



pravahini

# Monthly Compendium

SUCCESS MANTRA (GTB Nagar)



**We would like to thank our dear students and parents for a fabulous 2021!**

In 2021, almost every aspect of our learning lives changed due to the pandemic & we are grateful for the way you all responded and cooperated with us. You faced it with courage and resilience. We are grateful for that strength.

The times, we are experiencing now, will be the subject of history and social lessons for generations to come. But as we know every coin has 2 sides, this crisis has also provided us the opportunity to think about all aspects of our studies and prepare differently. It has allowed us to examine how we can take advantage of technology to be more flexible in meeting the needs of every student.

Dear students! when you have a dream, you've got to grab it and never let it go.

May in this coming year, you make resolutions to work harder to achieve your dreams and acknowledge those who stand behind us no matter what, who motivate us and love us unconditionally.

Happy holiday and advanced wishes for a prosperous & healthy new year to you and your family!

Thank you,

**Success Mantra Smart Coaching**  
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# PREFACE

It gives us great pleasure to release the monthly edition of the PRAVAHINI - Monthly e-Compendium & Weekly e-Periodicals of Current Affairs. The magazine's members have shown considerable cooperation as well as devotion. We at successmantra.in work tirelessly to create this magazine and bring it to you with a great sense of gratitude.

The PRAVAHINI December-2021 eBook covers the current events that happened in the month of December. Current Affairs is a crucial component of any competitive exams including CLAT, AILET, DU-LLB, HM, CAT, IAS, PCS, SSC, Banking, MBA and various other competitive examinations.

Current Affairs play the bigger role in many competitive and government exams. It holds the power of making or breaking your chance of success. Therefore, the candidates should cover the Current Affairs thoroughly and smartly.

The PRAVAHINI December-2021 eBook is divided into different sections keeping in mind the need of various exams. The sections covered namely International, National, Economy, Ecology and Environment, Science & Technology, Legal Affairs, Sports, States News Makers and few others.

We would also be pleased to receive any suggestion that could assist us with the upcoming editions.

Success Mantra (GTB Nagar, Delhi)

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## Our Goal

Our goal at Success Mantra is to provide Quality education at rational price and thereby to create an environment that guides students towards the path of the success. Along with designing the curriculum and delivering the lectures, we work upon the ways the students think and approach problems asked.

*B.S. Shanti*



Success Mantra (Delhi) is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out, for your accomplishment. Delhi, GTB Nagar, branch of SUCCESS MANTRA Coaching is considered as the paramount choice of Law and Management aspirants, across country. Because, at the end of the day, it is our results which speak !

Since a decade, we have delivered thousands of 'Gems Students' to the nation and persistent in doing so. It is the platform where student's ideology is developed and their dreams take the face of reality. This act is splendidly demonstrable on our result chart of applicable courses. Students from numerous junctions of India come to GTB Nagar to avail best coaching classes at rational price. The vision, of making the quality education accessible to all, is furthermore augmented by the launch of EASE VIDYA Mobile application.

While Success Mantra (GTB Nagar) is the epitome to the classroom coaching program, EASE VIDYA Mobile Application (available on Android) is an online podium, available on the web and mobile application both. It is familiarized to ease up the high growing pressure of competition among students preparing for CLAT | AILET | DU-LLB | MHCET | SLAT | BHU | AMU | and other Major Law Entrance Examinations in India. Just in a couple of months of its launch, EASE VIDYA App has been proven to be the best solution for students who are preparing for various academic and competitive entrance examinations.

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# NATIONAL AFFAIRS

## WHAT IS GREATER TIPRALAND DEMAND?



**Greater Tipraland is a region in Tripura.** Several tribals are demanding to make the region a separate state.

There are 19 notified **Scheduled Tribes in Tripura.** Among these, 5.92

lakh are Tripuris, 1.88 lakh are Reangs.

These three tribal groups are the major tribes in the state. Some of the minor tribal groups have joined hands and formed **TIPRA Motha (Tirpaha Indigenous Regional Alliance)** and **IPFT (Indigenous People's Front of Tripura)** political parties.

These parties are now arguing that they want a separate state for their **"survival and existence"**.

**Constitutional Validity in the issue:** They claim that they are making the demand under **Article 2 and Article 3 of the constitution.**

**Article 2 of the constitution says that** "The Parliament shall permit the establishment of new states and union territories and also permit the entry of new states and UTs into the Indian Union". **Article 3 says that** "Parliament shall increase or diminish the area of a state".

**Tripura was ruled by the Manikya dynasty** from the late 13th century till it signed the Instrument of Accession with the **Government of India in 1949.**

## PM MODI TO INAUGURATE DELHI-DEHRADUN CORRIDOR



The Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to inaugurate **Delhi - Dehradun corridor** along with several other projects. **The corridor will reduce the distance between the two cities from 248 - km to 180 -**

km.

PM Modi will lay the foundation stone for Delhi - Dehradun corridor. **The corridor is to be built at a cost of Rs 8,300 crores.**

The project is to be executed in Engineering, Procurement and Construction mode. **In EPC mode, the government pays the private developer for constructing roads.** And the toll revenue accrues to the government.

The highway is to be divided into four sections. Section 1 is to be developed as 6 lanes. Also, it is divided into two packages.

**The package 1 falls in Delhi portion and Package 2 falls in Uttar Pradesh portion.** The main aim of the corridor is to decongest North East Delhi. **The corridor will enhance Mandala Vihar Yojana of Government of Uttar Pradesh** and also the development potential of Tronica city.

## UNION CABINET APPROVED KEN-BETWA PROJECT

On December 6, 2021, the **Union Cabinet approved the Ken-Betwa River interlinking project,** ahead of elections to major North Indian states.



**Ken-Betwa River**

**Interlinking project is worth Rs 44,605-crore.** This project promises to address the issue of water scarcity in Bundelkhand region, spreading across **Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Uttar Pradesh (UP).**

This project is expected to benefit several poverty-stricken regions in MP and UP. **Prime Minister Narendra Modi will formally lay the foundation stone for this project soon.**

**Out of a total Rs 44,605 crore for the project, the central government will provide the support of Rs 39,317 crore.** It covers a grant of Rs 36,290 crore and a loan of Rs 3,027 crore.

**The Ken-Betwa River Interlinking Project aims to transfer surplus water from Ken River in MP to Betwa River in UP in a bid to irrigate the drought-prone Bundelkhand region.**

Bundelkhand region spread across the districts of two states: Banda, Jhansi, Lalitpur and Mahoba districts in **UP and Tikamgarh, Panna and Chhatarpur districts in MP.**

**Ken-Betwa is one among the 30 rivers interlinking projects conceived across India.** This project has been delayed because of political and environmental issues several times, before getting approval on December 6.

Under this project, Daudhan Dam and a canal connecting the two rivers will be constructed.

*This project will ensure:*

**An annual irrigation on 1.06 million hectares**  
Drinking water supply to around 6.2 million people and  
**Generation of 103 Mw of hydropower & 27 Mw of solar power.**

This project will act as a boon to the water scarce districts of the bundelkhand region where farmers are dependent on monsoon. Interlinking will help in boosting agricultural production by area by including water intensive, plantation and cash crops in their crop cycle.

## PM MODI INAUGURATED SARYU CANAL PROJECT



Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate the Rs 9,802 crore Saryu Canal National project in Balrampur district of Uttar Pradesh on December 11.

The Saryu Canal project is the biggest in Uttar Pradesh. It will benefit some 25-30 lakh farmers across nine eastern UP districts namely, Bahraich, Gonda, Basti, Shravasti, Balrampur, Sant Kabir Nagar, Siddharthnagar, Gorakhpur and Maharajganj.

Canal will facilitate irrigation of 14.04 lakh hectares of land, as well as reduce the risk of floods in several flood-prone areas of the region.

The irrigated area under the project will be 4.04 lakh hectares. Under this project, five rivers namely Ghagra, Rapti, Banganga, Saryu and Rohini, have been connected.

The canals have a total length of 6,600 kilometers and have been linked to the 318 km long main canal.

This project was started on a small scale, back in 1978 to provide irrigation facilities in two districts with a cost of Rs 78.68 crore.

In 1982, it was expanded to nine districts and its name was changed to Saryu Canal National Project. The cost of the project increased to Rs 9,802 crore by 2021.

The Saryu River originates at a ridge south of Nanda Kot Mountain in Bageshwar district of Uttarakhand. It flows through Kapkot, Seraghand and Bageshwar towns

and finally discharges into the Sharda River at Pancheshwar, which is located at India – Nepal border.

It then flows into Ghaghara River in Sitapur District of Uttar Pradesh. Lower Ghaghara is also known as Saryu River, especially when it flows through the city of Ayodhya. The river has been mentioned multiple times in the ancient Indian epic called Ramayana.

## CHARDHAM DEVASTHANAM MANAGEMENT ACT

The Uttarakhand Government recently withdrew the Char Dham Devasthanam Management Act.

The act was withdrawn due to the protests from priests and other stakeholders of Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the major shrines.



The Char Dham Shrine Management Act was legislated by the Uttarakhand State Assembly in 2019.

The act constituted a board called Uttarakhand Char Dham Devasthanam Board. The board brought the Char Dham of Kedarnath, Badrinath, Gangotri and Yamunotri and 49 other temples under its purview.

The Chief Minister was the Chairman of the board and the Minister of Religious Affairs was the vice chairman. Two MLAs of Yamunotri and Gangotri were members of the board and a senior IAS officer was the Chief Executive Officer.

The board was responsible for management of temples. It had powers to frame policies, sanction expenditure, and budget formulation. Also, the board had powers to give directions for the safe custody of temple jewellery and properties.

Before the act, the temples were managed under the Shri Badrinath – Shri Kedarnath Act, 1939. Under the act, Shri Badrinath – Shri Kedarnath Mandir Samiti was constituted.

The Samiti was chaired by a person appointed by the Government. The committee was responsible for making decisions related to funds, donations and development works in and around the temples.

Most of the provisions of Shri Badrinath – Shri Kedarnath Act, 1939 were not relevant to the present context. Thus, the Char Dham Bill was proposed. It aimed to rejuvenate the temples.

*Why did priests and other stakeholders protest against the Char Dham Act?*

According to the Protestants, the Government wants to take control over the financial and policy decisions of the temple.

In Gangotri and Yamunotri, the temples were earlier under the control of local trusts. The Government had no say and no share in the donations made by the devotees.

## LEGAL MARRIAGE AGE OF WOMEN FROM 18 TO 21 YEARS



The Union Cabinet on December 15, 2021 cleared a bill to raise women's legal marriage age from 18 to 21 years after reviewing a proposal from a specially constituted task force.

The task force had made its recommendations after holding extensive consultations with experts and young adults, especially young women.

The present legal marriageable age for women is 18 years and for men it is 21 years.

The decision to raise the marriageable age of women will bring the marriageable age of men and women at par. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had first announced this plan during his Independence Day address in 2020.

Following the cabinet's approval of the proposal of raising the marriageable age of women, the centre is expected to introduce an amendment to the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 and consequently bring amendments to the Special Marriage Act and personal laws such as the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.

### Jaya Jaitly Task Force

The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development had set up the special task force in June 2020 to examine various matters pertaining to the age of motherhood, lowering Maternal Mortality rates, improving nutritional and other related issues.

After reviewing all matters, the task force submitted its recommendations to Niti Aayog. The task force had received some objections from certain quarters.

Headed by Jaya Jaitly, the task force comprises Niti Aayog member Dr. V K Paul and Secretaries of the Women and Child Department, Health and Education ministries and of the Legislative Department.

The task force was constituted to look at the feasibility of increasing the marriage age and its implication on

women and child health and how to increase access to education for women.

It has also recommended training of women in polytechnic institutes, skills and business training and livelihood enhancement as a means to ensure that an increase in marriageable age can be implemented.

### Why was the task force formed?

The government decided to form the task force to re-examine marriage age for women due to various reasons including to reduce Maternal Mortality Rate, infant mortality rate and improve overall health and mental wellbeing of women and their children and for the empowerment of women who get cut off from education and livelihood after early marriage.

## 5 ASIAN COUNTRIES TO BE CHIEF GUEST OF REPUBLIC DAY

India is planning to invite the leaders of five Central Asian countries as Republic Day 2022 Chief Guests.

The five central Asian nations include Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan. Out of the five nations, three share a border with Afghanistan.



This comes against the backdrop of the country's focus on the strategic region for connectivity, trade and security.

### Leaders of 5 Central Asian Nations

**Kazakhstan-** Kassym-Jomart Tokayev

**Uzbekistan-** Shavkat Mirziyoyev

**Tajikistan-** Emomali Rahmon

**Turkmenistan-** Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow

**Kyrgyzstan-** Sadyr Japarov

These five leaders are likely to attend the Republic Day Celebrations in India in January 2022.

India has been engaging with these five central Asian nations in the past few months over the current situation in Afghanistan, as these nations play a significant role in the region.

India had recently hosted an NSA-level dialogue on the Afghanistan crisis with the five countries in New Delhi, during which they had expressed concern over the situation in Afghanistan.

This will be the first time that all Central Asian countries will be present as Republic Day guests and the second



time so many countries will be **invited together for India's Republic Day celebrations** after India invited ASEAN grouping for the 2018 Republic day celebrations.

India shares cultural, civilization and historic linkages with central Asian countries.

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi had become the first Prime Minister to visit all Central Asian countries in 2015**, a first by any Indian Prime Minister since the five republics came into being after the Soviet Union's breakup.

## ELECTION LAWS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021



The Union government is likely to introduce 'The **Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021**' in Lok Sabha, in order to link Aadhaar with electoral roll.

### **Election Laws (Amendment) Bill 2021**

will allow electoral registration officers to ask for the Aadhaar number of people who want to register as voters, once passed. They will ask for an **Aadhaar number to establish the identity**.

**Bill also seeks to allow electoral registration officers to ask for Aadhaar numbers from persons who have already been included in the electoral roll.**

**This will be done to authenticate the entries in the electoral roll** as well as to identify the registration of the name of the same person in the electoral roll of more than one constituency or to identify **the registration of name more than once in the same constituency**.

**Bill also makes it clear that, "no application will be denied for inclusion of name in the electoral roll and no entries will be deleted for inability of individuals in the electoral roll, to intimate Aadhaar number due to such sufficient cause.**

Such people will be allowed **to furnish other alternative documents as may be prescribed**.

The bill will amend several sections of **Representation of the People Act, 1950 and 1951**.

**Section 23 of 1950 act will be amended for allowing linking of electoral roll data with Aadhaar ecosystem.** This amendment will help in curbing the menace of multiple enrolment of **the same person in different places**.

Section 14 of 1950 act will be amended to have four **"qualifying" dates for eligible people for registering as voters**.

**Section 20 of 1950 act and section 60 of 1951 act** will allow the elections to become gender neutral for service voters.

**Amendment will replace the word "wife" with the word "spouse"**. As per existing electoral law, the wife of an Army man was entitled to be enrolled as a **service voter** however, but a woman Army officer's husband was not.

**This provision will change as the world wife** will be replaced with the world Spouse.

## PM MODI INAUGURATED KASHI VISHWANATH CORRIDOR

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the first phase** of the Rs 339 crore Kashi Vishwanath Corridor project that connects the temple town's two iconic landmarks – **Kashi Vishwanath temple and Ganga ghats**.



**Modi offered prayers at the Kashi Vishwanath Temple and planted a Rudraksha tree** at the premises of the temple.

**He also offered Ganga Jal, Chandan, ashes and milk to Lord Shiva.** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister **Yogi Adityanath, BJP President J P Nadda and a large number of saints** from across the country attended the ceremony.

**The idea behind the project is to ensure that all heritage structures get preserved.** A total of 23 buildings will be inaugurated in phase 1 of the project.

They will provide a variety of facilities to the pilgrims visiting **Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple, including Yatri Suvidha Kendras, Tourist Facilitation Centre, Vedic Kendra, Mumukshu Bhavan, Bhogshala, City Museum, Viewing Gallery and Food Court, among others**.

**The project is now spread over a massive area of about 5 lakh square feet**, whereas earlier premises were limited to just around 3000 square feet.

## NATIONAL SUMMIT ON AGRO & FOOD PROCESSING

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to address the valedictory session of **"National Summit on Agro & Food Processing"** on December 16, 2021.



During his address, the Prime Minister will present the detailed contours of Natural Farming.

This summit will be organized to emphasize on natural farming and to

deliver a message to farmers in far flung areas of India.

#### *About National Summit on Agro & Food Processing*

This summit is being organized as part of "Vibrant Gujarat Summit" which is scheduled to be held in Anand, Gujarat from December 14 to December 16.

Conference will be witnessed and attended by 5000 farmers. 80 central institutes of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), ATMA network in states and Krishi Vigyan Kendras will also connect farmers to witness this event live.

During the event, farmers will get to know and learn about practice and benefits of Natural Farming.

#### *Government's measure to transform agriculture*

Government has initiated several measures for transforming agriculture with the objective of increasing farmer's income, in the last six years.

Government has also been taking efforts to promote & support initiatives for reducing cost, accessing markets and maintaining the sustainability of the system.

#### **Zero Budget Natural Farming**

Government has also implemented 'Zero Budget Natural Farming' as a promising tool for minimizing the dependence of farmers on purchased inputs and reducing the cost of agriculture by using traditional field-based technologies.

It emphasizes shifting agriculture practices from mono-crops to diversified multi-crops systems. Cow and its dung & urine play an important role in making inputs like Beejamrit, Jivamrit and Ghanjivamrit, on the farm.

### **INDIA'S 1ST GREEN HYDROGEN MICROGRID PROJECT**



Andhra Pradesh has been granted India's first green hydrogen microgrid project by state-owned NTPC Ltd.

The project was awarded at NTPC Ltd. 's Simhadri plant in Andhra Pradesh. At

NTPC Simhadri, NTPC will work on a project called "Standalone Fuel-cell based Microgrid with hydrogen production using electrolyzer."

In addition, as part of its energy security strategy, India plans to invite bids for the construction of 4 gigawatts (GW) of electrolyzer capacity.

This project will serve as a testbed for large-scale hydrogen energy storage systems. Multiple microgrids will also be studied and deployed in numerous off-grid and key places in India.

**Simhadri Super Thermal Power Plant**, located in Simhadri, India, is a coal-fired power plant in the Andhra Pradesh city of Visakhapatnam.

It's one of NTPC's coal-fired power plants. The coal for this power station comes from the Talcher Coal resources in Odisha's Kalinga Block. It is a national asset that generates power that is shared among several states.

**NTPC Renewable Energy Limited (NTPC REL)** has also struck an agreement with the Union Territory of Ladakh for a green hydrogen transportation project.

NTPC will carry out this project in collaboration with the NVVN. Green hydrogen is made by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen in an electrolyzer fueled by renewable energy sources such as wind and solar.

Green hydrogen as a fuel has the potential to revolutionize India's energy security. Currently, India imports 85 percent of its oil and 53 percent of its gas.

### **PM MODI LAUNCHED SEVERAL PROJECTS IN GOA**

On the occasion of Goa Liberation Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of several development projects worth over 650 crores rupees in Goa.



He felicitated freedom fighters and veterans of 'Operation Vijay' at the function. He appreciated Chief Minister Pramod Sawant for keeping the pace of development up in the state.

*Some of the major projects Modi will inaugurate are*

The re-development of Aguada Fort Jail Museum at a cost of over Rs 28 crore.

A super specialty block at the Goa Medical College and Hospital, which has been constructed at a cost of over Rs 380 crores.

The New South Goa District Hospital, built at a cost of around Rs 220 crore.



The **Aviation Skill Development Center** at the upcoming Mopa Airport, built at a cost of around Rs 8.5 crore.

A gas-insulated substation at Davorlim-Navelim, Margao, was constructed at a cost of around Rs 16 crores.

## PM MODI LAID FOUNDATION STONE OF GANGA EXPRESSWAY



Prime Minister Narendra Modi has laid the foundation stone of Ganga Expressway in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh.

PM Modi also addressed a rally at Railway Ground, Rouza on the occasion. After completion of work, it will become the longest expressway of Uttar Pradesh.

It will connect the western and eastern regions of the state. It starts near the Bijauli village in Meerut. It will extend till near the Judapur Dandu village in Prayagraj.

**About the Ganga Expressway:** Ganga Expressway is a 594 Km long Expressway. It will be built at a cost of over Rs 36,200 crore.

It passes through Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Budaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Rae Bareilly, Pratapgarh and Prayagraj districts.

A 35 Km long airstrip for emergency take-off and landing of Air Force planes will also be constructed on the Expressway in Shahjahanpur.

## PM MODI LAY FOUNDATION OF RENUKAJI DAM PROJECT



On December 27, 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay down the foundation of Renukaji Dam Project in Himachal Pradesh.

It is a Rs 6,700-crore project on the Giri river in Sirmaur district. The project, once completed, is likely to generate 200 million units of energy in a surface power house which has the installed capacity of 40 MW. Storage capacity of the dam will be 498 million cubic meters.

It will fulfill around 40 per cent of the drinking water requirement of Delhi.

Construction of the dam has been pending since the last three decades. It will finally take shape following cooperation on behalf of six states named Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand.

The Prime Minister will also lay the foundation of development projects worth Rs 11,281 crore in Himachal Pradesh. He will also preside over the second ground-breaking ceremony of Himachal Pradesh's Global Investors' Meet.

Global Investors' meet is likely to give a boost to investments in the region with the development of projects worth around Rs 28,000 crore.

**Renuka dam project:** Renuka dam project has been conceived on Giri river, as a storage project. Giri river is a tributary of the Yamuna.

The project is being conceived in Sirmaur district of Himachal Pradesh. It envisages making a dam of 148-meter height, which will supply water to Delhi and other basin states.

The dam will also generate a power of 40 MW. 90% of the cost of the irrigation or drinking water component will be provided by the central government while 10% will be provided by the rest of the basin States.

## KARNATAKA GOVT. PASSED ANTI-CONVERSION BILL

Karnataka legislative assembly passed the controversial anti-conversion bill on December 23, 2021 amid long debates. The bill seeks to curb illegal religious conversions.



### What does Karnataka's anti-conversion Bill propose?

The Karnataka Right to Freedom of Religion Bill, 2021 prohibits conversion from one religion to another by misrepresentation, force, fraud, allurement or marriage.

The bill exempts those who reconvert into their immediate previous religion as it will not be deemed to be conversion under the Act.

Under the bill's provisions, marriages conducted with the intention of conversion will be deemed null and void.

The bill also provides that family members or any other person related to the individual getting converted can file a complaint against it.

The bill seeks compensation worth Rs 5 lakh for victims of conversion by the persons attempting the conversion and double punishment for repeat offenses.

The bill makes the offense of conversion cognizable and non-bailable. The bill proposes jail terms of up to 3-5 years and a fine of Rs 25,000 for those found guilty of converting people from the general category.

Further, it proposes a jail term of 3-10 years and a fine of Rs 50,000-1 lakh for those converting minors, women or persons from SC/ST communities.

## CCI APPROVES AIR INDIA ACQUISITION BY TATA



The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved Talace, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Tata Sons, acquiring Air India Stakes on 20 December.

Air India is currently entirely owned by the Indian government. Air India and AIXL are principally delivering domestic scheduled air passenger transportation, air cargo transport, and international scheduled air passenger transport.

Air India SATS Airport Services provides ground handling services at Delhi, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Mangaluru, and Thiruvananthapuram. Bengaluru Airport also provides cargo handling services.

In October 2021, the Tata Group signed a share purchase deal with the government of India to buy the government's stake in national carriers Air India, Air India Express, and AISATS.

Following that, Tata Group received a Letter of Intent (LoI). The Tata Group had to meet the agreement's pre-conditions following the SPA before acquiring Air India.

Under the sale process, Tata Sons' subsidiary Talace emerged as the highest bidder for AIR India.

CCI: The Competition Commission of India (CCI) is the country's top competition regulator. It is a government-run agency that reports to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

It is in charge of enforcing the Competition Act of 2002 to promote competition and prohibit illegal activity. CCI also investigates incidents to see if they hurt competition.

## PM MODI INAUGURATED MULTI-PRODUCT PIPELINE PROJECT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 356 Km long Bina Refinery (Madhya Pradesh)- POL Terminal at Panki (Kanpur, UP) Multi Product pipeline project ( capacity of 45 million metric tons per annum) with an outlay of Rs 1524 crore (Rs. 1227 crores in UP and Rs. 297 crores in MP).

The project has been completed and commissioned one month ahead of the approved completion schedule of December 2021 (3 years from PNGRB authorisation) and within the approved cost.



It will provide for safe and efficient evacuation of products from Bina Refinery and also improve the availability of products in Eastern U.P, Central U.P., Northern Bihar and Southern Uttarakhand.

### Some other projects inaugurated by PM Modi:

PM has also inaugurated the completed section of the Kanpur Metro Rail Project and undertook a metro ride from the IIT metro station to Geeta Nagar.

The entire length of the Metro Rail Project in Kanpur is 32 Km and is being built at a cost of around ₹11,000 crores. The PM also attended the 54th Convocation Ceremony of IIT (Indian Institute of Technology) Kanpur.

## PM MODI INAUGURATED KANPUR METRO RAIL PROJECT

On December 28, 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Kanpur to inaugurate the completed section of the Kanpur Metro Rail Project.



The "Bina-Panki multi-product pipeline project" will also be inaugurated by the Prime Minister.

Later, he will speak at IIT-54th Kanpur's convocation ceremony. On February 28, 2019, the central government approved the Kanpur Metro Project, which has a budget of more than Rs 11,000 crores and a five-year timeline.

A €650 million loan from the European Investment Bank (EIB) has also been proposed for this project.



The Bina-Panki project, which spans 356 kilometers, has a capacity of 3.45 million metric tons per year.

The project stretches from Madhya Pradesh's Bina refinery to Kanpur's Panki. It was constructed at a cost of over Rs 1,500 crore. The refinery will aid in the region's access to petroleum products. **Kanpur Metro is a rail-based public transportation system in Kanpur.**

It is currently being built for the city of Kanpur. The project can be expanded to cover the entire Kanpur metropolitan area. RITES completed a feasibility study for this project in June 2015. The metro will run for 32 kilometers as part of the project. It will cost Rs 11000 crore to construct.

## EXTENSION OF AFSPA IN NAGALAND

On December 30, 2021, the Central government declared the entire Nagaland as a "disturbed area" for six more months, under the AFSPA Act.



This declaration will be in effect, starting from December 30, 2021. Government has also termed the state's condition as "disturbed and dangerous".

This decision was taken days after the central government constituted a high-level committee for examining the possibility of withdrawal of the controversial Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act from Nagaland.

AFSPA has been operational in Nagaland for decades.

Central government is of the view that, area comprising the whole of Nagaland is in such disturbed and dangerous condition that use of armed forces to aid the civil power is necessary.

Central government exercised the powers conferred by Section 3 of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 to declare entire Nagaland as 'disturbed area'.

### Recommendation of the panel

This decision was taken following the recommendation of a panel, which was set to examine the possibility of withdrawal of the AFSPA.

Notification to extend AFSPA was issued by additional secretary in the Home Ministry, Piyush Goyal.

He has been also named as the member secretary in the panel. The Panel is headed by secretary-level officer Vivek Joshi. Panel was set up to ease the rising tension in Nagaland because of the killing of 14 civilians.

### AFSPA Act

The Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958 gives power to the armed forces to maintain public order in "disturbed areas".

With this act, armed forces are authorized to use force or even open fire after warning a person found to be in contravention of the law.

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# ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

## KARNATAKA GOVT. PASSED ANTI-CONVERSION BILL

Recently, the **Karnataka Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Bill, 2021** was introduced in the state assembly of Karnataka. The Bill prohibits conversion from one religion to another by **misrepresentation, force, fraud, allurement or marriage**. Other States like Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand have also passed laws restricting religious conversion.



### MAIN PROVISIONS OF THE BILL

- **Penal Provision:** The offense of conversion is cognisable and non-bailable offense. It will attract a **jail term of three to five years and a fine of Rs 25,000 for people found violating the law and a jail term of three to 10 years**, and a fine of Rs. 50,000 for people converting minors, women and persons from the SC and ST communities.
- **Locus Standi Doesn't Apply:** According to the proposed legislation, complaints of conversions can be filed by family members or relatives or any person in association.
- **Exemption:** The Bill provides an exemption in the case of a person who **"reconverts to his immediate previous religion"** as "the same shall not be deemed to be a conversion under this Act".
- **Provision for Willing Person:** After the law comes into force, any person intending to convert to another religion will have to **inform the district magistrate at least thirty days in advance**. This will be followed by an inquiry to be conducted by the district magistrate through the police to establish the real intent of conversion. Not informing the district magistrate will lead to the conversion being declared null and void.

*What happens if the bill is not passed by the Legislative Council?*

- If the **Legislative Council does not pass the anti-conversion bill** then the government will have other options, as the legislative councils in the states are not as powerful as the Rajya Sabha.
- The **Legislative Council can only delay the bill** but does not have the authority to make any changes to it.
- If the council rejects the bill, it will go back to the Legislative assembly, which can pass it again **with or without amendments and pass it again to the Legislative Council**.
- If the legislative council rejects it for the second time or more than a month has passed since the bill was tabled in the council, then the bill will be considered to have been passed by both the houses of the state legislature.

### ANTI-CONVERSION LAWS IN INDIA

**Constitutional Provision:** The Indian Constitution **under Article 25** guarantees the freedom to profess, propagate, and practise religion, and allows all religious sections to manage their own affairs in matters of religion; subject to public order, morality, and health. However, no person shall force their religious beliefs and consequently, no person should be forced to practice any religion against their wishes.

**Existing Laws:** There has been no central legislation restricting or regulating religious conversions. However, since 1954, on multiple occasions, **Private Member Bills have been introduced in (but never approved by) the Parliament**, to regulate religious conversions. Further, in 2015, the Union Law Ministry stated that Parliament does not have the legislative competence to pass anti-conversion legislation. Over the years, several states have enacted '**Freedom of Religion**' legislation to restrict religious conversions carried out by force, fraud, or inducements.



## ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH ANTI-CONVERSION LAWS

- **Uncertain and Vague Terminology:** The uncertain and vague terminology like **misrepresentation, force, fraud, allurement** presents a serious avenue for misuse. These terms leave room for ambiguities or are too broad, extending to subjects far beyond the protection of religious freedom.
- **Antithetical to Minorities:** Another issue is that the present anti-conversion laws focus more on the prohibition of conversion to achieve religious freedom. However, the **broad language used by the prohibitive legislation** might be used by officials to oppress and discriminate against minorities.
- **Antithetical to Secularism:** These laws may pose a threat to the secular fabric of India and the international perception of our **society's intrinsic values and legal system**.



### Supreme Court on Marriage and Conversion:

- **Hadiya Judgment 2017:** Matters of dress and of food, of ideas and ideologies, of love and partnership are within the central aspects of identity. **Neither the State nor the law can dictate a choice of partners** or limit the free ability of every person to decide on these matters. The principle that the **right to marry a person of one's choice is integral to Article 21**.
- **K.S. Puttaswamy or 'privacy' Judgment 2017:** Autonomy of the individual was the ability to make decisions in vital matters of concern to life.
- **Lata Singh Case 1994:** The apex court held that India is going through a "**crucial transformational period**" and the "Constitution will remain strong only if we accept the plurality and diversity of our culture". Relatives disgruntled by the inter-religious marriage of a loved one could opt to "**cut off social relations**" rather than resort to violence or harassment.
- **Soni Gerry case, 2018:** The SC warned judges from playing "super-guardians", succumbing to "any kind of sentiment of the mother or the egotism of the father".
- **Salamat Ansari-Priyanka Kharwar case of Allahabad High Court 2020:** The right to choose a partner or live with a person of choice **was part of a citizen's fundamental right to life and liberty (Article 21)**. It also held that earlier court rulings upholding the idea of religious conversion for marriage as unacceptable are not good in law.
- **Other Judgements:** The SC in its various judgments, has held that faith, the state and the courts have no jurisdiction over an adult's absolute right to choose a life partner. India is a "**free and democratic country**" and any interference by the State in an adult's right to love and marry has a "**chilling effect**" on freedoms. Intimacies of marriage lie within a core zone of privacy, which is inviolable and the choice of a life partner, whether by marriage or outside it, is part of an individual's "**personhood and identity**". The absolute right of an individual to choose a life partner is not in the least affected by matters of faith.

## CONCLUSION

The governments implementing such laws need to ensure that these do not curb one's **Fundamental Rights** or **hamper the national integration** instead, these laws need to strike a balance between freedoms and malafide conversions.



## WHAT IS GREATER TIPRALAND DEMAND?

Recently, **several tribal outfits in Tripura** have joined hands to push their demand for a separate state, **Greater Tipraland** for indigenous communities in the region. Among the political parties that have come together for the cause are TIPRA Motha Tipraha Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance) and IPFT (Indigenous People's Front of Tripura).



## WHAT IS GREATER TIPRALAND?

Greater Tipraland is the extension of the **Indigenous People's Front of Tripura's demand of Tipraland** as a separate state for tribals. This demand is said to involve each tribe residing in the indigenous area or village outside the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council. This model is not restricted to **Tripura Tribal Council Areas** but also seeks to include Tiprasa of the Tripuris that are spread across **Mizoram and Assam, Bandarban, Chittagong, Khagrachari too**. The demand would be placed in front of the Central Government in case the leaders are invited for talks. The demand for **Greater Tipraland** rose as the demands for revising the NRC in Tripura were unfulfilled.

## ARTICLE 2 & 3 OF THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

- **Article 2:** Parliament may by law admit into the Union, or establish, new States on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit.
- However, Parliament cannot establish a new union territory by passing a law that can only be done through a constitutional amendment. **States like Sikkim (previously not within India)** became a part of the country under Article 2.
- **Article 3:** It empowered the Parliament to make law relating to the formation of new states and alteration of existing states.
- **Immediate Cause:** The churn in the state's politics with the **rise of TIPRA Motha and the Assembly polls** due in early 2023 are the two major reasons behind the development.

**Historical Background:** Tripura was a kingdom ruled by the Manikya dynasty from the late **13th century until the signing of the Instrument of Accession with the Indian government in 1949**. The demand stems from the anxiety of the indigenous communities in connection with the change in the demographics of the state, which has reduced them to a minority. It happened due to the displacement of Bengalis from the erstwhile **East Pakistan between 1947 and 1971**. From 63.77% in 1881, the population of the tribals in Tripura was down to 31.80% by 2011. In the **intervening decades, ethnic conflict and insurgency gripped the state**, which shares a nearly 860-km long boundary with Bangladesh. The joint forum has also pointed out that the indigenous people have not only been reduced to a minority, but have also been dislodged from land reserved for them by the penultimate king of the Manikya dynasty Bir Bikram Kishore Debbarman.

## SIMILARITY TO GREATER NAGALIM?

As per **Pradyot Kishore** the demand for Tipraland is a democratic issue and the demand of Greater Nagalim. The Greater Nagalim idea was floated by the rebel **Naga agency- NSCN (IM)**. It is now involved in peace talks with the central government. The new demand seeks to include every tribal person living in indigenous area or village or village outside the **Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC)** under the proposed model.



### Facts about Tripura:

- The Tripuri are also called **Tipra, Tiprasa, Twipra** etc and are an ethnic group that originated in Tripura
- They are basically inhabitants of **Twipra, North-East India and Bangladesh**
- They ruled through the Manikya dynasty until 1949
- Their **main dialect is Konborok**, also called Tiprakok or Tripuri

**Political Standing of the issue:** TIPRA has emerged as the single-largest political party of Tripura, with Pradyot's new political maneuvering. The royal scion has also announced an alliance with all major tribal political parties where two parties majorly are **Tipraland State Party and Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura**. The 'Greater Tipraland' is said to be in consonance with the demand of 'Tipraland' which is a proposed separate state for tribals of



Tripura. This **idea was floated in 2009** and also was the main poll agenda which led to the victory in the 2018 assembly election. The **oldest tribal party has also joined the cause and has supported TIPRA**. It said that while Tipraland was only restricted to ADC, Greater Tipraland would be a better extension to it.

### *What is Tipraland?*

The **formation of Tipraland** which is a state within the Tripura Tribal Areas, is a political agenda. **It is to be formed under articles 2 and 3 of the Indian Constitution** and has been demanded by a political party called the **Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT)**. Take a look at the map below.

## INITIATIVES TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE

**Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council:** The Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) was formed under the sixth schedule of the Constitution in 1985 to ensure development and secure the rights and cultural heritage of the tribal communities. '**Greater Tipraland**' envisages a situation in which the entire TTAADC area will be a separate state. It also proposes dedicated bodies to secure the **rights of the Tripuris and other aboriginal communities living outside Tripura**. The TTAADC, which has legislative and executive powers, covers nearly two-third of the state's geographical area. The council comprises 30 members of which 28 are elected while two are nominated by the Governor.



**Reservation:** Also, out of the 60 Assembly seats in the state, 20 are reserved for Scheduled Tribes.

### *Other Demands in the North East*

- Greater nagalim (Parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Assam and Myanmar)
- Bodoland (Assam)
- Tribal Autonomy Meghalaya

## CONCLUSION

**Economic and social viability** rather than political considerations must be given primacy. There should be certain clear-cut parameters and safeguards to check the unfettered demands. It is better to allow democratic concerns like development, decentralization and governance rather than **religion, caste, language or dialect to be the valid** bases for conceding the demands for a new state. Apart from this the fundamental problems of development and governance deficit such as concentration of **power, corruption, administrative inefficiency etc must be addressed**.



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# INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

## INDIA JOINED G-20'S TROIKA WITH ITALY & INDONESIA

India recently joined the G20 Troika. **The G20 Troika is made of Indonesia, India and Italy.** Troika is made of the current presidency, Indonesia; the previous presidency Italy and the incoming presidency which is India.

**Troika means a group of three people working together.** It is an English word. The Troika of G20 is made of the current, next and immediate past host countries. **The Troika ensures continuity and provides presidency support.**



The G20 operates without a permanent staff or secretariat. **The chair of the group rotates annually among its members.**

The current chair establishes the secretariat temporarily. This secretariat organises meetings and coordinates the working of the group. **Thus, there is a need for the Troika to help with the secretariat so that there is continuity in the works of G20.**

In 2019, the G20 was hosted by Japan. In 2020, Italy will host the G20. In 2021, it will be Indonesia. **In 2022, 2023 and 2024, it will be hosted by Indonesia, India and Brazil.** Thus, the following countries formed the Troika in G20

2020: Japan, Italy and Indonesia

2021: Italy, Indonesia and India

2022: Indonesia, India and Brazil

**The current presidency of G20 was assumed by Indonesia recently.** It is to hold the chair till October 2022 under the theme **"Recover Together Recover Stronger"**. Then India will take over for the first time.

## INDIA & EU TO SET UP CLEAN ENERGY & CLIMATE PARTNERSHIP



India and the European Union (EU) have agreed to **step up their Clean Energy and Climate Partnership.**

They jointly agreed on a detailed work program until 2023 to implement the

2016 India-EU Clean Energy and Climate Partnership.

**The Panel agreed on increased technical cooperation in energy efficiency,** renewable energy, green hydrogen, grid integration, storage, power market design, interconnection, cold chain, and sustainable financing.

**The Panel also agreed to explore further avenues to strengthen India-EU cooperation within the context of the International Solar Alliance.**

The EU expressed its support for the close cooperation between India and the International Energy Agency. **India and EU also agreed to exchange closely on clean energy in the frame of G20.**

European Union Founded: **1 November 1993.**

European Union Headquarters: **Brussels.**

European Union Member states: **27.**

European Union President of the European Council: **Charles Michel.**

## CHILE PASSED LAW PERMITTING SAME SEX MARRIAGE

Chile has passed a law permitting **same-sex couples to marry** on December 9, 2021.



The adoption was signed into law by **President Sebastian Pinera** during an event attended by activists for **LGBT and broader human rights.**

The ceremony was organized more than **six months after conservative leader** announced that he would smooth the way for a marriage equality law which had long been pending in **the nation's Congress.**

**The new law will allow all children** with a father and a mother, with two fathers or with two mothers to have **the same rights and same protection.**

**This move will help hundreds of children and adolescents** who have been unable to get legal protection from both parents.

**In the year 1999, Chile had depenalized sex between consenting adults** of the same sex. It had also outlawed arbitrary discrimination in the year 2012. In the year 2015, **President Michelle Bachelet** signed a law allowing gay civil unions.

He also introduced the bill to allow **same-sex marriages in 2017,** which was passed on December 7, 2021, in both

houses of Congress. **In recent years, similar laws have been adopted across many Latin American nations.**

In February 2021, **Central Government had opposed same-sex marriage in Delhi High Court**, noting that marriage in India can be recognised only if it is happening between biological man and biological woman, capable of producing children.

Government had responded to petitions of 2020 seeking recognition of same sex marriages under **Special Marriage Act, 1954 and Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.**

## INDIA & RUSSIA SIGNED DEFENCE DEAL 2021



**In a major boost to India's defence sector, a procurement deal of over 6 lakh AK-203 rifles were signed between India and Russia on December 6, 2021.**

As India and Russia begin their 2+2 first-ever ministerial dialogue **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Russian counterpart Sergey Shoigu** signed a contract for the manufacture of nearly 6 lakh AK-203 rifles under a joint venture in Amethi, UP.

The deal between India and Russia was signed following the **bilateral meeting between the Defence Ministers of both nations.**

**As the President of Russia Vladimir Putin has arrived in India for the annual talks with Prime Minister Modi**, both India and Russia are expected to sign more than 10 agreements following the talks between the two leaders.

**The agreements will be in the area of culture, space, science and technology, defence etc.**

India and Russia have signed defence deals to facilitate and boost the military cooperation between the two nations.

**The deals will also be significant for India in expanding its defence mechanism at the border amid the continuous threat from China.**

**Deal for the procurement of over 6 lakh AK-203 assault rifles.** The procurement deal is worth over Rs. 5,000 crores.

Another agreement between India and Russia has been signed on **Protocol on amending the agreement on cooperation in the field of Kalashnikov series small arms manufacturing** dated back to February 18, 2019.

The Defence Ministers of India and Russia signed an **agreement to extend the military-technical cooperation between the two nations for the next decade, from 2021 to 2031.**

## AUNG SAN SUU KYI SENTENCED TO JAIL

**Myanmar's ousted civilian leader, Aung San Suu Kyi** was sentenced to four years imprisonment after being found guilty on two charges, the first verdicts in a raft of criminal cases that the country's military has brought against her since **seizing power 10 months ago.**



Ms Suu Kyi was convicted of charges of incitement and violating pandemic rules. **The 76-year-old Nobel Peace Prize laureate is facing a total of 11 charges** which can bring in a maximum imprisonment of 102 years.

**Why has the court sentenced Suu Kyi to four years in prison?**

**Suu Kyi has been found guilty on two charges – of inciting the public against the military and breaching the Covid-19 protocols in the country.**

**The incitement charge stems from statements made on Facebook pages of Suu Kyi's party** after she was detained by the military, following a coup that prevented her from starting a second term in office.

## OLAF SCHOLZ ELECTED AS GERMAN CHANCELLOR

**Parliament of Germany has elected Olaf Scholz** as the ninth post-World War II chancellor, on December 8, 2021.



This has opened a new era for **Germany after the 16-year tenure of Angela Merkel.** Government of Olaf Scholz took office with high hopes of modernizing Germany and **combating climate change.**

However, it faces the immediate challenge of handling Covid-19 pandemic. **Olaf's three-party coalition** has won 416 seats in the **736-seat lower house of parliament.**

The Chancellor of Germany is officially called as **the federal chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.** He is the head of the federal government of Germany.



He also acts as **the commander in chief of German Armed Forces during wartime**. He is the chief executive of the Federal Cabinet and heads its executive branch.

**The chancellor is elected by Bundestag**, following the proposal of the federal president and without debate in accordance with **the Article 63 of German Constitution**.

History of the office of Chancellor dates back to the Holy Roman Empire, when the office of **German archchancellor was held by archbishops of Mainz**.

**The title was used in several states of German-speaking Europe**. The modern office of chancellor was set up in 1867. With the enlargement of the federal state to the German Empire, the title was renamed to Reichskanzler in 1871. In **1949, the title of Bundeskanzler was revived**.

**Olaf Scholz is a German politician**, who is serving as Chancellor of Germany since December 8, 2021. He is a member of the **Social Democratic Party (SPD)**.

**He earlier served as the vice chancellor to Angela Merkel**, as well as the finance minister from 2018 to 2021. He also held the office of **First Mayor of Hamburg in between 2011 to 2018**.

## M. ANDERSSON BECOMES 1ST FEMALE PM OF SWEDEN



The former Finance Minister of Sweden, **Eva Magdalena Andersson from the Social Democratic Party (SDP)** won her 2nd election and became the 1st female Prime Minister (PM) of Sweden.

On 24 November 2021, she was first elected as the PM but later resigned after her **coalition partner (Green Party)** quit the government and the budget failed to pass. **Sweden's Parliament is known as Riksdag**. Sweden is the last Nordic country to get a female Prime Minister.

About Magdalena Andersson: Magdalena Andersson was born on 23 January 1967. She is a 54-year-old Swedish politician and economist serving as the PM from the **Social Democratic Party or SDP**.

She began her political career as a political adviser to then PM Goran Persson in 1996 and then as Director of Planning. **In 2004 she began to work in the Ministry of Finance as State Secretary**. She became the head of the SDP on November 4, 2021. **She is the second woman leader of the SDP**.

## BANGLADESH & USA BEGAN BILATERAL EXERCISE 'CARAT'

**US military personnel and Bangladesh Navy (BN)** began the 27th annual **Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT)** maritime exercise virtually from 1 December in the Bay of Bengal.



The nine-day exercise focuses on a wide range of naval capabilities and includes cooperative actions that demonstrate the US and Bangladesh's capacity to work together to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

**CARAT is to promote regional cooperation and build relationships, according to Bangladesh Navy Fleet Commander Rear Admiral S M Abdul Kalam Azad**.

Since 2011, the Bangladesh Navy has been participating in the CARAT exercise, which is celebrating its 27th anniversary this year.

**Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (Exercise CARAT):**

CARAT exercise is an annual bilateral exercise. **United States Pacific Fleet, a command of the US Navy conducts it with several ASEAN members**.

Currently, Exercise CARAT is conducted with navies of nine nations, which are the navies of **Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, and Thailand**.

## PM MODI PARTICIPATED IN DEMOCRACY SUMMIT

**US President Joe Biden is hosting the first** of two Summits for Democracy, which takes place virtually between December 9-10.



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually addressed the summit saying that **'democratic spirit' and 'pluralistic ethos' are ingrained in Indians**.

**A total of 100 nations participated in this 'Summit for Democracy'**.

Even Ukraine and Taiwan were invited to **the summit but Russia and China were not**.

Both these countries released a joint statement in which they said that the US is displaying a **"Cold-War**

mentality" that will "stoke up ideological confrontation and a rift in the world".

*PM Modi highlights in the summit:*

In his address, PM Modi highlighted India's civilisational ethos as one of the original sources of democracy. He outlined sensitivity, accountability, participation, and reform orientation as four pillars of Indian democratic governance, stressing that principles of democracy should also guide global governance.

India's Prime Minister also recalled that 75 years ago, India's Constituent Assembly had held its first session. He said how democratic countries must deliver on values enshrined in their respective constitutions.

## UNITED NATIONS GRANTED OBSERVER STATUS TO ISA



The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has granted Observer Status to the International Solar Alliance.

The 76th President of the UN General Assembly

Abdulla Shahid informed that the UN General Assembly based on the 6th Committee Report unanimously decided to invite the International Solar Alliance to participate in the sessions and work of the UNGA in the capacity of an 'Observer'.

The 4th General Assembly of the International Solar Alliance was held in October 2021 in which a total of 108 countries around the world participated.

It included the 74 member countries, 34 Observer and Prospective countries, 33 Special invitee organizations, and 23 Partner Organizations.

The launch of the International Solar Alliance was announced back in 2015 by Prime Minister Modi and the former President of France Francois Hollande at the 21st Session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties in France.

ISA's mission is for a rapid increase in solar energy usage so that the countries can achieve an ambitious goal of net-zero carbon emission by the middle of the century, in a bid for limiting the global temperature rise to 1.5C.

*USA joins International Solar Alliance*

With an aim of accelerating the global adoption of solar energy, the United States of America joined the ISA as a member country in November 2021.

With this, the US became the 101st country to sign the framework agreement of the International Solar Alliance.

Other countries that have recently joined the International Solar Alliance are Greece, Israel, and Sweden.

## HONG KONG IMPLEMENTED 'ZERO COVID POLICY'

On December 6, 2021, Hong Kong implemented its new 'Zero Covid Policy'.



With the implementation of new rules, travelers from the United States will be subject to the highest tier of quarantine measures in semi-autonomous city, having some of the strictest anti-Covid policies worldwide.

Hongkong will make the US the first country outside Africa to be placed under the quarantine center order since the Omicron variant was first detected in November month.

Only fully vaccinated travelers from the US will be allowed to enter Hong Kong and will also be required to spend their first seven days at a quarantine center accompanied with daily testing and health monitoring.

Following this, they will be required to spend another 14 days in quarantine at a hotel booked in advance.

Hong Kong has followed China's lead in adopting a "zero-Covid strategy". This strategy has led to toughest quarantine and testing measures worldwide. This policy has kept infections low.

Hong Kong is a city and special administrative region of China. It is located on the eastern Pearl River Delta in South China. It has more than 7.5 million residents of various nationalities.

City is one of the most densely populated places worldwide. It is one of the most developed cities of the world, with the most expensive housing.

## GABRIEL BORIC ELECTED AS NEXT PRESIDENT OF CHILE

On December 19, 2021, A leftist millennial Gabriel Boric was elected as next President of Chile.

He was elected as President, after a



**campaign against** a free-market firebrand likened to former US President Donald Trump.

Gabriel won with 56 per cent of the votes. **Gabriel Boric Font is the president-elect of Chile.**

He was a member of the Chamber of Deputies since March 2014, and **represented the Magallanes and Antarctic district.**

**In the 2013 general election, he was elected as an independent candidate.** He was re-elected in 2017. In both the elections, he received **the largest number of votes among all candidates in Magallanes Region.**

**For the 2021 general election, he won the Apruebo Dignidad Presidential primary,** with 60% of the popular vote.

Thus, he became a Presidential candidate for the leftist electoral coalition. **He is all set to take charges as the first socialist President of Chile, after Salvador Allende.**

Chile is officially called the Republic of Chile. **It is a country in western part of South America.** The country occupies a long, narrow strip of **land between Andes and the Pacific Ocean.**

It is the southernmost country of the world. It is closest to Antarctica, and shares **borders with Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and the Drake Passage.**

It also controls the Pacific islands of Juan Fernandez, Desventuradas, Isla Salas y Gomez, and Easter Island in Oceania. **Santiago is the country's capital as well as largest city.** Spanish is the national language of Chile.

The country is a founding member of the United Nations, Pacific Alliance and **Community of Latin American & Caribbean States (CELAC).** It also joined the OECD in 2010.

## INDIA RE-ELECTED TO INT. MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO)



**India has been re-elected to the International Maritime Organization (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.

## 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 the United States.**

Category (b) ☐ 10 State with the largest interest in international seaborne trade: India, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, United Arab Emirates.

International Maritime Organization Headquarters: **London, United Kingdom;**

International Maritime Organization Founder: **United Nations;**

International Maritime Organization Founded: **17 March 1948.**

## 1ST EUROPEAN NATION TO LEGALIZE CANNABIS

**Malta became the first European country to allow limited cultivation and possession of cannabis for personal use, following a vote in parliament.**



**The Maltese parliament voted in favor of the reform last week,** with 36 votes in favor and 27 against.

Adults will be allowed to grow four plants at home and carry seven grams of cannabis, **with smoking in public or in front of children remaining illegal.**

The Netherlands also has a liberal attitude towards cannabis, allowing the sale of small quantities in a policy aimed at managing crime and health risks, though officially it is illegal. **Cannabis, also known as marijuana among other names,** is a psychoactive drug from the Cannabis plant.

**Native to Central and South Asia, the cannabis plant has been used as a drug for both recreational and entheogenic purposes and in various traditional medicines for centuries.**

## KARL NEHAMMER SWORN IN AS AUSTRIA'S CHANCELLOR

**Karl Nehammer was sworn in as Austria's new chancellor** by Alexander Van der Bellen, President of Austria in a ceremony in Hofburg Palace, Vienna, Austria.





He is succeeding the career diplomat **Alexander Schallenberg** who took charge as chancellor in October 2021.

He is the **3rd person to hold the role of Austria's**

**Chancellor** in the last two months. Nehammer, from the ruling conservative **Austrian People's Party (ÖVP)**, was formerly the country's interior minister.

The **Vienna-born Nehammer** worked in the army for several years. He then started working as a communications adviser before becoming a politician in 2017.

He was made interior minister in January 2020. While he was in office, Austria experienced its first Islamist terrorist attack, in which **four people were killed last November**.

### WHO IS GABRIEL BORIC?



**Gabriel Boric, leftist lawmaker and former student activist** has won Chile's Presidential Elections 2021.

He beat right-wing candidate **Jose Antonio**

**Kast** in Chile's presidential runoff with 56 percent votes on December 19, 2021, becoming **Chile's youngest President ever**.

The **35-year-old** had come to the limelight in 2011 when he had led the student protests demanding better education.

During his presidential campaign, he had promised to **address economic inequality**, boost green investment and raise taxes on the rich.

**Chile has one of the world's biggest income gaps**, as about one percent of the country's population owns **25 percent of the total wealth**.

**Most of the citizens in the country are heavily indebted and have to pay wholly or at least partly for education and healthcare. Pensions are also made up of private savings.**

**Gabriel Boric was born in Chile's far south in Punta Arenas. He studied law but never sat for the bar exam. He is unmarried.**

He will be by far **Chile's most liberal leader after late President Salvador Allende**, whose death in 1973 military coup had resulted in a brutal 17-year dictatorship.

**Boric has promised to produce real change** in society by eliminating existing injustices.

### SRI-LANKA & INDIA TRINCOMALEE OIL TANK FARM DEAL

Sri Lanka and India are set to sign a long-awaited agreement to jointly develop the **'Trincomalee oil tank farm.'**

The Trincomalee oil tank farm deal is a much-desired project that has been contentious for a long time.



This project has been in the works for 16 months between India and Sri Lanka. **Sri Lanka's Energy Minister, Udaya Gammanpila**, has directed the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) to **establish a subsidiary called Trinco Petroleum Terminal Ltd for this purpose.**

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has given his approval for the establishment of a special purpose vehicle.

**Trincomalee Oil Tank Farm:** During World War II, the British built the Trincomalee Oil Tank Farms to serve as a refueling station. **It was constructed next to the Trincomalee port, which boasts a beautiful natural harbor.**

The century-old oil tanks, on the other hand, will need to be refurbished to be fit for use again, which will cost millions of dollars.

**The proposal to renovate the oil farm was included in the Indo-Lanka agreement 35 years ago.**

**'China Bay' is home to the Trincomalee Oil Tank Farm.** It consists of 99 storage tanks, each with a capacity of 12,000 kilolitres, located throughout Lower and Upper Tank Farms.

**Lanka IOC currently operates 15 tanks.** For the remaining tanks, a new agreement is being negotiated. The Upper Tank Farm will be developed in collaboration with the **Indian Oil Corporation and the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation.**

# ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

## RUSSIA PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN ON A VISIT TO INDIA

Russian President Vladimir Putin visited India on December 6, 2021, for the Annual Summit with PM Narendra Modi. During Putin's visit to India, a number of pacts in the field of economy, defense, science and technology, and trade are expected to be signed. The visit of Russian President Putin coincides with the delivery of the first batch of the S400 air defense systems to India by the end of 2021. Putin's visit will be preceded by the first 2+2 dialogue of the foreign and defense ministers meeting and a joint military commission.



## RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN'S: KEY AGENDA

During Putin's visit to India on December 6, 2021, a number of pacts in the field of economy, defense, science and technology, trade are expected to be signed. The Summit will also witness the renewal of a framework for military-technical cooperation for the next decade (2021-31). A joint commission on technology and science is also likely to be announced. India and Russia are at the stage of finalizing negotiations for the Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement (RELOS) which is likely to be signed during the Summit or the first 2+2 dialogue of the foreign and defense ministers meeting. The situation and developments in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover are also expected to be taken up during 2+2 ministerial dialogue and the Summit. In August 2021, PM Modi and Russian President Putin had announced plans to create a permanent channel between India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Russian counterpart Nikolay Patrushev for discussions relating to Afghanistan. The visit of the Russian President coincides with the delivery of the first batch of the S400 air defense systems to India by the end of 2021. India and Russia had signed the contract for S400 air defense systems in October 2018. Besides strategic areas of discussion, the COVID-19 crisis and overall health sector will also be discussed. India is a major production hub for Russian Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIA-RUSSIA TIES

The 21st India-Russia annual summit took place at New Delhi which also included the first 2+2 ministerial dialogue of India's foreign and defense ministers with their Russian counterparts. This first face-to-face bilateral meeting of the Russian President with any country since the onset of the pandemic signifies that the long-standing relations between the two are still as strong as ever. However, the continuing conflict between Russia and the West and the absence of a thriving commercial relationship between India and Russia are the obstacles in reviving the bilateral partnership between the two.

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIA AND RUSSIA

Diplomatic Ties: India and Russia are together in multiple forums including BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). India helped the induction of Russia as a dialogue partner in the Indian Ocean Rim Association which may give Russia a major role in the Indian Ocean. Russia also helped Indian and Chinese Foreign Ministers to meet and diffuse the stalemate in Ladakh on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in Moscow. Also, in the UNSC conference on maritime security chaired by India, Russia displayed its proximity to the former.



India-Russia Annual Summit: It is the highest institutionalized dialogue mechanism in the strategic partnership between India and Russia. The latest summit is an institution of a new "two plus two" mechanism bringing the foreign and defense ministers from both sides into a single forum. There is also speculation about a new 10-year defense pact between the two countries. Russia became the fourth nation, along with the US, Japan and Australia, with which India has such a joint structure in place.

Recent Cooperation in Defense: Currently, 65% of Indian armed forces equipment is of Russian origin and India continues to rely on Russia for spares. Despite strong US opposition, India procured the S-400 Triumf Missile from Russia. A deal worth over ₹5,000 crore with Russia for the manufacture of AK 203 assault rifles is also in the pipeline.

For now, **India has escaped the US sanctions on the purchase of S-400 missiles**, however, India's deepening defense ties with Russia will continue to trouble the USA as well as China.

Economic Domain of Relations: **India and Russia have greater freedom in the economic domain** but their failure to boost the commercial relationship has been stark. **India-Russia annual trade is worth about only \$10 billion whereas the latter's annual trade** with China is a little more than \$100 billion. India's goods trade with the US and China is at the level of \$100 billion.

Significance of India for Russia: **Persistent conflict with the US, Europe, and Japan have moved Moscow closest ever to Beijing.** However, Russia is well aware of the dangers of relying solely on a neighbor like China. **While resetting its relations with the West still has a lot to cover, sustaining the traditional partnership** with India holds political value to Moscow.

Issues in India-Russia Ties: **India remains wary of the growing military partnership between Russia and China** and their shared opposition to the Indo-Pacific framework. Despite political tensions, India's China trade continues to grow, while its commercial ties with Russia are stagnant despite good political relations.

**The Russian business elites gravitate to Europe and China and the Indian corporations** are focused on America and China. **Russia considers the Quad as the 'Asian NATO'** and has claimed military alliances in Asia as counterproductive.

## CONCLUSION

Befriending the Best Friend: **The structural constraints posed by the great power dynamic** and vastly different appreciation of the regional security environment could be reduced if matters improve between Washington and Moscow. **A less conflictual relationship between the two will be a huge relief for India.** Also, the US-China quest for power or Russia's deepening ties with China would have mattered less to India if its relations with China were more peaceful and stable.

Connecting with the Russian Far-East: **Connectivity is another driver in the strategic partnership** with underlying commercial advantages and overall economic development. **Parallel to the multimodal International North-South Transport Corridor**, the proposed **Chennai-Vladivostok Maritime Corridor (CVMC)** will sharpen India's strategic intent in the **South China Sea and the Indo-Pacific region**, with a naval presence securing its energy and trade shipments from the Russian Far East. The far-flung regions of Siberia, **the Arctic and the Far East are home to one of the largest reserves of hydrocarbon**, metallurgical coke, rare-earth and precious metals in the world. **India and Russia can work with countries like Japan and Korea to promote joint investments for exploration in the Far East, the Arctic and Siberia.**

Cooperation in the Energy Sector: **The unknowns of climate change suggest that India should accelerate its energy transition from fossil fuel** based to a renewable one. Russia, one of the key global players across the energy market, could emerge as an indispensable partner for such a transition. **Fortunately, both countries have an extensive record of bilateral cooperation in the energy domain** but undoubtedly more efforts are needed to expand the cooperation.

## RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN LAST VISIT TO INDIA

Last, Russian President Putin visited India in 2018 for the Annual Summit during which the contract for the S400 system was signed between India and Russia. **The last edition of the Summit between India-Russia in 2020 was postponed due to COVID-19.**

### *List of international presidential trips made by Vladimir Putin in 2021*

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the visit to India on December 6 will be Putin's second foreign visit in 2021. **The first foreign visit of Putin in 2021 was to Geneva for a summit-level meeting with US President Joe Biden. Putin had joined the G20 Summit virtually amid COVID-19 crisis in Russia.**





## FIRST DEMOCRACY SUMMIT HELD VIRTUALLY

The **President of the United States Joe Biden** has invited more than 100 countries to a virtual summit on democracy to be held on December 9-10, 2021. The invite list of the **democracy summit includes India and Taiwan but excludes China**, a move which is bound to anger the country. The virtual democracy summit was a campaign **pledge by the US President**, who placed the struggle between the democracies and the autocratic governments at the heart of his foreign policy. The Summit for Democracy will be taking place **ahead of an in-person meeting** at its second edition in 2022. The main rivals of the United States- Russia and China- have been excluded from the list, however, the inclusion of Taiwan is **guaranteed to further escalate the tensions between US and China**. It is widely known that China resists any use of the word 'Taiwan' as it lends a sense of international legitimacy to the democratic self-ruled island, which China claims as part of its territory and has also vowed to seize one day. The final list leaves out Russia, while in the **South Asia region Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka have been excluded**.



## WHO IS INVITED IN THE SUMMIT?

To a virtual summit on democracy, including the major western alliances, the **US has invited India and Pakistan from the South Asia region**. From East Asia, Japan is invited to the summit. **Taiwan is invited to the virtual summit** on democracy. A major diplomatic move that will further escalate the tensions between US and China. Among the Middle East countries, only Iraq and Israel have been invited to the summit on Democracy. Brazil is invited even though Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil's far-right President has been criticized as having an authoritarian bent. He was also a firm supporter of Donald Trump. **Poland has been invited** to the summit despite the continuous tension with the EU over its human rights record. The Philippines is also invited. In Africa, **South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger, and Nigeria** are invited to the Biden Democracy Summit.

## WHO IS NOT INVITED?

**China and Russia, the principal rivals of the United States**, are not invited to the Democracy Summit. Turkey is missing from the participant's list. The country is also the US's NATO ally. Traditional Arab allies of the United States- **Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates**, are not on the democracy summit invite list. As per the list posted on the US State Department website, **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka are excluded from the summit**. Hungary is not invited. The country is led by the hardline nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMIT

It aims to show how ☐open, rights-respecting societies can work together to effectively tackle the challenges of present time, **such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the climate crisis, and inequality**.

**India's Stand:** Democracies should jointly deal with **social media and crypto currencies**, so that they are used to empower democracy, not to undermine it. **India is the largest democracy in the world** which has 2,500-year-old democratic traditions and proposes to share India's democratic experience through digital solutions. Referred to the civilisational tradition of democracy in India citing the ancient city states under the **Licchavis and other people that flourished in India during the late Vedic and Buddhist period** and continued to the early medieval period. Democracy has taken various shapes across the world and there is a need to work on the democratic practices and symptoms. It is needed to constantly improve the **democratic practices and systems** and to continuously enhance inclusion, transparency, human dignity, responsive grievance redressal and decentralization of power.



## WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

**Democracy is a system of government** in which the citizens exercise power directly or elect representatives from among themselves to form a governing body, such as a parliament. It is also **referred to as "rule of the majority"**. Here the power can't be inherited. People elect their leaders. Representatives stand in an election and the citizens' vote for their representative. The representative with the **most number of votes gets the power**.

**Brief History:** India is the world's largest democracy. India became a democratic nation **post its independence in the year 1947**. Thereafter, the citizens of India were given the right to vote and elect their leaders.

## INDIA'S ROLE IN STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY

- **Around the World: Capacity Building:** Beyond demonstrating the **Election Commission (EC)**'s enviable record in conducting free and fair elections, India has given training to the thousands of electoral officials from **Asia, Africa, and other regions of the world** in election management and parliamentary affairs for several decades.
- **Developmental Partnership Administration (DPA):** India has created a Developmental Partnership Administration (DPA) within the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to offer critical development assistance projects for many developing and new democracies across geographies.
- **Examples:** The building of the **Afghan Parliament**, **providing support to Myanmar** for upgrading its administrative and judicial capabilities, amongst others.
- **Funding to Democracy Watch Dogs:** Together with the US, India was instrumental in the creation of the **UN Democracy Fund (UNDEF)** and the **Community of Democracies** to support democracy at international levels. Incidentally, India is one of the largest contributors to UNDEF that supports 66 NGO-led projects in South Asia.
- **United Nations Democracy Caucus:** India also helped to form the United Nations Democracy Caucus, the only body within the **UN system to convene democratic states based on shared values**.

*In India:*

- **Breaking Racial Discrimination:** India has given representation to a Dalit woman to rise to the **highest office (as Chief Minister)**.



## TELEGRAM



- **Right to Information Act, 2005:** The act, a totally civil society driven grassroots movement has truly democratized information spaces for ordinary citizens.

- **Democratic Decentralization:** Twin constitutional amendments (73rd and 74th) in 1992 to create third-tier governments (rural and urban local bodies), has taken deep ground in the last three decades. **With 3 million representatives at various levels (Gram Sabha, Panchayat Samiti, and Zilla Parishad)**, this is by far the largest democratic exercise anywhere in the world.

*Concerns Related to Democracy:*

Democracies across the world—rich and established, developing and newly established ones—are grappling with serious crises on many **key parameters**. According to the reports of leading democracy watch dogs, democracy is witnessing an alarming decline. According to Democracy Index 2020, as low as 9% of the world population live in a “full” democracy. The **recent military coups in Myanmar, Tunisia, and Sudan** are testimonies to the steady rise of anti-democratic forces and the failure of the global democracy collective to do anything meaningful to stem the rot. **Rising threats stemming from the steady rise of authoritarian powers**, particularly China is a major concern. At a time when the West, particularly the US and rich European countries, have considerably ceded their global commitment to democratic values, China has set its eyes on re-defining global human rights and democracy norms.

**Examples:** China has marshaled the military and diplomatic means to threaten Taiwan, **forced territorial claims in the disputed South China Sea**, thrown millions of Uyghur Muslims in internment camps, curbed political freedoms in Hong Kong,

and launched influence operations across many geographies.

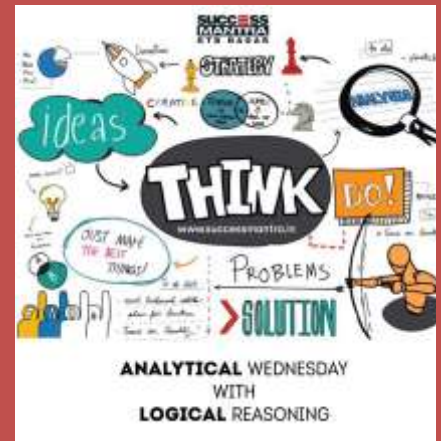
**India's:** The **Freedom House 2021 report** put India as only “**partly free**”, the V-Dem report went a step **ahead to call it an “electoral autocracy”**. According to the Global State of Democracy 2021 report, India was amongst the 10 most backsliding democracies – a more severe and deliberate kind of democratic erosion

### *Three principal themes at democracy summit*

While announcing the **Democracy Summit back in August 2021**, the US had said that the meeting on democracy will stimulate the initiatives and commitments **across three principal themes:**

- Defending against authoritarianism
- Fighting Corruption
- Promoting Respect for Human Rights

A **Virtual Summit on Democracy is being organized by the United States** as democracy has suffered major setbacks in the nations where the country had placed great hopes. Myanmar and Sudan have experienced military coups. Taliban has taken over Afghanistan after the withdrawal of US troops and Ethiopia is in the midst of a conflict that can lead to its implosion.



PRAVAHINI



### 3RD INDIA-CENTRAL ASIA DIALOGUE

Recently, the 3rd meeting of the **India-Central Asia Dialogue** was held in New Delhi. It is a ministerial-level dialogue between India and the Central Asian countries **namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan**. India virtually hosted the second meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue in 2020.



#### INSTC:

Emphasis on optimum usage of the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** as well as Ashgabat Agreement on International Transport and Transit Corridor to enhance connectivity between **India and the Central Asian countries**. Stressed on including Chabahar Port within the framework of INSTC and expressed interest in cooperation on issues related to the development and strengthening of regional connectivity in **Central and South Asia**. Agreed to develop the transit and transport potential of their countries, improve the regional logistics network and promote joint initiatives to create new transport corridors.

**Connectivity Projects:** The connectivity initiatives (**China's Belt and Road Initiative**) should be based on the principles of transparency, broad participation, local priorities, financial sustainability and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries.

### SITUATION OF AFGHANISTAN

- Discussed the current situation in Afghanistan and its **impact on the region, following the Taliban's occupancy**. Issues like current humanitarian situation, terrorism, territorial integrity, respect for sovereignty and unity were discussed too. Pushed for concerted action against all terror groups. The Afghanistan's soil must not be used for planning terror attacks, even as they pledged to provide immediate humanitarian aid to the Afghan people. Condemned all forms of terrorism and opposed "**providing safe haven, using terrorist proxies for cross-border terrorism, terror financing, arms and drugs trafficking**, dissemination of a radical ideology and abuse of cyber space to spread disinformation and incite violence. Supported a **peaceful and stable Afghanistan and emphasized respect** for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in its internal affairs. Pointed to the importance of **UN Security Council Resolution 2593**, which "unequivocally demands that Afghan territory not be used for sheltering, training, planning or financing terrorist acts and called for **concerted action against all terrorist groups**".
- Counter Terrorism Efforts:** Perpetrators, organisers, financiers and sponsors of terror acts must be brought to justice in accordance with principle of "**extradite or prosecute**". Called on the world community to implement relevant UN resolutions, **global counter-terrorism strategy and Financial Action Task Force standards**.
- Line of Credit:** All the countries are currently discussing the use of a USD 1 billion line of credit announced by India last year for infrastructure projects in Central Asia. **A line of credit** is a preset borrowing limit that can be tapped into at any time. The borrower can take money out as needed until the limit is reached, and as money is repaid, it can be **borrowed again in the case of an open line of credit**.
- Post-pandemic Recovery:** All the countries stressed the importance of extensive vaccination and called for cooperation through sharing of vaccine doses, transfer of technology, development of local production capacities, **promotion of supply chains for medical products, and ensuring price transparency**.
- Restoration of Tourism:** Backed the gradual restoration of tourism and business ties **between India and the Central Asian countries**. The foreign ministers of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan welcomed the mutual recognition of Covid-19 vaccination certificates between India and their countries, while the ministers of **Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan** sought early mutual recognition of certificates.



### HISTORICAL & CULTURAL TIES

- Need to build on the **historical and cultural ties** of their region with India and highlight the potential for cooperation in areas such as **connectivity, transport, transit and energy**.

- **International Solar Alliance:** India highlighted the role of "International Solar Alliance (ISA)" initiative in collective, rapid and massive deployment of solar energy for effective implementation of the Paris Agreement.
- **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure:** India also underlined the role of "Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)" in promoting disaster resilient infrastructure for reducing economic losses.
- **Permanent membership at UNSC:** Reiterated support of their countries for permanent membership of India in an expanded and reformed **UN Security Council (UNSC)**. Welcomed the ongoing non-permanent tenure of India in the UNSC and its priorities.
- **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation:** Appreciated the important role of the **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)** Programme in capacity building and human resource development of their countries, especially in Information Technology and Communication Skills in the English language.

## INDIA-CENTRAL ASIA DIALOGUE

It is a ministerial-level dialogue between India and the Central Asian countries namely **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan**. All five nations became independent states after the **collapse of the USSR in 1991, post-Cold war**. All the countries participating in the dialogue, except for Turkmenistan, are also **members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization**. The dialogue focuses on a number of issues including ways to improve connectivity and stabilize war-ravaged Afghanistan.

## OTHER POINTS TO REMEMBER

### INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE

- It is an **Indian initiative that was launched by the Prime Minister of India** and the President of France on 30th November 2015 in Paris, France on the side-lines of the **Conference of the Parties (COP-21)**, with 121 solar resource-rich countries lying fully or partially between the tropic of Cancer and tropic of Capricorn as prospective members.
- **Objective:** To collectively address key common challenges to the scaling up of solar energy in ISA member countries.
- **Members:** Till now, 87 countries have signed the Framework Agreement of the ISA and of these **67 have deposited their instruments of ratification**. Nicaragua, a Central American country is the 87th and the latest country to sign the agreement. The Government of India has allotted 5 acres of land to the ISA in **National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE)** campus, Gurugram and has released a sum of Rs. 160 crore for creating a corpus fund, building infrastructure and meeting day to day recurring expenditure of the ISA up to the year 2021-22.



### COALITION FOR DISASTER RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE (CDRI)

The **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)** is a multi-stakeholder global partnership of national governments, UN agencies and programmes, multilateral development banks and financing mechanisms, the private sector, and knowledge institutions. The **Prime Minister of India launched CDRI** during his speech at the UN Climate Action Summit on 23rd September 2019. It aims to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks in support of sustainable development.

**Members:** 22 countries and 7 organizations.

**Thematic Areas:** Governance and Policy, Risk Identification and Estimation, Standards and Certification, Capacity building, Innovation & Emerging Technology, Recovery and Reconstruction, Finance and Community based approaches. The **CDRI Secretariat is based in New Delhi, India**.



# ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

## ADB FORECASTED INDIA'S GROWTH FOR 2021-22



Asian Development Bank has trimmed its 2021 growth forecast for India to 9.7 percent from 10 per cent but left the 2022 growth forecast unchanged at 7.5 per cent.

The inflation forecast of developing Asia was revised to 2.1 per cent for 2021 and unchanged at 7 per cent for 2022.

### *Asian Development Outlook Supplement Report 2021-22:*

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 per cent, down from its earlier projection of 7.1 per cent (September 2021), and 2022 growth to 5.3 per cent, down from 5.4 per cent.

## ICRA FORECASTED INDIA'S GDP GROWTH



Ratings agency ICRA revised its Indian GDP growth estimate, recently.

According to ICRA's estimate, **there was an upward growth of 7.9 % in the second quarter of**

**financial year 2021-22.**

An increase in government spending in September resulted in an upgrade of GDP growth estimate in the second quarter. **As per earlier estimate, real GDP growth for the July-September period was 7.7%.**

**GDP of India had surged by over 20% in the first quarter, because of a low base as the first wave of covid-19 pandemic ranged.**

As per agency, there was a growth of 8.5%, 7.9% and 3% respectively across industry, services & agriculture and forestry & fishing for the same quarter. RBI's forecast:

On the other hand, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has forecasted a growth of 9.5% for the full financial year 2021-22.

## BANK OF BARODA AT NO.1 SPOTS IN DIGITAL PAYMENTS

Bank of Baroda has announced it has won the #1 position in overall digital transactions amongst large banks for FY20-21.



The bank showed the exceptional growth of digital payment transactions achievement and was felicitated by the **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Govt. of India** at the Digital Payments Utsav.

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Independence of India, MeitY is celebrating "**Digital Payments Utsav**".

As a part of the celebration, the Bank of Baroda has been conferred with 5 DigiDhan awards for FY 2019-20 & 2020-21 in various categories. BoB has been **conferred with five DigiDhan awards for FY 2019-20 & 2020-21** in various categories.

Bank of Baroda Founded: **20 July 1908.**

Bank of Baroda Headquarters: **Vadodara, Gujarat.**

Bank of Baroda Managing Director & CEO: **Sanjiv Chadha.**

Bank of Baroda Tagline: **India's International Bank.**

Bank of Baroda Amalgamated Banks: **Dena Bank & Vijaya Bank in 2019.**

## WHAT IS RBI'S CARD TOKENIZATION RULE?

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently **extended the deadline for complying with the card information storage rules** by another six months.



Deadline was extended because **merchants and payments companies expressed their inability to comply with the December 31 deadline.**

**RBI took this decision as industry bodies had requested the central bank to extend the deadline from December 31 highlighting multiple challenges in implementing new guidelines.**



Furthermore, merchants and banks were not prepared to switch to the new system in the specified time.

#### What are RBI's guidelines on Tokenization?

RBI had issued new guidelines in September 2021. Under the guidelines, merchants will not be able to store customers' card data in their servers.

It prohibited merchants from storing customer card details as well as mandated for the adoption of card-on-file (CoF) tokenization as an alternative to card storage.

The new rule was to be implemented from January 1, 2022. As per RBI's new directive on tokenization, customers have to enter full card details each time to make payments online.

Tokenization means replacement of actual card details with an alternate code dubbed as "token". The token will be unique for a combination of card, token requestor and device.

#### INDIA TO BECOME 3RD LARGEST ECONOMY IN 2031: CEBR

The Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) from the United Kingdom has predicted that the Indian economy will become the world's third-largest by the year 2031.

In the year 2022, India is set to regain its sixth position in World Economic League Table (WELT) from France, as per CEBR.

In the year 2020, India's GDP had witnessed a contraction of 7.3% due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown leading to constraints on economic activity.

India has witnessed a large scale spread of infections and has the third-highest death toll worldwide, behind US and Brazil.

However, with the help of emergency aid and prompt measures taken by the Indian government, the country has recovered from the second wave of COVID-19.

In Global Scenario: The annual league table also predicted that China will overtake the US to be the largest economy in 2030 (two years later than the forecast in 2021). The world economy is set to surpass \$100 trillion for the first time in 2022



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# APPOINTMENTS

## ADMIRAL HARI KUMAR TOOK CHARGE AS NEW CHIEF OF NAVY



**Vice Admiral Hari Kumar** on November 30, 2021, took charge as the new Chief of Naval Staff.

The Ministry of Defence has announced on November 9, 2021, that Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar will take charge as the next **Chief of the Indian Navy**.

Vice Admiral Kumar has been serving as the **Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command**.

*Who is Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar?*

Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar was commissioned on January 1, 1983, into the executive **branch of the Indian Navy**.

The **Vice-Admiral R Hari Kumar**, during his long and distinguished service which spanned nearly 39 years, has served in a variety of command, **staff and instructional appointments**.

Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar's sea command includes INS Nishank, Missile Corvette, INS Kora and Guided Missile Destroyer INS Ranvir.

Vice Admiral Kumar has also commanded Indian Navy's aircraft carrier INS Viraat. He also served as the Fleet Operation Officer of the Western Fleet.

Vice Admiral Kumar, before serving as the **Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief** of the Western Naval Command, was the Chief of Integrated Staff Committee of headquarters, Integrated Defence Staff.

**Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar has been decorated with-**

Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM)  
Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM)  
Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM)

**Chief of Naval Staff:** The Chief of the Naval Staff is the head of the military staff of the Indian Navy. The Naval Staff Chief is the highest-ranking naval officer on the active service of the Indian Armed Forces unless the Chief of Defence is a Navy Officer.

**Role-** The Chief of Naval Staff is the primary adviser to the Government of India on naval affairs.

The Chief is also responsible for governing and directing the naval staff, the supreme decision-making body which consists of the highest-ranking naval officers of the Indian Navy. They are the **Navy's Chief Executive and the Chief Naval Adviser of the Chief of Defence Staff**.

## GITA GOPINATH BECOMES 1ST DEPUTY MD OF IMF



The Indian American, Gita Gopinath has become the first Deputy Managing Director of the **International Monetary Fund**.

She is the first Indian to take up the top role in the organisation. **First Deputy Managing Director is the second top post in the IMF next to the Managing Director**.

Gita Gopinath was the first female Chief Economist of the **International Monetary Fund**. In 2018, she was appointed the Chief Economist of the IMF.

She named the world wide recession of 2020 due to COVID-19 as "**The Great Lockdown**". In 2021, she was named the First Managing Director of the IMF. It is the number 2 position in the organisation.

**She was awarded the Parvasi Bharatiya Samman in 2019 by the President of India.**

The Parvasi Bharatiya Samman is presented in the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. It is the highest award presented to the overseas Indians.

**IMF is managed by the Managing Director, First Deputy Managing Director and deputy managing directors.**

The First Deputy Managing Director in the IMF takes lead on conducting surveillance, flagship publications and oversees research.

Under Ms Gopinath's leadership, **the IMF has contributed to multilateral surveillance through World Economic Outlook**. Her plan to end COVID-19 crisis by vaccinating the world at feasible cost was a huge success.

## MM NARAVNAE AS CHAIRMAN OF CSC

**Indian Army Chief Gen MM Naravane** has taken charge as the Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee comprising the three service chiefs.





The post of the Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee had fallen vacant after the death of the Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat in the IAF helicopter crash in Tamil Nadu on December 8, 2021.

MM Naravane is the current Chief of the Army Staff and the 58th Chairman of the Chiefs Staff Committee.

Before his appointment as the Army Staff Chief, Naravane served as the 40th Vice Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army, General Officer Commanding in chief of Army Training Command, and General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Command.

The Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee was the head of the Indian Armed Forces. The appointment of senior-most Chief of Staff was made to serve as a Chairman until he retired.

After the creation of Chief of Defence Staff, CDS became the permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee. Before that senior-most of the three Chiefs used to be the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.

The Chiefs of Staff Committee consists of the most senior military personnel. They advise on the operational military matters as well as on the preparation and conduct of the military operations. The Chiefs of Staff Committee consists of the heads of each branch of the armed forces: Chief of Air Staff, Chief of Naval Staff, and Chief of Army.

### CATHERINE RUSSELL TO HEAD UNICEF



Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appointed Catherine Russell as the head of UN children's agency UNICEF.

Catherine Russell is an assistant to US President Joe Biden. She also heads the White House Office of Presidential Personnel.

From 2013-2017, she has also served as the State Department's ambassador-at-large, for global women's issues. Russell will succeed Henrietta Fore, who resigned in July 2021 because of a family health issue.

UNICEF is also known as "United Nations Children's Fund". It is a United Nations agency, which is responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children across the world.

It is among the most widespread and recognizable social welfare organizations of the world. It is present in 192 countries and territories.

UNICEF is the successor of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. It was established on December 11, 1946, in New York.

It was established by the U.N. Relief Rehabilitation Administration for providing immediate relief to children and mothers who were affected by World War II.

### ATUL KUMAR GOEL AS MD & CEO OF PNB

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Atul Kumar Goel, MD & CEO of UCO Bank, as MD & CEO of Punjab National Bank (PNB) with effect from February 1 next year.



Goel will serve as PNB chief until December 31, 2024, which is his attaining the superannuation age.

Goel will replace Mallikarjuna Rao, incumbent MD & CEO of PNB. Rao was given a three-month extension that will end on January 31, 2022.

Meanwhile, the ACC has appointed Soma Sankara Prasad, currently Deputy Managing Director at State Bank of India, as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer in UCO Bank.

He will serve as MD & CEO of UCO Bank till the date of attaining the age of superannuation on May 31, 2023.

### VIKRAM MISRI APPOINTED AS DEPUTY NSA

Vikram Misri was appointed as India's new deputy National Security Adviser in the National Security Council Secretariat. Misri is a 1989 batch Indian Foreign Service officer.



He currently serves as India's Ambassador to China. He was appointed to the post in 2019.

He will be succeeded by Pradeep Kumar Rawat, who was recently appointed as the next ambassador to China.

Misri had previously served as private secretary to Prime Ministers Inder Kumar Gujral, Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi.



**Vikram Misri is an Indian diplomat, who currently serves as the ambassador of India to China.** He was also appointed as the Indian ambassador to Spain and Myanmar previously.

He was born in Srinagar and then got his undergraduate degree in history honors from **Hindu College from the Delhi University.** He then did MBA at XLRI.

He later worked for three years in advertising and then joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1989. **He served Indian missions in Brussels and Tunis between 1991 and 1996.**

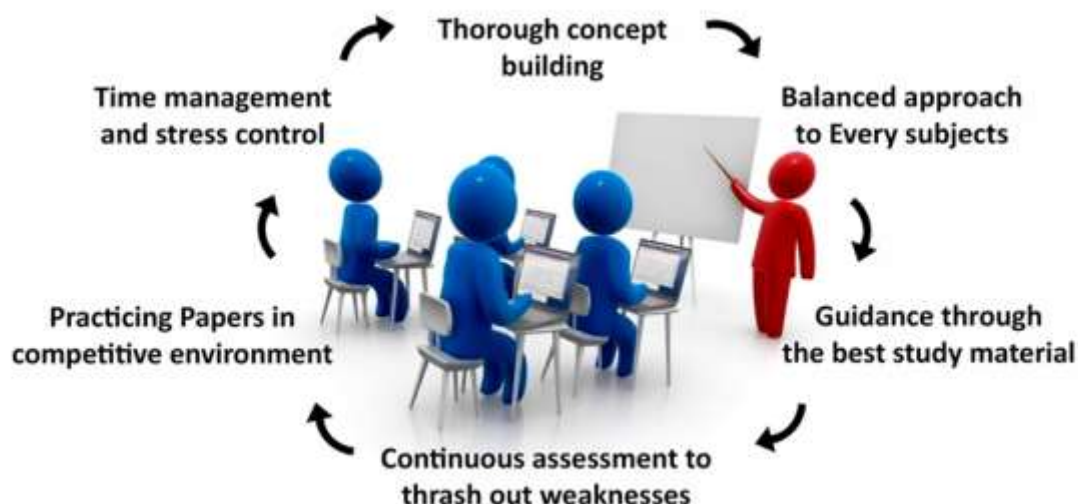
He was appointed as the Private Secretary to Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral in 1997. He held various other posts in **the Prime Minister's Office and External Affairs Ministry as well as several Indian missions abroad.**

**He was appointed as the private secretary to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2012.** He also served as the private secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi when he succeeded Manmohan Singh.

He was appointed as the ambassador to China in 2019. **He had held a series of meetings with senior Chinese officials during the 2020-2021 India-China border clash.**

# PRAVAHINI

## IDEAL MENTORING CYCLE BY SUCCESS MANTRA



# AWARDS & HONOR

## 56TH & 57TH JNANPITH AWARDS ANNOUNCED

56th and 57th Jnanpith Awards were announced recently, for the year 2020 and 2021 respectively.



Assamese Poet Nilmani Phookan Jr. and Konkani Novelist Damodar Mauzo have emerged as the winners of 56th and 57th Award respectively.

They were selected for their contribution to Indian literature. **Jnanpith Awards are India's highest literary honor**, which is bestowed on the writers for their **outstanding contribution in Literature**.

Both Phookan and Mauzo are also the winners of **Sahitya Akademi Award**. They are known for their significant contribution to the respective regional literature.

Damodar Mauzo is from Majorda in Goa while Nilmani Phookan is from Guwahati in Assam. Assamese Poet Nilmani Phookan Assamese Poet Nilmani Phookan received the highest literary honor '**Jnanpith Award**', honoring his **lifelong devotion to literature**.

Other Assamese to win the award: Assam has received the Jnanpith Award for the third time. **Before Nilmani Phookan, Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya won the award in 1979 while Mamoni Raisom Goswami won it in 2000.**

**Konkani Writer Damodar Mauzo:** Damodar Mauzo is a 77 years old Konkani writer. He has been awarded the **57th Jnanpith Award**.

He is known for his novels like **Tsunami Simon and Karmelin** as well as for short stories like **Other Stories** from Goa and **Teresa's Man**.

### About Jnanpith Award

**Jnanpith Award is the oldest and highest literary award.** Award is honored annually by Bharatiya Jnanpith to an author for their contribution to literature. **The award was established in 1961.**

It is bestowed only on the Indian writers who write in the Indian languages mentioned in **the 8th schedule of Indian Constitution, besides English.**

## RATAN TATA HONOURED WITH ASSAM'S HIGHEST AWARD

On the occasion of **Assam Divas**, the state government of Assam has decided to accolade renowned industrialist **Ratan Tata with the 'Asom Bhaibav' award**, the highest civilian state award for his contribution to cancer care in the state.



The awards that precede it are **Asom Saurav, followed by Asom Gaurav**. With healthcare as one of its top priorities, the Assam government is showing its appreciation towards **Tata's push to cancer care in the region**.

The **Tata Trust**, in collaboration with the Assam government, had decided to set up 19 cancer care units during the '**Advantage Assam - Global Investment Summit**' in 2018 and an MoU had been signed between the Assam government and Tata Trusts.

The hospitals were to be set up on a three-tier system and constructed under **the divisions L1, L2 and L3**, which signified the standard of care that would be **provided by them**.

Ratan Tata had laid the foundation stone for **the cancer care units in the state**.

## YOUNG GEOSPATIAL SCIENTIST AWARD

Ropesh Goyal from IIT-Kanpur **won the 'Young Geospatial Scientist'** award in recognition of his unique contribution to developing the **Indian Geoid Model** and computation software.



**Member of Space Commission, Government of India, and former ISRO Chairman AS Kiran Kumar** presented the award to Goyal during the inaugural event of the **DigiSmart India 2021** conference hosted by **the Geospatial World**.

**About the award:** The '**Young Geospatial Scientist'** award and a gold medal have been presented every year since 2011 to promising scientists below 35 years of age in memory of **Rachapudi Kamakshi, a strategic analyst**

with a strong inclination towards geography and geospatial studies.

The Rachapudi Kamakshi Memorial Trust is an organization founded to help and encourage students and young and talented individuals with great ideas and research work in the field of geospatial sciences.

## PM MODI HONORED WITH BHUTAN'S HIGHEST CIVILIAN AWARD



Bhutan conferred Prime Minister Modi with the country's Highest Civilian Award- Ngadag Pel gi Khorlo on December 17, 2021.

The Head of the State of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk pronounced Prime Minister Modi's name for the highly prestigious civilian decoration of Bhutan and also highlighted the unconditional friendship between India and Bhutan.

The neighboring country also acknowledged the support that India provided to Bhutan during the COVID-19 pandemic under PM Modi's leadership.

The diplomatic relations between India and Bhutan were established in 1968 with the establishment of a special office of India in Thimpu, Bhutan.

The basic framework of the bilateral relations between the two countries is the 'Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation' which was signed in 1949 and was later revised in February 2007.

In 2018, India and Bhutan celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the two nations.

Bhutan, being one of the most peaceful neighbor countries of India, has always received economic support from India for the country's socio-economic development since the early 1960s when Bhutan launched its five-year Plans.

## HARNAAZ SANDHU CROWNED AS MISS UNIVERSE 2021



Actor-model Harnaaz Sandhu made history as she was crowned Miss Universe 2021 beating contestants from 80 countries, 21 years after India last brought home the title.

While Paraguay's Nadia Ferreira, 22, finished second, South Africa's Lalela Mswane, 24, came third.

### History of India in Miss Universe title:

Only two Indians before Ms Sandhu have won the title of Miss Universe — actors Sushmita Sen in 1994 and Lara Dutta in 2000.

The 70th edition of the event was held in Eilat, Israel, where the 21-year-old bagged the coveted pageant.

**Career of Harnaaz Sandhu:** The Chandigarh-based model, who is pursuing her master's degree in public administration, was crowned by her predecessor Andrea Meza of Mexico, who won the pageant in 2020.

Ms Sandhu started her journey in pageantry when she won Times Fresh Face in 2017, representing Chandigarh at the age of 17. She later won the LIVA Miss Diva Universe 2021 title.

## TIME MAGAZINE'S '2021 PERSON OF THE YEAR'

The prestigious TIME magazine has named Elon Musk, the CEO of Tesla, as the "2021 Person of the Year."

In 2021, US-based electric-vehicle startup Tesla became a \$1 trillion company as Musk became the world's richest person with an estimated net worth of around US \$255 billion.



Musk is also the founder and CEO of rocket company SpaceX, and leads brain-chip start-up Neuralink and infrastructure firm The Boring Company.

In 2020: US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris were named as the Person of the Year for 2020 by Time magazine.

## MOTHER TERESA MEMORIAL AWARD FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Environmentalism Dr Anil Prakash Joshi, who was conferred upon the Padma Bhushan this year, has been awarded the Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice 2021.



Vidyut Mohan, the winner of the Earth shot Prize, and Ridhima Pandey, a young environmental activist from Uttarakhand, were also the recipients of the award.



The Harmony Foundation identifies a theme each year for the Mother Teresa Memorial Awards and felicitates individuals and organizations who work in the realm of augmenting environmental sustainability.

The awardees were felicitated by Dr Abraham Mathai, the founder chairman of the foundation.

*Why were these 3 awarded?*

Dr Joshi was given the award for his efforts as a changemaker in the environmental sustainability sector by impacting over 10,000 villages in the Himalayan region through his Himalayan Environmental Studies & Conservation Organization.

Vidyut was acknowledged for his seminal and ingenious efforts in combating air pollution through his social enterprise Takachar.

Ridhima, on the other hand, received the award for her spectacular courage, and indomitable spirit as a youth environmental activist who has galvanized national participation to stop climate change.

## ALIA BHATT NAMED PETA PERSON OF THE YEAR AWARD



People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India has named Bollywood star Alia Bhatt its 2021 Person of the Year.

**She is an animal lover and often shares pictures**

**with her pets.** This year, Alia Bhatt invested in Phool, the company behind Fleather, which is vegan leather made from discarded temple flowers.

Her vegan kidswear line, Ed-a-Mamma, also won a 2021 PETA India fashion award for helping to nurture kids' love for animals and nature.

Alia also starred in a pro-adoption PETA India campaign to help cats and dogs. She has used her position to call for stronger animal protection laws.

*Past recipients of PETA India's Person of the Year Award:*

Dr Shashi Tharoor, for supporting Compassionate Citizen, PETA India's humane education programme for children, as well as other education on animal protection;

Former Supreme Court Justice KS Panicker Radhakrishnan, for the landmark judgment against the use of bulls in performances;

Cricketer Virat Kohli, for calling for the release of an abused elephant and stronger penalties for animal abusers;

Comedian Kapil Sharma, for encouraging people to adopt dogs;

Actors John Abraham, Anushka Sharma, Sunny Leone, R Madhavan, Jacqueline Fernandez, Hema Malini, and Sonam Kapoor Ahuja, for helping animals in various ways.

## ANNOUNCEMENT OF SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARDS

Sahitya Akademi announced its prestigious Sahitya Akademi Awards, Yuva Puraskar and Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2021 in various languages.



According to the board, an engraved copper plate, shawl and an amount of Rs 1 lakh will be given to the main Sahitya Akademi prize winner and an engraved copper plate and an amount of Rs 50,000 each will be given to the Yuva Puraskar and Bal Sahitya Puraskar.

*Sahitya Akademi Award 2021:*

The Sahitya Akademi Award 2021 was given in 20 Indian languages; the winner of Gujarati, Maithili, Manipuri, and Urdu languages will be announced at a later date.

Seven books of poetry, two novels, five books of short stories, two plays, one book each of **biography, autobiography, criticism, and epic poetry** have won the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2021.

Author, Namita Gokhale was awarded for her novel Things to Leave Behind.

Anuradha Sarma Pujari (Assamese)  
 Bratya Basu (Bengali)  
 Mwdai Gahai (Bodo)  
 Raj Rahi (Dogri)  
 Namita Gokhale (English)  
 Daya Prakash Sinha (Hindi)  
 DS Nagabhushana (Kannada)  
 Wali Mohd Aseer Kashtawari (Kashmiri)  
 Sanjiv Verenkar (Konkani)  
 George Onakkoor (Malayalam)  
 Kiran Gurav (Marathi)  
 Chhabilal Upadhyaya (Nepali)  
 Hrushikesh Mallick (Odia)  
 Khalid Hussain (Punjabi)  
 Meethesh Nirmohi (Rajasthani)  
 Bindeshwari Prasad Mishr "Vinay" (Sanskrit)

Niranjan Hansda (Santali)  
 Arjun Chawla (Sindhi)  
 Ambai (Tamil)  
 Gorati Venkanna (Telugu)

#### *Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar 2021:*

The Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar 2021 were awarded for 22 Indian languages and the award in Tamil will be declared later, there was no award given in Rajasthani language this year.

Author Megha Majumdar won the Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar 2021 for her debut book 'A Burning', published in 2020.

#### *Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2021:*

The Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2021 was given in 22 Indian languages, no Bal Sahitya Puraskar was given in Gujarati and Punjabi languages this year.

Anita Vachharajani has been named as the recipient of the Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2021 for the biography "Amrita Sher-Gil: Rebel with a Paintbrush".

Hindi writer Devendra Mewari won the award for his play titled "Natak Natak me Vigyan".

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# PRAVAHINI



# SPORTS

## ANJU BOBBY GEORGE WINS WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD



The Indian Athlete Anju Bobby George has accomplished the **Woman of the Year Award** from World Athletics.

She has won the accolade for grooming young girls to take up sports.

In the 2005 IAAF World Athletics Finals, she was a **gold medallist** and the first Indian contestant to win a bronze medal in the long jump at the World Championships in Athletics held in 2013 in Paris. In the 2004 Olympics, she finished sixth.

Anju was conferred the Arjuna award in 2002, Padma Shri in 2004, Khel Ratna in 2003. In 2021, she won the BBC lifetime achievement award under Best Athlete Category.

In 2016, she formed a sports academy for young girls, helped India advance in sports, and inspired more women to follow in her footsteps.

Anju was born in Cheeranchira village in Kottayam, Kerala, in the Kochuparambil family, an orthodox family.

She cultivated an interest in athletics from her father and started her career with Heptathlon.

She won medals in the Delhi Junior Asian Championship, South Asian Federation Games (held in Nepal), Commonwealth games held in Manchester, and a gold medal at the Asian Games held in Busan.

## US ANNOUNCES BOYCOTT OF BEIJING OLYMPICS



boycott.

The Biden administration has announced that **US officials will not attend the 2022 Winter Olympics** in Beijing after China pledged unspecified "countermeasures" against any such diplomatic

The US cited that "**China's human rights ATROCITIES**" is the main reason for its boycott. The US has named the boycott as "**Diplomatic Boycott**".

It means that the US is not sending any official or diplomatic representation to participate in the Olympics. However, the **US is allowing American athletes to participate in the Olympics.**

The US is boycotting for the following **human rights atrocities of China: Situations in Taiwan and Tibet, The crackdown in Hong Kong and Abuse of minority Muslim Uyghurs in Xinjiang.**

## CANADA JOINS US IN DIPLOMATIC BOYCOTT OF OLYMPICS

Canada will join the **United States, the United Kingdom and Australia** diplomatic boycott of the **Beijing Winter Olympics** over **human rights concerns.**



The announcement came after the **White House, the Australian government and the UK government** confirmed diplomatic boycotts of the Winter Games in February to protest Chinese human rights abuses. **China has vowed to react with "firm countermeasures."**

The diplomatic moves by **Canada, the U.S., Britain and Australia** do not affect their athletes' ability to compete in the games.

**Australia took this decision amid a disagreement with China** over several issues, ranging from Australia's foreign interference laws to a move to acquire **nuclear-powered submarines.**

**Relations between Canada and China have been poor since China arrested two Canadians in China in Dec. 2018,** shortly after Canada arrested Meng Wanzhou, Huawei Technologies' chief financial officer and the daughter of the **company's founder, on a U.S. extradition request.**

**UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said no ministers** will attend due to alleged human rights abuses in China, which Beijing strongly denies.

**The 2022 Winter Olympics:** The 2022 Winter Olympics are an upcoming international **winter multi-sport event.**

**This event is scheduled to take place from February 4 to 20, 2022 in Beijing, China.** It will be the first Winter Olympics in China as well as the last of three consecutive Olympics which is to be held in East Asia, after the 2018 Winter Olympics in **South Korea, and the 2020 Summer Olympics in Japan.**



## KHELO INDIA WOMEN'S HOCKEY LEAGUE



Sports Minister Anurag Singh Thakur formally inaugurated the first-ever national-level Khelo India Women's Hockey League at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in New Delhi.

The winner of the Khelo India Women's Hockey League will get a cash prize of 30 lakhs. In the first phase, 14 teams will participate in the league and 42 matches will be played from 15 December to 21 December.

The second and third phases will be organized early next year.

The Sports Authority of India and Hockey India are jointly organizing the first-ever national-level Khelo India league.

This is the first big event that will be organized at the Major Dhyan Chand Stadium after 2015.

## TIME'S MAGAZINE 2021 ATHLETE OF THE YEAR



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.

Despite the setback, the 24-year-old managed to earn team all-around silver and a bronze in balance beam at the Tokyo Games.

Biles along with hundreds of athletes accused the FBI, USA Gymnastics and the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee for failing to stop the abuse.

A month after the Tokyo Olympics, Biles gave an emotional testimony at a US senate hearing into

former USA Gymnastics team doctor Larry Nassar sexual abuse scandal.

## KIDAMBI SRIKANTH CREATED HISTORY IN BWF

On December 19, 2021, Shuttler Kidambi Srikanth became the first Indian man to win a silver medal at BWF World Championships.



In the final, he was defeated by Singapore's Loh Kean Yew by 21-15, 22-20.

This was the first time that a men's player from Singapore won gold at BWF World Championships.

2021 BWF World Championships is officially known as "TotalEnergies BWF World Championships 2021" for sponsorship purposes.

The badminton tournament was held from December 12 to 19, 2021 in Huelva, Spain.

Huelva was awarded this event in November 2018, when an announcement was made for 18 major badminton event hosts from 2019 to 2025.

It is a French multinational integrated oil and gas company, which was founded in 1924.

Its businesses include crude oil & natural gas exploration and production to power generation, refining, transportation, international crude oil & product trading and petroleum product marketing. It is also a large-scale chemicals manufacturer.

Srikanth Kidambi: He is an Indian badminton player, who trains at Gopichand Badminton Academy in Hyderabad.

In April 2018, he was ranked as world number 1, at the BWF ranking. He also received the Padma Shri, India's fourth highest civilian award in 2018 as well as the Arjuna award in 2015.

He became the first ever Indian to reach the final of 2021 BWF World Championships in Men's singles and win a silver medal.



# DATES & DAYS

## WORLD AIDS DAY OBSERVED ON DECEMBER 1ST



Every year, **World AIDS Day** is celebrated on **December 1st**. The day is being celebrated since 1988.

It is celebrated to create awareness against the spread of HIV infection. It

is one of the 11 official **Global Public Health campaigns** of the **World Health Organisation**.

This year, **World AIDS Day** is celebrated under the **theme: Ending Inequalities**.

Every year the last week of November is celebrated as **AIDS awareness week**. The **first AIDS Awareness Week** was celebrated in 1984 in **San Francisco**.

According to the **National AIDS Control Organisation**, around 2.14 million people live with **AIDS** in India as of 2017.

India is home to the third largest population of persons with **AIDS** in the world after **South Africa** and **Nigeria** as of 2018.

However, the **prevalence rate of AIDS** in India is lesser than that of many other countries. In 2016, the prevalence rate of **AIDS** was at 0.3% in India. This was the **80th highest** in the world.

**India** fights the disease through **antiretroviral drugs** and education programmes.

It was established in 1992 under the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**. It takes leadership in controlling **AIDS** in India.

It conducts estimates of the disease once in every 2 years along with **National Institute of Medical statistics** and **Indian Council of Medical Research**. The **first such Estimation in India** was done in 1998 and the last was done in 2017.

**NACO** has increased its number of centres providing **free** antiretroviral treatment from 54 to 91. The number of **AIDS** patients in the country has increased largely in 2020 due to **COVID-19**.

The government programmes implemented to **reduce AIDS** in the country have come to halt due to **COVID-19** crisis.

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Every year, **International Day of Persons with Disabilities** is celebrated on **December 3** by the **United Nations** and several other organisations spread all over the world. This year the day is celebrated with the following theme.



**Theme: "Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world".**

The **International Day of Persons with Disability** was first proclaimed by the **United Nations General Assembly** in 1992.

It aims to promote well-being and rights of the persons with disabilities and increase the awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in social, political, economic and cultural life.

### *Need for International Day of Persons with Disabilities*

There are more than **1 billion** persons with disabilities in the world. Of these **80%** live in developing countries. Of the disabled persons in the world, **46%** are older than **60 years**. The persons with disabilities are among the hardest hit by **COVID-19**.

In 2006, the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** was adopted. The other major **United Nations** frameworks that included disabilities as a major part are as follows

*The following goals include disabilities as a major part in their agenda*

**Goal 4:** Inclusive and Equitable Quality of Education

**Goal 8:** To promote inclusive, sustainable economic growth. This is to be achieved by providing productive employment to all men, women and persons with disabilities.

**Goal 10:** To reduce inequality

**Goal 11:** To make human settlements, cities safe, inclusive and sustainable.

**Goal 17:** To strengthen and revitalise global partnership for sustainable development.

## INDIA & BANGLADESH TO CELEBRATE MAITRI DIVAS



India and Bangladesh have decided to celebrate December 6, the day on which India formally recognized Bangladesh, as "Maitri Divas" (Friendship Day).

During the visit of PM Narendra Modi to Bangladesh in March 2021 to attend the national day of Bangladesh, it was decided to commemorate 6 December as Maitri Divas (Friendship Day).

Ten days before the liberation of Bangladesh, India had recognised Bangladesh on 6 December 1971. India was one of the first countries to establish bilateral diplomatic ties with Bangladesh.

According to the joint statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs, Prime Minister Modi highlighted that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, one of the greatest leaders of modern times, will be remembered for his courage and indelible contribution to Bangladesh's emergence as a sovereign country.

### About the Maitri Divas:

The Maitri Divas is being commemorated in 18 countries around the world apart from Dhaka and Delhi.

These countries are Belgium, Canada, Egypt, Indonesia, Russia, Qatar, Singapore, UK, Australia, France, Japan, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, UAE and USA.

The holding of Maitri Divas is a reflection of the deep and abiding friendship between the people of India and Bangladesh that have been forged in blood and shared sacrifices.

## INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY 2021



The anti-corruption day is observed annually on December 9 to raise awareness against corruption and the measures that can be implied to fight it.

The act of corruption, which exists in all forms of societies, is considered a threat to democracy by the international community.

The anti corruption day 2021 is a reminder as well as an opportunity to address the issue which impacts every significant structure and the lives of people.

The International anti-corruption day 2021 sheds light particularly on the problems persisting in the bureaucratic structures of the countries which in turn impacts the functioning of every institution.

The theme of the International anti corruption day 2021 is 'Your right, your role: Say no to corruption'.

**History of International anti-corruption day:** To fight corruption, the United Nations Convention against Corruption was adopted by the General Assembly on October 31, 2003.

The international anti-corruption day is organized by the UN Development Programme in which all the agencies work together to fight against corruption and discourage acts that can facilitate the practice of corruption.

## INT. HUMAN RIGHTS DAY OBSERVED ON 10TH DECEMBER

The world observes Human Rights Day every year on December 10 to make people aware of their basic rights and also to acknowledge the absence of human rights in various countries.



Human Rights is described as a broad range of fundamental rights and freedoms to which each and every human being living on Earth is entitled to.

In the current political scenario, Human Rights Day 2021 must not be an observance of one day, but it should also bring our focus towards the people living in regions that still lack basic human rights forcing them to live under crisis and instability.

The theme announced by the UN for Human Rights Day 2021 is 'Reducing Inequalities and Advancing Human Rights'.

The theme of Human Rights Day 2021 is related to equality and to Article 1 of UDHR which states that all human beings in the world are born free and are equal in dignity and rights.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality are at the heart of human rights.

Human Rights Day is significant as it highlights and makes people aware of the institutions that are empowered to prevent inequality, protect the most



vulnerable, abuses, and discrimination, and punishes the perpetrators of **human rights violations**.

## INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN DAY: 11TH DECEMBER



**International Mountain Day** is observed globally on December 11 every year.

The day is celebrated to create awareness about the importance of mountains to life, to highlight the opportunities and constraints in mountain development and to build alliances that will bring positive change to mountain peoples and environments around the world.

The theme of the day: **The theme of this year's International Mountain Day (IMD)** on 11 December will be sustainable mountain tourism.

**Sustainable tourism in mountains can contribute to creating additional and alternative livelihood options** and promoting poverty alleviation, social inclusion, as well as landscape and biodiversity conservation.

It is a way to preserve the natural, cultural and spiritual heritage, to promote local crafts and high-value products, and celebrate many traditional practices such as local festivals.

**History of the day:** The day was established by the UN General Assembly in 2003 to encourage the sustainable development of mountains. The United Nations had declared 2002 as the UN International Year of Mountains.

**Mountains are home to 15% of the world's population** and host about half of the world's biodiversity hotspots.

They provide fresh water for everyday life to half of humanity. Their conservation is a key factor for sustainable development and is part of Goal 15 of the SDGs.

## NATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION DAY: 14TH DECEMBER



Every year on the 14th of December, **National Energy Conservation day is celebrated in India.**

**This occasion has been celebrated since 1991** when it was led by the

Ministry of power.

**This day is celebrated to raise awareness regarding the conservation of energy** as it is the best way to have a greener and brighter future.

**Significance of the day:** Energy conservation is a big necessity that is required of our future well-being.

**It is a practice that everyone should indulge in** to make the future of our earth even better.

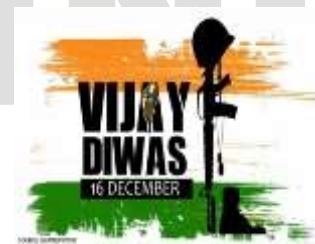
The agenda of celebrating national energy conservation Day is to raise awareness regarding the importance of energy and resources conservation. Conserving energy means wisely using energy rather than indiscriminately misusing it.

**History of the day:** Back in 2001, the Indian bureau of energy efficiency implemented the Indian energy conservation act which focused on formulating policies regarding energy conservation.

Since then on every 14th December various discussions, conferences, and workshops are organized to raise awareness regarding energy conservation. These events are organized across the country.

## VIJAY DIWAS CELEBRATED ON 16TH DECEMBER

In India, **Vijay Diwas (also called Victory Day)** is celebrated every year on December 16.



The country is celebrating the 50th Vijay Diwas in 2021. **Vijay Diwas is observed to commemorate the service, valour, and sacrifices of the gallant men of the Indian Armed Forces' victory over Pakistan in the 1971 war.**

On this day, we pay homage to all the soldiers who had defended the nation in the war.

**About Vijay Diwas:** The Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 which began on December 3 lasted for 13 days and officially ended on December 16, **after which Pakistan surrendered to India.**

It was on this day in 1971, the chief of the Pakistani forces, **General AA Khan Niazi, along with 93 thousand troops**, had surrendered unconditionally to the allied forces consisting of the Indian Army and Mukti Bahini.

The end of the war also resulted in the subsequent secession of East Pakistan into Bangladesh.

## INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY OBSERVED ON 18TH DECEMBER

International Migrants Day is observed on 18 December throughout the world. **Migration is a global phenomenon where a wide range of factors determine the movement of people.**



Hope and aspiration for dignity, safety and peace often prompt people to leave their homes in search of a better life.

History: Taking into account the large and increasing number of migrants in the world, the United Nations

General Assembly declared 18 December as **International Migrants Day**. The day was proclaimed on 4 December, 2000.

The day also coincides with the UN General Assembly adopting the **International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and members of Their Families** in the year 1990.

Significance: On the International Migrants Day this year, **UN Secretary General António Guterres stated that the world requires "more effective international cooperation and a more compassionate approach to migration."**

**He also talked about the challenges faced by migrants, including racism and xenophobia.** Guterres also highlighted the contribution migrants have made in the face of their struggles, including their role as frontline workers in many nations during the coronavirus pandemic.

As per the UN, in the year 2020, **approximately 281 million people, or 3.6 percent of the global population, were classified as international migrants.**

Many people leave their homes out of choice, but most migrate due to necessity where factors such as economic challenges, frequent disasters, extreme poverty and conflict become the reason for their forced movement.

Launched by UNESCO in 2004, **International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities**, works to promote a welcoming approach towards migrants at the local level.

Furthermore, **UNESCO jointly works with UN partners through the Global Migration Group (GMG)**, an inter-agency group that promotes wider application of migration related norms, to build a system for safe, orderly and regular migration globally.

**Theme: A theme for International Migrants Day is observed every year and as per the International Organization for Migration, 'Harnessing the Potential of Human Mobility' is the theme for 2021.**

**The theme aims at highlighting the contributions made by migrants to build stronger communities, through their knowledge, networks and skills.**

## NATIONAL MINORITIES RIGHTS DAY



**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.**

India has **faced many obstacles since the British Rule regarding basic human rights.** However, these rights were safeguarded after independence and people must be made aware of them.

**Thus we celebrate Minorities Rights Day on 18th December every year.**

The **Minority Rights Day 2021** aims to uplift all the minority sections of society and back them to voice their opinion.

**Considering the COVID-19 pandemic**, all the sessions, seminars, and debates are likely to take place digitally.

**History of the day:** 18 December was declared as the **Minorities Rights Day** back in 1992 by the United Nations.

The UN had adopted the statement on the individual's Rights belonging to religious or Linguistic National or Ethnic Minorities.

In India, it is the **responsibility of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM)** to carry out the events on this day.

The NCM was established by the **Union Government under the National Commission for Minorities Act**, in 1992.

## GOOD GOVERNANCE WEEK 2021 IN DECEMBER

**The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG)**, under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions is celebrating '**Good Governance Week 2021**' on December 20-25.



The Good Governance Week is being organized in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj & Rural Development.

It is being celebrated as a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. On the occasion, Good Governance Week Portal will be launched and a booklet on 2-year achievements of DARPG will be released.

A film on “Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur” will also be screened.

**Theme of the Week:** The Good Governance Week is being organized under the theme- “Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur”.

During the celebration of Good Governance Week, Nation-wide campaign to Redress the Public Grievances and to improve Service Delivery will also be held across all the Districts, States, and Union Territories in India.

More than 700 Districts Collectors will take part in the campaign. They will visit Tehsil or Panchayat Samiti Headquarters for providing timely grievance redressal and improve service delivery.

**Objective of the event:** The Good Governance Week is being organized with the objective of translating the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for Next Generation Administrative Reforms during the Amrit Kaal period in all the Districts and Tehsils across the country.

## INTERNATIONAL HUMAN SOLIDARITY DAY: 20TH DECEMBER



International Human Solidarity Day is observed globally on 20 December every year to celebrate unity in diversity and raise awareness about the importance of solidarity.

According to the United Nations Millennium Declaration, solidarity is among the fundamental values that are essential to international relations.

**International Human Solidarity Day is:** a day to celebrate our unity in diversity;

a day to remind governments to respect their commitments to international agreements;  
a day to raise public awareness of the importance of solidarity;

a day to encourage debate on the ways to promote solidarity for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals including poverty eradication;  
a day of action to encourage new initiatives for poverty eradication.

**Solidarity is defined as an awareness of shared interests and objectives** that create a psychological sense of unity and ties in a society that bind people together as one.

**History of International Human Solidarity Day:** The General Assembly, on 22 December 2005, by resolution 60/209 identified solidarity as one of the fundamental and universal values that should underlie relations between peoples in the twenty-first century, and in that regard decided to proclaim 20 December of each year International Human Solidarity Day.

## GOA LIBERATION DAY: 19TH DECEMBER

Goa Liberation Day is observed on 19 December every year in India and it marks the day Indian armed forces freed Goa in 1961 following 450 years of Portuguese rule.

The year 2021 marks the 60 years of Goa's independence.



Goa Liberation Day is marked by an abundance of events and festivities in Goa though this time because of the pandemic the celebrations are expected to be muted.

A torchlight procession is ignited from three different locations in the state, eventually all meeting at the Azad Maidan.

### *History of Goa Liberation Day:*

The Portuguese colonized several parts of India in 1510 but by the end of the 19th-century Portuguese colonies in India were limited to Goa, Daman, Diu, Dadra, Nagar Haveli and Anjediva Island.

The Goa liberation movement, which sought to end Portuguese colonial rule in Goa, started off with small scale revolts.

On August 15, 1947, when India gained its Independence, Goa was still under Portuguese rule.

The Portuguese refused to give up their hold over Goa and other Indian territories. Following a myriad of unsuccessful negotiations and diplomatic efforts with the Portuguese, the former prime minister of India,



Jawaharlal Nehru, decided that military intervention was the only option.

The 36-hour military operation, conducted from December 18, 1961, was code-named 'Operation Vijay' meaning 'Operation Victory,' and involved attacks by the Indian Navy, Indian Air Force and Indian Army.

## NATIONAL CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY: 24TH DECEMBER



National Consumer Rights Day is observed every year on December 24. On this day in 1986, the Consumer Protection Act 1986 received Presidential assent and thus came into force.

The Act aims to provide consumers with effective safeguards against different types of exploitation, **such as defective goods, deficiency in services and unfair trade practices.**

Consumer Protection Act in India **guarantees six basic rights** to consumers:

- Right to choose the product
- Right to be protected from all kinds of hazardous goods
- Right to be informed about the performance and quality of all products
- Right to be heard in all decision-making processes related to consumer interests
- Right to seek redressal, whenever consumer rights have been infringed
- Right to complete consumer education

### World Consumer Rights Day:

People often get confused between World Consumer Rights Day and National Consumer Rights Day.

While both have the same purpose, they are observed on different dates. World Consumer Rights Day is celebrated annually on March 15.

### History of National Consumer Rights Day:

The National Consumer Rights Day was observed for the first time in 1986 under the Consumer Protection Act. It's different from World Consumer Day, which is celebrated annually on March 15.

The Consumer Protection Act came into force in 1986. In 2019, the Consumer Protection Act 1986 was revised.

Later, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution announced the CPA 2019 bill put to effect on July 20, 2020.

## GOOD GOVERNANCE DAY: 25TH DECEMBER

In India, Good Governance Day (Sushasan Divas) is observed annually on 25th December. On this day the nation celebrates the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna and former-Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

In keeping with this principle, **Good Governance Day has been declared to be a working day for the government.**

Significance of the day: The aim of observing this day is to let the students and citizens of the country know about the duties and responsibilities of the government they need to fulfill.

Good governance day acts as a reminder to the government about their responsibilities, and the government should be unbiased, transparent, and development-oriented.

### History of the day:

On 23rd December 2014, former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya were announced to receive the highest civilian award of the nation, Bharat Ratna.



After the announcement, the newly elected Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced 25th December to be **celebrated and observed as the Good Governance Day.**

### About Atal Bihari Vajpayee:

Atal Bihari Vajpayee served as the Prime Minister of India for three times. His first term was for only 13 days in 1996.

He served his second term for a period of thirteen months from March 1998 to April 1999 and then a full term from 1999 to 2004. His first entry into parliament was in 1962 through the Rajya Sabha. He was elected to the Lok Sabha seven times. **In 2015, Mr Vajpayee was conferred the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award.**



# ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

## INDIAN NAVY DAY OBSERVED ON 4TH DECEMBER

Navy Day is observed on December 4 every year to commemorate the launch of **Operation Trident** against Pakistan during the **71' Indo-Pak War**. The Indian Navy is a well-balanced three-dimensional force, capable of operating above, on, and under the surface of the oceans and safeguarding our national interests. Its objective is also to improve its **circumstances in the Indian Ocean Zone**. On the night of December 4-5, 1971, the Indian Navy planned the attack at night as Pakistan did not have aircraft that could carry out bombings at night. It was a devastating attack on the **Pakistan Naval Headquarters of Karachi**. The attack was successful as it sank a minesweeper, a destroyer, and an ammunition supply ship. Therefore, to celebrate the success and achievements of the Indian navy force, every year Navy day is celebrated.



**Indian Navy Day 2021: Theme:** Each year, a different theme is proposed to celebrate Navy Day. The theme of 2021 Indian Navy Day is 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' signifying **50 years of India's victory in the Indo-Pakistan war** that took place in 1971. Last year, the theme was "**Indian Navy Combat Ready, Credible & Cohesive**". Every year the Indian Navy Day is celebrated to commemorate Operation Trident. The operation was launched by the Indian Navy during the India-Pakistan war of 1971 to attack Karachi Harbour.

## BACKGROUND OF OPERATION TRIDENT

**Hostilities between India and Pakistan** had broken out on 3 December 1971. While the Indian army pushed forward deeper into **East Pakistan (Later Bangladesh)** it took steps to ensure that West Pakistan would not provide any assistance whether by land or sea. The port of Karachi was the headquarters of the **Pakistani Navy and its entire fleet was based in Karachi Harbour**. Karachi was the hub of Pakistan's maritime trade as well. Blocking Karachi port would cripple its shipping and inadvertently cause an economic crisis in Pakistan. The **Western Naval Command along with Indian Naval Headquarters in Delhi** planned an attack on Karachi port. A strike group was formed for this purpose consisting of these Vidyut-class missile boats already developed off the coast of Okha. Since these boats had radar and operational restrictions, support vessels like submarines and an oil tanker were assigned.



The following were the **Vidyut-class missile boats**:

- INS Nipat
- INS Nirghat
- INS Veer

All three were armed with **Styx missiles, courtesy of the Soviet Union**. The task force was under the command of Babru Bhan Yadav

### *Aftermath of Operation Trident*

The **Pakistan Air Force** responded by carrying out an attack on Okha Port. But the Indian Navy had already moved its assets like missile boats to prevent any damage. However, a **destruction of a large specialized fuel tank did prevent any incursion**. Operation Trident put the Pakistan Armed Forces on high alert and . There was a case of friendly fire when a reconnaissance aircraft misreported a Pakistani frigate as an Indian Navy missile boat. Fighter jets scrambled strafed the vessel and caused some casualties and damage. **It was later discovered the supposed missile boat was the frigate PNS Zulfiqar**. The operation was a resounding success as there were zero casualties on the Indian side. It was regarded as one of the most successful naval operations since World War II. Three days later following the end of **Operation Trident, another naval offensive would be carried out – Operation Python**.

**Operation python:** After the first attack during operation Trident, the Pakistan Navy attempted to outsmart the Indian Navy by mingling with merchant ships. Operation Python was launched to counter this move of the Pakistan Navy.

## ABOUT INDIAN NAVY

The operational and administrative control of the **Indian Navy is exercised Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS)** from the Integrated Headquarters of the of Defence (Navy). The Navy has three Commands, each under the control of officer Commanding-in-Chief.

- The Western Naval Command (**Headquarters at Mumbai**)
- The Eastern Naval Command (**Headquarters at Visakhapatnam**)
- The Southern Naval Command (**Headquarters at Kochi**)



by the  
Ministry  
a Flag

Indian Navy plays a significant role in **securing the marine borders of the nation** as well as accelerating the international relations of India through various means like seaport visits, joint ventures, patriotic missions, calamity relief, and many others. Modern-day Indian Navy has been transformed in order to improve the position of the navy to the Indian Ocean area. There are three divisions in the **Indian Armed Forces: Indian Army, Navy and Air Force**. The Indian Army protects our land, the Navy in water, and the Air Force protects us in the sky.

## VICE ADMIRAL HARI KUMAR TOOK CHARGE AS NAVY CHIEF

**Vice Admiral Hari Kumar** on November 30, 2021, took charge as the new Chief of Naval Staff.

*Who is Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar?*

**Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar** was commissioned on January 1, 1983, into the executive branch of the Indian Navy. The **Vice-Admiral R Hari Kumar**, during his long and distinguished service which spanned nearly 39 years, has served in a variety of command, staff and instructional appointments. Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar's **sea command includes INS Nishank, Missile Corvette, INS Kora and Guided Missile Destroyer INS Ranvir**. Vice Admiral Kumar has also commanded Indian Navy's aircraft carrier **INS Viraat**. He also served as the Fleet Operation Officer of the Western Fleet. Vice Admiral Kumar, before serving as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command, was the Chief of Integrated Staff Committee of headquarters, Integrated Defence Staff.

*Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar has been decorated with-*

- Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM)
- Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM)
- Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM)

## ROLE OF CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF

The **Chief of the Naval Staff is the head of the military staff of the Indian Navy**. The Naval Staff Chief is the **highest-ranking naval officer** on the active service of the Indian Armed Forces unless the Chief of Defence is a Navy Officer. The Chief of Naval Staff is the primary adviser to the Government of India on naval affairs. The Chief is also responsible for governing and directing the naval staff, the supreme decision-making body which consists of the highest-ranking naval officers of the Indian Navy. They are the **Navy's Chief Executive and the Chief Naval Adviser of the Chief of Defence Staff**.





## GOOD GOVERNANCE DAY (ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE)

Good governance day is celebrated annually on **25th December** to mark the **birth anniversary of the former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee**. The aim is to create awareness of accountability in government among the citizens of India. It is the **process of decision-making** and the process by which **decisions are implemented** (or not implemented). Governance can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance.



### ABOUT THE FORMER PM ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE

Atal Bihari Vajpayee was born on **25th December, 1924** in the **erstwhile princely state of Gwalior** (now a part of Madhya Pradesh). He entered in national politics during the **Quit India Movement of 1942** which hastened the end of British colonial rule. In 1947, **Vajpayee** started working as a journalist for newspapers of **Deendayal Upadhyaya – Rashtradharma** (a Hindi monthly), **Panchjanya** (a Hindi weekly) and the dailies **Swadesh** and **Veer Arjun**. Later, influenced by **Syama Prasad Mookerjee**, Vajpayee joined the **Bharatiya Jana Sangh** in 1951. He was the former **Prime Minister of India** and was elected to the position twice in 1996 and 1999. He was conferred with the **country's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna in 2015** and second-highest civilian honour, the **Padma Vibhushan in 1994**.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE DEFINED BY UN

- **Participation:** People should have a **voice in decision-making**, either directly or through legitimate intermediate institutions that **represent their interests**.
- **Rule of law:** Legal frameworks should be **fair and enforced impartially**, particularly the **laws on human rights**.
- **Transparency:** Transparency is built on the free flow of information. **Processes, institutions and information** are directly accessible to those concerned with them, and enough information is provided to understand and monitor them.
- **Responsiveness:** **Institutions and processes** try to serve all **stakeholders within a reasonable timeframe**.
- **Consensus orientation:** Good governance requires mediation of the **different interests in society** to reach a broad consensus in society on what is in the **best interest of the whole community** and how this can be achieved.
- **Equity:** All groups, particularly the most vulnerable, have opportunities to **improve or maintain their well being**.
- **Effectiveness and efficiency:** Processes and institutions produce results that **meet needs while making the best use of resources**.
- **Accountability:** Decision-makers in government, the **private sector and civil society organisations** are accountable to the public, **as well as to institutional stakeholders**.



### CHALLENGES TO GOOD GOVERNANCE

- **Women Empowerment:** Women are not **adequately represented** in government institutions, and other allied sectors.
- **Corruption:** The **high level of corruption in India** has been widely perceived as a major obstacle in improving the quality of governance.
- **Delay in Justice:** A citizen has the **right to avail timely justice**, but there are several factors, because of which a **common man doesn't get timely justice**. One such factor is lack of **personnel and logistics under disposal of court**.
- **Centralisation of Administrative System:** Governments at lower levels can only function efficiently if they are empowered to do so. This is particularly relevant for the **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)**, which currently

suffer from inadequate devolution of funds as well as **functionaries to carry out the functions** constitutionally assigned to them.

- **Criminalisation of Politics:** The **criminalisation of the political** process and the unholy nexus between politicians, civil servants, and business houses are having a baneful influence on public policy formulation and governance. **Environmental security, sustainable development.** Challenges of **globalization, liberalisation and market economy.**

## INITIATIVES TAKEN BY GOVT. FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

- **Good Governance Index:** GGI has been launched by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions to determine the status of governance in the country. It assesses the impact of various interventions taken up by the State Government and UTs.
- **National e-Governance Plan:** It has the vision to “make all government services accessible to the common man in his locality, through common service delivery outlets and **ensure efficiency, transparency & reliability of such services** at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man.”
- **Right to Information Act, 2005: Right to Information (RTI)** is an act of the Parliament of India which sets out the rules and procedures regarding **citizens' right to information.** It replaced the former **Freedom of Information Act, 2002.** Under the provisions of RTI Act, any citizen of India may request information from a "public authority" (a body of Government or "instrumentality of State") which is required to reply expeditiously or within thirty days. In case of matter involving a **petitioner's life and liberty, the information** has to be provided **within 48 hours.** The Act also requires every public authority to computerize their records for **wide dissemination and to proactively publish certain categories of information** so that the citizens need minimum recourse to request for information formally.
- **Setting up of NITI Aayog:** The NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India) is a **policy think tank** of the Government of India, established with the aim to achieve sustainable development goals with **cooperative federalism by fostering the involvement of State Governments of India** in the economic policy-making process using a bottom-up approach. Its initiatives include "15-year road map", "7-year vision, strategy, and action plan", AMRUT, Digital India, Atal Innovation Mission, Medical Education Reform, agriculture reforms (Model Land Leasing Law, Reforms of the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee Act, Agricultural Marketing and Farmer Friendly Reforms Index for ranking states), Indices **Measuring States' Performance in Health, Education and Water Management**, Sub-Group of Chief Ministers on Rationalization of Centrally Sponsored Schemes, Sub-Group of Chief Ministers on **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**, Sub-Group of Chief Ministers on **Skill Development**, Task Forces on **Agriculture and up of Poverty**, and Transforming India Lecture Series. Other programme for good governance includes **Make in India** programme, Lokpal, etc.

## LAUNCH OF E-SAMPADA WEB PORTAL

The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** on December 25, 2020, launched a new web portal and mobile app, **e-Sampada** to **boost transparency and accountability** while ensuring ease of living for the citizens of India. **E-Sampada** aims to provide '**One Nation, One System**', the four websites (eawas.nic.in, grpa.nic.in, holidayhomes.nic.in and states.gov.in) and the two mobile apps (m-Awas and m-Ashoka5) of the Directorate of Estates have been integrated into one paving the way for all the services on the same platform.

The new application will be providing a single window for all the services which includes office space allotment to government organizations in 45 office complexes in 28 cities, allotment for **over one lakh government residential accommodations**, booking of 5, Ashoka Road, and 1,176-holiday homes for the social functions, etc. The web portal and mobile app have been developed by NIC. **E-Sampada mobile app will be available for Android as well as iOS platforms.**

## #Reading Corner

When you read, you exercise your comprehension abilities and your analytical abilities. It fires up your imagination and stimulates the memory centers of your mind. It helps recall information as well as stabilize your emotions.

The importance of a reading habit is that it strengthens mental muscles. Reading is one of the best mental workouts there is.

And to ace CLAT, reading is the key. So dear aspirants, solve the passage based questions regularly and keep reading.

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Some More Preparation Tips  
<https://www.successmantra.in/blog/post/article/preparation-tips2/law-entrance--6>

### ACCESS TO SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

- **SUCCESS MANTRA BLOG** : A domain jam-packed with knowledgeable content
- Meet our mentors on **YOUTUBE** and avail some additional plusses
- Dedicated **TELEGRAM** Channel for daily updates related to News, quiz, articles, vocabulary, vacancies and much more
- Interactive **INSTAGRAM** page which you can't resist to follow
- Social media is always partial without our ancestral **FACEBOOK**

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## OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME

- **E-Sampada** has been developed by the government to **simplify the process and for bringing uniformity in the systems across India.**
- It will **promote the ease of living for the Indian government's officers/departments** as all the services can be easily availed online on a single window with live tracking of applications.
- Through **e-Sampada, the real-time information** on the delivery of service and **utilization of assets will facilitate the maximum utilization of resources.** The automated processes under it will lead to **greater transparency and will minimize human intervention.**

## GOOD GOVERNANCE WEEK OBSERVED

The **Union Government is set to launch a nationwide 'Good Governance Week'** from 20th December to 26th December, with the motto to redress and dispose of public grievances and improvise service delivery down to the village level. Various events will be convened during the week under the campaign titled **"Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur"** aimed to be citizen-focused. 25th December is celebrated as 'Good Governance Day' to mark the **birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.**

It is observed to celebrate the strides made by India in promoting citizen-centric governance and improving service delivery in line with **Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav celebrations to commemorate 75 years of progressive Indi.** The series of programmes planned during the week will aim to highlight various good governance initiatives taken by the Center..It will also include the inauguration of the Exhibition on Good Governance Practices.

### Events include:

- **Ease of Living and Next Phase of Reforms for Reducing Compliance Burden**
- **Experience Sharing Workshop by DARPG on Best Practices.**
- **Mission Karmayogi - The Path Ahead.**
- **Good Governance Week Portal** will also be launched during the occasion and all district collectors of states and union territories will be given access to the online portal to upload and share the progress and achievements.
- **Prashasan Gaon Ki Aur" campaign** will be launched with an aim to take good governance to the rural areas.

**About Governance:** It is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (**or not implemented**). Governance can be used in several contexts such as **corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance.**



# REPORT & INDEXES

## FORBES LIST OF WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL WOMEN



**Finance Minister(FM) of India, Nirmala Sitharaman has ranked 37th on the Forbes' list of the World's 100 Most Powerful Women 2021 or 18th Edition of Forbes' list of the World's 100 Most Powerful Women.**

She has been featured on the list for the 3rd year in a row. **She was ranked 41st on the list in 2020 and 34th in 2019.**

India's seventh woman billionaire and **the wealthiest self-made billionaire, Falguni Nayar, founder and CEO, Nykaa was ranked 88th on the list.** Only 4 Indian Women ranked in Forbes 2021 World's 100 Most Powerful Women List.

**Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Chairperson of the HCL Technology, the first woman to lead a listed IT company in India was ranked 52nd on the list.**

**Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, executive chairperson and founder of Biocon was ranked 72nd on the list.** She founded India's largest listed **biopharmaceutical firm in India in 1978.**

**The 3rd richest woman in the world, MacKenzie Scott, philanthropist, author and ex-wife of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos was topped Forbes' 2021 World's 100 Most Powerful Women replacing the outgoing German chancellor Angela Merkel who topped the 15 out of 17 iterations of the list.**

**Kamala Harris, the first woman and the first person of color (Black) to become the Vice President of the United States of America was ranked 2nd on the list.** Janet Yellen, the first woman to be named the U.S. Treasury Secretary has ranked 39th on the list.

**The list also features Oprah Winfrey (23), Jacinda Ardern (34), Rihanna (68), and others.**

**Taylor Swift (31 years old) ranked 78th, is the youngest woman featured in the list and Queen Elizabeth II (95 years old) ranked 70th, is the oldest.**

## WORLD MALARIA REPORT 2021 BY WHO

**The World Health Organization (WHO) released its World Malaria Report 2021 on December 6, 2021.**

In the report, the WHO notes that 'Global efforts to tackle malaria suffered because of novel coronavirus disease in 2020.

Report further warned that, if proper action is not taken, **the world will witness the danger of seeing an immediate resurgence of Malaria, particularly in Africa.**



**The WHO African Region accounted for around 95 percent of the cases. It accounted for 228 million malaria cases in 2020. Twenty-nine countries were responsible for 96 per cent of malaria cases across the world.**

**Six countries namely Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Mozambique, Angola and Burkina Faso accounted for around 55 per cent of all cases worldwide.**

**India is responsible for 83 per cent of cases in WHO South-East Asia Region. Sri Lanka was certified malaria-free in the year 2016 and it remains malaria-free.**

**Global progress against malaria had been downgraded even before the covid-19 pandemic. Countries having a high burden of Malaria were losing ground.**

## GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY INDEX (GHSI) 2021

**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.**



**GHS Index 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.**

**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.**

## WORLD TALENT RANKING REPORT 2021

The International Institute for Management Development (IMD) World Competitive Center published its "World Talent Ranking Report". In the report, Europe has dominated the ranking in 2021.



Global top 10 countries are from this region. Switzerland has retained its top spot. India has been ranked at 56th position.

In the Middle East & North Africa, UAE maintained its second position, following Israel (first in this region). Israel has been ranked 22nd.

In the Arab world, UAE maintained its top position. The UAE has improved its global talent ranking by one position to 23rd.

Taiwan has been ranked at third place in Asia while at 16th place In Asia, Taiwan has been ranked behind Hong Kong (11) and Singapore (12) but ahead of South Korea (34), China (36), and Japan (39).

### Top 10 in World Talent Ranking report 2021:

About the IMD: IMD is an independent academic institution, having Swiss roots and a global reach. It was founded 75 years ago for business leaders by business leaders.

It has been a pioneering force in developing leaders who can transform organizations and contribute to society.

## WORLD INEQUALITY REPORT 2022



France-based World Inequality Lab published its report titled "World Inequality Report 2022". This report was authored by Lucas Chancel, who is the co-director of World Inequality Lab.

It was coordinated by famed French economist Thomas Piketty. In 2021 the top 10 percent and top 1 percent of the Indian population hold 57 percent and 22 percent of total national income respectively, whereas the share of the bottom 50 percent has gone down to 13 percent.

### Key Findings analysis on inequalities in India:

The report notes that the top 1 % of India's population owns more than one-fifth of the total national income in 2021.

The bottom half of the population earns just 13.1 per cent. It highlights that **economic reforms and liberalization** that India has adopted, have mostly benefited the top 1 percent.

The report identifies India as a poor and unequal country, with an affluent elite. **1 percent richest people in India hold 22%** of the total national income in 2021, while the top 10 % own 57 per cent of the income.

The average national income of the Indian adult population is Rs 204,200 in 2021, on the basis of purchasing power parity.

However, the report clarified that the average national income of a country masks inequalities.

### The scenario in the world's richest nation

The ratio in the richest nation that is the US, is 1 to 17. The richest ten of the global population owns 52 per cent of global income. On the other hand, the poorest half of the population earns 8.5 per cent of the global income.

**Global Scenario: The Middle East and North Africa (MENA)** are the most unequal regions in the world, whereas Europe has the lowest inequality levels. In Europe, the top 10 per cent income share is around 36 per cent, whereas in MENA it is 58 per cent.

## GOOD GOVERNANCE INDEX 2020-21 RELEASED

The "Good Governance Index 2020-21" was released by the central government on 25 December.



The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances compiled the index (DARPG).

The top three states are Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Goa. Indicators recorded by these states increased by 12% in Gujarat and around 25% in Goa in comparison to 2019.

In comparison to the previous year, Uttar Pradesh saw an increase of around 9%. Uttar Pradesh has taken the lead in the commerce and industry sector.

In addition to citizen-centric governance parameters, Uttar Pradesh has improved in the areas of social welfare and development, as well as the judiciary and public safety.

Twenty states improved their composite 'Good Governance Index (GGI) scores in this year's index. The GGI indicators improved by 3.7 percent in J&K. It had a strong showing in the commerce and industry sector.

Agriculture and allied sectors, commerce and industry, public infrastructure and utilities, environment, economic governance, and **social welfare and development** were all strong areas for Goa.

In comparison to the GGI 2019 performance, Jharkhand saw a 12.6 percent increase. It excelled in seven different areas.

Rajasthan saw a 1.7 percent increase in growth. Mizoram excelled in commerce and industry, public health, human resource development, and economic governance in this category.

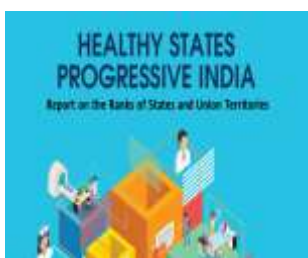
Among the union territories, Delhi came out on top. Agriculture and related sectors, public infrastructure & utilities, commerce and industry, and **social welfare & development** all performed well.

#### *Good Governance Index*

The Good Governance Index 2021 included 58 indicators and ten sectors. GGI is a comprehensive and easy-to-implement framework for assessing the state of governance in states and union territories, as well as ranking states and districts.

The goal of GGI is to create a tool that can be used uniformly across States and UTs to assess the impact of various interventions undertaken by the Central and State Governments.

#### **NITI AAYOG RELEASED FOURTH STATE HEALTH INDEX**



On December 27, 2021, the NITI Aayog released its fourth Health Index. The fourth round of the Index took into account the period 2019-20 as reference year.

NITI Aayog prepared this report in collaboration with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare as well as with the technical assistance from the World Bank.

According to NITI Aayog's health index, Kerala has emerged as the top performer with respect to overall health performance among larger states.

On the other hand, Uttar Pradesh has been ranked the last. However, Uttar Pradesh topped in terms of incremental performance since it registered the highest incremental change in reference year 2019-20 as compared to the base year 2018-19.

Tamil Nadu emerged as second while Telangana emerged as the third best performers, on health parameters.

Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra have been ranked among top five. Bihar is the second and Madhya Pradesh is the third worst performer, on health parameters.

In the smaller states category, Mizoram became the best performer in overall performance and incremental performance.

Among Union Territories, Delhi and Jammu & Kashmir have been ranked among bottom UTs with respect to overall performance. However, they emerged as leading performers with respect to incremental performance.

In terms of health performance, Kerala emerged as the best state, for the fourth time.

Kerala and Tamil Nadu were top two performers with highest reference year (2019-20) index score, in terms of overall performance.

However, they have been ranked twelfth and eighth in terms of incremental performance.

Telangana secured the third place in terms of overall performance as well as incremental performance. Rajasthan was the worst performer, in terms of overall performance and incremental performance.

Among smaller states, Mizoram & Tripura registered strong overall performance. They also showed improvements in incremental performance.

#### **GLOBAL UNICORN INDEX: INDIA AT 3RD SPOT**

Adding 33 "unicorns" in a single year has helped India displace the United Kingdom to be third in the list of countries that are home to such enterprises valued at over \$1 billion each.



The US and China, who occupy the first two ranks, are way ahead, according to the data compiled by Hurun Research Institute.

The US and China are home to 74 per cent of the unicorn universe. The US added 254 unicorns and now totals 487 companies in the coveted list, while China added 74 to take its tally to 301 start-ups having a valuation of over \$1 billion.

The UK added only 15 unicorns to take its total to 39, and hence got displaced by India.



Last year: India was placed fourth when it comes to the number of unicorns last year.

However, the US and northern neighbor China, who occupy the first two ranks, are way ahead, according to the data compiled by Hurun Research Institute.



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# SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

## INDIA TO HAVE NINE NUCLEAR REACTORS BY 2024



The nation will have nine nuclear reactors by 2024 and a new nuclear project, the first in northern India, will come up 150 kms away from Delhi in Gorakhpur of Haryana, the government informed the Rajya Sabha.

By 2024, India will have nine nuclear reactors plus 12 new additional ones which were approved during the Covid times with a capacity of 9000 MW.

The minister said that nuclear energy will soon emerge as one of the most important sources of alternative or clean energy for the increasing power demand of the country.

India is counting on its nuclear program to help meet its Paris climate commitments to reduce the emissions intensity of its economy by a third from 2005 levels by 2030.

## INDIA TEST-FIRED BRAHMOS SUPERSONIC MISSILE



India successfully test-fired the air version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from the integrated test range of Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha.

The air version of the missile was test-fired from supersonic fighter aircraft Sukhoi 30 MK-I.

BrahMos is a joint venture between DRDO (India) and NPO Mashinostroyeniya (Russia) for the development, production, and marketing of the supersonic cruise missile which has been inducted into the Indian Armed Forces.

The missile derives its name from the rivers of Brahmaputra in India and Moscow in Russia.

### List of DRDO Missile with range:

Prithvi II- 250-350 Km  
Brahmos- 400 Km  
Shaurya- 700 to 1,900 km  
Pranash- 200 Km  
K-4 nuclear- 3500 Km

Nirbhay: 1500 Km  
Agni P Ballistic Missile: 1000 to 2000 Km  
Akash-NG: 27-30 Km  
Agni-5: 5000 Km

## NUCLEAR CAPABLE BALLISTIC MISSILE 'AGNI-P'

Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) successfully tested the new generation nuclear capable ballistic missile 'Agni P'.



Agni P was launched from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam island off the coast of Odisha. Trajectory and parameters of the missile were tracked and monitored by several telemetry, electro-optical stations, radar, and down range ships positioned along eastern coast.

Agni P followed a textbook trajectory and met all the objectives of the mission with a high level of accuracy.

**About Agni P:** Agni P is a two-stage canisterised solid propellant ballistic missile, having a dual redundant navigation and guidance system.

It is a medium-range ballistic missile, developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) as the successor of Agni-I and Agni-II missiles. It is the sixth missile in the Agni (missile) series of ballistic missiles.

The missile can be either transported on a train or stored in a canister.

**First Test of Agni-P:** DRDO successfully test fired the first Agni-P on June 28, 2021, from Abdul Kalam Island. The missile carried two multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRV).

It is a three-stage solid fuel missile, having the capability of maneuverable re-entry vehicle (MaRV).

## ISRO SIGNED 6 AGREEMENTS WITH FOREIGN NATIONS

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has signed six agreements with four countries for launching foreign satellites during 2021-2023.

About 132 million Euros would be earned through the launching of these foreign satellites on a commercial basis.





The **ISRO-Indian space agency**, founded in 1969 to develop an independent Indian space program.

**Minister of State for Atomic Energy and Space Dr Jitendra Singh** has said that

ISRO has launched a total of 342 satellites from 34 countries since 1999.

ISRO through its commercial arm, **New Space India Limited (NSIL)**, has been launching satellites belonging to other countries from **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)**.

**Total 124 indigenous satellites** have been put into Earth's orbit including 12 student satellites.

## DRDO SUCCESSFULLY TEST-FIRED SANT MISSILE



**Pokhran Range.**

The Defense Research and Development Organization and Indian Air Force on December 11, 2021, **flight tested the indigenously developed and designed Stand-Off Anti-tank (SANT) Missile** from

According to the Defense Ministry, the Sant missile test was successful in meeting all its objectives.

The flight test of an indigenously developed SANT missile successfully met all its objectives.

The advanced guidance and tracking algorithms, release mechanism, all avionics with the integrated software, performed sufficiently and satisfactorily and the tracking systems also monitored all the events.

The indigenously designed and developed Stand-Off Anti-tank missile is equipped with a state-of-art MMW seeker.

It is capable of providing high precision strike capability from a safe distance. The SANT missile can neutralize targets in a range up to 10 kms.

The SANT Missile for the armed forces has been designed and developed by the **Research Center Imarat (RCI)** in Hyderabad in coordination with the other labs of DRDO and other industries.

## INDIA LAUNCHED 'SMART MISSILE' SYSTEM

On December 13, 2021 India successfully launched **Supersonic Missile Assisted Release of Torpedo**

**System (SMART)** from Abdul Kalam Island, off the Odisha coast.

During the mission, full range capability of the missile was successfully demonstrated.

The SMART system has been designed for enhancing **anti-submarine warfare** capability far beyond the conventional range of torpedoes.

This was a textbook launch, in which entire trajectory of the test was monitored by the **electro optic** telemetry system and several range radars, including down range instrumentation & down range ships.

SMART carried a torpedo, release mechanisms and parachute delivery system. It was launched from a ground mobile launcher and can cover a range of distances.



The Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) have developed the weapon for the Indian Navy.

## About Supersonic Missile Assisted Torpedo (SMART)

SMART is a next-generation, missile based standoff torpedo delivery system. It has been designed to enhance the anti-submarine warfare capability.

Missile will work beyond the conventional range of the torpedo. It is a canister-based missile system comprising of advanced two-staged solid propulsion, precision inertial navigation and electromechanical actuators.

## Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO)

DRDO is a premier agency, working under the Department of Defence Research and Development of the Ministry of Defence.

It is charged with military's research and development. The agency is headquartered in Delhi. It was established in 1958.

## WORLD'S LARGEST & MOST POWERFUL SPACE TELESCOPE

The James Webb Space Telescope, the world's largest and most powerful space telescope, was launched on December 25, 2021 beginning a one-million-mile journey to see





13.5 billion years into the past.

**James Webb Space Telescope Goal:** The James Webb Space Telescope will aim to find the first galaxies that formed in the early universe and look through dusty clouds to see stars forming planetary systems.

**The space telescope will be a giant leap forward in the quest** to understand the Universe and its origins.

**The powerful space telescope will aim to examine every phase of cosmic history**, starting from the first luminous glows after the Big Bang to the formation of galaxies, stars and planets and the evolution of our solar system.

#### *Mission Objectives*

**Find first galaxies formed after Big Bang:** The James Webb Space Telescope will be like a powerful time machine with infrared vision that will look back over 13.5 billion years to see the formation of the first stars and galaxies in the early universe.

**Learn how galaxies evolved:** Its unprecedented infrared sensitivity will help astronomers compare the faintest, earliest galaxies to today's grand spirals and ellipticals. It will help deepen the understanding of how galaxies assemble over billions of years.

**Observe the formation of stars:** The telescope will be able to see right through massive clouds of dust that are opaque to visible-light observatories like Hubble and see how stars and planetary systems are born.

**Look for the potential for life in other planetary systems:** The telescope will also be able to tell more about the atmospheres of extrasolar planets. It could even find the building blocks of life elsewhere in the universe.

#### *James Webb Space Telescope vs Hubble*

The James Webb Space Telescope will aim to replace its 30-year-old predecessor, the Hubble Space Telescope. The Hubble orbits the Earth from 340 miles away, passing in and out of the planet's shadow every 90 minutes.

The James Webb Telescope is named after James Edwin Webb, who was an American government official who served as Undersecretary of State from 1949-1952. He was appointed as the second administrator of NASA from February 14, 1961, to October 7, 1968. James Webb oversaw NASA during most of its formative decade of the 1960s.

The James Webb Telescope is expected to be about 100 times more sensitive than the Hubble telescope. It is expected to transform scientists' understanding of the universe.

## JAPAN LAUNCHED INMARSAT-6 COMMUNICATION SATELLITE

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 the 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 a dual-payload satellite 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 the largest rocket operated by MHI for the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).

## NASA'S JAMES WEBB SPACE TELESCOPE MISSION

NASA is all set to launch its much-awaited next-generation space telescope mission named "James Webb Space Telescope Mission", as and when weather is clear.



It will be launched on Ariane 5 rocket, operated by Arianespace.

### *About James Webb Space Telescope (JWST or Webb)*

JWST has been in the works for decades. It has been jointly developed by NASA, Canadian Space Agency (CSA) and the European Space Agency (ESA).

As NASA's flagship astrophysics mission, it is planned to succeed the Hubble Space Telescope. It will be launched around December 25, 2021 during Ariane

flight VA256. The **primary mirror of JWST**, that is, Optical Telescope Element, comprises 18 hexagonal mirror segments. These segments are made up of gold-plated beryllium.

### *Purpose of the Mission*

The JWST mission will provide improved infrared resolution and sensitivity as **compared to the Hubble Space Telescope**.

It will enable a broad range of investigations in the **fields of astronomy & cosmology**, including observation of some of the most distant events and objects in space, like formation of the first galaxies and **detailed atmospheric characteristics of potentially habitable exoplanets**.

## INDIA SUCCESSFULLY TEST-FIRED PRALAY MISSILE



India successfully conducted the maiden flight test of the indigenously-developed, **surface-to-surface missile 'Pralay'** off the Odisha coast.

The solid-fuel, battlefield missile developed by the Defense Research Development Organization is based on Prithvi Defense Vehicle from the Indian ballistic missile programme.

The missile, launched from the APJ Abdul Kalam Island.

**About the Missile:** The new missile followed the desired quasi ballistic trajectory and reached the designated target with high degree accuracy, validating the control, guidance and mission algorithms.

**With a range of 150 to 500 km, 'Pralay' is powered** with the solid propellant rocket motor and other new technologies.

## PSYCHE MISSION LAUNCHED BY NASA



**NASA's Psyche mission is going to be launched in August 2022.** It will be the first launch to explore a giant metal asteroid known as Psyche in the main asteroid belt.

The asteroid Psyche is in between Mars & Jupiter and is orbiting the Sun. **The Psyche mission is one among the**

**two missions of NASA to explore the early Solar System.**

**The Lucy mission is another mission to explore Jupiter's Trojan asteroids** in order to study the early Solar System.

### *NASA's Psyche mission*

**NASA's Psyche Mission is the first mission that will be launched** to explore a unique giant metal asteroid called Psyche.

**The mission is being led by Arizona State University.** Mission management, navigation and its operations will be looked upon by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

**Mission was selected as one of the two missions to explore the early Solar System in 2017.** Mission will be launched in August 2022 from Kennedy Space Center, Florida and will arrive on the Psyche asteroid in 2026.

### *What is the objective of the mission?*

To understand how planets and other bodies separated into layers **such as cores, mantles, and crusts**.

To examine an asteroid made of metal.

To explore early eras of solar system. **Italian astronomer Annibale de Gasparis had discovered the Psyche as the 16th asteroid in 1852.**

## NASA'S PARKER SOLAR PROBE ENTERED SUN'S CORONA

Recently, a scientific paper revealed that **NASA's Parker Solar Probe successfully entered the Sun's Corona** on April 28, 2021.



Corona is the outermost layer of the Sun's atmosphere. Here, strong magnetic fields bind plasma as well as **prevent turbulent solar winds from escaping**.

Prior to April 28, spacecraft had been flying just **beyond the Alfvén point**. The Alfvén point is when solar winds become greater than critical speed and can break free of the Sun's corona and magnetic fields.

**Parker Solar Probe is a NASA space probe.** It was launched on August 12, 2018.

It was launched with the objective of making observations of the outer corona of the Sun. It reached to within 9.86 solar radii **from the Sun's center**.

By 2025, it will travel at closest approach. It is the **first spacecraft to fly into a low solar corona.**

This project was announced in 2009, at the cost of US\$1.5 billion. The spacecraft was designed and built by **Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory.**

**It is the first spacecraft by NASA,** named after a living person. It has been named so to honor nonagenarian physicist Eugene Newman Parker.

## EXTENDED RANGE PINAKA ROCKET TESTED BY DRDO



The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) announced that an Extended Range Pinaka (Pinaka-ER) Multi Barrel Rocket Launcher System has been successfully

tested at Rajasthan's Pokhran Range.

Pinaka-ER launcher system has been designed by DRDO Laboratory Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) with the High Energy Materials Research Laboratory in Pune, the technology has already been

transferred to the Indian Industry.

The system is designed by DRDO Laboratory ARDE along with HEMRL, Pune, the technology has been transferred to the Indian industry.

According to the **Defense Research and Development Organization, the Pinaka-ER Multi Barrel Rocket System Launcher** is the upgraded version of the earlier version of Pinaka which has been in service with the Indian Army for the last decade.

The latest system has been designed by DRDO in the light of newly emerging requirements with advanced technologies enhancing the range.

**Objective:** Reportedly, the development of the enhanced Pinaka System was taken up by the government and armed forces for achieving the longer-range performance.

All the flight articles at the time of the test were tracked by various range instruments for checking the accuracy of the rockets hitting the targets.

Earlier in June 2021, India had successfully test-fired the

enhanced range versions of indigenously developed Pinaka rockets as well as 122mm caliber rockets from multi-barrel Rocket Launcher at Integrated Test Range in Odisha.

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# MISCELLANEOUS

## DUBAI 1ST IN WORLD TO GO 100% PAPERLESS



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.

It will save around 3 billion Dirham (USD 350 million) and 14-million-man hours. The digitization will provide all the govt.

services to customers & reduce paper consumption by more than 336 million papers.

All the exceptional digital services can be accessed by the Citizens through the "Dubai Now application".

UAE Capital: Abu Dhabi.

UAE Currency: United Arab Emirates dirham.

UAE President: Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

## UNESCO ADDS DURGA PUJA IN INTANGIBLE CULTURAL LIST



The Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage decided, in its 16th session, to inscribe 'Durga Puja in Kolkata' on the Representative List of

Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The 16th session of UNESCO is being held, starting from December 13, 2021. It will conclude on December 18, 2021.

Till now, Durga Puja was celebrated in many parts worldwide. But an official global recognition was pending.

Durga Puja is a classic fusion of religion and culture. It is regarded with a lot of pride. This festival is performed and celebrated predominantly by the Bengali community.

Durga Puja is an annual Hindu festival. It is also known as Durgotsava or Sharadotsav. The festival

originates in the Indian subcontinent which reveres and pays homage to Hindu goddess Durga.

It is celebrated to mark goddess Durga's victory over Mahishasur. This festival is particularly popular and traditionally celebrated in states like West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand, Tripura, Assam, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Uttarakhand as well as in Bangladesh. Durga Puja is a ten-day festival. Out of this, the last five are most significant.

## BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021

Recently, the Biological Diversity (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was tabled in the Parliament.



The amendments seek to decriminalize certain provisions and bring more foreign investments in the chain of biological resources, including research, patent and commercial utilization, without compromising the national interest.

However, opposition parties have cited concerns over the bill and it is being referred to a select committee.

They demanded the bill to be referred to the Parliament standing committee.

A Select Committee is formed for examining a particular Bill and its membership is limited to Members of Parliament from one House. It's chaired by MPs from the ruling party.

Objective: The bill looks to relax certain rules in the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

The 2002 Act imposed a heavy "compliance burden" on Indian medicine practitioners, seed sector, industry & researchers and made it hard to conduct collaborative research and investments.

Simplify Research Process: The amendments also streamline the process of Patenting for Indian researchers to encourage patenting.

For this, regional parenting centers will be opened across the country.

Boosting Indian Medicine System: It seeks to give a fillip to "Indian system of medicine", and facilitate fast-tracking of research, patent application process,

transfer of research results while utilizing the biological resources available in India.

**It seeks to empower local communities to be able to utilize resources, particularly of medicinal value, such as seeds.**

The Bill looks to encourage farmers to increase cultivation of medicinal plants. **These objectives to be achieved without compromising the objectives of the United Nation Convention on Biological Diversity.**

## 1% RESERVATION TO TRANSGENDER IN POLICE



**Karnataka Government has announced to give 1 per cent reservation to transgenders in Police.**

**Reservation will be given to them across all the ranks in the police department.**

This move will help in changing the perception towards transgenders.

**It will bring them into the mainstream and remove all the prejudices against them in society.**

**Karnataka police department is also recruiting both men and women by giving them equal opportunities.**

There was reservation for women in the police department, **three-four decades back.** But now **the department aims to reach 25 percent of women in the police force.**

**Police in Karnataka were called by different names in different regions such as Thoti, Talwar, Kattubidi, Umbalidhar, Neeruganti etc.**

**The foundation for the current police set up was laid after the appointment of the first Inspector General of Police in the state.**

**Before that, the State Police had no status, structure and powers.** During 1883, Talwars, Thotis, Kavalugararu, Neeragantis, Patela, Amaragararu, Ankamaale, Shyanubhogas etc. used to do policing. **Police existed in different variants during the rule of Maharajas of Mysore.**

## CHINA DRAFT LAW ON PROTECTION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

China's **Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC)** began reviewing a draft amendment to the **"Law on Protection of Women's Rights and Interests"** on 20 December.

The amendment was proposed in the wake of an increase in sexual harassment and domestic violence cases, as well as the year-long #MeToo movement.



The amendment would bring the three-decade-old law **protecting women's rights at home and at work up to date and strengthen it.**

For the first time, the proposed legislation includes a **specific definition of "discrimination against women."**

It includes detailed descriptions of **what constitutes workplace sexual harassment, such as sexually explicit images, inappropriate behavior, or offering benefits in exchange for sex.**

The proposed legislation isn't just for the workplace. **It also seeks to protect a woman's rights within a traditional family structure,** as well as allowing women to seek compensation following a divorce.

**Employers are no longer allowed to state gender preferences in job ads** or ask female applicants about their marital or pregnancy status, thanks to the amendments.

**In the event of a divorce, women will have the right to seek compensation if they believe they have taken on more responsibilities at home.**

# ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

## HAIDERPUR WETLAND OF UP AS 47TH RAMSAR SITE

Recently **Haiderpur Wetland of Western Uttar Pradesh** has been recognized as 47th Ramsar site in the country and 10th in Uttar Pradesh and 2463rd in the world, which has been confirmed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

The **Haiderpur Wetland** is spread over an area of **6908 hectares** on the Muzaffarnagar-Bijnor border **between the Ganges and the Solani River**. It is a part of Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary. Haiderpur Wetland is a man-made lake, which was formed in 1984. The biodiversity here attracts birds. **Exotic birds reach here by crossing the hills of Mongolia**. Also there are many species of dolphins, turtles, alligators, crocodiles, butterflies and deer etc. There are over 30 plant species and over 300 bird species, as well as over 40 fish species and over 102 waterfowl species. **A conference was held on 2 February 1971 in Ramsar, Iran**. The countries involved in this signed an **agreement related to the protection of wetlands and it came into effect from December 21, 1975**. According to the Ramsar Convention, a wetland is a place that is full of water for at least eight months in a year and is home to more than 200 species of birds.



## ABOUT WETLANDS

**Wetlands are ecosystems saturated with water**, either seasonally or permanently. They include mangroves, marshes, rivers, lakes, deltas, floodplains and flooded forests, rice-fields, coral reefs, marine areas no deeper than 6 metres at low tide, as well as human-made wetlands such as waste-water treatment ponds and reservoirs. **Though they cover only around 6% of the Earth's land surface, 40% of all plant and animal species live or breed in wetlands.**

## ADDITION OF NEW RAMSAR SITES

Recently, the **Ramsar Convention has designated four new wetlands in India**, as wetlands of global importance. It is an international treaty for the conservation and wise use of wetlands.

- **Bhindawas Wildlife Sanctuary**, the largest wetland in **Haryana** is a human-made freshwater wetland.
- **Sultanpur National Park from Haryana** supports more than 220 species of resident, winter migratory and local migratory waterbirds at critical stages of their life cycles.
- **Thol Lake Wildlife Sanctuary in Gujarat** lies on the Central Asian Flyway and more than 320 bird species can be found here.
- **Wadhvana Wetland from Gujarat** is internationally important for its birdlife as it provides wintering ground to migratory waterbirds, including over 80 species that migrate on the Central Asian Flyway.

These wetlands are home to endangered bird species like **Egyptian Vulture, Saker Falcon, Sociable Lapwing, and the near threatened Dalmatian Pelican**. With this, the number of Ramsar sites in India is 46.

## ROLE OF URBAN WETLANDS

- **Historical Importance:** The value of wetlands, especially in urban settings, is evidenced through our history. In southern India, the cholas, **the Hoysalas built tanks all over the state**.
- **Multi-layered Role:** Wetlands not only support high concentrations of biodiversity, **but also offer a wide range of important resources and ecosystem services** like food, water, fiber, groundwater recharge, water purification, flood moderation, storm protection, erosion control, carbon storage and climate regulation.
- **Liquid Assets of Cities:** They serve as special attributes contributing to the cultural heritage, and have deep connections with a city's ethos. The value of wetlands in securing local livelihoods through activities such as fishing, farming and tourism, is incomparable.



## MAJOR THREATS TO WETLANDS

- **Urbanization:** Wetlands near urban centres are under increasing developmental pressure for residential, industrial and commercial facilities.
- Anthropogenic activities. **Due to unplanned urban and agricultural development, industries, road construction, impoundment, resource extraction and dredge disposal**, wetlands have been drained and transformed, causing substantial economic and ecological losses in the long term.
- **Agricultural activities:** Following the **Green Revolution of the 1970s**, vast stretches of wetlands have been converted to paddy fields. Construction of a large number of reservoirs, canals and dams to provide for irrigation significantly altered the hydrology of the associated wetlands.
- **Hydrologic activities:** Construction of canals and diversion of streams and rivers to transport water to lower arid regions for irrigation has altered the drainage pattern and significantly degraded the wetlands of the region. **Keoladeo Ghana Sanctuary, Loktak Lake, Chilika Lake, Vembanad Kole** are among those severely impacted by dams that affect water and silt flows.
- **Pollution:** Unrestricted dumping of sewage and toxic chemicals from industries has polluted many freshwater wetlands.
- **Aquaculture:** Demand for shrimps and fishes has **provided economic incentives to convert wetlands and mangrove forests** to develop pisciculture and aquaculture ponds.
- **Introduced species:** Indian wetlands are threatened by exotic introduced plant species such as water hyacinth and salvinia. **They clog waterways and compete with native vegetation.**
- **Climate change:** Increased air temperature; shifts in precipitation; increased frequency of storms, droughts, and floods; increased atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration; and sea level rise could also affect wetlands.

## ISSUES IN WETLAND CONSERVATION

Major regulatory bodies like the Central Wetland Regulatory Authority had limited impact as they only have advisory powers. Additionally, existing laws ignore the participation of local communities in governing and monitoring wetlands. Further, cities are unable to cater to the water demand due to a policy vacuum as **there is no well-defined 'National Urban Water Policy' to guide urban water management.**



## GLOBAL WETLAND CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

- **Ramsar Convention:** The Convention came into force in 1975. The Convention's mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".
- **Three pillars of the Convention are:** Work towards the wise use of all their wetlands. Designate suitable wetlands for the **list of Wetlands of International Importance (the "Ramsar List")** and ensure their effective management. Cooperate internationally on transboundary wetlands, shared wetland systems and shared species. **India has 27 Ramsar Sites which are the Wetlands of International importance.**
- **Montreux Record:** It is maintained as part of the Ramsar List. **Montreux Record is a register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance** where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference. Two wetlands of India are in Montreux Record: **Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan) and Loktak Lake (Manipur)**. Chilka lake (Odisha) was placed in the record but was later removed from it.
- **Cities4Forests global campaign:** It works closely with cities around the world to connect with forests, emphasizes the importance of wetlands and their **multiple benefits to help combat climate change and protect biodiversity in cities.**

## CONSERVATION EFFORTS BY INDIA

- National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA)
- Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017
- ISRO carried out the **National Wetland Inventory and Assessment** using remote sensing satellites from 2006 to 2011 and mapped around two lakh wetlands in India.

## CONCLUSION

**Developing Synergy With Mega Urban Schemes:** The ecosystem services of wetlands need to be highlighted in our development policies, urban planning and climate change mitigation. In this context, mega urban schemes like **Smart Cities Mission** and **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation** need to add the aspects of sustainable management of wetlands.

**Enabling People's Participation:** The **Delhi Development Authority** invited public comments on Master Plan Delhi 2041 to protect and develop an integrated network of 'green and blue assets' of Delhi to maintain the biodiversity and microclimate of the capital. The **'green-blue policy', refers to where water bodies and land are interdependent**, growing with the help of each other, while offering environmental and social benefits. Similarly, Swamini' self-help group of ten women have been organising 'mangrove safari' for tourists in the Mandavi creek in Maharashtra since 2017. This has been **recognised as a model for community-led conservation through ecotourism**. The multiple benefits and services provided by wetlands are essential to **achieve the ambitious agenda for building resilient cities** to achieve our sustainable development goals, while accommodating further development and eradicating poverty.



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*"A wise person knows that there is something to be learned from everyone and everywhere."*