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# CURRENT AFFAIRS

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## MoHUA extends Timeline for Implementation of Smart Cities Mission to June 2023



On December 2, 2021, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) extended the timeline for the implementation of the Smart Cities Mission (SCM) for all 100 participating cities to June 2023 due to the COVID-19 induced slowdown and other factors. The Mission was launched in the year FY2015-16 & set a target of five years i.e. FY2019-20.

- ◆ This decision is also based upon the recommendations made by NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog in August 2021.
- ◆ The information for the same was provided by Minister of State (MoS) Kaushal Kishore, MoHUA in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha.

### Key Points:

- ◆ According to an earlier deadline, the cities were expected to complete their projects within five years of being selected under the SCM.
- ◆ The cities were selected from January 2016 to June 2018. MoHUA launched the SCM in June, 2015.

## BDL and Indian Army sign Rs 474.41 crore contract to supply IGLA-1M missiles

Barat Dynamics Limited (BDL) and the Indian Army signed a contract worth Rs \$471.41\$ crore in New Delhi for the refurbishment of IGLA-1M missiles. After the Refurbishment, the missile will get a fresh lease life of ten years.

### About IGLA-1M missile :

- ◆ Introduced by the Soviet Union in 1986, the IGLA-1M is an improved version of Igla man-portable missile system.
- ◆ The Igla is a fire-and-forget, man-portable, shoulder-launched, short range Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) to engage low flying fixed and rotary-wing aircraft and cruise missiles.

### Key Points :

- ◆ BDL has built-up its in-house R&D (Research & development) capabilities primarily focusing on design and engineering activities.

- ◆ It is utilizing emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) to develop futuristic weapons for the Armed Forces,
- ◆ It also offers its exportable products to friendly foreign countries to be a part of the global supply chain.

## Devusinh Chauhan MoS for Communications Released Commemorative Stamp to Mark 75 Years of Mahindra Group



**D**evusinh Chauhan, Minister of State (MoS) for Communications, has unveiled the commemorative postage stamp to mark the 75th anniversary of the Mahindra Group. He also urged the group to collaborate with the postal department to improve the delivery of social services in the rural areas

- ◆ During the event, the First Day Cover (FDC) and an Information Brochure were also released.
- ◆ The Commemorative Postage Stamp, FDC and Information Brochure would be available for sale at Philatelic Bureaux and they can also be ordered online on <https://www.epostoffice.gov.in/>.

### Key People:

- ◆ Anand Mahindra, Chairman of Mahindra Group, Ashwini Vaishnav, Union Minister of Communications were also present during the event.

### Features of the Commemorative stamp :

- ◆ The stamp features the founders of the Mahindra Group: Kailash Chandra Mahindra and Jagdish Chandra Mahindra.
- ◆ The design of the stamp is inspired by miniature art and it has used modern graphical illustrations of the various facets of the Mahindra group.

## India-EU adopted Clean Energy and Climate Partnership 2021-2023

**O**n December 1, 2021, the 9th India-EU (European Union) Energy Panel held which was co-chaired by Reenat Sandhu, the Secretary of India's Ministry of External Affairs (West), and Ms. Mechthild Worsdorfer, Deputy Director General for Energy, European Commission (EC).

During the meeting both sides agreed on a detailed work programme 2021-2023, to implement the 2016 India-EU Clean Energy and Climate Partnership. iii. The Energy Panel agreed on increased technical cooperation in the area of energy efficiency, renewable energy, green hydrogen, grid integration; storage power market design, interconnection, cold chain, and sustainable financing.

### About European Union :

- ◆ It has 27 member states.
- ◆ It has 24 official languages.
- ◆ The United Kingdom (UK) withdrew from the EU on January 31, 2020.

## Indian Army Received Israel's Heron Drones for Deployment in Ladakh Sector



The Indian Army has received the advanced Heron Drones from Israel to boost the army's surveillance capabilities. The drones will be deployed in the eastern Ladakh sector.

The drones were received under the emergency procurement clause to monitor the Chinese activities in Ladakh sector.

- ◆ The acquisition of the drones under the emergency financial powers granted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the government to the Defence forces.

- ◆ Under these powers, the defence can buy equipment and systems worth Rs 500 crores to upgrade the war fighting capabilities.

Under this facility, The Indian army has also leased 2 Predator drones from the American Firm General Atomics.

## India achieves target of 40% Power Generation Capacity from Non-Fossil Fuel Sources

In accordance with the ministry of new and renewable energy (MNRE), India has achieved the target of 40 % power generation capacity to 156.83 (Giga Watt) from non-fossil fuel sources in November 2021.

- ◆ Now, India's installed renewable energy (RE) capacity stands at 150.05 GW, while its nuclear energy-based installed electricity capacity is 6.78 GW.

- ◆ This 156.83 GW non-fossil fuels based installed energy capacity is 40.1 % of the total installed electricity capacity of 390.8 GW.

- ◆ According to the government, installed power capacity from non-fossil fuels will go up to 66 % by 2030. Also, India has already reached an emission reduction of 28 %.

### Note :

- ◆ India announced to cut net carbon emissions to zero by 2070 at COP26 in Glasgow.

## MoS E&IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar Released the National Strategy on Blockchain, Launches India's 1st Indigenous Server RUDRA

On 3rd December 2021, while celebrating Azadi Ka Digital Mahotsav, the Minister of State (MoS) for Electronics and Information Technology (IT) & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, released the National Strategy on Blockchain.

- ◆ The National Strategy on Blockchain was formulated by the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) to create trusted digital platforms through shared Blockchain infrastructure.

- ◆ The strategy document would provide the guidance for creating a nationwide ecosystem for creating the National Blockchain Platform and the development of relevant applications.

- ◆ MoS E&IT launches India's 1st indigenous server RUDRA. Rajeev Chandrasekhar also launched India's 1st indigenous Server, RUDRA, which was developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM) supported by MeitY and DST (Department of Science & Technology).
- ◆ C-DAC is collaborating with Intel, NVIDIA (technology partners), and ATOS (manufacturing partner).
- ◆ MoS announced the top 10 winning teams of the Swadeshi Microprocessor Challenge, which was announced in August 2020 to provide further thrust to the Start-up, innovation and research in India.
- ◆ Under the aegis of Microprocessor Development Programme of MeitY, a powerpack indigenously developed processors such as SHAKTI (by IIT Madras) and VEGA (by C-DAC) has been developed from scratch using Open-Source Architecture.

### About Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology :

- ◆ Union Minister - Ashwini Vaishnaw (Constituency - Odisha)
- ◆ Minister of State - Rajeev Chandrasekhar (Constituency - Karnataka)

### PM Narendra Modi Inaugurated, lays Foundation Stone for Multiple Projects in Dehradun

On December 4, 2021, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi inaugurated 7 projects worth Rs 2,573 crore and laid the foundation stone of 11 projects worth Rs 15,728 crore in

Dehradun, Uttarakhand (Cumulatively the projects worth around Rs 18,000 crore).

- ◆ Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami also participated in the project's inauguration.
- ◆ More than Rs 1 lakh crore has been approved by the Centre in the last five years for the development of Uttarakhand.

### About some of the Key Projects :

#### Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor:

- ◆ PM laid the foundation stone for the Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor project, which will be built at a cost of around Rs 8,300 crore.
- ◆ It will have Asia's largest wildlife elevated corridor (12 kilometres) for unrestricted wildlife movement. It also includes the 340 metres long tunnel near Dat Kaali temple, Dehradun to reduce the impact on wildlife.
- ◆ Dehradun - Paonta Sahib, Himachal Pradesh road project: PM Modi laid the foundation stone for the Dehradun - Paonta Sahib (Himachal Pradesh) road project, being constructed at a cost of around Rs 1700 crore.

### India-ITU Launch Joint Cyber Drill 2021

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) operating under the Ministry of Communications conducted a 'Joint Cyber Drill 2021'. It was conducted for the Critical Network Infrastructure (CNI) operators of India.

- ◆ It is a four-day virtual event that will take place from November 30 to December 3, 2021.

- ◆ The CNIs are the systems, assets and networks that are essential to ensure the security of a country.

#### Participants :

- ◆ The speakers, panelists, and experts from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), INTERPOL, the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), and other prestigious organisations.

#### Main purpose of Cyber Drill :

- ◆ The 2021 India-ITU joint CyberDrill for Indian entities will emphasize the role of national Computer Incident and Response Teams (CIRTs) and Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRTs) in building cyber resilience and protecting critical information infrastructure.
- ◆ ii. It will improve the cyber security readiness of India and also helps to test an organization's cyber capabilities against cyber-attacks, information security incidents, and other disruptions in our country.

### Gol to Develop Indigenous Jet Engines for LCA Tejas Aircrafts

The Government of India (Gol) has informed the Parliament about the future development of indigenous engines for powering aircraft such as Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas variants and Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) in association with an International Engine House.

Currently, the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas is integrated with an imported engine.

The LCA Tejas, Flight Operational Clearance (FOC) configuration requires higher thrust than the intended engine requirement. Thus the present architecture of the Kaveri engine cannot be integrated with LCA Tejas.

### 22nd Hornbill Festival begins in Nagaland



On 1 December 2021, The 22nd Hornbill Festival began in Nagaland at Naga Heritage Village, Kisama (Kohima). The Governor of Assam and Nagaland Prof. Jagdish Mukhi inaugurated the programme of the 10-day festival. It is also called the 'Festival of Festivals'.

- ◆ It is the largest celebration of the Indigenous Warrior Tribes of Nagaland, generally celebrated for 10 days.
- ◆ The festival is also known as Dhanesh bird festival. Organized by the State Tourism and Art & Culture Departments.

#### Objective :

- ◆ To revive and protect the rich culture of Nagaland and display its extravaganza and traditions.
- ◆ To encourage inter-tribal interaction and to promote cultural heritage of Nagaland.

## Highlights:

- ◆ The festival is named after the bird Indian hornbill, the large and colourful forest bird which is displayed in the folklore of most of the state's tribes.
- ◆ The festival is currently being celebrated in the major parts of Nagaland that includes Kisma to Kohima, Mocomchung, Dimapur, Okha etc.
- ◆ It is celebrated by organising several traditional arts, folk songs & games, indigenous traditions etc.

## Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia Announced New Helicopter Policy to set up Dedicated Hubs and Corridors

Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, Union Minister of Civil Aviation has announced a New 10point(Step) Helicopter Policy at the 3rd Helicopter Summit 2021 - India@75: Expediting the Growth of Indian Helicopter Industry and Enhancing Air Connectivity organised by FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry), Ministry of Civil Aviation(MoCA) and Pawan Hans Ltd. in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

- ◆ Under this new policy dedicated hubs and corridors will be established to boost air connectivity. Initially four Heli Hubs and Training Units will be set up Juhu in Mumbai, Guwahati, Delhi, and Bangalore.
- ◆ He also stated that 10 cities and 82 routes were identified to develop helicopter corridors.

## Features of the New Policy :

- ◆ Under this policy, the landing charges and parking deposits were abolished to boost commercial operations.
- ◆ As a part of the new policy, the government will also form a dedicated helicopter acceleration cell in the Ministry of Civil Aviation, which will monitor the issues of the helicopter industry.
- ◆ An advisory group will also be formed under the Ministry to discuss the difficulties faced by the helicopter industry.

## PM Modi Inaugurated thought Leadership Forum on FinTech- 'Infinity Forum'

In December 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated a thought leadership forum on FinTech, 'InFinity Forum'.

The event was hosted by International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), under the aegis of the Government of India in collaboration with GIFT City and Bloomberg on December 3 and 4,2021.

Indonesia, South Africa and the United Kingdom were the partner countries in the 1 st edition of the Forum.

## Key Points :

- ◆ Theme: The Forum focused on the theme of 'Beyond' with various subthemes.
- ◆ The sub-themes include FinTech beyond boundaries, FinTech beyond Finance, and FinTech Beyond Next, with a focus on how Quantum Computing could impact the nature of the Fintech industry in the future and promote new opportunities.

### Participants :

- ◆ Tengku Zafrul Aziz, Finance Minister of Malaysia, Mulyani Indrawati, Finance Minister of Indonesia, Sandiaga S Uno, Minister of Creative Economy Indonesia, Mukesh Ambani, Chairman and MD of Reliance Industries, Masayoshi Son, Chairman and CEO of SoftBank Group Corp, Arvind Krishna, Chairman and CEO, IBM Corporation, Uday Kotak, MD and CEO of Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited were some of the participants of the forum.

### Partners :

- ◆ NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog, Invest India, FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry) and NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Service Companies) are some of the key partners of 2021's Forum.

### NMPB and CSIR-CIMAP Lucknow Signed MoU to Promote the Production of Medicinal Plants

The National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), under the Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Homoeopathy signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, (CSIRCIMAP), Lucknow to collaborate in promoting the production of Quality Planting Material (QPM) of medicinal plants.

### Features of the MoU :

- ◆ The MoU will support the development of QPM of medicinal plants and herbs identified by NMPB and help in establishment of their

nurseries for QPM development, promotion, conservation and cultivation of the appropriate medicinal plants in various agro climatic zones.

- ◆ Under this MoU, CSIR-CIMAP will undertake the research on mass multiplication, agro technology development, quality planting material generation of selected medicinal plants and herbs.
- ◆ Under this MoU NMPB will work through the implementing agencies in collaboration with CSIR-CIMAP, Lucknow and support projects related to QPM Development of Medicinal plants species.
- ◆ The implementing agencies include, State Medicinal Plant Boards, State Horticulture Departments, Regional-cum-facilitation centres across India.

### Government Expands SCALE Committee with 3 New Members

The government has expanded the Steering Committee for Advancing Local Value-Add and Exports (SCALE committee) by adding three new members from different industries.

### Key Points :

#### New Members:

- ◆ Manish Sharma, Panasonic India Chairman and CEO
- ◆ Vikram S Kirloskar, Toyota Kirloskar Vice-Chairman
- ◆ Jalaj Dani, Asian Paints co-promoter and Chairman Addverb Technologies

### About SCALE Committee :

- ◆ The SCALE Committee is formed by the Ministry of Commerce and

- ◆ Industry, working closely with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under Ministry's guidance.
- ◆ Current Members - 14 (Headed by former Mahindra CEO Pawan Goenka)

### **First Ship 'Sandhayak' under Survey Vessel (Large) Project for Indian Navy Launched in Kolkata WB**



**O**n December 5, 2021, Sandhayak, the first of the four Survey Vessels (Large) Project being built for the Indian Navy (IN) was launched in Hooghly River of Kolkata, West Bengal (WB) in the presence of Minister of State (MoS) Ajay Bhatt, Ministry of Defence (MoD).

These Vessels have been designed and developed by Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU), Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE). iii. It was launched by Smt Pushpa Bhatt, spouse of Ajay Bhatt, by chanting invocation from Atharva Veda. It is a Naval Maritime Tradition of launching new vessels.

The contract for building four survey ships is priced at Rs 2435 Crs. It was signed between MoD and GRSE on Oct 30,2018.

### **India Skills Report 2022: Maharashtra Retains Top Position for Most Employable Talent**

As per the 9th edition of India Skills Report (ISR) 2022, released by Wheebox, Maharashtra has retained the top position in the list of states with the highest pool of employable talent followed by Uttar Pradesh and Kerala

- ◆ The theme of ISR 2022 - 'Rebuilding and Reengineering the Future of Work'.
- ◆ States with Maximum Hiring Activity: Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu are the 3 states that have a higher job demand.
- ◆ Pune is the city with the most highly employable resources with 78% of the test takers scoring above 60 percent.
- ◆ As per the current edition, the overall employability in India has improved with 46.2 of the youth being found to be highly employable compared to last year's employability standing at 45.97.

### **NITI Aayog releases report on Country Level Status of Emergency and Injury Care in India**

**O**n 10th December 2021 National Institute of Transforming India (NITI Aayog) released two comprehensive reports titled - Reports on current status on Country level (secondary & tertiary level) and district level emergency and injury care in India.

- ◆ These reports were launched in the presence of Dr V K Paul, Hon'ble Member (Health) NITI Aayog and Dr Rakesh Sarwal, Additional Secretary, and other dignitaries.

- ◆ These studies were carried out by the department of Emergency Medicine, Jai Prakash Narayan Apex Trauma Centre (JPNATC), All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), New Delhi in collaboration with NITI Aayog.

### Highlights :

Prevailing gaps in ambulance services, health infrastructure, human resources and equipment in the provision of optimal care.

### NEDFi Introduced Atmanirbhar Hastshilpkar Scheme for North Eastern Artisans

On December 09, 2021, the North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFi), a premier financial institution in the North-Eastern (NE) Region, has introduced a new scheme named Atmanirbhar Hastshilpkar Scheme to the grass-root Artisans of the NE region under the Ministry of Doner (Development of NE Region).

- ◆ Objective: To develop the petty artisans of the NE Region by providing financial assistance in the form of term loans for income-generating activities for setting up/expansion/modernization/working capital requirement and other activities related to the sector.

### Key Points :

- ◆ Under the launch of the scheme, around 17 artisans have been provided with credit assistance of Rs 1 lakh per artisan.
- ◆ The credit facility is collateral-free and carries a subsidized interest rate of  $\mathbf{6\%}$  percent per annum which is repayable in 24 months.

- ◆ On regular repayment, an incentive of 1 percent on the interest rate will be refunded to the artisans (on successful repayment of loans).
- ◆ **Eligibility** : The artisan should have a valid qualification or practice of any art form and the individual should not have an existing loan from any other bank/ financial institution.

### ISRO, Oppo India Collaborates to Strengthen R&D of NavIC Messaging Service

An agreement has been inked between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Chinese smart devices maker Oppo's Indian arm to strengthen the Research and Development (R&D) of the NavIC messaging service, an Indian satellite navigation system.

- ◆ NaviC, an acronym for Navigation with Indian Constellation, aims to provide a user-friendly platform.

### What is in the agreement?

- ◆ As a part of pact, Oppo India will support ISRO with its R&D capabilities to provide a seamless experience to the users of the NavIC application.
- ◆ There will be an exchange of technical information between ISRO and Oppo.
- ◆ Oppo will also use NavIC messaging service in its future mobile handset sold in India.
- ◆ This agreement will also enable both entities for future collaborations to develop indigenous solutions.
- ◆ What is NavIC?

- ◆ It is the regional geo-positioning system designed in India by ISRO to provide accurate PNT (Position, Navigation, and Timing) of the Indian mainland and an area up to 1500km beyond the Indian mainland. It is equivalent to American GPS (Global Positioning System), Russia's Glonass and Galileo developed by Europe.
- ◆ NavIC is also capable of broadcasting short messages/safety-of-life alerts in areas with poor or no communication, particularly in the oceans.
- ◆ Also, NavIC is powered by dual frequency ( S and L ) while GPS is dependent only on \$L\$ band making it more accurate than GPS.

#### Points to be noted :

- ◆ Oppo phones currently have GPS and Beidou global positioning services.
- ◆ Currently, Xiaomi is the only company to have used the NavIC on its phones.
- ◆ It collaborated with ISRO for the same in 2020.
- ◆ The Redmi Note 9 series and the Redmi Note 10 Lite also support NavIC navigation.

#### MoD signs MoU with IITE, Gandhinagar for Training 800 Sainik School Teachers

On December 10, 2021, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Teacher Education (IITE), Gandhinagar to facilitate training for 800 teachers of Sainik Schools.

- ◆ The MoU is signed for 5 years with effect from January 2022. Under the partnership, around more than 800 teachers from all Sainik

Schools will be trained through courses named 'Gurudiksha' and 'Pratibaddhta'.

- ◆ The MoU was signed in New Delhi by Rakesh Mittal, Joint Secretary (Land & Works) and Honorary Secretary, Sainik Schools Society (SSS), (on behalf of MoD); and Himanshu Patel, Registrar of IITE.

#### Key Features of the MoU :

- ◆ Implementation of New Education Policy in schools.
- ◆ Development of Leadership qualities among students.
- ◆ Time management of UPSC (Union Public Service Commission)-NDA (National Defence Academy) preparation and CBSE curriculum.
- ◆ Selection of appropriate pedagogies for academic subjects.
- ◆ Dealing with individual differences, emotional & behavioural problems of students as a Mentor.
- ◆ Enhancing Teacher-Pupil relationship in boarding school environment.

#### Govt launches 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of Animal Husbandry startup Grand Challenge

On December 13, 2021, the 2nd edition of 'Animal Husbandry Startup Grand Challenge' or 'Animal Husbandry Startup Grand Challenge 2.0' was launched by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD), in partnership with Startup India. It was launched by Union Minister Parshottam Rupala, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying (MoFAHD) during an event celebrating 'National Milk Day' in Anand, Gujarat to commemorate the birth centenary of Dr. Varghese Kurien.

This challenge will explore innovative and commercially viable solutions to address six problems faced by the animal husbandry and dairy sector.

### About Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying:

- ◆ Union Minister- Parshottam Khodabhai Rupala (Constituency-Gujarat) Ministers of State (MoS)- Sanjeev Kumar Balyan (Constituency Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh), Dr. Loganathan Murugan (Constituency-Madhya Pradesh)

### Govt Lays Foundation for Maa Umiya Dham Development Project

Union Home Minister Amit Shah laid the foundation stone of Umiya Mata Dham temple and temple premises under Maa Umiya Dham Development Project at Umiya Campus in Sola in Ahmedabad, Gujarat along with several developmental projects including a railway bridge.

- ◆ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has virtually attended and addressed the foundation stone laying of the project on 13 th December 2021. He stated the Project as an example of the notion of 'SabkaPrayas' (Efforts of everyone).
- ◆ Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel was also present on the occasion.

### About Umiya Mata Temple :

- ◆ Umiya Mata Temple is the Temple of Goddess Umiya, who is worshipped as the clan-deity or kuldevi of Kadava Patidars (the farming community from north Gujarat)

- ◆ It is located in the center of Unjha in the Mehsana district of Gujarat which celebrated its silver jubilee in November 2009.

### Note :

- ◆ An Umiya Mata temple was also commissioned by the Kadva Patidar Samaj in Macon, Georgia, in 2013.

### Key Highlights:

- ◆ The Laying foundation stone of the Umiya Mata temple and other buildings were conducted as a 3-day ceremony starting from 11th December 2021.
- ◆ They will be developed at a cost of Rs 1,500 crore on 74,000 square yards of land.
- ◆ A 13-storey complex adjacent to the temple will be constructed for providing training and a hostel facility to Patidar youths, preparing for Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and Gujarat Public Service Commission (GPSC) exams.

### Other Inaugurations :

- ◆ Umiya Dham complex in Ahmedabad, Gujarat is being built by the Kadava Patidar community.
- ◆ Amit Shah also inaugurated a 4-lane railway overbridge and a water distribution station built by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in Sola, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- ◆ He also laid the foundation stone for an affordable housing project of the Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority.

## IIT Delhi signs MoU with IAF to Improve Indigenization Efforts

On 13th December 2021, IIT-Delhi signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Air Force (IAF) to support requirements towards indigenous solutions in various weapon systems. The MoU was signed by Air Vice Marshal Samir V Borade, Deputy Senior Maintenance Staff Officer, Headquarters Maintenance Command, IAF, and M R Ravi, Head of Department for Mechanical Engineering at IIT-Delhi.

### Key Points:

- ◆ Under the MoU, The IAF has identified key focus areas involving development of technology and finding indigenous solutions towards sustenance of various weapon systems.
- ◆ IIT Delhi will provide consultancy and cooperation, appropriately supported by research, for feasibility studies and prototype development.
- ◆ The partnership between IIT Delhi and IAF will also boost the efforts by Base Repair Depots (BRDs) of Maintenance Command IAF.

### Note :

- ◆ In 2017, IIT-Delhi established a Joint Advanced Technology Center, funded by (DRDO) Defence Research and Development Organisation.

### About Indian Air Force (IAF):

- ◆ Establishment - 8th October 1932
- ◆ Headquarters- New Delhi, Delhi
- ◆ Chief of the Air Staff- Vivek Ram Chaudhari
- ◆ Motto- Touch the Sky with Glory

## Uttarakhand's Askot Wildlife Sanctuary Declared as Eco-Sensitive Zone



According to the gazette of India dated 2nd December 2021 issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), an area of 454.65 square kilometres around the boundary of Askot Wildlife Sanctuary in the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand has been declared as the Askot Wildlife Sanctuary Eco-sensitive Zone(ESZ).

- ◆ The notified area extends from 0 to 22km around the Askot Wildlife Sanctuary.

### Background :

- ◆ The government of India notifies the ESZ, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) and clauses (v) and (xiv) of sub-section (2) and sub-section (3) of section 3 of the environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (29 of 1986), read with sub-rule (3) of rule 5 of the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986.

### About Askot Wildlife Sanctuary Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ)

#### Boundaries:

- ◆ North - International Boundary of Tibet
- ◆ South - Boundary of Askot Wildlife Sanctuary
- ◆ East - River Kali and boundary of Nepal and Tibet
- ◆ West - River Gori and Chiplakedar

## AIM NITI Aayog, & Embassy of Denmark Launched AIM-ICDK Water Innovation Challenge 2.0 to Address Global Water Distress

**A**tal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India) and the Royal Embassy of Denmark to India launched the 2nd edition of the water innovation challenges, "AIM-ICDK Water Innovation Challenge 2 to address the global water distress through innovations. This is a part of the Indo-Danish Bilateral Green Strategic partnership.

- ◆ The 2nd edition of the water challenge (2022 AIM-ICDK Water Challenge) was launched under the partnership of AIM, NITI Aayog and Innovation Center Denmark (ICDK) under the aegis of the Denmark Embassy in India, and the Denmark Technical University (DTU).

### Aim :

- ◆ To identify innovative and next-generation solutions to solve the proposed challenges in collaboration with corporate and public partners.

### Dignitaries:

- ◆ Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog, Ambassador at the Royal Danish Embassy H. E. Freddy Svane, Dr Chintan Vaishnav, Mission Director, AIM, and others were present during the launch.

### About the 2nd edition of Water Innovation Challenges :

- ◆ This initiative will engage the youths from various leading universities and innovation hubs across India to build their skills and utilise their technical disciplines and innovation capacities.

- ◆ The challenges will identify 2 young students and 2 startups from India working on innovative technologies that address the water challenges of India. iii. The winners of the 2nd edition of the Water Innovation Challenges will represent India at the International Water Congress 2022.
- ◆ The Denmark Embassy in India and DTU will prepare the Indian participants for the Global Next Generation Water Action (NGWA) program which will be hosted by DTU.
- ◆ NGWA: Next Generation Water Action(NGWA) is a university-powered initiative to boost international cross-sectorial innovation to inspire, empower and connect the next generation of young talents from across the globe.

## Rajasthan's Art and Culture Minister BD Kalla inaugurated 24<sup>th</sup> Lokrang 2021 in Jaipur



**F**or the first time in two years amid COVID-19, on December 16, 2021, Rajasthan's Art and Culture Minister Dr. Bulaki Das Kalla inaugurated 11-day long 24<sup>th</sup> 'Lokrang-2021', an annual festival of folk artists, at Jawahar Kala Kendra (JKK) in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

- ◆ It is organized by JKK, Art and Culture Department and RUDA (Rural NonAgriculture Development Agency) under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- ◆ It will culminate on December 26, 2021.
- ◆ It will comprise National Handicrafts Fair in Shilpgram (rural arts and crafts complex in JKK) in collaboration with RUDA, and Rajasthani Language Writing Festival.

#### Key Points :

- ◆ The National Handicrafts Fair showcases artistic handicraft products made by award-winning craftsmen across the country under one roof.
- ◆ This edition of Lokrang is being celebrated with due COVID-19 protocols. In this event folk artists from Indian states present the folk arts of their respective regions.
- ◆ The participating states are Rajasthan, West Bengal (WB), Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh (HP), Tripura, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Assam, Punjab, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Uttar Pradesh (UP).
- ◆ On the first day, artists performed Garba Raas of Gujarat, Lavani dance (Ganpati) of Maharashtra, Kunbi of Goa, Dolu Kunitha of Tamil Nadu, Chhau (Slaughter of Mahisasur) of West Bengal, Badi-jawara of Madhya Pradesh, Dhobia of Uttar Pradesh, Jhijhiya of Bihar, Langa singing of Jodhpur (Rajasthan), among other.

### PM Modi Lays Foundation Stone of Ganga Expressway in UP

On December 18, 2021, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the longest highway in India, the Ganga Expressway in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh (UP) to offer fast-paced connectivity in India.

- ◆ The six-lane 594 km long expressway will be built at a cost of about Rs 36200 crore will connect the western and eastern regions of UP.

#### Features of Ganga Expressway :

- ◆ The highway will pass through different districts of UP such as Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Budaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Rae Bareli, Pratapgarh and Prayagraj.
- ◆ 3.5 km long airstrip was also planned to be built in Shahjahanpur for assisting emergency landing and take-off of Air Force planes.
- ◆ An industrial corridor will also be built along the expressway for the socioeconomic development of the region.

#### Note :

- ◆ PM also pays tributes to revolutionaries of the Kakori incident - Pandit Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaq Ullah Khan, Thakur Roshan Singh, whose martyrdom day falls on December 19.
- ◆ Participants : Chief Minister of UP, Yogi Adityanath, Union Minister B L Varma also participated on the occasion.

#### About Uttar Pradesh (UP):

- ◆ Governor - Anandiben Patel

- ◆ Bird Sanctuary - Vijay Sagar Bird Sanctuary Hathinala, Renukut (Sonbhadra)
- ◆ Festival - Ganga Dussehra, Buddha Purnima

## **Multinational Exercise PANEX-21 inaugurated at Pune, Maharashtra comprising BIMSTEC nations**



**O**n December 20-22, 2021, the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of multi-national - multi-agency exercise, PANEX-21, was organized at Pune (Maharashtra) to develop capabilities in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations among BIMSTEC nations.

BIMSTEC is an acronym for Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation. It is an international organisation of seven South Asian and Southeast Asian nations comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand.

The inaugural address for this exercise was delivered by Lt Gen Jai Singh Nain, Army Commander, Southern Command at Armed Forces Medical College, Pune. Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) also addressed over video conference.

## **About Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC):**

- ◆ Established in 1997, initially it was known as BIST-EC (Bangladesh-India-Sri Lanka-Thailand Economic cooperation). With the admission of Myanmar and Bhutan it became BIMSTEC.
- ◆ Secretary General- Tenzin Lekphell

## **GIS based 'Automatic Water Supply System' 1<sup>st</sup> of its kind in India launched by Rajnath Singh**

**O**n the occasion of Defence Estates Day 2021 i.e. December 16, 2021, Union Minister Rajnath Singh, Ministry of Defence has launched India's first of its kind Geographic Information System (GIS) Based 'Automatic Water Supply System' for citizens of Cantonment Boards under eChhawani project. It is an easy and fast application with 100 % automatic process.

- ◆ The module for this system has been developed by Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geo informatics (BISAG) under the guidance of Defence Secretary and Director General of Defence Estates (DGDE), Delhi.
- ◆ Its integration with the e-Chhawani portal is done by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL).

## **Key Points:**

- ◆ It is based on "minimum government and maximum governance" as there is no manual intervention for clearance/sanction of the water connection. ii.It provides a facility to citizens to identify the location of the water supply connection, automatically determines the nearest water pipeline, defines the

capacity of all water supply lines, calculates distance based on the location and amount payable by the Applicant including connection charges can be paid online.

### **DoT sets up Six Task Forces to Explore 6G Development**

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) of the Ministry of Communication formed a task force under the Technology Innovation Group (TIG) on 6G (6th Generation) technology to explore technological innovations and various commercial uses.

- ◆ The task forces will enable research and development, manufacturing, prepare pre-standardisation and market readiness framework.

#### **Highlights :**

- ◆ Under the 6G TIG, the Six task forces will be set up to provide research and development support in the form of inputs.
- ◆ Task force on Multi-Platform for Next Generation Networks - Bhaskar Ramamurthy, Director, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Chennai.
- ◆ Task force on Spectrum Policy - Abhay Karandikar, Director, IIT-Kanpur.
- ◆ Task force on Multi-Disciplinary Innovative Solutions and Devices Bharadwaj Amrutur, Director, Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore.
- ◆ Task force on Devices - Kiran Kumar Kuchi, Director, IIT-Hyderabad.
- ◆ Task Force Group for Financing Research And Development - Ashok Kumar Tiwari, Member

(Technology), Digital Communications Commission (DCC)

- ◆ Task force on international standards - NG Subramaniam, chairman of the Telecommunications Standards Development Society, India (TSDSI).

### **Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Launched the India Semiconductor Mission**

Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw launched the India Semiconductor Mission (ISM) to attract large investments for setting up semiconductor wafer fabrication facilities in India.

- ◆ The companies that are interested are invited by the Centre for the development of the semiconductors and display manufacturing ecosystem in India.
- ◆ ISM is a specialised and independent business division within the Digital India Corporation.

#### **Key Points :**

- ◆ Different schemes have been notified and uploaded on the website and a portal for the same has been prepared for receiving the applications. Interest companies were directed to apply from January 1, 2022, onwards.

#### **About Scheme for setting up semiconductor fab and the display fab :**

- ◆ Application Duration: application period will be for 45 days (i.e. till February 15, 2022) (extendable based on response).

- ◆ A fab - It represents a fabrication plant where raw silicon wafers are processed and turned into integrated circuits.

#### Fiscal support :

- ◆ The fiscal support of up to 50 percent of the project cost (ceiling of Rs 12,000 crore per fab) will be provided for the scheme for setting up display fabs.
- ◆ Fiscal support will be provided on 'pari-passu' basis for a period of six years from the date of approval both for semiconductor fabs and display

#### PM Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of Major Dhyan Chand Sports University in Meerut UP

On January 2, 2022, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Damodardas Modi laid the foundation stone of Rs 700 Crore Major Dhyan Chand Sports University in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh (UP). It will be established at Salawa and Kaili villages of Sardhana town in Meerut

- ◆ The Governor of UP Anandiben Patel and its Chief Minister (CM) Yogi Adityanath were also present at the event.
- ◆ Dedicated to Major Dhyan Chand, an Indian field hockey player, the university will graduate 1,080 students annually.
- ◆ It should be noted that Meerut is exporting sporting goods to more than 100 countries.

#### About Uttar Pradesh (UP):

- ◆ Wildlife Sanctuaries- Katarniya Ghat Wildlife Sanctuary, Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary, National Chambal Sanctuary

- ◆ Tiger Reserve- Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, Amangarh (buffer of Corbett TR)
- ◆ Zoological Park- Nawab Wajid Ali Shah Zoological Garden, Kanpur Zoological Park

#### Ladakh Celebrates 'Losar Festival' the traditional new year of Tibetan Buddhist



The Losar Festival in Ladakh is celebrated at the onset of the New Year in the traditional schedule of Tibetan Buddhism. It is celebrated by the Buddhist Community in the Ladakh region.

- ◆ The Losar is a 15 days festival, from the start of the Tibetan Lunar calendar, marking the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 11 month in Tibetan Calendar.
- ◆ Losar is a Tibetan word which means 'New Year'.

#### Key Points :

- ◆ The celebrations begin with a 'Metho ceremony' with the chanting of prayers and carrying flame torches.
- ◆ Various ancient rituals, cultural events and traditional songs are also performed.

#### About Ladakh :

- ◆ Ladakh is also known as "the Land of Passes" (La-passes, dakh-many) and also famous for

several monasteries like Hemis, Thiksey and Lamayuru Monastery.

- ◆ National park- Hemis National Park
- ◆ Rivers- Zaskar River, Indus River, Shyok River

### **Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched a 100-day Reading Campaign 'Padhe Bharat'**

**O**n 1st January 2022, Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Education, launched a 100-day reading campaign "Padhe Bharat" to encourage the reading habit among students and

to improve the learning levels of the students with a focus on children studying in Balvatika to Grade 8

- ◆ The 100 days (14 weeks) reading campaign will be organised from January 2022 to April 2022.

#### **Aim :**

- ◆ To promote joyful reading culture for children by ensuring the availability of ageappropriate reading books in Indian Languages including the local/mother tongue/regional/tribal Language.



## South Korea to Get World's Sustainable First Floating City by 2025



South Korea is set to get the World's first floating city, a joint effort by OCEANIX and the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habit), which is likely to be completed by 2025. The floating city will be developed on the coast of Busan, South Korea, to tackle the problem of rising sea levels.

- In November 2021, Busan Metropolitan City of the Republic of Korea, UNHabitat, and New York designers OCEANIX, signed an agreement to build the world's first sustainable floating city.

## EAM S Jaishankar addresses 5th Indian Ocean Conference in Abu Dhabi

The Union Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Ministry of External Affairs (EAM) visited Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) to attend the 5th Indian Ocean Conference on December 4-5, 2021. The theme

of the conference was 'Indian Ocean: Ecology, Economy, Epidemic'.

- ◆ The Conference is chaired by Sri Lankan President, Gotabaya Rajapaksa & Vice Chairs are S.Jaishankar, Vivian Balakrishnan, Sayyid Badr Bin Hamad Bin Hamoud Al Busaidi.
- ◆ The conference is being organised by India foundation in collaboration with the RSIS Singapore, Institute of National Security Studies (INSS), Sri Lanka, and the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research (ECSSR), UAE.

### Key Points :

- ◆ The Indian Minister met the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed where discussions were held to scale up the bilateral strategic ties between India and the UAE. ii.He also met his counterparts from Oman and Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and discussed bilateral cooperation with them.

## G7 Finance Leaders set Guidelines for CBDCs

G7 (Group of Seven) advanced economies' central banks have been working to set common standards toward issuing 'Central Bank Digital Currency' (CBDC).

- ◆ As per the statement of G7, any CBDC issued by a central bank should not harm the bank's ability to fulfill its mandate on monetary and financial stability, and also should meet the standards.

### What is CBDC ?

- ◆ A CBDC is a legal tender that would be issued by the central bank in a digital form. It is exchangeable one-to-one with fiat currency and it would appear as a liability (currency in circulation) on a central bank's balance sheet.
- ◆ A CBDC would complement cash and could act like a liquid, safe settlement asset and an anchor for the payments system.

### G7's Statement on CBDC :

- ◆ Any CBDC should be grounded in long-standing public commitments to transparency, rule of law and sound economic governance
- ◆ The currencies must be issued in a way that does not violate the central banks' mandates and meet rigorous standards of privacy, transparency and accountability for the protection of user data.
- ◆ CBDCs could enhance cross-border payments and minimize harmful spillovers to the international monetary and financial system. Currently, China has been leading toward issuing a digital currency.

### Note :

- ◆ In July 2021, the Reserve Bank of India's Deputy Governor  $\$T\$$ . Rabi Sankar stated about the RBI's plan for the phased introduction of a CBDC. [Click here to know more](#)

### About G7 :

- ◆ Members - The G7 is an inter-governmental political forum consisting of 7 members (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States) 2021 Presidency - United Kingdom

### Adama Barrow wins second term as Gambia's President



The President of Gambia, Adama Barrow, won the second term as President during Gambia's presidential election by achieving over 53 % votes from 50 of 53 constituencies. He defeated his main challenger Ousainou Darboe who won 27.7 % of vote.

- ◆ The results of the election were declared by Electoral commission Chairman Alieu Momarr Njai.

### Point to be noted :

- ◆ Adama Barrow's assumption as President 5 years ago ended more than 20 years of dictatorship of former dictator Yahya Jammeh.

### About Gambia :

- ◆ Capital- Banjul
- ◆ Currency- Gambian dalasi

## World Malaria Report 2021: Worldwide Malaria Cases in 2020 Estimated at 241 million

According to WHO's (World Health Organisation) latest World Malaria Report 2021, globally there were an estimated 241 million malaria cases and 627000 malaria deaths in 85 malaria-endemic countries in 2020, increasing from 227 million in 2019.

- ◆ As per the report, there are about 14 million more cases in 2020 compared to 2019 and 69000 more deaths.

### Key Points :

- ◆ Globally, India accounts for \$1.7\$ percent of malaria deaths in 2020. As per the report, India was the only high-burden country to have sustained a reduction in the disease burden.
- ◆ South-East Asia: India shares over 83 percent of the malaria cases and 82 percent of all malaria deaths in the WHO South-East Asia Region, from about 18 cases per 1000 population at risk in 2000 to about 3 cases in 2020.
- ◆ In 2021, WHO certified two countries - China and El Salvador - as malaria free, and a further 25 are on track to end malaria transmission by 2025.

## UNGA granted Observer Status to International Solar Alliance

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) granted Observer Status to International Solar Alliance (ISA) by adopting resolution 76/123. This decision has been taken based on the UNGA's Sixth Committee report.

In November 2015, ISA was jointly launched by India and France during the 21st session of the United Nations Climate Change COP-21 in Paris, France to promote solar energy among its Member Countries.

## India Assumed the Chairmanship of Council of Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of SCO

India assumed the Chairmanship of Council of Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (RATS SCO) for 1 year from October 28, 2021.

The National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), Government of India, in association with Data Security Council of India (DSCI), as a Knowledge Partner, organized a 2-day Practical Seminar on 'Securing Cyberspace in the Contemporary Threat Environment' (on December 7 and 8, 2021) for delegates from SCO member States.

- ◆ The seminar is the 1st event to be hosted by India during its Chairmanship of Council of RATS SCO.
- ◆ This is the second time India is hosting such the Seminar event. At 1st time the seminar was held in Hyderabad, India in August 2019 and it was not held in 2020 due to COVID-19.

### Key Points :

- ◆ The Seminar addressed the key areas like Policies and Strategies, Cyber Terrorism, Ransomware, and Digital Forensics amongst others.
- ◆ The program focused on the changing nature of online crime and criminal behaviour in order to understand the threats, trends, issues, responses and ethical questions

associated with, mainly terrorists using technology.

- ◆ The Seminar provided Hands-on Practical experience to the participants to enhance the capabilities of respective Law Enforcement Agencies in securing cyberspace from Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism.
- ◆ It also examined issues related to the cyber-realm from an interdisciplinary and multi-dimensional perspective.
- ◆ The event acted as effort of India to improve the collaboration among RATS SCO Member States to overcome the misuse of internet by Terrorists, Separatists and Extremists.
- ◆ Participants: The representatives from the Executive Committee (EC) of RATS SCO and all SCO member countries participated in the Seminar.

### **India ranked 66th at the Global Health Security Index 2021; USA Tops**

As per the Global Health Security (GHS) Index 2021, the world's average overall GHS Index score was reduced to 38.9 (out of 100) in 2021, from a score of 40.2 in the GHS Index, 2019. India ranked 66 out of 195 countries with an overall Index score of 42.8 and along with a change of \$-0.8\$ from 2019

- ◆ The United States of America (USA) ranked 1st on the index with a score of \$75.9\$ followed by Australia and Finland.
- ◆ No countries scored in the top tier (no country scored above 75.9) of the GHS index, with 58 percent of countries scoring below average for rapid response to and mitigation of the spread of an epidemic.

### **Note :**

- ◆ India ranked 57th in the GHS Index 2019 with a score of 46.5 out of 100 .

### **About GHS Index :**

- ◆ It is an assessment and benchmarking of health security and related capabilities across 195 countries. It is developed in partnership with the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) and the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security at the Bloomberg School of Public Health. It was 1st launched in October 2019.

### **India re-elected to International Maritime Organization Council for 2022-2023**



India has been re-elected to International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Council for the 2022-2023 biennium under category B states.

- ◆ The Assembly of the International Maritime Organization has elected the Members of its Council for the 2022-2023 biennium.
- ◆ The Council is the executive organ of IMO and is responsible, under the Assembly, for supervising the work of the Organization.
- ◆ The Council performs the functions of the Assembly, except that of making recommendations to Governments on maritime safety and pollution prevention.

### Candidates for IMO Council :

Category (a) 10 States with the largest interest in providing international shipping services:

- ◆ China, Greece, Italy, Japan, Norway, Panama, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States.

- ◆ Category (b) 10 States with the largest interest in international seaborne trade:

- ◆ India, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, United Arab Emirates.

For Category (c) 20 States which have special interests in maritime transport or navigation and whose election to the Council will ensure the representation of all major geographic areas of the world:

- ◆ Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, Vanuatu.

### Note :

- ◆ The newly elected Council will meet, following the conclusion of the 32nd Assembly, for its 126th session (on December 15) and will elect its Chair and Vice-Chair for the next biennium.

### UNICEF: COVID-19 Biggest Global Crisis to Child Progress in UNICEF's 75 Years

**O**n the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the UNICEF(United Nations Children's Fund), UNICEF released a report titled "Preventing a

lost decade: Urgent action to reverse the devastating impact of COVID-19 on children and young people.

- ◆ The report states that children were most affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic, making this the biggest threat to progress for children in our 75-year history.

- ◆ The report outlines our current work by taking into account the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on children and the response and recovery path for each child in the future.

### Problems of COVID-19:

- ◆ Without proper action, the world will face a lost decade for children, leaving the Sustainable Development Goals an impossible dream.

- ◆ In less than 2 years around 100 million children have fallen into poverty, this is around 10% increase since 2019.

### Dangers :

- ◆ Before the COVID-19 pandemic, around 1 billion children across the globe and around 50 % of all the children in developing countries, suffered at least one severe deprivation without access to minimum levels of education, health, housing, nutrition, sanitation, or water.

### Response:

- ◆ To respond and recover and reimagine the future for every child, UNICEF calls for,
- ◆ Investing in social protection, human capital and spending for an inclusive and resilient recovery

- ◆ Ending the pandemic and reversing the alarming rollback in child health and nutrition
- ◆ Building back stronger by ensuring quality education, protection and good mental health for every child
- ◆ Building resilience to better prevent, respond to and protect children from crises.

#### Key Points:

- ◆ There are more than 60 million children are living in monetary poor households, and more than 23 million have missed out on essential vaccines, the highest number in more than decade.
- ◆ Schools around the globe were closed for almost 80% of in-person instruction time during the 1st year
- ◆ Due to the global pandemic, more than \$1.6 billion students were put out of school.
- ◆ Mental health conditions affect more than 13 per cent of adolescents aged 10-19 worldwide. By October 2020, the pandemic had disrupted or halted critical mental health services in 93 per cent of countries worldwide.

### PM Narendra Modi Attended the Closed-door Session of the 1st Summit for Democracy

In December 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has participated in the closed-door virtual Summit Session of the 1st summit for democracy which was convened by United States President Joe Biden.

- ◆ India was among the 12 countries invited to attend the Summit for Democracy Leaders' Plenary Session.
- ◆ The summit focuses on challenges and opportunities facing democracies and will provide a platform for leaders to announce both individual and collective commitments, reforms, and initiatives to defend democracy and human rights at home and abroad.

#### Key Points:

- ◆ Joe Biden highlighted the 'definite challenges' and threats faced by democracy worldwide that has been 'backsliding'.
- ◆ The second Leaders' Plenary Session was hosted by the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen.
- ◆ PM Modi stated about India's democratic civilization and suggested ways to improve the democratic rule across nations. He also emphasised the need for democratic countries to deliver the values and ethos of their constitutions.
- ◆ He also outlined sensitivity, accountability, participation and reform orientation as four pillars of Indian democratic governance.
- ◆ He stressed that principles of democracy should also guide global governance; and that given technology's ability to impact democracy positively or negatively, technology companies should contribute to preserving open and democratic societies.

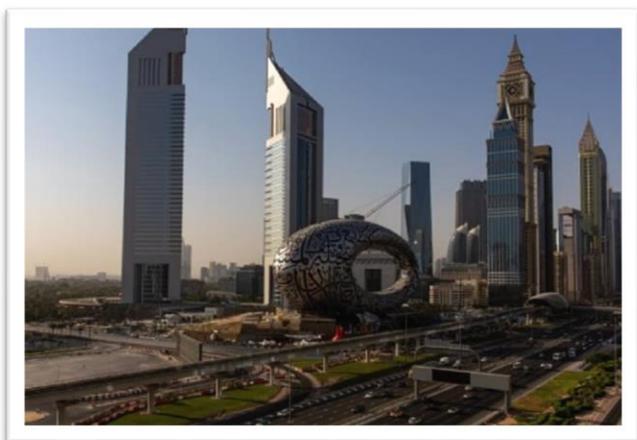
### UAE Became the 1st Country to Transition to 4 and Half-day Work Week

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has announced to change its 5-day work-week to a 4 and a half day starting from 1st January

2022 and became the first country to make the employee-friendly transition as part of its efforts to improve productivity and work-life balance.

New Schedule: Monday to Thursday the work timings would be from 7.30 am to 3.30 pm followed by a half-day on Friday from 7.30 am to 12.00 pm & Saturdays and Sundays are full-day holidays.

### **Dubai becomes World's 1<sup>st</sup> 100% Paperless Govt**



In December 2021, Dubai became the world's first government to turn 100 percent paperless, the announcement was made by the United Arab Emirate (UAE) Crown Prince, Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

- ◆ It will save around 3 billion Dirham (USD 350 million) and 14-million-man hours.

#### **Key Points :**

- ◆ A comprehensive digital government services platform is managing all internal, external transactions and procedures of the Government of Dubai.
- ◆ The Dubai Paperless Strategy was implemented in five consecutive phases, each entity consisting of a different group of the Dubai Government's entities.

- ◆ By the end of the fifth phase, the strategy was fully implemented across all 45 government entities in the emirate.
- ◆ All the entities provide more than 1,800 digital services and over 10,500 key transactions.
- ◆ All the exceptional digital services can be accessed by the Citizens through "DubaiNow application".
- ◆ The digitization will provide all the govt. services to customers & reduce paper consumption by more than 336 million papers.

#### **About United Arab Emirates (UAE) :**

- ◆ The UAE is a country in Western Asia located in the Arabian Peninsula. It borders Oman and Saudi Arabia, and has maritime borders in the Persian Gulf with Qatar and Iran.
- ◆ Capital- Abu Dhabi
- ◆ Currency- Dirham
- ◆ President- Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan

#### **Current Generation Students could lose 14% of Global GDP due to COVID-19 induced School Closure**

As per the report of the World Bank (WB), titled, 'The State of the Global Education Crisis: A Path to Recovery', the present generation of students' risks losing USD 17 trillion (higher than the 2020 estimation of USD 10 trillion) in lifetime earnings in present value, or about 14 percent of today's global GDP (Gross Domestic Product) due to COVID-19-related school closures

- ◆ The report was prepared by WB in collaboration with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund).

### Key Points :

- ◆ In low- and middle-income countries, the share of children living in Learning Poverty (which is already over 50 percent before the COVID-19) has increased up to 70 percent, given the long school closures and the varying quality and effectiveness of remote learning.
- ◆ COVID-19 has brought education systems across the world to a halt, with school closures affecting more than 1.6 billion learners.
- ◆ More than 370 million children globally missed out on school meals during school closures, losing what is for some children the only reliable source of food and daily nutrition.
- ◆ In rural Karnataka, the share of grade 3 children in government schools able to perform simple subtraction fell from 24 percent in 2018 to only 16 percent in 2020.

### WHO Report on 3 Diseases: State of Inequalities-HIV, TB and Malaria

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Fund released titled 'State of Inequalities - HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria', stating that the poorest, least-educated and rural subgroups remain vulnerable to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Tuberculosis (TB) and malaria.

- ◆ The report takes a look at 32 health indicators from 186 countries on HIV, TB and malaria.

- ◆ India's average on prevention of HIV, TB and malaria have improved in the past decade.

### Aim :

- ◆ To document and understand the relation between inequalities and the fight against HIV, TB and malaria that kill more than 2 million people every year.

### Note :

- ◆ People living with HIV accounted for 8 percent of new TB infections in 2020. Moreover, \$1.3\$ million, who were HIV negative have died of TB, while 214,000 people living with HIV were affected with TB.

### About World Health Organisation (WHO):

- ◆ Director - General - Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (Ethiopia)
- ◆ Headquarters - Geneva, Switzerland

### India Ranks 56<sup>th</sup> on IMD 2021 World Talent Ranking; Switzerland Tops

India has ranked 56<sup>th</sup> on the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) 2021 World Talent Ranking, which evaluates the ability of the economies in developing, attracting and retaining talent. The IMD World Talent Ranking 2021 shows the overall ranking for 64 economies. In the Peer Group Ranking - Asia - Pacific, India have ranked 12 th.

- ◆ Switzerland tops the ranking followed by Sweden in 2nd and Luxembourg in 3 rd.
- ◆ The ranking is published by the IMD World Competitiveness Center.

### About International Institute for Management Development (IMD):

- ◆ President- Jean-François Manzoni
- ◆ Location- Lausanne, Switzerland

## China launches Satellites for Space Exploration- Shijian 6 05



China successfully launched a new group of satellites Shijian-6 05 into space from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China for space exploration and new technology tests.

- ◆ The satellites were launched by a Long March-4B rocket which marked the 400 th mission of Long March series carrier rockets.

### Note :

- ◆ The first flight of Long March-1 was in 1970, Long March carrier rockets marked the majority deployment with 92.1 percent of China's space launches.

### Past Missions:

- ◆ In the recent 100 launches, the Long March rockets have taken up quality missions like the launch of China's Tianhe space station core module, Shenzhou manned spacecraft, Chang'e-5 lunar probe and the country's first interplanetary Tianwen-1 Mars exploration mission.

### Background :

- ◆ According to the rocket developers with the state-owned space giant China Aerospace

Science and Technology Corporation (CASC), the first 100 launches took place over 37 years, the second 100 launches took seven and half years, the third took four years and three months, and the fourth only took two years and nine months.

## 70<sup>th</sup> Miss Universe: India's Harnaaz Sandhu Crowned Miss Universe 2021; 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian to become Miss Universe



21 years old Indian Actor and Model, Harnaaz Sandhu from Chandigarh, Punjab, has been crowned Miss Universe 2021 at the 70th Edition of the Miss Universe Competition held in Eilat, Israel. Harnaaz Sandhu became the 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian to be crowned Miss Universe after Sushmita Sen, the 1st Indian to win Miss Universe (1994) and Lara Dutta (Miss Universe 2000).

- ◆ Miss Universe 2020 Andrea Meza (Mexico) presented the crown to Harnaaz Sandhu.
- ◆ The ceremony of the 70th edition was hosted by Steve Harvey.

### Note :

- ◆ Nadia Ferreira (Paraguay) finished 2nd followed by Lalela Mswane (South Africa) in 3rd.

## Elon Musk Named Time Magazine's Person of the Year 2021



The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Tesla & SpaceX, Elon Musk named 'Person of the Year 2021' by Time magazine. He took over the title from US President Joe Biden & Vice President Kamala Harris, who received the title in 2020.

- ◆ In April 2021, NASA granted Elon Musk's rocket company SpaceX an exclusive contract to put United States (US) astronauts on the moon for the first time since 1972.

### About Elon Musk :

- ◆ Elon Reeve Musk was born on 28 June 1971 in Pretoria, South Africa.
- ◆ He is an entrepreneur and businessman. He is the founder, CEO and Chief Engineer at SpaceX, and CEO - Product Architect of Tesla.
- ◆ In 2021, Elon Musk became the world's richest person with a total worth of USD 300 billion. He succeeded Jeff Bezos, the CEO of Amazon, who previously held the position of World's Richest Person.

## ADB trims Developing Asia's Growth Forecasts over Omicron Risks

In its Asian Development Outlook Supplement Report of December 2021, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has trimmed the growth forecasts for developing Asia for 2021-2022 to reflect the economic impact and uncertainty caused by the new Omicron COVID-19 variant.

- ◆ ADB marks the 2021 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth projection of developing Asia to 7 percent, down from its earlier projection of 7.1 percent (September 2021), and 2022 growth to 5.3 percent, down from 5.4 percent.
- ◆ India: The ADB trimmed its 2021 growth forecast for India to 9.7 percent from the 10 percent but left the 2022 growth forecast unchanged at 7.5 percent.

### Inflation :

- ◆ The inflation forecast of developing Asia was revised to 2.1 percent for 2021 and unchanged at 2.7 percent for 2022.

## India's EAM S. Jaishankar and Tajikistan's FM Sirojiddin Muhriddin Signs Agreements on Diplomatic Training

In December 2021, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar met Tajikistan foreign minister Sirojiddin Muhriddin who was on an official visit to India from 18 to 20 December 2021 to attend the 3rd meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue.

- ◆ They have signed agreements on diplomatic training and program of cooperation.

- ◆ Both of them exchanged views on expanding bilateral cooperation in energy, connectivity, trade, security and capacity building.

### India-Central Asia Dialogue:

- ◆ EAM S. Jaishankar hosted the 3rd meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue in New Delhi from 18-19 December 2021. Foreign Ministers of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan participated in the meeting. ii.The Ministers discussed strengthening of relations between India and Central Asian countries with particular focus on trade, connectivity and development cooperation.

### Note :

- ◆ The 2 nd meeting was organized virtually by India in October 2020 .
- ◆ Additional Points:
- ◆ Tajikistan is India's key partner in Central Asia in the fight against cross-border terror and radicalisation. It also hosts India's lone military base.
- ◆ Earlier Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Tajikistan in July 2015 and both countries decided to step up cooperation in the spheres of defence, connectivity and in the fight against terrorism.
- ◆ President Ram Nath Kovind paid a state visit to Tajikistan in October 2018 and announced a grant of 20 million for Tajikistan.

### Pakistan successfully test-fires enhanced range version of Babur Cruise Missile 1B

On December 21,2021, Pakistan successfully test-fired an enhanced range version of its indigenously-built surface-to-surface Babur cruise missile namely 'Babur Cruise Missile 1B'

that can strike targets up to 900 kilometers from 450 Km of former missile.

- ◆ The Babur missile is capable of engaging targets at land and sea with high precision.
- ◆ The launch ceremony of Babur Cruise Missile 1B was witnessed by Lt Gen Nadeem Zaki Manj, Director General, Strategic Plans Division; Dr Raza Samar, Chairman National Engineering and Scientific Commission (NESCOM); among others.

### Key Points :

- ◆ The missile is named after Mughal King Babur who laid the foundations of the Mughal Empire in the sub-continent in 1526.
- ◆ In February 2021, Pakistan conducted a successful training launch of the earlier version of Babar cruise
- ◆ In August 2021, it conducted a successful test flight of Fatah-1 which is a guided multi-launch rocket system capable of delivering conventional warheads.

### KUFOS to Join Research Project under NASA-ISRO Collaborative Programme

The Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS), Kochi, Kerala, is set to join the research project backed by the Space Application Centre of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) under the (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) NASA-ISRO collaborative programme.

- ◆ KUFOS is selected as one of the nodal agencies in South India to implement the project.

- ◆ The project will be headed by Girish Gopinath, Associate professor of Remote Sensing and geographic information system (GIS) at KUFOS and U Surendran, senior scientist at Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM).

### **IEA Report: Coal Demand Forecasted to Grow by 6% in 2021; way off to Achieve Net Zero**

As per the report of the International Energy Agency (IEA) titled Coal 2021 Analysis and forecast to 2024, overall global coal demand is expected to grow by 6 percent in 2021 with coal consumption to 7,906 million tonnes (Mt) and is set to rise to 8025 MT in 2022, the highest level ever.

#### **Key Points of the Report :**

- ◆ The global coal power generation is expected to increase by 9 percent in 2021 to 10,350 terawatt-hours (TWh).
- ◆ CO2 emissions from coal in 2024 are expected to be well over 3 gigatonnes higher than in the Net Zero Emissions by 2050 Scenario.
- ◆ Due to Covid-19 total coal consumption declined 4.4 percent in 2020, to 7,456 Mt and the Coal use for power production also dropped by 4.2 percent.
- ◆ According to IEA, coal power generation is set to increase by almost 20 percent in 2021 in the United States and the European Union (but that would not be enough to take it above 2019 levels).
- ◆ In 2020, China's share in global coal consumption increased to 53 percent. As

China and India (12 percent) together account for roughly two-thirds of world coal use.

#### **Note :**

- ◆ China is the world's largest consumer, producer and Importer of coal followed by India being the 2nd largest producer, consumer and importer.

### **Japan launches Inmarsat-6 F1 Communications Satellite into Geostationary Orbit**

Japan has launched Inmarsat-6-F1, a communication satellite, through a Mitsubishi Heavy Industries' (MHI) H-IIA204 rocket from Japan's Tanegashima Space Center that will enter geostationary orbit, about 22,240 miles (35,790 kilometers) above earth.

- ◆ It is developed by the London-based company Inmarsat as a part of its next generation satellite broadband service.
- ◆ The satellite is 12,060 -pound (5,470 kilograms) and is the first of two 'I-6' spacecraft.

#### **Key Points :**

- ◆ Designated H-IIAF45, Inmarsat-6 F1 launch is Japan's third orbital flight of 2021 and H-IIA's second mission of the year, marking the 45th flight of the H-IIA vehicle overall.
- ◆ It is dual-payload satellites featuring both L-band (ELERA) and Ka-band (Global Xpress).
- ◆ It is the world's largest and most sophisticated commercial communications satellite ever launched.
- ◆ H-IIA is Japan's longest-serving liquid-fueled rocket (since 2001) and currently largest rocket operated by MHI for the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)

## China Launches New Camera Satellite 'Ziyuan-1 02E' to Find Resources

On 26<sup>th</sup> December 2021, the China National Space Administration (CNSA) stated about China's launch of a new satellite with a high-resolution camera that can take pictures of the ground with a resolution of 5 meters.

- ◆ The satellite, named 'Ziyuan-1 02E' or 'five-meter optical satellite 02' was launched by a Long March-4C rocket from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre in north China's Shanxi province.

### About 'Ziyuan-1 02E' or 'five-meter optical satellite 02':

- ◆ The Ziyuan-1 02E weighs about 2.5 kilograms and it is equipped with infrared, near-infrared and hyperspectral cameras that can take full-colour panchromatic images of the Earth.
- ◆ Pictures taken by the satellites will help engineers survey China's geological environment and search for minerals.
- ◆ It also helps in other areas like transportation, agriculture and disaster mitigation.
- ◆ The satellite will work with the 5-meter optical satellite 01 and shorten the revisit time of Chinese territory from three days to two days.

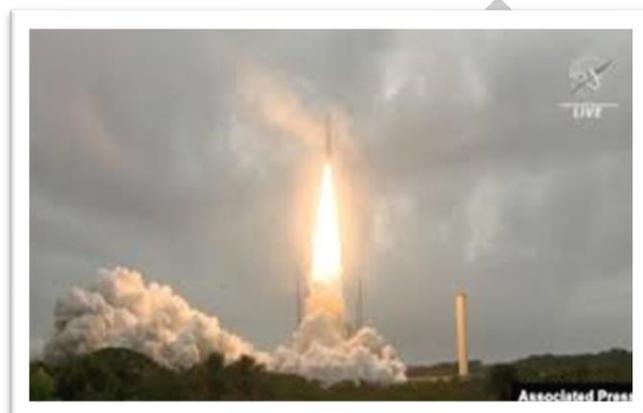
### Highlights :

- ◆ The Long March-4C carrier rocket also sent a small satellite that belongs to Beijing 101 Middle School into orbit.
- ◆ It carries payloads such as a small imaging camera, intelligent processing equipment, and equipment for conducting experiments

on semiconductor thermoelectric generation, state-run Xinhua.

- ◆ It will carry out auxiliary geography teaching, scientific and technological experiments and other popular science activities for middle school students.

## NASA's James Webb Space Telescope Launched from French Guiana, South America



On December 25, 2021, NASA's (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), an infrared telescope, launched through the Arianespace's heavy-lift Ariane 5 rocket from the European Space Agency's (ESA) spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana, on South America's northeast coast.

- ◆ It is named after James Edwin Webb, one of the architects of the Apollo Moon programme.
- ◆ It will be positioned at a spot called Lagrange Point 2 (L2) 1.5 million kilometre from earth or more than four times beyond the moon.
- ◆ Its commissioning in space will take 6 months. The mission span is between 5-15 years.

## Russia Test-fires New Hypersonic Tsirkon Missiles from Frigate and Submarine

On 31 December 2021, Russia successfully test-fired around 10 new Tsirkon (Zircon) hypersonic cruise missiles from a frigate and other two missiles from a submarine.

### Key Points :

- ◆ The Zircon missile would be capable of flying at nine times the speed of sound and have a range of 1,000 kilometres (620 miles).
- ◆ The deployment of the missiles will elevate the capability of Russia's military power.

### About Tsirkon (Zircon) Hypersonic Cruise Missile:

- ◆ The Tsirkon Cruise Missile will join Avangard glide vehicles and the air-launched Kinzhal (Dagger) missiles in Russia's hypersonic arsenal.
- ◆ Cruise missiles differ from ballistic missiles in that they fly towards their target at lower altitudes, remaining within the Earth's atmosphere throughout their trajectory.
- ◆ It is one of the several missiles being developed in Russia that will arm up Russian submarines, frigates, and cruisers.
- ◆ Hypersonic Weapons are much harder to track and intercept than traditional projectiles because they can travel more than five times the speed of sound and maneuver in mid-flight.

### About Russia :

- ◆ President- Vladimir Putin
- ◆ Capital-Moscow
- ◆ Currency-Russian ruble

## Shanghai Opened 2 Driverless Metro Lines; Becomes Longest Metro Line in the World



Shanghai, the biggest city in China, has opened 2 new driverless metro lines (Line 14 and Phase One of Line 18) and retained its titles as the World's longest Metro line. With the inclusion of the 2 new driverless lines, the total length of Shanghai's metro network is extended to 831 km.

### Shanghai Metro Network :

- ◆ The 2 new fully driverless metro lines take the total number of automatic lines in Shanghai to 5.
- ◆ At present Shanghai operates 5 of fully automated metro lines, which makes the city the first in the World.
- ◆ Line 14 of the Shanghai metro network which operates for 38 km, is the first fully automatic metro line for 8-car trains in the city.
- ◆ With the inclusion of the 2 new metro lines, Shanghai now has 20 metro lines with 508 stations.

### Key Points :

- ◆ Shanghai is followed by Beijing (China) and Delhi(India) in the 2nd and 3rd spot on the list of cities with the largest metro network. Beijing has about 780 km long metro lines with 450 stations.

## **New Coronavirus Variant Named IHU Discovered in France**

The Scientists of France have discovered a new variant of the Coronavirus, named IHU - B.1.640.2 variant. The new variant named IHU was discovered by the academics at the institute IHU Mediterranean Infection, Marseille, France.

- ◆ IHU variant contains 46 mutations (more than the Omicron) and 37 deletions resulting in 30 amino acid substitutions and 12 deletions.
- ◆ IHU (B.1.640.2) has not been spotted in other countries or labelled a variant under investigation by the World Health Organization (WHO).

## **JC Chaudhry gets first ever Guinness World Record in Numerology**

India's one of the top numerologists, JC Chaudhry has achieved the first-ever Guinness World Record in Numerology and the first world record of 2022 by educating about ancient science to around 6000 participants, enthusiasts of numerology joined from the United States, the United Kingdom, Middle East, and India. The Guinness World Record London office has opened a new category, "Numerology" for this achievement.

## **Veteran Director Peter Bogdanovich passes away**

Oscar-nominated Hollywood Director Peter Bogdanovich passed away at the age of 82 on January 7, 2022. Bogdanovich had served as a bridge between Old Hollywood and new Hollywood. The legendary director had directed the film the 1971 black and white classic, 'Last

Picture Show', which had received 8 Oscar nominations including for best director. He has also directed movies such as 'Mask', 'At Long Last Love' and 'Daisy Miller.'

## **Antigua and Barbuda joined ISA as the 102nd member**

The Caribbean nation of Antigua and Barbuda joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA) as the 102nd member by signing the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement, the India-led global green energy initiative. The Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Gaston Browne signed the framework agreement in the presence of Indian High Commissioner Dr K. J. Srinivasa to catalyze global energy transition through a solar-led approach.

## **India and 5 Other Nations Begin Anti-Submarine Exercise 'Sea Dragon 22' with US Navy**

The United States (US) Navy Seventh Fleet announced the beginning of the multilateral anti-submarine warfare (ASW) exercise, 'Sea Dragon 22' in Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, in the western Pacific.

- ◆ The six nations that are participating in the exercise are the US, Australia, Canada, India, Japan and South Korea.

### **Note :**

- ◆ India, Japan, Australia and America are also part of the Quad, and also participate in the Malabar exercise.

## Key Highlights:

- ◆ The P-8 Poseidon Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft (MPRA) with Patrol Squadron (VP) 47 and Tridents of VP- 26 will Join the exercise.
- ◆ The 'Golden Swordsmen of VP-47', part of Commander Task Force (CTF) 72, are stationed in Whidbey Island, Washington, and are currently deployed to Misawa Air Base in Aomori, Japan.
- ◆ The 'Tridents of VP-26', part of CTF 72, are stationed in Jacksonville, Florida, and are currently deployed to Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, Japan.
- ◆ Throughout their deployment, 'Golden Swordsmen of VP-47' & 'Tridents of VP 26 will conduct maritime patrol and reconnaissance and theater outreach operations within the 7th Fleet area of operations.

## Google Doodle pays tribute to Stephen Hawking on his birth anniversary



The Google doodle on January 8 marks the birth anniversary of the iconic physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking, who is known for his work on the origins of the universe.

Hawkins was born in Oxford in England in 1942 into a family of physicians. He went on to study at the University College in Oxford and then the Trinity Hall, Cambridge. He completed a PhD degree in theoretical physics and applied mathematics.



## Argentina Beat Germany to lift 12th MEN's FIH Junior Hockey World Cup 2021 in Bhubaneswar Odisha



Argentina junior men's hockey team defeated Germany by 4-2 in the final of the 2021 Men's FIH Hockey Junior World Cup (WC) or 12th edition of the Men's FIH Hockey Junior WC to clinch their second Junior Men's Hockey WC title at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. This was held from November 24, 2021 - December 5, 2021.

- ◆ This makes them only the third team after Germany (six titles) and India (2001, 2016) to win multiple Junior Hockey WC titles.
- ◆ The third place was clinched by France after defeating India by 3-1 in the Bronze medal match.

### Point to be noted:

- ◆ This biennial men's under-21 field hockey world championship was organized by the International Hockey Federation (FIH).

### Other Awards:

- ◆ Best Player of the Tournament: Timothée Clément (FRANCE)
- ◆ Best Goalkeeper of the Tournament: Anton Brinckman (GERMANY)
- ◆ Hero Top Scorer of the Tournament: Miles Bukkens (NETHERLANDS) (18 goals)
- ◆ Odisha Fair Play Award: Team Chile
- ◆ Odisha Fans Choice Award for Best Goal of the Tournament: Ignacio Nardolillo (ARGENTINA)
- ◆ Hockey India Maximum Team Goals: NETHERLANDS (45 goals)
- ◆ Hockey India Best Goal Saved of the Tournament: Mahmoud Seleem (EGYPT)
- ◆ AM/NS India Best Coach of the Tournament: Johannes Schmitz (GERMANY)

### Highlights of 2021 BWF World Championships

The 2021 Badminton World Federation (BWF) World championship (officially known as the Total Energies BWF World Championships 2021), an annual tournament was held between 12th December 2021 and 19th December 2021 in Huelva, Spain Venue - Palacio de los Deportes Carolina Marin, Spain

## Highlights :

Kidambi Srikanth has won India's first medal at the 2021 World Championships.

It was Kidambi's first-ever World Championships podium and also India's third medal at the World Championships in men's singles.

Loh Kean Yew is the first player from Singapore to win a world championship title.

## Pankaj Advani wins 2021 National Billiards Title



In December 2021, Pankaj Advani defended his National Billiards Title- to win his 11th one-after defeating his PSPB teammate Dhruv Sitwala in a 5-2 game final that was held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh (MP).

- ◆ He represented the Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) team in the National Billiards Championship.
- ◆ The 88th National Billiards and Snooker Championships 2021, held at Bhopal, MP. It was organised by Billiards and Snooker Federation of India (BSFI), the governing body for cue sports in India.

## About Pankaj Advani:

- ◆ Pankaj Arjan Advani is an Indian billiards and snooker player, who was the only cueist to win the Asian and World Championships in all formats of billiards and snooker.

## List of Championships :

- ◆ He has won the IBSF World Billiards Championship - 15 times, The World Team Billiards Championship - 1 time, among others
- ◆ Awards - Arjuna Award in 2004, Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award in 2006, Padma Shri in 2009 and Padma Bhushan in 2018

## Cricket-Himachal Pradesh Cricket Team won 2021-22 Vijay Hazare Trophy

On 26th December 2021, Himachal Pradesh cricket team won its maiden Vijay Hazare Trophy 2021-22 or 20th season of the Vijay Hazare Trophy title after defeating Tamil Nadu in the finals that was held at Sawai Mansingh Stadium, Jaipur, Rajasthan.

Shubham Arora of Himachal Pradesh was adjudged as the Player of the Match for his majestic hundred in the final.

It is Himachal's first-ever domestic title. Himachal Pradesh team defeated Tamil Nadu team by 11 Runs and also used VJD method (V Jayadevan system) to win. Vijay Hazare Trophy also known as the Ranji One-Day Trophy, is an annual Twenty 20 (T20) cricket tournament conducted since 2002-03. It is named after the famous Indian cricketer Vijay Hazare. It is a "List A cricket tournament" in India & Administered by Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)

## Pakistan all rounder **Mohameed Hafez** announces retirement from International Cricket



**V**eteran Pakistan all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez (41), who captained his national team in every format of the game, has announced his retirement from international cricket.

- ◆ He represented Pakistan in 392 international matches in which he scored 12,789 runs and took 253 wickets.
- ◆ He has played 55 Tests, 218 ODIs (One Day International) and 119 T20Is (Twenty20 International) including three ICC (International Cricket Council) ODI World Cups and six T20 World Cups.
- ◆ He won 32 Player-of-the-Match awards, the fourth-highest among Pakistan players in all international cricket, after Shahid Afridi (43), Wasim Akram (39) and Inzamam-ul-Haq (33).
- ◆ Overall, Hafeez played in three 50-over World Cups (2007, 2011 and 2019), six 20-over World Cups (2007, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2021) and

three ICC Champions Trophies (2006, 2013 and 2017).

- ◆ Currently he signed up with Lahore Qalandars for the upcoming edition of the Pakistan Super League and will be available for global franchise cricket.

## Three-time Olympic Gold winning Triple Jump Champion- Viktor Saneyev passed away

**T**he Olympic triple jump - 3-time gold medalist and former world record holder, Viktor Danilovich Saneyev passed away in Australia at the age of 76 years.

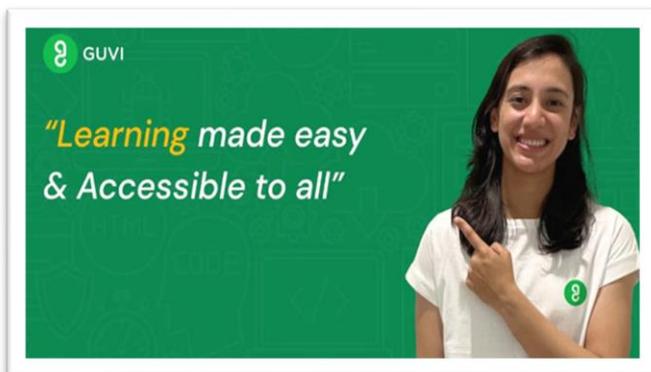
- ◆ Viktor Saneyev was born on October 3, 1945, in Georgia.
- ◆ He was a triple long player who represented the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) in the Olympic games. Later he worked as a coach in Australia.
- ◆ He clinched four Olympic titles which include three gold medals and one silver medal.
- ◆ He secured gold medals in European Games organized in 1969 Athens and 1974 Rome.

### Olympic career :

- ◆ 1968 Mexico City- Gold medal
- ◆ 1972 Munich- Gold medal
- ◆ 1976 Montreal- Gold medal
- ◆ 1980 Moscow- Silver medal



## Smriti Mandana Signed as Brand Ambassador of GUVI



Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) incubated startup, GUVI has signed Indian Women's cricketer Smriti Mandhana as its brand ambassador.

As the brand ambassador of GUVI, Smriti Mandhana will be the face of GUVI and feature across the online campaigns of GUVI aimed to strengthen the importance and scope of technological education & information technology (IT) skills.

### Key Points:

- ◆ She will create awareness about technological education among everyone, especially among women.
- ◆ GUVI will be launching a cross-platform campaign with Smriti Mandhana, under which GUVI will offer the most affordable learning solutions for the youth, early professionals to develop their career profile in the IT industry.

## Sambit Patra named as Chairman of India Tourism Development Corporation

Sambit Patra has been appointed as the chairman of India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet. IAS officer, G. Kamala Vardhana Rao will hold the post of managing director of ITDC.

The India Tourism Development Corporation is a hospitality, retail, and education company owned by the Government of India, under the Ministry of Tourism. Earlier, Patra had served as an independent Director of ONGC.

## Pradip Shah appointed as Chairman of National Asset Reconstruction Company

Pradip Shah, the founder of IndAsia Fund Advisors, has been appointed chairman of the National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARCL).

Shah, an MBA from Harvard and chartered accountant, is credited for establishing India's first and largest housing finance company, HDFC, and rating firm Crisil.

While Aditya Birla Asset Reconstruction Company managing director Sanjay Jain will be the chief executive of India Debt Resolution Company (IDRCL), the privately-owned asset management company (AMC) mandated to resolve bad loans acquired by NARCL.

## **NHAI: Alka Upadhyaya appointed as chairperson of NHAI**

Centre effects major bureaucratic reshuffle. The Centre has appointed Alka Upadhyaya as chairperson of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). A 1990-batch IAS officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre, Upadhyaya is currently Additional Secretary, Department of Rural Development.

### **Other appointments:**

- ◆ Sanjay Bandopadhyay, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, has been named chairman, Inland Waterways Authority of India, a Personnel Ministry order said.
- ◆ Sundeep Kumar Nayak has been appointed as Director-General, National Productivity Council, Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade.

## **Former SBI Chairman Rajnish Kumar becomes new Strategic Group Advisor of OYO**

IPO-bound hospitality unicorn Oyo Hotels and Homes (Oyo) has appointed Rajnish Kumar, former Chairman of State Bank of India (SBI) as Strategic Group Advisor.

In his role, Kumar will advise Oyo's management on short-term and long-term strategy, regulatory and stakeholder engagement, and enhancing the brand of the company globally. He is currently a part of the boards of HSBC Asia Pacific, L&T infotech, Hero Motocorp and BharatPe.

## **Ujjivan Small Finance Bank named Ittira Davis as MD and CEO**



The Board of Directors of Ujjivan Small Finance Bank appointed Ittira Davis as the MD and CEO of the bank. Davis has been appointed as the MD and CEO for a period of 3 years from the date of approval of the RBI or such other period as may be approved by RBI.

Davis was the MD and CEO of Ujjivan Financial Services Limited from July 2018 from where he resigned in 2021.

## **FICCI appoints Sanjiv Mehta as its President**

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) announced that Sanjiv Mehta, the Chairman and Managing Director of Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), will be appointed as its President. Mehta, presently the Senior Vice President of FICCI, will be succeeding media industry veteran Uday Shankar.

Mehta is also the President of Unilever South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka & Nepal), and is a member of the 'Unilever Leadership Executive' which is Unilever's Global Executive Board.

## **Catherine Russell appointed as the new head of UNICEF**

**U**N Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appointed Catherine Russell as the head of UN children's agency UNICEF, also known as the United Nations Children's Fund. Catherine Russell is an assistant to US President Joe Biden. She also heads the White House Office of Presidential Personnel. Russell will succeed Henrietta Fore, who resigned in July 2021 because of a family health issue.

## **Ravinder Bhakar assumed charge of NFDC, films division and CFSI**

**C**EO of Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), Ravinder Bhakar has assumed charge of National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), Films Division, and Children Films Society of India (CFSI). He is a 1999-batch officer of the Indian Railway Stores Service (IRSS). He has been assigned these charges in addition to his present duties as CEO of the film certification body.

## **British Indian Leena Nair is the new global CEO of Chanel**

**F**rench fashion house Chanel named Leena Nair, an executive from Unilever, as its new global CEO. Nair's career at Unilever spanned 30 years, most recently as the chief of human resources and a member of the executive committee.

The recruitment of Nair, who rose through the ranks of Unilever having started out as a trainee on the factory floor, comes as the fashion industry is under pressure to show a more inclusive approach.

## **Gita Gopinath appointed as IMF's First Deputy Managing Director**



**I**ndian-American and the first female Chief Economist of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Gita Gopinath is promoted as the IMF's First Deputy Managing Director (FDMD) serving under IMF Chief Kristalina Georgieva. She will succeed FDMD Geoffrey Okamoto who is set to be relieved from IMF.

### **About Gita Gopinath:**

- ◆ She was born on 8 December 1971 in Kannur, Kerala.
- ◆ She has been serving as the Chief Economist of the IMF since 2019. In that role she is the Director of IMF Research Department and the Economic Counsellor of the Fund.
- ◆ Gita Gopinath was also appointed to various positions including as an advisory member to the US Federal Reserve Bank and also as an economic advisor to the Kerala Chief Minister (CM).

## **Arvind Kumar Joins Software Technology Parks of India as DG**

**A**rvind Kumar has joined as Director General of Software Technology Parks of India. Software Technology Parks of India is an autonomous body under the Ministry of

Electronics & Information Technology  
Government of India.

STPI is fuelling the culture of tech entrepreneurship and innovation in the country by launching 25 + Centres of Entrepreneurship in emerging technology domains.

#### **About the Software Technology Parks of India:**

- ◆ Currently, STPI-registered units have reached IT/ITeS/ESDM exports of over Rs. 5 lakh crores.
- ◆ STPI is one of the largest tech incubators in India with an area of approx.13 lakh square feet spread across various Tier 1/2/3 cities.
- ◆ STPI is also assisting in the formulation of India BPO Promotion Scheme 2.0. Further to strengthen the electronics sector, STPI has undertaken rolling out of the Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC 2.0) Scheme.

#### **Mohit Jain Elected as New President of Indian Newspaper Society**

**M**ohit Jain of The Economic Times has been elected President of The Indian Newspaper Society for the year 2021-22. He succeeds L. Adimoolam of Health & The Antiseptic.

The 82nd Annual General Meeting of the Indian Newspaper Society – an apex body of Publishers of Newspapers, Magazines & Periodicals in the country, was held through Video Conference.

#### **Atul Dinkar Rane appointed as BrahMos Aerospace CEO and MD**

**A**tul Dinkar Rane has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of the BrahMos Aerospace Limited that

manufactures the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile.

His pioneering contributions and techno-managerial leadership has been transformative for the successful development and induction of BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile into Armed Forces.

Rane is renowned for his decades of sustained R&D contributions in the indigenous design and development of mission-critical Onboard Computers (OBC), hardware in loop simulation studies, systems analysis, development of mission software and avionics technologies for defence applications.

His pioneering contributions and techno-managerial leadership has been transformative for the successful development and induction of BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile into Armed Forces.

#### **RBL Bank: Rajeev Ahuja appointed new MD**

**T**he RBL Bank board has appointed Rajeev Ahuja, who's currently working as the Executive Director at the bank, as interim Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of the bank with immediate effect, subject to the regulatory and other approvals.

The board of directors at its meeting has accepted the request of Vishwavir Ahuja, Managing Director and CEO of the bank, to proceed on leave with immediate effect.

#### **ITBP DG Sanjay Arora to hold SSB additional charge**

**I**TBP director general Sanjay Arora will hold the additional charge of another border guarding force Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) as the

latter's chief Kumar Rajesh Chandra is set to retire on December 31. Arora, a 1988-batch officer of Tamil Nadu cadre, was appointed the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)

DG in August and he took charge of the India-China LAC guarding force on September 1. The SSB is primarily tasked to guard unfenced Indian borders with Nepal and Bhutan.

### **Anupam Ray to become India's new ambassador to UN Conference on Disarmament**



Senior diplomat Anupam Ray has been appointed as India's next permanent representative to the UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Ray, a 1994-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, is currently serving as a joint secretary in the MEA's headquarters in Delhi.

Ray will succeed Pankaj Sharma. Sharma, a 1991-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, has been appointed as India's next ambassador to Mexico.

### **Baldev Prakash named as MD and CEO of J&K Bank**

Baldev Prakash has been appointed as the Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO) of Jammu & Kashmir

Bank for three years. His appointment will be effective from the date of taking charge or April 10, 2022, whichever is earlier.

Apart from him, R K Chhibber has been appointed as an additional director on the board of the bank.

### **Vinay Kumar Tripathi named as Chairman and CEO of Railway Board**

1983 Batch of Indian Railway Service, Vinay Kumar Tripathi has been appointed as new Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Railway Board.

He is presently working as General Manager, Northeastern Railway to the post of Chairman of Railway Board. Indian Railway Board is the apex body of the Indian Railways, which reports to parliament through the Ministry of Railways.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has not only approved the appointment of Tripathi for six months from January 1 but also further granted an extension of his tenure till 31 December in 2022.

### **VS Pathania takes over as Director General of Indian Coast Guard**



V.S. Pathania took over as the 24th Director General (DG) of the Indian Coast

Guard from Krishnaswamy Natarajan who retired from service.

He is an alumnus of Defence Services Staff College, Wellington and National Defence College, New Delhi. He was elevated to the rank of Additional Director General in Nov 2019 and took over the reins as Coast Guard Commander (Eastern Seaboard) at Visakhapatnam.

### **Former RBI Governor Urjit Patel Appointed as Vice President of AIIB**

**F**ormer Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor, Urjit Patel has been appointed as Vice President of the multilateral funding institution Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) for a period of three years. He will be one of the five Vice Presidents of the AIIB. He is expected to take charge from February 2022.

He will succeed outgoing Vice President D J Pandian, who is in charge of sovereign and non-sovereign lending of the AIIB in South Asia, the Pacific Islands and South-East Asia.

### **Govt Re-Appoints Vijay Paul Sharma as CACP Chairman**

**T**he Centre has re-appointed Vijay Paul Sharma as the chairman of the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) after he relinquished the post in May last year following completion of the five-year tenure. The role of the CACP chairman will be crucial in the proposed committee on the minimum support price (MSP) and other reforms. Sharma, a professor at the Centre for Management in Agriculture at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, was appointed CACP Chairman for the first time in June 2016.



# List of Important Days National & International



## International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2021

The United Nations (UN)'s International Day of Persons with Disabilities is annually observed across the globe on 3rd December to create awareness about the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

- ◆ The day also aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development,
- ◆ The theme of International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2021 is "Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-covid-19 world.". Observance in India: National Awards:
- ◆ As a part of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities observance, Ram Nath Kovind, President of India, conferred the National Awards 2020 in the field of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.
- ◆ Tamil Nadu won National Award 2020 under Best State category: The state of Tamil Nadu(TN) has won the National Awards 2020 for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities under the Best State in Promoting Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities category.

## Indian Navy Day 2021- December 4

The Indian Navy Day is annually observed across India on 4th December to commemorate the victory of India Navy's Operation Trident, launched during the 1971 Indo-Pak war and to pay homage to the martyrs who lost their lives in the line of duty.

- ◆ The day reaffirms the Indian Navy's commitment to preserve, protect and promote India's maritime interest.
- ◆ The theme of 2021 Indian Navy Day is 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh', which highlights the 50th anniversary of the victory of the Indian armed forces in the 1971 IndoPak War.
- ◆ Indian Navy Week 2021 - 1st to 7th December:
- ◆ The Indian Navy Week 2021 will be observed from 1st to 7th December 2021 during which various activities and events will be organized.

## International Day of Banks 2021- December 4

The United Nations (UN)'s International Day of Banks is annually observed across the globe on 4th December to recognise the vital role of the banking systems in the UN Member States in contributing to the improvement of their standard of living.

The day also recognises the potential of multilateral development banks and other international development banks in financing sustainable development.

- ◆ 4th December 2021 marks the observance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Day of Banks.

#### Background:

- ◆ The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the resolution A/RES/74/245 on 19th December 2019 and proclaimed the 4th December of every year as the International Day of Banks.
- ◆ The first ever International Day of Banks was observed on 4th December 2020.

#### Human Rights Day 2021 - December 10

The United Nations (UN) Human Rights Day 2021 is observed annually on December 10, as the Day marks the anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1948.

#### The Theme :

- ◆ 'Equality - Reducing inequalities, advancing human rights' Aim - To raise awareness about people's social, cultural, and physical rights and to ensure the welfare of everyone.

#### Human Rights & SDG Goals:

- ◆ Human rights are the vital part of the sustainable development goals (SDG) Goal 10 - Reduced inequalities - Paves way for achievement the goal of 2021 human rights day.

#### Note :

- ◆ On 10th December the five-yearly United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights and Nobel Peace Prize is awarded.

#### International Mountain Day 2021 - December 11

The United Nations (UN)'s International Mountain Day is annually observed across the globe on 11th December to create awareness about the importance of preserving the mountains across the globe. The theme of International Mountain Day 2021 is "Sustainable Mountain tourism".

#### Background:

- ◆ The idea of the International Mountain Days originates in 1992 when the adoption of Chapter 13 of Agenda 21 "Making Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development" at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in the history of mountain development.
- ◆ The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has declared the year 2002 as the "International Year of Mountains".
- ◆ The UNGA also adopted the resolution A/RES/57/245 titled 'International Year of Mountains 2002' and proclaimed the 11th December of every year as the International Mountains Day.
- ◆ The first ever International Mountains Day was observed on 11th December 2003.

## International Universal Health Coverage 2021- December 12

The United Nations (UN)'s International Universal Health Coverage Day (UHC Day) is annually observed across the globe on 12 th December to create awareness about the need for strong and resilient health systems and Universal Health Coverage (UHC). The day also signifies the unprecedented momentum and global commitment to achieving Health for All by 2030.

- ◆ The UHC Day, 12th December, also marks the anniversary of the UN's unanimous endorsement of universal health coverage in 2012.
- ◆ The theme of UHC Day 2021 is "Leave No One's Health Behind: Invest in health systems for all."

## International Migrants Day 2021- December 18

The United Nations (UN)'s International Migrants Day is annually observed across the world on December 18th to increase the interest of the international community on effective and full protection of the human rights of the migrants. The day also aims to ensure that migrants' rights are not violated and are protected equally.

- ◆ The year 2021 marks the 70 th anniversary of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), established in 1951.
- ◆ The theme of International Migrants Day 2021 is "Harnessing The Potential Of Human Mobility'.

## About International Organization for Migration (IOM):

- ◆ Director General- António Vitorino
- ◆ Headquarters- Geneva, Switzerland

## UN World Arabic Language Day observed on December 18, 2021



On December 18,2021 , the annual United Nations' (UN) World Arabic Language Day was observed on the theme 'Arabic Language, a bridge between civilisations'.

This day honors the Arabic language, which is spoken by over 400 million people globally and celebrates the cultural diversity of the Middle Eastern region.

## About United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

- ◆ Director-General- Audrey Azoulay
- ◆ Headquarters- Paris, France

## Good Governance Day 2021- December 25

The Good Governance Day is annually observed across India on 25th December to commemorate the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the 10th Prime Minister(PM) of India, who was born on 25th December 1924 in Gwalior, Gwalior State (now Madhya Pradesh), British India.

- ◆ 25th December 2021, the '8th Good Governance Day' marks the 97<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

### Background:

- ◆ In 2014, The Government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared the 25th December of every year, the birth anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, as Good Governance Day.
- ◆ The first ever Good Governance Day was observed on 25th December 2014. Good Governance Week - 20 to 25th December 2021
- ◆ The Good Governance Week was celebrated from 20th to 25th December 2021 as a part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebration with the motto of taking good administration down to the villages.
- ◆ The theme of Good Governance Week is "Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur"

### JAG Department Celebrated 38<sup>th</sup> Corps Day-21<sup>st</sup> December 2021

The Judge Advocate General (JAG) or JAG Department, the legal wing of the Indian Army celebrated its 38<sup>th</sup> Corps Day on 21st December 2021. JAG Corps Day is annually celebrated on 21<sup>st</sup> December to mark the day on which the Bill for Army Act was introduced in the Parliament (21st December 1949).

- ◆ The post of Judge Advocate General (JAG) in India is held by a Major General, who is the legal and Judicial Chief of the Army.

- ◆ JAG is the legal advisor to the Chief of the Army Staff in the matters of Military, Martial and International Laws.
- ◆ Current JAG (army)- Major General Praveen Kumar

### World Day of War Orphans 2022 – January 6



World Day of War Orphans is annually observed across the globe on 6th January to create awareness about the condition of the children who were orphaned as a result of war or other conflicts. The day also highlights the need to protect the human rights of orphaned children.

- ◆ The day offers a platform to address the plight of war orphans and to highlight the emotional, social, and physical challenges children face while growing up.

### Background:

- ◆ World Day of War Orphans was started by the French organisation SOS Enfants en Detresses (SOSEED), which was working towards improving the lives of the children affected by war.

## World Braille Day January 4 2022

The United Nations (UN)'s World Braille Day is annually observed across the globe on 4th January to create awareness about the importance of braille as a means of communication in the full realization of human rights for blind and partially sighted people across the globe.

- ◆ 4th January also marks the birth anniversary of 19th-century French educator, Louis Braille, who invented Braille, a universally accepted system of reading and writing used by and for blind persons.

- ◆ 4th January 2022 marks the observance of the 4th World Braille Day and the 213th birth anniversary of Louis Braille.

### Background:

- ◆ The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the resolution A/RES/73/161 in November 2018 and proclaimed the 4th January of every year as World Braille Day.
- ◆ The first ever World Braille Day was observed on 4th January 2019.



## Current Affairs Quiz - 1

### NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS

1. NITI Aayog has planned to establish 1000 Atal Tinkering Laboratories in which Union Territory?  
(a) Ladakh (b) Delhi  
(c) Lakshadweep (d) Jammu and Kashmir
2. Which country has assumed the Chairmanship of Council of Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (RATS SCO)?  
(a) India (b) China  
(c) Singapore (d) Myanmar
3. What is the rank of India in the "World Talent Ranking Report 2021" published by IMD World Competitive Centre?  
(a) 42 (b) 53  
(c) 56 (d) 66
4. Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved how much policy-based loan to improve urban services in India?  
(a) \$100 million (b) \$150 million  
(c) \$300 million (d) \$350 million
5. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently approved Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) to increase its stake in which bank up to 9.99%?  
(a) HDFC Bank (b) IndusInd Bank  
(c) Axis Bank (d) ICICI Bank
6. Which of the following has developed the Pinaka Extended Range (Pinaka-ER) Rocket which has been successfully test fired recently?  
(a) Indian Space Research Organisation  
(b) Defence Research and Development Laboratory  
(c) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited  
(d) Defence Research and Development Organisation

7. Which state government has set up General Category Commission (Samanya Varg Aayog) for upper castes?  
(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Uttar Pradesh  
(c) Arunachal Pradesh (d) Himachal Pradesh
8. Government of Karnataka has signed a Letter of Understanding (LoU) with which organization as a part of the state-level initiative 'Code-Unnati' to improve entrepreneurship & youth employment?  
(a) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development  
(b) United Nations Development Programme  
(c) United Nations Human Rights Council  
(d) United Nations Security Council
9. Which state is holding the top spot with 255,700 registered EVs?  
(a) Gujarat (b) Karnataka  
(c) Tamil Nadu (d) Uttar Pradesh
10. What was the rank of India in the Global Health Security (GHS) Index 2021?  
(a) 49 (b) 55  
(c) 66 (d) 74
11. India has been re-elected to International Maritime Organisation Council for 2022-2023. Where is the headquarters of International Maritime Organisation (IMO)?  
(a) Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur (b) Jakarta, Indonesia  
(c) Shanghai, China (d) London, United Kingdom
12. Which country became the first country to transition to 4 and half-day work week?  
(a) Qatar (b) Oman  
(c) Kuwait (d) United Arab Emirates
13. Which Payments Bank has partnered with NPCI Bharat BillPay Limited (NBBL) to facilitate pan India doorstep bill payments service?  
(a) Paytm Payments Bank (b) Airtel Payments Bank  
(c) India Post Payments Bank (d) Fino Payments Bank

14. Who among the following has won the 2021 Miss Universe crown?  
(a) Adline Castelino (b) Sanjana Vij  
(c) Vartika Singh (d) Harnaaz Sandhu
15. Sarayu Nahar National Project has been inaugurated by Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi in which of the following state?  
(a) Gujarat (b) Karnataka  
(c) Tamil Nadu (d) Uttar Pradesh
16. Which UT's Police has launched an e-learning platform "Unnati" to skill school dropouts under the flagship scheme 'YUVA'?  
(a) Jammu and Kashmir (b) Delhi  
(c) Lakshadweep (d) Puducherry
17. Which state has topped the list of state with maximum of beneficiaries under Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY)?  
(a) West Bengal (b) Jharkhand  
(c) Maharashtra (d) Chhattisgarh
18. Geographical Indications Registry (GIR) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has accepted the proposal to retain which state's Mithila Makhana's Geographical Identification (GI) tag?  
(a) Rajasthan (b) Uttarakhand  
(c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Bihar
19. Which of the following has become the world's first government to turn 100% paperless?  
(a) Dubai, United Arab Emirates (b) Lausanne, Switzerland  
(c) Montreal, Canada (d) Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
20. Which organization has flight-tested Helicopter-launched Stand-off Anti-tank (SANT) Missile?  
(a) Indian Army  
(b) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited  
(c) DRDO  
(d) Defence Research and Development Laboratory

21. Which company has tied up with Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) to scale-up Alkaline Electrolyze technology for Green Hydrogen production?  
(a) Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (b) Reliance Industries  
(c) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (d) Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd
22. Amit Shah has laid the foundation stone of Umiya Mata Dham temple and temple premises under Maa Umiya Dham Development Project at \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Ahmedabad, Gujarat (b) Bhavnagar, Gujarat  
(c) Anand, Gujarat (d) Porbandar, Gujarat
23. Which state has inked agreement with United Nations Capital Development Fund's (UNCDF) to launch "Mission Shakti Living Lab" for financial empowerment of women?  
(a) Karnataka (b) Andhra Pradesh  
(c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Odisha
24. Which state's Askot Wildlife Sanctuary has been declared as the Askot Wildlife Sanctuary Eco-Sensitive Zone?  
(a) Nagaland (b) Sikkim  
(c) Uttarakhand (d) West Bengal
25. ADB has projected India's economic growth for 2021-2022 at \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) 10.0% (b) 9.7%  
(c) 8.9% (d) 6.5%
26. Which bank has tied up with Swift to provide digital banking solutions to clients?  
(a) ICICI Bank (b) RBL Bank  
(c) State Bank of India (d) Axis Bank
27. India's First International Arbitration and Mediation Centre (IAMC) has been inaugurated in which state?  
(a) New Delhi (b) Mumbai  
(c) Hyderabad (d) Bengaluru
28. Who has authored the book titled "India's Ancient Legacy of Wellness"?  
(a) Amitav Ghosh (b) Subhadra Sen Gupta  
(c) Avtar Singh Bhasin (d) Rekha Chaudhari

29. Which of the following state government has recently announced that the creation of three new districts, namely Tseminyu, Niuland and Chumoukedima?  
(a) Assam (b) Nagaland  
(c) Arunachal Pradesh (d) Mizoram
30. Which state of India has become the first LPG enabled and smoke free state in the country?  
(a) Kerala (b) Gujarat  
(c) Maharashtra (d) Himachal Pradesh

## Current Affairs Quiz - 2

### SPORTS APPOINTMENTS AND DAYS OF IMPORTANCE

1. Who among the following has been appointed as the head of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)?  
(a) Catherine Russell (b) Audrey Azoulay  
(c) Henrietta H Fore (d) Rafael Grossi
2. On which date International Universal Health Coverage Day is celebrated every year?  
(a) 12 December (b) 11 December  
(c) 15 December (d) 13 December
3. Who has won his maiden Formula One Drivers' championship title in the Abu Dhabi GP 2021?  
(a) Sergio Perez (b) Esteban Ocon  
(c) Max Verstappen (d) Valtteri Bottas
4. India has won total of six medals, including two gold and 4 silver medals in the Asian Rowing Championship. Asian Rowing Championship 2021 was held in \_\_\_\_\_  
(a) Vietnam (b) Thailand  
(c) Indonesia (d) Malaysia
5. Who has been named 'Person of the Year' for 2021 by TIME Magazine?  
(a) Joe Biden (b) Elon Musk  
(c) Vladimir Putin (d) Jeff Bezos
6. Who among the following has assumed charge of NFDC, Films Division and Children Films Society of India (CFSI)?  
(a) Abhas Jha (b) Ravinder Bhakar  
(c) Anil Dave (d) Sunil Arora

7. International Tea Day is observed every year on \_\_\_\_\_ in India.  
(a) 14 December (b) 15 December  
(c) 16 December (d) 17 December
8. Who is the head of the Advisory Committee for Leveraging Regulatory and Technology Solutions (ALeRTS) set up by Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)?  
(a) Mukundakam Sharma (b) Sudarshan Sen  
(c) Deepak B Phatak (d) Madhabi Puri Buch
9. Who among the following has been honoured with Sports Journalists' Federation of India (SJFI) Medal 2021?  
(a) Sunil Gavaskar (b) Rahul Dravid  
(c) Ravi Shastri (d) Anil Kumble
10. Who has been named Time magazine's 2021 Athlete of the Year?  
(a) Sofia Kenin (b) Victoria Azarenka  
(c) Jen Brady (d) Simone Biles
11. Who among the following has been honoured with SJFI Sportsman of the year 2021?  
(a) Bajrang Punia (b) Yogeshwar Dutt  
(c) Ravi Dahiya (d) Neeraj Chopra
12. Which state has launched Sports Action toward Harnessing Aspiration of Youth (SAHAY) scheme?  
(a) West Bengal (b) Jharkhand  
(c) Karnataka (d) Chhattisgarh
13. What is the theme of the International Migrants Day 2021?  
(a) Reimagining Human Mobility  
(b) Harnessing the potential of human mobility  
(c) #WeTogether  
(d) Migrants and Refugees Challenge Us
14. Every year, \_\_\_\_\_ is observed as the Minorities Rights Day to uphold the right to freedom and equal opportunities for the ethnic minorities in India.  
(a) December 18 (b) December 19  
(c) December 20 (d) December 21

15. World Arabic Language Day is observed globally on \_\_\_\_\_ every year.  
(a) 16th December (b) 17th December  
(c) 18th December (d) 19th December
16. Who has been appointed as the Managing Director (MD) of Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL)?  
(a) Unsoo Kim (b) Chun Doo-hwan  
(c) Seon Seob Kim (d) Jack Ma
17. Who among the following has won 'Best Female Debut' honour at 2021 Paralympic Sport Awards?  
(a) Lovlina Borgohain (b) Sonalben Madhubhai Patel  
(c) Mirabai Chanu (d) Avani Lekhara
18. On which date, Goa Liberation Day is celebrated every year?  
(a) 16 December (b) 17 December  
(c) 19 December (d) 20 December
19. Karl Nehammer has been sworn in as the chancellor of which country?  
(a) Sweden (b) Norway  
(c) Denmark (d) Austria
20. India has won 16 medals in Commonwealth Weightlifting Championship 2021 held at \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (b) Dushanbe, Tajikistan  
(c) Tashkent, Uzbekistan (d) New Delhi, India



# ANSWERS



## Current Affairs Quiz - 1

### NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS

1.(d) Jammu and Kashmir

**Exp.** The NITI Aayog has planned to establish 1000 Atal Tinkering Laboratories in Jammu and Kashmir. Out of 1000 Atal Tinkering Laboratories, 187 will be established by the end of the financial year 2021-22.

2.(a) India

**Exp.** India assumed the Chairmanship of Council of Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (RATS SCO) for 1 year from October 28, 2021.

3.(c) 56

**Exp.** World Talent Ranking report 2021: India ranked 56th; Switzerland retained top spot. IMD World Competitive Centre published its "World Talent Ranking Report" on December 9, 2021

4.(d) \$350 million

**Exp.** Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved Rs.2653.05 crore (USD 350 million) policy-based loan to improve urban services in India

5.(b) IndusInd Bank

**Exp.** Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India to increase its stake to 9.99 per cent in IndusInd Bank of the total issued and paid-up capital of the private sector lender.

6.(b) Defence Research and Development Laboratory

**Exp.** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test fired Pinaka Extended Range (Pinaka-ER), Area Denial Munitions (ADM) and indigenously developed it.

- 7.(d)** Himachal Pradesh  
**Exp.** Himachal Pradesh govt announced setting up Commission for upper castes, on the lines of Madhya Pradesh.
- 8.(b)** United Nations Development Programme  
**Exp.** Karnataka & UNDP signed LoU as a part of 'Code-Unnati' to improve entrepreneurship & youth employment.
- 9.(d)** Uttar Pradesh  
**Exp.** Uttar Pradesh holds top spot in Total Registered EVs in India: Ministry of Road Transport & Highways.
- 10.(c)** 66  
**Exp.** India ranked 66 out of 195 countries with an overall Index score of 42.8 and along with a change of -0.8 from 2019.
- 11.(d)** London, United Kingdom  
**Exp.** London, United Kingdom is the headquarters of International Maritime Organisation (IMO).
- 12.(d)** United Arab Emirates  
**Exp.** The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has announced to change its 5-day work-week to a 4 and a half day starting from 1st January 2022 and became the first country to make the employee-friendly transition as part of its efforts to improve productivity and work-life balance.
- 13.(c)** India Post Payments Bank  
**Exp.** India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) partnered with NPCI Bharat BillPay Limited (NBBL) to facilitate pan India doorstep bill payments service for IPPB and non-IPPB customers.
- 14.(d)** Harnaaz Sandhu  
**Exp.** India won the Miss Universe crown after 21 years after 21-year-old Harnaaz Sandhu from Chandigarh was named the winner of the 70th edition of the beauty pageant held in Israel
- 15.(d)** Uttar Pradesh  
**Exp.** PM Narendra Modi inaugurated Sarayu Nahar National Project in Balrampur, UP. The 40-year long pending project, Sarayu Nahar National Project, is inaugurated by Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi in Balrampur, Uttar Pradesh (UP).

- 16.(b)** Delhi  
**Exp.** Rakesh Asthana, Police Commissioner of Delhi launched an e-learning platform 'Unnati', under the Delhi Police's flagship scheme 'YUVA' at the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) Auditorium, New Delhi.
- 17.(c)** Maharashtra  
**Exp.** Maharashtra topped the list of state with maximum of beneficiaries under Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana.
- 18.(d)** Bihar  
**Exp.** The Geographical Indications Registry (GIR) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry accepted the proposal to rename Bihar Makhana or fox nut as Mithila Makhana and retain its Geographical Identification (GI) tag.
- 19.(a)** Dubai, United Arab Emirates  
**Exp.** Dubai became the world's first government to turn 100% paperless, the announcement was made by the United Arab Emirate (UAE) Crown Prince, Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.
- 20.(c)** DRDO  
**Exp.** IAF-DRDO flight-tested Helicopter-launched SANT Missile from Pokhran Range, Rajasthan.
- 21.(d)** Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd  
**Exp.** Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) has collaborated with Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) to scale-up Alkaline Electrolyze technology for Green Hydrogen production.
- 22.(a)** Ahmedabad Gujrat  
**Exp.** Union Home Minister Amit Shah laid the foundation stone of Umiya Mata Dham temple and temple premises under Maa Umiya Dham Development Project at Umiya Campus in Sola in Ahmedabad, Gujarat along with several developmental projects including a railway bridge.
- 23.(d)** Odisha  
**Exp.** Odisha inked agreement with UNCDF to launch "Mission Shakti Living Lab" for financial empowerment of women.
- 24.(c)** Uttarakhand  
**Exp.** According to the gazette of India issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), an area of 454.65 square kilometres around the boundary of Askot Wildlife Sanctuary in the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand has been declared as the Askot Wildlife Sanctuary Eco-sensitive Zone (ESZ).

- 25.(b)** 9.7%  
**Exp.** ADB projected growth forecast for 2021-2022 for India at 9.7% and developing Asia's at 7%.
- 26.(d)** Axis Bank  
**Exp.** Axis Bank is working with new digital services from provider Swift to provide a comprehensive digital solution to clients.
- 27.(c)** Hyderabad  
**Exp.** India's 1st International Arbitration and Mediation Centre (IAMC) inaugurated in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- 28.(d)** Rekha Chaudhari  
**Exp.** A book titled "India's Ancient Legacy of Wellness" authored by Dr Rekha Chaudhari was launched in the presence of the Governor of Maharashtra, Bhagat Singh Koshyari.
- 29.(b)** Nagaland  
**Exp.** The Nagaland government has announced the creation of three new districts, namely Tseminyu, Niuland and Chumoukedima
- 30.(d)** Himachal Pradesh  
**Exp.** Himachal Pradesh state of India has become the first LPG enabled and smoke free state in the country. The state has achieved this achievement due to Ujjwala Yojana and Grihini Suidha Yojana. The Ujjwala scheme was launched by the central government with the aim of freeing the women of the country from indoor pollution

## Current Affairs Quiz - 2

### SPORTS APPOINTMENTS AND DAYS OF IMPORTANCE

- 1.(a)** Catherine Russell  
**Exp.** UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appointed Catherine Russell as the head of UN children's agency UNICEF, also known as the United Nations Children's Fund.
- 2.(b)** 11 December  
**Exp.** UNICEF Day is observed on December 11 every year, to spread awareness on saving children's lives, defending their rights and helping them fulfil their potential from childhood to adolescence.
- 3.(c)** Max Verstappen  
**Exp.** Red Bull's Max Verstappen won maiden F1 Drivers' championship title by beating Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes in the season-ending Abu Dhabi GP 2021.

- 4.(b)** Thailand  
**Exp.** India won total of six medals, including two gold and 4 silver medals in the Asian Rowing Championship in Thailand.
- 5.(b)** Elon Musk  
**Exp.** The prestigious TIME magazine has named Elon Musk, the CEO of Tesla, as the “2021 Person of the Year.
- 6.(b)** Ravinder Bhakar  
**Exp.** CEO of Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), Ravinder Bhakar has assumed charge of National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), Films Division, and Children Films Society of India (CFSI).
- 7.(b)** 15 December  
**Exp.** International Tea Day is observed every year on December 15 in countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Vietnam, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Uganda, India, and Tanzania.
- 8.(d)** Madhabi Puri Buch  
**Exp.** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has set up an Advisory Committee for Leveraging Regulatory and Technology Solutions (ALeRTS) to enhance technological capabilities and explore suitable technology solutions for the early detection of market anomalies.
- 9.(a)** Sunil Gavaskar  
**Exp.** The Sports Journalists’ Federation of India (SJFI) has decided to honour former Indian Cricketer and cricket commentator Sunil Manohar Gavaskar with its prestigious ‘SJFI Medal 2021’ at SJFI Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Guwahati, Assam.
- 10.(d)** Simone Biles  
**Exp.** Simone Biles was named Time magazine’s 2021 Athlete of the Year. The world’s most decorated gymnast, a four-time Olympic medalist, was hailed for putting her mental health first when she withdrew from four event finals at the Tokyo Olympics.
- 11.(d)** Neeraj Chopra  
**Exp.** SJFI Sportsman of the year 2021 has been honoured to Neeraj Chopra.
- 12.(b)** Jharkhand  
**Exp.** Jharkhand CM launched Sports Action toward Harnessing Aspiration of Youth (SAHAY) scheme for maoist-hit areas.

**13.(b)** Harnessing the potential of human mobility

**Exp.** The theme of International Migrants Day 2021 is Harnessing the potential of human mobility.

**14.(a)** December 18

**Exp.** Every year, December 18 is observed as the Minorities Rights Day to uphold the right to freedom and equal opportunities for the ethnic minorities in India and create awareness about the respect and dignity of the minorities.

**15.(c)** 18<sup>th</sup> December

**Exp.** World Arabic Language Day is observed globally on 18th December every year. The Arabic language is one of the pillars of the cultural diversity of mankind.

**16.(a)** Unsoo Kim

**Exp.** Hyundai Motor Company has appointed Unsoo Kim as the Managing Director (MD) of Hyundai Motor India Limited (HMIL), starting from 1st January 2022.

**17.(d)** Avani Lekhara

**Exp.** Indian shooter Avani Lekhara, who has created history by winning India's first Gold medal in Shooting at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics, won the "Best Female Debut" honour at the 2021 Paralympic Sport Awards.

**18.(c)** 19 December

**Exp.** Goa Liberation Day is observed annually in India on December 19. The year 2021 marks the 60 years of Goa's independence.

**19.(d)** Austria

**Exp.** Karl Nehammer was sworn in as Austria's chancellor by Alexander

**20.(c)** Tashkent Uzbekistan

**Exp.** India won 16 medals in Commonwealth Weightlifting Championship 2021 held at Tashkent, Uzbekistan.