutions, border roads and border outposts (BOPs), and company operating bases to secure India's borders with Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar.
 - The Ministry of Home Affairs is responsible for the improvement of BIM.
- 82. Union Minister of Culture G Kishan Reddy** has inaugurated the conference on Indian Temple Architecture titled "DEVAYATANAM- An Odyssey of Indian Temple Architecture" at **Hampi, Karnataka**.
- The two-day international conference has been organized by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- 83. The Government of India (GoI)** has constituted a high-level inter-ministerial task force to study the impact of sanctions against **Russia** by the USA, the European Union, the UK, Japan, Canada, Taiwan, and New Zealand.
- The task force includes secretaries and other senior officials from across Ministries and Departments such as External Affairs, Defence, Finance, Home, Commerce & Industry, and Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- 84. The Ministry of Education** has launched a campaign named ‘**Bhasha Certificate Selfie** to encourage cultural diversity and promote multilingualism and foster the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat (EBSB). It aims to promote the Bhasha Sangam mobile app, developed by the Ministry of Education and MyGov India.
- **Note:** Bhasha Sangam mobile app was launched on **31st October 2021**. Using the app, people can learn 100+ sentences of daily use in as many as 22 scheduled Indian languages.

85. Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya along with Dr. Bharti Pravin Pawar, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare has launched the **“ICMR/ DHR Policy on Biomedical Innovation & Entrepreneurship”** for Medical Professionals, Scientists and Technologists at Medical, Dental, Para-Medical Institutes/Colleges.
- This policy will ensure multi-disciplinary collaboration, promote start-up culture and develop an innovation led ecosystem at Medical Institutes across India by promoting Make-in India, Start-Up-India and Atmanirbhar Bharat initiatives of the Government of India.
 - This policy is in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s motto of “Innovate, Patent, Produce, and Prosper.”
86. The 28th edition of the **DST-CII India-Singapore Technology Summit 2022** has been held virtually under the theme “Buliding Economies for the Future”.
- The summit has been attended by Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. **Jitendra Singh**, and Singaporean Minister for Transport and Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations, Mr. **S Iswaran**.
 - It has been organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in partnership with the Department of Science & Technology.
87. **Defence Accounts Department (DAD)** of Ministry of Defence has signed an MoU with **CSC e-Governance Services India Limited**, a special purpose vehicle (SPV) under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, to onboard pension services under the System for Pension Administration (Raksha) (SPARSH) initiative across more than 4 lakh Common Service Centres (CSCs) across India.
- DAD has also signed an MoU with **Kotak Mahindra Bank** to set up service centres across 14 branches located in areas with high ex-servicemen density.
88. The Union Government of India has announced the purchase of **44.4 million tonnes** of wheat and **4.29 million tonnes** of rabi-grown rice during **2022-23** under the minimum support price (MSP) programme.
- The state-wise procurement target of wheat: Punjab (13.2 MT), Madhya Pradesh (12.9 MT), Haryana (8.5 MT), Uttar Pradesh (6 MT), and Bihar (1 MT).
 - Food Corporation of India (FCI) in collaboration with state government-owned agencies will procure wheat from farmers in the key producing states, including Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh during April-June.
89. The signature tune for **"Vande Bharatam"** composed by Grammy Award winner **Ricky Kej** and Oscar contender **Bickram Ghosh** has been released by the Minister of State for Culture & External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi. The ‘Vande Bharatam’ song was produced for Vande Bharatam, Nritya Utsav of Ministry of Culture presented at Rajpath, New Delhi for the national Republic Day event 2022.
90. The Government of India, amidst the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, has launched **‘Operation Ganga’** to **evacuate around 15,000 Indians in Ukraine**. A dedicated Twitter account named ‘OpGanga’ Helpline has also been set up to assist Operation Ganga.
- As per the data by the Ministry of External Affairs, around 20,000 Indians are stuck in Ukraine. 4,000 were able to come to India before the invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

91. As per the recent data released by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), **Tamil Nadu** has achieved the first position in overall installed renewable energy capacity in India surpassing Karnataka.
- As of 31st January 2022, Tamil Nadu's total installed renewable capacity stood at **15,914 MW** as compared to Karnataka's total clean energy capacity of 15,795 MW.
 - Tamil Nadu's total solar capacity has increased to **4,894 MW** (includes ground-mounted, rooftop, and off-grid capacity) as of 31st January 2022, from 2,575 MW as of 31st March 2019, while wind capacity has increased to 9,857 MW from 8,969 MW during the period.

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92. Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Giriraj Singh has launched the **Rural Connectivity Geographic Information System (GIS) Data** in Public Domain in India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.
- This includes GIS data for 8 lakh rural facilities as points, 10 lakh habitations and 25 lakh km of rural roads which have been collected and digitised using the GIS platform developed for the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) scheme.
93. The Union Minister for Ports, Shipping & Waterways, and AYUSH, Sarbananda Sonowal has inaugurated the “**Nikarshan Sadan Dredging Museum**” at the DCI campus in **Visakhapatnam**.
- The museum is built by the Dredging Corporation of India (DCI).
 - The museum displayed models of different types of dredgers, historical milestones, and vintage photos of this dredging behemoth from the Eastern Port of Vizag City.
94. The Central Government has approved the continuation of the **Immigration Visa Foreigners Registration & Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme** for five years from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2026 with an outlay of **Rs. 1,364.88 crore**.
95. The first batch of three MH-60R Multi-Role Helicopters, contracted by the Indian Navy from the United States, is scheduled to arrive in India by mid-July 2022 in Kochi, Kerala.
- India had signed a **USD 2.4 billion** deal for procuring 24 MH-60R Multi-Role Helicopters (MRH) from the USA in 2020.
96. The **Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM)** has observed its **6th anniversary** on 21st February 2022. So far, the Ministry of Rural Development has approved **296 clusters** under it.
97. The Acquisition Wing of the **Defence Ministry** has signed a contract with **Bharat Electronics (BEL)** for the retro-modification of Commander Sight of Battle Tanks-T-90.
- BEL will supply 957 commander thermal imager cum day sights for T-90 tanks of the Indian Army.
 - The total outlay of the contract is **Rs 1,075 crore**.

98. The third edition of the joint military exercise “**Ex Dharma Guardian 2022**” has been conducted between **India and Japan** at Belagavi (Belgaum), Karnataka. The 15th Battalion the Maratha Light Infantry Regiment of the Indian Army and 30th Infantry Regiment of Japanese Ground Self Defence Forces (JGSDF) has participated in this 12 days long joint exercise.
99. The Government of India has organised a week-long science exhibition titled ‘**Vigyan Sarvatra Pujyate**’ from 22nd to 28th February 2022 in **75 locations** across the country.
- The program is jointly organized by the Department of Science and Technology, Department of Biotechnology, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Indian Council of Medical Research, All India Council for Technical Education, and Defence Research Development Organisation.
 - The programmes have been grouped under **four themes**:
 - 1) From the annals of the history of S&T
 - 2) Milestones of Modern S&T
 - 3) Swadeshi Paramparik Inventions and Innovations
 - 4) Transforming Indias

The exhibition will feature 75 expositions, 75 lectures, 75 films, 75 radio talks, 75 science literary activities, and more.
100. Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar has recently (Feb 2022) visited France to attend EU Ministerial Forum for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. During the visit, the agreement on ‘**Roadmap on Blue Economy and Ocean Governance**’ has been signed between **India and France** with the aim to contribute to scientific knowledge and ocean conservation and ensure that the ocean remains a global common, based on the rule of law.
101. Union Minister of Science & Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh has chaired the District Development Coordination & Monitoring Committee (DISHA) meetings of several districts in Jammu & Kashmir. During the meeting, it has been decided to designate **Lavender** as a Doda brand product, to promote lavender under the ‘One District, One Product’ initiative. This will attract Agri- startups, entrepreneurs, and farmers.
102. The Government of India has observed the **3rd anniversary** of **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)** on 24th February 2022. It was launched on **24th February 2019** by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.
- It is a central sector scheme under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
 - Under the scheme, the Centre transfers an amount of **Rs 6,000** per year, in three equal installments, directly into the bank accounts of all landholding farmers irrespective of the size of their landholdings.
 - So far, 11.78 crore farmers have received benefits under this scheme. Rs 1.82 lakh crore have been distributed to the beneficiaries under this scheme. Out of this amount, Rs 1.29 lakh crore has been distributed during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Centre has allocated **Rs 68,000 crore** for the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) in the Union Budget 2022-23.*

- 103.** The Ministry of Education has approved the continuation of the **National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship (NMMSS)** during the 15th Finance Commission cycle for a period of five years i.e. from **2021-22 to 2025-26** with a financial outlay of **Rs. 1827.00 crore**.
- The government has also modified the eligibility criteria like increasing the income ceiling from the present **Rs.1.5 lakh to Rs.3.5 lakh** per annum.
 - Under this scheme, 1 lakh scholarships of Rs.12, 000 per annum per student are awarded to all those selected students of class 9 every year.
 - The renewal and continuation of the monetary scholarship are also done in classes 10 to 12 so that the students can pursue their education in government-aided, state government, and local body schools.
 - Since its launch, a total of **22.06 lakh scholarships** worth Rs 1,783.03 crore have been sanctioned under this scheme.
- 104. MATSYA 6000**, an indigenously developed manned **submersible vehicle**, will be ready as originally planned for its launch in **2024** for the **Samudrayaan Mission**.
- MATSYA 6000 is capable of carrying three people.
 - It can reach a maximum depth of **6,000 metres**.
- 105.** Indian Navy's multi-national exercise **MILAN 2022** has commenced in the 'City of Destiny', **Visakhapatnam**. The exercise aims to hone operational skills, imbibe best practices and procedures, and enable doctrinal learning in the maritime domain, through professional interaction between friendly navies.
- 106.** The Union Minister of Rural Development Giriraj Singh has launched the **Ombudsperson App** for Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
- **Ministry of Rural Development** has developed the app for smooth reporting and categorization of grievances by Ombudsperson based on complaints he received from various sources viz. physical, digital, and mass media, related to the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi NREG Scheme in the States/UTs.
- 107.** India's first cable-stayed railway bridge named **Anji Khad Bridge** is being constructed in the Reasi district of Jammu & Kashmir. The bridge is situated over the Anji River.
- It will connect **Katra and Reasi**.
 - It is a part of the 111-kilometer long Udampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project.
 - The bridge will stand at a height of **331 meters** above the river bed – higher than the Eiffel Tower in Paris.
 - The total length of the bridge is **473.25 meters** and it is supported by 96 cables.
- 108.** The Indian Navy has received the **12th P-8I aircraft** from the U.S.-based aerospace company Boeing. This is the fourth of four additional aircraft delivered under the options contract signed by the Ministry of Defence in 2016.
- P-8I is a long-range maritime reconnaissance and Anti-Submarine Warfare Aircraft, and a variant of the P-8A Poseidon used by the US Navy.
 - India was the first international customer of Boeing for this aircraft.
 - The Indian Navy inducted the first P-8I aircraft in 2013.

- 109.** The Chief of Army Staff General MM Naravane, on behalf of the President of India Ram Nath Kovind, has presented the **President's Colours or the 'Nishan'** to **four parachute battalions** at Parachute Regiment Training Centre in Bengaluru.
- The four battalions are the 11 Para (Special Forces), 21 Para (Special Forces), 23 Para, and 29 Para battalions.
- 110.** Union Ministry of Home Affairs has declared the Delhi headquarters of the **Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Ltd. (SPMCIL)** as a “**prohibited place**” under Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, 1923 to prevent the entry of unauthorised persons.

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- 111.** Bengaluru-based non-profit The/Nudge Foundation, and Ashirvad Pipes, in partnership with the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, have launched the **The/Nudge Prize-Ashirvad Water Challenge**.
- Aim:** To support solutions that address population-scale water challenges.
 - The startup prize of **Rs.2.5 crore** invites startups and innovators to create solutions to provide clean drinking water to the underprivileged and rural households.
 - This program will run for **18 months**.

STATES AFFAIRS

- 112.** The Chief Electoral Officer's (CEO) office of **Punjab** has unveiled its election mascot, "**Shera**" depicting a lion. The mascot aims to increase voter awareness and participation in the elections to increase voter turnout and promote ethical voting.
- The mascot is dressed in traditional Punjabi attire.
 - The election mascot represents the rich cultural heritage of Punjab.
 - It is promoted under the **Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP)** project.

State	No. of Seats in Assembly
Uttar Pradesh	403
Punjab	117
Uttarakhand	70
Himachal Pradesh	68
Goa	40

- 113.** **Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL)** to provide its techno-financial expertise to set-up a rooftop solar power project.
- Under the MoU, IREDA will assist GSL to set-up a rooftop solar power project in **Vasco da Gama, Goa**.

- 114.** The “**Mandu Festival**” is observed annually in the historic town of **Mandu** in **Dhar district** of **Madhya Pradesh**. The festival is celebrated in Mandu, Ujjain, and Indore.
- This year the festival is organized from **30th January 2022 to 3rd February 2022**.
- 115.** The **Aravalli Biodiversity Park** has been declared as **India’s first “other effective area-based conservation measures” (OECM) site** on the occasion of World Wetlands Day (2nd February).
- Aravalli Biodiversity Park is located in **Gurugram, Haryana**.
 - It is spread across 390 acres and has semi-arid vegetation, with around 300 native plants, 101,000 trees, 43,000 shrubs, and several species of birds.
- 116.** The **Kala Ghoda Arts Festival** is annual festival commencing always on the first Saturday of February and closing is always on the second Sunday in February, in the Kala Ghoda area of **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.
- The festival is organised by Kala Ghoda Association, a non-profit organization.
 - The festival is named after the blackish equestrian statue of Edward VII which used to be located in the fort area of Mumbai.
 - It is nine-day-long festival that has a variety of events in 12 sections, related to arts, music, cinema, literature, theatre and heritage walks.
 - This year, it is observed from **5th February 2022 to 13th February 2022**.
- 117.** The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has recently approved to set up India’s first geological park at **Lamheta village**, on the banks of the Narmada River in **Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh**.
- The park will be constructed with an investment of **Rs.35 crores**, over 5-acre land.
 - **Geopark:** It is a unified area, which advances the protection and use of geological heritage in sustainable manner. It also promotes the economic well-being of the people living there.
- 118.** The social activists have built a ‘**Gandhi Mandiram**’ and also a ‘**Smruthi Vanam**’ at the Municipal Park in **Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh** to inculcate patriotism among the youth by remembering the sacrifices of freedom fighters. Statues of freedom fighters and social activists are erected in the park with the help of donors.
- Mahatma Gandhi statue has also unveiled along with Smritivanam on the eve of Mahatma Gandhi’s death anniversary (30th January).
- 119.** The tableau of **Uttar Pradesh** has been adjudged as the best tableau among the 12 states/UTs that participated in the Republic Day Parade 2022. The tableau of Uttar Pradesh is based on the theme ‘**One District One Product and Kashi Vishwanath Dham**’. This is the second successive year when UP tableau won the first prize at the Republic Day parade.
- The second place went to **Karnataka** for its tableau based on ‘**Cradle of Traditional Handicrafts**’. The third place went to **Meghalaya** for its tableau on ‘**Meghalaya’s 50 years of Statehood and its tribute to women-led cooperative societies & SHGs**’.
- 120.** Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and BCCI president Sourav Ganguly have laid the foundation stone of the **world's third largest cricket stadium in Jaipur**.
- It will be the second-largest cricket stadium in India and the third-largest in the world.

- It will be built by the Rajasthan Cricket Academy (RCA) on the Jaipur-Delhi bypass, over 100 acres of land in Jaipur.
- The stadium will have a seating capacity of **75,000 spectators**.

121. The Government of **Kerala**, through the Energy Management Centre (EMC) and Kerala Development and Innovation Strategy Council (KDISC), has collaborated with **Social Alpha** through its Clean Energy International Incubation Centre (CEIIC). This collaboration will facilitate Kerala in curating innovative technologies for deployment by means of government initiatives to address the challenges in power sector and energy access for all.

122. The **Karnataka government** has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Ather Energy and Electric Supply Companies (ESCOs)** to establish 1000 fast-charging stations for electric two-wheelers. Ather Energy will provide free-charging services for the electric two-wheeler vehicles.

123. The annual celebrations of **Ladakh** festival **Spituk Gustor** have commenced in the state, on 30th January 2022. It is a two-day festival to celebrate peace, harmony, and prosperity in society. It is celebrated at the Spituk Monastery in Leh and Ladakh UT.

- The main attraction of the festival is the colourful mask dance locally called "**Chams**" performed by the monks of the monastery.

124. Congress leader **Rahul Gandhi** has launched the '**Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Bhumihin Krishi Majdur Nyay Yojana**', financial assistance scheme of the **Chhattisgarh** government for landless labourers of rural areas of Chhattisgarh. This is the first-of-its-kind scheme in India for which the state government had made a provision of Rs.200 crore in the budget for the financial year 2021-22.

- Under the scheme, an amount of **Rs. 6, 000** will be given annually by the state government in 3 instalments to the selected landless agricultural labourers as financial assistance.

125. A three-day monastery festival, **Torgya** is observed by the **Monpa tribe** of Arunachal Pradesh at Tawang Monastery. The year 2022 is the '**Dungyur Torgya**' festival, which marks special occasion as every 3rd year, the festival is organized on a broader level with the name **Dungyur Festival** during which Dalai Lama offers blessings to other lamas by sending **Feb Jum** which is a holy item to be used in rituals.

The main attraction of the festival is the '**Sha-na Cham**', the ritual dance performed by monks to showcase the **Choe-gyal Yap** and **Yum Tsa-Munde** deity.

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126. 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 LoI for investing **Rs 1 lakh crore** for the generation of **20,000 MW** solar power.
 - NTPC has signed an LoI for investment of **Rs 40,000 crore** to generate **10 GW**.
- 127. 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.
- 128. 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.
- 129. The ancient festival of 'Kanchoth' or 'Gauri Tritiya'** 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.
- 130. 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.
- 131. 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.
- 132. 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.

- 133.** 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.
- 134.** 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.
- 135.** 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.
- 136.** 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 31st March 2027.
 - The policy provides support for both capital (CAPEX) and operational (OPEX) expenditures.
- 137. Maru Mahotsav**, also known as Jaisalmer Desert Festival, has recently started by flying a golden balloon in the sky at **Pokhran, Jaisalmer, Rajasthan**.
- This time the tourism department of the state has named the Maru Mahotsav as 'Umeedon Ki Udaan'.
 - It is a four-day festival held in the month of Magh (February), three days prior to the full moon.
 - It is celebrated with regional folk-dances such as Kalbelia, Kachhi Ghodi, Gair, music, heritage, and various cultural festivities in the state.
 - This year, it has been organized from 13th February to 16th February 2022.
- 138.** The **Central Jail of Indore** (Madhya Pradesh) has started its radio channel '**Jail Vaani-FM 18.77**' to inform jail inmates about what is happening across the world.

- Through the radio channel, prisoners are hopeful of catching entertainment, while also becoming aware of the happenings around the world.
 - The radio channel will also provide the jail inmates with information on health issues.
- 139.** The state government of **Kerala** has recently announced that the first Caravan Park of Kerala will be set up in **Vagamon**, a hill station, in the Idukki district. This is a part of the state government's new Caravan Tourism policy, promising the visitors safe, customized and closest-to-nature travel experience.
- Under this initiative, there will be two types of caravans. In one model, two guests shall be accommodated, while the other is for a family of four.
- 140.** The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Leh has launched a new scheme named '**Kunsnyoms**' for **differently-abled** persons in the district.
- Kunsnyoms means Equal for All, Fair for All.
 - **Aim:** To provide assistive devices, and technologies to needy people at 90 percent subsidy.
- 141.** The state government of **Gujarat** has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with global business process management company QX Global Group Limited, for the holistic development of the IT and ITeS sector in the state.
- Under this MoU, around 2,000 jobs will be generated in the IT sector in the coming days.
- 142.** **Assam** government has launched **India's first-night navigation mobile application** for ferry services on the Brahmaputra River in Guwahati, Assam. It is developed by the transport department in association with K Raju, the principal scientist of IIT Madras.
- 143.** The union territory of **Jammu & Kashmir** has hosted the “**Janbhagidari Empowerment**” portal on a different server with higher bandwidth to provide easy and ready accessibility to the general public.
- The portal provides detailed insights to people into nature, status as well as several developmental works that are being executed in their areas.
 - The portal has also been linked with schemes like MGNREGA, Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural), Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), PM Awas Yojana, and PM Gram Sadak Yojana, under execution in Government.
- 144.** **Kerala** Government has recently organized the third edition of the 2-day '**Huddle Global 2022**'. During the event, the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) has entered into a collaboration with technology major Google to enable start-ups in the State to join a wider global network that provides mentorship and training.
- 145.** The 48th edition of the **Khajuraho Dance Festival** has been organized in Khajuraho in the **Chhatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh**. It has been held from 20th to 26th February 2022.
- The Khajuraho Dance Festival was started in 1975.
 - It is being organized with the joint effort of Ustad Alauddin Khan Sangeet and Kala Akademi, Madhya Pradesh Sanskriti Parishad of Culture Department, Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board, Archaeological Survey of India, and District Administration Chhatarpur.

146. The “**Upper Bhadra Project**” has been given the national project status by the central government’s high-powered committee. This is the first project in **Karnataka** to get this status.
- This status of the national project will change the irrigation scenario of central Karnataka.
 - It will help the state in getting **Rs 12,500 crore** from the Centre.

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147. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), in collaboration with IIT Delhi, has successfully tested **India's first Quantum Key Distribution (QKD)** link between **Prayagraj and Vindhyachal** in Uttar Pradesh, a distance of more than 100 km.
- The technology has been developed by two DRDO facilities, the Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIR), Bengaluru, and DRDO Young Scientists’ Laboratory – Quantum Technology (DYSL-QT), Mumbai.
148. **Chamba**, an Aspirational District of Himachal Pradesh, has become the **100th ‘Har Ghar Jal’ District**. Chamba is the fifth aspirational district to become ‘Har Ghar Jal’. The other four Har Ghar Jal Aspirational districts are Bhadradri Kothgudem, Jayashankar Bhupalpalli, Komram Bheem Asifabad (all in Telangana), and Mewat in Haryana.
- Har Ghar Jal is a scheme initiated by the Government of India in 2019 to provide tap water to every rural household by 2024.
149. The Delhi cabinet has approved the establishment of **India's first e-waste eco-park**. This park will recycle, refurbish, and dismantle e-waste in a safe and scientific manner. The park will be built on **20 acres** of land.
- The Delhi cabinet has approved **Delhi Film Policy 2022**. This will be India’s most progressive Film Policy, aiming to create jobs and boost the economy. A Rs 50 crore film fund will be introduced to support film producers. The Delhi government will also provide a subsidy, upto Rs 3 crore, if the film is shot in the national capital.
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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

- 163. North Korea** has recently launched the **Hwasong-12** mid-range ballistic missile. It is the seventh test conducted by North Korea this month and the first time a nuclear-capable missile of this size has been launched since 2017.
- 164. Portugal's Prime Minister** and Socialist Party (PS) Secretary General **Antonio Costa** has been re-elected as the Prime Minister of the country by securing 117 seats out of 230 seats in the country’s parliament.
- 165. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** has recently announced that the **International Space Station (ISS)** will cease operations in **2031**, after which it will fall out of orbit and plunge into the waters of the South Pacific Ocean. ISS will continue its operations till 2030.
- ISS has been orbiting Earth at a speed of about eight kilometres per second.
 - ISS was the brainchild of former US President Ronald Reagan, who in 1984 proposed building a permanently inhabited spacecraft in cooperation with a few other countries.
 - First part of the space station, a control module, was launched into space in 1998, on board a Russian rocket.

166. China is observing the **Spring Festival**, it's the most important annual festival as it entered the Lunar new **"Year of the Tiger"**. In 2021, China observed the Lunar Year of the Ox. According to the Chinese Zodiac calendar, the Year of the Ox has ended and the Year of the Tiger has begun from **1st February 2022**, and will end on **21st January 2023**.

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- 167.** **SpaceX** has recently launched the **Italian Earth-observation satellite** named **Cosmo-SkyMed Second Generation FM2 (CSG-2)** after scrubbing the scheduled lift-off for fourth consecutive time. It has been launched from a station in **Florida, US**.
- This satellite will monitor the Earth and provide data risk management, forest & environment protection, cartography, natural resources exploration, defence & security, land management, food & agriculture management and maritime surveillance.
 - The system comprises of two satellites that have been designed to observe Earth using synthetic aperture radar (SAR).
 - **Falcon-9** rocket will deliver the satellites into orbit around Earth.
- 168.** Bilateral consultations on **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**-related issues has been held between **India and Russia** in New Delhi. The Indian delegation is led by Reenat Sandhu, Secretary (West) in MEA, while the Russian delegation is led by Ambassador Sergey Vasilyevich Vershinin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.
- Both sides have agreed to deepen cooperation on issues of mutual interest at multilateral platforms.
- 169.** The **Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala**, the famed Hoysala temples of Belur, Halebid and Somananthpura in Karnataka, has been nominated for **UNESCO World Heritage List** for the year 2022-2023 from India. These protected monuments have been on UNESCO's tentative list since 2014. These include:
- **Channakeshava temple** (Lord Vishnu) at **Beluru**
 - It was commissioned by King Vishnuvardhana in 1117 CE, on the banks of the Yagachi River in Belur.
 - **Hoysaleshwara temple** (Lord Shiva) at **Halebidu**
 - It was built during the reign of Hoysala King, Vishnuvardhana Hoysaleshwara, in 1121CE.
 - **Keshava temple** (Lord Vishnu) at **Somnathpura**
 - The temple was consecrated in 1258 CE by Somanatha Dandanayaka, a general of the Hoysala King Narasimha III.
- 170.** **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.

- 171.** 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.
- 172.** 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.
- 173.** **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.
- 174.** 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.
- 175.** **One Ocean Summit 2022** has been organized by **France** from 9th February to 11th 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.
- 176.** India has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) to provide **50,000 MT of wheat** to **Afghanistan** as a part of humanitarian assistance through the land border with Pakistan.
- The shipments, eventually divided into 5 batches of 10,000 MT, will be taken to Afghanistan from 22nd February 2022.
- 177.** **Nepal** has become the first country to adopt the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) system of India. This will enhance digitalization of cash transactions. The services for the same in Nepal will be provided by the NPCI International Limited (NIPL) in collaboration with payment system operator Gateway Payments Service and Manam Infotech.

- 178. Iran** has recently unveiled the long range ballistic surface-to-surface missile named "**Khaibar-buster**". It has a range of 1,450 kilometres.
- "Khaibar-buster" refers to a Jewish castle overrun by Muslim armies in the early days of Islam.
- 179.** The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched a '**Quit Tobacco App**' to help people quit the cigarette butt and give up tobacco in all forms, including smokeless and other newer products.
- It has been launched during WHO's year-long 'Commit to quit' campaign.
 - The app helps users identify the triggers, set their targets, manage cravings and stay focused to quit tobacco.
- 180.** The **4th Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting 2022** has been held in **Melbourne, Australia**. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has participated in the meeting from the Indian side. Other participants include: Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.
- 181.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently organized a virtual summit in 2022 with UAE's crown prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.
- During the summit, India and UAE have signed a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**.
 - Both the countries issued a joint vision statement - "Advancing India and UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership: New Frontiers, New Milestone".
 - The two leaders also released joint commemorative stamp on the occasion of 75th anniversary of India's independence and 50th year of UAE's foundation.
- 182.** The **4th India – Australia Energy Dialogue 2022** has been held virtually. The dialogue has been co-chaired by Hon'ble Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy, **R.K. Singh** from the Indian side, and Hon'ble Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, **Angus Taylor** from the Australian side.
- 183.** The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** has recently launched a new Digital Strategy 2022-2025 to support countries to build inclusive, ethical, and sustainable digital societies.
- As per the UN, artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technology could bring a 10-20% reduction in global carbon dioxide emissions by 2030.
- 184.** The 21st edition of the **World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2022** has recently been organized by **The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)**.
- **Theme 2022:** 'Towards a Resilient Planet: Ensuring a Sustainable and Equitable Future'
 - The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has delivered the inaugural address at the summit.
 - He discussed the LED bulbs distribution scheme (**UJALA**) that has been running for over seven years that had reportedly saved close to 220 billion units of electricity and prevented 180 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions per year.
 - He encouraged academic and research institutes like TERI to come up with scalable solutions to realize the potential of green hydrogen.

- 185.** The air forces of **Bangladesh** and the **USA** has conducted a joint air exercise named ‘**Cope South 22**’ from 20th February to 25th February 2022. It has been conducted at BAF Kurmitola Cantonment, Dhaka, and Operating Location-Alpha, Sylhet, Bangladesh.
- **Objective:** To improve interoperability with the Bangladesh air force and to support the armed forces of Bangladesh's long-term modernization efforts in order to maintain regional stability.
 - The six days exercise has been sponsored by Pacific Air Forces (PACAF).
- 186.** The 44-member contingents of the Indian Air Force (IAF) has participated in the Singapore Airshow 2022. It is held from 15th to 18th February 2022 at the Changi International Airport in Singapore.
- India has showcased the IAF’s Made in India Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) **Tejas Mark-One (MK-1)**, a 4th generation fighter aircraft.
- 187.** **Israel** has successfully test-fired the 'C-Dome or Protective Dome' naval air defense system based on Iron Dome which is tested against rockets, cruise missiles, and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV). It has successfully been tested for the first time from Israeli Navy Ship Sa’ar 6 ‘Magen’ Class Corvette.
- 188.** The **World Economic Forum (WEF)** has recently collaborated with the **National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)** to design the ‘Sustainable Cities India’ program.
- **Aim:** To enable cities to generate decarbonization solutions across sectors including energy and transport.
 - WEF and NIUA will adapt the Forum’s **City Sprint process** and **Toolbox of Solutions** for decarbonization in the context of five to seven Indian cities across two years.
 - The City Sprint process is a series of multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder workshops involving business, government, and civil society leaders to enable decarbonization, especially through clean electrification and circularity.
- 189.** Belgian ambassador in India François Delhaye along with Sandeep Chakravorty, Joint Secretary and Head of Europe West Division, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India, has released a **special logo** to mark the **75th anniversary** of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The logo is a peacock with national flags of both the national, symbolized, on either side of India’s national bird.
- **Belgium** was among the first European countries to have bilateral relations with India.
- 190.** **India and Nepal** have agreed to constitute a **Joint Hydro Development Committee** during the 9th meeting of Nepal-India Energy Secretary-Level Joint Steering Committee in Kathmandu, Nepal. The committee will have maximum three members from both the countries. The committee will explore the development of viable hydropower projects in Nepal with a focus on storage.
- 191.** Russian President Vladimir Putin has recently recognized the Russian speaking regions of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine as independent states by signing documents declaring them no longer part of Ukraine.
- Donetsk and Luhansk are two states located in **eastern Ukraine**, which share a border with Russia.

REPORTS & INDICES

192. According to the data furnished by the Office of the Development Commissioner in the Union Ministry of MSME, **Maharashtra** has topped India's list in the number of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) owned by entrepreneurs from the Scheduled Castes with as many as **96,805 enterprises**, followed by Tamil Nadu with 42,997 enterprises and Rajasthan with 38,517 enterprises.

- The fourth, fifth and sixth slots belong to Uttar Pradesh (36,913 units), Karnataka (28,803 enterprises) and Punjab (24,503 units) respectively.
- The proportion of enterprises owned by SC entrepreneurs in the overall national tally of MSMEs is **6%**.

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193. The '**Death Penalty in India Report**' has been released by the criminal law reforms advocacy group at the National Law University, Delhi- named Project 39A.

- As per the report, the number of prisoners on death row at the end of 2021 stood at 488, the highest in 17 years. This is an increase of nearly 21% from 2020. This is also the highest the death row population has been since 2004 (563).
- As per the report, limited functioning of courts amid covid-19 pandemic has impacted the priority given to death penalty related cases.
- The trial courts has imposed 144 death sentences in 2021 while, high courts has decided only 39 cases during same period.
- The Supreme Court has decided on 6 cases in 2021, as compared to 11 in 2020 and 28 in 2019.

194. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), the unemployment rate in India has fallen to **6.57%** in **January 2022**. This is the lowest rate witnessed since March 2021. In December 2021, the unemployment rate rose to a four-month high of 7.91%, compared to 6.97% in November 2021.

- **State-wise lowest unemployment rate:**
 - **Telangana** has recorded the lowest unemployment rate in January at **0.7%**. It is followed by Gujarat at 1.2%, Meghalaya at 1.5%, Odisha at 1.8% and Karnataka at 2.9%.
- **State-wise highest unemployment rate:**
 - **Haryana** has witnessed the highest unemployment rate of **23.4%** in January 2022. It is followed by Rajasthan (18.9%), Tripura (17.1%), Jammu & Kashmir (15%) and Delhi (14.1%).
- **Rural Unemployment:**
 - Rural unemployment in January 2022 has declined to **5.84%** as against 7.28% in December 2021.
- **Urban Unemployment:**
 - Urban unemployment in January 2022 has declined to **8.16%** as against 9.30% in December 2021.

195. As per the latest RBI data on '**Sectoral Deployment of Bank Credit-December 2021**', the bank's non-food credit has registered a growth of **9.3%** in December 2021 as compared to **6%** in December 2020.

S.No.	Sector	December 2021	December 2020
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1	Gross Bank Credit (II + III)	9.2%	6.6%
2	II. Food Credit	-4.2%	10.8%
3	II. Non-Food Credit	9.3%	6.6%
4	Agriculture and Allied Activities	14.5%	7.7%
5	Industry	7.6%	0.4%
	a) Micro and Small	20.5%	1.3%
	b) Medium	86.5%	17.1%
	c) Large	1.3%	-0.5%
6	Services	10.8%	8.0%
	a) NBFCs	13.4%	3.7%
7	Personal Loans	14.3%	8.8%

- 196.** The National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, has released the First Revised Estimates of National Income, Consumption Expenditure, Saving and Capital Formation for FY2020-21.
- As per the data, the Indian economy has contracted by **6.6%** in **2020-21** as against the earlier estimate of **7.3%** in **May 2021**.
 - The National Statistical Office has also revised downward the real GDP growth number for 2019-20 to **3.7 percent** as against the earlier estimate of 4 percent.
 - Real GDP** or GDP at constant (2011-12) prices for the years 2020-21 and 2019-20 stands at **Rs 135.58 lakh crore** and **Rs 145.16 lakh crore**, respectively, showing a contraction of 6.6 per cent during 2020-21 as compared to growth of 3.7 per cent during 2019-20
 - Under the first revision released in January 2021, real GDP or GDP at constant (2011-12) prices for the years 2019-20 was pegged at Rs 145.69 lakh crore, showing growth of 4 per cent during 2019-20.
 - In terms of **real GVA (gross value added)**, i.e., GVA at constant (2011-12) basic prices, there has been a contraction of **4.8 percent** in 2020-21, as against growth of 3.8 per cent in 2019-20.
 - Nominal Net National Income (NNI)** or NNI at current prices for the year 2020-21 stands at **Rs 171.94 lakh crore** as against Rs 177.17 lakh crore in 2019-20, showing a contraction of **2.9 percent** during 2020-21 as against growth of 6 per cent in the previous year.
 - Per Capita Net National Income** at current prices is estimated at **Rs 1, 32,115** and **Rs 1,26,855** respectively for the years 2019-20 and 2020-21.
- 197.** According to a report released by research firm Counterpoint Technology Market Research, South Korean electronics manufacturing giant **Samsung Electronics** has surpassed U.S chipmaker Intel to become the world's leading chipmaker by revenue in 2021. Samsung took the lead with a strong DRAM and NAND flash market performance in 2021. It is followed by Intel and SK Hynix, respectively.
- 198. India Press Freedom Report 2021** has been released by the Rights and Risks Analysis Group, based in Delhi.
- According to the report, 13 media houses and newspapers are targeted in the country, 108 journalists are attacked, and 6 journalists are killed.

- The highest number of journalist attack is in **Jammu and Kashmir**. J&K faced more than **25 attacks**.
 - The second highest is in Uttar Pradesh with 23. It is followed by Madhya Pradesh (16), Tripura (15), Delhi (8), Bihar (6), Assam (5), Haryana(4) and Maharashtra (4), Goa (3), Manipur (3), Karnataka (2), West Bengal (2), Tamil Nadu (2), Andhra Pradesh (1), Kerala (1), Chhattisgarh (1).
- Jammu and Kashmir has maximum number of attacks. On the other hand, Tripura has maximum number of attacks by non–state actors.

199. Salesforce, a leading player in Customer Relationship Management (CRM), has recently published the **Global Digital Skills Index 2022**.

- As per the index, **India** leads in digital skills readiness and has the highest readiness score (63 out of 100) amongst 19 countries it surveyed.
- 72 percent of respondents in India say they are very actively learning digital skills.
- 66 percent of respondents in India also said they feel very equipped with resources to learn digital skills.
- 54 percent of respondents in India want to learn new skills to help them grow their current career.

200. As per a brand valuation report released by Brand Finance, **Life Insurance Corporation** has been ranked **10th** in the list of most valued insurance brands globally. LIC is the only Indian insurance company in the top 10 list.

- According to this valuation, LIC is largest and strongest brand in the country with a valuation of **USD 8.655 billion** in 2021, which grew by 6.8 percent from USD 8.11 billion in 2020.
 - It must be noted that LIC was ranked as the 206th most valuable brand in 2021, from 238th slot in 2020.
- According to the London-based Brand Finance, the market value of LIC will become **Rs 43.40 lakh crore** or **USD 59.21 billion** by 2022, and **Rs 58.9-lakh crore** or **USD 78.63 billion** by 2027.
- Of the top 10, as many as 5 are Chinese insurance companies, with by Ping An Insurance emerging as the world's most valuable insurance brand, despite recording a 26 percent drop in brand value. The US has two companies in the top 10, while France, Germany, and India have one each in the list.

201. 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.
- 202.** 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.
- 203.** The **US Green Building Council (USGBC)** has released the 9th 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 2nd 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.
- 204.** 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 **5th** in the index.
 - Bengaluru – 10th
 - Delhi – 11th
 - Pune – 21st
 - 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.
- 205.** 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 4th** 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.

206. 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.

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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 53rd in the 2020 Democracy Index.*

207. India's retail inflation, which is measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), has increased to **6.01%** in **January 2022** as compared to 5.66% in December 2021. This rise is driven by the rising prices of food and manufactured items.

- As per the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the inflation in the food basket is 5.43% in January 2022 as against 4.05% in the preceding month.

208. As per the Second Advance Estimates of production of major crops for the agricultural year 2021-22 released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, India's estimated food grain production is **316.06 million tonnes**.

- This is 1.71 percent higher than 310.74 million tonnes recorded in 2020-21.

Product-wise estimation:

- **Jute & Mesta:** 9.57 million bales (each of 180kg)
- **Cotton:** 34.06 million bales (each of 170 kg)
- **Sugarcane:** 414.04 million tonnes
- **Pulses:** To increase by 5.87 percent to 26.96 million tonnes in 2021-22.
- **Oilseed:** To increase by 3.34 percent to 371.47 million tonnes in 2021-22.
- **Rice:** To increase by 2.86 percent to 127.93 million tonnes in 2021-22.
- **Wheat:** To increase by 1.58 percent to 111.32 million tonnes in 2021-22.

209. Hurun Report, the world's largest rich list compiler, has released the second edition of **Hurun India Wealth Report 2021**, macro research on India's wealth landscape. As per the report, the number of dollar-millionaire households in India has increased by **11%** to **4,58,000 households** compared to 2020.

- A household having a net worth of at least **INR 7 crore (\$1 million)**, is referred to as a dollar-millionaire household.
- The number of Indian dollar-millionaire households is estimated to increase by **30%** over the next five years to reach 6,00,000 households by 2026.
- With 20,300 millionaires (USD) households, **Mumbai** is India's millionaire capital, followed by Delhi and Kolkata with 17,400 and 10,500 millionaire households respectively.
- The report is based on the survey on 350 Indian 'millionaires' (individuals with a personal wealth of \$1 million).

Hurun Report has also released the second edition of **Hurun Indian Luxury Consumer Survey 2021** that gives insights on Indian millionaire brand preferences, consumption habits and lifestyle trends.

- As per the report, 36% of Indian millionaires use e-wallets or UPI as their preferred payment method as compared to the 18% last year.
- 66% of the survey respondents indicated that they are happy with both personal and professional life, compared to 72% in 2020.
- Taj is the most preferred hospitality brand, followed by Oberoi and Leela.
- Rolex is the most preferred luxury watch brand, followed by Cartier and Audemars Piguet.
- Tanishq is the most preferred Indian jewellery retail brand.
- Louis Vuitton is the most preferred luxury goods brand, followed by Gucci and Burberry.
- Gulfstream is the most preferred private jet brand, followed by Boeing and Airbus.

210. The report by the **State Bank of India** (SBI) economic research department (ERD), '**Ecowrap**' has lowered India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimate for the financial year 2022 to **8.8%** from its earlier forecast of 9.3%. It has projected India's GDP to grow at **5.8 percent** in Q3 of fiscal 2022.

211. As per the '**Deloitte 2022 CxO Sustainability Report: The Disconnect Between Ambition and Impact**', Indian businesses have ranked **fifth** amongst 21 countries based on their concern for climate change.

- The survey was conducted by KS&R Inc. and Deloitte during September-October 2021.

- According to the report, 80 percent of Indian executives see the world at a tipping point for responding to climate change (it was about 53 percent eight months ago).
 - Indian companies are more likely to be implementing tougher climate actions compared with their global counterpart.
 - The top climate issue already affecting Indian organisations is employees' health.
- 212.** The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has published the **Global Trade Update (February 2022)**.
- As per the report, the value of global trade reached a record level of **\$28.5 trillion** in 2021, an increase of 25% on 2020 and 13% higher compared to 2019.
 - The report indicates that trade growth will slow during the first quarter of 2022.
 - Trade in goods increased more strongly in the developing world than in developed countries.
 - As a result of the global shortage of semiconductors, trade growth in communication equipment, road vehicles and precision instruments was subdued.
- 213.** As per the estimates released by the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC), under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, India's fuel demand is expected to grow **5.5% in FY23**.
- Fuel consumption in FY23 is estimated to rise to 214.5 million tonnes from the revised estimates of 203.2 million tonnes for FY22.
 - In 2019-20, India had consumed 214.1 million tonnes of petroleum products such as petrol, diesel, and LPG.
- 214.** India Ratings has lowered India's GDP forecast for FY22 to **8.6%** from the 9.2 percent forecast in the first advance estimate released on 7th January 2022. According to an India rating analysis, National Statistical Organisation (NSO) is likely to peg the FY22 real gross domestic product growth at Rs.147.2 lakh crore.
- 215.** Rating agency Moody's Investors Service has raised India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) forecast to **8.4%** in FY23 from 7.9% estimated earlier.
- Moody's has estimated the Indian economy to grow at **9.3 percent** in FY22.
 - It has also been estimated that the GDP growth forecast for **FY23** stands at **5.5%** and **6.5%** for **FY24**.

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- 216.** The 10th edition of the **International Intellectual Property Index 2022** has been released by the Global Innovation Policy Centre of the United States Chambers of Commerce (USCC).
- **The USA** has topped the index with **95.48%**, followed by the UK with 94.14%, and Germany with 92.46%.

- **India** has been ranked **43rd** out of 55 countries on the International Intellectual Property Index. The overall score of India has increased from 38.40 percent (19.20 out of 50) in the ninth edition of this report to 38.64 percent (19.32 out of 50) in the 10th edition.
- Out of the 53 economies included in both the ninth and tenth editions, 45 economies saw a net improvement in their scores. United Arab Emirates (UAE), Nigeria, and Peru had the largest improvements in score at 4.04%, 3.91%, and 2.76%, respectively.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

- 217.** The Alternate Mechanism, comprising Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitharaman, and Piyush Goyal, has approved the divestment of the **93.7 percent** stake held in **Nilachal Ispat Nigam Limited (NINL)** by four central PSUs and two companies of the Odisha government, to **Tata Steel Long Products (TSLP)** at an enterprise value of **Rs.12,100 crore**.
- 218. Bharat Electronics (BEL)** has inked a **USD 73 million** agreement with **Hyperion Global Group** to develop, manufacture and supply Internet of Things (IoT) devices for the US market.
- As per the contract, BEL will manufacture and supply IoT devices worth US \$73 million to Hyperion during the first year of commencement of supply with a provision to negotiate and supply upgrades of the products, worth US \$365 million, in the next five years.
- 219.** The government of **Sri Lanka** has recently decided to purchase petrol and diesel, **40,000 metric tonnes** each, from the **Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL)** as part of the Sri Lankan government's bid to face the current fuel and energy crisis.
- The country has also signed a Line of Credit (LoC) agreement with **EXIM Bank** for a **\$500 million** credit line to help finance its fuel purchases. The LoC will last for **1 year** at a nominal interest rate.
- 220. Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)** and the **Indian Army** have signed a contract worth **Rs 3,131.82 crore** in New Delhi for the manufacture and supply of **Konkurs-M**, anti-tank guided missiles. This contract will be executed in three years.
- 221.** The **United States of America (USA)** has become the largest trading partner of India with a trade of **\$112.3 billion** in the calendar year 2021, followed by China and UAE. The bilateral trade between India and China has raised to \$110.4 billion in 2021 against \$77.7 billion in 2020, registering a year-on-year growth of **42.2%**.
- **Note:** In 2020, China was India's top trading partner and the US was in the second rank.
- 222. Dukaan**, a platform that enables small and medium-sized businesses to set up online stores and sell products digitally, has partnered with **Simpl**, a buy-now-pay-later (BNPL) platform, to provide BNPL services to Dukaan's merchants.
- 223.** The rating agency **CRISIL** has estimated India's real GDP to grow at **7.8 percent** in **FY23** as compared with the 8.5 percent projected in the Economic Survey. The agency has projected the growth to slow to 7.8 percent in FY23 from the 9.2 percent in FY22.

- 224.** Google has introduced a new line of secure and sustainable **Chromebook devices for education**. The devices with updated programmes, resources, and Chrome OS, advances will play a major role in the classroom and support 50 million students and teachers to learn and collaborate from any location.
- 225.** NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam (NVVN), a wholly owned subsidiary of NTPC, has acquired a **5% stake** in the Power Exchange of India (PXIL). NVVN has purchased the shares of PXIL from NSE Investment, a co-promoter shareholder of PXIL.
- 226.** The Swiss based startup THE JET ZeroEmission has signed an agreement with UAE-based Zenith Marine Services and DWYN to launch the **world’s first hydrogen-powered flying boat** named “**The Jet**” in **Dubai, UAE**.
- The boat will cruise without noise over the waters at a speed of 40 knots, and has a capacity of hosting 8-12 passengers.
 - It is equipped with two fuel cells, an air conditioner and other environmentally friendly technologies that help reduce carbon emissions.
 - It will have its inaugural flight during the COP28, which is scheduled to be held in Dubai, UAE in November 2023.
- 227.** The **Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (HPCL)** has recently opened two more Convenience Stores under its brand name ‘**HaPpyShop**’. The new HaPpyShop stores have been opened at the HPCL's Auto Care Centre, Bandra West in Mumbai and Millennium retail outlet in Visakhapatnam.
- 228.** **Tata Sky**, the leading direct-to-home (DTH) company, has decided to drop 'Sky' from its brand name after a 15-year run in a rebranding initiative and has rechristened itself as **Tata Play**.
- The DTH company has joined hands with Netflix to offer new OTT (over the top) content-centric channel packs as well. The new name of the company will be visible to the viewers.
 - Tata Play Binge will hosts content from 13 leading OTT apps through a single User Interface while offering the flexibility of a single subscription and payment.
- 229.** As per the data officially released by the **Asian Development Bank (ADB)**, it provided a record **USD 4.6 billion** in sovereign lending to India in 2021 for **17 loans**, including **USD 1.8 billion** towards coronavirus response.
- The ADB's regular funding programme to India is made to support transport, urban development, finance, agriculture, and skills building.
 - The USD 1.8 billion COVID-19-related assistance included USD 1.5 billion for vaccine procurement and USD 300 million to strengthen primary health care in urban areas and the country’s future pandemic preparedness.
- 230.** 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.

- 231.** 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.
- 232.** 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.

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- 233.** **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.
- 234.** 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.
- 235.** **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.

- 236.** 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.
- 237.** **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.

- 238. 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
- 239. 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.
- 240. 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.
- 241. Jio Platforms**, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), has announced a joint venture with **SES**, a Luxembourg-based satellite services provider, to deliver the next generation scalable and affordable broadband services in India.
- Jio Platforms and SES will own 51% and 49% equity stake each in the joint venture.
 - The total value of the contract is about \$100 million.
- 242. BSE Ebix Insurance Broking**, a joint venture of BSE and Ebix Fincorp Exchange Pte Ltd, has partnered with **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)** for the distribution of insurance products. Under this partnership, BSE Ebix will offer its clients insurance products offered by LIC such as Life and Health, using its omnichannel digital presence.
- 243.** The **National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)** to set up biofuel projects, plants for post-processing of products like cattle feed and marketing of end products of CBG (Cannabigerol).
- 244.** The Central Government has recently reduced the Agricultural Infrastructure Development Cess (AIDC) on Crude Palm Oil (CPO) from 7.5 percent to **5 percent** with effect from 12th February 2022.
- After this reduction, the import tax gap will be 8.5 percent between CPO and Refined Palm Oil.

- 245.** The **Aditya Birla Group** has invested an undisclosed amount in **Zand**, an upcoming digital bank in the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**.
- Zand will be the first digital bank to provide both retail and corporate services.
 - Other investors of Zand includes: Franklin Templeton, Al Hail Holding LLC, Al Sayyah and Sons Investments LLC, Global Development Group, Mohamed Alabbar, Olivier Crespin, and Yusuff Ali M A as shareholders in the bank.
- 246.** NHPC Limited has set up a new wholly owned subsidiary company namely “**NHPC Renewable Energy Limited (NREL)**”, for development of Renewable Energy, Small Hydro and Green Hydrogen based business of NHPC Ltd.
- Currently, NHPC’s total installed generation capacity stands at **7071 mega-watt (MW)** which includes 100 MW of Solar/ Wind energy-based plants.
 - Another **5999** of Hydro and **105 MW** of Solar Plants are under construction.
 - NHPC has signed a Letter of Intent with **Rajasthan Renewable Energy Corporation Limited (RRECL)** for development of 10000 MW renewable energy projects / parks in Rajasthan.
- 247.** **Ayana Renewable Power Pvt. Ltd.**, owned by National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF), has partnered with Hyderabad-based **Greenko Group** to store 6-gigawatt hour (GWh) of power in hydro pump storage plants that Greenko is building at Pinnapuram in Andhra Pradesh. The aim is to provide standalone storage capacity to develop firm and dispatchable renewable energy (RE) solutions, including round-the-clock power supply of up to 1GW.
- 248.** **TransUnion CIBIL** has partnered with the **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)** to launch a MSME consumer education program that will help small businesses gain awareness on credit management, CIBIL Rank and commercial credit information.
- This program will kick off with MSME clusters in Maharashtra, Assam and Tripura.
 - The program aims to reach thousands of MSMEs across key MSME clusters in India.
- 249.** Tata Sons have appointed **Ilker Ayci**, former Chairman of Turkish Airlines, as the new MD&CEO of Air India. He will assume his responsibilities on or before 1st April 2022.
- 250.** **JPMorgan**, the largest bank in the USA, has become the first bank to enter the metaverse, having opened a lounge named ‘**Onyx Lounge**’ in Decentraland, a virtual world based on blockchain technology.
- Users can create their virtual avatars, build virtual spaces and roam in the lounge.
 - The lounge also features a digital image of the bank’s CEO Jamie Dimon.
- 251.** **Dabur India**, India’s largest Ayurveda company, has become a 100% ‘**Plastic Waste Neutral Company**’ in India after collecting, processing and recycling around 27,000 metric tonnes of post-consumer plastic waste during FY21-22. With this, Dabur has become the first Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) company to achieve this feat.
- 252.** **Vedanta Limited** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with electronics manufacturing services giant **Foxconn** to form a joint venture (JV) for manufacturing **semiconductors** in India.

- With this, Vedanta has become the first company to announce investment in semiconductor manufacturing in India.
- As per the MoU, Vedanta will hold the majority equity in the JV, while Foxconn will be the minority shareholder.

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- 253. Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL)** has bagged an order from **Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL)** to manufacture, assemble, test, and supply compact heat exchanger sets for 83 LCA (Light Combat Aircraft) Tejas MK1A aircrafts.
- The BHEL's Heavy Plates and Vessels Plant (HPVP), Visakhapatnam is the sole supplier of heat exchangers for LCA Tejas to HAL since 1996.
- 254. Micro-blogging platform Twitter** has partnered with **Paytm Payments Services Limited**, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Paytm, to strengthen the 'Tips' feature in India.
- Tips is a new way to monetise on Twitter and enables people on the service to send and receive funds as a token of appreciation.
 - Using the Tips feature, users can support their favourite creators or small business owners on Twitter by using any Paytm Payment Instrument like Paytm UPI, Paytm Wallet, Paytm Postpaid (buy-now-pay-later), debit and credit cards, and netbanking.
 - Tips on Twitter are available in Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, and Tamil.
- 255. Brio Hydroponics**, an Ahmedabad based agritech startup, has tied up with an Israeli firm **Pic-Plast Limited** for a rain protection technique. This will help grow plants hydroponically throughout the year.
Note: Hydroponics is a technique of growing plants indoors without using any soil.
- 256. Juspay Technologies** has launched a software stack named '**OpenPPI**' to help Prepaid Instruments (PPI) like digital wallets implement and comply with RBI's PPI interoperability regulation.
- **Interoperability:** It allows to transfer money by scanning UPI QR code and pay from wallets or cards just like a bank account with multiple possibilities for wallet use.
- 257. Tata Power Renewable Energy Limited**, a 100 percent subsidiary of Tata Power, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Germany-based **RWE Renewable GmbH**, one of the world's leaders in offshore wind, to explore the potential for joint development of offshore wind projects in India.
- 258. Adani Group** has signed a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Ballard Power Systems** for the commercialization of hydrogen fuel cells in various mobility and industrial applications in India.

- 259.** Maharatna company of the Government of India, **Coal India Limited (CIL)** has been awarded the ‘India’s Most Trusted Public Sector Company’ award at the Energy Meet 2022 & Excellence Awards of ASSOCHAM (The Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry).
- 260.** CIL has been honored for providing energy security to India and not allowing the situation of power crisis in the country by significantly increasing coal production and supply in the last few months to meet the increased demand for coal for the power sector.
- 261. Bharti Airtel** has joined the SEA-ME-WE-6 undersea cable consortium to scale up its high-speed global network capacity and serve India’s fast-growing digital economy.
- It shall be anchoring **20 percent** of the overall investment in the cable system.
 - Through SEA-ME-WE-6, Airtel will be able to add **100 TBps** capacity to its global network.
 - Airtel will land the SEA-ME-WE-6 cable system in India at new landing stations in **Mumbai and Chennai**.
- 262.** The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of stakes in **ISMT Limited** by **Kirloskar Ferrous Industries Limited**. The proposed combination is notifiable under Section 5(a) of the Competition Act 2002.
- 263. Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL)** has successfully commissioned India's first solar photovoltaic plant of 1.7-megawatt at **Bina** (Madhya Pradesh) in West Central Railway.
- It is the first Solar Power Plant on Indian Railways which feeds Traction Power directly.
 - The plant shall generate 1.8 Million units of electricity per year.
- 264. Bharti Airtel** has signed an agreement with Vodafone to buy an additional **4.7% stake** in Indus Towers. With the acquisition, Airtel’s shareholding in Indus Towers will increase to 46.4 percent.
- At present, Vodafone holds about 28% stake in Indus Towers, and Bharti Airtel holds around 42%.
- 265.** BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL), a subsidiary of Reliance Infrastructure, has **commissioned India’s first ‘Smart Managed EV Charging Station’** in **New Delhi**.
- It is supported by Nordic Innovation, an organization promoted by the governments of Nordic countries, and executed by Fortum Charge & Drive.
 - The management and operation of the Smart EV Charging Station will be under BYPL.
- 266.** Ideal Finance, a subsidiary of Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services Ltd has announced the rebranding of its company as **Mahindra Ideal Finance Ltd (MIFL)**. The objective is to make MIFL one of the leading licensed finance companies (LFC) in Sri Lanka.
- 267. International Business Machines Corp. (IBM)** has announced to launch a **Cyber Security Hub** in Bengaluru, Karnataka to address the concerns of its clients across the Asia Pacific (APAC) region. The security hub will be one of the only two centres globally. The other one is in the USA.

268. The 25th meeting of the **Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)** has been held in **Mumbai**, Maharashtra, under the Chairpersonship of Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
269. During the meeting, the council discussed the different mandates of the FSDC as well as important macro-financial concerns that have arisen as a result of certain domestic and global developments. It also discussed operational issues relating to currency management.
270. The **International Air Transport Association (IATA)** has partnered with **Standard Chartered India** to launch its new payment platform named “IATA Pay” for the airline industry in India.
- IATA Pay in India is powered by Standard Chartered's **Straight2Bank Pay**, a payment platform that helps online merchants digitalize collections via multiple payment options through single global connectivity.
271. **LinkedIn** has launched **Creator Accelerator Program** in India to support creators in growing their communities on the platform. The 10-week incubator-style initiative will support 200 creators in growing their communities.
- The Creator Accelerator Program is part of LinkedIn's USD 25 million commitment to creators globally.
 - India is the second country to roll out the program, after its successful launch in the US in September 2021.
272. **EaseMyTrip** has partnered with **Toffee Insurance**, one of the fastest-growing InsurTech companies, to provide a first-of-its-kind, free-of-charge, full refund medical policy that provides innovative and tailored travel insurance solutions to its customers.

BANKING & FINANCE

273. The **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** and the **UPI ecosystem** (comprising of leading banks and fintechs) have announced the ‘**UPI Safety and Awareness**’ initiative to create awareness amongst consumers.
- Under this initiative, NPCI and the UPI ecosystem will observe February 1-7 as ‘UPI Safety and Awareness Week’ and the whole of February as ‘UPI Safety and Awareness Month’.
 - This initiative will help vulnerable and first-time customers in overcoming their fears of adopting digital payments and guide them to pursue safe payments on the UPI platform.

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274. **Edelweiss General Insurance (EGI)** has recently launched an **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Voice Bot** to enable its customer's intimate insurance motor claims in a convenient and seamless manner. This is the first of its kind services in the General Insurance industry in India.

- 275. Vedanta Ltd** has tied up a facility of **Rs 8,000 crore** with **Union Bank of India** at 7.75% to take over a majority of the syndicated facility after multiple discussions with potential lenders.
- During 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Vedanta Ltd had tied up a syndicated facility of Rs 10,000 crore with State Bank of India as the lead bank at a running cost of 10.5 percent.
- 276. The State Bank of India (SBI)** has recently launched a dedicated centralized processing cell named ‘**Surya Shakti Cell**’ at Ballard Estate in Mumbai. It has been launched in association with **Tata Power Solar Systems**.
- **Aim:** To provide a new direction to solar projects financing in India.
 - The cell will process all the loan applications for solar projects (capacity up to 1 MW) sourced from across the country, for installation by business entities as well as households.
- 277. Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has restructured its four member high-power advisory committee on settlement orders and compounding of offences.
- The committee will now be chaired by **Jai Narayan Patel**, former chief justice of Calcutta High Court.
 - The panel was earlier headed by Vijay C Daga, retired judge of High Court of Bombay.
- 278. Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)** has recently partnered with insurance aggregator **Policybazaar** for distribution of its products. This is LIC’s first association with an insurance aggregator. The aim is to facilitate seamless digital distribution of life insurance products and boost financial inclusion across the nation.
- 279. The Reserve Bank of India** has cancelled the licence of Nashik-based **Independence Co-operative Bank Ltd**. The bank ceases to carry on banking business, with effect from the close of business on 3rd February 2022.
- The major reason for the cancellation of the license by RBI is that bank does not have adequate capital and earning prospects i.e. it does not comply with the provisions of **Section 11(1)** and **Section 22 (3) (d)** read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- 280. The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT-Hyderabad)** has launched the beta version of ‘**Swarajability**’, a job portal powered by artificial intelligence that helps people with disabilities acquire relevant skills and find jobs.
- The platform will analyse the profiles of the job seekers and suggest the skills they would require to become eligible.
 - The institute has developed the platform in association with Youth4Jobs, Visual Quest and Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.
 - The project is funded by **Kotak Mahindra Bank**.
- 281. ICICI Bank** has bought additional stake in **India International Clearing Corporation (IICC)** at IFSC in GIFT City for **Rs 4.43 crore**, taking its holding in the clearing body to **9.90 percent**.
- As many as 44,262,356 equity shares at Re 1 per share were allotted to ICICI Bank on 2nd February 2022 for a cash consideration of Rs 44.3 million (Rs 4.43 crore).
 - After investment, ICICI Bank’s shareholding has increased from **7.61 percent to 9.90 percent** of the equity share capital of IICC.

- 282.** According to the latest Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, the **External Commercial Borrowings (ECB) of Indian companies** has raised to **USD 23.28 billion** in the first 3 quarters of the FY22 (April, 2021 - December, 2021) as against USD 19.53 billion during FY21 (April-December, 2020) and has jumped over **19 percent** in the first nine months of the current fiscal (9MFY22).
- ECBs for the on-lending or sub-lending in the 1st 9MFY22 (April 2021 to December 2021) stood at **USD 6.72 billion** which is higher than USD 6.67 billion raised by the non-banking lenders in FY21.
 - ECBs for refinancing of rupee loans (USD 3.70 billion), modernisation (USD 1.67 billion), capital goods Import (USD 1.54 billion) and rupee expenditure (USD 976 million) in 1st 9MFY22 have exceeded the entire FY20.
 - The total credit growth of Banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) will improve by **9 percent to 11 percent** in fiscal 2023 with the broad-based recovery in the economy and support of both retail and wholesale verticals.
- 283.** **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)**, a premier R&D organization under the Ministry of Electronics and IT, to strengthen collaboration in Cyber Security and Allied sectors.
- 284.** **Karnataka Bank** has been awarded the digital transformation award, '**DX 2021 Awards**', in recognition of the “innovative” best practice '**KBL VIKAAS**', by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) for Best Practice in Digital Transformation.
- “KBL VIKAAS, a wholistic transformation journey, launched by the bank in 2017, has enabled the bank in implementation of digital capabilities, namely, digital journeys for assets and liability products, enhancement in customer experience under ADC products and bringing in a strong culture of sales and marketing.
 - The bank has also launched the digital transformation journey '**KBL NxT**' as part of wave 2.0 of 'KBL VIKAAS', with an objective of taking the digital initiatives to the next level and eventually emerge as ‘the digital bank of future’”.
- 285.** As per the statement of State Bank of India’s Chairman Dinesh Khara, in the first phase, banks will be transferring **15 stressed assets** (Non-Performing Assets (NPA) accounts) worth over **Rs. 50,000 crore** by **31st March 2022** to the National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARCL) or bad bank to clean up their books.
- The initial 15 stressed assets accounts for **60%** of the 38 identified stressed assets worth around Rs 82,845 crore, which was agreed by Banks to be transferred to NARCL.
- 286.** **State Bank of India (SBI)** has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)** and **National Culture Fund (NCF)** for the development of **Atmanirbhar Bharat Centre for Design (ABCD)** at L1 Barrack, Red Fort, Delhi.
- The ABCD project is being implemented by **IGNCA**, an autonomous organization under Ministry of Culture.
 - SBI will sponsor the project with a contribution of **Rs. 10 crore**.
- 287.** **Punjab National Bank (PNB)**, and **Patanjali Ayurved Limited (PAL)** have launched co-branded credit cards in partnership with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

- The co-branded credit cards are offered on NPCI's RuPay Platform and are available in two variants – **PNB RuPay Platinum and PNB RuPay Select.**
- 288. 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.
- 289. 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.
- 290. 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.
- 291. 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.
- 292.** 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).
- 293.** 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%.

294. 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.

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- 295.** 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**.
- 296.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has extended the restrictions on **Millath Co-Operative Bank, Devangere (Karnataka)**, by another **three months** till 7th May 2022.
- As per the directions issued first on 10th May 2019, withdrawals were capped at Rs.1,000 from any account. The directions have been periodically extended till now.
- 297. 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.
- 298. 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.
- 299. 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.
- 300.** 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.

301. 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.

302. 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.

303. 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.

304. 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.

305. 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 **31st March 2026**, with an upper tolerance of 6 percent and lower tolerance of 2 percent.

Policy rates as of February 2022	
Repo rate	4%
Reverse Repo Rate	3.35%
Marginal Standing Facility Rate	4.25%
Bank Rate	4.25%
Reserves Ratio as of February 2022	
Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)	4%
Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR)	18%

- 306.** **Yes Bank** has launched an annual start-up program named 'Yes Bank Agri Infinity program', which seeks to co-develop digital financial solutions for the food and agriculture ecosystem by mentoring entrepreneurial ventures in the field.
- 307.** **Karur Vysya Bank Ltd. (KVB)** has joined hands with **Unanu Technologies** to introduce digital freight financing to fund transport contractors using the end-to-end logistics technology platform.
- KVB is the first bank to introduce digital freight financing through marketplace in the banking sector.
 - UNANU has built the Freight Financing System within their suite of software platforms.
 - Using the module “U-Turbo – a marketplace”, one can on-board logistics companies and shippers to Freight Financing programme.
- 308.** **DMI Finance Private Limited (DMI)** has recently partnered with **Google Pay** to provide digital personal loans to Google Pay users.
- Under this partnership, DMI Finance will disburse up to **Rs. 1 lakh** per loan which would be repayable over a maximum of 36 months.
 - This partnership is being launched in over 15,000 pin codes.
- 309.** **Phonepe** has partnered with **NITI Aayog** to launch **Fintech Open Hackathon** to provide an opportunity for innovators, digital creators, and developers from all over India to think, ideate and code.
- Participating teams can have one or up to five participants. They can use data sources like PhonePe Pulse, the Open Government Data Platform and RBI reports on payments to build on their submission.
 - The winning team will be awarded Rs 1,50,000. Two teams, in second and third places, will win Rs 1 lakh and Rs 75,000, respectively.

- 310. Kotak Mahindra Bank** has partnered with **Ezetap** to provide integrated point of sale (PoS) solutions across 4,000 locations in India. This partnership will enable the lender to scale up its PoS product base across merchant segments, including retail enterprises and government customers.
- 311. The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** has launched a new programme named '**Waste to Wealth Creation**' for the women in the Sundarbans in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal.
- This is a part of Swavalamban mission of SIDBI that aims to support artisans to become sustainable.
 - In this, the women will make ornaments and showpieces from the fish scale.
 - SIDBI will extend benefits to 50 women indirectly generating revenues from alternate livelihoods.
- 312. State Bank of India (SBI), Bank of Baroda (BoB), Punjab National Bank (PNB), Union Bank of India (UBI), Canara Bank, and Bank of Maharashtra (BoM)** have subscribed to shares of India Debt Resolution Company Ltd (IDRCL).
- 313. The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** has recently collaborated with **Bihar** government to develop the micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) ecosystem. For this, SIDBI has signed a two Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) with the Industries Department, Government of Bihar and Bihar Industrial Area Development Authority (BIADA).
- Bihar is the **14th state** of India with which SIDBI has partnered to strengthen MSME.
- 314. Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance** has launched its new insurance plan named '**Flexi Edge**', a non-linked participating individual savings life insurance plan that enables the customers with the ability to prioritize their long-term savings.
- 315. IndusInd Bank** has been empanelled by the Small Farmers Agri- Business Consortium (SFAC) to facilitate digital collection and settlement services on **National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)** portal for the transactions between farmers and traders across the country.
- 316. LKP Securities Ltd** has tied up with **HDFC Bank** to offer a special 3-in-1 online account. Under this facility, customers of LKP Securities Ltd. can complete their bank account opening formalities and gain added benefits of broking and demat account.
- The 3-in-1 account facilitates swift fund transfer between the bank account and trading account.
 - The account offers a host of benefits including no annual maintenance charges (AMC) for one year from the trading account opening date and waiver on brokerage charges of up to Rs 500 for one month from the date of demat account opening.
 - The demat and trading accounts also provide the facility to trade in other segments like commodities and currency.
- 317. PayU** has recently announced its integration with **BigCommerce**, an Open SaaS e-commerce platform for fast-growing and established brands, to strengthen Server Message Block (SMB) digitalization.

- 318.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has extended the deadline for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) to comply with new asset classification norms issued on 12th November 2021. NBFCs will now be allowed to move to the new rules for recognizing bad loans by **30th September 2022**, as against 31st March 2022.
- The new guidelines issued last year had asked NBFCs to upgrade bad loans to standard assets only after all interest dues and principal outstanding are repaid across credit facilities.
- 319. Standard Chartered Bank, India** has launched the ‘interest-only home loan’ facility for completed residential properties where during the initial period, borrowers can pay only the interest without principal deduction.
- This facility is available for a loan amount ranging from Rs.35 lakh to Rs.3.5 crore.
 - The maximum tenure set for the loan is 30 years for salaried individuals and 25 years for self-employed individuals.

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- 320. Edelweiss Asset Management** has launched a mutual fund investment mobile application named “**eInvest**” to help investors perform all financial transactions on the go. The app comes with **Insta Money** feature that is a mutual fund savings account with an instant withdrawal facility to the registered bank account.
- 321.** Fisdom, a wealth-tech company, has tied up with the **Bank of Maharashtra (BoM)** to offer wealth management products and services to over 29 million customers of the bank. The aim is to distribute the wealth products and services including the mobile banking app and internet banking.
- 322. Bank of Baroda** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Assam Rifles**, the oldest paramilitary force, to provide the ‘Baroda Central Forces Salary Package’ to all personnel of the Assam Rifles, both serving and retired.
- The lender will also provide special benefits, including Personal Accident Insurance and a co-branded credit card.
- 323. BoB Financial Solutions Limited (BFSL)**, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bank of Baroda (BoB), has launched a co-branded RuPay contactless credit card named ‘**IRCTC BoB Rupay Card**’ in collaboration with the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd (IRCTC).
- 324.** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has reconstituted its Alternative Investment Policy Advisory Committee (AIPAC). The committee advises SEBI on a range of issues that impact further development of the Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) space.
- The committee has now **20 members**. The panel, constituted by SEBI in March 2015, earlier had 22 members.
 - The committee is chaired by Infosys co-founder **N R Narayana Murthy**.

- 325.** ICICI Bank has acquired a **9.49% stake** of Rs 19.99 crore in the Verve Financial Services (VFSPL) through the acquisition of 2,29,600 equity shares. Since the acquisition of shareholding is below 10%, regulatory approval is not required.
- 326. Mastercard**, as an extension of its flagship campaign ‘Team Cashless India’, along with **SBI Payments** has partnered with the Auto Rickshaw Association in Lucknow, All Assam's Restaurant Association (AARA) in Guwahati, local shopkeepers, and Boat Union in Varanasi to boost the digital payments infrastructure.
- 327. Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL)** has recently become an official acquiring partner for 'e-RUPI' vouchers, which will be accessible at offline stores across India.
- It has also partnered with One97 Communications Limited (OCL), the company that owns Paytm, to improve its strong merchant base.
- 328.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the certificate of registration issued to **PC Financial Services Pvt Ltd**, which carries out lending operations through an app called Cashbean. It has been cancelled in exercise of the powers conferred under **Section 45-IA (6) (iv)** of the Reserve Bank of India Act 1934.
- Earlier, the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) seized bank/payment gateway funds worth Rs 288 crore from PC Financial Services through three seizure orders issued under the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA).
- 329.** National Hydropower Generation Company (NHPC) has signed a pact with **HDFC Bank** to monetize return on equity of its **540-MW Chamera-I Power Plant** in Himachal Pradesh for 10 years. The amount of the securitization facility has been arrived Rs 1,016.39 crore or 5.24 percent per annum discounting rate linked with three-months Treasury bills (T-bills).
- 330.** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has recently extended the time limit to segregate client-level funds and monitor collateral at stockbrokers from 28th February 2022 to **2nd May 2022**. This is the second time SEBI has extended the deadline for these rules. Earlier, it was supposed to be implemented from 1st December 2022.
- 331.** The **Union Bank of India**, in association with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has launched the ‘**Union MSME RuPay Credit Card**’. The aim is to provide simplified and digital delivery of finance to Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), to meet their business-related operational expenses.
- 332. IIFL Home Finance Ltd (IIFL HFL)** has signed a **USD 68-million** loan agreement with **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** to improve financial access to affordable green housing for lower-income groups in India.
- From this loan, 80 percent will be lent to women borrowers or co-borrowers and 20 percent will be allocated to financing mortgages for green-certified homes.

- 333.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced to conduct a “**Sell/Buy Swap Auction**” of **USD 5 billion** in March 2022. This will lead to an inflow of the US dollar.
- RBI will conduct a spot sale to sell USD 5 billion to banks in exchange for rupees, through this auction on **10th March 2022**.
 - On **11th March 2024**, it will make a forward purchase from banks in two years. The forward purchase will help in reducing RBI’s current foreign exchange reserves and increase its two-year forward USD purchases.
- 334.** Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India has acquired **1.50 lakh** equity shares or **0.085%** additional stakes of Capri Global Capital (CGCL). With this, LIC has increased its stake in CGCL from 4.959 percent to **5.044 percent**.
- 335.** **HDFC Bank** has partnered with **Indore Clean Energy Private Limited (ICEPL)** for the development of 550 tonnes/day of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) to Compressed Biogas (CBG) plant - the largest Bio-CNG plant in Asia.
- ICEPL has a **20-year** concession agreement with Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) for procurement of municipal solid waste and converting it to CBG.
- 336.** **Edelweiss General Insurance (EGI)** has partnered with **Ashv Finance**, a tech-led NBFC, to provide digital loan protection to MSMEs. EGI will offer health insurance cover to all the customers of Ashv Finance in all major cities across the country.
- 337.** **TripMoney**, the fintech arm of MakeMyTrip, has partnered with **SBM Bank** to launch a rupee-denominated secure credit card named 'TripMoney Global card'.
- The card is powered by Visa and can be used across over 150 countries.
- 338.** **South Indian Bank (SIB)** has introduced two new services by enabling “**SIBerNet**” and **SIB Express** to enhance both “remittances to” (outward remittances) and “remittances from” (inward remittances).
- The online outward remittance is enabled through Net Banking and inward remittances through National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI’s) Unified Payment Interface (UPI) mode.
- 339.** The board of the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI Bank) has approved the reappointment of **Rakesh Sharma** as the managing director and chief executive officer (MD&CEO) of the bank for three years with effect from 19th March 2022.
- 340.** **Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)** has approved the tender for cleaning up rivers, Mula, Mutha, and Mula-Mutha (confluence of both rivers) of Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) area.
- The project will cost around **Rs. 1,000 crore** for the pollution abatement of rivers.
 - **Aim:** To improve the water quality by augmenting sewage collection systems and sewage treatment facilities in Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) area.
- 341.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has directed Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) to mandatorily implement '**Core Financial Services Solution (CFSS)**' by **30th September 2025** to provide a seamless customer interface as well as have a centralized database.

- Currently, RBI has directed the NBFCs - Middle Layer and NBFCs - Upper Layer with 10 and more 'fixed point service delivery units' as on 1st October 2022 to implement CFSS on or before 30th September 2025.
- However, NBFC - Upper Layer shall ensure that the CFSS is implemented at least in **70 percent** of 'Fixed point service delivery units' on or before **30th September 2024**.
- In the case of NBFC - Base Layer and NBFC - Middle and Upper Layers with fewer than 10 'Fixed point service delivery units', implementation of CFSS is not mandatory.
- A 'fixed point service delivery unit' is a place of operation from where the business activity of non-banking financial intermediation is carried out by a NBFC and which is manned either by its own staff or outsourced agents.

342. New Development Bank (NDB), formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank, will become the first multilateral agency to open an office in Gujarat International Finance Tech City (GIFT). It will start its operation by the mid of May 2022.

- NDB has also announced to partner with the newly launched National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NBFID) to support crucial infrastructure projects in India.

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AWARDS & RECOGNITION

343. Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), the premier Telecom R&D center of the Government of India, has won three awards at the 12th Annual Aegis Graham Bell Awards for its indigenously designed & developed innovative Telecom solutions in various categories. It has won three awards in the following categories:

- Indigenous Early Warning Platform for Disaster Management & Preparedness based on ITU's Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) in the "Tech for Social Good" category.
- C-DOT SAMVAD – A Unified Platform for Secure Messaging and Calling Solution.
- C-DOT Quarantine Alert System (CQAS) has won the first prize in the category of "Preventive Measures to combat Covid 19".

344. Neeraj Chopra has become the **third Indian athlete** to be nominated for a **Laureus World Sports Award**, after wrestler Vinesh Phogat in 2019 and cricket maestro Sachin Tendulkar, who had won the Laureus Sporting Moment 2000-2020 Award.

- Neeraj Chopra has been nominated for the **2022 Laureus World Breakthrough of the Year Award**. The other nominees include Russian tennis star Daniil Medvedev, British tennis player Emma Raducanu, Spanish footballer Pedri, Australian Olympic champion Ariarne Titmus and Venezuelan athlete Yulimar Rojas.

345. The National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India has selected ‘**Street Student**’ by **Akula Sandeep** for the first prize of Rs. 2 lakh of its seventh prestigious **Short Film Award Competition**. The film shows the story of a street urchin to send across a strong message on Right to Education and how the society needs to support it. It is in **Telugu** with sub-titles in English.

- ‘**Karfew**’ by Romi Meitei has been selected for the Second prize of Rs. 1.5 lakh. The film, through the story of a child in Manipur, pitches in hope for a better world, wherein people’s right to life, liberty, dignity and equality can be protected against odds including stereotyped fear psychosis. It is in **Meiteilon language** with sub-titles in English.
- ‘**Munghyar**’ by Nilesh Ambedkar has been selected for the Third prize of Rs. 1 lakh. The film is a poignant tale of the victims of discrimination on the basis of caste and creed amounting to violation of right to life, liberty, equality and dignity. It is in **Marathi** with sub-titles in English.

346. 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.

347. 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	
Men’s Test batting	Rishabh Pant (India)
Men’s Test bowling	Kyle Jamieson (New Zealand)
Men’s ODI batting	Fakhar Zaman (Pakistan)
Men’s ODI bowling	Saqib Mahmood (England)
Men’s T20I batting	Jos Buttler (England)
Men’s T20I bowling	Shaheen Afridi (Pakistan)
Women’s batting	Beth Mooney (Australia)
Women’s bowling	Kate Cross (England)
Associate batting	Gerhard Erasmus (Namibia)
Associate bowling	Ruben Trumpelmann (Namibia)
Debutant of the year	Ollie Robinson (England)
Captain of the year	Kane Williamson (New Zealand)

348. **Sandeep Bakhshi**, managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO) of ICICI Bank, has been named the **Business Standard Banker of the Year 2020-21** for turning around the private sector lender

and changing the perception about it during his tenure of the past three and a half years.

349. The prestigious ceremony of **Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2022** has been held in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2022	
Category	Winners
Outstanding Contribution to Films	Asha Parekh
Film of the Year	Pushpa: The Rise
Best Film	Shershaah
Best Director	Ken Ghosh for film State of Siege: Temple Attack
Best International Feature Film	Another Round
Best Actor	Ranveer Singh for 83
Best Actress	Kriti Sanon for Mimi
Critics Best Actor	Sidharth Malhotra
Critics Best Actress	Kiara Advani
Best Actor in Supporting Role	Satish Kaushik for film Kaagaz
Best Actress in Supporting Role	Lara Dutta for film Bell Bottom
Best Actor in Negative Role	Aayush Sharma for film Antim: The Final Truth
People's Choice Best Actor	Abhimanyu Dasani
People's Choice Best Actress	Radhika Madan
Best Debut	Ahan Shetty for film Tadap
Best Playback Singer Male	Vishal Mishra
Best Playback Singer Female	Kanika Kapoor
Critics Best Film	Sardar Udham Singh
Best Cinematographer	Jayakrishna Gummadi for film Haseena Dilruba
Best Short Film	Pauli
Best Actor in Web Series	Manoj Bajpayee for The Family Man 2
Best Actress in Web Series	Raveena Tandon for Aranyak
Best Web Series	Candy
Best Actor in Television Series	Shaheer Sheikh for Kuch Rang Pyar Ke Aise Bhi
Best Actress in Television Series	Shraddha Arya for Kundali Bhagya
Television Series of the Year	Anupama
Most Promising Actor in Television Series	Dheeraj Dhoopar for Kundali Bhagya
Most Promising Actress in Television Series	Rupali Ganguly for Anupama

350. **Bill Gates** of United States of America has been honoured with **Hilal-e-Pakistan**, Pakistan's second-highest civilian honour, for his efforts to help eradicate polio in the country. He is the co-founder of Microsoft and philanthropist.

351. The IBA 17th Annual Banking Technology Awards 2021 has been organized by the Indian Banks' Association (IBA). This year's IBA Awards celebrating "Next Gen Banking" has recognized technologies and practices in the banking industry that have demonstrated a high degree of innovation over 2021.

IBA 17th Annual Banking Technology Awards 2021		
Category	Segment	Winner
Best Technology Bank of the Year	Large	Bank of Baroda
	Small	South Indian Bank

	Foreign	Citibank
	Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)	Baroda Rajasthan Ksheteriya Gramin
	Cooperative Banks	Saraswat Cooperative Bank
Best Use of AI/ML and Data Analytics	Large	ICICI Bank
	Small	South Indian Bank and Karur Vysya Bank
	RRBs	Telangana Grameen Bank
Best IT Risk & Cyber Security Initiatives	Large	Union Bank of India
	Medium	Yes Bank
	Small	South Indian Bank
	Foreign	HSBC
	RRBs	Baroda Rajasthan Ksheteriya Gramin and Telangana Grameen Bank
	Cooperative Banks	Saraswat Cooperative Bank
	Small Payment Banks	Ujjivan Small Finance Bank
Best Digital Financial Inclusion Initiatives	Large	SBI
	Small	Jammu & Kashmir Bank
	RRBs	Baroda Rajasthan Ksheteriya Gramin
Best Payments Initiative	Public	SBI
	Private	ICICI Bank
Best Fintech Adoption	Large	ICICI Bank
	Medium	Federal Bank
	Small	South Indian Bank
	RRBs	Baroda Rajasthan Ksheteriya Gramin
Cloud Adoption	Large	Union Bank of India
	Medium	Yes Bank
	Small	Karur Vysya Bank
	Foreign	Citibank
	RRBs	Baroda Rajasthan Ksheteriya Gramin

BOOKS & AUTHORS

- 352.** A new book titled “**The Great Tech Game: Shaping Geopolitics and the Destinies of Nations**” has been authored by **Anirudh Suri**. It is published by HarperCollins India. In this book, the author lays out a roadmap for how any country must develop its strategic plan to succeed in this technology-dominant era.
- 353.** A new book titled “**Last Among Equals: Power, Caste & Politics in Bihar’s Villages**” has been authored by **M.R. Sharan**. The book is published by Context. The book features the formidable spirit shown by the poor to succeed against all odds. It is an account of the author’s field study in a group of villages in Bihar that he undertook as part of his PhD programme.
- 354.** India's first-ever season style book titled '**The Class of 2006: Sneak Peek into the Misadventures of the Great Indian Engineering Life**' is written by management professional **Akash Kansal**. It is launched virtually at one of the biggest book launch ceremonies at IIT Kanpur & Delhi Technological University.
- The book is released on Amazon Kindle by talented Indian film actor, writer, director, and producer **R. Madhavan**.

- The book consists of 18 different episodes, each with a Learning Box, that recall the times spent in collage.

355. A Trilogy book series titled “**India that is Bharat: Coloniality, Civilisation, Constitution**” has been authored by **J Sai Deepak**. The book is published by Bloomsbury India. It is the first part of a comprehensive trilogy, which examines the impact of European ‘colonial consciousness’ on Bharat.

356. Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Manoj Sinha has released a book titled “**Prakrtik, Vaidik avem Jaivik Kheti- Graameen Udyamita Ka Naya Swaroop**” at the Raj Bhavan, Jammu. The book is published by Chudamani Sanskrit Sansthan, Basohli, Kathua. The book comprises research papers of scholars of Sanskrit and agricultural science from across India and will increase awareness among people about Vedic farming.

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357. 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)

358. 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**”.

359. A book titled ‘**How to Prevent the Next Pandemic**’ has been authored by **Bill Gates**. It will be published by Knopf in the U.S. and Penguin Random House internationally. It will be released in May 2022. In the book Bill Gates has written about specific steps that can only stop future pandemics but, in the process, provide better health care for everyone around the world.

360. A new book titled “**Dignity in a Digital Age: Making Tech Work for All of Us**” has been authored by **Ro Khanna**. The book is published by Simon & Schuster. The book highlights the effects of changing lifestyle patterns of Americans due to technological progress.

361. A new book titled “**A History of Sriniketan: Rabindranath Tagore's Pioneering Work in Rural Reconstruction**” has been authored by **Uma Das Gupta**. It is published by Niyogi Books under the imprint ‘Paper Missile’. The book explores Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore's work for rural

reconstruction by setting up 'Sriniketan', a wing of his Visva Bharati International University at Shantiniketan in 1922.

- 362.** A new book titled “**The Founders: The Story of Paypal and the Entrepreneurs Who Shaped Silicon Valley**” has been authored by **Jimmy Soni**. It is published by Simon & Schuster. The book highlights the story of multinational digital-payments company PayPal and how it covered the journey of a start-up that turned into one of the most successful companies of all time.
- 363.** A new book titled ‘**A Nation To Protect**’ has been authored by **Priyam Gandhi Mody**. The book has been launched by Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya. The book highlights the role of PM Narendra Modi during the Covid crisis in the past two years. The book documents the Centre’s leadership in this unprecedented time and how it tided the nation through the crisis.
- 364.** A new book titled “**Humane: How the United States Abandoned Peace and Reinvented War**” has been authored by **Samuel Myon**. The book highlights the USA strategy on fighting wars and how armed combat was transformed from an imperfect tool for resolving disputes into an integral component of the modern condition.

PERSON IN NEWS

- 365.** The Government of India has recently extended the tenure of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) Chairperson, **M R Kumar** by **one year** or till he attains the age of superannuation. His term was supposed to end on 13th March 2022.
- The tenure of MD of LIC **Raj Kumar** has also extended by 1 year. He was supposed to retire on 31st January 2022.
- 366.** The online gaming company Games24x7 has appointed Bollywood actor **Hrithik Roshan** as brand ambassador for its online skill gaming platform, RummyCircle. The brand will also start its new campaign #RahoEkKadamAage starring Hrithik Roshan.
- 367.** The Government has appointed former civil servant **Ravi Mittal** as the chairperson of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) for a period of 5 years or till the age of 65, whichever is earlier. He will take over from Navrang Saini after his term ends on 5th March 2022.
- In October 2021, IBBI Whole Time Member Navrang Saini was given the additional charge as the chairperson.
- 368.** The Freedom and Refoundation Party (Libre) member **Xiomara Castro** has been sworn in as the **first female President of Honduras**. She has replaced President Juan Orlando Hernández, to become 56th President of Honduras.
- 369.** Lieutenant General **GAV Reddy** has been appointed as the new Director-General of the Defence Intelligence Agency. He will succeed Lt. General KJS Dhillon.
- 370.** Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor **Urjit Patel** has resigned from the post of non-executive and independent director of Britannia Industries Limited, citing a full-time work assignment starting next month.

- He is recently appointed **vice president** for investment operations in South Asia at the Beijing-based **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)**. His appointment is effective from 1 February 2022.
 - Urjit Patel had succeeded Raghuram Rajan and served as the 24th Governor of RBI from 2016-2018. Prior to that, he was RBI's deputy governor in charge of monetary policy.
- 371.** The Government of India has appointed **Sonali Singh** to hold the additional charge of the **Controller General of Accounts (CGA)**, under the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, with effect from 1st February 2022. She has been appointed in place of Dipak Dash, who superannuated on 31st January 2022.
- 372.** IndiGo (InterGlobe Aviation Ltd), an Indian low-cost airline, has appointed its co-founder and promoter **Rahul Bhatia** as the new Managing Director (MD) of IndiGo with immediate effect for a period of 5 years.
- 373.** **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.
- 374.** **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.
- 375.** **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.
- 376.** **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 31st January 2022.
- 377.** **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.

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- 378.** 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.
- 379.** 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.
- 380. 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.
- 381.** 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).
- 382. Pradip Shah** has been appointed as the new chairman of **Pfizer India**. He has succeeded RA Shah who resigned on 3rd 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.*
- 383. 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.
- 384. 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 Kabore.
- 385.** 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.
- 386.** The Krishi Network, an agritech startup company, has appointed Bollywood actor **Pankaj Tripathi** as its Brand Ambassador and investor.

- 387.** The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has recently announced the appointment of **Vineet Joshi**, Additional Secretary, Department of Higher Education, as its new Chairman with effect from 14th February 2022. He has succeeded **Manoj Ahuja**.
- 388.** A23, an app owned by online skill gaming company Head Digital Works, has recently roped in Bollywood actor **Shahrukh Khan** as its brand ambassador. He will feature in its ‘Chalo Saath Khele’ campaign along with a first-of-its-kind responsible gaming campaign, which showcases skill games such as rummy, fantasy sports, carom and pool.
- Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) and Bhojpuri Singer, **Manoj Tiwari**, has been appointed as the brand ambassador of Khadi and other handicrafts of Bihar.
- 389.** Former Vice Chief of Navy Vice Admiral **G Ashok Kumar** has been appointed as the country’s first National Maritime Security Coordinator (NMSC).
- 390.** The Institute of Economic Growth has appointed **Chetan Ghate** as the new director of the institute. He will succeed Ajit Mishra.
- Chetan Ghate was a member of the Reserve Bank of India’s first monetary policy committee between 2016-2020.
 - He is the winner of the 2014 Mahalanobis Memorial gold medal for the best research economist in the country.
 - He is currently an external affiliate of the Centre for Research in Macroeconomics and Macro-Finance at Swansea University (Wales, UK).
- 391.** The Delhi High Court has appointed former Chief Justice of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, **Gita Mittal** as the Chairperson of a 3-member Committee of Administrators (CoA) to run the day-to-day affairs of the Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI).
- 392.** Indian table tennis player **Manika Batra** has been appointed as the brand ambassador of Sportswear brand Adidas. The partnership focuses on empowering women to realise their dreams, cheering for women to break barriers and create a reverberating impact in the world of sports.
- 393.** The Government of India has recently appointed **Sanjay Malhotra**, the Secretary of the Department of Financial Services, as the Director on the Central Board of Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- 394.** Takuya Tsumura has been appointed as the new President and CEO of Honda Cars India Ltd (HCIL) with effect from 1 April 2022. He has succeeded Gaku Nakanishi.
- 395.** Finance Ministry’s Principal Economic Advisor, **Sanjeev Sanyal** has been appointed as a full-time member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM). The appointment is for a tenure of two years.
- 396.** **KS Mani**, Chairman of Kerala Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation, known popularly by brand name Milma, has been elected to the Board of Directors of the **National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India (NCDFI)**.

- 397. Hindustan Unilever (HUL)** has separated the positions of chairman of the board and the chief executive officer & managing director (CEO & MD), which will be effective from 31st March 2022.
- **Nitin Paranjpe** has been appointed as the Non-Executive Chairman of Hindustan Unilever.
 - Sanjiv Mehta will continue as CEO & MD.
- 398.** Dish TV India's direct-to-home brand D2H has recently appointed Indian cricketer and Delhi Capitals captain **Rishabh Pant** as the new brand ambassador. He will feature in the brand's 360-degree communication for the next two years.
- In February 2022, Coca-Cola has appointed Bollywood actor **Shahrukh Khan** as the brand ambassador for Thums Up.
- 399. Abhishek Singh**, CEO of Digital India Corporation, has been appointed as the President of the **National e-Governance Division (NeGD)**. He is a 1995-batch IAS officer from Nagaland cadre. He will hold the position in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary. He will continue to hold the additional charge of the post of Managing Director & CEO, Digital India Corporation.
- 400.** The Appointments Committee of Cabinet has approved the appointment of **Madhabi Puri Buch**, a former SEBI Whole Time Member, as the new chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for an initial period of three years. She has succeeded **Ajay Tyagi**.

OBITUARIES

- 401.** The first tribal chief minister of **Odisha** and prominent tribal Congress leader **Hemananda Biswal** has passed away recently in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. He was born in Thakurpada village of Odisha on 1 December 1939.
- 402.** Veteran Malayalam actress **Maheshwari Amma**, better known by her stage name **KPAC Lalitha**, has passed away recently in Thrippunithura in Ernakulam, Kerala. She was born on 25th February 1948 in Kayamkulam, Kerala.
- She published an autobiography, titled "**Katha Thudarum**" (Story to Be Continued), which won the Cherukad Award in 2013.
- 403.** Indian film and television actor **Ramesh Deo** has passed away recently in Mumbai, Maharashtra. He was born on 30th January 1929 in Amravati, Maharashtra. He was known for playing a diverse range of roles in Marathi and Hindi movies. He made his Hindi film debut with Rajshri Productions' Aarti (1962). He also directed a number of films, documentaries and television serials.

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- 404.** Legendary singer **Lata Mangeshkar** has passed away recently in Mumbai, Maharashtra due to multi-organ failure. She was born as **Hema Mangeshkar** on 28th September 1929 in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.
- She is popularly known as **Nightingale of India, Voice of the Millennium and Queen of Melody**.
 - She recorded songs in over **36 Indian languages** and a few foreign languages, though primarily in Hindi, Bengali, and Marathi.
- 405.** Former President of Greece **Christos Sartzetakis** has passed away due to respiratory failure in Athens, Greece. He was born on 6th April 1929 in Thessaloniki, Greece.
- 406.** Actor and filmmaker **Amitabh Dayal** has passed away recently after suffering a heart attack in Mumbai, Maharashtra. He has worked in films like Kagaar: Life on the Edge (2003) with Om Puri, Bhojpuri film Rangdari (2012) and Raj Babbar's Dhuaan (2013), Amitabh Bachchan's Virrudh (2005).
- 407.** Padma Shri awardee and social worker **Ibrahim Sutar** has passed away in Karnataka due to cardiac arrest. He was born in Mahalingpur, Karnataka.
- He was fondly referred to as the **"Kabir of Kannada"**.
 - He was known for his work towards spreading social and communal harmony.
 - He was awarded the **Padma Shri in 2018**.
- 408.** Senior advocate and Additional Solicitor General (ASG) **Rupinder Singh Suri** has passed away recently in New Delhi. He was appointed the ASG in June 2020.
- 409.** Veteran Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, **Chandupatla Janga Reddy** has passed away recently in Hyderabad, Telangana. He was born on 18 November 1935 in Warangal district of Telangana.
- 410.** 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.
- 411.** **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 6th December 1947 in Sarhali Kalan, Punjab.
- He was a **hammer and discus thrower** before he became an actor.
- 412.** **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 Françoise Barre-Sinoussi and Germany's Harald zur Hausen.
- 413.** Veteran industrialist and head of the Bajaj group, **Rahul Bajaj**, has passed away recently in Pune, Maharashtra. He was born on 10th 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**.
- 414.** Eminent **Kannada poet** Chennaveera Kanavi has passed away recently in Dharwad, Karnataka. He was born on 29th June 1928 at Homball village in Gadag district of Karnataka.
- He was popularly known as "**Samanvayada Kavi**" and "**Soujanya Kavi**".
 - He received the Sahitya Akademi Award for his work 'Jeevadhvani' in 1981.
- 415.** Former India **footballer Surajit Sengupta** has passed away recently in Kolkata, West Bengal. He played for both Mohun Bagan and East Bengal and represented India at the 1974 and 1978 Asian Games. He was part of the Indian national team that won a bronze medal in the 1970 Asian Games, held in Bangkok, Thailand.
- 416.** Senior journalist and Indian Express national bureau chief **Ravish Tiwari** has passed away recently in Gurugram, Haryana. He had been suffering from cancer. He was also the national political editor of The Indian Express. He had previously worked at India Today and The Economic Times.
- 417.** Veteran singer and composer, **Bappi Lahiri** has passed away recently in Mumbai, Maharashtra. He was born as **Alokesh Lahiri** on 27th November 1952 in Jalpaiguri, West Bengal.
- 418.** Veteran Kannada actress and writer **Bhargavi Narayan** has passed away recently in Bangalore, Karnataka. She was born on 4th February 1938 in Bangalore, Karnataka.
- She wrote a book in Kannada titled 'Naa Kanda Nammavaru'.
 - Her notable films include Eradu Kanasu, Hanthakana Sanchu, Pallavi Anupallavi, and Baa Nalle Madhuchandrake.
- 419.** Renowned Freedom fighter and Social Worker **Shakuntala Choudhary** has passed away recently in Guwahati, Assam. She was born on 25th June 1920 in Kamrup, Assam.
- She was fondly known as Shakunthala Baideo.
 - She was a torch-bearer of the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi across the Northeast, particularly in Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya and spent a large part of her life at the Kasturba ashram.

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SPORTS

- 420.** Indian hockey goalkeeper **PR Srejeesh**, who was part of the men's team that claimed a bronze medal in the Tokyo Olympics, has won the prestigious **World Games Athlete of the Year** award for his 2021 performances.

- He is the **first man and second Indian** after Rani Rampal to win this award. In 2020, Indian women's hockey captain Rani Rampal became the first Indian to win the honour for her performances in 2019.
- 421.** Netherlands cricketer, **Benjamin Nicolas Cooper** (Ben Cooper) has recently announced his retirement from international cricket. He has represented cricket teams of Australia, Netherlands, and Amsterdam Knights.
- He made his international debut for **Netherlands** in an ODI in August 2013, against Canada.
- 422.** **Argentina hockey team** has won its 6th women's field hockey championship title at the **2022 Women's Pan American Cup** after defeating Chile in the finals held in Santiago, Chile. With this win, Argentina, Chile, and Canada have qualified for the 2022 FIH Hockey Women's World Cup.
- The Women's Pan American Cup is the quadrennial international championship of the Americas organized by the Pan American Hockey Federation. The 2022 Women's Pan Am Cup is the sixth edition of the championship.
 - **Note:** 2022 FIH Hockey Women's World Cup will be held in Terrassa, Spain and Amstelveen, the Netherlands from 1 to 17 July 2022.
- 423.** World Champion Grand Master (GM) **Magnus Carlsen (Norway)** has won the Tata Steel Chess Tournament 2022 in the Masters section by defeating GM Fabiano Caruana of Russia.
- In Challengers Section, **Arjun Erigaisi** of India has won the tournament.
 - The Tata Steel Chess Tournament 2022 is the 84th edition of the annual chess tournament held in Wijk aan Zee, Netherlands.
- 424.** The International Olympic Committee has approved a proposal to include **surfing, skateboarding and sport climbing** for the **2028 Olympic Summer Games** that will be organized in **Los Angeles, USA**.
- Skateboarding, sport climbing, and surfing had made their debut at the Tokyo Olympics in summer 2021 and will also be included in the 'additional' list for Paris in 2024.
- 425.** **India** has recently played its **1000th** One Day International (ODI). The match was played against West Indies. Indian team played the match under the captainship of Rohit Sharma and won the match.
- With this, the Indian Cricket team is the first in the world to complete 1000 ODI matches.
 - The team has so far won two ODI world cups and one T20 world cup. In all, the team has won 519 ODI matches out of the 1000 matches.
 - After India, the Australian team (958) has played the second highest number of ODI matches.
- 426.** Indian teenager **Unnati Hooda** has defeated Smit Toshniwal to win the women's singles title at the **2022 Odisha Open badminton tournament**.
- In men's singles, India's **Kiran George** has defeated Priyanshu Rajawat to emerge as the winner.
 - The 2022 Odisha Open is a BWF Super 100 tournament, organized at the Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium, Cuttack, Odisha.

- 427. New Zealand cricketer Daryl Mitchell** has won the **ICC Spirit of Cricket Award 2021** for his gesture of refusing a single to his partner James Neesham in the T20 World Cup semi-final against England at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi.
- 428. India** has won the U-19 Cricket World Cup title under the captaincy of **Yash Dhull** for the fifth time after beating England by four wickets at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, Antigua. India has added the fifth title to their collection, having previously won the trophy in 2000, 2008, 2012, and 2018.
- **Yash Dhull** becomes the fifth Indian captain to win the title after Mohammad Kaif, Virat Kohli, Unmukt Chand and Prithvi Shaw.
 - **Player of the Match (finals):** Raj Angad Bawa (India)
 - **Player of the Series:** Dewald Brevis (South Africa)
 - **Host Country:** West Indies
 - **Total participating teams:** 16
- 429. 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
- 430.** The 26th 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	
Men's Singles	João Sousa (Portugal)
Men's Doubles	Rohan Bopanna & Ramkumar Ramanathan (India)

- 431. 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.
- 432.** South African batter **Keegan Petersen** has been named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for January 2022. Whereas, England women's team captain **Heather Knight** has been named the ICC Women's Player of the Month for January 2022.
- 433. Chelsea**, an English football club, has won the 2021 FIFA Club World Cup title by defeating Brazilian club Palmeiras in the finals held at Mohammed bin Zayed Stadium, Abu Dhabi, UAE.
- Chelsea has won the FIFA Club World Cup for the first time.

- It has become the third English team to win the Club World Cup after Manchester United and Liverpool.
- 434.** The 70th Senior National Volleyball (Men & Women) Championship 2021-22 under the aegis of Volleyball Federation of India (VFI) has been held at the Biju Patnaik Indoor Stadium, KIIT Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar in Odisha.
- Winners of Senior National Volleyball Championship 2021-22:**
- **Men's category:** Haryana
 - **Women's category:** Kerala
- 435.** The International Olympic Committee (IOC) Athletes' Commission (AC) has recently re-elected Double Olympic ice hockey bronze medallist **Emma Terho** of Finland as its Chair.
- IOC has elected table tennis player Seung Min Ryu of the Republic of Korea as its Vice-Chair.
 - The commission has also elected cyclist Sarah Walker of New Zealand as second Vice-Chair.
- 436.** **Mumbai** has been officially elected as the host for the **2023 International Olympic Committee (IOC) session**. Mumbai received a historic 99% of the votes in favour of its bid from the delegates participating in the process, with 75 members endorsing its candidature in the session held at Beijing. The last such session was hosted by India in the year 1983 in New Delhi.
- 437.** International chess players woman FIDE masters (WFM) **Tanishka Kotia**, student of SRCC, and her sister **Riddhika Kotia**, student of Suncity School, have been appointed as brand ambassadors 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme for the Gurugram district of Haryana.
- 438.** **Sakibul Gani** of Bihar has become the first cricketer to score a triple century on his first-class debut against Mizoram at the Jadavpur University Campus ground, Jadavpur, Bengal. He scored 341 off 405 balls, hitting 56 fours and two sixes, in the Plate Group Ranji Trophy fixture against Mizoram.
- 439.** The 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games has been held from 4th February to 20th February 2022 in Beijing, China. The closing ceremony of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games is held at National Stadium (known as the Bird's Nest) in Beijing.
- **Norway** has won the most medals for the second successive Winter Olympics, winning a total of 37 medals, including 16 golds.
 - Germany has finished second with 27 medals overall, while China has finished third with 15 medals.
- India's performance:**
India could not win any medal in the games. The Indian team in the game is represented by a male alpine skier, Arif Khan.
- 440.** Indian Chess Grandmaster **R Praggnanandhaa** has defeated world no 1 Magnus Carlsen (Norway) in the eighth round of the Airthings Masters tournament, an online rapid chess tournament.
- With this, he has become the **3rd Indian**, after Vishwanathan Anand and P Harikrishna, to accomplish the rare feat of defeating Magnus Carlsen.

- 441.** Indian Wushu player **Sadia Tariq** has won a gold medal in the junior tournament at the Moscow Wushu Stars Championship 2022 held in Moscow, Russia. She hails from Srinagar in Jammu & Kashmir.
- 442.** The Mexican Open 2022 (also known as Acapulco title) has been held at Arena GNP Seguros in Acapulco, Mexico.
- **Men's Singles:** Rafael Nadal (Spain)
 - **Men's Doubles:** Feliciano Lopez (Spain) and Stefanos Tsitsipas (Greece)
- 443.** The 8th edition of the Rio Open 2022 has been held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It is a professional men's tennis tournament played on outdoor clay courts.
- **Men's Singles:** Carlos Alcaraz (Spain)
 - **Men's Doubles:** Simone Bolelli (Italy) and Fabio Fognini (Italy)
- 444.** Australian star golfer **Hannah Green** has won the 72 hole mixed-gender professional golf tournament at the TPS Murray River event in Australia. With this, she has become the first woman to win the Pro Mixed-Gender Event. She has won the 2019 Women's Professional Golfers Association (PGA) champion.
- 445.** The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** has recently launched the "**National Strategy on Additive Manufacturing**" to encourage collaboration between academia, government, and industry to make India a global hub for the design, development, and deployment of 3D printing.
- The strategy aims to achieve a market share of **5%** and contribute nearly **\$1 billion** to the GDP by **2025**.
- 446.** Indian weightlifter and 2020 Tokyo Olympics silver-medallist, **Mirabai Chanu** has won the gold medal in the 55kg weight category at the Singapore Weightlifting International 2022. She lifted 191kg (86kg+105kg) to stand on top of the podium in an uncompetitive field. The Singapore Weightlifting International is a qualifying event for the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.
- India has won a total of **eight medals**, including six gold and a silver and bronze each in the championship.

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IMPORTANT DAYS

- 447.** The Indian Coast Guard has celebrated its **46th Raising Day** on 01 February 2022. It is the fourth largest Coast Guard in the world. It has played a significant role in securing the Indian Coasts and enforcing regulations in the Maritime Zones of India.
- It was formally established on 1st February 1977, by the Coast Guard Act, 1978 of the Parliament of India.
 - It operates under the Ministry of Defence.

- 448. World Interfaith Harmony Week** is observed annually during the **first week of February (1-7 February)** to promote cultural peace and nonviolence. The week is based on the pioneering work of The Common Word initiative. This day was first proposed by **King Abdullah II of Jordan** at the United Nations in **2010**.
- 449. World Wetlands Day** is observed annually on **2nd February** to raise global awareness about the importance of wetlands, not only for people but the planet Earth as well. The day also marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2nd February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. The day was first observed in 1997.
- The year 2022 marks **51 years** of the Convention on Wetlands.
 - **Theme 2022:** ‘Wetlands Action for People and Nature’
 - This is the first year when the World Wetlands Day will be observed as a United Nations international day, following its adoption by the UN General Assembly on 30th August 2021.
- 450.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently addressed the **30th National Commission for Women Foundation Day** programme on 31st January 2022, via video conference. The event has been organised to celebrate the achievements of women in different fields. The theme of the programme is ‘**She The Change Maker**’.
- The National Commission for Women (NCW) is the statutory body of the Government of India.
 - It was set up on **31 January 1992** under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990.
 - **Objective:** To advise the government on all policy matters affecting women.
 - **Chairperson:** Rekha Sharma
- 451. World Cancer Day** is observed annually on **4th February** to spread awareness, inspire change and reduce the global impact of cancer. The aim is to reduce misconceptions surrounding cancer and the prejudices associated with it, to help people in getting the right information about it. The day is an initiative of the Union of International Cancer Control (UICC).
- **Theme 2022:** “Close the Care Gap”
 - The day came into existence on **4th February 2000**, during the World Cancer Conference for the New Millennium in Paris, France.
- 452. International Day of Human Fraternity** is observed annually on **4th February** to raise awareness about different cultures and religions, or beliefs, and the promotion of tolerance; and to educate people that tolerance, pluralistic tradition, mutual respect, and the diversity of religions and beliefs promote human fraternity.
- The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to declare 4th February as International Day of Human Fraternity on 21 December 2020.
 - The day was first observed in **2021**.
 - The day is a part of the ‘**World Interfaith Harmony Week**’, observed during the first week of February, as proclaimed by UN General Assembly in 2010.
- 453. International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female** is observed annually on **6th February** to eradicate female genital mutilation. The day was first observed in 2003.
- **Theme 2022:** “Accelerating Investment to End Female Genital Mutilation”

454. 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 **8th February 2022**.
- The year 2022 marks the **19th 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.

455. World Pulses Day is observed annually on **10th 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.

456. National Deworming Day is observed annually on 10th 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 **10th February** and **10th 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.

457. World Unani Day is observed annually on **11th 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.

458. International Day of Women and Girls in Science is observed annually on **11th 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 **7th** International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

459. National Productivity Day is observed annually across India on **12th 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**'.

460. Darwin Day is observed annually on **12th February** to commemorate the birth anniversary of the 19th-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 12th 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.

461. World Radio Day is observed annually on **13th 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.

462. National Women's Day is observed annually across India on **13th 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 13th 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.

463. 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 **14th February 2022**.
- The day is organised jointly by the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) and the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE).

464. International Childhood Cancer Day is observed annually on **15th February** to raise awareness about childhood cancer, and to express support for children and adolescents with cancer, the survivors and their families.

- **Theme 2022:** 'Better Survival' is achievable #throughyourhands
- The symbol for childhood cancer is the **Gold ribbon**.
- The day was first observed in 2000 by the Childhood Cancer International (CCI).

- 465. World Pangolin Day** is observed annually on the “**Third Saturday of February**” to spread awareness about these unique mammals and speed up conservation efforts.
- In 2022, the day is observed on **19th February**.
 - The year 2022 marks the **11th edition** of the event.
- 466. Soil Health Card Day** is observed annually on **19th February** to commemorate the launch of the Soil Health Card (SHC) Scheme, and create awareness about the benefits of the scheme. The year 2022 marks the 7th year of the launch of the SHC Scheme.
- SHC scheme was launched on **19th February 2015** by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at **Suratgarh, Rajasthan**.
 - **Objective:** To issue soil health cards to farmers every 2 years so as to provide a basis to address nutritional deficiencies in fertilization practises.
 - The scheme has been introduced to assist State Governments to issue soil health cards to all farmers in the country.

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- 467. World Day of Social Justice** is observed annually on **20th February** to encourage people to look at how social justice affects poverty eradication. It also focuses on the goal of achieving full employment and support for social integration.
- **Theme 2022:** “Achieving Social Justice through Formal Employment”
 - On 26 November, 2007, the UN General Assembly declared 20 February as the annual World Day of Social Justice. The day was first observed in 2009.
- 468. International Mother Language Day (IMLD)** is observed annually on **21st February** to spread awareness regarding linguistic and cultural diversity and to promote multilingualism.
- **Theme 2022:** “Using technology for multilingual learning: Challenges and opportunities”
- 469.** The states of **Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh** have observed their **36th Statehood day** on 20th February. Mizoram, as well as the state of Arunachal Pradesh, came into existence on **20 February 1987**.
- Mizoram became the 23rd state of India after the 53rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1986.
 - Arunachal Pradesh became the 24th state of India after the 55th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1986.
- 470. World Thinking Day**, formerly Thinking Day, is observed annually on **22nd February** by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) across 150 countries. The day is observed to think about fellow brothers and sisters around the world, address their concerns and understand the true meaning of guiding.
- **Theme 2022:** “Our World, Our Equal Future: The Environment and Gender Equality”

- 471.** Central Excise Day is observed annually across India on **24th February** to commemorate the Central Excise and Salt Act, which was enacted on 24th February 1944. The day is observed to encourage the employees of the excise department to carry out the central excise duty in a better way.
- 472.** The **Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC)** has observed its **44th Foundation Day** on 22nd February 2022. AEPC is the official body of apparel exporters in India, under the aegis of Ministry of Textiles, which provides invaluable assistance to Indian exporters as well as importers/ international buyers.
- 473.** The **Polio National Immunization Day 2022 (NID)**, commonly known as Pulse Polio Immunisation programme, has been observed across India on **27th February 2022** to give two drops of oral polio vaccine (OPV) to every child in the country under the age of 5.
- During the Polio NID, over 15 crore children will be covered across all 36 States and UTs in 735 districts
 - It has been launched by Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Mansukh Mandavia.
- 474.** **World NGO Day** is observed annually on **27th February** to recognise, celebrate and honour non-government and non-profit organisations. The day was first observed by the United Nations in 2014.
- 475.** **National Protein Day** is observed annually across India on **27th February** to educate people on the benefits of consuming protein-rich foods.
- The year 2022 marks the **third** year of National Protein Day celebration in India.
 - **Theme 2022:** Food Futurism
 - The day was first observed in 2020.
- 476.** **National Science Day** is observed annually on **28th February** to commemorate the discovery of the “Raman Effect”. The day is observed to create awareness on the importance of science.
- The government of India designated 28 February as National Science Day (NSD) in 1986.
 - On this day Sir **C.V. Raman** announced the discovery of the '**Raman Effect**' for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in **1930**.
 - **Theme 2022:** Integrated Approach in S&T for Sustainable Future
- 477.** **Rare Disease Day (RDD)** is observed annually on the **last day of February** to raise awareness for rare diseases and improve access to treatment and medical representation for individuals with rare diseases and their families. This year, the day falls on **28th February**.
- The day was first launched by European Organisation for Rare Diseases (EURORDIS) and its Council of National Alliances in 2008.
 - **Theme 2022:** Share Your Colours