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MARCH 2022

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. The **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)** has recently planned to launch the third phase of the **Monsoon Mission** to achieve further improvement in our understanding about the monsoons, thus helping achieve a quantum leap in the predictions.
 - The Mission Monsoon was first launched in **2012** by the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
 - **Aim:** To improve overall understanding of Indian monsoons.
2. The **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur** has developed a novel nanoparticle-based **Biodegradable Carbonoid Metabolite (BioDCM) system** that can be used as an alternative to chemical-based pesticides and help farmers protect their crops from bacterial and fungal infections.
 - The nanoparticle has been developed in collaboration with C. Kannan and Divya Mishra from ICAR-Indian Institute of Rice Research, and R Balamurugan and Mou Mandal from the School of Chemistry, University of Hyderabad.
3. The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the national roll-out of the Central Sector Scheme, **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)** of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, with a total outlay of **Rs. 1,600 crore** for five years.
 - ABDM was launched in September 2021.
 - The **National Health Authority (NHA)** will be the implementing agency of ABDM.
 - Under the ABDM, citizens will be able to create their ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Account) numbers, to which their digital health records can be linked.
 - As on 24th February 2022, 17,33,69,087 ABHA have been created and 10,114 doctors and 17,319 health facilities have been registered in ABDM.

Other Cabinet approvals:

 - Union Cabinet has approved a proposal to allow **coal companies**, including state-owned Coal India Limited (CIL), to offer the dry fuel through a **common e-auction window**. This will replace the sector specific auctions.
 - Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for continuation of the seven existing sub schemes under the Umbrella Scheme **Relief and Rehabilitation of Migrants and Repatriates**. The approval has been given for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26 with a total outlay of **Rs.1,452 crore**.
4. The **'Stree Manoraksha Project'** has been launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) in collaboration with **NIMHANS** Bengaluru to improve women's

mental health across India.

5. The **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** has been awarded the '**Special Jury Award**' at the 7th India Industry Water Conclave and 9th edition of FICCI Water Awards in recognition of the significant work done for Ganga rejuvenation.
6. The Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, **Ashwini Vaishnav** has inaugurated the 3rd edition of **NIC Tech Conclave 2022** at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
 - Minister of State for Electronics and IT **Rajeev Chandrasekhar** has graced the event as a guest of honour.
 - It is a two-day event organized by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
 - It is focused on Emerging Technologies applicable in e-Governance.
 - **Theme 2022: Next-Gen Technologies for Digital Government**
7. **Ministry of Defence (MoD)** has accorded in-principle approval to four projects which are under **Make-I** (this is funded by the government) and five projects under **Make-II** (this is industry-funded) categories of Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020. The objective is to develop the design capabilities of Indian defence industry and position India as a design leader in these technologies.
8. The Indian Navy has successfully test-fired a long-range version of the **BrahMos supersonic cruise missile** from stealth destroyer **INS Chennai**.
 - The BrahMos is a supersonic cruise missile manufactured by an Indo-Russian joint venture.
 - INS Chennai is a stealth-guided missile destroyer of the Indian Navy constructed by the Mazagon Dock Limited at Mumbai.
9. The **National Highway for Electric Vehicle (NHEV)**, an organization for promoting electrification of the country's transportation systems, is constructing a first of its kind "**green charging hub**" along the Jaipur-Delhi-Agra E-highway.
 - **Aim:** To reduce carbon footprint to zero and also replaces petrol pumps in the future.
 - The charging station will have a restaurant, coffee lounge, a bank, an ATM, a showroom, and other amenities for the customers to use while their vehicle is charging.
10. The **Ministry of Development of the North Eastern Region (MDoNER)**, as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, has launched a week-long campaign named '**Nari Shakti of the North East**' to recognize the exceptional achievements of women and girls in North East India ahead of

International Women's Day 2022. The campaign has been launched by Minister of Development of the North Eastern Region, G. Kishan Reddy.

- 11. OCEANS 2022**, a bi-annual event of global marine researchers, has been organized in **Chennai**, Tamil Nadu. It has been organized for the first time in India by the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) and the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai.
- **'Inspire-Innovate-Sustain'** is the main theme of the conference.
 - The conference has been organized for global maritime professionals to learn, innovate, and lead in the protection and utilization of the world's largest natural resource Oceans.
- 12.** The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** has planned to start a **'Health Star Rating System'** for packaged foods. Under this, the packaged foods will display the number of stars on the Front of Pack Label (FOPL), which indicates how healthy or unhealthy they are depending upon the amount of salt, sugar, and fat they have.
- 13.** Union Minister of Communication, Ashwini Vaishnav has signed the **Host Country Agreement (HCA)** with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Secretary-General Houlin Zhao to establish an area office and innovation centre of the United Nations telecom body in **New Delhi** for South Asia.
- The agreement has been signed during the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly-20 (WTSA-20) held in Geneva, Switzerland.
 - The Area Office and the Innovation Centre is expected to be operational by mid-2022.
- 14.** The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has decided to distribute **4,800** daily living aids and assistive devices among 895 senior citizen beneficiaries under **Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana** (RVY).

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY):

- It was launched in **2017** by the *Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment*.
- It is a central sector scheme funded by the Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund.
- It aims to provide aids and assistive living devices to senior citizens belonging to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category who suffer from age-related disabilities such as low vision, hearing impairment, loss of teeth, and locomotor disabilities.
- It is being implemented by **Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India** (ALIMCO), which is a public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

15. The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, has inaugurated a newly developed '**Arogya Vanam**' at the President's Estate, (Rashtrapati Bhavan) in **New Delhi**.
- **Objective:** To promote the importance of Ayurvedic plants and their effects on the human body.
 - It has been developed in the shape of a human sitting in the Yoga Mudra.
 - It is spread over 6.6 acres of land.
 - It consists of around 215 herbs and plants used for therapeutic purposes in Ayurveda.

16. **Exercise Vayu Shakti**, which is the biggest exercise of the Indian Air Force, has been organized at the Pokharan range in **Jaisalmer**, Rajasthan.

- **Chief Guest:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- A total of **148 aircraft** of the Indian Air Force (IAF) has participated in the exercise.
- Rafale aircraft has participated for the first time in this exercise.

*Exercise Vayu Shakti is organized by Indian Air Force once every **three years**. The last Vayu Shakti Exercise was held in 2019.*

17. India's first Floating Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU) named **Hoegh Giant** has arrived at H-Energy's Jaigarh terminal in Maharashtra.

- It has a storage capacity of 170,000 cubic meters and has an installed re-gasification capacity of 750 million cubic feet per day (equivalent to 6 million tons annually).
- It will deliver re-gasified LNG to the **56-km long** Jaigarh-Dabhol natural gas pipeline, connecting the LNG terminal to the national gas grid.

18. The **Ministry of Minority Affairs** has extended the deadline for the **Quami Waqf Boards Taraqqiati Scheme** (geotagging the Waqf properties) from March 2022 to November 2023.

- **Objective:** To map the immovable assets under the Waqf Boards, and to ensure their proper utilization and monetization.
- The Central Waqf Council is the Nodal Agency for the implementation of the scheme.

19. The **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** has launched a program named 'Building AI Readiness among Young Innovators' in collaboration with **Intel India** to strengthen AI readiness. The program aims to build digital readiness among the students from classes 6 to 10, enrolled under DST's INSPIRE-Awards MANAK scheme.

20. India's first indigenously developed '**Kavach: Anti-Collision System**' has been successfully tested by the Indian Railways. This system will help the Railways achieve the goal of 'zero accidents'. It was tested on the Sanatnagar-Sankarpalli section in Secunderabad.

- Kavach is India's own automatic train protection system, which is in development since 2012, under the name Train Collision Avoidance System (TCAS).

- It will help prevent accidents on rail tracks like collision of trains.
- Once the system is activated, all trains within a 5-km range will halt to provide protection for trains on adjacent tracks.
- It will cost **Rs 50 lakh per kilometre** to operate in comparison to about Rs 2 crore worldwide.

21. The 19th edition of the **India-US Military Cooperation Group (MCG)** meeting has been held in **Agra**, Uttar Pradesh. The meeting has been co-chaired by Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC) Air Marshal BR Krishna from the Indian side and Deputy Commander, US Indo-Pacific Command Lieutenant General Stephen D Sklenka from the US side.

22. The Central Government has approved the **Modernisation Plan-IV for Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)** scheme to improve the overall operational preparedness and efficiency of the CAPFs.

- The scheme will run from **1 February 2022** to **31 March 2026** with a total financial outlay of **Rs.1,523 crore**.
- It will be implemented by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.

23. India's first indigenously developed Flying Trainer, '**HANSA-NG**', has successfully completed the sea-level trials at **Puducherry**. The objective is to evaluate handling qualities, climb/cruise performance, balked landing, structural performance including positive and negative G, power plant, and other systems performance at sea level.

- The aircraft has been designed and developed by **CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL)**.
- It is powered by Rotax Digital Control Engine.
- It is a two-seater aircraft and a revamped version of the HANSA.
- It is an ideal aircraft for Commercial Pilot Licensing (CPL) due to its low cost and low fuel consumption.

24. The ninth edition of the Indian and Sri Lankan Navy bilateral maritime exercise **SLINEX 2022** has been held in **Visakhapatnam**, Andhra Pradesh from 7th March to 10th March 2022.

Aim: To increase mutual understanding, interoperability, and the exchange of best procedures and practices for multi-faceted maritime operations between the two navies. The exercise has been conducted in two phases:

- Harbour Phase has been conducted in Visakhapatnam.
- Sea Phase has been conducted in the Bay of Bengal.

25. Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Chemicals & Fertilizers Dr. **Mansukh Mandaviya** has inaugurated the seminar on **“Industry Connect 2022”: Industry and Academia Synergy** to promote innovation & technology for the progress of the country. It is organized by the Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India in association with Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering & Technology (CIPET) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).
26. The Union Minister of State for Education Annapurna Devi has presented the **National ICT Awards 2020 & 2021 to 49 teachers** from across India. ITC Award 2020 is given for school teachers and 2021 is for school teachers, teachers educators, and best practicing states/UTs.
27. The **Technology Development Board (TDB)** under the Ministry of Science and Technology in the presence of the Union Science Minister Dr Jitendra Singh has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Skyshade Daylight Private Limited** (Hyderabad) to promote start-up in **Daylight Harvesting Technology**. The total cost of the project is **Rs 10 crore**, of which Rs 5 crore will be given by TDB.
28. 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).
29. 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.*
30. 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.

31. 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.*

32. 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.

33. 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.

34. 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.

35. 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.

36. 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

37. 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.

- 38.** 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.
- 39.** 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.
- 40.** 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.
- 41.** 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**'.
- 42.** 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.*

43. 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.

44. 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).*

45. 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.

- 46.** 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.
- 47.** 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).
- 48.** 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 Kamlapati Railway Station on the occasion of the International Women’s Day.
- 49. 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.

- 50.** 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)

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- 51.** 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.

- 52.** 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.

- 53.** 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.

54. 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.

55. 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.
- 56.** 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.
- 57. 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.
- 58. 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".
- 59.** 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
- 60.** 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.

61. Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Parshottam Rupala has addressed the **Saurashtra Maldhari Sammelan**, organised by Sahjeevan (Centre for Pastoralism), at Upleta in Rajkot district of Gujarat.
- Theme of the Sammelan: "*Fostering Pastoralism in Saurashtra- Conservation and its Sustenance*"
 - The event focussed upon the conservation of threatened breeds of livestock, particularly the Halari breed of Donkey.
 - During the event, the book titled '**Pastoral Breeds of India**' has been released.
 - It is compiled by Sahjeevan and an "**APEKSHA** (Expectations) **PATRA**" shared by a group of Maldharis from Saurashtra & Kutch at the event.
62. The Department of Pharmaceuticals, under the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, has released the guidelines for the '**Strengthening of Pharmaceutical Industry (SPI)**' scheme.
- The Centre has assigned a financial outlay of **Rs.500 crore** for the period of **5 years** (i.e. from FY 21-22 to FY 25-26).
 - In the Scheme, financial assistance to pharma clusters will be provided for the creation of Common Facilities.
 - The scheme has 3 sub-schemes:
 - Assistance to Pharmaceutical Industry for Common Facilities (APICF): Total outlay is Rs.178.40 crore
 - Pharmaceutical Technology Upgradation Assistance Scheme (PTUAS): Total outlay is Rs.300.10 crore
 - Pharmaceutical & Medical Devices Promotion and Development Scheme (PMPDS): Total outlay is Rs.21.50 crore.
 - The scheme also aims to upgrade the production facilities of SMEs and MSMEs.
63. The Indian Coast Guard (ICR) has commissioned **ICGS 'Saksham'**, the fifth Coast Guard Ship in the series of 105 M-Class offshore patrol vessels in Goa.
- ICGS Saksham was launched in December 2020.
 - It is the 5th and last Offshore Patrol Vessel designed and developed by **Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL)** for Coast Guard.
 - The vessel uses totally indigenous steering gear and gearbox.
64. The **36th edition** of the **International Geological Congress (IGC)** has been held in **New Delhi** under the theme "**Geosciences: The Basic Science for a Sustainable Future**". It has been inaugurated by Union Minister of Coal, Mines & Parliamentary Affairs Shri Pralhad Joshi and 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 in the presence of Minister of State for Coal, Mines & Railways Shri Raosaheb Patil Danve and Minister of State for Communications Shri Devusinh Chauhan.

- It is a joint endeavour of the Ministry of Mines, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Indian National Science Academy and the Science Academies of Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
- This edition of IGC will be releasing three commemorative Postage Stamps on the occasion along with the First Day Cover.
- The present Congress, originally scheduled to be held during 2-8 March, 2020 was postponed due to Covid-19 pandemic.

India had hosted the 22nd session of the IGC which was the first IGC on the Asian soil.

65. The third edition of '**Gender Samwaad**' has been organized by the **Ministry of Rural Development** to generate awareness on the interventions of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) across India with a gender lens.

- The theme of Gender Samwaad 2022: 'Promotion of food and nutrition security through women's collectives'
- It has been organized as a part of the Rural Development Ministry's Iconic Week celebrations under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav from 7th – 13th March 2022 during the week of International Women's Day (8th March 2022).
- The theme of Iconic Week celebrations is 'Naye Bharat ki Naari' (Women of New India).

66. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully carried out the ground testing of the newly developed **solid booster stage (SS1)** for its new launch vehicle Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) at **Satish Dhawan Space Centre** at Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. The remaining stages of SSLV (SS2 & SS3) have successfully gone through necessary ground tests and are ready for integration.

67. The Union Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav and the Union Minister, Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat along with the Minister of State, MoEF&CC, Ashwini Kumar Choubey, have jointly released the Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) on Rejuvenation of **thirteen** Major Rivers through Forestry Interventions.

- The budget outlay of 13 DPRs is **Rs. 19,342.62 crore**.
- The 13 rivers include: Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, Sutlej, Yamuna, Brahmaputra, Luni, Narmada, Godavari, Mahanadi, Krishna, and Cauvery.
 - Thirteen rivers collectively cover a total basin area of 18,90,110 sq. km that represents 57.45% of the geographical area of the country.
 - The length of 13 rivers including 202 tributaries within the delineated riverscapes is 42,830 km.

- The DPRs are funded by National Afforestation & Eco-development Board, (MoEF&CC) and prepared by Indian Council of Forestry Research & Education (ICFRE), Dehradun.
68. Nagendra Nath Sinha, Union Rural Development Secretary, has hosted a webinar to promote the '**Captive Employer**' initiative under the **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana** (DDU-GKY).
- It is a first of its kind initiative to address the vision of a demand-based and dynamic skilling ecosystem that caters to the requirements of the industry while assuring sustainable placements for the rural poor youth of the country.
 - Under this initiative, post-training placement of candidates for at least six months with a minimum CTC of **Rs 10,000** has been assured.
 - The initiative is funded by the **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)**.
69. India's first **Artificial Intelligence & Robotics Technology Park (ARTPARK)** has been launched in **Bangalore, Karnataka**. It is promoted by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc Bengaluru), with the seed capital of **Rs 230 crore** from the governments (Rs 170 crore from Centre and Rs 60 crore from the state government).
70. The '**Motor Vessel (MV) Ram Prasad Bismil**' has become the longest vessel ever to sail on **Brahmaputra River**. The vessel has successfully completed the pilot run of heavy cargo movement from Haldia Dock in Kolkata after it anchored at Pandu port in Guwahati.
- The vessel along with two barges - DB Kalpana Chawla and DB APJ Abdul Kalam - were flagged off from the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port in Haldia by Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (PSW) on 16th March 2022.
 - The 90 meters long vessel is 26 meters wide, loaded with a draft of 2.1 meters.
71. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has presented a budget of **Rs.1.42 lakh crore** for the Union Territory of **Jammu and Kashmir** for the year 2022-23 in Lok Sabha, New Delhi.
- She has also presented the supplementary demands for the year 2021-22 totalling **Rs 18,860.32 crore** for J&K.
 - The budget has projected **7.5%** growth in Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of J&K.
 - The Budget 2022-23 for J&K in 2022-23 is 10% higher at Rs. 1,12,950 crore compared to the revised estimates (RE) of 2021-22.
72. Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated **India's first green hydrogen-based advanced fuel cell electric vehicle (FCEV)** named '**Toyota Mirai**' in New Delhi.

- It has been launched by Toyota Kirloskar Motor Pvt Ltd and International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT) under a pilot project, to study and evaluate the performance of Toyota Mirai on Indian roads and climatic conditions.
- It is completely powered by a hydrogen fuel cell battery pack and capable of providing a range up to **650 km** in a single charge, with a refuelling time of five minutes.
- This is a first of its kind project in India which will create a Green Hydrogen based ecosystem in the country and help India to become '**Energy Self-reliant**' by **2047**.

73. The Indian Army has dedicated the '**Chair of Excellence**' in memory of **General Bipin Rawat**, India's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) as well as the 27th Chief of the Indian Army, on the eve of his 65th birth anniversary, at the **United Service Institution of India (USI)**. The chair will be open to Veterans of three Services and civilians having expertise in the field of National Security.

74. Indian Railways have prepared a **National Rail Plan (NRP)** for India to create a 'future ready' Railway system by **2030**.

Key objectives of NRP:

- To formulate strategies based on both operational capacities and commercial policy initiatives to increase modal share of the Railways in freight to **45%**.
- **To** reduce transit time of freight substantially by increasing average speed of freight trains to 50Kmph.
- As part of the National Rail Plan, **Vision 2024** has been launched for accelerated implementation of certain critical projects by 2024 such as 100% electrification, multi-tracking of congested routes, upgradation of speed to 160 kmph on Delhi-Howrah and Delhi-Mumbai routes, upgradation of speed to 130kmph on all other Golden Quadrilateral-Golden Diagonal (GQ/GD) routes and elimination of all Level Crossings on all GQ/GD route.
 - 58 Super critical Projects of a total length of 3750 kms costing **Rs.39,663 crore** and 68 Critical Projects of a total length of 6913 kms costing **Rs.75,736 crore**, have been identified for completion by **2024**.
- To identify new Dedicated Freight Corridors and High Speed Rail Corridors.
- To assess Locomotive requirement to meet twin objectives of 100% electrification (Green Energy).

75. '**Green Triangle**' named after **Mahatma Gandhi** has been inaugurated in **Antananarivo, Madagascar** as part of the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' to commemorate India's 75th year of independence. Ambassador of India to Madagascar, Abhay Kumar has inaugurated the Green Triangle along with Mayor of Antananarivo Naina Andriantsitohaina.

- 76. Visakhapatnam railway station** has become the first station in the East Coast railway to implement 'One Station, One Product' concept of the Government of India. It will be running on a pilot basis for 15 days.
- **Etikoppaka toys** and handicraft products from the Etikoppaka village will be showcased and sold at the Vishakapatnam station.
 - The GI tag for Etikoppaka toys (Andhra Pradesh) was given in 2017.
- 77.** Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences, **Dr Jitendra Singh**, has released **India's Arctic policy** titled 'India and the Arctic: building a partnership for sustainable development' in New Delhi.
- 78. Thirteen (13) nations** are observers in the Arctic Council which include France, Germany, Italian Republic, Japan, The Netherlands, the People's Republic of China, Poland, India, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom.
- India's Arctic policy is based on **six pillars**:
- Strengthening India's scientific research and cooperation
 - Climate and environmental protection
 - Economic and human development,
 - Transportation and connectivity
 - Governance and international cooperation
 - National capacity building in the Arctic region
- 79.** Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated a seven-storeyed **Flight Control System (FCS) Integration** facility at Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), a laboratory of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in **Bengaluru**, Karnataka.
- It has been constructed in record 45 days, with in-house hybrid technology consisting of conventional, pre-engineered, and precast methodology.
 - The technology has been developed by DRDO with the support of Larsen & Toubro (L&T).
 - Design check and technical support have been provided by the teams of IIT Madras and IIT Roorkee.
- 80.** The National Capital Regional Transport Corporation (NCRTC) has unveiled the coaches of India's first rapid rail for the **Delhi – Meerut corridor**. The Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) train will run on the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor and cover a distance of 82 km in just 55 minutes.
- The Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor will minimise carbon dioxide emissions by 2,50,000 tonnes per year.

- The entire 82-kilometre Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS route, which will have 25 stations in total, is now under construction, with two depots at Duhai and Modipuram and one stabling yard at Jungpura.

81. India's first 'World Peace Centre' will be established in **Gurugram**, Haryana. It will be established by Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti (AVB) Organization, founded by Acharya Dr Lokesh Muni. The construction work of about 25000 square feet will be completed in 2 years.

82. The city of **Mumbai** has announced its detailed plans to '**zero out carbon emissions by 2050**' and become the first South Asian city to set such a target.

Note: India has set a target to reach net zero emissions by 2070.

83. The Union Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has approved the continuation of the **National AIDS and STD Control Programme (NACP)** for a period of five years from **1st April 2021** to **31st March 2026**. The total outlay will be **Rs. 15471.94 crore**.

- The annual new HIV infections in India have declined by 48% against the global average of 31% (the baseline year of 2010).
- The annual AIDS-related deaths have declined by 82% against the global average of 42% (the baseline year of 2010).
- The HIV prevalence in India continues to be low with an adult HIV prevalence of 0.22%.

84. The **Constitution of India** has been translated for the first time into the **Ol Chiki script** of the **Santhali language**. The Ol Chiki script, also known as Ol Chemet', Ol Ciki, Ol, and sometimes as the Santali alphabet, is the official writing system for Santhali, an Austroasiatic language recognized as an official regional language in India.

- Santhali language was added to the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution by the **92nd Constitutional Amendment Act 2003** along with the Bodo, Dogri, and Maithili languages.
- As per the 2011 Census, there are over 70 lakh people who speak Santali across the country.
- Santhals are the largest scheduled tribe in the Jharkhand state of India in terms of population and are also found in the states of Assam, Tripura, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and West Bengal.

85. Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, **Mansukh Mandaviya** has launched the **BRICS Vaccine Research and Development (R&D) Centre** and Workshop on Vaccine Cooperation via a video-conference in New Delhi.

- This centre will help pool together the advantages of the BRICS countries in the field of vaccine development and research which will boost the capacity of the BRICS countries to control as well as avoid infectious diseases.
- This centre will also help in generating preclinical and clinical studies, basic R&D, and strengthen the laboratories of the BRICS countries so as to develop them to test the vaccine candidates.

86. The **Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE)**, Guwahati under the aegis of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)** to promote the **Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP)** at a local level amongst the rural youth.
- IIE will act as a National Resource Organisation (NRO) for the SVEP and will provide support to the State Rural Livelihoods Mission (SRLM) for the scheme's successful implementation.
87. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has designated **Indian Naval Ship (INS) Shivaji** as the Centre of Excellence (CoE) in the field of Marine Engineering. This designation is the first of its kind for any military organisation and an indication of the establishment's sustained efforts towards skill and technology development.
88. The **Agnibaaz Division** of the Indian Army has conducted a joint anti-terrorism exercise named '**Suraksha Kavach 2**' with the **Maharashtra Police** at Lullanagar, Pune.
- Indian Army's Counter Terrorism Task Force (CTTF), Maharashtra Police's Anti-Terrorism Squad along with Dog Squads, Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs), and Bomb Disposal Teams of the army, as well as the police, have participated in this exercise.
 - **Objective:** To coordinate the procedures and drills undertaken by the Police and the Army to counter any terrorist attacks.
89. **Ministry of Jal Shakti** has launched a nationwide campaign named **Sujalam 2.0** for greywater management on the occasion of World Water Day (22nd March). The campaign will focus on creation of community and institutional **greywater management** assets in Panchayat Ghar, healthcare facilities, schools, anganwadi centres (AWCs), community centres and other government institutions. The treated greywater can be used to recharge the groundwater.
90. A Joint Advisory has also been signed by **9 Ministries** namely the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Women & Child Development, Ministry of Youth

Affairs and Sports, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Ministry of Panchayati Raj, on how greywater management will be taken up at their level based on convergence model.

91. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has approved the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Raw Jute for 2022-23 season. It has been fixed at **Rs.4750/-** per quintal for 2022-23 season with an increase of **Rs.250/-** over the previous year. This will ensure a return of 60.53 percent over all India weighted average cost of production.
- The approval is based on recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices.
 - The Jute Corporation of India (JCI) will continue as Central Government Nodal Agency to undertake Price Support Operations and the losses incurred, if any, in such operations, will be fully reimbursed by the Central Government.

Other Cabinet approvals (March 2022):

- Cabinet has given approval to the **Delhi Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Act, 2022**, which aims to merge the Capital's three municipal corporations (South, North and East) into a single unified Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).
 - Cabinet has approved the extension of applicability of the **New Investment Policy-2012** for three upcoming units of Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan (HURL) at Gorakhpur, Sindri and Barauni. The cost of the three HURL urea projects is **Rs 25,120 crore**.
92. The **Western Naval Command** of Indian army has conducted exercise '**Prasthan**' in B-193 platform of Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) in the Offshore Development Area (ODA) off Mumbai, Maharashtra. The bi-annual exercise aims to integrate efforts of all maritime stakeholders involved in offshore defence.
93. The Union Minister for Culture, Tourism & DONER **G Kishan Reddy** has inaugurated the three-day North-East festival called '**Ishan Manthan**' in **New Delhi**. The event includes discussion on the indigenous faith of North East India, discussions on the unsung freedom fighters of the North East among others. The event provides information about films, art and handicrafts of the North-East.
- The event has also witnessed the release of two books titled '**Lok Beyond Folk**', a book on the Lok Culture which is edited by Shri J Nandalumar and '**Jewels of North East India**'.

94. The **Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** has launched the “**Training for Emirates Jobs and Skills (TEJAS)**” project for Indians at the Dubai Expo. The project is expected to create a 10,000-strong Indian workforce in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The aim is to create pathways to enable Indian workforce to get equipped for skill and market requirements in UAE.
95. The Central Government has decided to sell its **1.5% stake** in the **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)** through an offer for sale (OFS) to raise worth Rs.3,000 crore.
- The floor price for the sale has been set at Rs.159, at about 7 percent discount to the stock's closing price of Rs.171.
 - The sale will bring down the centre's shareholding in ONGC to **58.91 percent** from **60.41 percent** presently.
96. The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has approved a USD 808 million or Rs 6,062.45 crore for the '**Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance**' (RAMP) scheme. It is a new scheme and will commence in FY 2022-23.
- The total outlay for the scheme is **Rs. 6,062.45 crore** or **USD 808 million**, out of which Rs.3750 crore or USD 500 Million will be a loan from the World Bank and the remaining Rs.2312.45 crore or USD 308 million will be funded by the Government of India (GoI).
 - It is a **World Bank** assisted Central Sector Scheme to support various Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID) Resilience and Recovery Interventions of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME).
 - **Objective:** To improve access to market and credit, strengthening institutions and governance at the Centre and State, improving Centre-State linkages and partnerships, addressing issues of delayed payments and greening of MSMEs.
97. The Military Engineering Services (MES) of the Indian Army has made two concrete 3D printed houses for soldiers using 3D construction technology. It has been constructed in South-Western Air Command in **Gandhinagar**, Gujarat.
- It is the first-of-its-kind structures in India.
 - It has been built in collaboration with the Chennai based startup Tvasta.
 - The disaster-resilient structures are in compliance with Zone-3 earthquake specifications.
98. The **Union Ministry of Civil Aviation** and **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)** has jointly organized Asia's largest event on Civil Aviation (Commercial, General and Business Aviation) titled '**WINGS INDIA 2022**' at Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad.
- The event focuses on new business acquisition, investments, policy formation, and regional connectivity.
 - **Theme:** India@75: New Horizon for Aviation Industry

99. The Centre for Digital Transformation at **Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA)**, a premier global management institute, has established a Retail Tech Consortium. The institute has collaborated with several retail and technology organisations in India.
- **Flipkart** has joined as a principal partner for the inaugural year of the consortium.
 - **Aim:** To work towards sharing deep knowledge, research, and setting up industry best practices for better collaboration amongst retail tech players in the country.
100. The Union Women and Child Development Minister **Smriti Irani** has inaugurated the ten-day mega Red Fort Festival named '**Bharat Bhagya Vidhata**' at Red Fort in Delhi. It has been organised as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav by Ministry of Culture. The aim is to commemorate the heritage of the country and culture of every part of India.

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101. The **Ministry of Defence** has signed a contract with **Larsen & Toubro (L&T)** for acquisition of two multi-purpose vessels (MPVs) for Indian Navy at an overall cost of **Rs 887 crore** under "Buy-Indian" category.
- The vessels will be built at L&T shipyard in **Kattupally** (Chennai).
 - These vessels will be the first of its kind platform, constructed to provide a cost-effective solution to meet a variety of requirements of Indian Navy.
102. The '**Jingkieng Jri: Living Root Bridge**' of **Meghalaya** has been included in the tentative list of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites. At present there are about 100 living root bridges around 70 villages of subtropical terrain region of the state.
- Villagers from the **Khasi** and **Jaintia** tribes grow them by training the '**ficus elastica**' tree on both sides of water bodies over a period of about 10-15 years where the roots form the bridge.
 - These bridges can also be found in the state of Nagaland.
103. The Union Ministry of Defence (MoD) has signed a contract with **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**-Bangalore unit for the supply of the **Advanced Electronic Warfare (EW)** suite for fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF). The overall cost of the contract is **Rs.1,993 crore**.

- The Ministry of Defence has also signed a contract with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)-Hyderabad unit for the supply of **Instrumented Electronic Warfare Range (IEWR)** for the IAF. The overall cost of the contract is **Rs.1,109 crore**.

104. The President of India, **Ram Nath Kovind**, has launched the '**Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain campaign 2022**' in New Delhi. The campaign will focus on springshed development, catchment area augmentation, and gender mainstreaming.

105. The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved the procurement of **Rs 8,357 crore** worth of military platforms and hardware. The approved proposals included procurement of night sight (image intensifier), light vehicles GS 4X4, air defence fire control radar (light) and GSAT-7B satellite.

- The DAC has also accorded consolidated Acceptance of Necessity for procurements amounting to **Rs 380.43 crore** from the iDEX startups and MSMEs.
- A Simplified **iDEX** procurement has been introduced.
 - Acceptance of Necessity to Procurement timelines have been reduced from 2+ years to 5 months.

STATES AFFAIRS

106. The city of **Ujjain**, known as the 'Land of Mahakal, in Madhya Pradesh has created a Guinness record by lightning **11.71 lakh clay lamps** in 10 minutes.

- The diyas were lighted as part of the 'Shiv Jyoti Arpanam Mahotsava' on the occasion of Mahashivratri on 1st March 2022.
- The clay from the lamps will be used to prepare idols, while the oil left in the lamps will be offered to gaushalas.

107. The state government of **Tamil Nadu** has launched the '**Naan Mudhalvan**' (I am first) scheme for the students. Under the scheme, students of government and aided schools and colleges will be monitored and their special skills will be identified.

108. Madras High Court Justice Dr. Anitha Sumanth has launched **India's first ambulance for street animals** in **Chennai**, Tamil Nadu.

- It has been started by the Blue Cross of India, an animal welfare charity, in collaboration with the international animal welfare organization Four Paw.
- The Stray Animal Care programme will be a "hospital on wheels" with a veterinarian on board to provide on-site treatment for sick and injured street animals.

- 109. New Delhi Police** has launched three digital initiatives '**Anubhuti**', a QR code-based feedback system, '**e-Chittha**' portal, and a refurbished Delhi Police website.
- **Aim:** To add a new dimension in modernizing and digitizing the police force.
 - **Anubhuti:** To establish two-way communication between the police and the public.
 - **e-Chittha portal:** It act as the backbone of the duty deployment of the Delhi Police.
- 110.** The National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) has partnered with the state government of **Telangana** to encourage and support the MSMEs (micro, small & medium enterprises) of the state. This partnership will enable MSMEs to list on the NSE Emerge platform to raise capital in an efficient manner and scale up their business to compete globally.
- 111.** Goldi Solar, a global solar panel manufacturer and EPC services provider, has partnered with Shree Ramkrishna Knowledge Foundation (SRKKF) to lay the foundation stone for the solarization of the village of **Dudhala** in Southern **Gujarat**.
- This partnership will set up a **450 KW** solar rooftop project that will be used to power around 350 houses and public areas such as anganwadis and gram panchayat.
 - The project is undertaken under Shri Govindbhai Dholakia's mentorship.
 - With this, Dudhala village in Gujarat will become the first fully solarized village by a foundation.
- Dudhala** is a small village in the Lathi taluka of **Amreli district** in Gujarat.*
- 112.** According to the latest data, from the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, the state of **Telangana** has been ranked highest in the country among states with a population over 1 crore in terms of growth rate in terms of Per Capita Net State Domestic Product at Current Prices.
- It has surpassed Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to become top-performing state in the country.
 - The Gross State Domestic Price (GSDP) in Telangana has increased from 359434 crores in 2011-12 to 1,154,860 crores in 2021-22.
- 113. 'Herath',** also known as Mahashivratri, is celebrated in the union territory of **Jammu & Kashmir**. The festival is celebrated on the eve of Shivratri by the Kashmiri Pandit community to mark the wedding of "Lord Shiva" and "Goddess Parvati".
- 114.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated a 12 km stretch of the **Pune Metro Rail Project**. The trains will run along two routes for the time being: Vanaz to Garware College Metro Station and PCMC to Phugewadi Metro Station.
- It is the first metro project in the country to have **Aluminum** body coaches.
 - It has been built at a total cost of **Rs.11,420 crore**.

- It has a total length of **32.2 km** and 30 stations.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the Pune Metro Rail Project in December 2016.

He has also unveiled the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at the premises of the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) and has laid the foundation stone and inaugurated multiple developmental projects in Pune.

- 115.** 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.
- 116.** 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.
- 117.** 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.
- 118.** 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.
- 119.** 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.
- 120.** 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.

- 121.** 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.
- 122.** 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.
- 123.** 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.
- 124.** 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.
- 125.** 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.
- 126.** **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', 'Lohu Pranam Mohiyashi Charane Charane', 'Kalam' and 'Kabita Bitan'.

- 127.** The government of **Delhi** has launched an online portal named **"My EV"** for the purchase and registration of electric autos in Delhi.
- The portal is developed by the Delhi government in collaboration with Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL).
 - The portal is accessible to all users on the website of the Delhi government's transport department.
 - The Delhi government will provide a **5% interest** subvention on loans on the purchase of electric autos under the Delhi Electric Vehicle Policy.
- 128.** The IT Minister for Karnataka, C N Ashwath Narayan has launched India's first-ever digital water data bank **'AQVERIUM'** in **Bangalore, Karnataka**.
- The Digital water data bank is a curated list of water data from all institutions and sources, that will help tackle some common development challenges.
 - This is an initiative of Bangalore-based AquaKraft Digital Ventures.
- 129.** The state of **Kerala** has recorded the lowest Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) of **30** (per one lakh live births) in India during 2017-19. It was 43 during 2016-18.
- 130.** The **35th edition** of the **Surajkund International Crafts Mela** has been organized at Surajkund in the Faridabad district of **Haryana**. It has been started from 19th March to 4th April 2022.
- **Aim:** to promote the culture and talent and flawless craftsmanship by capturing the dash of colours and speed of the music.
 - The theme state for 2022 Surajkund International Crafts Mela is **'Jammu and Kashmir'**.
 - **Uzbekistan** is the partner Nation for the 35th Surajkund International Crafts Mela 2022.
 - It is organized jointly by the Surajkund Mela Authority & Haryana Tourism in collaboration with Union Ministries of Tourism, Textiles, Culture and External Affairs.
- 131.** The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader **Bhagwant Mann** has taken oath as the **18th chief minister of Punjab**. Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit has administered the oath of office and secrecy to him at Khatkar Kalan, the ancestral village of legendary freedom fighter Bhagat Singh in Shaheed Bhagat Singh (SBS) Nagar district of Punjab.
- AAP party in Punjab has won *92 seats* out of **117 seats** of the legislative assembly in Punjab.

- 132.** The state government of **Haryana** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Welspun One Logistics Parks (WOLP)** for the development of Grade-A warehousing facilities across key micro-markets in the state. WOLP will invest around Rs.1500 crore.
- 133.** '**Dol Jatra**' or '**Dol Purnima**', the festival of colours, is observed every year in the state of **West Bengal**. The festival is dedicated to Lord Krishna and Radha. It is celebrated on a full moon day.
- The day also marks the last festival of the year as per the Bengali calendar.
 - The day welcomes the spring season.
 - The Dol festival celebrates the love between Radha and Krishna, while the north-Indian Holi signifies the power and victory of good over evil.
- 134.** The state of **Telangana** has become the first state in India to record its crop diversification patterns in the form of an index. According to the crop diversification index, 77 varieties of crops are grown in Telangana. Among 77 crops, only around 10 crops (mostly grains) are preferred for diversification.
- Top three districts in terms of crop diversification are Nirmal, Vikarabad & Sangareddy.
 - Bottom three districts in terms of crop diversification are Peddapalli, Karimnagar, and Suryapet.
- 135.** BJP leader **Pushkar Singh Dhami** has become the **11th chief minister of Uttarakhand** for the second term. Governor Lt Gen (retd) Gurmit Singh has administered him the oath of office and secrecy at the Parade Ground in Dehradun.
- The BJP party has won 47 seats in the recent election.
 - There are **70** Legislative Assembly seats in Uttarakhand.
- 136.** The National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) has successfully commissioned an additional **42.5 MW** (out of 100 MW) of power generating capacity at **Ramagundam floating solar project**, India's largest floating solar power plant, in **Telangana**. Now, the total capacity of the project has reached 80 MW.
- With this, the total installed and commercial capacity of NTPC has become 68609.68 and 67949.68 MW respectively.
- 137.** The state government of **Karnataka** has developed the **Dishaank app** to ensure easy access to land records. It is developed under the Geographical Information System (GIS) program of the Karnataka State Remote Sensing Applications Centre (KSRSAC).

- 138.** The state of **Bihar** has become the first state in the country to introduce the concept of a **dynamic map** for villages. The dynamic map will automatically get updated, each time land ownership changes hands. The objective is to reduce legal disputes.
- 139.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated **Biplobi Bharat Gallery** at Victoria Memorial Hall in **Kolkata** on the occasion of Shaheed Diwas (23rd March). This new gallery depicts the contribution of the revolutionaries to the freedom struggle of India and provides a holistic view of the events that led up to 1947.
- 140.** The Government of India has set a target to build **220 new airports** by **2025**. The government has also planned to create 33 new domestic cargo terminals, set up 15 new flight training schools for pilots, create more jobs, and increase focus on the drone sector. It is noteworthy that the total strength of women pilots in the country is only **15%** which is much higher than other parts of the world.
- 141.** BJP leader **N Biren Singh** has been sworn in as the **Chief Minister of Manipur** for a second consecutive five-year term. He has been administered the oath of office by governor La Ganesan at a ceremony at the Raj Bhavan in Imphal.
- Total number of Manipur Legislative Assembly seats: **60**
 - In the recent elections, BJP party has won 32 seats in the 60-member assembly.
- 142.** The **Narasingapettai Nagaswaram**, an ancient musical instrument from Narasingapettai, a village in Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu), has been granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag under 'musical instruments of class 15'.
- It is a classical **wind music instrument**, dating back to the 13th century.
 - It is made of '**aacha maram**', a tree known for its sturdy features.
 - This wood is naturally water resistant.
- 143.** The state of **Kerala** has become India's first state to introduce **carbon-neutral farming** practices in select locations for better soil health.
- **First phase:** Carbon-neutral farming will be implemented in 13 farms below the Agriculture division and tribal areas, and steps are on to transform the State Seed Farm at Aluva a carbon-neutral farm.
 - **Second phase:** Mannequin carbon-neutral farms will be developed in all of the 140 Meeting constituencies
- 144.** **Kerala Tourism** has launched a 24×7 WhatsApp chatbot named '**Maya**' to enable tourists to access all information and updates about the tourism ecosystem in Kerala. Maya will

provide information to travellers about the latest updates on destinations, facilities, prerequisites etc.

145. The **Meghalaya Infrastructure Development and Finance Corporation Ltd. (MiDFC)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** to ensure a holistic development of MSME ecosystem in Meghalaya. It also aims to support and showcase replicable livelihood projects aligned to the priority identified by state.

146. BJP leader **Pramod Sawant** has taken oath as the Chief Minister of **Goa** for the second time in a row at the Dr Shyamaprasad Mukherjee stadium in Taleigao, Goa. The Governor of Goa, P S Sreedharan Pillai has administered the oath of office and secrecy to him. BJP party has won 20 seats out of **40 legislative assembly** seats in Goa in the recent elections.

147. BJP leader **Yogi Adityanath** has become the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh for the second term. Governor Anandiben Patel has administered the oath of office and secrecy to him at Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Stadium, Lucknow in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and other central ministers.

- **Keshav Prasad Maurya** and **Brajesh Pathak** have also taken oaths as the Deputy Chief Ministers in the new government.
- BJP party has secured **274 seats** out of **403** Legislative Assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh.
- BJP has become the first party in over three decades to form a government for a second consecutive time in the state.

148. Union Minister of State for Department of Science and Biotechnology Dr. Jitendra Singh has launched the Data-Driven Research to Eradicate TB- **"Dare2eraD TB"** program on the occasion of World TB Day (24th March). It has been launched during the "STEP Up to End TB 2022" summit held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

- The 'Dare2eraD TB' program includes:
 - InTGS – Indian Tuberculosis Genomic Surveillance Consortium
 - InTBK Hub – Indian TB Knowledge Hub- Webinar Series
 - Host directed therapies against TB and developing an evidence-based regimen for treating extra-pulmonary Tuberculosis.
- The program will be based on Indian data, and formation of a Genome Sequencing Consortium for Whole Genome Sequencing, (WSG) TB surveillance.

149. The state assembly of **Nagaland** has become India's first Legislative Assembly to successfully conduct its proceedings using the **National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA)**

programme in paperless mode. This initiative encourages paperless operations and reflects government's commitment towards Ashta Lakshmi.

About NeVA:

It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** by the **Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs** with the funding ratio of **90:10** by Centre and State respectively. It is a Mission Mode Project for Digital Legislatures to make the functioning of all Legislative Houses in the country paperless. It is developed on the theme of 'One Nation – One Application'.

- 150.** The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has announced to build India's first-ever **Sports Authority of India (SAI) National Centre of Excellence (NCOE)** in collaboration with the Himachal Pradesh government to train athletes in Mountain Terrain Biking (MTB) and Bicycle Motocross (BMX) in **Shimla**. The objective is to provide world-class training facilities to Indian cyclists so that they can compete for the 18 Olympic medals.

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- 151.** The Diamond City of India, **Surat** in Gujarat, has become the first in India to get a road that is made out of steel waste. The steel slag road has been built by ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India along with CSIR India (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research) and the Central Road Research Institute (CRRI) and Niti Aayog.
- It has been built at the **Hazira Industrial Area**.
 - The road has been built with 100% processed steel slag.
 - The experimented project is a 1 km long road and has six lanes.
- 152.** The state government of **Himachal Pradesh** has partnered with the **National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (NIPER)**, Mohali for the upcoming **Medical Devices Park** in Nalagarh area of Solan district as the knowledge partner.
- A total of **Rs.74.95 crore** has been sanctioned to the State Implementation Agency by the State Planning Department for the development of the park.
 - NIPER Mohali will establish a Centre for Excellence in Medical Devices Park that will enable Industry-Academia linkage.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

- 153.** **China** has claimed a domestic record for the most spacecraft launched by a single rocket by launching a 'Long March-8 rocket' to place 22 satellites in space from the 'Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site' in the southern Hainan Province.

- The mission marked the **409th flight** of the Long March carrier rockets.
- These satellites will be mainly used for commercial remote sensing services, marine environment monitoring, forest fire prevention and disaster mitigation.

- 154.** The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has retained **Pakistan** in the grey list and has also added **UAE** to its grey watch list. Pakistan has been on the grey list of FATF since June 2018 for failing to check money laundering, leading to terror financing, and was given a plan of action to complete it by October 2019.
- 155.** The **Antonov An-225 or Mriya** ('Dream' in Ukrainian) is the **world's largest cargo aircraft**. It has been destroyed by Russian troops during an attack on an airport near Kyiv, Ukraine. The aircraft was designed in then Ukrainian USSR during the 1980s amid a tense race to space between the United States and the Soviet Union.
- 156.** **India** and **Nepal** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the supply of **Urea** and **Di-ammonium Phosphate (DAP)** fertilizers from India to Nepal under Government to Government Arrangement. The MoU has been signed by Rajesh Kumar Chaturvedi, Secretary (Chemical and Fertilizers), Government of India, on the Indian side and Govinda Prasad Sharma, Secretary (Agriculture and Livestock Development) on the Nepali side.
- 157.** **Canada** has become the first country to approve the world's first plant-based COVID-19 vaccine for adults aged 18 to 64 named '**Covifenz**'.
- It is jointly developed by Medicago Inc. and GlaxoSmithKline Plc.
 - It is 71% effective at preventing COVID-19 (before the emergence of the Omicron variant).
- 158.** The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has successfully launched an Earth-observation satellite named **Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite (GOES-T)** through United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida, USA.
- It has been launched for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
 - It is the third in a series of GOES-R weather satellites.
- 159.** **Swiss International Air Lines** and its parent company the Lufthansa Group, have partnered with synthetic fuel group Synhelion to use its solar fuel. With this, Swiss will become the first airline in the world to use "sun-to-liquid" fuel. Swiss will become the first customer of solar kerosene in 2023.

- 160.** The **fifth session** of the **United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)** has been held in Nairobi, Kenya under the theme of "Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals".
- **UNEA-5 President:** Espen Barth Eide (Norway)
 - It has been hosted by the *United Nations Environment Programme* (UNEP).
 - The UNEA-5 session is followed by "**UNEP@50**", a two-day Special Session of the Assembly to mark UNEP's 50th anniversary.
 - The session concluded with **14 resolutions** to strengthen actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
 - 175 nations has signed a mandate to curb use of plastic by developing a legally binding agreement.
- 161.** 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.
- 162.** 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.
- 163.** 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.

- 164. 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.
- 165.** 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.
- 166. 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.
- 167.** 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.
- 168. India** and **Sri Lanka** have signed a **Joint Venture and Shareholders Agreement (JVSHA)** to develop a **100-megawatt (MW)** Solar Power Plant at the eastern port district Trincomalee, Sri Lanka.
- Trincomalee Power Company Limited (TPCL) is a joint venture between National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Limited from India and the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) from Sri Lanka.
- 169.** The Government of India has issued a **USD 1 billion** line of credit (LoC) for Sri Lanka to aid in the import of food, necessary products, and medication. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** will provide an LoC of USD 1 billion to Sri Lanka.
- 170.** The **2nd edition** of the **India-Indonesia Security Dialogue (IISD)** has been held in **Jakarta, Indonesia**. It has been co-chaired by National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs of Indonesia, Mohammad Mahfud.
- The IISD is a forum that brings the Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs of Indonesia and National Security Adviser of India together to discuss and enhance cooperation between the two countries on political and security issues.
 - *The first IISD was held in 2018.*

- 171.** Exercise '**Cold Response 2022**' has been organized by the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**. It has been held from 14th March to 1st April 2022 in Norway.
- The exercise is held in Norway every other year for NATO allies and partners.
 - Around 30,000 troops from 27 countries are participating in the 2022 edition of the exercise, which includes around 220 aircraft and over 50 vessels.
- 172.** The **International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)** has signed a new agreement with the **International Labour Organization (ILO)** to boost the aviation industry. The agreement is signed for five years and is renewable.
- 173.** The researchers of **China** have developed a microwave machine named "**Relativistic Klystron Amplifier (RKA)**" to destroy satellites or sensitive electronics in satellites in space. The device can generate a wave burst measuring 5-megawatts in the Ka-band. This band is a portion of the electromagnetic spectrum increasingly used for both civil and military purposes.
- 174.** The Government of **Sri Lanka** has signed an agreement with **Goa Shipyard Limited** to build a floating dock with the valuation of USD 20 million. The floating dock will be established at the Trincomalee Naval Dockyard, Sri Lanka within the next 30 months.
- 175.** **Robert Abela** has become the **Prime Minister of Malta** for a second term. He has been administered the oath of office by President George Vella. He was first sworn in as Prime Minister of Malta in January 2020.
- 176.** The **5th BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) Summit** has been hosted by **Sri Lanka**, the current chair of BIMSTEC, in a hybrid mode. The theme of the summit is "Towards a Resilient Region, Prosperous Economies, Healthy People".
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has participated in the summit.
 - During the summit **3 agreements** were signed:
 - BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters
 - BIMSTEC Memorandum of Understanding on Mutual Cooperation in the field of Diplomatic Training
 - Memorandum of Association on Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility

- 177. North Korea** has successfully test-fired its biggest intercontinental ballistic missile named '**Hwasong-17**' from a Transporter Erector Launcher (TEL) vehicle with 11 axles. It is the largest liquid-fuelled missile ever launched by any country from a road-mobile launcher.
- 178.** India has committed to invest **USD 6 million** jointly with the **Australian** government to explore lithium and cobalt mines in Australia in the next six months. For this, Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL) has signed a preliminary agreement with Australia's Critical Minerals Facilitation Office (CMFO).
- 179. Malaysia** has hosted the armed forces from **Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom** in the annual **Bersama Shield 2022** training exercise. It is conducted within the framework of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) – a series of bilateral and multilateral defence agreements established in 1971. The exercise involved sea and air drills, mostly in international waters but also in part of Malaysia's exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea.
- 180.** The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has extended the term of Secretary-General **Jens Stoltenberg** (Norway) by one year i.e. till 30th September 2023. He was named NATO Secretary-General in October 2014.
- 181.** The 3rd edition of joint training exercise named '**EX-DUSTLIK**' has been conducted between **Indian and Uzbekistan armies** at Yangiariq, Uzbekistan. The Indian contingent have been represented by the Grenadiers Regiment and the Uzbekistan Army contingent have been represented by troops of the North-Western Military District.
- 182. India and Japan** have launched the **Clean Energy Partnership (CEP)** for cooperation towards achieving sustainable economic growth, addressing climate change and ensuring energy security. It has been launched on the occasion of the **14th India-Japan Annual Summit** held at Hyderabad house in New Delhi.
- Japanese Prime Minister **Fumio Kishida** has attended the summit with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi.
 - Japan has increased its investment target in India to **5 trillion yen** which is around USD 42 billion over the next five years.
- 183.** The 9th edition of the Joint Military Exercise '**LAMITIYE-2022**' has been conducted between the **Indian Army** and **Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF)** at Seychelles Defence Academy (SDA) in Seychelles. The contingent of the Indian Army has been represented by the 2/3 GORKHA RIFLES group (PIRKANTHI Battalion).

- Seychelles has hosted Exercise LAMITIYE since 2001.
- It is a 10-day exercise to build and promote bilateral military relations, sharing experiences gained during various operations; exchanging skills and good practices between both armies.

184. The **2nd edition of India-Australia Virtual Summit 2022** has been held between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison. The first Virtual Summit was held in 2020.

Key agreements:

- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed on Co-Investment in Australian Critical Minerals Projects between Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL), India and Critical Minerals Facilitation Office (CMFO), Australia.
- A letter of intent has been signed between both the countries which aimed to work towards a **"Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement."**
- MoU has been signed for cooperation and collaboration on broadcasting between Prasar Bharati, India and Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), Australia.
- Letter of Arrangement has been signed between India and Australia for Educational Qualifications Recognition.
- Establishment of **General Rawat India-Australia Young Defence Officers' Exchange Programme.**
- Return of **29 artefacts** by Government of Australia.
- Australia has also announced an investment package of **Rs 1,500 crore** (280 million Australian dollar) to boost ties with India in areas such as clean technologies, space, and innovation.
- Australia will set up a new **Centre for Australia-India relations**, to be based in Australia, with funding of USD 28.1 million over four years.

REPORTS & INDICES

185. The second advance estimate of national income has been released by the National Statistical Office (NSO). NSO has projected India's GDP growth at **8.9%** for **FY22** (earlier it was 9.2% in first advance estimates). It has also projected India's GDP growth at **6.6%** for **FY21** (earlier it was -7.3%).

186. Wealth Report 2022

As per Knight Frank's 16th edition of the **Wealth Report 2022**, the number of ultra-high-net-worth-individuals (UHNWIs) has globally increased by **9.3%** in 2021 to 6,10,569 from 5, 58,828 in 2020.

The list has been topped by the **United States (748)**, followed by China (554).

India has been **ranked 3rd** in billionaire population globally.

- The number of ultra-high-net-worth-individuals (UHNWIs) in India has increased by 11% YoY in 2021 to 145 billionaires, the highest percentage growth in the Asia Pacific (APAC) region.
- **Bengaluru** has recorded the highest growth in the number of UHNWIs in 2021 at 17.1% to 352 billionaires, followed by Delhi (12.4% to 210) and Mumbai (9% to 1596) in 2021.

187. According to the recent data released by the Ministry of Finance, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection has crossed **Rs 1.30 lakh crore** mark for the 5th time in February 2022.

- The gross GST revenue collected in the month of February 2022 is **Rs 1,33,026 crore** of which CGST is Rs 24,435 crore, SGST is Rs 30,779 crore, IGST is Rs 67,471 crore (including Rs 33,837 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is Rs 10,340 crore (including Rs 638 crore collected on import of goods).

188. State of India's Environment Report 2022:

Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav has released the **State of India's Environment Report 2022** of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE).

India has slipped three spots to **120th** from 117th in 2021 on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted as part of the 2030 Agenda by 192 United Nations member states in 2015. The overall Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) score of India is **66** out of 100.

State-wise rankings:

- **Kerala** has topped among states, followed by Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh in the 2nd position. Karnataka, Goa, Uttarakhand, and Andhra Pradesh shared third place.
- The states of **Jharkhand & Bihar** are least prepared to meet the SDGs by the target year of 2030.

Union Territory rankings: Chandigarh has topped among the Union Territories, followed by Delhi, Puducherry, and Lakshadweep in second place, and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands in the third position.

- The South-Asian countries ahead of India are Bhutan ranked 75th, Sri Lanka: 87th, Nepal: 96th, and Bangladesh: 109th.
- India's ranking has slipped due to substantial challenges in 11 SDGs such as zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, gender equality, and sustainable cities and communities.

- 189. Bain & Company and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)** have released a report titled 'Innovation in India's Rural Economy: disruptive business models are stimulating inclusive growth in agriculture and rural finance'.
- As per the report, the agriculture sector has grown by a CAGR of **11%** during **2015-2020** and it contributes to approximately 37 percent of the total rural GDP.
 - Around 30 percent of the rural ecosystem is adopting digital payment and digital commerce.
 - Agri credit has grown at 10 percent CAGR in the last five years, reaching nearly Rs 14 lakh crore in 2019-2020 and about 35 percent of this comes from the states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.
- 190.** A report titled "Q4 & Annual India Solar Market Update" has been released by the Mercom India Research. As per the report, India has installed a record **10 GW** of new solar capacity in 2021, a 210% increase as compared to 3.2 GW installed in 2020.
- The cumulative installed solar capacity in India at the end of Q4 2021 was approximately **49 GW**.
 - **Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh** were the top three states for large scale solar installations.
 - Solar accounted for 62% of new power capacity additions in 2021, the largest share of power capacity ever.
 - Rooftop installations registered a y-o-y increase of 138% in 2021.
- 191.** 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.
- 192.** 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.

- 193. 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.
- 194.** 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.
- 195.** 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.
- 196.** 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.*

- 197.** 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.
- 198.** According to the latest report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) on Trends in International Arms Transfer 2021, **India** and **Saudi Arabia** have emerged as the largest arms importers of arms between 2017-21, each accounting for **11%** of all global arms sales.
- Egypt, Australia and China are the next three largest importers with respective shares of 5.7%, 5.4% and 4.8%.
 - Russia (46%), France (27%), and the USA (12%) are the top three largest exporters of arms to India during the period.
 - **Largest exporters:**
 - Russia (19%), France (11%), China (4.6%) and Germany (4.5%) are among the top 5 largest exporters respectively.
 - India has emerged as the **23rd** largest exporter during 2017-21, with a share of just 0.2% of the global exports.
- 199.** As per Bloomberg's recent data on Market capitalization, India has secured **5th position** in terms of market capitalization for the first time with **USD 3.21 trillion**, which is higher than that of the UK (\$3.19 trillion), Saudi Arabia (\$3.18 trillion), and Canada (\$3.18 trillion).
- The **USA** has topped the ranking with USD 47.32 trillion, followed by China, Japan, and Hong Kong.
 - The total world market capitalization stands at **USD 109.22 trillion**.

Note: Market capitalization (market cap) refers to the total market value of a publicly-traded company's outstanding shares of stock. It is calculated by multiplying the total company's outstanding shares by the current market price of one share.

200. As per the recently released special bulletin on maternal mortality ratio (MMR) by the Registrar General of India, India's maternal mortality ratio (MMR) has improved to **103** in **2017-19**, from 113 in 2016-18.

- The state of **Kerala (30)** has the lowest MMR in India, followed by Maharashtra (38) and Telangana (56).
- **Worst Performed States:** Uttarakhand (101) < West Bengal (109) < Punjab (114) < Bihar (130) < Odisha (136) < Rajasthan (141) < Chhattisgarh (160) < Madhya Pradesh (163) < Uttar Pradesh (167) < Assam (205).

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201. The 10th edition of the **World Happiness Report 2022** has been released by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network. The report usually ranks 150 countries based on several factors such as real GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity and perceptions of corruption. This year, the report ranked **146 countries**.

- **Finland** has been named the world's happiest country for the fifth consecutive year, followed by Denmark, and Iceland.
- **Afghanistan** has been ranked as the unhappiest nation, followed by Lebanon, and Zimbabwe.

202. **Karnataka Bank** has been awarded the **Best MSME Bank of the Year** award among private sector Banks at the 8th MSMEs Excellence Awards Ceremony and Summit instituted by The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) at New Delhi.

203. As per the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), India's urban unemployment rate has increased to **12.6 percent** in the April-June quarter of 2021, compared to 9.3 percent in the January-March quarter of 2021. It was 20.8% in April-June 2020.

- In the 15-29 age group, **25.5 percent** of urban youth remained unemployed in April-June 2021 as against 34.7 percent in April-June 2020 and 22.9 percent in January-March 2021.

204. According to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based retail inflation has increased by **6.07%** year-on-year in **February 2022**. It was 6.01 percent in January 2022. The rate of price rise in the food basket is 5.89 percent in February 2022.

- Whereas, the Wholesale price-based inflation has increased to **13.11%** in **February 2022** from 12.96% in January 2022.

205. Hurun India has released a report titled **"2022 M3M Hurun Global Rich List"**. As per the report, Reliance Industries Limited Chairman **Mukesh Ambani** has emerged as the **Richest Man in India and Asia** with a USD 103 billion net worth. He has become the only Indian to feature in the Top 10 2022 M3M Hurun Global Rich List. He has **ranked 9th** globally.

- Globally, **Elon Musk**, CEO of Tesla, has topped the list with USD 205 billion, followed by Jeff Bezos (Amazon), and Bernard Arnault (Louis Vuitton Moet Hennessy).
- After Mukesh Ambani, Gautam Adani has ranked second with a wealth of USD 81 billion, Shiv Nadar and family third with a net worth of USD 28 billion, Cyrus Poonawalla fourth with wealth of USD 26 billion and Lakshmi Mittal fifth with USD 25 billion.
- **Mumbai** has become the billionaire capital of India with **72 billionaires** followed by New Delhi with 51.

206. Deloitte has released a report titled **'Global Powers of Retailing 2022'**. As per the report, **Walmart** has topped the list, followed by Jeff Bezos-owned Amazon and the US-based Costco Wholesale Corporation.

- **Reliance Retail**, the consumer business arm of Reliance Industries Ltd, has **ranked 56th** on the list of top 250 global retailers.
- Reliance Retail has secured **2nd position** on the list of top 50 fastest-growing retailers (FY2015-20). South Korean e-commerce brand Coupang topped the list.

207. **World Air Quality Report 2021** has been published by Swiss organisation IQAir. The report is based on PM2.5 air quality data from 6,475 cities in 117 countries, regions, and territories around the world. It is the first major global air quality report based on updated annual WHO air quality guidelines for PM2.5. The new guidelines were released in September 2021 and cut existing annual PM2.5 guideline values from 10 Aug/m 3 to 5 Aug/m 3.

- As per the report, **New Delhi** has been ranked the world's most polluted capital city for the second consecutive year, followed by Dhaka (Bangladesh), N'Djamena (Chad), Dushanbe (Tajikistan) and Muscat (Oman).
- Globally, **Bangladesh** has been ranked the world's most polluted country, followed by Chad, Pakistan and Tajikistan.
 - India has been ranked the **fifth** most polluted country.

- The index listed 35 Indian cities with the worst air quality tag for 2021 with Rajasthan's **Bhiwadi** topping the list followed by Ghaziabad, Delhi, and Jaunpur.

208. The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** has recently published the 'Annual Frontier Report, 2022'. As per the report, **Dhaka (Bangladesh)** has been ranked as the world's most noise polluted city with noise pollution of 119 decibels (dB) in 2021, followed by Moradabad (Uttar Pradesh, India) with noise pollution of 114 decibels, and Islamabad (Pakistan) with noise pollution of 105 decibels.

- The city of Irbid (Jordan) has been ranked as the world's quietest city, followed by Lyon (France) and Madrid (Spain).
- The other four most noise polluted cities in India in the list are Kolkata (89 dB), Asansol (89 dB), Jaipur (84 dB), and Delhi (83 dB).

209. The 7th edition of the Celebrity Brand Valuation Report 2021 titled '**Digital Acceleration 2.0**' has been released by Duff & Phelps. Indian cricketer **Virat Kohli** has emerged as the most valued celebrity in India for the fifth year in 2021. The brand value of him has dropped from USD 237.7 million in 2020 to USD 185.7 million in 2021.

- Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh has been ranked 2nd with a brand value of \$158.3 million.
- Ranveer Singh is followed by Akshay Kumar with a brand value of \$139.6 million and Alia Bhatt with a brand value of \$68.1 million.

210. As per the 12th Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) by the National Statistical Office (NSO), India's unemployment rate for persons of age 15 years and above in urban areas has declined to **9.8%** in July-September (Q2) 2021 from 13.2% in Q2 2020. It was 12.6% in April-June 2021.

- Unemployment rate among **females** (age 15 years and above) in urban areas has also declined to **11.6 percent** in Q2 2021 from 15.8 percent in Q2 2020. It was 14.3 percent in April-June 2021.
- Unemployment rate among **males** in urban areas has also declined to **9.3 percent** in Q2 2021 from 12.6 percent in Q2 2020. It was 12.2 percent in April-June 2021.
- **Labour force participation rate** in CWS (current weekly status) in urban areas for persons of 15 years of age and above was **46.9 percent** in Q2 2021 from 47.2 percent in Q2 2020. It was 46.8 percent in April-June 2021.
- **Worker Population Ratio (WPR)** (in percent) in CWS in urban areas for persons of age 15 years and above stood at **42.3 percent** in Q2 2021, up from 40.9 percent in Q2 2020. It was 40.9 percent in April-June, 2021. The Global House Price Index Q4 2021 has been released by property consultant Knight Frank. **Turkey** has topped the index with the highest annual price growth rate by 59.6 percent in Q4 2021, followed by New Zealand (22.6 percent), and Czech Republic (22.1 percent).

India's performance:

- India has been placed at **51st position** in Q4 of 2021.
- India has witnessed 2.1 percent annual appreciation in housing price rates during the October-December quarter of the 2021 against Q4 of 2020.
- India was placed at 56th position in Q4 of 2020.

211. NITI Aayog, in partnership with the Institute of Competitiveness, has released the second edition of the **Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2021**. The index can be used by states and union territories (UTs) to benchmark their performance against their peers and analyse potential challenges to develop better policy mechanisms to foster export-led growth at the subnational level.

Key highlights:

Overall Ranking: Gujarat has topped the index for the second time in a row with a score of 78.86, followed by Maharashtra and Karnataka.

- States with higher exports also experience a high Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). US\$ 259.25 billion is the estimated GSDP of Gujarat in Fiscal Year 2022. Maharashtra GSDP stood at US \$366.67 billion in 2020-2021.
- **Lakshadweep** has performed worst in the index with a score of 2.12, followed by Arunachal Pradesh, and Mizoram.

Coastal states: Gujarat has topped. It is followed by Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Himalayan states: Uttarakhand has topped with a score of 40.79, followed by Himachal Pradesh and Tripura.

UT/City States: Delhi has topped with a score of 43.66, followed by Goa and Jammu & Kashmir.

Landlocked states: Haryana has topped with a score of 53.20, followed by Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

- Most of the Coastal States are the best performers.

The EPI ranks states and UTs on **4 main pillars**: Policy; Business Ecosystem; Export Ecosystem; Export Performance and **11 sub-pillars**: Export Promotion Policy; Institutional Framework; Business Environment; Infrastructure; Transport Connectivity; Access to Finance; Export Infrastructure; Trade Support; R&D Infrastructure; Export Diversification; and Growth Orientation.

212. The Hurun Research Institute has released the **Hurun Global Forty and Under Self-Made Billionaires 2022**. The report ranks the self-made billionaires in the world (in terms of US dollars) aged 40 years and under.

Country-wise:

- **USA** has topped the list with 37 self-made billionaires, followed by China with 25 billionaires, and United Kingdom with 8 billionaires.

- **India** has been ranked **fourth** with 6 billionaires.

Individual-wise:

Meta CEO **Mark Zuckerberg** is the world's richest self-made billionaire aged 40 and under with a total wealth of \$76 billion, followed by ByteDance CEO Zhang Yiming, FTX CEO Sam Bankman-Fried, Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky, and Facebook co-founder Dustin Moskovitz, respectively.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

213. Japan and India have renewed the **Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA)**. The size of BSA is up to **USD 75 billion** which means when India wants to borrow money from Japan it can borrow in US Dollars or Japanese Yen up to the limit of \$75 billion and vice versa. The countries will pay interest on the amount borrowed at an interest rate fixed at the time of borrowing the money.

214. The Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) has tied up with **Solar Energy Corporation of India Ltd (SECI)** for cooperation and collaboration in the field of renewable energy, electric mobility, and alternative fuels including the development of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Projects.

215. Adani Renewable Energy Holding Fifteen, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Adani Green Energy, has received the Letter of Award (LOA) from Punjab State Electricity Corporation for setting up a **150 MW** solar power project.

- The fixed tariff for the project capacity is Rs.2.34/ kWh for a period of 25 years.
- With this, Adani Green Energy now has a total renewable energy project portfolio of 20,434 MWac capacity.

216. Tata Motors has launched a showroom on wheels (mobile showroom) named '**Anubhav**'. It will target rural customers by increasing their reach in rural areas and providing them with a doorstep car buying experience. A total of 103 mobile showrooms are being deployed across the country to enhance the Tata Motors brand awareness in rural India.

217. Indian Hotels Company (IHCL), India's largest hospitality company, has collaborated with the **United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** to help preserve and promote the intangible cultural heritage of India.

218. Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL) has become first depository to register **more than six crores** (60 million) active Demat accounts.

- A Demat account is a dematerialized account that can be used to keep online copies of securities and shares.
- CDSL is India's only listed depository.

219. The **MeitY Startup Hub**, an initiative of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and **Google** has announced a cohort of **100 early to mid-stage Indian startups**, with an aim to help build global apps and games as part of the Appscale Academy programme.

220. The Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA) has organized the **Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2022** in **Barcelona, Spain**.

- The global Telecom industry will invest **USD 600 billion** by 2025 in the global mobile industry's capital expenditure (CAPEX).
- An increase in the 5G network will increase the global GDP by **5%** i.e. up to USD 5 trillion in 2025.

221. Hero MotoCorp, India's leading two wheeler company, has unveiled a new Electric Vehicle (EV) sub-brand named '**Vida**' for its emerging mobility solutions and upcoming electric vehicles.

- The first electric vehicle under the Vida brand will be officially unveiled on **1st July 2022**, to coincide with the birth anniversary of Dr Brijmohan Lall, Chairman Emeritus of Hero MotoCorp.
- The company has also announced a \$100 million Global Sustainability Fund that will help the company to nurture more than 10,000 entrepreneurs on ESG solutions.

222. The Reliance Industries Limited has opened India's first largest Global Destination '**Jio World Centre**' in Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.

- The centre is spread over an area of 18.5 acres.
- It includes a cultural centre, a musical fountain (Fountain of Joy), an upscale retail experience, a curated selection of cafés and fine dining restaurants, serviced apartments and offices and the state-of-the-art convention facility.
- It has 'hybrid and digital experiences' enabled by the 5G network.

223. 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.

- 224. 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.*
- 225. 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.
- 226.** 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).
- 227. 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.
- 228. 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**.
- 229.** 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.

230. 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.

231. The **National Stock Exchange of India Ltd (NSE)** has tied up with **India Bullion and Jewellers Association Ltd (IBJA)** to launch the **Domestic Bullion Spot Exchange** as per the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) guidelines. It is the first time that a domestic bullion spot exchange is being set up under the aegis of SEBI.

232. Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has launched an **e-commerce platform** for B2B industrial products and services named '**SuFin**'. This platform will empower businesses, especially MSMEs, to enable them source their industrial supplies pan-India, digitally and cost-effectively.

233. The **Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL)**, a unit of the Coal India Limited (CIL), has become the largest coal producer in India by producing **157 million tonnes (MT)** of coal in the financial year of 2021-22.

- MCL has despatched over **166 MT** dry fuel to the consumers, registering 22 percent growth over a previous financial year while it has also removed **195 MCuM** (million cubic meters) of over burden registering 19 percent growth over the last financial year.
- As on 12th March 2022, MCL has produced 7.62 lakh tonne of dry fuel which is the highest in a day during the current financial year reaching 157.7 MT of coal production.

234. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bengaluru-based company **SASMOS** to work together on advanced electronics,

electrical and fibre optic interconnections in the aerospace domain. Naini Aerospace Limited (NAeL), a subsidiary of HAL, is also a signatory to the MoU.

- 235. JSW Cement**, India's leading green cement company, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with **Punjab Renewable Energy Systems Private Limited (PRESPL)** to use agricultural waste as biomass energy in its cement-manufacturing operations.
- 236.** The **Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)** has partnered with **UltraCash Technologies Pvt Ltd** to provide a voice-based digital payment facility that allows its BharatGas consumers, who do not have smartphones or internet, to book their LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) cylinders and make the payment through '**UPI 123PAY**'.
- This partnership will allow BharatGas customers to call a common number 080-4516-3554 from a non-internet phone and book BharatGas cylinder.
 - With this, BPCL has become the first company in India to offer digital payment to non-internet users.
- 237.** Rating agency Moody's has lowered India's GDP forecast by 40 basis points to **9.1 percent** in **CY2022** as compared to 9.5% estimated earlier. This happened due to adverse effects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on the global economy. It has projected India's GDP growth forecast for the **CY23** at **5.4 percent**.
- 238. Formula 1** and **Tata Communications** have jointly announced a multi-year strategic collaboration for end-to-end managed network services for video contribution globally. With this collaboration, Tata Communications will return to sports as the official broadcast connectivity provider for Formula 1 racing.
- 239. Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M)** has increased its stake in **Carnot Technologies**, a vehicle monitoring technology company, to **52.69 percent** from the current 15.6 percent with an investment of around **Rs.14 crore**.
- 240. Adani Group** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Sri Lanka** for two large power projects in the Northern Province. These projects will be executed in two locations of Sri Lanka- **Mannar** and **Pooneryn**. The project aims to generate combined capacity of **500 MW**, at a cost of **USD 500 million**.
- 241.** The **Cochin Shipyard Limited** has signed an agreement with **Dredging Corporation of India (DCI)** to build India's first indigenous dredger.

- The vessel with a 12,000 cubic metre capacity, will cost around **Rs. 920 crore** and is expected to be completed within 34 months.
- The Dutch dredging technology major, IHC Holland, will be technology partners in the project.

242. Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the **National Mineral Development Corporation Limited (NMDC)**, under the Ministry of Steel, to conduct drone-based mineral exploration.

- With this, NMDC has become India's **first** Central Public Sector Enterprise to conduct Drone-based geophysical surveys and hyperspectral studies for mineral exploration, setting a new benchmark in the field of mineral exploration.

243. Torrent Power has signed a Share Purchase Agreement (SPA) and Shareholders Agreement (SHA) with Administrator of the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (Holding Entity) and Dadra and special purpose vehicle (SPV) Daman and Diu Power Distribution Corporation Limited to acquire **51%** equity of **Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu Power Distribution Corporation Limited**.

244. The **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with state-owned warship building firm **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE)** Limited worth around **Rs.60 crore** for the construction of **27** carriageway double lane galvanized modular bridges of 7.5 meters with Indian Road Congress (IRC) Load Class 70 in border areas. These bridges will be launched within 45 days of handing over the site by the units.

245. TCS BaNCS has been selected by Singapore Exchange (SGX) to power the **NSE IFSC-SGX Connect** (Gift Connect) in a special economic zone in Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (Gift City).

- The NSE IFSC-SGX Connect will be powered by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS).
 - The first phase of the proposed initiative between the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and Singapore Exchange (SGX) will go live in **April 2022**, while it will become fully operational in another three to four months.
- SGX has set up **SGX India Connect IFSC**, a special purpose vehicle at GIFT city to enable international access to Indian capital markets and create a larger liquidity pool of international and domestic participants.
- TCS BaNCS will facilitate Nifty trading between India and Singapore.

- 246. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited** and **Safran Helicopter Engines (Safran)** have collaborated to set up a new facility of **Helicopter Engines MRO Pvt Limited (HE-MRO)**, a Joint Venture of HAL and Safran, at **Sattari**, near Panaji in **Goa**.
- The facility will be operational by the end of 2023 with a capacity to repair 50 engines a year and a full-capacity goal of 150 engines in upcoming years.
 - The facility will provide Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) services for Safran TM333 and HAL Shakti engines installed on HAL-built helicopters to increase the operational readiness of the Indian Armed Forces.
- 247. Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL)** has signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Eker Group** of Norway and **Vaan Moto** of Kerala to explore opportunities in the field of manufacturing speed boats. Under this MoU, high-end boats are to be built with smart, flexible solutions with superior manoeuvrability that can be operated from the shore up to a maximum speed of 75 knots.
- 248.** Rating agency **Fitch** in its Global Economic Outlook-March 2022 has lowered India's GDP forecast by 180 basis points to **8.5 percent** for **FY23** from 10.3% due to high energy prices amid Russia-Ukraine war.
- The rating agency has increased India's GDP forecast for FY22 to 8.7% from 8.1%.
 - For FY24, it is estimated at 7 percent.
- 249.** The **Indian Institute of Technology Madras** has collaborated with **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** to provide a web-based and user-friendly program on Industrial AI.
- It is an 18-month program aimed toward upskilling employees and incorporating AI applications to industrial concerns.
 - The program will offer strong theoretical courses and labs covering significant data science and AI issues.
- 250.** Indian ed-tech company **BYJU's** has become the official sponsor of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. Through this partnership, BYJU's will leverage its rights to the FIFA World Cup 2022 marks, emblem, and assets, and run unique promotions to connect with football fans around the world.
- Note:** The 2022 FIFA World Cup is scheduled to take place in Qatar from 21 November to 18 December, 2022.

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- 251. OneWeb**, the satellite communications company backed by Sunil Mittal's Bharti group and the UK government, has tied up with **SpaceX** to resume the launch of its satellites, after suspending its launch from Russia's Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. The first launch with SpaceX is expected in 2022 and will add to OneWeb's constellation that is currently at 428 satellites or 66% of the fleet.
- 252.** Tata Group firm **Nelco Limited** has partnered with US-based **Omnispace** to enable and distribute 5G non-terrestrial network (NTN), direct-to-device satellite services. This partnership will expand the reach of 5G using satellite communication throughout India and South Asia.
- 253. FinMapp**, a financial service firm, has received a license from the **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** under the National Pension Scheme (NPS). It has also received a registration certificate from the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** recognizing it as a corporate agent.
- 254.** Multiplex companies **INOX Leisure Limited** and **PVR Limited** have announced the merger of their two companies. Inox will have a 16.66 percent stake in the new firm and PVR will have 10.62 percent stake. The new entity will be known as '**PVR Inox Limited**'. Ajay Bijli will be MD of PVR Inox Limited, Sanjeev Kumar will be executive director and Pavan Kumar Jain will be non-executive chairman of the consolidated board.
- 255.** India's merchandise exports have recently (21st March 2022) crossed a record **USD 400.8 billion** in FY22. The exports have registered a 37 percent increase as compared to USD 292 billion in the previous fiscal. India's export target has been achieved nine days ahead of schedule. It may cross \$410 billion by the end of the month.
- 256.** The Government of India (GoI) has set **Rs.1 trillion** infrastructure lending target for the new Development Finance Institution (DFI) namely, '**National Bank for Financial Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID)**' for sanctioning loans to the infrastructure sector in FY23.
- The DFI will get **10-year** tax concession so that it can provide long-term funds at an affordable cost to the infrastructure sector.

- It will get government guarantees at a concessional rate of up to **0.1 percent** for borrowing from multilateral institutions, sovereign wealth funds, and other such foreign institutions.

257. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has introduced a 19-seater aircraft named '**Hindustan 228**' to develop small civil transport aircraft under the UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik) scheme.

- Hindustan 228 can be operated even in semi-prepared and unpaved airstrips.
- The design is based on the Germany-based Dornier GmbH Aircraft.

258. SpiceJet, Boeing and CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP) have collaborated to explore opportunities for the use of **Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF)** in the Indian aviation industry. It is noteworthy that SAF can reduce CO2 emissions by as much as 65% over the fuel's life cycle with the potential to reach 100% in the future.

259. The President of India, Ramnath Kovind has awarded the prestigious '**President's Colour**' to the **Indian Naval Ship (INS) Valsura** at Jamnagar in Gujarat for its 80 years of exceptional service.

- INS Valsura is a premier training establishment of the Indian Navy. It was established on 5th December 1942, in Jamnagar of Gujarat.
- The aim is to augment training facilities in the domain of Torpedo handling (Underwater missile) and operations.

260. The Union Ministry for Environment, Forest and Climate Change has designated **5th October** to be celebrated as **National Dolphin Day** every year to spread awareness for the conservation of Dolphins, beginning from 2022.

Gangetic Dolphin:

It is found mainly in the Indian subcontinent, particularly in Ganga Brahmaputra - Meghna and Karnaphuli - Sangu river systems. The breeding season of the Gangetic dolphin extends from January to June. It is listed 'Endangered' in the IUCN Red List.

261. Rating agency ICRA has lowered India's GDP forecast for the financial year 2022-23 (FY23) to **7.2%** from **8%** estimated earlier due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. It has also lowered India's GDP growth for FY22 to **8.5%** from its earlier forecast and the National Statistical Office's second advance estimate of **8.9%**.

BANKING & FINANCE

262. Investment in Umbrella Organization (UO) by Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has exempted urban cooperative banks (UCBs) from the **10 percent cap** for their investments in the **umbrella organisation** (UO).

According to norms, investments in non-SLR (statutory liquidity ratio) securities by primary (urban) cooperative banks is to be limited to **10 percent** of a bank's total deposits as on March 31 of the previous year. Furthermore, the norms mandate that investments in unlisted securities should not exceed ten percent of the total non-SLR investments at any time.

The banking regulator has exempted the UCBs from both the norms.

- RBI has accorded regulatory approval to **National Federation of Urban Co-operative Banks and Credit Societies Ltd.** (NAFCUB) in June 2019 for formation of Umbrella Organization (UO) for the UCB Sector. The approval inter-alia permits UCBs to subscribe to capital of the UO on voluntary basis.

263. Nitin Chugh, former Ujjivan Small Finance Bank CEO, has been appointed as the Deputy Managing Director (DMD) by the State Bank of India (SBI) for an initial period of three years. He has been appointed as SBI's Group Head of Digital Banking at the level of DMD.

264. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the licence of **Sarjeraodada Naik Shirala Sahakari Bank**, Shirala, Sangli district of Maharashtra due to compliance failure with a regulation under Section 11(1) and Section 22 (3) (d) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.

265. Bank of Maharashtra has launched "**Project Banksakhi**" in collaboration with Mahagram & Sunivesh India Finance Services Pvt. Ltd. for an Online Bank Account opening in Odisha. This will provide doorstep and hassle-free access to the people of Odisha for opening bank accounts.

266. Union Bank of India has partnered with **Ambit Finvest** for co-lending to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) customers. This will enable the creditworthiness of MSMEs in **11 states** that are currently covered by Ambit Finvest.

267. LoanTap, a fintech digital lending platform, has tied up with Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) - **ArkaFincap Ltd.** (Arka), and **MAS Financial Services Ltd.** (MAS) in a co-lending model for the salaried and MSME segment.

268. IIFL Finance Limited has partnered with fintech firm **NIRA** to provide personal loans to customers. Under this partnership, salaried customers can avail of a personal loan of up to **Rs. 1 lakh** from IIFL Finance by the NIRA app.

- 269. Axis Bank** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with IPE Global for the SAMRIDH Healthcare Blended Finance Facility with finance of up to **USD 150 million** (about Rs 1,140 crore) to support health enterprises and innovators.
- SAMRIDH is an initiative supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).
 - SAMRIDH stands for '*Sustainable Access to Markets and Resources for Innovative Delivery of Healthcare*'.
- 270. Indian Oil** has partnered with **Kotak Mahindra Bank** to launch the Indian Oil Kotak co-branded fuel credit card. This partnership will offer more value to customers in the form of an enhanced rewards programme.
- 271. Religare Broking Limited (RBL)**, a full-service broking house and securities firm, has launched the '**Pre Apply LIC IPO**' app. It will be a one-stop app to open a Demat account and share intent to pre-apply for the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) *Initial Public Offering* (IPO).
- 272. IDBI Bank** has launched Corporate Liquidity Management Solution (C-LMS) and Government Liquidity Management Solution (G-LMS) to meet the liquidity management needs of institutional customers. These solutions will provide real-time, web-based and formula-driven liquidity management solutions.
- 273. UCO Bank** has partnered with **Fisdom** to provide fintech services including Demat account, stockbroking services, pension funds and tax filing to its customers. The services will be offered through UCO Bank's mobile banking application UCO mBanking Plus and will gradually be accessible through its internet banking platform.
- 274. PayU** has tied up with **VTEX**, one of the largest global digital commerce platforms, to provide multiple payment solutions to VTEX merchants. The objective is to simplify payment methods for the merchants using VTEX platform.
- 275. Standard Chartered Bank** has partnered with **Edelweiss Housing Finance Limited (EHFL)** to provide *loans against property* (LAP) to prospective customers, especially MSMEs at low-interest rates. Under this partnership, EHFL will originate, process, service the loans and retain **20 percent** of the loan on its books, while the remaining 80 percent will be on the books of Standard Chartered Bank.

- 276. Bharti AXA Life Insurance**, a joint venture between Bharti Enterprises, and AXA, has appointed Bollywood actress **Vidya Balan** as its brand ambassador. She will help in promoting #DoTheSmartThing campaign of Bharti AXA Life Insurance.
- 277. The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC)** has collaborated with **Paytm** to provide digital ticketing services to consumers through *Automatic Ticket Vending Machines* (ATVM) installed at railway stations across India.
- 278. The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** has partnered with **Yatra.com** and **SBI Card** to launch a co-branded '**Yatra SBI Card**' on the RuPay network. This holiday-cum-shopping credit card gives travel benefits on booking flights and hotels that are applicable 6 times a year.
- 279. Future Generali India Insurance Company Limited (FGII)** has launched comprehensive health insurance for pet dogs named 'FG Dog Health Cover', along with an industry-first 'emergency pet minding' cover.
- Policy costs start at **Rs.323/-** per month including terminal illness, surgery and hospitalization, and mortality.
 - It has also launched a digital campaign named "**Oh My Dog!**" to raise awareness amongst 'dog parents'.
- 280. LIC Mutual Fund Asset Management Limited** has appointed **TS Ramakrishnan** as its new Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). He will succeed Dinesh Pangtey, its former Whole time Director and CEO.
- 281. 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.
- 282. 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.
- 283. 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.

- 284.** 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.
- 285.** **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.
- 286.** Rating Agency Morgan Stanely 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.
- 287.** 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.
- 288.** **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.
- 289.** **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.

- 290.** 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.
- 291.** 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.
- 292. 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.
- 293. 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.
- 294. 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**.
- 295. 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.

- 296.** 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.
- 297. 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.
- 298.** 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.
- 299.** 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.

- 300.** 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.

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- 301. 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.
- 302.** 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.
- 303. 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.
- 304. 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.
- 305. 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.
- 306.** 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.

307. 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**.

308. 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**.

309. Bajaj Allianz General Insurance has extended the tenure of **Tapan Singhel**, the current Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the company, by another **five years** with effect from 1st April 2022. He has already completed 10 years as the MD & CEO of the company.

310. **Axis Bank**, India's third-largest private sector bank, has been awarded the **Asian Bank of The Year Award 2021** and **India Bond House** at the IFR Asia Awards 2021. The award acknowledges the bank's outstanding performance in equity and debt issuance, across all major products and segments.

- 311.** The Government of India (GoI) has extended the deadline for startups to convert debt investments into equity shares by up to **10 years**. This measure will provide comfort to emerging enterprises. Earlier, convertible notes may be converted into equity shares for up to 5 years after the initial convertible note was issued.
- 312. Razorpay** has acquired Pune-based **IZEaliant Technologies**, a leading Fintech startup that provides payments technology solutions for banks, for an undisclosed amount.
- 313. ICICI Bank** has collaborated with **Emirates Skywards**, a loyalty programme of Emirates and flydubai, to launch a range of co-branded credit cards named '**Emirates Skywards ICICI Bank Credit Card**'.
- The cards will enable customers to earn reward points, called Skywards Miles, on travel, lifestyle and everyday spending.
- The cards award up to 2.5 Skywards Miles on every spend of Rs.100.
- The cards are powered by Visa as the network partner, and are available in three variants:
- 'Emirates Skywards ICICI Bank Emerald Credit Card'
 - 'Emirates Skywards ICICI Bank Sapphire Credit Card'
 - 'Emirates Skywards ICICI Bank Ruby Credit Card'
- Note:** ICICI bank is the first Indian bank to partner with Emirates Skywards.
- 314.** The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the acquisition of equity stake in **Future Generali India Insurance Company Limited (FGIIC)** by Generali Participations Netherlands N.V. (GPN). GPN has proposed to acquire **approx. 25%** of the equity share capital of FGIIC held by Future Enterprises Limited, pursuant to which GPN's aggregate (direct and indirect) shareholding in FGIIC will stand increased from 49% to approx. 74%.
- 315.** The **Ujjivan Small Finance Bank** has launched industry-first digital based onboarding for its micro banking customers via "Ujjivan SFB Assisted" app. The app is designed to enable mobile number updation in real time basis.
- 316.** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has amended the **AIF (Alternative Investment Funds) Regulations 2021** for Category III AIFs. The new norms will be called as 'SEBI's AIF Regulations 2022'. **New Amendments:**
- Category III AIFs, such as private equity and hedge funds, to invest not more than **10%** of the NAV in the equity shares of a particular listed investee company.
 - The large value funds for accredited investors of category III AIFs can invest up to **20%** of the investable funds in an investee company, directly or through investment in units of other AIFs.

- For investment in listed equity of an investee company, Category III AIFs may calculate the investment limit of 10% of either the 'investable funds' or NAV subject to certain conditions.

317. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a new framework for microfinance lenders in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 21, Section 35A and Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949; Chapter IIIB of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934; and Sections 30A and Section 32 of the National Housing Bank Act, 1987.

- This new framework will be called the **Reserve Bank of India (Regulatory Framework for Microfinance Loans) Directions, 2022**, which will be effective from **1st April 2022**.
- It will be applicable to the following entities:
 - All Commercial Banks (including Small Finance Banks, Local Area Banks, and Regional Rural Banks) excluding **Payments Banks**;
 - All Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks/ State Co-operative Banks/ District Central Co-operative Banks; and
 - All Non-Banking Financial Companies (including Microfinance Institutions and Housing Finance Companies).

Microfinance loan: *It is defined as a collateral-free loan given to a household having annual household income up to **Rs.3 lakh**. For this purpose, the household shall mean an individual family unit, i.e., husband, wife and their unmarried children.*

318. RBI Innovation Hub (RBIH), a wholly owned subsidiary of Reserve Bank of India, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **IIT Madras Incubation Cell (IITMIC)** to develop the necessary ecosystem to support and expand FinTech startups in India.

319. Kotak Mahindra Bank has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Business France, the French national agency in charge of the development of exports and international investments in France, to provide support to companies in the Indo-French corridor.

320. The **U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)** has partnered with **Mastercard** to promote digital empowerment of women in India through 'Project Kirana'.

- **Project Kirana** was launched in November 2020.
- It is an initiative of USAID and Mastercard.
- It is a digital financial literacy program for **women entrepreneurs** that aims to increase revenue streams, expand financial inclusion, and enable the adoption of digital payments and other digital tools by women-owned-and-operated kirana shops.
- It is being implemented by DAI and ACCESS Development Services and is working in select cities of Uttar Pradesh.

- 321.** The **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)** has planned to launch the 'on-device' wallet feature named '**UPI Lite**' for Unified Payments Interface (UPI) users to facilitate small ticket transactions. This feature will process transactions in complete offline mode i.e., debit and credit both offline.
- In the first phase, UPI Lite will process transactions in near offline mode that is debit offline and credit online and after that both transactions will be processed offline.
 - The upper limit of any transaction done through UPI Lite will be **Rs 200**.
 - The total limit of UPI Lite e balance for an 'on-device' wallet will be **Rs.2,000** at any point of time.
- 322.** **Max Life Insurance Company** has launched the '**Max Life Smart Guaranteed Pension Plan**'. It is a non-linked, and non-participating single premium individual/group general annuity plan.
- 323.** **Mahila Money** has launched '**Mahila Money Prepaid Card**' in partnership with **Transcorp** and **Visa** to support women entrepreneurs. The aim is to help women entrepreneurs use digital payments more effectively.
- 324.** The **State Bank of India (SBI)** will set up an Innovation, Incubation, and Acceleration Centre (IIAC) at **Hyderabad**, Telangana to build in-house capability to bolster its current performance and drive higher top-line growth through innovation. It will be operational in six to nine months of onboarding a consultant.
- 325.** **HDFC Bank** has announced the launch of the "**SmartHub Vyapar program**" & "**AutoFirst**" app for small business loans. The aim is to give a digital push to small business loans.
- '**SmartHub Vyapar**' programme:
 - It is an app that bundles all payment platforms – cards, UPI, QR code, tap pay and SMS-based payments. The programme for merchants will be launched soon.
 - '**AutoFirst**' application:
 - This will offer fully automated auto loans.
- 326.** **Paytm Payments Services Limited (PPSL)**, a wholly-owned subsidiary of One97 Communications, has launched a first-of-its-kind service called '**Payment Analytics**', a data analysis feature for online and offline merchants, at no extra cost.
- This feature offers three services: Payment source analytics, Customer Analytics, and Payment flow analytics.
 - It has been exclusively designed by Paytm Payment Gateway.

- 327.** The **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)**, an arm of the World Bank, has issued a five-year **\$150-million** Wildlife Conservation Bond (WCB) in support of South Africa's efforts to conserve endangered species.
- Wildlife Conservation Bond (WCB) is also known as the **"Rhino Bond"**.
 - **Aim:** To provide a return to investors based on an increase in **black rhino** numbers in South Africa.
 - The bond will contribute to protecting and increasing black rhino populations in two protected areas in South Africa namely the Addo Elephant National Park (AENP) and the Great Fish River Nature Reserve (GFRNR).
- 328.** The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has sanctioned **Rs. 837 crore** to the Odisha government under its cluster development fund scheme to help develop 18 MSME infrastructure projects. The projects include the growth of 5 new MSME parks, building of 11 employee's hostels and two projects to help MSME infrastructure.
- 329.** **DBS Bank India** has partnered with **EaseMyTrip** to launch an environment-friendly international debit card named 'EaseMyTrip Green Debit Card'. It is made using 99% recycled polyvinyl chloride (PVC) material. The card provides exclusive travel-related offers to customers and rewards them for adopting eco-friendly practices.
- 330.** **IDBI Bank** has decided to sell its **25% stake** in Ageas Federal Life Insurance Company (AFLI) to Ageas Insurance International NV. The lender has approved to sell its entire stake of 200 million equity shares in AFLI to Ageas pursuant to exercise of Call Option by Ageas.
- 331.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released the framework for **geo-tagging of payment system touch points** to ensure proper monitoring of the availability of payment acceptance infrastructure. As per the new framework, banks/non-bank PSOs (Payment System Operators) will capture and maintain geographical coordinates for all payment touch points. This framework is issued under Section 10 (2) read with Section 18 of Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007
- 332.** **Equitas Small Finance Bank** has launched a limited edition debit card for **Chennai Super King (CSK)** named Equitas Bank CSK Debit Card at 'Equiverse' virtual world.
- 333.** **HDFC Bank** has acquired **15 percent** stake in India Debt Resolution Company Limited (IDRCL) for Rs.7.5 crore. The IDRCL is established to manage stressed assets in India.
- **ICICI Bank** has also acquired 15% stake in IDRCL.

- 334. Central Bank of India** has tied up with **Kwik.ID** to implement digital know your customer (KYC), video KYC and eKYC for its network across India. This collaboration will support the lender in driving its digital transformation agenda and supporting digital finance initiatives championed by the government.
- 335.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has inaugurated the **Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH)** in Bangalore, Karnataka. It has been set up with an initial capital contribution of **Rs 100 crore** to encourage and nurture financial innovation.
- **Senapathy (Kris) Gopalakrishnan** has been appointed as the chairman of RBIH.
 - The RBI has set up the RBIH as a Section 8 company under **Companies Act, 2013**.
 - **Objective:** To create an ecosystem that focuses on promoting access to financial services and products for the low-income population in the country.
- 336.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has dedicated '**Varnika**', the ink manufacturing unit of Bharatiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran Private Limited (BRBNMPL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of RBI, at **Mysuru**, Karnataka.
- It has been set up with an annual ink manufacturing capacity of **1,500 MT** to enhance the security of banknotes.
 - This unit also manufactures Colour Shift Intaglio Ink (CSII) and meets the entire requirements of banknote printing presses in India
- 337. HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company** has launched India's first industry-based digital customer engagement and rewards program named '**VAULT**'. This program is an experiment to test a new idea under the Regulatory Sandbox of IRDAI.
- VAULT program is a customer engagement-based membership program. Under this program, the insurer will incentivize by way of reward points on meeting the specified criteria or actions.
 - The testing period will be till 14th May 2022.
- 338. Max Life Insurance** has collaborated with **PhonePe** to launch its 'Max Life Smart Secure Plus Plan' for its customers. It is a non-linked non-participating individual pure risk premium life insurance plan on the PhonePe app to enhance financial protection for digitally-savvy customers. PhonePe customers can avail comprehensive financial coverage for their families with premiums starting as low as **Rs.4,426** annually.
- 339.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the license of **People's Co-operative Bank Limited, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh** as the bank failed to adhere to the requirements of Section

22 (3) (a), 22 (3) (b), 22 (3) (c), 22 (3) (d), 22 (3) (e) under Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act 1949.

- Upon liquidation, every depositor will be entitled to receive deposit insurance claim amounts of their deposits up to **Rs.5 lakh** from the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC).

340. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned **Rs.4,013 crore** to the Odisha government under the *Rural Infrastructure Development Fund* (RIDF) for the financial year 2021-22.

- With this the total sanction has crossed Rs.32,100 crore for Odisha since the inception of the RIDF.
- The RIDF is classified under three broad categories: Agriculture and related sector; Social sector; and rural connectivity.

341. Google Pay has collaborated with **Pine Labs** to launch Tap to Pay for UPI (Unified Payments Interface) transactions. With this new feature, customers can just tap their phone on the Point of Sales (POS) terminal and authenticate transactions on their phone using their UPI PIN.

342. HDFC Mutual Fund has filed a scheme information document (SID) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for India's first Defence Fund - HDFC Defence Fund. This open-ended equity scheme will be investing in defence & allied sector companies. This fund will be benchmarked to the recently introduced Nifty India Defence Index TRI (Total Returns Index).

343. DBS Bank India has launched its **Green Deposit Programme** for corporate clients to provide a simple way for companies to support environmentally friendly projects or avenues. Green Deposits will fund green industries and initiatives such as green building sustainable water initiatives that include wastewater management, renewable energy and clean transportation.

344. Airtel Payments Bank has collaborated with **ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company** to provide smartphone insurance which offers financial protection against protection. This will boost the mobile insurance industry in India.

345. The **State Bank of India** has signed a co-lending agreement with **5 Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)** to provide loans for affordable homes, especially for the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) and the Informal Sections of the society.

- **Five HFCs:** PNB Housing Finance, Shriram Housing Finance, IIFL Home Finance, Edelweiss Housing Finance, and Capri Global Housing Finance.
- Shriram Housing Finance and SBI will jointly service housing loan customers as per the **20:80** co-lending model (CLM) of RBI.

346. ICICI Bank has tied up with **Chennai Super Kings (CSK)**, an IPL franchise, to launch a co-branded credit card named '**Chennai Super Kings ICICI Bank Credit Card**'. The card has been specially designed with a range of exclusive privileges for millions of cricket fans of the iconic team. The customers can apply for the 'Chennai Super Kings ICICI Bank Credit Card' by sending an SMS 'KING' to 5676766.

347. EbixCash Limited, a technology-based provider of digital products and services in the B2C, B2B and financial technology space, has partnered with **Axis Securities** to provide end-to-end trading services to customers.

348. PhonePe, a fintech company backed by Flipkart, has acquired a **100%** stake in **GigIndia**, a B2B gig marketplace for freelance micro-entrepreneurs. The objective is to strengthen its offerings to corporate and enterprise partners.

349. SBI Card has collaborated with **Nature's Basket**, India's leading premium grocery store brand, to launch the first-of-its-kind credit card named 'Nature's Basket SBI Card'. It will be available in two variants – 'Nature's Basket SBI Card' and 'Nature's Basket SBI Card Elite'.

350. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has recently acquired a **7.84% stake** in Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) for Rs.10 crore. SBI has subscribed to 10 lakh equity shares of ONDC of face value of Rs.100 each.

Other lender's stake in ONDC:

- HDFC Bank: 7.84%
- Axis Bank: 7.84%
- Kotak Mahindra Bank: 7.84%

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351. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved **SBI Mutual Fund** along with other SBI group companies to hold **9.99%** stake in **ICICI Bank**. The approval to SBI Mutual Fund is valid for a

period of one year that is up to 22nd March 2023. Earlier, SBI Mutual Fund had 5.72% stake in ICICI Bank.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

352. Prof **Deepak Dhar** from the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune (IISER Pune) has been awarded the Boltzmann Medal for the year 2022 for his contribution in the field of '**Statistical Physics**'. He has shared the award with American scientist **John J Hopfield** of Princeton University. With this, he has become the first Indian to be awarded the Boltzmann Medal 2022.

353. **CtrlS**, a data centre company, has won the ASSOCHAM Award for Sustainability Excellence in Energy Management. The entity has received the award for its excellence in energy management and making a positive impact during the Covid-19 pandemic from March 2020 through their innovative and sustainability initiatives in their data centre operations.

354. 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

355. 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.

356. 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.*

357. 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.

358. 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.

359. The 75th edition of the **British Academy Film Awards (BAFTA) 2022** has been organized at the Royal Albert Hall in London, UK. The awards are presented annually to recognize the outstanding work in British Television. It is being given annually since 1955.

Category	Winners
Best Film	The Power of the Dog
Best Director	Jane Campion, The Power of the Dog
Best Actress in Leading Role	Joanna Scanlan, After Love
Best Actor in Leading Role	Will Smith, King Richard
Best Supporting Actress	Ariana DeBose, West Side Story
Best Supporting Actor	Troy Kotsur, CODA
EE Rising Star Award	Lashana Lynch
Outstanding British Film	Belfast
Outstanding Debut By A British Writer, Director, Or Producer	The Harder They Fall
Best Film Not In The English Language	Drive My Car
Best Documentary	Summer of Soul (Or, When The Revolution Could Not Be Televised)
Best Animated Film	Encanto
Best Short Animation	Do Not Feed the Pigeons, Vladimir Krasilnikov, Jordi Morera and Antonin Niclass
Best Short Film	The Black Cop, Cherish Oleka
Original Screenplay	Licorice Pizza, Paul Thomas Anderson
Adapted Screenplay	CODA, Sian Heder
Original Score	Dune, Hans Zimmer
Casting	West Side Story, Cindy Tolan

360. Indian-origin author **Manjeet Mann** has been shortlisted for her children's book '**The Crossing**', a tale of a little girl's friendship with an Eritrean refugee, for the UK's prestigious **Yoto Carnegie Medal 2022**. 'The Crossing' has previously won the 2022 Costa Children's Book Award.

- The other seven books on the 2022 shortlist include: 'October, October' by Katya Balen; 'Guard Your Heart' by Sue Divin; 'When the Sky Falls' by Phil Earle; 'Everyone Dies Famous in a Small Town' by Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock; 'Tsunami Girl' by Julian Sedgwick; 'Cane Warriors' by Alex Wheatle; and 'Punching the Air' by Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam.

361. Professor **Narayan Pradhan**, a member of the faculty at the School of Material Sciences, Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, Jadavpur, has been selected for the **31st GD**

Birla Award for Scientific Research for his outstanding contribution in the field of material sciences. His research work focused on understanding the chemistry and physics of light-emitting semiconductor Nano crystals.

362. Karolina Bielawska from **Poland** has won the 70th edition of the **Miss World 2021** title held at San Juan, Puerto Rico. She has been crowned by Miss World 2019 Toni-Ann Singh of Jamaica.

- 1st Runner Up: Shree Saini of USA
- 2nd Runner Up: Olivia Yacé of Cote D'Ivoire

363. Diébédo Francis Kéré from Burkina Faso has won the **51st Pritzker Architecture Prize 2022**. She has become the first African and first Black architect to win this prize.

- ***Balkrishna Doshi** was the first Indian to win Pritzker Prize in 2018.*

364. Former India cricketer **Suresh Raina** has been honoured with the 'Sports Icon' award by the Government of Maldives at the Maldives Sports Awards 2022. He has been felicitated for his various achievements throughout his career. He is the first Indian player to score 6000 as well as 8000 runs in a Twenty20 career and the first-ever cricketer to reach 5,000 runs in IPL.

365. 2022 Sportstar Aces Awards has been announced in Mumbai, Maharashtra. Tokyo Olympic gold medallist, **Neeraj Chopra** has won the 'Sportstar of the Year (Male)' award while weightlifter **Mirabai Chanu** has won the 'Sportstar of the Year (Female)' award.

Other awardees:

- **Lovlina Borgohain:** (Sportswoman of the Year, Individual Sports)
- **Avani Lekhara:** (Parathlete of the Year, Female)
- **Pramod Bhagat:** (Special Recognition award)
- **Savita:** (Sportswoman of the Year, Team Sports), and Rupinder Pal Singh: (Sportsman of the Year, Team Sports)
- **Arif Khan:** (Special Recognition Award)
- Former Indian hockey team captain **Ajit Pal Singh** has been conferred the 'Lifetime Achievement award. He was part of two Olympic bronze-winning teams, including one at the 1972 Munich Games.

366. The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters has awarded the **Abel Prize 2022** to American Mathematician **Dennis Parnell Sullivan** for his ground-breaking contributions to topology in its broadest sense, and in particular its algebraic, geometric and dynamical aspects. Topology is a field of mathematics which was born in the 19th century and has to do with properties of surfaces that do not change when they are deformed.

367. Mario Marcel, the Governor of the Central Bank of Chile, has won the Governor of the year award at the Central Banking Awards 2022. He has been awarded for changing the internal management structure and reducing the number of monetary policy meetings from 12 to 8. The bank has also improved the quality of its communications in both English and Spanish.

368. The **Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL)** has been conferred with the **COVID Champion Award** at Wings India 2022 for the successful implementation of a meticulous project named 'Mission Safeguarding' during the pandemic time to ensure safe travel at Kochi Airport.

Other winners:

- The Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru has won two awards: 'Best Airport' and 'Aviation Innovation' Award at the event.
- The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA), Mumbai has won the 'Aviation Sustainability & Environment' award at the event.

During the event, the **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** has partnered with Defence Public Sector Undertaking **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** to develop indigenous Air Traffic Management Systems.

369. The renowned hydrologist **Wilfried Brutsaert**, also known as Mr Evaporation, has won the Stockholm Water Prize 2022 for his ground-breaking work to quantify environmental evaporation, and to make accurate predictions of the impact that climate change has on local rainfall patterns and water sources.

370. Bollywood actress **Deepika Padukone** has been named as one of the awardees of the TIME100 Impact Awards 2022 for her contribution to mental health awareness and raising awareness, through her LiveLoveLaugh Foundation. The awards has been presented at the Museum of the Future in Dubai.

371. The fifth edition of the Women Transforming India (WTI) Awards 2022 has been organized by the NITI Aayog. **75 women achievers** have been honoured with the WTI Awards 2022 to celebrate their contribution towards a 'Sashakt Aur Samarth Bharat'.

- The WTI Awards is NITI Aayog's annual initiative to highlight the commendable and ground-breaking endeavours of India's women leaders and change-makers.
- The Awards have been hosted under the aegis of NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), with a special focus on entrepreneurship, since 2018.

BOOKS & AUTHORS

372. Bhajan Samrat Anup Jalota has released the book titled "**Udaan Ek Majdoor Bachhe Ki**" by **Captain AD Manek**. The author of this book is **Mithilesh Tiwari**. This book is about the life journey of Captain AD Manek, how he traveled from zero to pinnacle in his career graph. Captain AD Manek is the founder of 'The Skyline Aviation Club'. It was established in 1987.

373. A new book titled "**The Millennial Yogi: A modern-day parable about reclaiming one's life**" has been authored by former Indian Army Captain **Deepam Chatterjee**. The book is published by Ebury Press.

- This is a book that mixes mysticism and music that takes readers on a journey of awakening.

374. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has launched the first volume of a book titled **Ungalil Oruvan** (One Among You) in Chennai. The book is an autobiography of **MK Stalin** (Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu). The first volume of the autobiography contains his early life experiences.

375. A new book titled '**The Blue Book: A Writer's Journal**' has been authored by **Amitava Kumar**. The book has been published by HarperCollins India. The book is the outcome of the diary-keeping by the author during the time of lockdown due to pandemics.

- **Other books by Amitava Kumar:** 'Husband of a Fanatic: A Personal Journey Through India, Pakistan, Love, and Hate', 'Immigrant, Montana', 'A Time Outside This Time', etc.

376. "**The Queen of Indian Pop: The Authorised Biography of Usha Uthup**" is the English translation of the book "**Ullas Ki Naav**". It is translated by **Srishti Jha**. The book is published by Penguin Random House India (PRHI).

- The book was originally written in Hindi titled "Ullas Ki Naav" by author **Vikas Kumar Jha**.
- Usha Uthup had completed 50 years as a professional singer in 2020.
- She is widely known for evergreen hits such as "Hari Om Hari", "Rambha Ho" and "Jeete Hain Shaan Se".

377. **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.

- 378.** 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.
- 379.** 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.
- 380.** Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters, has published a book-length poem titled '**Monsoon**' by Indian poet-diplomat **Abhay Kumar**. It is a poem of 150 stanzas of 4 lines each that commence its journey in Madagascar and follows the path of the monsoon and acts as a messenger to carry the poet's message from Madagascar to his beloved in Srinagar in the Himalayas.
- 381.** A new book based on the life of Prime Minister Narendra Modi titled '**Modi @ 20: Dreams Meet Delivery**' will be released on April 2022. The book is a compilation of chapters authored by eminent intellectuals and domain experts namely, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar, National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval, actor Anupam Kher, Olympic athlete P.V Sindhu and singer Lata Mangeshkar, etc.
- The book has been edited and compiled by BlueKraft Digital Foundation.
 - The book has been published by **Rupa Publications**.
- 382.** A new book titled "**Rahul Bajaj: An Extraordinary Life**" has been authored by **Gita Piramal**. The book is based on the life of the late iconic industrialist Rahul Bajaj. The book is published by Penguin Random House.
- Other books by Gita Piramal:** 'Business Legends' and 'Business Maharajas'
- 383.** Padma Awardee Dr Tehemton Erach Udwadia has authored a book titled "More Than Just Surgery: Life Lessons Beyond the OT". The book depicts the personal account of people, incidents, mentors, failures, and absurdities against the backdrop of surgery. The book is published by Penguin eBury Press.
- 384.** Former Indian cricketer captain **Gundappa Viswanath** has penned his autobiography titled "**Wrist Assured: An Autobiography**". It has been co-authored by senior journalist **R Kaushik**. The book is published by Rupa Publication. The 266-page long book traces the

cricketing journey of Gundappa Vishwanath who played Test Cricket for India between 1969 and 1986.

385. Nobel Peace Prize Laureates His Holiness the **Dalai Lama** and Archbishop **Desmond Tutu** have co-authored a book titled '**The Little Book of Joy**'. It will be released in September 2021. It will be published by Random House Children's Books.

In 2016, they also co-authored a book titled '**The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World**', which has sold more than one million copies and has been translated into more than 40 languages.

386. Union Home Minister Amit Shah has unveiled the coffee table book "**The Shield: Covishield**". It has been authored by **Prakash Kumar Singh**, Director, Government and Regulatory Affairs at Serum Institute of India (SII). The book aims to introduce readers to the chronological journey of the Covishield vaccine from lab to people.

- The Covishield has been developed by SII in collaboration with Oxford University and AstraZeneca.
- According to the Union health ministry's vaccine administration data, more than 150 crore doses of Covishield have been administered in India so far.

387. A new book titled "**Unfilled Barrels: India's oil story**" has been authored by Indian journalist and reporter **Richa Mishra**. The book is published by Bloomsbury India.

388. Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoA&FW) Narendra Singh Tomar has released a book titled '**Indian Agriculture towards 2030: Pathways for Enhancing Farmers' Income, Nutritional Security and Sustainable Food and Farm Systems**' at the event. It has been published by Springer Publications.

Indian Agriculture towards 2030 covers the following themes:

- Transforming Indian Agriculture
- Structural Reforms and Governance
- Dietary Diversity, Nutrition and Food Safety
- Managing Climate Risks in Agriculture
- Science, Technology and Innovation
- Symbiosis of Water and Agricultural Transformation in India
- Pests, Pandemics, Preparedness and Biosecurity
- Transformative Agroecology-Based Alternatives for a Sustainable and Biodiverse Future

The event has been organized by **NITI Aayog** and the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** of the United Nations.

389. The Vice President, M Venkaiah Naidu has released a book titled '**Spoorthi Pradatha Sri Somayya**'. It has been authored by **K. Syam Prasad**. The book is based on the life story of late Somepalli Somaiah, a social worker from Andhra Pradesh.

PERSON IN NEWS

- 390. Samiran Gupta** has been appointed as the new head of policy for the microblogging platform Twitter in India. He will lead the company's public policy and philanthropy efforts in India and South Asia.
- 391.** The World Bank's India head and a Bangladeshi economist, **Junaid Kamal Ahmad** has been appointed as the Vice President for operations of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA). He will assume his new role from 16th April 2022.
- 392.** The University Grants Commission (UGC) has appointed educationist and research scientist Professor **Bhushan Patwardhan** as the new Chairman of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC).
- 393. Ashneer Grover**, co-founder and Managing Director (MD) of BharatPe, has resigned as Managing Director and Director of the Board of **BharatPe**. He has **9.5 percent** shareholding in the company.
- 394.** EdTech platform **upGrad** has appointed Bollywood actor **Amitabh Bachchan** as the official brand ambassador. He will promote upGrad's brand value through endorsements and promotions of services, while emphasizing the importance of life-long learning for progressive career growth.
- 395.** Jalan Kalrock Consortium, the new promoters of Jet Airways, has announced the appointment of **Sanjiv Kapoor** as the Chief Executive Officer of **Jet Airways**. He will join on 4th April 2022.
- 396.** The Appointment Committee of Cabinet (ACC) has appointed Chief Justice of Delhi High Court **D.N. Patel** as the next chairperson of the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) for a period of four years. He will succeed Justice Shiva Kirti Singh.
- 397.** Sanjay Verma, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs and Marten van den Berg, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to India has released a special logo to commemorate **75 years** of diplomatic relations between **India** and the **Netherlands**.

- The logo features a lotus and a tulip – the national flowers of both countries.
- The chakra in the middle of the logo depicts the bond of friendship and the flag colours enhance the connections that exist between the people of India and the people of the Netherlands.

398. Akshaye Widhani has been named as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of **Yash Raj Films (YRF)**. He was serving as senior vice-president, finance and business affairs, and head of operations at YRF Studios.

- Yash Raj Films was founded by Yash Chopra in 1970.

399. 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.

400. 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.

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PRACTICE MOCK

401. 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.

402. 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.

- 403.** 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.
- 404.** 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.
- 405.** 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.
- 406.** **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.
- 407.** Games24x7, an online skill gaming company, has appointed cricketers **Shubman Gill** and **Ruturaj Gaikwad** as its new brand ambassadors for its My11Circle fantasy gaming platform. Both the cricketers will feature in multimedia campaigns by the company spanning across TV, digital and social media platforms.
- 408.** Tata Sons Chairman **N Chandrasekaran** has been named as the Chairman of Air India. In February 2022, he was reappointed as chairman of Tata Sons for a second term of five years.
- 409.** **Ranjit Rath** has been appointed as the next Chairman and Managing Director of **Oil India Limited (OIL)**. He will succeed Sushil Chandra Mishra, who will superannuate on 30th June 2022.
- He is currently serving as the CMD of Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited (MECL).
 - He was honoured with the prestigious National Geosciences Award 2016 from the President of India.
 - He also published several technical papers and participated in conferences in India and overseas including a co-authored book named **“Underground Storage Technologies”**.
- 410.** The Baroda Asset Management India and BNP Paribas Asset Management India have partnered to form a joint venture named **‘Baroda BNP Paribas Mutual Fund’**.

- Bank of Baroda will have a **50.1 percent** stake in the asset management company (AMC), while BNP Paribas Asset Management will hold the remaining **49.9 percent** stake.
- **Suresh Soni** has been appointed the CEO of Baroda BNP Paribas Mutual Fund.
- This new JV will offer 28 schemes across equity, hybrid, debt and overseas fund of fund categories.

411. Suchitra K Ella, Co-Founder and Joint Managing Director of Bharat Biotech International, has been appointed as the Chairperson of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Southern Region for the year 2022-23. **Kamal Bali** has been appointed as the Deputy Chairperson of CII Southern Region.

412. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved a three-month extension to **Rajeev Ahuja**, interim managing director & chief executive officer (MD&CEO) of RBL Bank, with effect from 25th March 2022.

413. The tenure of **Jay Shah** as the President of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) has been extended by **one year i.e. till 2024**. He had succeeded Nazmul Hassan, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president in January 2021.

- The ACC has also appointed Pankaj Khimji as the Vice President and Mahinda Vallipuram as Chairman of the Development Committee.

414. Rajesh Gopinathan has been re-appointed as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** for a period of five years, from 21st February 2022 to 20th February 2027. He has been the CEO and MD of TCS since 2017.

- The company has also re-appointed **N Ganapathy Subramaniam** as the Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director from 21st February 2022 to 19th May 2024.

415. Indian **economist Jayati Ghosh** has been appointed by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to a new high-level advisory board on effective multilateralism. The 12-member Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism will be co-chaired by former Liberian president and Nobel laureate **Ellen Johnson Sirleaf** and former Swedish Prime Minister **Stefan Lofven**.

- The new advisory board will be asked to build on the ideas in **Our Common Agenda** including the centrality of women and girls, and the need to take into account the interests of young people and future generations to make concrete suggestions for more effective multilateral arrangements across a range of key global issues.
- Its recommendations are non-binding, but they will inform deliberations by member states at the proposed **Summit of the Future in 2023**.

- 416. Serdar Berdymukhamedov** has become the new **President of Turkmenistan** by securing 72.97 percent of the votes in the election. He has succeeded his father and former president Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, who became president in 2006 and served till 2022.
- 417. CS Rajan** has been appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director of Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS) for six months with effect from 3rd April 2022 by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. He has succeeded **Uday Kotak**.
- 418. Shashidhar Sinha**, chief executive officer at IPG Mediabrands India, has been elected as the new chairman of Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) India. He has succeeded Punit Goenka.
- 419.** Deputy Managing Director of CSB Bank, **Pralay Mondal** has been appointed as the interim Managing Director and CEO of CSB Bank for a period of 3 months from 1st April 2022 or till the appointment of a regular MD & CEO, whichever is earlier. He will succeed C. VR. Rajendran.
- 420.** Former State Bank of India (SBI) chairman **Rajnish Kumar** has joined the international strategic advisory board of data and analytics firm Dun & Bradstreet. He also serves on the boards of HSBC Asia Pacific, L&T Infotech, Hero MotoCorp and BharatPe.
- 421.** The International Labour Organization (ILO) has elected **Gilbert Houngbo** from **Togo** as its next Director-General. He will take office from 1st October 2022 for 5 years.
- He will become the 11th Director-General of ILO and the first African to hold this post.
 - He will succeed Guy Ryder.
- 422.** Manchester United forward **Cristiano Ronaldo** has become the all-time top scorer in professional football with **807 goals**, after scoring 3 goals against Tottenham Hotspur during the English Premier League 2022.

OBITUARIES

- 423.** Legendary West Indies spinner **Sonny Ramadhin**, who was a part of the side that won its first away series in England in 1950, has passed away recently. He was the first of many Indian origins players to play for the West Indies. He was one of the five Wisden Cricketers of the Year in 1951.

424. Renowned Australian leg spinner **Shane Warne** has passed away recently in Koh Samui, Thailand. He was born on 13th September 1969, Upper Ferntree Gully, Australia.
- He played his first Test match in 1992 and took more than 1,000 wickets in Tests and One Day Internationals (ODIs).
 - He picked up 708 wickets in 145 Tests.
 - He captained Rajasthan Royals.
 - He was inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame in 2013.
 - **His autobiographies include:** No Spin: My Autobiography, Shane Warne's Century: My Top 100 Test Cricketers, Shane Warne: My Illustrated Career, Shane Warne: My Autobiography, and Shane Warne: My Own Story.
425. The Australian Cricket Board has decided to rename the Great Southern Stand as "**Shane Warne stand**" in Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG).
426. Former Army Chief **General Sunith Francis Rodrigues** has passed recently in Panaji, Goa. He was born on 19th September 1933. He headed the Indian Army between 1990 and 1993 and served as the governor of **Punjab** between 2004 and 2010.
427. Oscar-winning producer **Alan Ladd Jr**, who greenlit Star Wars, has passed away recently in Los Angeles, California, USA. He was born on 22nd October 1937 in Los Angeles, California, USA.
- He was popularly known as "**Laddie**".
 - He won the Academy Award (Oscar Award) for Best Picture in **1995** for producing '*Braveheart*'.
428. Renowned Film critic, writer **Jaiprakash Chouksey** has passed away due to cardiac arrest in Indore, Madhya Pradesh. He has penned scripts and dialogues for several films including 'Shayad' (1979), 'Qatl' (1986) and 'Bodyguard' (2011).
429. 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.
430. Former President of Zambia, **Rupiah Banda** has passed away recently in Lusaka, Zambia due to cancer. He was born on 19th February 1937 in Gwanda, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). He served as the fourth president of **Zambia** from 2008 and 2011.

- 431. Kumudben Manishankar Joshi**, the former **Governor of Andhra Pradesh**, has passed away recently at the Changa Dhanori village in Navsari district of Gujarat. She was born on 31st January 1934. She also served as the Union Deputy Minister of Information and Broadcasting from October 1980 to January 1982 and Union Deputy Minister of Health and Family Welfare from January 1982 to December 1984.
- 432.** American wrestler **Scott Hall**, also popularly known as **Razor Ramon**, has passed away recently in Marietta in Georgia, USA. He was born on 20th October 1958 in St. Mary's County, Maryland, USA.
- He was best known for his tenures with the World Wrestling Federation (WWF, now WWE).
 - He was inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame as an individual wrestler in 2014, and again as a member of NWO in 2020.
- 433.** American solar astrophysicist **Eugene N. Parker**, a pioneer in the study of solar wind, and namesake of NASA's Parker Solar Probe, has passed away recently in Chicago, USA. He was born on 10th June 1927 in Houghton, Michigan, USA.
- NASA named its **Parker Solar Probe** in his honour in 2017.
 - He published his theory of the solar wind, in which the solar corona expands supersonically to the outer reaches of the solar system in 1958.
- 434.** Former Chief Justice of India (CJI), **Ramesh Chandra Lahoti** has passed away recently in New Delhi. He was born on 1st November 1940 in Guna, Madhya Pradesh.
- He served as the **35th CJI of India** from 1 June 2004 to 1 November 2005.
 - **Books authored by him:** 'Preamble: The Spirit and Backbone of the Constitution of India', and 'Canons of Judicial Ethics'.
- 435.** British novelist and screenwriter **Kazuo Ishiguro** has passed away recently. He was born on 8th November 1954 in Nagasaki, Japan.
- He won the **Nobel Prize for Literature** in 2017.
 - He had also been nominated for the Man Booker Prize four times, which he won in 1989 for his novel The Remains of the Day.
- 436.** Former president of Bangladesh Justice **Shahabuddin Ahmed** has passed away recently in Dhaka, Bangladesh. He was born on 1st February 1930 in the Netrokona, Bangladesh.

437. Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga has passed away recently in Bamako, Mali. He was born on 8th June 1954 in Gao, Mali. He served as the **Prime Minister of Mali** for the tenure of two years (2017-2019).

438. Miguel Van Damme, a Belgian footballer, has passed away recently after suffering from leukaemia. He was born on 25th September 1993 in Ghent, Belgium. He played for Cercle Brugge.

SPORTS

439. Para Archery World Championships:

India has won **2 Silver medals** for the first time in the Para Archery World Championship held in Dubai, UAE.

- Compound mixed pair of **Shyam Sundar Swami** and **Jyoti Baliyan** has won a silver medal.
- Para-archer **Pooja Jatyan** has become the first Indian to win a silver in the individual category of the Para Archery World Championships held in Dubai, UAE. She lost to Patrilli Vincenza (Italy).

440. Daniil Medvedev of **Russia** has become the 27th player to reach **No. 1** in the men's **ATP tennis rankings** with 8615 points. He is the third Russian to achieve this feat. He has surpassed Novak Djokovic of Serbia (8,465), who has held the top spot in men's tennis for a record 361 total weeks.

441. The 31st edition of **Southeast Asian Games 2021**, the region's biggest sporting event, will be hosted by **Vietnam** from 12th to 23rd May 2022. Originally, it was scheduled to take place from 21st November to 2nd December 2021.

- The Games will feature 40 sports with 526 events.
- The Vietnamese capital Hanoi will be the main venue of the Games.
- The mascot of the 2021 Southeast Asian Games is "**Sao La**", inspired by saola – a rare mammal native to central Vietnam.

The Southeast Asian Games 2023 will be held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

442. Indian women's cricket team skipper **Mithali Raj** has become the first woman to appear in six ICC Women's Cricket World Cups. She has played in the ICC women's cricket world cup events in 2000, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017 and now in 2022.

- She is the only third cricketer overall to play six world cup after Sachin Tendulkar and Javed Miandad.
- She is followed by Jhulan Goswami (5 World Cups).

*The 2022 ICC Women's Cricket World Cup is being held in **New Zealand** from 4th March to 3rd April 2022.*

443. Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre (LSRC) has won the **15th CEC Cup Men's Ice Hockey Championship – 2022** by defeating Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) in the finals held at NDS Sports Complex in Leh. The tournament has been organised by the Department of Youth Services and Sports in Leh in collaboration with the Leh-based "Ladakh Winter Sports Club."

444. Dabang Delhi has won the Pro Kabaddi League Season 8 by defeating three-time champion **Patna Pirates** in the finals held in Bengaluru, Karnataka. The winning team has got a cash prize of Rs.3 crores.

Other awardees:

- Raider of the season award: Pawan Sehrawat
- Defender of the season award: Mohammadreza Chiyaneh
- Emerging Player of the season: Mohit Goyat
- Most Valuable Player of the season award: Naveen Kumar

445. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)'s Indian Premier League Governing (IPL) Council has announced the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)'s flagship product **RuPay** as an official partner for the TATA IPL 2022.

- This will be a multi-year partnership.
- TATA IPL 2022 will be co-presented by Dream 11 and co-powered by TATA and CRED.

446. 2022 ISSF World Cup:

The 2022 International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup has been held in Cairo, Egypt. **India** has topped the medal table with **seven medals** (4 gold, 2 silver, 1 bronze), the second by Norway with 6 medals (3 gold, 1 silver, and 2 bronze), the third by France with 3 gold medals.

- **Women's 25m pistol team** – Gold (Rahi Sarnobat, Esha Singh, and Rhythm Sangwan)
- **Men's 10m air pistol** - Gold (Saurabh Chaudhary)
- **Women's 10m air pistol team** - Gold (Esha Singh, Nivetha Paramanantham, Ruchira Vinerkar)
- **25m rapid fire pistol mixed team** - Gold (Rhythm Sangwan and Anish Bhanwala)
- **Women's 10m air pistol event** - Silver (Esha Singh)
- **Men's 25m rapid fire pistol team** - Silver (Gurpreet Singh, Anish Bhanwala, and Bhavesh Shekhawat)
- **50m rifle 3 positions mixed team event** - Bronze (Shriyanka Sadangi and Akhil Sheoran)

447. The **73rd Strandja Memorial Boxing Tournament** has been held in **Sofia, Bulgaria**. India has won **three medals** including two gold and one bronze in the tournament.

Indian winners:

- **Nikhat Zareen (52kg category)** : Gold
- **Nitu (48kg category)** : Gold
- **Nandini (81kg category)** : Bronze

448. 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.

449. 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.

450. 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.

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PRACTICE MOCK

451. 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.

452. The 69th edition of the **German Open 2022** has been held at the Westenergie Sporthalle in Mülheim, Germany. The tournament has been organized by the German Badminton Association. It is an annual badminton tournament classified as BWF World Tour Super 300 event.

German Open 2022	
Categories	Winner
Men's Singles	Kunlavut Vitidsarn (Thailand)
Women's Singles	He Bingjiao (China)

Men's Double	Goh Sze Fei and Nur Izzuddin (Malaysia)
Women's Double	Chen Qingchen and Jia Yifan (China)
Mixed Doubles	Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai (Thailand)

- From India, **Lakshya Sen** has won the **silver** medal after losing to Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand in the men's singles title.

453. All India Chess Federation (AICF) has announced that **India** will host the 44th edition of the **World Chess Olympiad 2022** in **Chennai**, Tamil Nadu. It was previously scheduled to be held in Moscow, Russia. It will be organized by the International Chess Federation (FIDE).
Note: The 45th World Chess Olympiad 2024 will be held in Budapest, Hungary.

454. Indian women's cricket team pacer, **Jhulan Goswami**, has become the first bowler in the world to take **250 wickets** in Women's One Day International (ODI). She has achieved the historic feat with the wicket of Tammy Beaumont in India's match against England in the ICC Women's World Cup 2022. Earlier, she had become the first cricketer to take 40 wickets in Women's World Cups. The second-highest wicket-taker in Women's ODIs is Australia's Cathryn Fitzpatrick who has taken 180 wickets.

455. Indian cueist **Pankaj Advani** has won his **eighth title** at the **19th Asian 100 UP Billiards Championship 2022** by defeating Dhruv Sitwala in the final held in Doha, Qatar. With this, Pankaj Advani has won 24th international title and 8th Asian crown.

456. Indian cricketer **Shreyas Iyer** has been awarded the ICC 'Men's Player of the Month' for February 2022. He has been awarded for his brilliant white-ball exploits during the home series against West Indies and Sri Lanka respectively last month.

- New Zealand all-rounder **Amelia Kerr** has been awarded the ICC 'Women's Player of the Month' for February 2022.

457. **Virat Kohli** has played his **100th Test match** under the captaincy of Rohit Sharma against Sri Lanka at **IS Bindra PCA International Stadium**, Mohali. With this, he has become the 12th Indian cricketer to achieve this feat.

- Indian cricket team has whitewashed Sri Lanka in both formats with the lead of 3-0 in the T20I series and 2-0 in the Test series.
- Player of the series:**
 - T20I:** Shreyas Iyer
 - Test:** Rishabh Pant

- **Rohit Sharma** has become the first Indian captain to whitewash opposition in debut test series.
- **Jasprit Bumrah** has become the first Indian player to take a five-wicket haul on five different continents.

458. Ferrari driver **Charles Leclerc** of Monaco has won the Formula One Bahrain Grand Prix 2022 held in Sakhir, Bahrain. Ferrari driver Carlos Sainz of Spain has finished second, while Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton of Britain has finished third. This is the first Formula One race of 2022.

459. Indian Wells Masters 2022, also known as the Indian Wells Open and BNP Paribas Open, has been held in California, USA. **Taylor Fritz** of USA has won the men's singles title by defeating **Rafael Nadal** in the tournament.

- **Women's singles:** Iga Świątek (Poland)
- **Men's doubles:** John Isner and Jack Sock (USA)
- **Women's doubles:** Xu Yifan and Yang Zhaoxuan (China)

460. Venezuela's world and Olympic triple jump champion **Yulimar Rojas** has created a World Record (WR) by clearing **15.74 meters** to win gold at the World Indoor Championships 2022 held in Belgrade, Serbia. It is noteworthy that she is the first female Olympic Gold medallist from Venezuela.

461. Jiya Rai, a 13-year-old para swimmer, suffering from autism spectrum disorder (ASD), has become the youngest and fastest female swimmer in the world to swim across the Palk Strait. She swam between Talaimanna in Sri Lanka and Dhanushkodi in Tamil Nadu in 13 hours and 10 minutes.

462. Netherlands Red Bull driver **Max Verstappen** has won the Formula One 2022 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix held at Jeddah Corniche Circuit, Saudi Arabia. Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc (Monaco) has finished second and Ferrari driver Carlos Sainz Jr. (Spain) has finished third in the tournament.

463. Australian professional tennis player and cricketer **Ashleigh Barty** has announced her retirement from tennis at the age of 25. She was ranked No. 1 with three Grand Slam singles titles in the bank, including Wimbledon 2021 and the Australian Open in January 2022.

464. Hyderabad Football Club has won their maiden Indian Super League title 2021-22 after defeating Kerala Blasters in the final held at the P.J.N Stadium in Margao, Goa. Jamshedpur FC has won the League Winner Shield.

465. ISSF World Cup Shotgun 2022 has been held in Nicosia, Cyprus. **Italy** has topped the medal tally with 6 medals (3-Gold, 2-Silver, 1-Bronze), followed by Turkey and Slovakia.

India's performance:

- India has secured **9th position** with 1 medal (Silver).
- **Prithviraj Tondaiman, Zoravar Singh Sandhu and Vivaan Kapoor** have won the silver medal in Men's Trap Team event.

466. The Yonex All England Open Badminton Championships 2022 has been held at Utilita Arena Birmingham in Birmingham, England.

All England Open 2022	
Category	Winners
Men's Singles	Viktor Axelsen (Denmark)
Women's Singles	Akane Yamaguchi (Japan)
Men's Doubles	Muhammad Shohibul Fikri and Bagas Maulana (Indonesia)
Women's Doubles	Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida (Japan)
Mixed Doubles	Yuta Watanabe and Arisa Higashino (Japan)

467. Indian professional Para-badminton player **Pramod Bhagat** has won 2 silvers in Men's Singles SL3 and Men's Doubles SL3-SL4 with **Manoj Sarkar** and 1 bronze in Mixed Doubles SL3-SU5 with **Palak Kohli** at the Level 1 Iberdrola Spanish Para-Badminton International 2022 held in Cartagena, Spain. **Sukant Kadam** has won a bronze medal at Men's Singles SL4.

- Indian Para shuttlers have won a total of **21 medals** (6 Gold, 7 Silver, & 8 Bronze) at the **Level 1** Iberdrola Spanish Para Badminton International 2022 held in Cartagena, Spain and **34 medals** (11 Gold, 7 Silver, 16 Bronze) at the **Level 2** Iberdrola Spanish Para Badminton International 2022 held in Vitoria, Spain.

468. Indian badminton player **PV Sindhu** has won the women's singles title at the Swiss Open 2022 after defeating Busanan Ongbamrungphan of Thailand in the finals held at St. Jakobshalle, Switzerland.

- **Jonatan Christie (Indonesia)** has won the men's singles title at the event.

469. India has won **2 medals** (1 Silver and 1 Bronze) at the World Table Tennis (WTT) Contender 2022 championship held at the Lusail Sports Arena in Doha, Qatar.

- Indian mixed doubles pair of **Manika Batra** and **Gnanasekaran Sathiyan** have won a silver medal in the tournament.
- Achanta Sharath Kamal** has won a bronze medal in Men's Singles at the tournament.

Winners of WTT Contender 2022:	
Category	Winners
Men's Singles	Yuan Lichen (China)
Women's Singles	Fan Siqi (China)
Men's Doubles	Kristian Karlsson and Mattias Falck (Sweden)
Women's Doubles	Miyuu Kihara and Miyu Nagasaki (Japan)
Mixed Doubles	Lin Yun-Ju and Cheng I-Ching (Taipei)

470. Indian weightlifter **Saikhom Mirabai Chanu** has been conferred with the 3rd edition of the **BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year (ISWOTY) award 2021**. She became the first Indian weightlifter to win a silver medal at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021.

Other awards:

- The '**BBC Emerging Player**' award has been presented to **Shafali Verma**, the youngest female cricketer who played for India in Women's Twenty20 International match in 2019.
- Former Indian weightlifter **Karnam Malleswari** has been presented the '**BBC Lifetime Achievement**' award. She was the first Indian woman to have won a medal at the Olympics in 2000.

471. The 13th Fazza International Para Athletics Championships of World Para Athletics Grand Prix 2022 has been held at Dubai. **Colombia** has secured the first position with 25 medals, followed by Algeria (16 medals) and Thailand (30 medals).

India's performance:

- India has secured the **8th position** with **14 medals** (5 Gold, 6 Silver, and 3 Bronze medals).
- Gold medals:**
 - Sprinter **Pranav Prashant Desai** has won India's first **gold medal** in the men's 200 m T64 event. He also won Gold medal in 100m men T63/64 final race.
 - Javelin Thrower Mohit has won Gold medal.

- Indian long jumper Someswara Rao Ramudri has won Gold medal.
- Ramsinghbhai Govin Padhiyar has won Gold medal in the High Jump T42 event.
- **Silver medals:**
 - Indian para-athlete **Dharambir** has won silver medal in the men's F32/51 club throw event.
 - Mohammed Yasser has won silver in the shot put final F42/46 event.
 - Devendra Singh has won silver medal in the men's discus throw F44 event.
 - Shailesh Kumar has won silver in the High Jump T42 event.
- **Bronze medals:**
 - **Jyoti Behera** has won bronze medal in 400 m women's final T37/38/47 events.

IMPORTANT DAYS

472. Zero Discrimination Day is observed annually on **1st March** to ensure right to equality, inclusion and protection of all people without any discrimination in their law and policies to live a full life with dignity regardless of any barriers.

- **Theme 2022:** 'Remove laws that harm, create laws that empower'
- The day was first observed in 2014 by the United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

473. World Defence Day is observed annually on **1st March** to pay tribute to the efforts of national services responsible for the fight against disasters.

- The day was initiated by the International Civil Defence Organization (ICDO) in 2012.
- **Theme 2022:** "Civil defence and management of displaced populations in face of disasters and crises; role of volunteers and the fight against pandemics"

474. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has observed its **17th Foundation Day** on 1st March 2022 at 15 August Maidan, Red Fort, New Delhi.

- **Chief Guest:** Smriti Zubin Irani, Union Minister for Women and Child Development
- During the occasion, Smriti Irani has launched the new motto of NCPCR i.e. '**Bhavishya Rakshati Rakshat**'.

475. World Birth Defects Day is observed annually on **3rd March** to spread awareness about birth defects and to highlight the importance to improve knowledge, prevention, and management of these conditions.

- **Theme 2022:** "Many Birth Defects, One Voice"
- The day was first observed in **2015**.

476. National Safety Day (NSD) is observed annually on **4th March** by the National Safety Council of India to spread awareness and commitment to the safety protocols that need to be followed to prevent accidents and mishaps at workplaces.

- **Theme 2022:** 'Nurture Young Minds-Develop safety culture'
- The year 2022 marks the **51st National Safety Day (NSD)**.
- The 2022 National Safety Week has been organised from 4th to 10th March 2022.
- The day was first observed in 1972.

The National Safety Council was set up on 4th March 1966 by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, to develop and implement a voluntary routine in the areas of safety, health, and the environment.

477. Janaushadhi Diwas is observed annually on **7th March** to create awareness about the use of generic medicines among the people. The day was first celebrated in the year 2019 making it the fourth celebration this year.

- Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers has organized the Janaushadhi Diwas week from **1st March to 7th March 2022**.
- **Theme 2022:** "Jan Aushadhi-Jan Upyogi"

478. The **46th Civil Accounts Day** has observed on **2nd March 2022** at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, Janpath, New Delhi. Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman is the Chief Guest of the occasion.

479. World Wildlife Day (WWD) is observed annually on **3rd March** to spread awareness about the world's wild fauna and flora. The day also reminds us of the need to fight against wildlife crime and human-induced reduction of species causing various wide-ranging economic, environmental and social impacts.

- **Theme 2022:** "Recovering key species for ecosystem restoration"
- The day was proposed by Thailand and recognised in 2013 by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

480. World Obesity Day is observed annually on **4th March** to create awareness about obesity and encourage action towards its elimination.

- **Theme 2022:** 'Everybody Needs to Act'
- The day was first observed on **11th October 2015**. From 2020, it has been changed to 4th March.
- The day is observed by the World Obesity Federation.

481. National Security Day or Rashtriya Suraksha Diwas is observed annually across India on **4th March** to honour the security forces of India and to commemorate the establishment of

the *National Safety Council* (NSC). The day is also observed to show gratitude to all the security forces, including policemen, para-military forces, commandos, guards, army officers, and other persons involved in security.

NSC of India was established by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1998. The present National Security Advisor is Ajit Doval.

482. World Hearing Day is observed annually on **3rd March** to create awareness on how to prevent deafness and hearing loss and promote ear and hearing care across the world.

- Theme 2022: **To hear for life, listen with care!**
- The day was first observed in **2007** by the *World Health Organisation* (WHO).

483. International Women's Day week has been observed from **1st March to 8th March 2022** by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with the Bureau of Police Research and Development at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The aim is to raise awareness of the safety and security of women.

- During the event, Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani has announced to provide an insurance cover of **Rs. 5 lakh** for the workers of One-Stop Centre (OSC). OSC was set up in 2015 under the Nirbhaya Fund to provide mental, legal, and medical aid to distressed women.

484. The Central Industrial Security Forces (CISF) has observed its **53rd Raising Day** on 06th March 2022 in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. Union Home Minister Amit Shah has attended and addressed the Raising Day ceremony of CISF at Ghaziabad's Indirapuram.

CISF:

- It was set up under the act of the Parliament of India on 10th March 1969.
- It functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- It is one of six paramilitary forces in India.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi

485. 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.

- 486. 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**.
- 487.** 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.
- 488. 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'
- 489.** 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.
- 490. 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**.
- 491. 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.
- 492. 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**.

493. World Consumer Rights Day is observed annually on **15th March** to safeguard consumer rights and to ensure that customers are not subjected to market exploitation or social injustice that may jeopardize their rights. The day was first observed in 1983.

Theme 2022: "Fair Digital Finance"

This day was chosen because it was on this day that U.S. President John Fitzgerald Kennedy mentioned four important consumer rights in his speech to Congress:

- Right to safety
- Right to be informed
- Right to choose
- Right to be heard

Note: National Consumers Rights Day is observed annually across India on 24th December.

494. The 193-member United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has recently (March 2022) adopted a resolution to observe **15th March** annually as the **International Day to Combat Islamophobia**.

- The day was introduced by Pakistan's permanent representative to United Nations (UN), **Munir Akram** on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries.
- It marks the day when a gunman entered two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, killing 51 worshippers and wounding 40 others in the terror attack.

495. National Vaccination Day or National Immunisation Day is observed annually on **16th March** to spread awareness about the importance of vaccines. The day also marks the victory of India against polio disease. This year, the day is important because the country started its biggest COVID-19 immunisation programme children between 15 to 18 years of age and booster dose for senior citizens.

- **Theme 2022:** "Vaccines Work for all"
- The day was first observed in 1995.
- India was declared polio-free in 2014.

496. Global Recycling Day is observed annually on **18th March** to help recognise, and celebrate, the importance recycling plays in securing the future of our planet.

- **Theme 2022:** Recycling Faternity
- The day was first observed in 2018.

- The day is an initiative of the Bureau of International Recycling (BIR) based in Brussels, Belgium.

497. World Sleep Day is observed annually on the **Friday** before the March equinox to raise awareness of the need for healthy sleep and eradicate sleep disorders. This year the day falls on **18th March 2022**.

- **Theme 2022:** "Quality Sleep, Sound Mind, Happy World."
- The day was first observed in 2008.
- It is organized by the World Sleep Day Committee of the World Sleep Society.

498. Union home minister Amit Shah has participated in the **83rd Raising Day** program of the **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)** on **19th March 2022**. The program has been organized at Maulana Azad Stadium in Jammu.

- CRPF came into existence in 1939, as Crown Representative's Police.
- It was renamed as CRPF on 28th December 1949.
- CRPF Raising Day is celebrated to mark the day when the then Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel presented colours to the CRPF in 1950 after the enactment of the CRPF Act and the name of the force was changed to its present name.

499. World Sparrow Day is observed annually on **20th March** to create awareness about the house sparrow and the dangers it confronts. The day was first observed in 2010.

- **Theme 2022:** "I LOVE Sparrows"
- The day was established by Mohammed Dilawar, the founder of The Nature Forever Society.

500. International Day of Happiness, also known as World Happiness Day, is observed annually on **20th March** to spread awareness about the importance of happiness in our lives.

- **Theme 2022:** Build Back Happier
- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), in 2011, adopted a resolution which recognised happiness as a "fundamental human goal" and called for "a more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach to economic growth that promotes the happiness and well-being of all peoples".
- The day was first observed in 2013.

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501. World Oral Health Day is observed annually on **20th March** to spread global awareness of the issues around oral health and the importance of oral hygiene so that governments, health associations and the general public can work together to achieve healthier mouths and happier lives.

- The theme for World Oral Health Day 2021-2023 is: **Be Proud of Your Mouth.**
- The day was originally observed on 12th September in remembrance of FDI founder, Dr Charles Godon.
 - It was changed to 20th March in 2013.

502. World Forestry Day, also known as International Day of Forests, is observed annually on **21st March** to celebrate and raise awareness of the importance of all types of forests.

- **Theme 2022:** Forests and sustainable production and consumption
- The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21st March the International Day of Forests in 2012.

503. International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on **21st March** to create awareness among people about the negative consequences of racial discrimination.

- **Theme 2022:** Voices for action against racism
- It is observed annually on the day the police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid "pass laws" in 1960.

504. World Down Syndrome Day is observed annually on **21st March** to create public awareness about the syndrome and well-being of people with Down syndrome.

- **Theme 2022:** Inclusion Means
- The day was first observed in 2012.

Down syndrome is a condition in which the child is born with an extra 21st chromosome. The child born with this condition is likely to suffer thyroid or heart-related problems.

505. International Day of Nowruz is observed annually on **21st March** to promote values of peace and solidarity between generations and within families as well as reconciliation and neighbourliness.

- The word Nowruz means 'new day'.
- The day was first observed in 2010.
- The day is celebrated in many countries having significant Persian cultural influence like Iran, Iraq, India, Afghanistan and parts of Central Asia.
- It is celebrated by Kurds in Iraq and Turkey, as well as by the Iranis, Shias and **Parsis** in the Indian subcontinent and diaspora.

506. Sangeet Natak Akademi, an autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture, has organized 'Putul Utsav', a puppet festival, on the occasion of **World Puppetry Day** (21st March).

- The theme of the festival is '**Azadi ke Rang, Putul Ke Sang**'.
- It has been observed in 5 cities – **Varanasi (UP), Hyderabad (Telangana), Angul (Odisha), New Delhi and Agartala (Tripura)**.

507. World Poetry Day is observed annually on **21st March** to honour poets, revive oral traditions of poetry recitals, promote the reading, writing and teaching of poetry, foster the convergence between poetry and other arts such as theatre, dance, music and painting, and raise the visibility of poetry in the media. UNESCO first adopted 21st March as World Poetry Day during its 30th General Conference in Paris in 1999.

508. World Water Day is observed annually on **22nd March** to highlight the importance of freshwater and to spread awareness about it.

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), in 1992, adopted a resolution declaring 22nd March as World Water Day.
- The day was celebrated for the first time in 1993.
- **Theme 2022:** 'Groundwater, making the invisible visible'

509. World Tuberculosis Day (WTD) is observed annually on **24th March** to create public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of tuberculosis (TB) and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic. The date marks the day in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced that he had discovered the bacterium (*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*) that causes TB, which opened the way towards diagnosing and curing this disease.

Theme 2022: Invest to End TB. Save Lives

510. World Meteorological Day is observed annually on **23rd March** to commemorate the establishment of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). WMO came into existence on 23 March 1950. It is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

- **Theme 2022:** Early Warning and Early Action

511. International Day for the Right to the Truth Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims is observed annually on **24th March** to pay tribute to Monsignor Óscar Arnulfo Romero, who was murdered on 24 March 1980. He was actively engaged in denouncing violations of the human rights of the most vulnerable individuals in El Salvador. The day was first observed in 2011.

- 512.** The **International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery** and Transatlantic Slave Trade is observed annually on **25th March** to spread awareness about the horrors of slavery and racism that happened and continues to happen all around the world.
- **Theme 2022:** "Stories of Courage: Resistance to Slavery and Unity against Racism"
 - The day was first observed in 2008.
- 513.** **International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members** is observed annually on **25th March** to commemorate the anniversary of the abduction of Alec Collett. He was a former journalist who worked for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). He was abducted by armed gunmen in 1985 and his body was found in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley in 2009.
- 514.** **World Theatre Day** is observed annually on **27th March** by the International Theatre Institute (ITI) Centres and the international theatre community. It was initiated in 1961 by ITI. The first World Theatre Day Message was written by Jean Cocteau in 1962. The year 2022 marks the 60th anniversary of World Theatre Day.
- 515.** **Earth Hour** is observed annually on the **last Saturday** of March month to show support for the fight against climate change and commitment towards a better planet. This year, the day falls on 26th March 2022.
- **Theme 2022:** 'Shape Our Future'
 - The day is organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to encourage individuals, communities, corporates, and households to turn off their lights for one hour, from 8:30 to 9:30 PM.
- 516.** **World Piano Day** is observed annually on the **88th day** of the year (mostly falls on 29th or 28th March). This year, the day falls on **29th March 2022**. The day aims to celebrate the Piano, an acoustic, keyboard, stringed percussion instrument.
- German pianist Nils Frahm declared the 88th day of a year as the World Piano Day, as modern standard pianos have 88 keys.
 - The day was first observed in 2015.
- 517.** **International Transgender Day of Visibility** is observed annually on **31st March** to celebrate the achievements and contributions of transgender and gender-diverse people around the world, as well as raise awareness of the work that still needs to be done to eliminate discrimination and other barriers within all aspects of society.
- The day was founded by US-based transgender activist Rachel Crandall of Michigan.
 - The day was first observed in 2009.

518. International Day of Drug Checking is observed annually on **31st March** to ensure people are educated on drugs and alert to their effects. The day also raise public awareness of the availability of drug checking services and companies from across the planet. The day was first observed in 2017.

519. World Backup Day is observed annually on **31st March** to raise awareness of how to safely backup data to introduce people to the 3-2-1 strategy. 3-2-1 backup is all about having three copies of your data: one on your computer, one on an external storage device and another offsite on a cloud storage solution.

Originally, World Backup Day began as World Backup Month, by a hard drive company named Maxtor which was later acquired by Seagate Technology.

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