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MISCELLANEOUS

#WORLD AIDS DAY OBSERVED ON DEC. 1ST

- The **world observes AIDS Day on December 1** every year to highlight the work done to eliminate the epidemic and to raise awareness about HIV.
- World AIDS Day 2021 commemorates the ones who passed away due to HIV and extends support to those who are living with a life-threatening condition.
- **World AIDS Day 2021**, apart from raising awareness about the problem, will also provide an opportunity to let people know about their rights and how they can **protect themselves against the discrimination and stigma that are caused because of AIDS.**



World AIDS Day 2021 theme

- The theme of World AIDS Day 2021 is '**End inequalities.**
- **End AIDS**'. On World AIDS Day, the **World Health Organization** and its partners have been highlighting the need for a special focus on reaching people who are left behind. The global health body is calling on global leaders to rally to end the inequalities that drive AIDS.

History of World AIDS Day

- **The very first World AIDS Day was observed in the year 1988.** WHO, while giving the data on World AIDS Day, informed that 3.77 crore people all over the world were living with AIDS in 2020.
- Even though the world has made significant progress ever since the **HIV virus was first discovered in 1984, the UN body says that the targets of 2020 have not yet met.**
- HIV (Human immunodeficiency virus) remains a major public health issue affecting millions of humans around the world. HIV virus attacks the immune system as well as reduced the resistance to other diseases.

Why is World AIDS Day important?

- **World AIDS Day** is important as it reminds the people and governments that the HIV virus is very much prevalent and there is a need to remain vigilant against it.
- World AIDS Day 2021 remind the people in authority that there still is a need to **raise money and awareness, educate people, and fight prejudices against AIDS.**

#KISAN DIWAS OR NATIONAL FARMER'S DAY

- KisanDiwasor National Farmers' Day is observed every year in India on December 23 to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Chaudhary Charan Singh, a prominent farmers' leader and the fifth Prime Minister of India.**
- Chaudhary Charan Singh held the post of the PM between 1979 and 1980. KisanDiwas 2021 is celebrated to honor the contributions of the Indian farmers as well as to glorify their significance in building the country.
- **National Farmers' Day 2021** also recognizes and honours the protests by the Indian farmers against the three Farm laws introduced by the Government of India.
- The consistent opposition ultimately led to the withdrawal of three farm laws.
- KisanDiwas or National Farmers' day 2021 is observed in India on December 23 to commemorate the birth anniversary of **Chaudhary Charan Singh.**



Why the day is observed on Charan Singh's birth anniversary?

- **National Farmers' Day 2021** was announced by the Government of India in 2001 in the recognition of Chaudhary Charan Singh's birth anniversary and his contribution towards the upliftment of the farmers and the development of agriculture in the country.
- Chaudhary Charan Singh also played a crucial role in bringing some of the most **remarkable reforms in the agrarian sector** and has been titled by various historians of the country as the 'Champion of India's Peasants'.
- **How Chaudhary Charan Singh became the 5th Prime Minister of India?**
- In 1977, **when Janata Party won the Lok Sabha Elections**, the MPs of the party authorized the Congress leaders Acharya Kriplani and Jayaprakash Narayan to choose the Prime Minister of India. Morarji Desai was chosen as the Prime Minister and he named Charan Singh as the Home Minister.
- However, Chaudhary Charan Singh was asked to resign in June 1978 because of the disagreements with Morarji Desai but later he was brought **back to the Cabinet as the Deputy PM in January 1979.**
- The truce did not last long and the government was reduced to a minority. **On July 28, 1979, Charan Singh was sworn in as the Prime Minister with outside support from Indira Gandhi's Congress (I) party.**
- Just he was about to confirm his majority in Lok Sabha, Indira Gandhi withdrew support and Charan Singh resigned just after 23 days in office in August 1979.
- Charan Singh then advised the then President of India Neelam Sanjiva Reddy to dissolve Lok Sabha, however, the advise was challenged by Jagjivan Ram, Janata Party Leader and he sought to cobble support. But Lok Sabha was already dissolved and Charan Singh continued his role as a caretaker Prime Minister of India until January 1980.

KisanDiwas 2021: 5 Facts about Chaudhary Charan Singh

- Chaudhary Charan Singh was born in 1902 in Noorpur, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh in a middle-class peasant family. He earned his bachelors' in 1923 and post-graduation in 1925 and also was an active participant in India's freedom struggle.
- **Chaudhary Charan Singh's role** behind the land reforms that changed the landscape of agriculture in the country is extremely significant.
- Among his works, the notable one is Debt Redemption Bill, 1939, which brought relief to India's farmers who were indebted to the money lenders. Another bill designed by Charan Singh was the Land Holding Act 1960 and he also worked towards the Zamindari Abolition Act of 1950.
- **Chaudhary Charan Singh** had served as the **fifth Prime Minister of India** for a few months between 1979 and 1980.
- On January 14, 1980, Charan Singh breathed his last. A memorial **dedicated to Charan Singh was built at Raj Ghat. It is called 'KisanGhat'.**

#NATIONAL CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY: 24TH DECEMBER

- BharatiyaGrahakDiwas is **observed in India annually on December 24** underlying the significance of the consumer movement in the country and the need to make the consumers aware of their rights and responsibilities.

- **National Consumer Rights Day 2021** revolves around the principle of 'Customer is King' and no one can be more powerful than the consumer who knows their rights.

- **National Consumers Day 2021 or BharatiyaGrahakDiwas 2021** will revolve around the theme of tackling plastic pollution.
- National Consumers Day 2021 signifies not only the rights and responsibilities of the consumers but it also condemns the malpractices taking place leading to the financial loss of the customer.
- BharatiyaGrahakDiwas highlights the practice of transparency with the customers to inform them about the authenticity and the quality of the products while purchasing.
- The National Consumer Rights Day 2021 in India is observed annually on **December 24**.
- The theme of the National Consumer Rights Day 2021 or BharatiyaGrahakDiwas 2021 is '**Tackling Plastic Pollution**'.



BharatiyaGrahakDiwas 2021 History

- The Government of India in 1986 passed the Consumer Protection Bill **to curb the exploitation of the consumers which was further aggravated by the poor technology and inflation.**
- National Consumer Rights Day was marked on 24 December, the day on which the Consumer Protection Act came into existence in 1986. The act came with a purpose to aware customers about their rights, to protect their rights as well as ensure that the consumer is not subjected to market abuse.
- Changes were further made in Consumer Protection Act in 1991 and 1993. Another amendment to make

the Consumer Protection Act more **effective was introduced in December 2002** which came into effect in March 2003.

National Consumer Rights Day 2021 Significance

- National Consumer Rights Day 2021 or BharatiyaGrahakDiwas sheds light on the unfair trade practices such as hoarding, false gifts offers, fake advertisements which sometimes lead to tremendous financial loss to the customers.
- However, BharatiyaGrahakDiwas also reminds of the fact that the Consumer Protection Act, via an effective complaint redressal forum, assures that there is an efficient settlement of the consumer disputes and the customer has been empowered to a great extent.

World Consumer Rights Day and National Consumer Rights Day

- There is confusion between the National Consumer Rights Day and World Consumer Rights Day. Both the days have similar purpose; however they are celebrated on different dates. **National Consumer Rights Day is observed on December 24 and World Consumer Rights Day is on March 15.**

National Consumer Rights Day 2021: 5 facts about Consumer Rights in India

- The customer in India has a right to choose product as per their awareness and knowledge and no imposition should be applied.
- Consumer in India has a **right to be protected** from all hazardous goods which can cause financial loss to them.
- Customer has a **right to seek redressal** whenever their rights have been infringed.
- The customer must be completely informed about the product, its quality and performance. **A transparency should always be maintained.**
- The consumer in India has a **right to be heard** in all the decision-making processes that are related to their interests.

#MAHAPARINIRVAN DIWAS: BR AMBEDKAR

Recently, the Prime Minister has paid tributes to Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar on MahaparinirvanDiwas.

- Parinirvana, regarded as **one of the major principles as well as goals of Buddhism**, is a Sanskrit term which means release or freedom after death.
- As per the Buddhist text **Mahaparinibbana Sutta**, the **death of Lord Buddha** at the age of 80 is considered as the original Mahaparinirvana.
- 6th December is **observed to commemorate the unfathomable contribution** to society given by **Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar** and his achievements. Owing to **Ambedkar's status as a Buddhist leader**, his **death anniversary** is referred to as MahaparinirvanaDiwas.



Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar:

- Birth:** 14th April 1891 in Mhow, Central Province (now Madhya Pradesh).
- Brief Profile:** Dr. Ambedkar was a **social reformer, jurist, economist, author, polyglot orator** and a scholar of comparative religions.
- In 1916, he received a **doctorate degree from Columbia University**, becoming the **first Indian to do so**.
- He is known as the **Father of the Indian Constitution** and was **India's first law minister**.
- He established a fortnightly newspaper "**Mooknayak**" in **1920** which laid the foundations of an assertive and organised Dalit politics.
- He founded **BahishkritHitkarini Sabha (1923)**, devoted to spreading education and culture amongst the downtrodden.
- He was appointed by the **Bombay Presidency Committee** to work in the **Simon Commission** in 1925.
- He led the **Mahad Satyagraha in March 1927** to challenge the regressive customs of the Hindus.
- The **Kalaram Temple Movement of 1930** formed a pivotal role in the Dalit movement in India in which Ambedkar led a protest outside the Kalaram temple which did not allow Dalits to enter the temple premises.
- He participated in **all three round-table conferences**.
- In 1932, he signed the **Poona pact** with Mahatma Gandhi, which abandoned the idea of separate electorates for the depressed classes (Communal Award).
- However, the **seats reserved for the depressed classes** were increased from 71 to 147 in provincial legislatures and to 18% of the total in the Central Legislature.
- In 1936, he was elected to the **Bombay Legislative Assembly** as a legislator (MLA).
- In 1947, he was appointed **Chairman of the Drafting Committee** for the new Constitution.
- He accepted Prime Minister Nehru's invitation to become **Minister of Law in the first Cabinet of independent India**.

- He resigned from the Cabinet in 1951, over differences on the Hindu Code Bill (aimed at reforming Hindu society). In 1956, he converted to Buddhism.
- He passed away on 6th December 1956. He was conferred **Bharat Ratna** in 1990.
- **Chaitya Bhoomi** is a memorial to **B.R. Ambedkar** which is located in **Dadar, Mumbai**.
- **Important Works:** Newspaper Mooknayak (1920); The Annihilation of Caste (1936); The Untouchables (1948); Buddha Or Karl Marx (1956), The Buddha and His Dhamma (1956), etc.

#NATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION DAY

The **National Energy Conservation Day** is observed on December 14th, every year by the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)**.

- The day **focuses on making people aware of global warming and climate change** and promotes efforts towards saving energy resources. It also **highlights the achievements of the country** in the fields of energy efficiency and conservation.
- The Ministry of Power celebrated **Energy Conservation Week (8-14 Dec)** in 2021 under **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**. As part of celebrations, the **BEE** under the Ministry of Power has organized various programs.



Energy Conservation:

- It refers to the **efforts made to ensure that energy is used efficiently** by either using less energy for a particular constant purpose – like **switching off lights and fans** when not being used – or **reducing the use of a particular service that uses energy** – like driving less and using public transport instead.
- Energy conservation is a **conscious, individual effort**, and at a macro level, it leads to energy efficiency.
- The end goal of energy conservation is **to reach towards sustainable energy**.
- It is **different from the term 'energy efficiency'**, which is using technology that requires less energy to perform the same function.

Energy Conservation Act, 2001:

- The **Act** was enacted with the goal of reducing the energy intensity of the Indian economy. **It provides regulatory mandates for:**
- Standards & labeling of equipment and appliances;
- Energy conservation building codes for commercial buildings; and
- Energy consumption norms for energy intensive industries.

Energy Conservation Week:

- The **Ministry of Power** is celebrating **Energy Conservation Week** under **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav** from 8th to 14th December 2021.
- The **BEE and the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** have together taken a number of initiatives to ensure the growth of this sector in an energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly way.
- To ensure synergy among various players in the MSME sector, BEE and the Ministry of MSME have also promoted a collaborative platform--"**SAMEEEKSHA**" (**Small and Medium Enterprises Energy Efficiency Knowledge Sharing**).

- The platform **aims to pool the knowledge and synergise the efforts of various organisations** for the promotion and adoption of clean, energy technologies and practices.
- The BEE has organized an **Interactive Workshop on Outcomes of Energy and Resource Mapping** of the MSMEs Clusters.

National Energy Conservation Awards:

- The Ministry of Power had launched the **National Energy Conservation Awards** in 1991, to give national recognition through awards to industries and establishments that have taken special efforts to reduce energy consumption while maintaining their production.
- It **recognizes the energy efficiency achievements** in 56 sub-sectors across industry, establishments and institutions.

Other Related Initiatives:

- **National Perform Achieve and Trade Scheme (PAT):** It is a market based mechanism to enhance the cost effectiveness in improving the Energy Efficiency in Energy Intensive industries through certification of energy saving which can be traded.
- **Standards and Labeling:** The scheme was launched in 2006 and is currently invoked for equipment/appliances.
- **Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC):** It was developed for new commercial buildings in 2007.
- **Demand Side Management:** It is the selection, planning, and implementation of measures intended to have an influence on the demand or customer-side of the electric meter.

Global Efforts:

- **International Energy Agency:** It works with countries around the world to shape energy policies for a **secure and sustainable future**.
- India is not a member country but an **association country**. However **IEA has invited India to be a full time member**.
- The **IEA** and Energy Efficiency Services Ltd. (EESL - Ministry of Power) co-produced a case study on the Indian Government's domestic efficient lighting programme - **UJALA** - to showcase the multiple benefits of energy efficient lighting.
- **Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL):**
- It is an **international organization** that works in **partnership with the United Nations and leaders in government, the private sector, financial institutions and civil society** to drive faster action towards the achievement of **Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7)** – access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030 – in line with the Paris Agreement on climate.
- **Paris Agreement:**
- It is a **legally binding international treaty on climate change**. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.
- As a part of the **Paris Agreement**, India has **committed to reducing its energy intensity** (units of energy use per unit of GDP) by 33-35% by 2030 compared to the 2005 levels.
- **Mission Innovation (MI):**
- It is a **global initiative of 24 countries** and the European Commission (on behalf of the **European Union**) to accelerate clean energy innovation.

- **India** is one of the member countries.
- **Scenario of Power Sector in India:**
- **Overall Capacity:** India is the **third-largest electricity producer** in the world. The overall capacity of about 392 GW is added into its electricity grid, as of November 2021.
- **Thermal, nuclear, and renewable energy systems** are the major sources for generating India's electricity.
- The installed power generation capacities for thermal, nuclear, and renewable energy technologies hold shares of 60% (234.69 GW), 2% (6.78 GW), and 38% (150.54 GW), respectively.
- **Renewable Energy Sector:** The **renewable energy sector** in India is the **fourth most attractive renewable energy** market globally.
- In terms of **wind energy installation capacity**, India was **ranked fourth**, while it was placed fifth in solar energy installation capacity.
- India has achieved a milestone by crossing 150 GW of renewable energy (RE) capacity.
- As of November 2021, the overall RE installed capacity stood at 150.54 GW against the ambitious RE target of 175 GW by 2022 and **450 GW by 2030**.

#DURGA PUJA ON UNESCO'S ICH LIST

Recently, **Durga Puja in Kolkata** has been inscribed on the **UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity**.

- It is the **first festival in Asia** to achieve recognition as UNESCO ICH of Humanity.
- Earlier, UNESCO announced the Harappan city of **Dholavira in Gujarat** as **India's 40th world heritage site**.

Durga Puja:

- Durga Puja is a **five-day festival** which begins on the **fifth night of the nine-day Navratri festival** and ends on the tenth day, which is Dashami.
- During this time, people collectively worship and invoke Goddess Durga, who is regarded as the feminine energy of the cosmos, also known as '**Shakti**'.



**DURGA PUJA
ENTERS UNESCO'S
'INTANGIBLE
HERITAGE' LIST**

- It is **one of the largest cultural carnivals** and street art festivals of the country.
- During this time, **intricately-designed clay models of the Goddess are worshiped** in 'pandals' and pavilions where people get together.
- Folk music, culinary, craft, and performing arts traditions are a part of the celebration.
- Though originating in West Bengal, which has the **largest Bengali community in the country**, the festival is **celebrated in many other parts of India**, and also the world.

Significance:

- It **acknowledges the festival's contribution** in sustaining and safeguarding a multitude of traditional arts and crafts, well-being and economic empowerment of communities, and energizing creativity.
- Earlier this year (2021), the British Council in India had **mapped the creative economy of Durga Puja to over Rs. 32,000 crore** for the year 2019 and added that the **festival contributes 2.58% of West Bengal's Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**.

UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage:

- This coveted list is **made up of those intangible heritage elements** that help demonstrate diversity of cultural heritage and raise awareness about its importance.
- According to **UNESCO cultural heritage** does not end at monuments and collections of objects.
- It also **includes traditions or living expressions inherited** from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, **such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices** concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.
- The list was **established in 2008** when the Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage came into effect.
- The Ministry of Culture (India) has also launched the **draft National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of India**.
- The National ICH List is an **attempt to recognize the diversity of Indian culture** embedded in its intangible heritage.
- This initiative is also a part of the **Vision 2024 of the Ministry of Culture**.
- India is also a **signatory of the 2003 UNESCO Convention** which aims for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage along with traditions and living expression.

Inscribed Elements:

- Currently, it has 492 elements from which India now has **14 intangible cultural heritage elements** on the prestigious UNESCO Representative List of ICH of Humanity.
- Other than the Durga Puja there are **13 Traditions in India recognised by UNESCO** as ICH.

UNESCO

- UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It seeks to **build peace through international cooperation** in Education, the Sciences and Culture.
- UNESCO's programmes contribute to the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals** defined in Agenda 2030, adopted by the **UN General Assembly** in 2015.
- It has 193 Members and 11 Associate Members. India joined UNESCO in 1946.

- In 2019, the USA and Israel formally quit UNESCO.
- It is headquartered in Paris, France.
- UNESCO-IOC (Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission) is **leading a global effort** to establish ocean-based tsunami warning systems as part of an overall multi-hazard disaster reduction strategy.
- Last year (2020), UNESCO-IOC approved the **recognition of two communities of Odisha** viz., Venkatraipur and Noliasahi as Tsunami Ready Communities.

Other Initiatives of UNESCO

- **Man and Biosphere Programme**
- **World Heritage Programme**
- **UNESCO Global Geopark Network**
- **UNESCO's Network of Creative Cities**

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 the 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 BabruBhan 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 by the Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS)** from the Integrated Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence (Navy). The Navy has three Commands, each under the control of a Flag 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**)
- 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.
- **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 VishishtSeva Medal (PVSM)
 - AtiVishishtSeva Medal (AVSM)
 - VishishtSeva 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**.

#NITI AAYOG STATE HEALTH INDEX 2021

- **Niti Aayog** released the fourth edition of its state health index for 2019-20 on December 27, 2021. The report, titled **"Healthy States, Progressive India"**, ranks states and Union Territories based on their year-on-year incremental performance in health as well as their overall status.
- Kerala retained its top rank on the health index among the larger states while Uttar Pradesh was the worst. Mizoram topped the health index among smaller states while Nagaland was ranked at the bottom.
- Among union territories, **Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu** was ranked at the top and Andaman & Nicobar was ranked at the bottom.
- The fourth round of the Health Index highlights the **overall performance and incremental improvement of states and UTs over the period from 2018-2019 to 2019-20**.
- The health index is a weighted composite score that incorporates 24 indicators covering key aspects of health performance.



NITI Aayog Health Index 2021- Larger States Ranking

Rank	State	Composite Score	Incremental Rank/ Change
1	Kerala	82.90	12 (0.60)
2	Tamil Nadu	72.42	8 (1.62)
3	Telangana	69.96	3 (4.22)
4	Andhra Pradesh	69.95	10 (1.07)
5	Maharashtra	69.14	4 (3.60)
6	Gujarat	63.59	9 (1.14)
7	Himachal Pradesh	63.17	15 (-0.06)
8	Punjab	58.08	7 (1.74)
9	Karnataka	57.93	19 (-1.37)
10	Chhattisgarh	50.70	16 (-0.09)
11	Haryana	49.26	18 (-0.55)
12	Assam	47.74	2 (4.34)
13	Jharkhand	47.55	5 (3.38)
14	Odisha	44.31	14 (0.13)

15	Uttarakhand	44.21	13 (0.58)
16	Rajasthan	41.33	17 (-0.25)
17	Madhya Pradesh	36.72	6 (3.35)
18	Bihar	31.00	11 (0.76)
19	Uttar Pradesh	30.57	1 (5.52)

NITI Aayog Health Index 2021- Smaller States Ranking

Rank	State	Composite Score	Incremental Rank/ Change
1	Mizoram	75.77	1 (18.45)
2	Tripura	70.16	4 (0.19)
3	Sikkim	55.53	5 (-0.72)
4	Goa	53.68	8 (-12.68)
5	Meghalaya	43.05	2 (17.70)
6	Manipur	34.26	7 (-5.73)
7	Arunachal Pradesh	33.91	6 (-5.73)
8	Nagaland	27.00	3 (3.43)

NITI Aayog Health Index 2021- Performance of Union Territories

Rank	State	Composite Score	Incremental Rank/ Change
1	Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu	66.19	6 (-3.53)
2	Chandigarh	62.53	7 (-10.85)
3	Lakshadweep	51.88	3 (7.72)
4	Puducherry	50.83	4 (1.58)
5	Delhi	49.85	1 (9.68)
6	Jammu and Kashmir	47.00	2 (9.55)
7	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	44.74	5 (0.14)

Background

- The **NITI Aayog Health Index 2021** was jointly released by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Dr Rajiv Kumar, CEO Amitabh Kant, Additional Secretary **Dr Rakesh Sarwal** and World Bank Senior Health Specialist

Sheena Chhabra.

- The report has been developed by **NITI Aayog** with technical assistance from the World Bank, in close consultation with the Health Ministry.

- **NITI Aayog Health Index 2021**

- The **NITI Aayog Health Index 2021** is an annual tool to assess the performance of states and UTs in health sector. The index measures 24 indicators grouped under 'Health Outcomes', 'Governance and Information', and 'Key Inputs/Processes' domains. Each domain has an allocated weightage.
- The Health Index ranking is categorised into three parts - **larger states, smaller states and union territories** -to ensure comparison among similar entities.

#EXERCISE EKUVERIN B/W INDIA & MALDIVES

- The **Exercise Ekuverin** is a **joint military exercise** held between India and Maldives. It is held between the armies of India and Maldives.
- **About Exercise Ekuverin: Ekuverin means "Friends" in Dhivehi language.** It is an Indo – Aryan language. It is spoken in India, Lakshadweep and Maldives.
- The Exercise is being conducted between India and Maldives since 2008.
- In 2019, the exercise was held in Pune, Maharashtra and in 2018, it was held in Maldives.



Exercise Ekuverin 2021

- The **2021 Exercise Ekuverin was held in Maldives.**
- The exercise focused on enhancing inters – operability between the armed forces of India and Maldives. It also included counter – insurgency and counter – terrorism operations.
- The joint exercise in 2021, also conducted sports and cultural activities to enhance the bilateral and defence relations.

What is the need for Exercise Ekuverin?

- **India's Policy of Indian Ocean** is centred around providing security and political stability to Mauritius, Maldives, Seychelles and Sri Lanka. With this India aims to counter the expanding face of **China in the region.**
- India sees itself as a net provider of security in the Indian Ocean Region.
- India is always the first responder in Human Availability Disaster Recovery Operations.
- The **piracy in the Indian Ocean Region has increased.**
- The Exercise Ekuverin will aid in all the above issues. Therefore, it is essential to conduct Exercise Ekuverin.

Benefits

- The exercise helps the militaries to understand each other's drills and procedures. It **helps to overcome language barriers**.
- It aids in weapon familiarization which is essential in war or humanitarian aid such as disaster – relief. **It is also essential in disaster relief operations.**

#US GOVERNMENT BOYCOTTED BEIJING OLYMPICS 2022

- The **US Government recently announced the boycott of Olympics 2022**. The Olympics 2022 is to be held in Beijing. 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".
- **What is Diplomatic Boycott?**
- It means that the US is not sending any official or diplomatic representation to the participate in the Olympics. However, US is allowing the American athletes to participate in the Olympics.



Why is US boycotting Olympics 2022?

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

US Previously boycotted in 1980

- Previously, the **US boycotted the Olympics completely in 1980**. Then the boycott was to protest against the Soviet Union military presence in Afghanistan.
- In December 1979, the Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan supporting the Afghan communist government. The soviet then remained in Afghanistan till 1989. In 1980, around 60 countries refused to compete in Olympics along with the US. This included China, Japan, Canada, Israel and West Germany.

China's Boycott

- The Chinese Government boycotted the Olympics in 1972. According to China, in 1972, the International Olympics Committee failed to recognize its team.
- China is hosting both summer and Winter Olympics. This is the first time in the Olympics history that a country is **hosting both summer and Winter Olympics**.
- The **Summer and Winter Olympics** are held once in four years. The Summer Olympics is generally referred to as Olympics with more number of countries participating.
- On the other hand, the Winter Olympics is relatively smaller event. The **summer Olympics** are held once

in four years, mainly during the leap years. The winter Olympics are held two years after the leap year. The Summer Olympics were held in 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, etc.

- **And the Winter Olympics were held in 2002, 2006, 2010, etc.** China hosted the Summer Olympics in 2008 and is now to host the Winter Olympics in 2022.

How is China hosting both Summer and Winter Olympics?

- Around six potential cities of Europe dropped out of the bidding due to doping scandal. Also, the price tag of 51 billion USD also drove away bidders. This led to getting down to two candidates. One was China and the other was Kazakhstan.

How is Olympic host city chosen?

- The major cities from the world make competitive bids every two years to the **International Olympics Committee**. This is done seven years before the games.
- The IOC then makes rigorous audits to check if the city bided are capable to host the games. This is because, the city has to accommodate large number of sports person, government delegates, should provide security, etc.
- Based on these factors and the bidding, the members cast their votes. **The winning city hosts the games.**

#INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY: 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.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY



Human Rights Day 2021 Theme

- 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 observed every year on December 10 signifying the absolute rights to which all human beings are entitled, irrespective of their age, sex, race, language, religion, or political or other opinions.

Human Rights Day History

- The **United Nations General Assembly in 1948** adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It has since then become a milestone document proclaiming the rights that every individual is entitled to, as a human being, regardless of their language, sex, religion, color, birth.
- The Declaration of Human Rights by the UN is also the most translated document in the world which has been available in more than 500 languages.

Human Rights Day 2021 Significance

- **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.
- Human Rights Day has become more **significant in post COVID-19** world which has further deepened the poverty, inequality, and other gaps in human rights protection.
- Human Rights Day 2021 provides an opportunity to close these gaps and to build a world that is **better, more sustainable, and resilient**.

#GOA LIBERATION DAY: 19TH DECEMBER

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Goa to attend **Goa Liberation Day** celebrations. Events were held at Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Stadium in Goa.
- On the occasion, Prime Minister felicitated the **freedom fighters and veterans of 'Operation Vijay'**.

Goa Liberation Day

- **Goa Liberation Day** is observed on December 19 every year.
- This Day marks the success of 'Operation Vijay', which was undertaken by Indian Armed Forces to liberate Goa from Portuguese rule.
- The day is celebrated to commemorate the Indian armed forces **annexing Portuguese-ruled Goa**. On this day, India was completely free from European rule.



Inauguration of multiple development projects

- On the occasion, Prime Minister inaugurated following development projects:
 - Renovated Fort Aguada Jail Museum
 - Super Speciality Block at Goa Medical College
 - New South Goa District Hospital
 - Aviation Skill Development Center at Mopa Airport
 - Gas-insulated Substation at Dabolim-Navelim, Margao.
 - Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone for the India International University of Legal Education as well as Research of Bar Council of India Trust at Goa.

Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana Scheme

- Under this scheme, Super Speciality Block has been constructed at the Goa Medical College and Hospital. Total cost of the **project was Rs 380 crore.**
- The block was constructed in line with Prime Minister's vision of improving medical infrastructure and provides top-class medical facilities. This hospital will provide services like liver transplant, angioplasty, bypass surgery, dialysis, kidney transplant, etc.

Re-development of Aguada Fort Jail Museum

- Aguada Fort Jail Museum** has been re-developed as a Heritage Tourism destination under Swadesh Darshan Scheme.
- It has been done at a cost of Rs 28 crore. **Aguada Fort** was used to incarcerate and torture freedom fighters, before Goa's liberation. The Museum highlights the **contributions and sacrifices of prominent freedom fighters, who took part in liberation of Goa.**

#KIDAMBI SRIKANTH CREATED HISTORY IN BWF CHAMPIONSIP

- Kidambi Srikanth became the first Indian male shuttler to win silver in men's singles event** at the BWF World Championships.
- He settled for the silver after losing to Singapore's Loh Kean Yew in straight sets of 21-15, 22-20. The summit clash lasted for a total of 43 minutes.
- Though **Kidambi Srikanth had taken an early lead of 9-3**, Yew bounced back taking the first game 21-15 and carried his momentum to take the second game as well.
- Yew has become the first male shuttler from Singapore to win a gold medal at the BWF World Championships.



- Kidambi Srikanth had created history earlier on December 18th** by becoming the first Indian shuttler to enter the men's singles final of the BWF World Championships in Huelva.
- Kidambi Srikanth first Indian male shuttler to enter BWF World Championship finals**
- Kidambi Srikanth, who is currently ranked world no.14, not only became the first Indian male shuttler to

qualify for the final at the prestigious event but the third Indian to achieve the feat after PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal.

- The former world number one beat his Indian compatriot Lakshya Sen by 17-21, 21-14, 21-17 in a thrilling match that lasted for one hour and nine minutes in the **men's singles semi-finals**.
- He had earlier defeated Dutch shuttler Mark Caljouw in two straight sets of 21-8, 21-7 to enter the men's singles **semifinals of the BWF World Championships**.
- This is a significant achievement for Srikanth after missing his Olympic berth at the Tokyo Olympics 2020.

Other Indians at BWF World Championship 2021

- This was the first time when four Indian shuttlers qualified for the quarterfinals of BWF World Championships. The four shuttlers included **Kidambi Srikanth, Lakshya Sen, PV Sindhu and HS Prannoy**. Both Sindhu and Prannoy bowed out of the tournament in the quarterfinal stage.

Lakshya Sen settles for Bronze

- **India's Lakshya Sen** would have been the youngest-ever finalist at the BWF World Championships singles' event had he won the semifinal match against Kidambi Srikanth.
- He, however, won the bronze medal, an honour that he will share with legendary Indian shuttler Prakash Padukone, who won bronze in 1983 and B Sai Praneeth, who won bronze in 2019.

PV Sindhu bows out early

- **PV Sindhu is the lone Indian shuttler to win the singles event at the BWF Championships**.
- The current world no.7, who is also the defending champion of the event, bowed out from the **BWF Championships 2021 Women's Singles event** after losing to Taiwan's Tai Tzu-Ying in the women's singles quarterfinal event.
- She had won the BWF World Championships in 2019 in Basel, Switzerland. **The event did not take place last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic**.
- The BWF World Championships women's singles final will take place between Taiwan's Tai Tzu-Ying and Japan's Akane Yamaguchi.

#ANNOUNCEMENT OF SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARDS

- On December 30, 2021, the **SahityaAkademi** announced its prestigious "**SahityaAkademi Awards, YuvaPuraskar as well as Bal SahityaPuraskar**" for 2021 in various languages.

- **SahityaAkademi Award 2021**

- The SahityaAkademy Award 2021 was given in 20 Indian languages. Namita Gokhale received it in English for her novel titled 'Things to Leave Behind'.



Other winners include:

- Anuradha Sarma Pujari (Assamese)
 - Bratya Basu (Bengali)
 - Daya Prakash Sinha (Hindi)
 - Wali Mohd Aseer Kashtawari (Kashmiri)
 - Khalid Hussain (Punjabi)
 - Vindeshwari Prasad Mishr "Vinay" (Sanskrit) etc.
- Winner of **Gujarati, Manipuri, Maithili, and Urdu languages** will be announced later date.

Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar 2021

- The **Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar 2021** was given in 22 Indian languages.
- Megha Majumdar won this award for her debut book '**A Burning**', which was published in 2020. This book is about struggles of life in India.
- **Megha Majumdar** was born in India, but now lives in New York and works as an Editor in chief- Books at Catapult Story.

Other winners of the award include:

- Abhijit Bora (Assamese)
- Gourab Chakraborty (Bengali)
- Drashti Soni (Gujarati)
- Himanshu Vajpai (Hindi)
- Mahesh Dahal (Nepali)
- Swetapadma Satapathy (Sanskrit) etc.

Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2021

- The **Bal Sahitya Puraskar 2021** was given in 22 Indian languages.
- **Anita Vachharajani** won the award in the English language. She was awarded for her **children's book** titled '**Amrita Sher-Gil: Rebel with a Paintbrush**'.
- **Other winners include:**
 - Mrinal Chandra Kalita (Assamese)
 - Sunirmal Chakraborty (Bengali)
 - Devendra Mewari (Hindi)
 - Majeed Majazi (Kashmiri) etc.

The Sahitya Akademi Award

- It is a literary honour in India, **conferred annually by the Sahitya Akademi**.
- Award is conferred on writers of most outstanding books of literary merit, which are published in any of 24 major Indian languages and 22 languages which are listed in the **Eighth Schedule of Indian Constitution**. The award was established in 1954.

#NEW VACCINES & DRUG OF COVID-19

Recently, India has approved two Vaccines Corbevax and Covovax, one pill Molnupiravir for treating Covid-19 patients.

Corbevax - Protein Subunit Vaccine:

- **About:** It is a **protein subunit vaccine**, which means that instead of the whole virus, it uses **fragments of it to trigger an immune response**.
- In this case, the subunit vaccine contains a **harmless Spike (S) protein**.
- The S protein is a **highly glycosylated and large type I transmembrane fusion protein that is made up of 1,160 to 1,400 amino acids**, depending upon the type of virus.
- The S protein plays a crucial role in penetrating host cells and initiating infection.
- Once the immune system recognises the protein, it **produces antibodies to fight a real infection** when it happens.
- **Efficacy:** Neutralising antibodies against **Delta strain** indicates a vaccine effectiveness of **more than 80 % for the prevention of symptomatic infections** based on published studies.
- In the pivotal Phase III study conducted with an endpoint of immunogenic superiority, it demonstrated **superior immune response in comparison with COVISHIELD vaccine** when assessed for **Neutralizing Antibody (nAb) Geometric Mean Titers (GMT)** against the Ancestral-Wuhan strain and the globally dominant Delta variant.
- **Covavax - Recombinant Nanoparticle Vaccine:**



- **About:** Manufactured by **Serum Institute of India (SII)**, is also a protein subunit vaccine, **but uses Recombinant Nanoparticle Technology (RNT)**. It has been developed by **US-based Novavax**.
- Recombinant protein vaccine is another proven approach against Covid-19 virus. This technology teaches the body **how to develop immunity against the virus using spike protein**.
- **Harmless copies of the spike protein are grown** in insect cells; the protein is then extracted and assembled into virus-like nanoparticles.
- Novavax has used an immune-boosting compound (adjuvant). The same technology is used in HPV and the Hepatitis B vaccine.
- **Efficacy:** The vaccine has been evaluated in two Phase 3 trials: a trial in the UK that demonstrated an **efficacy of 96.4% against the original virus strain**, 86.3% against Alpha and 89.7% efficacy overall.
- **Molnupiravir - Oral Antiviral Drug:**
- **About:** It works by **introducing errors into the virus's genetic code, which prevents replication**.
- **Efficacy:** The UK cleared molnupiravir as **"safe and effective"**.
- The US did not authorize it **for use for longer than five consecutive days, or in patients younger than 18** as it may affect bone and cartilage growth.
- In India, the recommendation is **for treatment of adult Covid patients with oxygen level over 93%**, and who have a high risk of progression of the disease, and that the drug be sold by retail only under prescription.

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