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NEWS

March 2022 - Week 2

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. The **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)** has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the **National Institute of Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD)** to develop a sustainable model for promoting entrepreneurship at the grassroots by initiating the 'start-up village entrepreneurship programme' (SVEP).
2. The **Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying**, Parshottam Rupala has inaugurated the '**Sagar Parikrama**' initiative to solve the problems of Coastal Fisher folk.
 - It is a navigation journey to be conducted in **nine coastal states/UTs** through a pre-decided sea route to demonstrate solidarity with all fisherfolk, fish farmers and concerned stakeholders.
 - It has started from **Mandvi, Gujarat** in first phase and will be organised in other districts of Gujarat and other State/UTs in subsequent phases.
 - **Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Hovercraft** is on board for the Parikrama.

*India is the **4th largest exporter of fish** in the world as it contributes 7.7% to global fish production.*

3. The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has decided to provide **8.1 percent** rate of interest on Employees Provident Fund (EPF) for 2021-22 from 8.5 percent in 2020-21.
 - The 8.1 percent interest rate was recommended by the Central Board of Trustees (CBT) after its meeting in Guwahati under the chairmanship of Union Labour and Employment Minister Bhupendra Yadav.
 - This is the lowest interest rate since 1977-78.
4. India's first Geographical Indication (GI) tagged **Kashmiri carpet** has been exported to **Germany** from New Delhi.
 - The Geographical Indication Registry of the Department of Industry Promotion and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry granted GI tag to Kashmiri carpets in June 2016 but the registered carpets were certified from this year.
 - The carpets made in Jammu and Kashmir are being exported to more than 20 countries.
 - In 2020-21, carpets worth Rs.115 crore were exported to Germany.

*In February 2022, The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has launched **quick response (QR) code** for its GI-tagged Kashmiri carpet, to preserve the authenticity and genuineness of the hand-knotted carpets.*

5. **Ministry of Labour and Employment** has launched the '**Donate-a-Pension**' programme. It is an initiative under the **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM)** pension scheme where citizens can donate the premium contribution of their immediate support staff including domestic workers, drivers and helpers.
- Under this programme, workers in the unorganised sector with the age group of **18 to 40 years** can register themselves and deposit a minimum of Rs.660 to 2400 every year depending on their age.
 - After attaining the age of 60 years, workers will receive the minimum assured pension of **Rs.3000 per month**.

PM-SYM:

- It was launched in 2019.
 - It is a Central Sector Scheme administered by the Ministry of Labour and Employment and implemented through Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) and Community Service Centres (CSCs).
 - LIC is the Pension Fund Manager and responsible for Pension pay out.
 - **Objective:** To ensure protection for unorganized workers, whose monthly income is below Rs.15000.
6. The **Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises** has launched a Special Entrepreneurship Promotion Drive for Women named –"**SAMARTH**" to provide Skill Development and Market Development Assistance to women and to train more than 7500 women candidates from rural and sub-urban areas in the FY 2022-23.
- Under the Samarth initiative following benefits will be available:
- 20% Seats in free Skill Development Programs organized under skill development schemes of the Ministry will be allocated for Women.
 - 20% of MSME Business Delegations sent to domestic & international exhibitions under the schemes for Marketing Assistance implemented by Ministry will be dedicated to women-owned MSMEs.
 - 20% Discount on annual processing fee on NSIC's Commercial Schemes
 - Special Drive for registration of women-owned MSMEs under Udyam Registration.
7. The Ministry of Rural Development has awarded the **Jammu & Kashmir Bank** with the 'National Award for Outstanding Performance for the Financial Year 2020-21' in recognition of its best performance in Self Help Group Bank Linkage.
8. The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has been organising a special programme for School Children titled "**Young Scientists Programme**" or "**YUva Vigyani KARYakram**"

(YUVIKA). The aim is to impart basic knowledge on Space technology, Space science and Space applications to young students, especially focusing on students from rural areas.

- The program will select **150 students** across the country, who are studying in class IX as of 1st March 2022.
- ISRO outlined the programme to **“Catch them young.”**
- The program will commence during the summer holidays (May 16-28, 2022).
- The program will be held at **five** ISRO centres:
 - Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Thiruvananthapuram,
 - U. R. Rao Satellite Centre (URSC), Bengaluru,
 - Space Application Centre (SAC), Ahmedabad,
 - National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), Hyderabad
 - North-East Space Application Centre (NE-SAC), Shillong.

9. Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) Hardeep Singh Puri has launched the **‘India Water Pitch-Pilot-Scale Start-up Challenge’** under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) 2.0.

- **Objective:** To empower startups in the water and used-water sector to grow through innovation and design that will drive sustainable economic growth and generate employment opportunities.
- Under this initiative, the ministry will select 100 start-ups which will be provided Rs. 20 lakhs as funding support as well as mentorship

10. India’s first medical city named **‘Indrayani Medicity’** will be set up in **Pune**, Maharashtra. It will be the first-of-its-kind city in the country to have all the treatments available at one place.

- It will be set up in 300-acre of land area in Khed taluka of Pune by the Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority (PMRDA).
- The project is estimated to attract investment worth over Rs. 10,000 crore.
- The entire facility is likely to have over 10,000 to 15,000 beds.

11. Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and AYUSH, Sarbananda Sonowal has received the self-propelled vessel **MV Lal Bahadur Shastri** carrying a total of **200 MT** of food grains for the Food Corporation of India (FCI), which completed the maiden pilot run from **Patna to Pandu** via Bangladesh in Guwahati, Assam.

12. India's first 100% women-owned FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) Industrial Park has been inaugurated in **Hyderabad**, Telangana to encourage sustainable development and growth.

- It is promoted by FLO in association with the government of Telangana.
- The 50-acre FLO Industrial Park is established with an investment of Rs 250 crores.

- It is the flagship project and the first of its kind at a national level.

13. The **Asansol division** of **Eastern Railways** has successfully commissioned a private siding of Maithan Power Limited at Thaparnagar, Jharkhand.

- This is the **first** such '**Gati Shakti Multi-Modal Cargo Terminal**' (GCT) commissioned in Indian Railways since the publication of GCT policy in December 2021.
- In 2009 the Maithan Power Project was initiated and in 2011 power generation was started.

Note: Gati Shakti – National Master Plan for Multi-modal Connectivity was launched in 2021. It is **Rs. 100 lakh crore** initiative collaborating 16 ministries and departments of the Indian government, including the railways and roads.

14. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), a government agency under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee** to set up its first '**BIS Standardization Chair Professor**'.

15. The Government of India (GoI) has constituted the **National Dam Safety Authority** to maintain standards related to dam safety, prevent dam-related disasters and resolve inter-State issues. It has come into force from **18th February 2022**.

- The Authority will be headed by a chairman and assisted by **five members** to lead its five wings — policy and research, technical, regulation, disaster and resilience, and administration and finance.
- The Authority will have its headquarters in the National Capital Region (NCR) Delhi and will be supported by four regional offices.
- GoI has also constituted a **22-member** National Committee on Dam Safety which will be headed by the Chairman of the Central Water Commission to resolve any issue between the State Dam Safety Organisations of States or between a State Dam Safety Organisation and any owner of a specified dam in that state.
- *As per the National Register of Large Dams, there are 5,264 completed large dams in the country, while 437 are under construction.*

16. Union Minister of State for MSME Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma has inaugurated the **International Summit on Plastics Recycling & Waste Management 2022** in **New Delhi**. The summit has been organized by the Ministry of MSME in association with the All-India Plastics Manufacturers' Association (AIPMA).

- During the summit, the Ministry of MSME has launched two special initiatives - '**Sambhav**' and '**Svavlamban**' to promote entrepreneurship amongst youth, especially in aspirational Districts all across the country.

- Ministry of MSME is conducting Sambhav- National Level Awareness Program (NLAP) in Webinar Mode from 28th February 2022 to 31st March 2022 in 1300 colleges across the country.
- The ministry is also organizing more than 200 Nukkad Natak in 46 Aspirational Districts under Svavlamban.

17. The Department of Science & Technology (DST) has organised an event on “Women Empowerment through Science and Technology” to mark the International Women’s Day (8th March).

During the occasion, Union Minister for Science and Technology Jitendra Singh has announced three important programs under the **Women in Science and Engineering (WISE)-Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing (KIRAN)** scheme.

- Industrial Research Fellowship for Women
- Senior Women Scientists Fellowship programme
- Overseas Fellowship for Women
- *He has also released a booklet on ‘WISE-KIRAN: At a Glance’; success stories of 75 women scientists in Intellectual Property Rights (WOS-C programme).*

18. India’s largest reclining statue of Lord Gautama Buddha is being built in **Bodh Gaya**, Bihar. It is being built by Buddha International Welfare Mission.

- The statue will be 30 feet high and 100 feet long.
- It is being made with fiberglass and is being built by sculptors who are from Kolkata.
- The statue is in sleeping posture.
- It will be open for devotees from February 2023.

Note: Bodh Gaya is the religious destination where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree. Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2002.

19. The Government of India has approved the continuation of the **Swatantrata Sainik Samman Yojana (SSSY)** and its components for the financial years 2021-22 to **2025-26**. The total financial outlay of the scheme is **Rs. 3,274.87 crore**.

- Under this scheme, freedom fighters, and their dependents are given financial benefits and pensions.
- Under this scheme, 23,566 beneficiaries are covered across India.

20. The Petascale Super Computer “**PARAM Ganga**” has been installed at **IIT Roorkee**. This supercomputer has been made in India under Phase II of National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).
- It has been designed and commissioned by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC).
 - It has a supercomputing capacity of **1.66 Petaflops** (Peta Floating-Point Operations Per Second).
21. The Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Textiles have organized a programme called “**Jharokha-Compendium of Indian handicraft/ handloom, art and culture**” to celebrate the traditional Indian handicrafts, handlooms, and art & culture.
- It is a PAN India programme which will be held at 16 locations in **13 states and UTs**.
 - The first event under this programme has been organized in **Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh** at Rani Kamalapati Railway Station on the occasion of the International Women’s Day.

22. Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD), in partnership with the Ministry of Education and UNICEF, has launched a campaign named ‘**Kanya Shiksha Pravesh Utsav**’ on the occasion of International Women’s Day (8th March).

- **Objective:** To enhance enrolment and retention of girls between **11-14 years of age** in school.
 - The campaign will be implemented as part of the **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
 - The scheme will target more than **4 lakh** out of school adolescent girls as primary beneficiaries.
 - The campaign to enrol them in schools will be driven by anganwadi workers in collaboration with district education officers.
 - The anganwadi workers will be given additional financial incentives ranging from **Rs.500 to Rs.1,000** to counsel adolescent girl dropouts in their anganwadis and ensure that they are enrolled in schools.
23. The **Ministry of Labour and Employment** has presented Vishwakarma Rashtriya Puraskar (VRP), National Safety Awards (NSA) for the performance year 2018, and National Safety Awards (Mines) for the contest years 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020.
- VRP (2018): 96 Awardees
 - NSA (2018): 141 Awardees (80 winners & 61 runner-up)
 - NSA (Mines): 144 Awardees (72 winners and 72 runner-up)

24. The Government of India (GoI) has approved the establishment of the **WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine** (WHO GCTM) by signing a Host Country agreement with the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- The WHO GCTM will be set up in **Jamnagar, Gujarat** under the Ministry of AYUSH.
 - This will be the first and only global outposted Centre (office) for traditional medicine across the globe.

WHO announced the establishment of WHO GCTM in India on the occasion of 5th Ayurveda Day on 13th November 2020.

25. The 3rd edition of the **National Youth Parliament Festival (NYPF)** has been organized in the Central Hall of Parliament, New Delhi.
- Union Sports Minister **Anurag Thakur** has addressed the inaugural session of NYPF, while the Lok Sabha Speaker **Om Birla** has addressed the valedictory function.
 - It is jointly organized by the **Lok Sabha Secretariat** and the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**.
 - **Objective:** To listen to the voice of youth between 18 and less than 25 years of age, who are allowed to vote but cannot stand as a candidate for election, through deliberations in Youth Parliaments at the district level and above.

26. The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the establishment of the **National Land Monetization Corporation (NLMC)** as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to undertake monetization of surplus land and building assets of CPSEs and other Government agencies.
- It will be set up as a wholly owned Government of India company with an initial authorized share capital of **Rs.5000 crore** and paid-up share capital of **Rs.150 crore**.
 - The **Department of Public Enterprise**, under the Ministry of Finance, will set up the company and act as its administrative ministry.
 - The Board of Directors will comprise senior central government officers and eminent experts.

27. The Union Minister for MSME Narayan Rane has launched the **MSME Innovative Scheme** (Incubation, Design and IPR) along with the **MSME IDEA HACKATHON 2022**.

MSME Innovative Scheme:

The scheme consists of **three** sub-schemes:

Incubation:

- The aim is to promote and support untapped creativity and to promote the adoption of the latest technologies in MSMEs that seek the validation of their ideas at the proof-of-concept level.

- Financial assistance up to Rs. 15 lakh per idea and up to Rs. 1.00 crore for relevant plant and machines will be provided.

Design:

- The aim is to bring the Indian manufacturing sector and Design expertise/ Design fraternity on to a common platform.
- Financial assistance up to Rs. 40 lakh for design project and up to Rs. 2.5 lakh for student project will be provided.

IPR (Intellectual Property Rights):

- The aim is to improve the IP culture in India to enhance the awareness of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) amongst the MSMEs and to encourage creative intellectual endeavour in the Indian economy.
- Financial assistance up to Rs. 5 lakh for Foreign Patent, Rs. 1.00 lakh Domestic Patent, Rs. 2.00 lakh for GI Registration, Rs. 15,000/- for Design Registration, Rs.10,000/- for Trademark in the form of reimbursement.

MSME Idea Hackathon 2022:

- It is a part of MSME Innovative Scheme.
- It is launched to invite ideas from MSMEs, innovators, and students through host institutes from 10th March to 24th March 2022.

28. Union Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy, **Raj Kumar Singh** has launched the **Virtual Smart Grid Knowledge Center (SGKC)** and Innovation Park.

- **POWERGRID** has established the Virtual SGKC with support from the Ministry of Power (MOP) for the advancement and demonstration of technologies related to smart grids.
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided technical assistance to set up the centre.
- It is set up in **Manesar, Haryana** to bring capacity building and awareness on the application of Smart Grid technologies to utilities and other stakeholders in the power sector.

29. The Supreme Court of India has named Justice (retd) **AK Sikri** as the Chairperson of the High-Powered Committee (HPC) to assess the Chardham Project.

- The previous Chairperson Professor Ravi Chopra had resigned from his post in February 2022.
- Chardham Project aims to improve connectivity to the Chardham pilgrimage centres in the Himalayas i.e. Kedarnath, Badrinath, Yamunotri, and Gangotri, making journeys to these centres faster, safer, and more convenient.

- 30. Ministry of AYUSH** has signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (**CSIR**), and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (**ICAR**) for Inter-Ministerial co-operation for the promotion and facilitation of research and development, validation, and deployment of agri-technologies related to medicinal plants and their value-added products of benefit to humans, plants and animals.
- 31. DefExpo-2022**, which was scheduled to be held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat from March 10 to March 14, 2022, has been **postponed** due to logistics problems experienced by the participants. The theme of DefExpo-2022 is "India – The Emerging Defence Manufacturing Hub".
- 32.** The Government of India (GoI) has introduced **18 major platforms** led by industry for design and development in the defence sector. The objective is to display the designing capabilities of the domestic defence industry. These 18 platforms have been classified into the following categories:
- Make-I category
 - Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) Model category
 - Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)
 - Make-II category
- 33.** Minister of Labour and Employment and MoEFCC, Bhupender Yadav has launched a book titled **"Role of Labour in India's Development"**. The book has been published by V V Giri National Labour Institute. The book has 12 articles outlining the contribution of labour in the development journey of India.

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STATES AFFAIRS

- 34.** The state government of **Sikkim** has announced to launch a scheme named **"Aama Yojna"** for helping non-working mothers. In this scheme, the government will provide **Rs.20, 000** each to all non-working mothers per annum.
- The state government has also announced a scheme named the **'Bahini Scheme'** for benefitting girl students of the state.

35. The state government of **Chhattisgarh** has launched the '**Kaushalya Matritva Yojana**' to support women financially for the nutrition of themselves and their child after pregnancy. Under this scheme, financial assistance of **Rs. 5000** will be provided to women beneficiaries on the birth of a second daughter.
36. The state government of **Haryana** has announced a '**Sushma Swaraj Award**' for women for their significant achievements or contribution in different walks of life in the international and national spheres. The award will carry a cash prize of Rs.5 lakh along with a commendation.
37. The state government of **Karnataka** has launched **Women@Work (W@W) programme** to provide 5 lakh jobs within 2026 to women with necessary employable skills. Under this programme, free certificate courses will be conducted for women to get them technically trained in various disciplines.
38. The Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has inaugurated the **first drone school** in **Gwalior**, Madhya Pradesh.
- This drone school is one of the five Drone Schools planned to be opened in different cities of Madhya Pradesh.
 - The other four cities are Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Satna.
39. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has dedicated the new complex building of **Rashtriya Raksha University**- RRU at **Lavad** village near **Gandhinagar** in **Gujarat** to meet the need for high quality trained manpower in various wings of policing, criminal justice and correctional administration.
- The University, which is an Institution of National Importance, commenced its operations from **1st October 2020**.
 - The University will develop synergies with the private sector by leveraging knowledge and resources from the industry and would also set up Centres of Excellence in various fields relating to police and security.
40. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the **11th edition** of the **Khel Mahakumbh 2022** at Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad, an annual sports competition organized by the government of Gujarat.
- Khel Mahakumbh was started in 2010 with 16 sports and 13 lakh participants.
 - Now, it includes 36 general sports and 26 para-sports.

41. The state government of **Haryana** has announced to launch '**Matrushakti Udaymita Scheme**' to provide support to women entrepreneurs. Under this scheme, the women whose family annual income is less than Rs.5 lakh based on Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP) verified data, will be provided access to soft loans by financial institutions to the extent of Rs.3 lakh.
42. The Union Territory of **Pondicherry** has launched a **Digital School Health Platform** for the students of Pondicherry. Under this project, the Health Department of UT will feed the personal details of all government school students (starting from Classes I to XII) into a portal to maintain their health records.
43. The state government of **Tripura** has announced to launch a special scheme named "**Mukhyamantri Chaa Srami Kalyan Prakalpa**" for Tea garden workers.
- The scheme will provide housing, rations and financial support to the tea garden workers.
 - The state government has allotted Rs.85 crore for the implementation of the scheme.
44. The **45th** edition of the **International Kolkata Book Fair**, the world's largest non-trade book fair, has been organized at the Central Park ground in Salt Lake, Kolkata, West Bengal.
- It is a **13-day** fair to be held from 28 February to 13 March 2022.
 - The focal theme country in 2022 is **Bangladesh**.
 - The Publishers and Booksellers Guild, Kolkata is the organizer of the event.
 - This year's event will be a celebration of the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Bangladesh's 50 years of Independence.
45. **Twelve books** penned by West Bengal Chief Minister **Mamata Banerjee** have been published during the fair. This includes: 'Khela Hobe', 'Covidin Dinlipi', 'Duare Sarkar', 'Bidhansabhai Mukhyamantri', 'Loho Pranam Mohiyashi Charane Charane', 'Kalam' and 'Kabita Bitan'.

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

46. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has started the assembly of **'Europa Clipper Spacecraft'** a new spacecraft that will carry out the Europa Clipper Mission. The spacecraft will launch from Cape Canaveral, Florida in October 2024.
- **Europa Clipper Mission** will investigate the signs of habitability in Europa.
 - Europa is one of the Galilean moons of **Jupiter**.
 - This mission will orbit Jupiter and conduct multiple close flybys of Europa to gather data on the moon's atmosphere, surface, and interior.
47. The countries of India, Bangladesh, and Nepal have finalised an enabling Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for implementing the **Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA)** during a meeting held in New Delhi.
- The BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement for the Regulation of Passenger, Personal and Cargo Vehicular Traffic between the 4 countries was signed during a transport ministers' meeting in Thimpu, Bhutan on **15th June 2015**.
 - **Objective:** To boost regional trade and people-to-people connectivity by fostering greater sub-regional cooperation.
 - Bhutan was an observer.
 - The **Asian Development Bank** has supported the project as part of its South Asian Sub-regional Economic Cooperation programme, and has been requested to prioritize about 30 road projects worth billions of dollars.
48. The **European Space Agency (ESA)** has introduced its new mission named **'Vigil'** to monitor the unpredictable and active Sun and help protect the Earth from its outbursts.
- The mission was previously named Lagrange.
 - This mission aims to position two spacecraft in the L1 and L5 Lagrangian points, where gravitational forces interact to provide a stable region where propellant may be saved and observations can be made.
49. **Gabriel Boric Font** has been elected as the new and 36th President of **Chile** for the period between 2022-2026. He has succeeded Sebastián Piñera. He is the youngest elected President of Chile.
50. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) of **Iran** has successfully launched a military satellite named **'Noor-2'** at an orbit of 500 kilometres (311 miles) above the earth's surface. The three-stage Qased, or "Messenger", carrier launched the Noor 2, from the Shahroud space port.
- Noor means light in the Persian language.
 - The first military satellite, Noor, was launched in April 2020 at an orbit of 425km (265 miles) above the earth's surface.

51. Germany has hosted a virtual meeting of agriculture ministers from the G7 countries to discuss the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on world food security. The ministers also discussed on how to stabilize food markets.

Note: Germany holds the rotating presidency of G7 in 2022.

52. Conservative **Yoon Suk Yeol** of the People Power Party has won the presidential election 2022 of **South Korea**. He will succeed Moon Jae-in. He will assume office on 10th May 2022.

REPORTS & INDICES

53. The “**Freedom in the World Report 2022 – The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule**” has been released by US-based non-profit organisation Freedom House. The report has evaluated the state of freedom in 195 countries and 15 territories during calendar year 2021.

As per the report, **India** has been labelled a '**partly free**' country in terms of democracy and free society for the second year in a row.

- India has scored **66** out of 100 in 2022 (67 in 2021).
- India's freedom scores are similar to that of Bolivia, Hungary and Albania.

54. The countries that have scored the worst include South Sudan, Syria, Tibet, Turkmenistan, Eritrea and North Korea.

85 countries are termed as 'Free', **56** as 'Partly Free' and **69** as 'Not Free' in 2022.

India was a free country till 2020 with a score of 71.

Freedom of the World Report: It is an annual global report on political rights and civil liberties. It is published annually since 1973. The report uses 25 indicators, grouped into the categories of political rights and civil liberties to determine whether the country or territory has an overall status of Free, Partly Free, or Not Free.

55. RailTel Corporation of India Limited has been ranked **124th** in the recently released '**Fortune India Next 500 List of the Year 2022**' list of top mid-sized companies operating in India. It was ranked 197 in the 2021 list.

- Apart from RailTel, IRCTC is the only Railway PSU featuring in the list, at the rank of 309.
- There are 10 (including RailTel) India government companies in the list.
- RailTel is the only telecom PSU on the list.

56. According to the London & Partners analysis of Dealroom. co-investment data, India has ranked the **2nd** largest global venture capital investment hub for digital shopping companies, growing up to **175 percent** from USD 8 billion in 2020 to USD 22 billion in 2021.
- **USA** has secured the first position with USD 51 billion in investment, followed by China at third with USD 14 billion and the UK at fourth with USD 7 billion.
 - Within India, **Bengaluru** has topped globally with USD 14 billion worth of Venture Capital (VC) investments in digital shopping in 2021, followed by Gurugram at 7th position with USD 4 billion and Mumbai at 10th position with USD 3 billion.
57. According to the latest Mercom India Research report, India has installed **1700 megawatt (MW)** of rooftop solar capacity in 2021, registering a **136 percent** year-on-year rise. India had added 719 MW of rooftop solar capacity in 2020.
- **Gujarat** is the leading state for cumulative rooftop solar installations with a 27 percent share, followed by **Maharashtra** and **Rajasthan**, which added 14 percent and 10 percent, respectively.
 - The residential and commercial segments has accounted for 35 percent and 33 percent of installed rooftop solar capacity, respectively in 2021.
58. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5, **Odisha** has topped the list at the national level in full immunization with **90.5 percent** coverage under Mission Indradhanush.
- Twenty districts of Odisha are above 90 percent in full immunization, while the remaining 10 districts are less than 90 percent.
 - As per the composite index assessment, Ganjam, Cuttack, Kendrapara, Jharsuguda, Koraput, Keonjhar, Malkangiri, Khurda, Sambalpur, Mayurbhanj, and Sundargarh districts are selected for inclusion under Intensified Mission Indradhanush.
- In February 2022, **Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 4.0** has been launched by the Ministry of Health to ensure that unvaccinated and partially vaccinated children (also children up to 2 years), as well as pregnant women, receive Routine Immunization (RI) services.*
59. The **International Labour Organization (ILO)** has released a report titled '**Care at work: Investing in care leave and services for a more gender equal world of work**'. As per the report, investing in universal childcare and long-term care services can generate up to 299 million jobs by **2035**.
- Among 299 million jobs, women will receive **234 million** jobs.
 - An annual investment of **USD 5.4 trillion** will be required for this job creation potential by 2035.
 - Employment rates of women will rise by **10%** points overall, ranging from 9% points in Europe and lower-middle and low-income countries in Asia to 12% points in the Arab states.

- Globally, only 89 out of 179 countries have a statutory provision of public long-term care services for older persons.
- As per the report, three out of every ten women of reproductive age or 649 million women, lived in the 82 countries that did not meet the ILO Convention.
 - The Convention mandates 14 weeks of minimum maternity leave on at least two-thirds of previous earnings, funded by social insurance or public funds.

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BUSINESS & ECONOMY

- 60.** The **National Mineral Development Corporation Ltd. (NMDC)**, a CPSE under the Ministry of Steel, has won the 1st prize in the **Ispat Rajbhasha Award** for 2018-19 and 2020-21 and the **Ispat Rajbhasha Prerna Award** for 2019-20.
- **MOIL Limited**, a Mini Ratna state-owned manganese ore mining company, has won the **Ispat Rajbhasha Samman** for the year 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- 61.** **Microsoft** has decided to set up its fourth data centre in India in **Hyderabad**, Telangana. It will be operational by 2025. Microsoft has also signed an agreement with the state government of Telangana with a total investment of Rs 15,000 crore to set up the data centre.
- *Microsoft already has a data centre in three Indian regions across Pune, Mumbai, and Chennai.*
- 62.** **India Global Forum's (IGF)** annual summit has been held in **Bangalore**, Karnataka to help young entrepreneurs create new goals and address major global issues while also providing an unparalleled networking opportunity.
- It is the first-ever edition of IGF at Bangalore. The previous editions were hosted in Dubai and the UK.
 - The forum discussed about unicorns, start-ups, and the growth pushed by new-age companies.
- 63.** The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of **76%** of the equity shares of **Prione Business Services Private Limited** by Amazon Asia-Pacific Resources Private Limited (AAPRPL).

- 64. Zeta**, a banking tech unicorn, has partnered with **Mastercard** to provide next-generation credit card processing to banks and fintech. The partnership has been signed for **5-years**. Under this partnership, the companies will work together to create credit cards with issuers all around the world using Zeta's modern, cloud-native, and API-ready credit processing stack.
- 65. Adani Solar** has signed a non-financial and non-commercial Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Smart Power India (SPI)**, a subsidiary of Rockefeller Foundation, for equitable access to last-mile electricity and to encourage energy transition in rural India. It aims to promote the usage of solar rooftop panels and achieve **5 MW** of solar deployment through Adani Solar's channel partners in rural and peri-urban areas of **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha**.
- 66.** Chennai-based **Tamilnadu Petroproducts Limited (TPL)** has become the world's first Linear Alkyl Benzene (LAB) manufacturer accredited with the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) certification from the Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers.
- With the BIS certification (IS12795:2020), TPL became the only authorized seller of LAB in the Indian market.
 - The certificate is in line with the requirements of the Linear Alkyl Benzene (Quality Control) order, 2021.
- 67. Atal Innovation Mission**, an initiative under NITI Aayog, has tied up with camera firm **Snap Inc.**, which owns social media platform Snapchat, to drive Augmented Reality (AR) skilling among the Indian youth along with the launch of a nationwide **Lensathon** (AR making hackathon), throughout the month of March.
- The hackathon will be focused on increasing participation of girls and young women over 13 interested in AR.
 - Snap Inc. has also joined hands with the Atal Incubation Centers (AICs) to support the Indian start-up ecosystem with AR advertising bootcamps, Ad credits and other opportunities.
 - Snap Inc. is expected to train over **12,000 teachers** affiliated with the Atal Tinkering Labs on AR, enabling the reach of the program to millions of students affiliated with ATL's network of schools.

BANKING & FINANCE

68. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has chosen **Intellect Design Arena** to implement the upgraded version of the Cloud Native Intellect Quantum Core Banking solution to power the next stage of their digital transformation agenda.
69. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (**IBBI**) and Indian Banks Association (**IBA**) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on **capacity building programs** primarily for financial creditors on topics related to insolvency, bankruptcy and related subjects. The MoU has been signed at a workshop on “Committee of Creditors: An Institution of Public Faith” organised jointly by IBBI, SBI and IBA in New Delhi.
70. **Axis Bank** has tied up with **Bharti Airtel** to launch a co-branded credit card named “**Airtel Axis Bank Credit Card**” to strengthen the growth of India's digital ecosystem through a range of financial solutions.
71. The **Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)** has partnered with the **MSME Trade and Investment Promotion Bureau (M-TIPB)** of **Tamil Nadu** government to promote awareness among the state's micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Through this partnership, BSE will provide capacity building and soft support to MSMEs in Tamil Nadu for fulfilling listing requirements.
72. **Indian Overseas Bank (IOB)** has sanctioned a loan of **Rs.1,000 crore** to **Jammu and Kashmir Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation Ltd (JKIDFC)** to widen credit growth and funding infrastructure development across the nation.
- With this, IOB has become the first public sector bank to lend to JKIDFC.
 - Rs.500 crore has already been disbursed by the bank.
73. Rating Agency Morgan Stanley has estimated India's GDP growth for FY23 at **7.9 percent**. It has lowered India's GDP forecast for FY23 beginning 1st April 2022 by **50 basis points** due to higher oil prices and other commodities; trade, and tighter financial conditions, influencing business/investment sentiment.
- It has also raised the CPI inflation forecast to 6 percent and expects the current account deficit to widen to 10-year high of 3 percent of GDP.
74. The **Banks Board Bureau (BBB)** has introduced a development program named '**Directors' Development Programme (DDP)**' for the management of Public Sector Bank (PSB). The aim is to improve director effectiveness and increase their impact on boards.

- It is a nine-month programme made for directors of Public Sector Banks and financial institutions.
 - The programme is developed in partnership with the Indian Banks Association (IBA) and others.
- 75. ToneTag**, a sound-based proximity communication, and payments service provider has launched its **“VoiceSe UPI payments service”** for feature phone users, in collaboration with **NSDL Payments Bank** and **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**.
- ToneTag has also launched its **Interactive voice response (IVR) 6366 200 200** to bridge a considerable gap in accessibility of digital payments, especially in rural India.
- 76. Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance (ABSLI)**, the life insurance subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital Limited (ABCL), has entered into a bancassurance partnership with **Bharat Co-operative Bank (Mumbai) Limited**. This partnership will provide life insurance support to more than 5 lakh customers of the bank.
- 77.** Rating agency CRISIL has retained India’s GDP growth forecast at **7.8%** for **FY23** amidst the ongoing invasion of Ukraine by Russia. The agency has estimated India’s GDP growth at 8.9 percent and CPI inflation at 5.4 percent for FY22.
- 78.** The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (**NABARD**) has signed an agreement with the state government of **Odisha** for the creation of fisheries infrastructure to boost fish production in the state. The Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF) will help in the creation of infrastructure facilities in the marine and inland sectors of the state.
- 79. ICICI Bank** has announced to acquire a **5% stake** in the **National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited (NARCL)** with total cash consideration of up to Rs.137.5 crore in tranches. The equity investment will be in tranches with the first tranche of equity investment of Rs.704.5 million expected to be completed by 31st March 2022.
- ICICI Bank has signed an agreement on 10th March 2022 for investment in NARCL.
 - NARCL is an asset reconstruction company, which was incorporated on 7th July 2021.
- 80. Karnataka Bank** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with **SELCO Solar Light** to provide energy access to the underserved population. Under this partnership, the lender will provide financial support to individuals/ HUF/ Farmers/ Traders/Businessmen / Proprietorship concerns / Professionals / Salaried Persons/Institutions, etc. to purchase the solar energy products of SELCO Solar Light in India.

- 81. LivQuik** has become the first Prepaid Payment Instrument (PPI) issuer to have achieved full interoperability as mandated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for their PPIs. LivQuik has also partnered with M2P Fintech to enable UPI on PPI.
- RBI, in the exercise of the powers conferred under Section 18 read with Section 10(2) of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act 2007 mandated all PPI issuers to facilitate interoperability for full KYC wallets by **31st March 2022**.
- 82. IIFL Securities** has launched India's first primary markets investment platform named '**OneUp**' for investing in initial public offerings (IPOs), non-convertible debentures (NCDs), and sovereign gold bonds (SGBs), among others.
- Features of OneUp:**
- The IPO applications are accepted 24x7 and up to three days before the IPO bidding opens.
 - It allows investors to place bids for others as well, be it, friends or family members.
 - The online orders are not limited to Rs.2 lakh only.
 - Real-time online IPO bidding for an amount greater than Rs.2 lakh can be executed.
- 83.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has directed **Paytm Payments Bank** to stop, with immediate effect, the onboarding of new customers in the exercise of its powers under section 35A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949. The bank has also been directed to appoint an IT audit firm to conduct a comprehensive system audit of its IT system.
- 84. BOB Financial Solutions Limited (BFSL)**, a wholly owned subsidiary of Bank of Baroda (BoB), and **CreditAI Fintech Pvt Ltd (CAI)**, a Singapore and Bengaluru based farmer digitisation and credit scoring company have launched **Unnati** – a co-branded credit card on the Visa network platform exclusively for **farmers**. This will empower Farmers to avail agricultural inputs in time and at any-time during the cultivation cycle.
- 85.** The **Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)** has partnered with the Bhartiya Swarnkar Sangh (**BSS**) and Jamshedpur Jewellers Association (**JJA**) to promote commodity derivatives trade and proposed electronic gold receipt (EGR) markets in India.
- 86.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that the **National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID)** will be regulated and supervised as an **All India Financial Institution (AIFI)** under Sections 45L and 45N of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. It shall be the **fifth AIFI** after EXIM Bank, NABARD, NHB and SIDBI.

87. Reserve Bank of India launched (a) UPI for Feature Phones (**UPI123pay**) and (b) 24x7 Helpline for Digital Payments (**DigiSaathi**)

The Reserve Bank has launched two key initiatives:

- 1) **UPI123Pay** – Option to make Unified Payments Interface (UPI) payments for feature phone users, and
- 2) **DigiSaathi** - a 24x7 Helpline to address the queries of digital payment users across products.

While launching the two initiatives, **RBI Governor Shri Shaktikanta Das** highlighted the importance of these initiatives in enhancing the diversity, utility and transformational power of digital innovations in the country. These initiatives will further deepen the digital ecosystem and financial inclusion. The Governor also stated that the RBI stands committed to providing an enabling environment for this.

At present, efficient access to UPI is available on smart phones. UPI can be accessed through **NUUP** (*National Unified USSD Platform*) using the short code of *99#. But this option is cumbersome and not popular. Considering that there are more than 40 crore feature phone mobile subscribers in the country, UPI123pay will materially improve the options for such users to access UPI.

UPI123Pay includes four distinct options as below:

App-based Functionality: An app would be installed on the feature phone through which several UPI functions, available on smartphones, will also be available on feature phones.

Missed Call: This will allow feature phone users to access their bank account and perform routine transactions such as receiving, transferring funds, regular purchases, bill payments, etc., by giving a missed call on the number displayed at the merchant outlet. The customer will receive an incoming call to authenticate the transaction by entering UPI PIN.

Interactive Voice Response (IVR): UPI payment through pre-defined IVR numbers would require users to initiate a secured call from their feature phones to a predetermined number and complete UPI on-boarding formalities to be able to start making financial transactions without internet connection.

Proximity Sound-based Payments: This uses sound waves to enable contactless, offline, and proximity data communication on any device.

The 24x7 Helpline – '**DigiSaathi**' – provides a channel to obtain help on the entire gamut of digital payments. Automated responses on information related to digital payment products

and services are available in Hindi and English through multiple options like – (a) toll-free number (1800-891-3333), (b) a short code (14431), (c) website – www.digisaathi.info, and chatbots.

DigiSaathi will assist users with their queries on digital payments via website & chatbot facility and through toll-free calls where user can dial or call out the options / products for which the information is required. More interactive options and language choices shall be enabled going forward.

The above initiatives are envisioned to accelerate the process of digital adoption in India, by creating a richer and inclusive ecosystem that can accommodate larger sections of population.

- 88. Axis Bank** has launched the '**HouseWorksWork**' initiative to bring educated women to workforce. The objective is to give confidence to women about their employment and also about the skills they possess that could fit in various job roles in a bank.
- GIG-A-Opportunities is Axis Bank's new platform for alternative work models to attract the finest talent, with a promise of growth with flexibility, diversity and inclusivity.
- 89.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released a booklet on modus operandi of financial frauds, titled '**BE(A)WARE**', as a part of the public awareness initiative by RBI's Consumer Education and Protection Department.
- As per RBI's Ombudsmen Offices and the Consumer Education and Protection Cells (CEPCs), sharing of confidential information by the customers, knowingly or unknowingly, is one of the major causes leading to financial fraud.
- 90. Star Health and Allied Insurance** has introduced a women-centric medical insurance policy named '**Star Women Care Insurance Policy**' for females aged between 18 years and 75 years.
- Customers can purchase the policy through premiums that can be paid in quarterly or half-yearly instalments, and this policy can also be taken for 1 year, 2 year or 3-year terms.
 - Through this policy, mothers can also provide health cover for their new-born child / children.
- 91. HDFC Mutual Fund** has launched a women-led financial empowerment initiative '**LaxmiForLaxmi**'. The initiative aims to empower and support women to begin their financial independence journey. This initiative is an extension of HDFC Mutual Fund's Investor Education campaign #BarniSeAzadi, launched in 2021.

- 92. Flipkart**, a leading digital commerce entity, has entered into a multi-year strategic alliance with **Google Cloud** to help fast-track Flipkart's innovation and cloud strategy. This partnership will enable Flipkart to accelerate the digital transformation, power productivity and advance innovation agenda.
- 93.** The Reserve Bank of India has issued guidelines on Interest Equalization Scheme for Pre and Post Shipment Rupee Export Credit (Scheme). The government of India has approved the extension of scheme up to **31st March 2024** or till further review, whichever is earlier. The extension takes effect from 1st October 2021.
- Telecom Instruments' sector having **six HS (Harmonised System) lines** shall be out of the purview of the scheme, except for MSME manufacturer exporters.
 - Revised interest equalisation rates under the Scheme will now be **3 percent** for MSME manufacturer exporters exporting under any HS lines, and **2 percent** for manufacturer exporters and merchant exporters exporting under 410 HS lines (after excluding 6 HS lines pertaining to Telecom Sector).
 - The extended Scheme will not be available to those beneficiaries who are availing the benefit under any Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme of the government.
 - For the period from 1st October 2021 to 31st March 2022, banks shall identify the eligible exporters as per the Scheme, credit their accounts with the eligible amount of interest equalisation and submit sector-wise consolidated reimbursement claim for the said period to the Reserve Bank by **30th April 2022**.
 - With effect from 1st April 2022, banks shall reduce the interest rate charged to the eligible exporters upfront as per the guidelines and submit the claims in original within 15 days from the end of the respective month, with bank's seal, and signed by authorised person, in the prescribed format.
- 94.** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has raised the investment limit for retail investors applying in public issues of debt securities through the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) mechanism to **Rs. 5 lakh** from the current limit of **Rs. 2 lakh**. The new guidelines will be applicable to public issues of debt securities that open on or after **1st May 2022**.
- 95.** The **UCO Bank** has become one of the stakeholders of **India Debt Resolution Company Limited (IDRCL)** by acquiring **3%** of the stake for a cash consideration of **Rs. 1.50 crore**.

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AWARDS & RECOGNITION

96. The President of India Ram Nath Kovind has conferred the prestigious **Nari Shakti Puraskars** to **29** outstanding individuals for the years 2020 and 2021 on the occasion of International Women's Day on 8th March 2022. There are a total of 28 awards which included 14 awards each for the years 2020 and 2021.

Nari Shakti Puraskar 2020

Sl. No	Name	State/ UT	Domain
1.	Anita Gupta	Bihar	Social Entrepreneur
2.	Ushaben Dineshbhai Vasava	Gujarat	Organic farmer & Tribal Activist
3.	Nasira Akhter	Jammu & Kashmir	Innovator - Environmental Conservation
4.	Sandhya Dhar	Jammu & Kashmir	Social Worker
5.	Nivruti Rai	Karnataka	Country Head, Intel India
6.	Tiffany Brar	Kerala	Social Worker - Working for Blind people
7.	Padma Yangchan	Ladakh	Revived the lost cuisine & clothing in Leh region
8.	Jodhaiya Bai Baiga	Madhya Pradesh	Tribal Baiga Art Painter
9.	Saylee Nandkishor Agavane	Maharashtra	Down syndrome affected Kathak Dancer
10.	Vanita Jagdeo Borade	Maharashtra	First Women Snake Rescuer
11.	Meera Thakur	Punjab	Sikki Grass Artist

12.	Jaya Muthu, Tejamma (Jointly)	Tamil Nadu	Artisans - Toda embroidery
13.	Ela Lodh (Posthumous)	Tripura	Obstetrician & Gynecologist
14.	Arti Rana	Uttar Pradesh	Handloom Weaver & Teacher

Nari Shakti Puraskar 2021

Sl. No	Name	State	Domain
1.	Sathupati Prasanna Sree	Andhra Pradesh	Linguist - preserving minority tribal languages
2.	Tage Rita Takhe	Arunachal Pradesh	Entrepreneur
3.	Madhulika Ramteke	Chhattisgarh	Social Worker
4.	Niranjanaben Mukulbhai Kalarthi	Gujarat	Author & Educationist
5.	Pooja Sharma	Haryana	Farmer & Entrepreneur
6.	Anshul Malhotra	Himachal Pradesh	Weaver
7.	Shobha Gasti	Karnataka	Social Activist - Working for ending Devadasi system
8.	Radhika Menon	Kerala	Captain Merchant Navy - First woman to receive award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea from IMO
9.	Kamal Kumbhar	Maharashtra	Social Entrepreneur

10.	Sruti Mohapatra	Odisha	Disability Rights Activist
11.	Batool Begam	Rajasthan	Maand & Bhajan Folk Singer
12.	Thara Rangaswamy	Tamil Nadu	Psychiatrist & Researcher
13.	Neerja Madhav	Uttar Pradesh	Hindi Author – working for rights for transgenders and Tibetan refugees
14.	Neena Gupta	West Bengal	Mathematician

- 97. Rizwana Hasan**, a Bangladeshi environmental lawyer, has been selected for the **International Women of Courage (IWOC) Award** for 2022. She is among the 12 women from around the world who will be honoured by the US Department of State with the award for showing exceptional courage and leadership to make a difference in their communities.
- She received the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 2012 for her activism.
 - The International Women of Courage (IWOC) award was established in 2007 by the US Department of State. Till now 170 women from 80 countries have been honoured under the IWOC programme.

- 98.** The SKOCH Group has released the **SKOCH State of Governance Report Card 2021** in New Delhi. The report ranks the states according to their performance in various projects at the state, district, and municipal levels.
- **Andhra Pradesh** has secured the No. 1 position for the second consecutive year, followed by West Bengal, Odisha, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Telangana.
 - Assam and Himachal Pradesh improved on their previous year's ranking of 23rd and 16th and finished 9th and 10th respectively.

*The **SKOCH State of Governance Report** is an annual report that studies project-level outcomes across various states of India. It also maps the shifting interests of different state governments and provides valuable insights into governance trends and opportunities.*

- 99.** The Airports Council International has awarded **Six Indian Airports** with the **Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Awards 2021** under the Asia Pacific category.

Category (Size)	Airport
2 to 5 million passengers per year	Chandigarh Airport
5 to 15 million passengers per year	Cochin International Airport
	Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport, Ahmedabad
15 to 25 million passengers per year	Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Hyderabad
Over 40 million passengers per year	Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai
	Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi

- **Chandigarh Airport** has also been adjudged as the **Best Hygiene Measures by Region** under the Asia Pacific category.
- The winners of ASQ Awards 2021 will be honoured at the award ceremony on 14th September 2022 in Karakow, Poland.

100. Hindi novelist **Geetanjali Shree's** translated Hindi novel '**Tomb of Sand**' has been nominated for the International Booker prize, making it the first Hindi language work of fiction to be selected for the literary award.

- The book was originally published as '**Ret Samadhi**' and Daisy Rockwell, a US-based writer and translator has translated it into English.
- It is selected among 13 books long-listed for the International Booker Prize.

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BOOKS & AUTHORS

101. **Ratnakar Shetty**, a Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) veteran and India's long served cricket administrators, has released its autobiography titled "**On Board Test, Trial and Triumph: My Years in BCCI**". The book narrates his experience as an administrator in BCCI.

- 102.** A new book titled '**Soli Sorabjee: Life and Times: An Authorized Biography**' has been authored by **Abhinav Chandrachud**. It will be released in April 2022. The book is published by Penguin Random House India. The book depicts the personal life of Soli Sorabjee, former Attorney General of India.
- 103.** Dr. Shashank Goel, Additional Secretary/Director General of Employment, Ministry of Labour and Employment, has launched an **e-Book** regarding the journey of the **National Career Service (NCS)**. It is an effort to highlight various stakeholder activities involved in the NCS project.

PERSON IN NEWS

- 104.** The Government of India (GoI) has appointed former financial services secretary **Debasish Panda** as the new Chairman of the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** for a period of three years. He is a 1987-batch IAS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre. He will succeed Subhash Chandra Khuntia.
- 105.** Pharma major **Lupin Limited** has appointed six-time world boxing champion and Olympics bronze medallist **Mary Kom** as brand ambassador for its Shakti campaign. The aim is to increase awareness on heart diseases among women through interactive social media sessions, sharing informative videos from doctors, and in-clinic awareness activities for patients.
- 106.** The **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)**, the world's anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism financing agency, has appointed **T. Raja Kumar** of **Singapore** as its next president. He will assume office on 1st July 2022 for a fixed two-year term. He will succeed Dr Marcus Pleyer of Germany.
- 107. Prabha Narasimhan**, executive director of Hindustan Unilever (HUL), has been appointed as the CEO and MD of Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited effective from 1st September 2022. She will succeed Ram Raghavan, who has been promoted to the role of President, Enterprise Oral Care, at Colgate Palmolive Company.
- 108.** Air Marshal **B Chandra Shekhar** (Telangana) has been appointed as the Commandant of the Indian Air Force Academy. He was awarded the Presidential Award of Ati Vishisht Seva Medal in the year 2020 by the President of India.
- Ati Vishisht Seva Medal is a military award of India. It is given to recognize the distinguished service of an exceptional order to all the ranks of the armed forces.

- 109.** The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of **Ashwani Bhatia**, managing director (MD) of the State Bank of India (SBI), as a whole-time member (WTM) of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for three years.
- 110.** The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed former Revenue Secretary **Ajay Bhushan Pandey** as the Chairperson of National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) for a period of three years.
- The ACC has also appointed 2 full-time members for NFRA: Praveen Kumar Tiwari and Smita Jhingran.
- 111.** **Katalin Novak** has been appointed as the first female President of **Hungary**. She will assume office on 10th May 2022. She will succeed Janos Ader.

OBITUARIES

- 112.** Veteran Pakistani politician and former Supreme Court judge, **Rafiq Tarar** has passed away recently in Lahore, Pakistan. He was born on 2nd November 1929 in Peer Kot, Pakistan. He served as the ninth president of **Pakistan** from 1997 to 2001.

SPORTS

- 113.** **Aarushi Verma**, a national-level shooter in Pistol and trap shooting, a multi-time State & Northern India Champion & National medalist, and an active environmentalist, has been selected to represent India at the **2041 Climate Force Antarctica Expedition**. She will be fully supported and sponsored by The Hans Foundation.
- 114.** **Priyanka Nutakki** of Andhra Pradesh has secured her final WGM-norm at MPL's forty-seventh National Women Chess Championship. With this, she has become the **23rd Woman Grandmaster** of India. She scored her first WGM-norm in January 2019.
- 115.** The first edition of Grandisacchi Cattolica International Open 2022 has been held in Italy. Indian Grandmaster, **S L Narayanan** from Thiruvananthapuram has won the competition. R Praggnanandhaa has scored the second position.
- 116.** Indian cricketer **S Sreesanth** has announced his retirement from all forms of domestic cricket. He played 27 Tests and 53 ODIs for India, taking 87 and 75 wickets respectively. He has also taken seven wickets in 10 T20 Internationals.

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IMPORTANT DAYS

- 117. International Women's Day (IWD)** is observed annually on **8th March** to recognise the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women.
- **Theme 2022:** *Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow*
 - IWD 2022 campaign theme is #BreakTheBias
 - The day was first observed in 1911.
 - This day was adopted by the United Nations in the year 1977.
- 118. No Smoking Day** is observed annually on the **second Wednesday** of March to create awareness about the detrimental health impacts of smoking and other forms of tobacco intake. This year, the day falls on **9th March 2022**.
- 119.** The United Nations has observed the first annual **International Day of Women Judges** on **10th March** to promote the full and equal participation of women at all levels of the judiciary and to celebrate the progress that has been made and raise awareness about the challenges ahead.
- Fathima Beevi from Kerala become the first female judge of the Supreme Court of India in 1989.
- 120. World Glaucoma Day** is observed annually on **12th March** to create awareness about glaucoma and to alert everyone to have regular eye check-ups to detect glaucoma as early as possible.
- Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of irreversible blindness.
 - **World Glaucoma Week** has also been observed from **6th to 12th March 2022**.
 - **Theme 2022:** 'The world is bright, save your sight'
- 121.** Union Minister of Home Affairs **Amit Shah** has attended the **37th Foundation Day** celebrations of the **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)** as the Chief Guest in New Delhi. He is the first Union Home Minister to attend a Foundation Day function of NCRB.

122. World Rotaract Day is observed annually on **13th March** to acknowledge the services provided by the rotaractors across the world. The day is also observed to commemorate the founding of the first rotary club in 1968.

- **Theme 2022:** "Rotary Making a Difference"
- World Rotaract Week has been organized from **11 March 2022** to **18 March 2022**.

123. International Day of Mathematics, also known as Pi Day, is observed annually on **14th March** to highlight the significant role played by the mathematical sciences in the achievement of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- **Theme 2022:** "Mathematics Unites"
- The day was first observed in 2020.

124. International Day of Action for Rivers is observed annually on **14th March** to create awareness about the value and importance of rivers. The day was formally known as International Day of Action against Dams, for Rivers, Water, and Life.

- The year 2022 marks the **25th anniversary** of the International Day of Action for Rivers, with a theme 'to highlight the importance of Rivers to Biodiversity.'
- The day is celebrated with the hashtags **#Rivers4Biodiversity** and **#RiversUniteUs**.

Other Important Study Material to help you in your preparation

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