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March 2022 - Week 4

# WEEKLY **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

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## NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. 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%.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. **Ministry of Jal Shakti** has launched a nationwide campaign named **Sujalam 2.0** for greywater management on the occasion of World Water Day (22<sup>nd</sup> 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.

8. 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.

9. 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**.
- 10.** 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.
- 11.** 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**'.
- 12.** 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.
- 13.** 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.
- 14.** 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.
- 15.** 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.
- 16.** 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
- 17.** 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.

18. 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.
19. 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.
20. 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.
21. 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**.
22. 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.
23. 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.

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## STATES AFFAIRS

- 24.** 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.
- 25.** 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.
- 26.** 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).
- 27.** 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.
- 28.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated **Biplobi Bharat Gallery** at Victoria Memorial Hall in **Kolkata** on the occasion of Shaheed Diwas (23<sup>rd</sup> 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.



29. 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.
30. 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.
31. 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 13<sup>th</sup> century.
  - It is made of '**aacha maram**', a tree known for its sturdy features.
    - This wood is naturally water resistant.
32. 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
33. **Kerala Tourism** has launched a 24x7 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.
34. 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.

35. 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.
36. 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.
37. 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 (24<sup>th</sup> 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.
38. 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'.

39. 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.
40. 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 (CRRRI) 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.
41. 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.

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## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

42. 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.
43. 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.

44. **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.
45. 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
46. **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.
47. 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).
48. **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.
49. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has extended the term of Secretary-General **Jens Stoltenberg** (Norway) by one year i.e. till 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023. He was named NATO Secretary-General in October 2014.

- 50.** 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.
- 51. 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.

Following agreements have been signed during the summit:

Sl. No.	Agreement/Roadmap	Indian signatory	Japanese signatory
1	Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) in the field of Cyber security: For information sharing, capacity building programs and cooperation in the area of cyber security.	Foreign Secretary	Ambassador
2	<p>7 Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Loans (<b>INR 20400 crores</b>) for projects in connectivity, water supply and sewerage, horticulture, healthcare, and biodiversity conservation in various States.</p> <p>a) Dedicated Freight Corridor Project (Phase 2) (III)  b) North East Road Network Connectivity Improvement Project (NH208 (Khowai-Sabroom))Phase-6  c) Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Project (Phase 3)(II)  d) Uttarakhand Integrated Horticulture Development Project  e) Strengthening Health Systems and Excellence of Medical Education in Assam  f) Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Conservation and Greening Project Phase –II  g) Chennai Metro (Phase 2) (II)</p>	<b>Ajay Seth</b>  Secretary, DEA	Ambassador
3	Amendment of Article 7 (Exchange of Information) of Implementing Agreement (IA) signed between India and	BVR Subrahmanyam	Ambassador



	Japan as per Article 13 of India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)	Commerce Secretary	
	Amend Annex 2 (Product Specific rules) of CEPA to allow the fish surimi product of India with the non-originating additive to be considered as an originating good of India.	BVR Subrahmanyam  Commerce Secretary	Ambassador
4	MoC on Decentralized Domestic Wastewater Management: To introduce <b>Johkasou</b> technology in India by Japanese companies for decentralized waste water treatment. It is used in areas where sewage infrastructure has not yet been developed.	Minister, Jal Shakti	Minister, Environment
5	India-Japan Industrial Competitiveness Partnership Roadmap: To implement the MoC on India-Japan Industrial Competitiveness Partnership that was signed in November 2021.	<b>Anurag Jain</b> Secretary, DPIIT	Vice Minister, METI
6	MoC on Sustainable Urban Development. It builds on the 2007 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Urban Development to include smart cities development, affordable housing, urban flood management, wastewater management, Intelligent Transport Management System etc.	Minister, MoHUA	Minister, MLIT

**52.** 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.

53. 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.

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## REPORTS & INDICES

54. **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<sup>3</sup> to 5 Aug/m<sup>3</sup>.

- 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.

- 55.** 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).
- 56.** The 7<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.
- 57.** 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.

**58.** 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.

**59.** 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

- 60.** 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.
- 61.** 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.
- 62.** 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.
- 63.** **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.
- 64.** 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.



- 65. 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.
- 66.** 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.
- 67.** India's merchandise exports have recently (21<sup>st</sup> 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.
- 68.** 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.
- 69. 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.
- 70. 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.

71. 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.
72. The Union Ministry for Environment, Forest and Climate Change has designated **5<sup>th</sup> 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.
73. 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%**.

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## BANKING & FINANCE

74. **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.

- 75. 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.
- 76. 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).
- 77. 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.
- 78. 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.
- 79. 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.
- 80. 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

- 81. 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.
- 82. 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.
- 83. 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.
- 84.** 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.
- 85.** 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
- 86. 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 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022.
- 87. 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.

- 88.** 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).
- 89.** 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.
- 90.** **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.
- 91.** **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).
- 92.** **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.



- 93. 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.
- 94. 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.
- 95. 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.
- 96. 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.
- 97. 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.
- 98. 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'.
- 99. 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%

- 100.** 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 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023. Earlier, SBI Mutual Fund had 5.72% stake in ICICI Bank.

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## AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- 101.** 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.

- 102.** 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.

- 103.** **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.

**104.** 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.

**105.** 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.

**106.** 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.

**107.** 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

**108.** 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.

- 109.** 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.
- 110.** 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.
- 111.** 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.
- 112.** 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

- 113.** 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**.

**114. Serdar Berdimukhamedov** 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.

**115. 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 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2022 by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. He has succeeded **Uday Kotak**.

**116. 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.

**117.** 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.

**118.** 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.

**119.** The International Labour Organization (ILO) has elected **Gilbert Houngbo** from **Togo** as its next Director-General. He will take office from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 for 5 years.

- He will become the 11<sup>th</sup> Director-General of ILO and the first African to hold this post.
- He will succeed Guy Ryder.

**120.** 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

- 121.** Former Chief Justice of India (CJI), **Ramesh Chandra Lahoti** has passed away recently in New Delhi. He was born on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1940 in Guna, Madhya Pradesh.
- He served as the **35<sup>th</sup> 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'.
- 122.** British novelist and screenwriter **Kazuo Ishiguro** has passed away recently. He was born on 8<sup>th</sup> 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*.
- 123.** Former president of Bangladesh Justice **Shahabuddin Ahmed** has passed away recently in Dhaka, Bangladesh. He was born on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1930 in the Netrokona, Bangladesh.
- 124.** **Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga** has passed away recently in Bamako, Mali. He was born on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1954 in Gao, Mali. He served as the **Prime Minister of Mali** for the tenure of two years (2017-2019).
- 125.** **Miguel Van Damme**, a Belgian footballer, has passed away recently after suffering from leukaemia. He was born on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1993 in Ghent, Belgium. He played for Cercle Brugge.

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## SPORTS

- 126.** **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)

- 127.** 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.
- 128. 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.
- 129.** 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.
- 130.** 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.
- 131. 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.
- 132.** 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 **9<sup>th</sup> position** with 1 medal (Silver).
  - **Prithviraj Tondaiman, Zoravar Singh Sandhu and Vivaan Kapoor** have won the silver medal in Men's Trap Team event.
- 133.** 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)

- 134.** 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.
- 135.** 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.
- 136.** 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 Sathiyam** 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)

**137.** Indian weightlifter **Saikhom Mirabai Chanu** has been conferred with the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**138.** The 13<sup>th</sup> 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 **8<sup>th</sup> 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**

**139. World Water Day** is observed annually on **22<sup>nd</sup> 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'

**140. 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

**141. World Meteorological Day** is observed annually on **23<sup>rd</sup> 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

**142. International Day for the Right to the Truth** Concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims is observed annually on **24<sup>th</sup> 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.

**143. The International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery** and Transatlantic Slave Trade is observed annually on **25<sup>th</sup> 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.

**144. International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members** is observed annually on **25<sup>th</sup> 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.

**145. World Theatre Day** is observed annually on **27<sup>th</sup> 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 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of World Theatre Day.



**146. 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 26<sup>th</sup> 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.

**147. 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 **29<sup>th</sup> 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.

**148. International Transgender Day of Visibility** is observed annually on **31<sup>st</sup> 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.

**149. 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.

**150. World Backup Day** is observed annually on **31<sup>st</sup> 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.

## Static Takeaways

❖ **National AIDS and STD Control Programme (NACP)** was initiated by the Government of India in 1992. Since then, four phases of NACP have been successfully completed. The Phase-IV (Extension) of NACP was concluded on 31st March 2021.

❖ **RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT FUND (RIDF)**

Government of India created the RIDF in NABARD in **1995-96**, with an initial corpus of **Rs. 2,000 crore**. With the allocation of Rs. 40,490.95 crore for 2021-22 under RIDF XXVII, the cumulative allocation has reached Rs. 41,8410.52 crore, including Rs. 18,500 crore under Bharat Nirman.

At present, there are 37 eligible activities under RIDF as approved by GoI. The eligible activities are classified under three broad categories i.e.

- Agriculture and related sector
- Social sector
- Rural connectivity

❖ **Mutual Funds:** A mutual fund is a fund that is created when a large number of investors put in their money, and is managed by professionally qualified persons with experience in investing in different asset classes—shares, bonds, money market instruments like call money, and other assets such as gold and property.

- A mutual fund is a type of investment vehicle consisting of a portfolio of stocks, bonds, or other securities.
- Mutual funds give small or individual investors access to diversified, professionally managed portfolios at a low price.
- Mutual funds are divided into several kinds of categories, representing the kinds of securities they invest in, their investment objectives, and the type of returns they seek.

❖ The **Abel Prize** is awarded annually by the *King of Norway* to one or more outstanding **mathematicians**. It is named after Norwegian mathematician **Niels Henrik Abel**.

❖ **Kempegowda International Airport** is an international airport serving Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka, in the southern part of India.

- ❖ The **Stockholm Water Prize** has been awarded to people and organizations for extraordinary water-related achievements. It was instituted in 1991.
- ❖ The **World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)** is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1961 that works in the field of wilderness preservation and the reduction of human impact on the environment. Its headquarters is in **Gland, Switzerland**.

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