



pravahini

Weekly Compendium

SUCCESS MANTRA (GTB Nagar)

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 February-2022 eBook covers the current events that happened in the month of February. 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 February-2022 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.

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

CONTROVERSY OVER HIJAB & FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Recently, six students were banned from entering a college in Karnataka's Udupi district for wearing a hijab (a head covering worn in public by some Muslim women).



The issue throws up legal questions on reading the freedom of religion and whether the right to wear a hijab is constitutionally protected.

How is Religious Freedom protected under the Constitution?

Article 25(1) of the Constitution guarantees the "freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion".

It is a right that guarantees a negative liberty – which means that **the state shall ensure that there is no interference or obstacle to exercise this freedom.**

However, like all fundamental rights, **the state can restrict the right for grounds of public order, decency, morality, health and other state interests.**

The implications of this are:

Freedom of conscience: Inner freedom of an individual to mould his relation with God or Creatures in whatever way he desires.

Right to Profess: Declaration of one's religious beliefs and faith openly and freely.

Right to Practice: Performance of religious worship, rituals, ceremonies and exhibition of beliefs and ideas.

Right to Propagate: Transmission and dissemination of one's religious beliefs to others or exposition of the tenets of one's religion.

How have courts ruled so far on the issue of a hijab?

While this has been put to courts on several occasions, two set of rulings of the **Kerala High Court, particularly on the right of Muslim women** to dress according to the tenets of Islam, throw up conflicting answers.

In 2015, at least two petitions were filed before the Kerala High Court challenging the prescription of dress code for **All India Pre-Medical Entrance** which prescribed wearing "light clothes with half sleeves not having big buttons, brooch/badge, flower, etc. with Salwar/Trouser" and "slippers and not shoes".

Admitting the argument of the **Central Board of School Education (CBSE)** that the rule was only to ensure that candidates would not use unfair methods by concealing objects within clothes, the **Kerala HC directed the CBSE to put in place additional measures for checking students** who "intend to wear a dress according to their religious custom, but contrary to the dress code".

In Amna Bint Basheer v Central Board of Secondary Education (2016), the Kerala HC examined the issue more closely.

The Court held that the practice of wearing a hijab constitutes an essential religious practice but did not quash the CBSE rule. The court once again allowed for the "additional measures" and safeguards put in place in 2015.

However, on the issue of a uniform prescribed by a school, another Bench ruled differently in **Fatima Tasneem v State of Kerala (2018).**

A single Bench of the Kerala HC held that **collective rights of an institution would be given primacy over individual rights of the petitioner.**

HARYANA PASSED ANTI-CONVERSION BILL



The bill is being brought in the state of Haryana to prevent unlawful religious conversions. Haryana is a BJP ruled state.

The other BJP ruled states that brought in the bill were UP, HP, MP and Karnataka.

Several "Love Jihad" incidents were reported in the state. Love Jihad is a term used in the country to address Muslim men forcing Hindu girls to convert to Islam. These men do this by marrying them.

According to several Hindutva leaders, it is a strategy used by the Muslim world to eradicate Hinduism. There are pseudo social organisations that use this strategy to convert vulnerable sections of the society.

This phrase is not found in central government laws or state government laws. However, it is commonly used in politics.

It aims to prohibit religious conversions through undue influence, misrepresentation, allurements, coercion or other fraudulent means. The bill includes greater punishments for conversions in women, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe.

If any of the marriages were performed by concealing the religion, the marriage shall be declared void or null under the bill. The designated authority will make enquiries.

The Right to freedom of religion cannot be extended to interpret collective right to convert. Because it belongs to the person converting. Still there are mass conversions happening in the country.

The people converting are mostly the vulnerable sections. Such people are offered allurements for conversion. In some place, the men marry the girls concealing their identity. They reveal that they follow Islam after getting

married. Also, they force their wives to get converted.

PM MODI TO UNVEIL 'STATUE OF EQUALITY'

On February 5, 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Hyderabad to kickstart the 50th anniversary celebrations of



"International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)".

He will dedicate a 216-feet tall "statue of equality" to the nation, on this occasion. 'Statue of equality' commemorates the 11th century bhakti saint Sri Ramanujacharya.

The saint promoted the idea of equality across all the aspects of living, including caste, creed and faith. Inauguration of the statue is part of ongoing 12-day celebrations of his 1000th birth anniversary.

About Statue of Equality

The statue is made of 'panchaloha', which is a combination of five metals namely, gold, silver, copper, zinc and brass. It is one of the tallest metallic statues in sitting position worldwide. It is mounted on a 54-feet high base building named 'Bhadra Vedi'.

About ICRISAT: ICRISAT is an international organisation, involved in conducting agricultural research for development in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

The organisation helps farmers by providing them with improved crop varieties and hybrids. It also helps smallholder farmers in drylands to fight against climate change.

Who was Sri Ramanujacharya?

Ramanujacharya was a Hindu theologian, Indian philosopher, social reformer, and an

important exponent of the Sri Vaishnavism tradition.

His philosophical foundations for devotionalism influenced the Bhakti movement. He worked for upliftment of people with the spirit of every human being equal regardless of caste, creed, gender, race and nationality.

30TH NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN FOUNDATION DAY

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addressed 30th National Commission for Women Foundation Day programme on January 31, 2022, via video conference.



The event was organised to celebrate the achievements of women in different fields. The theme of the programme was 'She The Change Maker'.

The Prime Minister remarked that today, in changing India, the role of women is continuously expanding.

Therefore, he said, the expansion of the role of the National Commission for Women is also the need of the hour.

All the women's commissions of the country will also have to increase their scope and give a new direction to the women of their states.

National Commission for Women (NCW):

The National Commission for Women (NCW) is the statutory body of the Government of India. NCW was set up on 31 January 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990.

Its basic objective is to advise the government on all policy matters affecting women. The incumbent Chairperson of NCW is Rekha Sharma since 30 November 2018. Its first head was Jayanti Patnaik.

DILUTION OF LOKAYUKTA POWERS IN KERALA

Recently, the Kerala government has proposed to amend the Kerala Lokayukta Act, 1999 with an ordinance, a move that has drawn criticism from the opposition.



The proposed ordinance envisages limiting the powers of the anti-corruption watchdog.

What are the Proposed Changes?

The Kerala cabinet has recommended to the Governor that he promulgates the ordinance. The proposal sought to give the government powers to "either accept or reject the verdict of the Lokayukta, after giving an opportunity of being heard".

By this ordinance, the quasi-judicial institution will turn into a toothless advisory body, whose orders will no longer be binding on the government.

What is the Concept of Lokpal and Lokayuktas?

The Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013 provided for the establishment of Lokpal for the Union and Lokayukta for States.

These institutions are statutory bodies without any constitutional status.

They perform the function of an "ombudsman" and inquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries and for related matters.

The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 provides for establishing a Lokpal headed by a Chairperson, who is or has been a Chief Justice of India, or is or has been a judge of the Supreme Court, or an eminent person who fulfills eligibility criteria as specified.

Of its other members, not exceeding eight, 50% are to be judicial members, provided that not less than 50% belong to the SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, or are women.

The Lokpal was appointed in March 2019 and it started functioning in March 2020 when its rules were framed. **The Lokpal is at present headed by former Supreme Court Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose.**

The Lokpal has jurisdiction to inquire into allegations of corruption against anyone who is or has been Prime Minister, or a Minister in the Union government, or a **Member of Parliament**, as well as officials of the Union government under Groups A, B, C and D.

INTEGRATED PLANT NUTRITION MANAGEMENT BILL



Central government has proposed a law to empower it to fix the maximum selling price of fertilizers and control its quality and distribution.

The Department of Fertilizers has asked comments on the **draft Integrated Plant Nutrition Management Bill, 2022**, from all the stakeholders.

It is convenient in the public interest that the central government should take control of the distribution, price and quality standards of fertilizers.

The bill seeks to establish an **'Integrated Plant Nutrition Management Authority of India'**.

It is aimed at promoting development and **sustainable use of balanced fertilizers, including bio-fertilizers, nano-fertilizers, bio-stimulates, and organic fertilizers.**

It seeks to simplify the process for manufacturing production, distribution and price management of fertilizers across India.

This will help in improving the ease of doing business.

INDIA TO ACHIEVE ZERO-DIESEL USE IN AGRICULTURE

Union Power Minister R K Singh has announced that India will achieve zero-diesel use in agriculture and replace fossil fuel with renewable energy by 2024.



For this, **states should develop action plans to achieve the assigned targets and specific agencies dedicated to energy efficiency and conservation.**

This **initiative is a part of the government's commitment** to increase the share of non-fossil fuels by 2030 and become a net-zero emitter by 2070.

The **Union minister chaired a virtual meeting** with additional chief secretaries and principal secretaries of power in states for **collaboration between the Central and state governments for achieving energy transition goals.**

BANNING ONLINE GAMES HELD UNCONSTITUTIONAL

On February 14, 2022, Karnataka High Court struck down **provisions of Karnataka Police (Amendment) Act, 2021, that had banned online games.**



The division bench was headed by **Chief Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi and Justice Krishna S. Dixit.**

According to the bench, to the extent the **provisions ultra vires the constitution, however not the entire Act.**

This judgment was interpreted for preventing an appropriate legislation concerning the subject like betting and gambling in line with the provisions of the constitution.

A writ of mandamus was issued to restrain the respondents from interfering with online gaming business and allied activities of the petitioners.

Karnataka Police (Amendment) Bill, 2021

The law includes all forms of betting or wagering in connection with any game of chance, except horse racing.

However, this law was opposed by online gaming companies, stating that this policy would affect the prospectus of Karnataka, which is emerging as an online gaming companies' hub.

GOI APPROVES NEW INDIA LITERACY PROGRAMME



The Government of India approved the New India Literacy Programme scheme for the fiscal years 2022-2027 that will cover all areas of adult education

and match with the national education policy 2020.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has announced the 'New India Literacy Programme' for the next five years, to cover all aspects of adult education.

The ministry has decided to use the term 'Education for All' instead of 'Adult Education,' because the previous term didn't represent all non-literates who are in the age group of 15 years and above.

This scheme's objectives are to teach not only foundational numeracy and literacy, but also critical life skills such as digital literacy, financial literacy, awareness and health care,

commercial skills, education and child care, and family welfare.

Vocational skills development will also be focused upon so that obtaining local employment becomes easier and basic education including preparatory, middle, and secondary education.

Education courses in sciences, arts, culture, technology, recreation, and sports as well as various other areas of interest to local learners, such as more advanced material on key life skills, are also to be included under this programme.

FIRST UT TO INTEGRATE WITH THE (NSWS)

Jammu & Kashmir has become the first Union Territory to integrate with the National Single Window System (NSWS) which marks a major leap in Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) in the UT.



Lieutenant Governor of J&K Manoj Sinha launched the J&K Single Window Clearance System integrated with NSWS.

NSWS is linked with the India Industrial Land Bank (IILB) which hosts 45 industrial parks of J&K that will help Investors to discover available land parcels in J&K.

J&K Lieutenant Governor: **Manoj Sinha**.
J&K Formation (Union territory): **31 October 2019**.

NCB ORGANIZED DARKATHON-2022

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) is organising a "Darkathon-2022" to find solutions to counter drug trafficking through the darknet.



The initiative aims at involving students, youth and technical experts to find effective solutions to unravel the anonymity of darknet markets.

The agency recently smashed three groups of drug peddlers that were operating on the network that is **accessed through encryption software which enables anonymity of users.**

The **prize money for the first winner is Rs 2.50 lakh**, the runner-up would get Rs 2 lakh and the third winner Rs 1.50 lakh.

Narcotics Control Bureau Director-General: **Satya Narayan Pradhan.**

Narcotics Control Bureau Headquarters: **New Delhi.**

Narcotics Control Bureau Founded: **1986.**

PM MODI INAUGURATED 'KISAN DRONE YATRA'



Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 'Kisan Drone Yatra', an initiative by Garuda Aerospace Pvt Ltd and

flagged off 100 'Kisan Drones' in various cities and towns across India to spray pesticides in farms across the states of India.

The **100 Kisan Drones were set off in 100 villages in 16 states** across India which includes Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Goa.

The farmers can use the high capacity Kisan drones to transport their produce such as fruits, vegetables and flowers to markets in a minimal time and boost their income.

The Kisan Drones will also be promoted for **crop assessment, digitization of land records and spraying of insecticides and nutrients.**

Garuda Aerospace has set a target of manufacturing two lakh drones in the next two

years and this will provide ample employment to youth.

STATEHOOD DAY OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH & MIZORAM

On February 20, 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted people of **Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram** on the occasion of statehood day in both the states.



Year 2022 marks the 36th **State Foundation Day of Arunachal Pradesh.** **North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA)** was given a new name and a new identity as Arunachal Pradesh, 50 years ago.

Arunachal Pradesh became a full-fledged state on February 20, 1987. Mizoram was the 23rd state of India. It was made a state on February 20, 1987, with 53rd Amendment Act of Indian Constitution, 1986.

Statehood Day of Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh is called the "Land of Dawn-Lit Mountains". It is a state in Northeast India, which is from the erstwhile **North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) region.**

It became a state on February 20, 1987. It borders the states of Assam and Nagaland to the south. It has international borders with Bhutan, Myanmar and China. Itanagar is the state capital. It is the largest among Seven Sister States of Northeast India by area.

About Mizoram: It is one among the seven sister states of **north-eastern India.** **Aizawl is its seat of government as well as the capital city.** Name of this state is derived from Mizo and Ram' which means land in the Mizo language. .

Thus, **Mizoram means "land of the Mizos".** It is the southernmost landlocked state among the northeast region of India.

The state shares borders with three states namely Tripura, Manipur and Assam. It also shares a **722-kilometre border with Bangladesh and Myanmar**. It was established on February 20, 1987.

RASHTRIYA UCHCHATAR SHIKSHA ABHIYAN (RUSA)



The Ministry of Education has approved the **Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) scheme** until 31 March 2026.

The Ministry of Education has approved the continuation of the **Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) scheme** till 31 March 2026 with an expenditure of 12,929.16 crores.

The new phase of the scheme would support around 1,600 projects. Out of Rs 12,929.16 crores of expenditure, the center will share Rs 8,120.97 crores, and therefore the state will share Rs 4,808.19 crores.

The new phase of the scheme has been designed to implement a **number of the recommendations of the New Education Policy (NEP)**.

Under the new phase of the scheme, State Governments will support Gender inclusion, Equity Initiatives, Enhance employability through vocationalisation and skill upgradation.

Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan:

Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan was launched in 2013. It's a Centrally Sponsored Scheme to supply government universities and colleges funding. Its main objective is to enhance the standard of state institutions and ensure reform in affiliation, academic, and examination systems.

COUNTRY'S 1ST DUGONG RESERVE IN TAMIL NADU

The Tamil Nadu government has begun work to set up the first **Dugong Conservation Reserve of India** in the Palk Bay region. Dugongs are endangered species and are protected under the Wildlife Protection Act's, 1972 Schedule 1.



Tamil Nadu's Environment, Forests, and Climate Change Department accepted the concept note of Shekhar Kumar Niraj, the Chief Wildlife Warden, and Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, for the Dugong Conservation Reserve's creation.

He was directed to send a draft notification to obtain the Union environment ministry's approval.

The size of the reserve will be spread over around 500 sq km and will be located in Palk Bay's northern part **from Adiramapattinam to Amapattinam**.

About Dugong

The **dugong is a sirenian species found along the Indian coast**. Dugongs are related to manatees and have a similar plump appearance to them, but they have a tail that looks like a dolphin's fluke.

Unlike manatees, **which live in freshwater, dugongs are purely marine mammals**. Dugongs are also known as Sea Cows. They graze, on seagrass, in shallow coastal waters of the Indian and western Pacific Oceans.

GOI LAUNCHED 'OPERATION GANGA'

On February 27, 2022, the ministry of external affairs set up 24x7 control centres in **order to assist the evacuation of Indian nationals from**



Ukraine. India also launched a multi-prong evacuation plan titled 'Operation Ganga'.

Indian nationals will be evacuated through border crossing points with **Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Slovak Republic.** The Ministry has activated a dedicated Twitter handle, 'OpGanga'.

India started the evacuation of stranded citizens on February 26, under Operation Ganga, as Russia intensified its offensive against Ukraine. Evacuation operation **started after Ukrainian airspace was shut for civil aircraft operations from February 24.**

So far, the Indian government has managed to fly three special flights of Air India to bring back stranded citizens.

The India Government is bearing the cost of evacuation, amid the prevailing emergency situation. **Under Operation Ganga, around 15,000 stranded Indians will be evacuated from Ukraine.**

CHAMBA AS 100TH HAR GHAR JAL DISTRICT

Jal Jeevan Mission has achieved numerous milestones of providing water to each home of **100 districts across the country.**

Jal Jeevan Mission has achieved many milestones in providing water to each home of 100 districts across the country.



Chamba, in Himachal Pradesh, has become the **100th 'Har Ghar Jal' district,** the fifth aspirational district to be covered under the initiative.

The other four Har Ghar Jal Aspirational districts are Bhadrachalam, Kothgudem, Jayashankar Bhupalpalli, Komaram Bheem Asifabad (all in Telangana), and Mewat in Haryana.

To translate **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's** vision of providing clean water to each range in the country by 2024, during a short span of two and half years and despite COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown disruptions, Jal Jeevan Mission, has provided water supply to quite 5.78 Crore rural households.

As a result, today, 100 districts enjoy unpolluted water supply advantages. Jal Jeevan Mission is on target to fulfill the Government's resolve to supply water to each rural household by 2024.

ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

SC VERDICT ON INHERITANCE OF DAUGHTERS

The **Supreme Court of India**, in a significant verdict announced that the daughters of a male Hindu, dying intestate, will be entitled to inherit the self-acquired as well as other properties obtained in the partition by the father. **In this case, the daughters will get preference over other collateral members of the family.** The latest Supreme Court judgement deals with the property rights of Hindu women and widows under the Hindu Succession Act. **The judgment came on an appeal against the Madras High Court Verdict.** The Supreme Court bench was dealing with the legal issue concerning the right of the daughter to inherit the **self-acquired property of her father, in the absence of any other legal heir.**



ABOUT DAUGHTERS INHERITANCE

- It ruled that the property of a man who had died without executing a will and is survived only by a daughter will devolve upon the daughter and not others such as his brother. Earlier in 2020, *the SC has already expanded the Hindu women's right to be the coparcener (joint legal heir)* and inherit ancestral property on terms equal to male heirs. SC also looked into Vyavastha Chandrika, a digest of Hindu Law by **Shyama Charan Sarkar Vidya Bhushan** which quoted '**Vrihaspati**' as saying 'the wife is pronounced successor to the wealth of her husband, in her default, the daughter. As a son, so does the daughter of a man proceed from his several limbs.
- **Old Law:** Right of a widow or daughter to inherit the self-acquired property or share received in partition of a coparcenary property of a Hindu male dying intestate is **well recognised not only under the old customary Hindu Law.** If a property of a male Hindu dying intestate is a self-acquired property or obtained in partition of a coparcenary or a family property, the same would devolve by inheritance and not by survivorship, and a daughter of such a male Hindu would be **entitled to inherit such property in preference to other collaterals**".
- **Property after Woman's Death:** The court also said that if a female Hindu dies intestate without leaving any issue, then the property inherited by her from her father or mother would go to the heirs of her father whereas the **property inherited from her husband or father-in-law would go to the heirs of the husband.** In case a female Hindu dies leaving behind her husband or any issue, **then Section 15(1)(a) of the HSA 1956 will come into operation** and the properties left behind including the properties which she inherited from her parents would devolve simultaneously upon her husband and her issues.

What if a female Hindu dies without leaving a will?

In that case, as per the court, **the property she inherited from her father or mother will go to the heirs of her father** while the property that she inherited from her husband or father-in-law will go to the heirs of her husband. The basic aim is to ensure that the inherited property of a female Hindu dying issueless and intestate goes back to the source.

HINDU SUCCESSION ACT, 1956

The **Mitakshara school of Hindu law** codified as the **Hindu Succession Act, 1956** governed succession and inheritance of property but only recognised males as legal heirs. It applied to everyone who is not a Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew by religion. **Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains and followers of Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj**, are also considered Hindus for this law. In a Hindu Undivided Family, several legal heirs through generations can exist jointly. Traditionally, only male descendants of a common ancestor along **with their mothers, wives and unmarried daughters are considered a joint Hindu family**. The legal heirs hold the family property jointly.

Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005:

The **1956 Act was amended in September 2005** and women were recognised as coparceners for property partitions arising from 2005. **Section 6 of the Act** was amended to make a daughter of a coparcener also a coparcener by birth **"in her own right in the same manner as the son"**. It also gave the daughter the same rights and liabilities "in the coparcenary property as she would have had if she had been a son". The law applies to ancestral property and to intestate succession in personal property, where succession happens as per law and not through a will. **Different benches of the Supreme Court and High Courts had taken conflicting views on the issue.**



For Example: In *Prakash V/S Phoolwati* (2015) case, a two-judge Bench headed by **Justice A K Goel** held that the benefit of the 2005 amendment could be granted only to **"living daughters of living coparceners"** as on September 9, 2005 (the date when the amendment came into force). However In February 2018, contrary to the 2015 ruling, a **two-judge Bench headed by Justice A K Sikri** held that the share of a father who died in 2001 will also pass to his daughters as coparceners during the partition of the property as per the 2005 law. Then in April that year, **yet another two judge bench, headed by Justice RK Agrawal, reiterated the position taken in 2015**. These conflicting views by benches of equal strength led to a reference to a three judge Bench in the current case.

RELATED ISSUES

LEGAL MARRIAGE AGE OF WOMEN

Recently, the Union Cabinet cleared a proposal to bring **uniformity in the marriageable age of men and women**. By amending the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006** and other personal law, the legal age of marriage of women will be raised from 18 to 21 years. The decision is based on the recommendation of a four-member task force led by **former Samata Party chief Jaya Jaitley**.



About Legal Framework of Minimum Age for Marriage: In India, the minimum age of marriage was prescribed for the first time by the law known as the **Sarda Act, 1929**. It was later renamed as the **Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA), 1929**. In 1978, the law was amended to raise the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys. This position remains the same even in the new law called the **Prohibition of Child Marriages Act (PCMA), 2006, which replaced the CMRA, 1929**.

Marriage Minimum Age For Different Religion:

For Hindus, The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 sets 18 years as the minimum age for the bride and 21 years as the minimum age for the groom. In Islam, the marriage of a minor who has attained puberty is considered valid. The Special Marriage Act, 1954 and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 also prescribe 18 and 21 years as the minimum age of consent for marriage for women and men, respectively. For the new age of marriage to be implemented, these laws are expected to be amended.

Provisions in the Indian Constitution to safeguard women's rights.

- The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its **Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles**. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women.
- **Preamble:** The Preamble to the Constitution of India assures justice, social, economic and political; equality of status and opportunity and dignity to the individual. Thus it treats both men and women equally.

Fundamental Rights

- **Article 14** ensures women the right to equality.
- **Article 15(1)** specifically prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.
- **Article 15(3)** empowers the State to take affirmative actions in favour of women. **Article 16** provides for equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office.

Directive Principles of State Policy:

- **Article 39 (a)** provides that the state directs its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood.
- **Article 39 (d)** mandates equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
- **Article 42** provides that the state make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief.



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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

PAKISTAN AGREEMENT WITH CHINA FOR CPEC



On February 4, 2022, Pakistan signed a new agreement with China to start the second phase of the USD 60 billion **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor**

(CPEC).

On the occasion, Prime Minister Imran Khan praised the controversial projects, stating that **it has strategic significance for Pakistan and China**. It will also deliver tangible benefits to the people.

The Prime Minister arrived in China on a four-day visit to attend the opening ceremony of the **2020 Beijing Winter Olympics**.

He held a virtual meeting with **He Lifeng, Chairman of China's National Development & Reform Commission (NDRC)** and held discussion on expansion of Chinese investments in Pakistan.

Framework Agreement on Industrial Cooperation

On the occasion, **Framework Agreement on Industrial Cooperation** was also signed with the aim of:

Attracting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)
Promote industrialisation and development of economic zones, and
Initiating, planning, executing and monitoring projects in public as well as private sector.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

CPEC is a collection of infrastructure projects, which are under construction throughout Pakistan. It started in 2013. This project was originally valued at USD 47 billion.

Its value has increased to worth USD 62 billion as of 2020. CPEC project focuses on rapidly upgrading Pakistan's required infrastructure and strengthening its economy by **constructing modern transportation networks, special economic zones and numerous energy projects**.

It is a 3,000-km long route of infrastructure projects, to connect **China's northwest Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region to Gwadar Port in western province of Balochistan in Pakistan**.

INDIAN STANCE ON UKRAINE AT UNSC

Recently, India remained absent from the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** vote on Ukraine.



This move of India is widely read as a play to balance its ties with Moscow and Washington. **It was a procedural vote on whether to discuss the situation in Eastern Europe**.

In Eastern Europe, **Russia accuses NATO of attempting to expand its membership**. On the other hand, the U.S. and other NATO countries accuse Russia of amassing troops for invading Ukraine.

Russia-Ukraine issue at UNSC

The United States had asked for an open meeting at the UNSC, on Russian military build-up at the Ukrainian border.

But Russia sought a vote on the decision to go ahead with the open meeting. **According to UNSC working methods, 9 votes were required to go ahead for the meeting**. 10 countries voted in favour of an open meeting on Ukraine.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict: **It is a major security crisis in Eurasian region**, having the

potential to escalate into a much broader conflict.

The conflict might lead to further deterioration of Russia's relations with Europe and the US. **The conflict also has far-reaching consequences on the larger dynamic of Asian geopolitics.**

Why did the conflict start?

Ukraine was a part of Russia, before becoming a Soviet republic. Russia and Ukraine share hundreds of years of cultural, familial and linguistic links.

With the disintegration of the USSR in 1991, Ukraine gained independence. Since then, Ukraine has been trying to shed Russian legacy and improve its relationship with the West. **The shared heritage has been exploited for electoral and military purposes.**

In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea. It was the first time a European country annexed territory from another country since World War II. **After the Crimean annexation, Russia and Ukraine signed ceasefire agreements at Minsk.**

Apart from that, **Russia also started a separatist movement in Donbas region of Ukraine,** which is home to ethnically Russian people.

35TH AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT HELD AT ADDIS ABABA



The 35th African Union summit was held at Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. **Security and pandemic got top priority at the summit.**

The countries discussed the unavailability of COVID vaccines to several African countries. Lately, the African Union has faced institutional failures due to insurgencies and

coups. This fact was widely agreed upon by many of the members.

All the six recent military coups were discussed. **The summit announced that only 11% of Africans are fully vaccinated.**

Palestine wanted the African Union to withdraw the observer status of Israel.

Strengthening Resilience in Nutrition and Food Security on the African continent is the Theme For 2022.

Strengthening agro-food systems, health, and social protection systems to accelerate human, economic, and social capital development

Tigray crisis

The Ethiopian Prime Minister Abhiy Ahmed addressed the summit. He announced the end of the conflict with Tigrayan rebels.

The Tigray People Liberation Front was a party. It had been a neighborhood of the coalition government that ended the military dictatorship in 1991.

The TPLF leader became the president of Ethiopia in 1991. Later in 1995, he became the primary PM of Ethiopia.

The Horn of Africa houses Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, and Eritrea. The interior political crisis of Ethiopia affects other African countries also.

INDIA'S DIPLOMATIC BOYCOTT OF BEIJING OLYMPICS

The Ministry of External Affairs officially announced the diplomatic boycott of Beijing winter Olympics of India. **Doordarshan** will not telecast the opening and closing ceremonies of **Beijing Winter Olympics.**



India will not send its envoy to the opening and closing ceremony of **Beijing Winter Olympics**. However, India will send an athlete to attend the ceremonies.

Earlier, India had supported the Beijing Olympics. India also supported China for conducting the winter Olympics during the BRICS summit. India is withdrawing its support now for Chinese annoying actions.

Why is India boycotting the Olympics?

China has chosen the army officer Qi Fabao as the torch bearer. **Qi Fabao was involved in the Galwan valley clashes between India and China in 2020.**

It was one of the bloodiest encounters between the two countries. India is of the view that by choosing Qi Fabao as the torch bearer, **China is politicising the Olympics.**

World countries like the **USA and other European countries are boycotting the China Winter Olympics.**

They are boycotting over China's poor human rights record. US is against forced sterilisation campaign and mass detention camps organized against Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities in China.

4TH QUAD FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING



Foreign Ministers of Australia, India and Japan recently noted that QUAD is cooperating on sharing intelligence information on threats in the Indo-Pacific region.

Ministers called for justice for **the 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai (2008)** as well as Pathankot airbase attack in 2016, for the first time since this group was formed.

They held their fourth Quad ministerial meeting in Melbourne on February 11, 2022, resolved to boost up delivery of more than

billion Covid vaccines to be manufactured in India, step efforts to ensure maritime security in the region and to hold a special meet on climate change in 2022.

Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)

QUAD is the informal strategic dialogue between **India, Japan, USA, and Australia** with a shared objective of **ensuring and supporting a "free, open and prosperous" Indo-Pacific region**. Idea to form QUAD was first mooted in 2007, by **Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe**.

But it couldn't move ahead as Australia pulled out of it, due to Chinese pressure. **Shinzo Abe again floated the concept of "Democratic Security Diamond"** comprising India, the US, Australia and Japan for safeguarding maritime commons from the Indian Ocean to western Pacific.

Finally in November 2017, India, Australia, US and Japan formed the QUAD Coalition to come up with a new strategy to keep sea routes free of any influence in the Indo-Pacific region.

PM MODI TO ADDRESS 'ONE OCEAN SUMMIT'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to address the high-level segment of **"One Ocean Summit"** on February 11, 2022, through a video message.

The summit will also be addressed by several other heads of states and governments from the **United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, South Korea, and Canada.**



The summit will be an opportunity for gathering political leaders and all stakeholders to make a decisive contribution with tangible, bold, and actionable initiatives and commitments.

It is the first major event, which will take place in the first year of the decade dedicated to the ocean.

Summit will be held in light of the **French Presidency of the Council of the European Union**.

The summit is being organised from February 9 to February 11, 2022 by France, in cooperation with the **World Bank and United Nations in Brest**.

Objective of the Summit: The One Ocean Summit is being organized with the **objective of mobilising the international community** to take tangible action to support and preserve healthy and sustainable ocean ecosystems.

United Nations Ocean Conference

This conference was **first held in June 2017 in New York**. It sought to mobilize action for conservation and sustainable use of the seas, oceans and marine resources.

It was organised with the theme of **"Our oceans, our future: partnering for implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14"**. The conference was hosted by the Governments of Fiji and Sweden.

RUSSIA & BELARUS MILITARY DRILLS



Russia and Belarus started joint military exercises near Belarusian border with Ukraine on February 10, 2022.

Military exercises started as a part of 10 days of drills. These exercises are seen as a significant element in the **Kremlin's menacing posture towards its neighbour**.

Around 30,000 Russian troops and all of Belarusian armed forces are taking part in the drills.

Forces have joined **when Russia has amassed forces along its border** with Ukraine as well in the annexed Crimean Peninsula.

Several equipment for the drills travelled thousands of miles across Russia. **Russia's S-400 missile defence systems** have been activated in Belarus, near the border with Ukraine.

Russia's missile tests in Black Sea: Russia is also preparing for missile tests in the Black Sea, which Ukraine says will make shipping impossible in Black Sea as well as the Sea of Azov.

What is the Minsk Agreement?

The Minsk agreement was written in 2014 by the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine, composed of Russia, **Ukraine and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)**.

It was written with mediation by the **leaders of Germany and France in Normandy Format**. The agreement sought to end war in the Donbas region of Ukraine.

INDIA BANNED 54 CHINESE APPLICATIONS

India banned 54 Chinese apps that pose a threat to India's security.

These 54 apps were banned because they allegedly obtained critical permissions and collected sensitive data of users. **Collected real-time data is being misused** and is being transmitted to servers located in hostile countries.

The list of banned apps includes

Beauty Camera-Selfie Camera, Sweet Selfie HD, Viva Video Editor, Garena Free Fire – Illuminate, Dual Space Lite, Tencent Xriver, Onmyoji Arena and AppLock.



Garena Free Fire: Garena Free Fire is Singapore-based and its developer is not from China. **This game was one of the most downloaded games in India 2021.**

It had filled up the space created by PUBG Mobile after its ban in September 2020. **The app was already removed from the App store and Play Store in India.**

In June 2021, **India banned 59 Chinese mobile applications including widely-used social media platforms like TikTok, WeChat, and Helo, as they were posing threat to India's sovereignty and security.**

India has blocked 321 apps, since border tensions started with China in May 2020. **India announced the first round of bans in June 2020, following the killing of 20 Indian soldiers in a clash with Chinese troops at Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh.**

PHILIPPINES STANCE ON RCEP



The Philippines Senate has postponed the ratification of RCEP after Farmers, and other civil society groups within the country took a cue from India's decision to remain out of RCEP.

The Philippines also expressed strong reservations against the **mega trade deal signed by the Duterte government.**

The decision to defer ratification was taken within the backdrop of solid opposition by **farmers, civil society organizations, fishers, and the personal sector** within the Philippines.

The Philippines took this decision before the three-day visit of the Indian secretary of state to Manila from February 13, 2022.

The visit was scheduled after India, and therefore the Philippines signed a USD 374.96 million deal in January 2022.

Under this deal New Delhi will export BrahMos missiles to the ASEAN country.

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership

RCEP may be a trade agreement among Australia, Brunei, China, Cambodia, Japan, Indonesia, Laos, South Korea, Myanmar, Malaysia, The Philippines, New Zealand, Thailand, Singapore, and Vietnam.

Fifteen member countries of RCEP account for **around 30% of the world's population and 30% of worldwide GDP.**

Thus, RCEP is the largest trade bloc in history. It's the primary trade agreement involving the largest economies of Asia, including **China, Japan, Indonesia, and South Korea.**

RCEP was first introduced during the 19th ASEAN Summit in Bali, Indonesia, in November 2011. Negotiations started in early 2013.

Initially, **India was a member of the RCEP drafting committee in 2011.** However, in 2019, it opted out of the agreement citing some concerns that were left unaddressed.

CANADA INVOKED EMERGENCY ACT FOR 1ST TIME

Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau has invoked never-before-used emergency powers to support provinces in ending the blockades and public disorder that have gripped Ottawa for 18 days at the hands of participants in the so-called "Freedom Convoy."



The demonstrations shut a main economic corridor between Canada and the United States for six days before it was reopened on the 13th Feb.

What is the Emergencies Act?

The act gives the government temporary powers it does not normally have, such as the power to impose special restrictions on public assembly and travel and to mobilize federal support for the local and provincial police.

It gives the federal government power to implement temporary measures to ensure safety and security during national emergencies.

US & BANGLADESH CONDUCTED EXERCISE 'COPE SOUTH 22'



The air forces of Bangladesh and the United States will conduct a joint tactical airlift exercise 'Cope South 22'. The six days exercise has been sponsored by Pacific Air Forces (PACAF).

The bilateral exercise will be held at Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) Kurmitola Cantonment, Dhaka; and Operating Location-Alpha, Sylhet, Bangladesh.

The goals of the Pacific Air Forces-sponsored bilateral tactical airlift exercise include improving interoperability with the Bangladesh Air Force and supporting the armed forces of Bangladesh's long-term modernization efforts in order to maintain regional stability.

The goal of the exercise is bolstering bilateral ties between the two countries through tactical airlift sorties and subject-matter expert exchanges.

4TH INDIA-AUSTRALIA ENERGY DIALOGUE

The 4th India-Australia Energy Dialogue was co-chaired by Union Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy, RK Singh and Australian Energy and Emissions Reduction Minister Angus Taylor.

Energy Transition was a major area of discussion in the dialogue and both the Energy

Ministers. Energy Transition activities in their respective countries with a focus on renewables, energy efficiency, storage, EVs, critical minerals, mining etc.



The need of Climate Finance was also highlighted by India for meeting the Energy Transition goals of developing countries.

Both the countries signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) for working towards reducing the cost of new and renewable energy technologies and scaling up their deployment to reduce global emissions.

Apart from the power sector, there are many desirable areas of cooperation agreed under the other JWGs like reducing costs of Green Hydrogen; cooperation in the sphere of coal-based energy security and resource deployment; investment opportunities in the minerals sector; exploring the potential for an LNG Partnership, among other areas.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE INVASION: IMPACT ON INDIA

On February 24, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a military operation in Ukraine, which was termed as "full-scale invasion" by the Ukrainian foreign minister.



US President Joe Biden called this move by Russia "an unprovoked and unjustified attack". The US & its allies have been responding to the Russian invasion by imposing sanctions on Russia.

Impact on Global Markets

Global markets also reacted in kind to 'demilitarisation and denazification' of

Ukraine. Major indices are trading in a deep sea of red.

Gold hit the highest since early 2021.

Impact on Energy. As a result of invasion, Crude oil prices have increased to 7-year high.

Brent oil prices increased above USD 100 a barrel for the first time since 2014. **Russia is a key supplier of energy, worldwide.** Europe relies on Russia for about a quarter of its oil supplies as well as a third of its gas.

According to JPMorgan Chase & Co, oil prices are likely to average USD 110 a barrel in the second quarter because of the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

China is the largest single customer for Russia's oil exports. **While Asia and Oceania account for 42% of Russia's total crude oil.** In 2020, China was the largest importing country of Russia's crude oil and condensate, at 31%.

It is likely that oil would come to market, but due to geopolitical risks will keep the prices at high levels.

Impact on India

According to **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman**, Russia-Ukraine tension and increase in crude oil prices pose risk to financial stability in India.

India accounts for less than 1% share of Russia's crude oil exports. This is because most Indian refineries cannot process heavy crudes that Russia exports. Higher crude oil prices will result in higher CPI inflation for longer.

Furthermore, as the **European Union is the biggest market for India's exports**, there will be supply disruptions there and a greater demand for steel, engineering goods, etc. for which India is an alternate supplier.

SUSTAINABLE CITIES INDIA PROGRAMME

World Economic Forum (WEF) and the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on a jointly designed '**Sustainable Cities India program**'.

The program aims to create an enabling environment for cities to generate decarbonization solutions across the energy, transport, and built environment sectors.



This initiative is particularly noteworthy as it comes after the **Honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi** stated India's commitment to turn **net-zero by 2070 as a climate mitigation response at COP26.**

Key points: The '**Sustainable Cities India program**' intends to enable cities to decarbonize in a systematic and sustainable way that will reduce emissions and deliver resilient and equitable urban ecosystems.

The **Forum and NIUA will adapt the Forum's City Sprint process and Toolbox of Solutions for decarbonization** in the context of five to seven Indian cities across two years.

The **City Sprint process is a series of multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder workshops involving business, government, and civil society leaders** to enable decarbonization, especially through clean electrification and circularity.

The **outcome of the workshop series** will be a shortlist of relevant policies and business models, which not only reduce emissions but also maximize System Value, such as improved air quality or job creation.

JAPAN LAUNCHED FIRST HYDROGEN-POWERED TRAIN

Japan has launched its **first hydrogen-powered train**. This unveiling is seen as a step towards the country's objective of becoming carbon neutral by 2050. The hydrogen-fuelled train will be tested in the country in March.

"Hybari" the two-car train costs over USD 35 million or 4 billion yen and can go up to 140 kilometers or 87 miles at a top speed of 100 kilometers per hour on a single hydrogen refuelling.

The train has been developed by East Japan Railway in association with **Hitachi and Toyota Motor Corporation**.

The nation has plans to replace its diesel fleet with this hydrogen variant of trains and will also look to export them. In 2030, commercial services are expected to start.

Which country has rolled out the first hydrogen-fuelled train?

In hydrogen-fuelled trains, Europe has been a pioneer. **Germany launched the world's first train in 2018 which was built by Alstom SA.**

Special fuelling stations and new regional trains are being developed by Deutsche Bahn AG and Siemens AG, and they will be tested in 2024.

INDIA & OMAN CONDUCTED EXERCISE EASTERN BRIDGE-VI



The **Indian Air Force (IAF) and Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO)** have organised a bilateral air exercise named Eastern Bridge-VI from February 21 to 25, 2022 at Air Force Station Jodhpur in Rajasthan.

Eastern Bridge-VI is the sixth edition of the exercise. The exercise will provide an

opportunity to enhance **operational capability and interoperability between the two Air Forces.**

Participation of IAF and RAFO in this exercise will promote professional interaction, exchange of experiences and enhancement of operational knowledge, besides strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries.

Various senior dignitaries are planning to visit Air Force Station Jodhpur during this exercise

US ANNOUNCED NEW SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA

President Joe Biden of the United States has announced new sanctions against Russia, saying that **Moscow's recognition of two separatist areas** in



eastern Ukraine as independent as the start of a Russian invasion of its neighbour.

The US has criticized Russia's decision to **recognize Donetsk and Luhansk independence** and the authorizing of the deployment of Russian troops under the guise of maintaining peace in the region.

The sanction made by the US has targeted the **sovereign debt of Russia and two financial institutions** of the country which include the military bank of Russia.

These sanctions being placed means that Russia will no longer be able to raise money from the Western as well as the European markets.

Why were the sanctions placed?

The Russian government recognized **Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) and Donetsk People's Republic (DPR)** as independent regions and signed an agreement with them to establish a military presence in the eastern part of Ukraine.

Doing so has made the US term this agreement as to the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine and has thus placed sanctions on Russia.

What is a pariah state?

A **pariah state**, also known as a **global or international pariah**, is a country that is considered to be an outcast globally.

Sanctions, international isolation, or even invasion may be placed on a pariah state by the other countries who find its existence, actions, and policies to be unacceptable.

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT DIVIDED UKRAINE IN 3 PARTS



Russian President, Vladimir Putin has recognised the independence of separatist regions in eastern **Ukraine** – **Donetsk and Luhansk**.

Putin's announcement paved the way for Russia to openly send troops and weapons to the long-running conflict pitting **Ukrainian forces against Moscow-backed rebels**.

Russian-backed rebels have been fighting Ukrainian troops in **Donetsk and Luhansk since 2014**, with regular violence despite a ceasefire agreement.

Putin signed decrees recognizing the Donetsk and Luhansk regions' independence, eight years after fighting erupted between **Russia-backed separatists and Ukrainian forces**, and called on lawmakers to approve measures paving the way for military support.

INDIA & FRANCE ROADMAP ON BLUE ECONOMY

India and France recently agreed on a Roadmap on **Blue Economy and Ocean Governance**.

Both the countries agreed on this roadmap with the aim of contributing scientific knowledge and ocean conservation. They seek to ensure that the **ocean remains a global common, on the basis of rule of law**.

This agreement was signed during a three-day visit of **External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to France**.

Scope of the roadmap will encompass

maritime trade, naval industry, marine technology, fisheries, scientific research, marine eco-tourism, inland waterways, integrated coastal management, and cooperation between competent administrations on civil maritime issues.



Both the countries have planned to organise an annual bilateral dialogue on **blue economy and ocean governance for exchanging views on their priorities**, support ongoing & future cooperation and share their best practices.

India-France on Blue Economy

India and France seek to make the blue economy a driver of progress in their respective societies, apart from respecting the environment and coastal & marine biodiversity. They noted that fisheries are a vital economic sector, playing a decisive role in food security and livelihood security, specifically for coastal populations.

According to them, **demographic, economic & societal factors** have resulted into increased global demand for marine products and increasing stress on global fish stocks. Both the countries will make the blue economy a priority in the development of their economic exchanges.

INDO-JAPAN JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE



Dharma Guardian is the name of an Indo-Japan Joint Military Exercise that began in 2018. This exercise takes place between both countries' armies.

This exercise with Japan is significant and crucial in the matters of security challenges that are faced by both nations in the backdrop of the current global situation.

This exercise covers platoon-level joint operations training in semi-urban and urban environments and forests.

About Exercise Dharma Guardian 2022

The latest edition of this exercise will begin from 27 February to 10 March 2022 and will be conducted at Foreign Training Node, Belagavi, Karnataka.

Indian Army's 15th Battalion the MARATHA LIGHT INFANTRY Regiment and Japan's 30th Infantry Regiment of Japanese Ground Self Defence Forces are participating in this year's exercise.

This exercise is being conducted between the two troops to share various experiences gained during operations so as to **enhance inter-operability in the execution** and planning of various operations in jungle, urban and semi-urban terrain.



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FIRST EVER INDIA-CENTRAL ASIA SUMMIT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hosted the first-ever India-Central Asia Summit virtually on January 27, 2022. It was attended by Presidents of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan. This first India-Central Asia coincided with the 30th anniversary of **establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Central Asian countries**. The summit came two days after a similar **China-Central Asia Conference** was held where China offered USD 500 million in assistance and pledged to ramp up trade to USD 70 billion from the present levels of about **USD 40 billion a year**.



ADOPTION OF DELHI DECLARATION

The joint declaration called upon other central Asian countries to consider joining the **connectivity initiatives of India and Central Asian member nations** such as the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** and **Ashgabat Agreement** (a multimodal transport agreement between **India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran and Oman**). The leaders also supported India's proposal to include the Chabahar Port and Turkmenistan's proposal to include Turkmenbashi Port within the framework of the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**. The leaders also agreed on the need to continue large-scale and long-term economic cooperation between India and Central Asian countries to strengthen and expand inter-connectivity. The Turkmenistan President stressed on the importance of the **TAPI gas pipeline project in the context of the same**. The leaders further directed their Ministers to prepare a roadmap to enhance trade and industrial cooperation between India and the Central Asian countries and encouraged the **India-Central Asia Business Council (ICABC)** to **accelerate their efforts to promote business linkages between the countries**.

INDIA'S STAND ON CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES

- **Kazakhstan:** It has become a vital partner for India's energy security. India also expressed condolences **for the recent loss of life and property in Kazakhstan**.
- **Uzbekistan:** India's state governments are also active partners in its growing cooperation with Uzbekistan.
- **Tajikistan:** Both the countries have a longstanding cooperation in the field of security.
- **Turkmenistan:** It is an important part of Indian vision in the field of regional connectivity, which is evident from participation in the Ashgabat Agreement. Regional connectivity in Central Asia is a **key arm of the 2018 Ashgabat Agreement**.



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 SCO. The dialogue focuses on a number of issues including ways to **improve connectivity and stabilise war-ravaged Afghanistan**.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SUMMIT FOR INDIA

The summit is symbolic of the importance attached by the leaders of India and the Central Asian countries to a comprehensive and enduring India-Central Asia partnership. It is being held at a critical juncture when **tensions between the West and Russia and the United States (US) and China are rising**. India too has faced geopolitical setbacks: Border tensions with China and the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. It follows **President Vladimir Putin's visit to India**, which may have allowed India to push Russia to moderately balance China in Eurasia and to contain the threats from Afghanistan. The recent unrest in Kazakhstan also **showed that "new actors" are vying for influence in the region though their motives are still not clear**.

SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION (SCO)

SCO is a permanent intergovernmental international organization. It's a Eurasian political, economic and military organization aiming to maintain peace, security and stability in the region. It was created in 2001. **The SCO Charter was signed in 2002**, and entered into force in 2003. It is a statutory document which outlines the organization's goals and principles, as well as its structure and core activities. The **SCO's official languages are Russian and Chinese**. Prior to the creation of SCO in 2001, **Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan were members of the Shanghai Five**. Shanghai Five (1996) emerged from a series of border demarcation and demilitarization talks which the four former Soviet republics held with China to ensure stability along the borders. Following the accession of Uzbekistan to the organization in 2001, the Shanghai five was renamed the SCO. **India and Pakistan became members in 2017**.



RELATED: INDIA-ISRAEL 30 YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATION

To mark the **30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries**, India and Israel launched a commemorative logo. The logo features the **Star of David and the Ashoka Chakra**- the two symbols that adorn the national flags of both countries- and forms the numeral 30 depicting the 30th anniversary of bilateral relations.

DIPLOMATIC TIES B/W INDIA & ISRAEL

Though India officially recognised Israel in 1950, the **two countries established full diplomatic ties** only on 29th January 1992. As of December 2020, India was among 164 United Nations (UN) member states to have diplomatic ties with Israel.

Economic and Commercial Relations: From **USD 200 million in 1992**, **bilateral merchandise trade** stood at USD 4.14 billion (excluding defence) during the period April 2020 – February 2021 with the balance of trade being in India's favour.

Trade in diamonds constitutes about 50% of bilateral trade. **India is Israel's third-largest trade partner in Asia and seventh largest globally**. Israeli companies have invested in India in energy,

renewable energy, telecom, real estate, water technologies, and are focusing on setting up R&D centers or production units in India. India is also in dialogue with Israel for **concluding a Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**.

Defence: India is the largest buyer of military equipment from Israel, which, in turn, is the second-largest defence supplier to India, after Russia. **The Indian armed forces have inducted a wide array of Israeli weapon** systems over the years, which range from Phalcon AWACS (Airborne Warning And Control Systems) and Heron, Searcher-II and Harop drones to Barak anti-missile defence systems and Spyder quick-reaction anti-aircraft missile systems. The acquisitions also include a host of **Israeli missiles and precision-guided munitions**, from Python and Derby air-to-air missiles to Crystal Maze and Spice-2000 bombs. At the **15th Joint Working Group (JWG 2021)** meeting on Bilateral Defence Cooperation, countries agreed to form a Task Force to formulate a comprehensive Ten-Year Roadmap to identify new areas of cooperation.

COOPERATION IN AGRICULTURE

- In May 2021, “**a three-year work program agreement**” for development in agriculture cooperation, was signed. The programme aims to grow existing Centres of Excellence, establish new centers, increase CoE's value chain, bring the Centres of Excellence into the self-sufficient mode, and encourage private sector companies and collaboration.
- **Science & Technology:** Recently, experts from India and Israel deliberated on widening the scope of India-Israel **Industrial R&D and Technological Innovation Fund (I4F)** at its 8th Governing Body meeting. They approved 3 joint R&D projects worth 5.5 million USD and suggested measures to create a broader India-Israel collaborative ecosystem. I4F is a cooperation between the two countries to promote, **facilitate and support joint industrial R&D projects between companies from India and Israel** to address the challenges in the agreed ‘Focus Sectors’.
- **Others:** Israel is also joining the India-led **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, which aligns very well with the objectives of both countries to scale up their cooperation in renewable energy and partner in clean energy.



ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

WHAT IS 'VIBRANT VILLAGE PROGRAMME'?



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in her budget speech that, government is set to work on improving connectivity across northern border under

the **Vibrant Villages Programme**.

The Minister did not provide details on this programme. However, as per reports the **Vibrant Villages programme will be launched to improve infrastructure in villages along India's border with China.** Infrastructure will be improved in states like Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Arunachal Pradesh.

Under the programme, residential and tourist centres will be constructed. It will also provide for improvement in road connectivity and development of decentralized renewable energy sources.

Apart from that, direct access of Doordarshan and education related channels will be provided. **Support will be provided for livelihood.**

The announcement to **launch the Vibrant Villages Programme** is significant in light of China's increasing presence along the Himalayan frontier with India. China is actively constructing dual-use infrastructure.

It has sparked concerns among government, strategic circles and security forces, and strategic circles. **China has undertaken large-scale construction since 2017, along the border.** It is building border villages in Tibet in a bid to strengthen their presence along the frontier.

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN LAUNCHED 'RAMP PROGRAMME'

The finance minister, **Nirmala Sitharaman, declared** during the Union Budget 2022-23 that the RAMP program would be implemented at a cost of Rs 6,000 crores.



RAMP is a **post-COVID recovery and resilience program**. Its goal is to improve the situation of India's SMEs. The initiative will be implemented for a period of five years.

The COVID pandemic and lockdown had a significant impact on MSMEs. MSMEs have easier access to capital as a result of this.

MSMEs' productivity will rise as a result of the program. It will also improve the competitiveness of MSMEs. **The MSME sector will be revitalized as a result.** In India, 40% of SMEs do not have access to capital.

Small and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) constitute the backbone of the Indian economy. They account for 40 percent of the country's exports and 30 percent of its GDP.

The **micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs)** are at the heart of the economic recovery. The most pressing need at the time is to ensure that the cash injected into the economy reaches MSMEs.

Benefits: It will resolve the liquidity problems. Currently, lenders are concerned about borrowers' ability to repay their loans.

The flow of credit into the MSME sector is being restricted and reduced as a result of this. **The scheme will reduce the risk of non-bank financial institutions and banks lending.**

FIRST COUNTRY TO ADOPT INDIA'S UPI SYSTEM



The **first country to adopt India's UPI system** will be Nepal which will be critical in modernising the neighbouring country's digital economy.

To deliver the services in Nepal, **NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL)**, NPCI's international arm, has partnered with Manam Infotech and **Gateway Payments Service (GPS)**.

In Nepal, GPS is the authorized payment system operator, and Manam Infotech will implement the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) there.

It will **open the way for real-time cross-border P2P transfers between Nepal and India in the future.**

UPI's real-time payment system can help accelerate Nepal's financial inclusion process while also expanding business opportunities.

JPMORGAN: WORLD'S FIRST BANK TO SET UP METAVERSE

JPMorgan has become the world's first bank to set up shop in the metaverse. The largest bank in the US has opened a lounge in the blockchain-based world Decentraland.



Users can create their virtual avatars, build virtual spaces and roam in the lounge christened '**Onyx Lounge**' after its suite of **Ethereum-based services.**

The lounge also features a digital image of the bank's CEO Jamie Dimon.

What is Metaverse?

Metaverse is a virtual universe where users can do multiple activities like socialising, shopping or even attending events through their avatar.

Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) headsets are becoming more pocket-friendly, and both technologies have together contributed to a significantly enhanced user experience.

UNCTAD'S GLOBAL TRADE REPORT



According to **UNCTAD's Global Trade Update**

published on February 17th, global trade in goods continued strong in 2021, and trade in services finally returned to the levels of pre-COVID-19.

Global trade touched \$28.5 trillion which is a record level in 2021, according to the research. This shows a 25% increase over 2020 and a 13% increase over 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic started.

While the majority of global trade growth occurred in the **first half of 2021**, it continued in the second half of the year.

After a slow third quarter, trade growth accelerated in the fourth quarter, **with goods trade increasing by about USD 200 billion to USD 5.8 trillion.**

Meanwhile, **service trade increased by USD 50 billion to USD1.6 trillion**, which is slightly higher than pre-pandemic levels.

According to the report, imports and exports in all major trade economies rose sharply over pre-pandemic levels in the fourth quarter of 2021.

However, goods trade increased more quickly in developing countries than in developed countries. **Exports of underdeveloped countries increased by roughly 30% compared** to the same period in 2020, compared to 15% for wealthy nations.

As commodity prices rose, growth was faster in commodity-exporting regions. Also, with a 32 percent year-on-year gain, trade grew faster than the global average.

With the exception of transportation equipment, all economic sectors **had significant growth in the value of their trade in the fourth quarter of 2021.**

The report stated that **high fuel costs are behind the considerable increase** in the value of trade in the energy sector, and trade growth for metals and chemicals was also above average.

The **global shortage of semiconductors slowed the growth of trade** in communication equipment, automobiles, and precision instruments.



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APPOINTMENTS

RAVI MITTAL APPOINTED AS CHAIRMAN OF IBBI



The former secretary, Department of Sports, **Ravi Mittal** has been appointed as the **Chairman of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of**

India (IBBI), as per the notification issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

He is a 1986 batch IAS officer from Bihar cadre. He will serve as the Chairman of IBBI for a term of five years or till he attains 65 years of age, whichever is early.

About the IBBI: The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India is the regulator for overseeing insolvency proceedings and entities like **Insolvency Professional Agencies, Insolvency Professionals and Information Utilities in India.**

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India Headquarters: **New Delhi.**

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India Founded: **1 October 2016.**

ILKER AYCI APPOINTED AS CEO & MD OF AIR INDIA



Ilker Ayçi has been appointed as the new **CEO and MD of Air India.** He will assume his responsibilities on or before 1st April 2022.

Ilker Ayçi is a **former chairman of Turkish Airlines.** Ilker is an aviation industry leader who led Turkish Airlines to its current success during his tenure there.

About Ilker Ayçi: Ayçi was born in Istanbul in 1971. After graduating from the Department of

Political Science and Public Administration at Bilkent University, he served as a researcher in the **Department of Political Sciences at Leeds University in the U.K.**

INDIA'S 1ST NATIONAL MARITIME SECURITY COORDINATOR

Retired Vice Admiral, G Ashok Kumar has been appointed as India's first national maritime security coordinator by the government.



The **government of India** has taken the decisive move to ensure reliability of security and **its objective to strengthen the country's maritime security.**

The **appointment of G Ashok Kumar**, who is a former Navy vice chief, is seen as part of India's consistent efforts to bolster its maritime security **following the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack 14 years back** when a group of sea-borne terrorists struck at the heart of the country's financial capital.

The **NMSC (National Maritime Security Coordinator)** will be working in coordination with the **National Security Council Secretariat** which is headed by NSA Ajit Doval.

The main task will be given to NMSC to make coordination **among the Indian Navy, the Coast Guard, security agencies** those tangled in coastal and maritime security and 13 coastal states and Union Territories.

27TH CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF: MM NARAVANE

In April, 2022, **General Manoj Mukund Naravane** will be retiring from the post of **27th chief of the Indian**



Army. General M M Naravane will be leaving behind a strong legacy that would be clear only with time.

He worked as an **Army Chief without any showoff or publicity**, even though he was directly responsible for many important strategic decisions and tactics that will be changing the shape of the Army's outlook in the coming years.

Career of General MM Naravane:

General MM Naravane (PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, ADC) has done his schooling from Pune's Jnana Prabodhini Prashala. He is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy (NDA) and the Indian Military Academy (IMA).

Gen. Naravane was commissioned in the Sikh Light Infantry Regiment in June 1980. He is also an alumnus of the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington and Higher Command Course.

Journey of General MM Naravane:

In an excellent and glorious military career spanning over four decades, General Naravane has the distinction of tenantry **key command and staff appointments in Peace and Field, both in the North - East as well as in Jammu and Kashmir** and has been an important part of the Indian Peace Keeping Force that was sent to Sri Lanka.

He has with him a large amount of experience in doing his duty in the most difficult and challenging areas.

He has also commanded a **Rashtriya Rifles Battalion, and also has raised an Infantry Brigade**. General Naravane was Inspector General at the North Assam Rifles and

commanded a prestigious group of Strike Corps.

After his successful command at both, the Army Training Command as well as at the Shimla and the Eastern Command which is in Kolkata, he was appointed as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff before getting appointed as the Army chief on 31 Dec 2019.

FIRST WOMAN CHAIRPERSON OF SEBI

Former ICICI Banker, Madhabi Puri Buch has been appointed as the **new Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** chairman, replacing Ajay Tyagi.

She is the **first woman chief of SEBI and also the first non-IAS** to head the regulatory body.

She has over three decades of experience in the financial markets and was SEBI whole-time member (WTM) between April 5, 2017, and October 4, 2021.

During her tenure at SEBI, she handled portfolios such as surveillance, collective investment schemes and investment management.

About the Madhabi Puri Buch: Buch is an alumna of the **Indian Institute of Management (IIM)**, Ahmedabad and has a graduate degree in mathematics from St Stephen's College, New Delhi. She has nearly three decades of financial market experience.

She started her career in **1989 with ICICI Bank where she worked in corporate** finance, branding, treasury and loans, before moving to ICICI Securities. She was also a consultant to the **New Development Bank, set up by the BRICS bloc of nations**.

AWARDS & HONOR

HOYSALA TEMPLES NOMINATED FOR WORLD HERITAGE SITES



For the years 2022-2023, the Hoysala Temples of Belur, Halebid, and Somnath Pura in Karnataka will be nominated for the World Heritage List by India.

The 'Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysala' have been on UNESCO's Tentative List since April 15, 2014.

The temples bear witness to India's rich cultural and historical legacy. Vishal V Sharma, India's Permanent Representative to UNESCO, filed a nomination for the Hoysala Temples.

Lazare Eloundou, UNESCO Director of World Heritage, received the nomination. After the dossier has been submitted, it will be subjected to technical review.

The site will be evaluated in September or October 2022, and the dossier will be considered in July or August 2023.

The Hoysala temples are Archaeological Survey of India-protected structures.

Hoysala Sacred Temples In Belur:

Lord Vishnu is honored at the Chennakeshava temple. It was in the heart of an old walled town on the Yagachi River's banks.

It was built in 1117 AD and took 103 years to complete. Around 118 stone inscriptions from the 11th to the 18th centuries have been discovered on the site.

Hoysala Sacred Temples in Halebid:

The Hoysaleswara temple at Halebid was constructed in 1121 CE during the reign of Hoysala King Vishnuvardhana Hoysaleswara.

It's a Shiva-themed piece. Merchants and affluent inhabitants of Dwarasamudra funded and erected it. More than 240 wall sculptures run along the temple's outer wall, and they are well-known.

TABLEAU OF UTTAR PRADESH PICKED AS BEST TABLEAU

The tableau of Uttar Pradesh has been picked as the best tableau among the 12 States/UTs which participated in the Republic Day parade on January 26, 2022.



The theme of the tableau of Uttar Pradesh was 'One District One Product and Kashi Vishwanath Dham'. A total of 12 states and union territories had participated in the Republic Day parade on January 26.

The second place went to Karnataka for its tableau based on 'cradle of traditional handicrafts' while the third position went to Meghalaya for its tableau based on 'Meghalaya's 50 years of Statehood and its tribute to women-led cooperative societies & SHGs'.

Other winners of Republic Day parade 2022:

Best marching contingent among three Services: Indian Navy

Best marching contingent among CAPF/other auxiliary forces: Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)

The tableaux of the ministry of education and the ministry of civil aviation have been

declared as joint winners in the category of central ministries and departments.

The theme of the tableau of the ministry of education and the ministry of skill development and entrepreneurship was 'National Education Policy. The tableau of the **ministry of civil aviation was based on the theme 'Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik'.**

Popular Choice Awards

The popular choice category award was introduced for the first time in 2022, wherein the general public was invited to vote for the best marching contingents and best tableaux through the MyGov platform. The online poll was conducted between January 25-31, 2022.

List of winners:

Best state/UTs Tableau: Maharashtra (Theme 'Biodiversity and State Bio-symbols of Maharashtra'.);

Best marching contingent among three Services: Indian Air Force;

Best marching contingent among CAPE/other auxiliary forces: Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF);

Central Ministry: Ministry of Communication/Department of Posts.

N. GADKARI AWARDED WITH MADHAVRAO LIMAYE AWARD



Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari will be facilitated for the first time with the 18th late **Madhavrao Limaye**

award in the category of Karyakram Khaasdar (Efficient Member of Parliament) for the year 2020-21.

This award will be facilitated by Nashik Public Library, Sarvajanik Vachanalay. Earlier, the award was given to Karyaksham Aamdaar, an efficient Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Maharashtra.

The Sarvajanik Vachanalay annually selects one of the members of Vidhan Parishad (Lok Sabha), Vidhan Sabha (Rajya Sabha) for the Efficient MLA or Member of Parliament (MP) Award.

The award has been instituted in the memory of Limaye by his daughter Dr. Shobha Nerlikar. **The award consists of Rs 50,000 in cash and a memento.**

HILAL-E-PAKISTAN AWARDED TO BILL GATES

Bill Gates, noted philanthropist and creator of Microsoft have been awarded the **Hilal-e-Pakistan**, Pakistan's second-highest civilian honor, for his efforts to help eradicate polio in the country.



Through Gavi, the vaccine alliance, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has been a major donor towards global polio eradication.

Gates also met with Asad Umar, the Minister of Planning and Development and the NCOC's director, and Dr. Faisal Sultan, the Prime Minister's Special Assistant for Health.

He was briefed on the NCOC's function, as well as its accomplishments since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the **non-pharmaceutical initiatives taken to prevent disease spread.**

About GAVI

GAVI is a public-private global health collaboration that aims to improve vaccination access in low-income countries.

By monetary measure, Gavi distributed more than half of total donor aid for health and the majority of donor help for immunization. **GAVI is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.**

INDIA'S MOST TRUSTED PUBLIC SECTOR COMPANY

Maharatna company of the Government of India, Coal India Limited has been awarded the 'India's Most Trusted Public Sector Company' award.

Coal India received this honour at the "Energy Meet and Excellence Award" function organized by Industry Chamber "ASSOCHAM" in Kolkata.

The company got this honour at a time when **Coal India has not allowed the situation of power crisis** in the country to significantly increase coal production and supply in the last few months to meet the increased demand for coal for the power sector.

In the midst of all these difficulties, Coal India has continuously increased its coal production and supply and did not allow the shortage of coal required to generate electricity in the country.



It is worth noting that the name of **Coal India Chairman Mr Pramod Agarwal** was included in the list of "Top 40 CEOs of India" released in January 2022 by the well-known organization Start-up Lens.

Last month, **Vinay Ranjan, Director (Personnel & Industrial Relations)**, Coal India was named in Forbes India's list of "India's 100 Great People Managers, 2021".

PRAVAHINI

ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

PADMA AWARDS ANNOUNCED BY HOME MINISTRY

The Home Ministry announced the list of recipients of the Padma Awards which is one of the highest civilian awards of India. Padma Awards 2022 has been conferred upon a **total of 128 people in three categories**- Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri. The three Padma Awards are later conferred by the President of India at a ceremonial function that will be held at Rashtrapati Bhawan around March or April every year.



Some of the eminent names announced for Padma Awards 2022 are India's first Chief of Defence Staff **Bipin Rawat** who died in December 2021 in a horrific chopper crash. He has been honoured posthumously with Padma Vibhushan. **Olympic Gold Medalist Neeraj Chopra and Singer Sonu Nigam** have been awarded Padma Shri while the heads of Microsoft and Google **Satya Nadella and Sundar Pichai** have been named for Padma Bhushan. The full list of Padma Awards 2022 recipients comprises 17 Padma Bhushan, 4 Padma Vibhushan, and 107 Padma Shri Awards.

Padma Awards 2022: Padma Vibhushan

- **Prabha Atre** ---- Art ---- Maharashtra
- **Radheyshyam Khemka** (Posthumous) ---- Literature & Education ---- Uttar Pradesh
- **General Bipin Rawat** (Posthumous) ---- Civil Service ---- Uttarakhand
- **Shri Kalyan Singh** (Posthumous) ---- Public Affairs ---- Uttar Pradesh

Background: The Padma Awards are announced annually on the Republic Day (26th January). Instituted in 1954, it is one of the highest civilian honours of India.

Objective: The Award seeks to recognize achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved.

Categories: The Awards are given in three categories:

- **Padma Vibhushan** (for exceptional and distinguished service),
- **Padma Bhushan** (distinguished service of higher-order) and
- **Padma Shri** (distinguished service).

Padma Vibhushan is highest in the hierarchy of Padma Awards followed by Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.

Disciplines: The Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service etc.

Bharat Ratna

Bharat Ratna is the highest civilian award of the country. It is awarded in recognition of **exceptional service/performance of the highest order** in any field of human endeavour. It is treated on a different footing from Padma Award. The recommendations for Bharat Ratna are made by the **Prime Minister to the President of India**. The number of Bharat Ratna Awards is restricted to a maximum of three in a particular year.

73RD REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATED ON 26TH JANUARY

Republic Day (73rd) is celebrated every year on 26th January to commemorate the adoption of the Indian Constitution, which came into effect on this day in 1950. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land and citizens are expected to abide by it.

Background: India became an independent nation on 15th August, 1947 – a date thrust upon by Lord Louis Mountbatten, as it marked the second anniversary of **Japan's submission to allied powers after World War II**. After India became independent, it did not have its own constitution. The laws were based on a common law system and a modified **version of the "Government of India Act, 1935"**, which was brought in by the British government. Approximately two weeks later, a Drafting Committee was appointed to **draft the Indian Constitution with**



Dr BR Ambedkar as the chairman. The Indian Constitution was finally ready and **adopted on 26th November, 1949 (Constitution Day)**. The Constitution came into effect after two months, on 26th January, 1950. The Indian National Congress, on **19th December, 1929**, passed a historic resolution of "**Purna Swaraj**" or complete self-rule at its **Lahore session**. It was declared by the Congress party that 26th January, 1930, **will be celebrated as "Independence Day" by the Indians**. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who was the President of Congress party, hoisted the tricolor on the banks of the Ravi river in Lahore. **This day was celebrated as Purna Swaraj day for the next 17 years.** Thus, when the Constitution of India was adopted on 26th November, 1949, many considered it necessary to celebrate and enforce the document on a day associated with national pride, which was



TELEGRAM



SIGNIFICANCE OF REPUBLIC DAY

Republic day is a monumental day in Indian history because it was on this day that India adopted its own Constitution and declared its own laws of the land. The **British colonial Government of India Act (1935)** was finally replaced and the country was set to make a fresh start. Additionally, it was also on this day that the Preamble of the Constitution of India



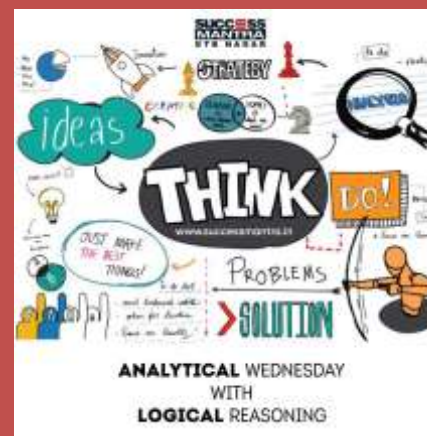
came into effect. The Preamble is largely a comprehensive statement that presents the key principles of the Constitution. On this day India shed the last relic of the **colonial system and effected a new dawn by becoming a Sovereign Democratic Republic**. The day is an occasion to commemorate the values of our democracy and Republic, to reaffirm our commitment to liberty, fraternity and equality across our society and among all our citizens. **The day celebrates the desire of a huge nation** that wants to be governed through one single constitution giving another example of India's unity in diversity.

SOVEREIGN, DEMOCRATIC & REPUBLIC

- **Sovereign:** The word 'sovereign' implies that India is neither a dependency nor a dominion of any other nation, but an independent state. There is no authority above it, **and it is free to conduct its own affairs**.
- **Democratic:** It is based on the doctrine of popular sovereignty, that is, possession of supreme power by the people.
- **Republic:** Preamble indicates that India has an **elected head called the President**. He is elected indirectly for a fixed period of five years.

CONCLUSION

Our Republic has come a long way and we must **appreciate how far successive generations have brought us**. Equally, we must appreciate that our voyage is far from complete. There is a need to recalibrate our yardstick of achievement and success - from quantity to quality; from a literate society to a knowledge society in order. **No conception of India's development** can be complete without a salute to our spirit of inclusiveness. India's pluralism is its greatest strength and its greatest example to the world. **The "Indian model" rests on a tripod of diversity, democracy and development** where we cannot choose one above the other. The nation needs to encompass all segments and all communities, so that the nation transforms into a family that invokes, encourages and celebrates the uniqueness and potential in each person.



SPORTS

WINTER OLYMPICS HOST CHINA WELCOMES 'YEAR OF TIGER'



China is celebrating the Spring Festival; it's the most important annual festival as it entered the **Lunar new "Year of the Tiger"**.

Last year was celebrated as the Lunar Year of the Ox.

According to the Chinese Zodiac calendar, the Year of the Ox has ended and the Year of the Tiger has begun from February 1, 2022, and will end on January 21, 2023.

In Chinese culture, the tiger symbolizes bravery, vigor and strength and it is believed that it can lift people from adversity and usher in final auspiciousness and peace.

Each year is named after one of 12 signs of the Chinese zodiac in a repeating cycle. This year, Spring Festival celebrations coincide with the Beijing Winter Olympics.

APPROVAL TO INCLUSION OF NEW GAMES IN 2028 OLYMPICS



The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has approved a proposal to include **Surfing, Skateboarding and Sport Climbing** for the 2028 Summer

Olympics Games that will be organized in Los Angeles, United States.

The 2028 Summer Olympics are officially known as the Games of the XXXIV Olympiad, or Los Angeles 2028 is a forthcoming event scheduled to take place from July 21 – August 6, 2028, in Los Angeles, California, US.

The 2024 Summer Olympics Games will be organized in Paris, France. With this Paris becomes only the second city to host 3 Summer Olympic games.

Surfing, Skateboarding and Sport Climbing had made their Olympic debut in Tokyo Olympics 2021 and will also be included in the "additional" list for Paris in 2024.

Boxing, weightlifting and modern pentathlon also have the chance to be included in upcoming Olympics games.

International Olympic Committee Headquarters: **Lausanne, Switzerland.**

International Olympic Committee President: **Thomas Bach.**

International Olympic Committee Founded: **23 June 1894, Paris, France.**

AHMEDABAD IPL TEAM TO BE KNOWN AS GUJARAT TITANS

Gujarat Titans is the official name of the new Ahmedabad franchise owned by CVC Capital as Hardik Pandya is all set to lead the franchise in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2022.



The naming of the Ahmedabad franchise comes days after Lucknow, owned by RPSG Group, announced its official name as Lucknow SuperGiants. The Lucknow team will be led by KL Rahul.

Debuting in the 15th season of the IPL, the Gujarat Titans will pay tribute to the state's rich cricketing legacy, which has seen it produce countless Indian international cricket legends over the years.

The franchise is inspired by the opportunity to represent and build on this deep cricketing

heritage, as well as build on its future success on the pitch.

Gujarat Titans drafted Hardik Pandya as their captain for Rs 15 crore and Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan for Rs 15 crore. They also got young India opener, Shubman Gill, for Rs 8 crore.

The Titans will head into the mega auction with a budget of Rs 52 crore. **The Gujarat Titans brought on board former England cricketer Vikram Solanki as the Director of Cricket.**

Ashish Nehra will be the head coach of the franchise while former World Cup-winning coach and **South Africa opener Gary Kirsten will be the Head of Cricket Operations and the batting coach for IPL 2022.**

WORLD'S THIRD LARGEST CRICKET STADIUM



The foundation stone for the world's third-largest cricket stadium was laid by Sourav Ganguly.

The foundation stone for the world's third-largest cricket stadium was set in Jaipur by **Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and BCCI President Sourav Ganguly.**

The International Cricket Venue in Jaipur will be India's second-largest and the world's third-largest cricket stadium.

The Rajasthan Cricket Academy (RCA) will construct the new international stadium on 100 acres of land in Jaipur, near the Jaipur-Delhi bypass. **A total of 75,000 people will be able to sit in the stadium.**

With a capacity of 132,000 spectators, **Narendra Modi Stadium (formerly Motera Stadium) in Ahmedabad is now the world's largest stadium.**

The Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) in Australia is the second-largest stadium, with a capacity of 1,00,024 spectators.

WINTER OLYMPICS GAMES CONCLUDED IN BEIJING

The closing ceremony of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games was held on February 20, 2022, at National Stadium (known as the Bird's Nest) in Beijing.



The **2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, China**, was held from 4 to 20 February 2022. The Games featured a record 109 events across 15 disciplines in 7 sports.

The venues of the Games were distributed across three zones- Beijing, Yanqing and Zhangjiakou. **The Presidency of the Games was formally handed over to Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo, in Italy, to host the 2026 Winter Olympics.**

The top country in Winter Olympics 2022 in Beijing:

Norway has topped the medal table for the second successive Winter Olympics, winning a total of 37 medals, including 16 golds. This is a new record for the most gold medals won at a single Winter Olympics.

Germany finished second with 27 medals overall, **while the host nation China finished third with 15 medals.**

India at the 2022 Winter Olympics:

The Indian team at the game was represented by **one male alpine skier, Arif Khan.**

He was the **country's flag bearer during the opening ceremony**, meanwhile, a volunteer was the flag bearer during the closing ceremony. India could not win any medal at the games.

MUMBAI HOSTING PRESTIGIOUS IOC SESSION OF 2023



The city of Mumbai will be hosting the 2023 **International Olympic Committee session**.

This event will see the election for the **2030 Winter Olympics host country** and the sports programme for the Olympic Games scheduled in Los Angeles for the year 2028. This **IOC session will be held either in the months of May or June the next year**.

The announcement confirms that India will **host the prestigious IOC meeting for the first time since the year 1983**. This will help in bringing in engagement between the Olympic Movement and the youths of the nation.

As India gets to host this session, India will be front-runners to host the 2030 Youth Olympics and can push for the 2036 Summer Olympics.

What is an IOC session?

The annual gathering of the members of the IOC, which consists of 101 voting members and 45 honorary members, is known as an IOC session.

Decisions and discussions on key aspects of the **worldwide Olympic movement**, such as the approval of any change of the Olympic Charter, the election of IOC members, **and the selection of the Olympic host city are done in the IOC sessions**.



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DATES & DAYS

WORLD WETLANDS DAY OBSERVED ON FEBRUARY 2ND



World Wetlands Day is observed every year on February 2 all over the world. 2022 marks 51 years of the Convention on Wetlands.

The international theme for World Wetlands Day 2022 is 'Wetlands Action for People and Nature'. The day aims to raise awareness about the crucial role played by wetlands for people and our planet.

Why is it celebrated annually on the 2nd of February?

The day is celebrated to mark the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on February 2, 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. World Wetlands Day was first celebrated in 1997.

Defining Wetlands: Wetlands are a habitat for a dense variety of plant and animal species and also rich with the biodiversity which is declining according to the researcher's estimates.

These are the land areas that are saturated or flooded with water either perennially or seasonally.

Types of wetlands:

Coastal wetlands: mangroves, estuaries, saltwater marshes, lagoons etc.

Inland wetlands: marshes, fens, lakes, swamps, rivers, floodplains and ponds.

Human-made wetlands: Fish ponds, saltpans, and rice paddies.

WORLD CANCER DAY OBSERVED ON 4TH FEBRUARY

World Cancer Day is observed every year globally on 4th February by the Union for International Cancer Control.



By raising worldwide awareness, improving education and catalysing personal, collective and government action, we are all working together to reimagine a world where millions of preventable cancer deaths are saved and access to life-saving cancer treatment and care is equitable for all – **no matter who you are or where you live.**

So this year's World Cancer Day's theme, "Close the Care Gap", is all about raising awareness of this equity gap that affects almost everyone, in high as well as low- and middle-income countries, and is costing lives.

History of the day: The day came into existence on February 4, 2000, during the World Cancer Conference for the New Millennium in Paris, France.

Every year since then, people across the world observe World Cancer Day with a different theme to improve the quality of lives of cancer patients and to continue spreading awareness on cancer, its prevention and treatment.

INDIAN COAST GUARD (ICG)'S 46TH RAISING DAY

On 1st February 2022, Indian Coast Guard (ICG) celebrated its 46th Raising Day.



ICG was established in August 1978 by the Coast Guard Act, 1978 as an independent armed force of India.

As the fourth largest Coast Guard in the world, it has played a significant role in securing the Indian coasts and enforcing regulations in the maritime zones of India.

It is an Armed Force, Search and Rescue and Maritime Law Enforcement agency under the Ministry of Defence. It is headquartered in New Delhi.

The concept of forming ICG came into being after the 1971 war. The blueprint for a multidimensional Coast Guard was conceived by the visionary Rustamji Committee.

For effective command and control, the Maritime Zones of India are divided into five Coast Guard Regions, namely, North-West, West, East, North-East and Andaman & Nicobar, with the respective Regional Headquarters located at Gandhinagar, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Port Blair.

WORLD UNANI DAY OBSERVED ON FEBRUARY 11TH



World Unani Day is observed on February 11 every year to mark the birth anniversary of **"Hakim Ajmal Khan"**, an eminent Indian Unani

physician.

The first Unani Day was celebrated in 2017 at the Central Research Institute of Unani Medicine (CRIUM), Hyderabad.

The main objective is to spread awareness and action about healthcare delivery through the Unani system of medicine worldwide through its preventive and curative philosophy.

What is the Unani system of medicine?

The Unani system of medicine has a long and impressive record in India. **It was introduced in India by the Arabs and Persians sometime around the eleventh century.**

It has the largest number of Unani educational, research and health care institutions. **The Unani system of medicine originated in Greece. Its foundation was laid by Hippocrates.**

About Hakim Ajmal Khan: Hakim Ajmal Khan was an eminent Indian Unani physician who was a versatile genius, a great scholar, a social reformer, a noted freedom fighter, an Unani medical educationist and founder of scientific research in Unani System of Medicine. **He was one of the founders of the Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi.**

WORLD PULSES DAY OBSERVED ON 10TH FEBRUARY

World Pulses Day was observed on February 10, to recognise Pulses as a global food.



On World Pulses Day, **people make efforts in raising awareness on the importance of Pulses in sustainable food production.**

The UN General Assembly had decided to dedicate this day to Pulses in 2019, with the **objective of increasing awareness and access to pulses worldwide.**

Theme of World Pulses Day 2022

World Pulses Day 2022 was celebrated under the theme **"Pulses to empower youth in achieving sustainable agri-food systems".**

History of World Pulses Day: **The UN General Assembly (UNGA) recognised the value of pulses in 2013.** It adopted 2016 as the International Year of Pulses (IYP).

The UN food and agriculture organization (FAO), increased public awareness on **nourishing and environmental benefits of pulses.**

As the International Year of Pulses succeeded, Burkina Faso (a country in West Africa) proposed to celebrate World Pulses Day. In 2019, UNGA announced February 10 as World Pulses Day.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF WOMEN & GIRLS IN SCIENCE



International Day of Women and Girls in Science is observed globally on 11 February.

The 7th International Day of

Women and Girls in Science Assembly, taking place on 11 February 2022, aims to recognize the role of women and girls in science, not only as beneficiaries but also as agents of change, including in view of accelerating progress towards the achievement of SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation).

The Day is implemented by UNESCO and UN-Women in collaboration with institutions and civil society partners that aim to promote women and girls in science.

The 2022 theme of the Day is “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Water Unites Us”.

History of the day: In December 2015, the United Nations adopted a resolution to celebrate February 11 as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

In 2016 is the first time it was celebrated. The idea behind this day is to ensure equal participation and involvement of women and girls in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY DAY OBSERVED ON FEB 12TH

India celebrated National Productivity Day on February 12, 2020 which provides for planning time, skills, energy, intelligence,

resources, and opportunities in order to achieve goals.

National Productivity Day is organised by National Productivity Council (NPC), with the objective of stimulating and promoting productivity and quality awareness in all sectors of India.



Productivity Week: National Productivity Council will celebrate “National Productivity Week” from February 12 to 18, 2022.

Theme of the day: **National Productivity Council** will celebrate productivity week under the theme “Self-Reliance through Productivity.”

WORLD RADIO DAY CELEBRATED ON 13TH FEB

World Radio Day is celebrated on 13 February each year to recognize radio as a powerful medium, which brings people together from every corner of the globe, to promote diversity and help build a more peaceful and inclusive world.

The day was Proclaimed in 2011 by the Member States of UNESCO and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012 as an International Day, February 13 became World Radio Day (WRD).

On the occasion of **World Radio Day 2022**, UNESCO calls on radio stations to celebrate the Day through three sub-themes:

Trust in radio journalism: Produce independent and high-quality content; **Trust and accessibility:** Take care of your audience; **Trust and viability of radio stations:** Ensure competitiveness.

INTERNATIONAL EPILEPSY DAY OBSERVED ON 14TH FEB

International Epilepsy Day is observed every year on the Second Monday of February across the world. In 2022, International Epilepsy Day falls on February 14, 2022.

International Epilepsy Day **seeks to raise awareness and educate the general public on the true facts about epilepsy** and the urgent need for improved treatment, better care, and greater investment in research.

The day is organised jointly by the **International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) and the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE)** to raise awareness about epilepsy and highlight the kinds of problems faced by victims, their friends and family.

Epilepsy is a neurological disorder that makes a person go **through sudden and recurrent episodes of sensory disturbances**.

INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

The **International Mother Language Day 2022** is being observed on February 21. The day is observed every year to promote awareness on linguistic and cultural diversity.

The day raises awareness with the aim of promoting multilingualism, that is, the ability to **speak multiple languages or use multiple languages**.

It is part of a broader initiative of promoting preservation and protection of all languages that are used by peoples across the world, **as adopted by the UN General Assembly**.

History of the day: The international mother language day was an initiative of Bangladesh. **It was later approved at the 1999 UNESCO General Conference**. Since then, it has been celebrated annually.

First ever International Mother Language Day was observed in 2000. This day was **first announced by UNESCO on November 17, 1999**. In 2002, it was formally recognised by the United Nations General Assembly.

Theme for the
The theme of International Language Day **“Using technology multilingual learning: Challenges and opportunities”**.



day:
Mother 2022 is

for

The theme raises the potential role of technology in advancing multilingual education and supports development of quality learning and teaching for all.

NATIONAL SCIENCE DAY OBSERVED ON 28TH FEBRUARY

On 28 February, every year **National Science Day** is celebrated to recognize the contributions of scientists towards the nation's development.

On 28 February important discovery in



1928, an the field

spectroscopy was made by **renowned Indian Physicist Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman**. Later, this discovery was named after him i.e. the Raman Effect.

In 1930, CV Raman received the Nobel Prize in Physics for his work. **The theme of National Science Day 2022**

‘Integrated Approach in Science and Technology for a Sustainable Future’ is the theme for this year's National Science Day.

History of this day: In 1986, the National Council for Science and Technology Communication asked the **Indian government to declare February 28** as the National Science Day.

The day was **named National Science Day after the government** accepted the proposal.

On February 28, 1987, the first National Science Day was observed in India.

About CV Raman: CV Raman was an Indian physicist and is known for his work in light scattering under the fields of physics.

He and his student K. S. Krishnan, using a spectrograph developed by Raman, discovered that when light passes through a transparent medium, the frequency, and wavelength of the deflected light change.

They named this phenomenon “*modified scattering*” and was later termed the Raman scattering or Raman effect.

In 1930, CV Raman received the Nobel Prize in Physics for this discovery and was Asia’s first person to receive a Nobel Prize in science.

POLIO NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION DAY 2022

In 2022, the Government of India has organised the **Polio National Immunization Day 2022 (NID)** (also known as “Polio Ravivar”) on February 27, 2022, to give two drops of oral polio vaccine (OPV) to every child in the country under the age of five.

Over 15 crore children will be covered under the drive across all 36 States and UTs in 735 districts.

The **National Polio Immunization Drive for 2022 was launched by Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Mansukh Mandavia** on February 26, 2022.

Polio history in India: In India, one nationwide NID and two **Sub-National Immunization Day (SNIDs)** for polio is held every year to maintain population immunity against wild poliovirus and to sustain its polio-free status.

India was removed from the list of polio-endemic countries in 2012 and in 2013 the entire Southeast Asia Region was declared Polio free. **The last case of wild poliovirus reported in India was on 13th January 2011.**

WORLD NGO DAY OBSERVED ON 27TH FEBRUARY

Every year on February 27, **people all over the world celebrate World NGO Day** to honour the work and contributions of various NGOs. NGO stands for Non-Governmental Organization, and it is a type of organization that works to improve society.

This day recognizes, honours, and celebrates non-profit and non-governmental organizations, as well as people who volunteer their time and effort to make society a better place to live.

History of this day

In 2010, 12 countries from **Baltic Sea Forum** in

Vilnius, Lithuania, recognized and proposed World NGO Day. **Denmark, Belarus, Finland, Estonia, Iceland, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, Poland, Sweden, and Norway** were among the Baltic Sea NGO Forum’s members.

On February 27, 2014, **Finland’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs** sponsored the first global inaugural event of World NGO Day in Helsinki, Finland.

The heads of **UNESCO, UNOPS, the European Union, UNDP**, the Nordic Council, and other international organizations were among the international guests.



ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION: 24TH JAN

- The **International Day of Education** is observed on **January 24**, annually. Year 2022 marks the fourth year of celebration. The day was observed with the theme- '**Changing Course, Transforming Education**'.
- **History of the day:** The International Education Day was proclaimed by "**United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**" in December 2018. It was proclaimed to mark the significance of education in ensuring peace and development.
- **UNGA resolution:** The resolution to observe '**International Day of Education**' was authored by 59 member states. It demonstrated the unwavering political will for supporting transformative actions for equitable, inclusive, and quality education for all.



NATIONAL EDUCATION DAY

It has been **observed every year on 11th November, since 2008 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad**. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the first Union Education Minister of India. He was a freedom fighter, scholar and eminent educationist. He was a key architect of Independent India who was responsible for setting up apex education bodies like **All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and University Grants Commission (UGC)**. He was posthumously awarded Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award in 1992. Azad supported the **Non-Cooperation Movement (1920-22) started by Gandhiji** and entered the Indian National Congress in 1920. In 1923, he was elected as the president of Indian National Congress. At an age of 35, he became the youngest person to serve as the President of the Indian National Congress. In 1947, **he became the first education minister of free India** and remained at this post till his death in 1958. In his tenure, he did tremendous work for the upliftment of the country. The first IIT, IISc, School of Planning and Architecture and the University Grants Commission were established under his tenure as the education minister.

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA): UNGA is one among the **six principal organs of the United Nations (UN)**, serving as the main policymaking, and representative organ of the UN. The powers, composition, procedures and functions of UNGA are set out in Chapter IV of the United Nations Charter. It is responsible for the UN budget. UNGA is the only UN organ, **where all the member states have equal representation**.

Members of UNGA: All the 193 members of UN are members of UNGA, besides Holy See and Palestine as observer states. **UNGA may grant observer status to an entity or international organization**. Observer status entitles them to participate in work of UNGA, though with limitations.

GOVT. INITIATIVES FOR SMOOTH CONDUCT OF E-LEARNING

Several initiatives have been taken to enable online education in India, such as:

- **E-PG Pathshala:** An initiative of the Ministry of Human Resource Development to provide e-content for studies.
- **SWAYAM:** it provides for an integrated platform for online courses.
- **NEAT:** It aims to use Artificial Intelligence to make learning more personalized and customized as per the requirements of the learner



Other initiatives include:

- **National Project on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL)**, National Knowledge Network (NKN), and National Academic Depository (NAD), among others. **PRAGYATA:** The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) released guidelines on digital education titled PRAGYATA.
- **Under the PRAGYATA guidelines**, only 30 minutes of screen time per day for interacting with parents is recommended for kindergarten, nursery and pre-school. Schools can hold live online classes for a maximum of 1.5 hours per day for Classes 1-8, and 3 hours per day for Classes 9-12.

EDUCATION IN INDIA: CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

Part IV of Indian Constitution, Article 45 and Article 39 (f) of Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP), has a provision for state-funded as well as equitable and accessible education. **The 42nd Amendment to the Constitution** in 1976 moved education from the State to the Concurrent List. The education policies by the Central government provide a broad direction and state governments are expected to follow it. However, it is not mandatory, for instance TamilNadu does not follow the three language formula prescribed by the first education policy in 1968. **The 86th Amendment in 2002 made education an enforceable right under Article 21-A.**

RELATED LAWS

Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 aims to provide primary education to all children aged 6 to 14 years and enforces education as a Fundamental Right. It also mandates 25% reservation for disadvantaged sections of the society.

OTHER IMPORTANT DAY OBSERVED ON 24TH JANUARY

NATIONAL GIRL CHILD DAY

National Girl Child Day is observed every year on January 24th. The day is observed to spread awareness regarding the inequalities faced by girl children in Indian society and also to promote the rights of the girl child and the importance of **female education, health and nutrition**. National Girl Child Day is an initiative taken by the **Union Ministry of Women and Child Development**. The day is commemorated by different ministries and organisations by organising different events to raise awareness on the inequalities faced by girls and importance of their empowerment. **The National Girl Child Day 2022 theme is yet to be announced.** The National Girl Child Day 2021 Theme was 'Digital Generation, Our Generation' and the 2020 theme was '**My voice, our common**

future. National Girl Child Day 2022 celebration will be observed under the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

National Girl Child Day History

The **National Girl Child Day** was first observed on **January 24, 2008** by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. It was decided to observe the day to tackle issues related to inequalities that girls face in society. The day is in line with all the campaigns and programmes launched by the Indian government for female children like **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Save the Girl Child and other programmes** like free and subsidised education and reservation in colleges and universities.

RELATED TOPICS TO BE READ

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD 2021

International Girl Child Day is observed every year on October 11. It is an observance day by the United Nations that aims at amplifying the voices of the young girls all around the world as well as increasing awareness about the issues that are faced by them. **Girl Child Day provides an opportunity** to take note of day-to-day discrimination and how it impacts the growth of young girls, particularly in underdeveloped and developing nations. **World Girl Child Day 2021 supports more opportunities** for the girls as well as increases awareness about gender equality in various areas **including, nutrition, education, medical care, legal rights, and protection from discrimination.** The theme for international Girls Day 2021 is 'Digital Generation, Our Generation'. The theme for Girl Child Day focuses on the gender digital divide in devices, connectivity, and their skills, use, and jobs.



International Girls Child Day History

At the **World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995**, the countries unanimously adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which was the most progressive blueprint ever for advancing the rights of not only women but girls. The **Beijing Declaration is known to be the first to specifically call out the girls' rights.** Later, the United Nations General Assembly on December 19, 2011, adopted the resolution to declare **October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child** in order to recognize girls' rights and the unique challenges that the girls face all around the world.

ABOUT GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE

The **theme of International Day of the Girl Child 2021** highlights the gender digital divide which has been affecting the major population of young girls all over the world. As per the United Nations, while the pandemic has accelerated the digital platforms for learning, connecting, and earning, some 2.2 billion people below 25 still do not have internet access at home. However, the **gender digital divide is much more about connectivity.** According to the UN, girls are also less likely than boys to use their own devices as well as gain access to tech-related jobs and skills.



Young Girls changing the world

- **Malala Yousafzai** - Shot in the head on a school bus by the Taliban, Malala Yousafzai was just 15-years old when she faced the tragic incident. Raising the voice for supporting young girls' education in Pakistan, **Malala came on Taliban's radar** after daring to speak against the ban on girl education. Her story is known across the world.
- **Great Thunberg** - A teenage climate activist from Sweden, **Greta Thunberg** is known for not mincing her words and opinions on world leaders and their take on climate change. She came into the limelight after starting a school strike for the climate outside the Swedish Parliament and eventually became a global phenomenon which further helped in bringing the problem of climate change and global warming to the UN table.
- **Thandiwe Abdullah** - Thandiwe Abdullah, by her 17th birthday, already had an impressive list of achievements. She co-founded the Black Lives Matter Youth Vanguard and helped in creating the Black Lives Matter in-school program, which was subsequently adopted by the National Education Association.
- **Licpriya Kangujam** - She is a child environment activist from India and is one of the youngest climate activists globally. Licpriya Kangujam addressed the World Leaders at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2019 and asked them to take immediate climate action.

RELATED SCHEME: BETI BACHAO, BETI PADHAO

It was launched in January 2015 with the aim to address sex selective abortion and the declining child sex ratio which was at 918 girls for every 1,000 boys in 2011. This is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource Development. The programme is being implemented across 405 districts in the country.

Other Initiatives for Girl Children

- **UJJAWALA**: To tackle the problem of trafficking, it is a Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of Trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-Integration of Victims of Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation.
- **Kishore Health Card**: To record the information about the weight, height, Body Mass Index (BMI) of Adolescent Girls (AGs). These health cards for AGs are maintained at the AnganWadi centres (AWCs).
- Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG).
- Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, etc.

REPORT & INDEXES

INDIA PRESS FREEDOM REPORT 2021

The India Press Freedom Report 2021 was recently released by the **Rights and Risks Analysis Group**.

According to the report, 13 media houses and newspapers were targeted in the country, 108 journalists were attacked, and 6 journalists were killed.

Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Tripura topped the list of States and Union Territories where journalists and media houses were targeted in 2021.

India Press Freedom Report 2021:

The highest number of journalists or media organisations targeted was in J&K (25), followed by Uttar Pradesh (23), Madhya Pradesh (16), Tripura (15), Delhi (8), Bihar (6), Assam (5), Haryana and Maharashtra (4 each), Goa and Manipur (3 each), Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal (2 each), and Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Kerala (1 each),” the report stated.

GAUTAM ADANI BECOMES ASIA'S RICHEST PERSON



In accordance with the **Bloomberg Billionaires Index**, **Gautam Adani net worth reached \$88.5 billion overtaking Mukesh Ambani's \$87.9 billion** becoming Asia's richest person as on 8th February 2022.

With a nearly \$12 billion jump in his personal wealth, he has become the 10th richest person in the world.

Globally Elon Musk was named as the world's richest person with a total net worth of \$235 Billion.

He was followed by Jeff Bezos with a total net worth of \$183 Billion & Bernard Arnault with a total net worth of \$168 Billion.

INDIA RANKED 46TH IN EIU'S DEMOCRACY INDEX

India has ranked **46th position in the 2021 Democracy Index's global ranking**, according to The Economist Intelligence Unit. With the highest score of 9.75, Norway topped the Democracy Index 2021 by Economist Intelligence.



The list was published on February 10, 2022. India scored **6.91 to rank 46th on the list**. Our neighbour Pakistan has been placed further below in the hybrid regime with a rank of 104.

Top 5 countries in the list:

Norway: In the full democracy segment, Norway topped the charts. It had an overall score of 9.75.

New Zealand: New Zealand ranked second in the Democracy Index 2021 with an overall score of 9.37.

Finland: The beautiful nation Finland came in at number three on the Democracy Index 2021 with an overall score of 9.27.

Sweden: Sweden slipped from the third position last year to the fourth rank, this year. It had an overall score of 9.26.

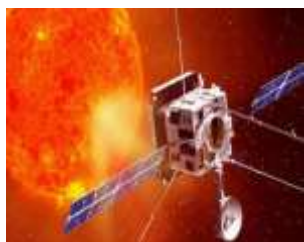
- Rank 1- United States
Rank 2- United Kingdom
Rank 3- Germany
Rank 4- Sweden
Rank 5U- France

Online doubt resolution

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

ADITYA-L1 MISSION EXPECTED TO BE LAUNCHED BY ISRO

In the year 2022, ISRO is expected to launch the "Aditya-L1 mission" to investigate the sun.



The L1 Lagrange point will be the landing site for the Aditya-L1 mission. After AstroSat, this will be ISRO's second space-based astronomy mission.

In 2015, AstroSat was launched. Aditya-L1 was originally known as Aditya 1 and was designed to only observe the solar corona.

Aditya L1, a solar probe, will be launched on a Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) XL carrying seven payloads or experiments.

Objectives: The Sun's corona (visible and near-infrared rays), chromosphere (ultraviolet), photosphere (soft and hard X-ray), solar winds and flares, solar emissions, and Coronal Mass Ejections will all be studied by the Aditya L1 mission (CMEs).

It will also image the Sun 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Challenges: The greatest hurdle for the Aditya L1 mission is the Sun's distance from Earth, which is around 15 crore kilometers.

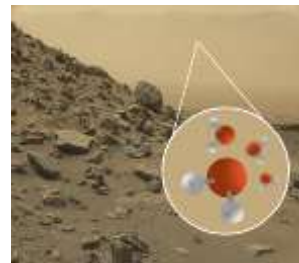
Previous ISRO flights' payloads have mostly remained immobile in space due to a number of dangers. However, Aditya L1 has certain moving parts, which raises the chances of a collision.

WATER FOUND ON MARS: STUDY OF NASA

According to the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, Mars had water two billion years ago.

However, all of the water in the world has evaporated today.

MRO confirmed this with the help of salt deposits on the planet's surface. The MRO discovered that water had recently flowed on the planet.



This begs the question of how long microbial life would have been able to thrive on the planet.

NASA's Odyssey discovered sodium chloride deposits that covered tens to hundreds of square kilometers. In the year 2001, something was discovered. In 2008, salt minerals were discovered.

Discovery: CRISM was used by the MRO to map the salts in the planet's southern hemisphere. Compact Reconnaissance Imaging Spectrometer is the acronym for Compact Reconnaissance Imaging Spectrometer.

There are several craters on Mars. These craters were used by MRO to date the terrains. The terrain was younger if the craters were fewer in number.

Salt deposits were discovered by the MRO along the small depressions of the volcanic plains. The depth of these deposits was less than three meters. They were only 2.3 billion years old when they were formed.

1ST COUNTRY TO ADMINISTER DNA VACCINE OF COVID-19

India has become the first country in the world to administer a DNA vaccine against COVID-19.



The ZyCoV-D which is the World's first plasmid DNA vaccine has been produced by Ahmedabad-based vaccine

manufacturer Zydus Cadila and it was administered for the first time in Patna.

It is a Painless and Needleless vaccine given at intervals of 28 days and 56 days. **It is the second India-made vaccine to get emergency authorization in India after Bharat Biotech's Covaxin.**

The Indian government approved emergency use authorisation for Zydus Cadila's DNA vaccine earlier this year, citing initial results from Phase III clinical trials that showed approximately 66 per cent efficacy for symptomatic cases.

ISS TO DISCONTINUE OPERATIONS FROM 2031



According to NASA, **the International Space Station will continue its operation until 2031** and then crash into an uninhabited area in the Pacific Ocean

known as Point Nemo.

It will be replaced with three free-flying space stations to continue the work after ISS's retirement. **NASA also selected Houston-based Axiom Space to provide the ISS's first commercial module.**

For over two decades, **the International Space Station (ISS) has been orbiting Earth at a speed of about eight kilometres per second**, while an international crew of astronauts and cosmonauts onboard conducted groundbreaking scientific investigations that have thrown open the doors for deep space exploration.

But now **NASA has announced that the spacecraft will cease operations in 2031**, after which it will fall out of orbit and plunge into the waters of the South Pacific Ocean.

History of International Space Station:

The International Space Station was the brainchild of former US President Ronald Reagan, who in 1984 proposed building a permanently inhabited spacecraft in cooperation with other countries.

In 1998, the first piece of the space station, a control module, was launched into space onboard a Russian rocket.

About two weeks later, a crew onboard the US' Endeavour space shuttle attached the control module with another part, the Unity node.

PSLV-C52 MISSION TO BE LAUNCHED BY ISRO

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to launch its first mission of 2022 is slated on February 14, 2022.



The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C52) is scheduled to launch on February 14, from the first launch pad of Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.

It will orbit an earth observation satellite (EOS-04).

About PSLV-C52

PSLV-C52 has a weight of 1710 kg. **It will orbit around EOS-04 into a sun synchronous polar orbit of 529 km.** This mission will carry two small satellites as co-passengers, namely,

Student satellite (INSPIRESat-1) – This satellite has been developed by Indian Institute of Space Science & Technology (IIST) in collaboration with Laboratory of

Atmospheric & Space Physics at University of Colorado.

FIRST TAIWAN PRESENCE IN ISRO: INSPIRESAT-1



On February 14, 2022, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched a satellite called "INSPIRESat-1".

INSPIRESat-1 has jointly been developed by a team of international researchers including from universities of India, US, Taiwan, and Singapore.

INSPIRESat-1 stands for International Research & Teaching Satellite Project satellite one.

This satellite has been developed by Indian Institute of Space Science & Technology (IIST) in association with Laboratory of Atmospheric & Space Physics at University of Colorado, Boulder.

It was launched onboard Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle PSLV-C52.

INSPIRESat-1 is a student satellite. Mission life of the satellite is one year. It will study orbital heating of the sun and about dynamics of the ionosphere.

NORTH KOREA TEST-FIRED BALLISTIC MISSILE



On February 27, 2022, North Korea fired a suspected ballistic missile. It was the first test since a nuclear-armed country conducted a record number of launches in January 2022.

During the firing, the missile flew to an altitude of about 390 miles and a range of 190 miles.

According to Japan, this launch was part of "frequent launches" since the beginning of 2022. It is of the view that North Korea was threatening the security of Japan and the international community.

Nuclear Weapons Program of North Korea

North Korea has a **military nuclear weapons program**. As of early 2020, it is estimated to have an arsenal of around 30 to 40 nuclear weapons as well as sufficient production of fissile material for six to seven nuclear weapons per year.

The country has also stockpiled a significant quantity of biological and chemical weapons.

It withdrew from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of nuclear weapons in 2003. Since 2006, it has been conducting a series of six nuclear tests and prompting the imposition of sanctions.

On October 10, 2020, North Korea unveiled a massive **intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)**, during a military parade for the 75th anniversary of the Workers' Party of Korea. It is believed to be one of the world's largest road-mobile ballistic missiles.

Non-Proliferation Treaty: It is an international treaty, formulated with the objective of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons & weapons technology, **promoting cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy**, and furthering the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament.

This treaty was negotiated by the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament, between 1965 and 1968.

COCHIN AIRPORT TO BECOME POWER POSITIVE

The **Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL)** is set to commission a 12 MWp solar power plant on March 6 near Payyannur in **Kannur district of Kerala**.

With the commissioning of the new solar power plant, CIAL will get the status as a power positive airport, **from its current status of being a power-neutral airport.**

In 2015, CIAL became the world's first airport to be fully powered by solar energy.

About the power plant: The power plant boasts of **12 megawatt capacity on a 35-acre land where CIAL** introduced a concept of terrain-based installation where the geographical characteristics of the area are retained and no changes are made in the gradient of the land.

CHINA'S RECORD LAUNCH OF 22 SATELLITES



On February 27, 2022, **China launched** a Long March-8 rocket to **place 22 satellites in space.**

With the launch, **China set a domestic record for the most spacecraft** launched by a single rocket.

The rocket blasted off at the **Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site** in southern Hainan Province. It sent the satellites into pre-set

orbits. It marked the 409th flight of Long March carrier rockets.

These satellites will be used for commercial remote sensing services, forest fire prevention, marine environment monitoring, and disaster mitigation.

Long March 8

Long March-8 rocket is an orbital launch vehicle. It has been developed by China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology. It can launch up to 5000 kg into **Sun-synchronous orbit (SSO) with an altitude of 700 km.**

It is based on the **Long March 7 with its first stage and two boosters.**

It also uses the existing liquid hydrogen burning third stage of Long March 3A/3B/3C and 7A as its second stage. First flight of the Long March 8 was launched on December 22, 2020 from Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site.

Long March 7: Long March 7 is a Chinese liquid-fuelled launch vehicle belonging to the Long March family. It has been developed by **China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CAST).**

Its inaugural flight was made on June 25, 2016. It was designed as a **replacement for the Long March 2F.**

ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

CHANDRAYAAN-3 MISSION OF ISRO

Recently, the **Department of Science** has stated that India plans to execute the **Chandrayaan-3 mission** in August 2022.

Chandrayaan 3 Mission

The **Chandrayaan 3 mission** is the **third planned lunar exploration mission** by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). It follows **ISRO's Chandrayaan 2 mission**, which successfully deployed its orbiter around the Moon but failed to soft-land its lander and deploys its rover after a last-minute glitch in soft landing guidance software. **Similar to Chandrayaan 2 mission**, Chandrayaan-3 will also include a modified lander and rover. The mission will not include an orbiter, due to the success of the Chandrayaan 2 orbiter. It will use the Chandrayaan 2 orbiter to communicate with the earth.



WHAT IS GSLV-Mk 3?

Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark-III was developed by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), is a three-stage vehicle, designed to launch communication satellites into geostationary orbit. It has a **mass of 640 tonnes that can accommodate up to 8,000 kg payload to Low Earth Orbit (LEO)** and 4000 kg payload to GTO (Geo-Synchronous Transfer Orbit).

WHAT IS GEOSYNCHRONOUS ORBIT?

Geosynchronous satellites are launched into orbit in the same direction the Earth is spinning and can have any inclination. **When the satellite is in orbit at a specific altitude** (approximately 36,000km above the Earth's surface), it will exactly match the rotation of the Earth. Geostationary orbits fall in the same category as geosynchronous orbits, but with that one special quality of being parked over the equator. **In the case of geostationary satellites, the Earth's force of gravity** is exactly enough to provide acceleration required for circular motion.

Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO): To attain geostationary or geosynchronous earth orbits, a spacecraft is first launched into a **Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit**. From the GTO the spacecraft uses its engines to shift to **geostationary or geosynchronous orbit**.

ISRO'S MOON EXPLORATION

- **Chandrayaan:** The Chandrayaan project began in 2007 with an agreement between **India's space agency ISRO and Russia's ROSCOSMOS** for mutual cooperation. However, the mission was postponed in January 2013 and rescheduled to 2016 as **Russia was unable to develop the lander on time**.
- **Findings:** Confirmed presence of lunar water. Evidence of lunar caves



formed by an ancient lunar lava flow. **Past tectonic activity was found on the lunar surface.** The faults and fractures discovered could be features of past interior tectonic activity coupled with meteorite impacts.

- **Chandrayaan-2 is India's 2nd mission to the moon** and comprises a fully indigenous Orbiter, **Lander (Vikram) and Rover (Pragyan)**. The Rover Pragyan is housed inside Vikram lander.

LUNAR MISSION OR EXPLORATIONS BY DIFFERENT NATIONS

ARTEMIS PROGRAM OF NASA

With the **Artemis program**, NASA wishes to demonstrate new technologies, capabilities and business approaches that will ultimately be needed for the future exploration of Mars. It stands for **Acceleration, Reconnection, Turbulence, and Electrodynamics of the Moon's Interaction with the Sun**. The program is divided into three parts:

- **Artemis I** is most likely to be launched 2021 and involves an uncrewed flight to test the Space Launch System (SLS) and Orion spacecraft.
- **Artemis II** will be the first crewed flight test and is targeted for 2023.
- **Artemis III** will land astronauts on the Moon's South Pole in 2024.

NASA & THE MOON

The **US began trying to put people in space as early as 1961**. Eight years later, on 20th July, 1969, Neil Armstrong along with **Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin became the first human to step on the Moon** as part of the Apollo 11 mission. Apart from the purpose of space exploration, NASA's endeavour to send Americans to the Moon again is to demonstrate American leadership in space and to establish a strategic presence on the Moon, while expanding the US global economic impact.

UAE'S MISSION TO MOON

- Recently, the **United Arab Emirates (UAE) has decided to send an unmanned spacecraft to the moon** in 2024.
- **Name:** The rover would be named Rashid after **Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum**, one of the original founding rulers of the UAE. Rover is a vehicle for exploring the surface of a planet or moon.
- **Aim:** The rover will explore the surface of the moon in areas that have not been explored previously by **human missions such as NASA's Apollo**. Participating in the moon exploration is part of the UAE's space strategy to build new knowledge capabilities and advance the country's scientific, technical and research environment.
- **Fourth Nation:** If successful in 2024, the UAE could become the fourth nation to land a spacecraft on the moon after the USA, the **former Soviet Union and China**. India, Israel and Japan have tried but failed in landing a spacecraft on the moon.
- **UAE's Space Mission:** In July 2020, the UAE launched a Mars probe named Amal (Hope) from Japan, marking the **Arab world's first interplanetary mission**. Amal is set to reach



Mars in February 2021, the year UAE will celebrate 50 years of its formation. The **UAE has also set a goal to build a human colony on Mars by 2117**. UAE is a federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula. In 2019, the **UAE sent its first astronaut to the International Space Station**.

CHINA'S MOON MISSION: CHANG'E

China made its first lunar landing in 2013. In January 2019, the Chang'e-4 probe touched down on the far side of the moon, the first by any nation's space probe. Chang'e is a series of lunar probes launched by China National Space administration. It aims to have a permanent manned space station in service by around 2022. Within the next decade, China plans to establish a robotic base station to conduct unmanned exploration in the south polar region of the moon. It is to be developed through the Chang'e-6, 7 and 8 missions through the 2020s.

PRAVAHINI



MISCELLANEOUS

TWO NEW ADDITIONS TO RAMSAR SITES IN INDIA



The Government of India recently added two new Ramsar sites. The sites were added on World Wetlands Day.

World Wetlands Day is celebrated on February 2 all over the world. The day spreads the importance of wetlands. **It is celebrated on February 2 because the Ramsar Convention was held on February 2, 1971 at Ramsar, Iran.**

Bakhira Wildlife sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh and Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary in Gujarat. These are the 48th and 49th Ramsar sites of India. **Earlier, the 47th Ramsar site was Haiderpur Wetland in Uttar Pradesh.**

Bakhira Wildlife sanctuary

It is the largest natural floodplain wetland in India. The floodplain wetland is that part of the river valley that gets flooded with water periodically. The resident time of water here is greater than flood plains. **The sanctuary is located to the west of Gorakhpur.**

It is a breeding ground for resident birds and a staging ground for a number of migratory birds. **The Siberian birds visit the wetland during winter.** Also, birds from China, Europe, Tibet and Siberia come to the lake during winters.

Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary

It is located in Jamnagar, Gujarat. More than 300 migratory birds visit the sanctuary. It has freshwater marshlands, freshwater lakes and salt water marshlands. **It is fed by river Ruparel.**

It also has creeks that support mangroves. It is located in the Gulf of Kutch region. The sanctuary is known for different types of nests such as floating nests, on ground nests and the ones built on trees.

The black - necked storks are found in abundance in the sanctuary. It is not found anywhere else in India.

Ramsar Sites in India: India has 52 tiger reserves. With the two new Ramsar sites, India now has 49 Ramsar sites. Also, there are two blue tag beaches in India.

INDIA'S 1ST OECM SITE: ARAVALLI BIODIVERSITY PARK

The Aravalli Biodiversity Park was named the first Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECM) site on **World Wetlands Day, February 2.**



The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) provides the OECM tag. The OECM sites aren't protected, yet they are rich in biodiversity, according to the IUCN.

The Aravalli Hills are the country's first OECM site. The National Biodiversity Authority proposed that Aravallis be designated as the OECM.

OECM: The OECM areas were established at the 2018 Convention on Biological Diversity. "OECM is not a protected area," in layman's terms. It is governed to obtain favorable results.

The objectives are biodiversity protection and focusing on cultural, socioeconomic, and spiritual values."

Technical Definition is divided into three categories. **Auxiliary conservation, secondary conservation, and primary conservation are the three types of conservation.**

KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK: A NET CARBON EMITTER

According to the latest research by scientists from **Tezpur University in Tezpur, Assam and Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune**, Kaziranga National Park in Assam is releasing more carbon than it is absorbing.

Research was published in “**Agricultural and Forest Meteorology**” journal on February 9, 2022.

As per research, as the planet Earth warms further, **the ability of Kaziranga National Park to absorb carbon would decrease further.** This ability would mainly decrease because of decreasing rainfall in this region.

Furthermore, Kaziranga National Park releases more carbon than it absorbs because of its unique soil of deciduous forest.

The soil is home to a huge population of bacteria that releases carbon dioxide while breathing. This adds to the carbon dioxide being emanated by other organisms and trees.

Researchers found that **Kaziranga absorbed the most amount of carbon dioxide during the pre-monsoon season of March, April and May.**

Photosynthetic activity of trees decreases during the monsoon because of increased cloud cover. **Thus, the ability of forests to absorb carbon dioxide also decreases.**

INDIA'S 1ST BIOMASS BASED HYDROGEN PLANT

India's **first commercial-scale biomass-based hydrogen plant will come up at the Khandwa district of Madhya Pradesh.** Every day this plant will produce one tonne of hydrogen, from 30 tonnes of biomass feedstock.

The plant is being put up by a joint venture of **Watomo Energies Ltd and Biezel Green Energy** with an investment of Rs 24 crore.



The company owns the technology for a ‘**thermally accelerated anaerobic digestion (TAD) reactor**’ that can produce hydrogen, methane and biochar from biomass.

AUSTRALIA DESIGNATED KOALA AS ENDANGERED SPECIES

On February 10, 2022, **Australia designated the koala as an endangered species** amid pressure on the marsupials’ eucalyptus tree habitats in eastern states of Australia.



The species was classed as vulnerable for 10 years also in Queensland, New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory.

Now, there would be increased protection for the animal.

Why was Koalas designated as an endangered species?

Population of Koalas is declining dramatically across the country because of habitat loss, impact of prolonged drought, **black summer bushfires, Urbanization and cumulative impacts of disease.**

Furthermore, thousands of koalas are thought to have been killed in fires that swept Australia's eastern and southern states in 2019 and 2020. Thus, this designation would provide more protection to the species.

Background: Proposal to list Koalas in Endangered category was given by **WWF-Australia, Humane Society International and International Fund for Animal Welfare**, in April 2020.

This proposal was made after research found a decline in population by 62 percent in **New South Wales** and 50 percent in **Queensland** since 2001.

ATAL TUNNEL AS WORLD'S LONGEST HIGHWAY TUNNEL



Atal Tunnel has been officially certified as **'World's Longest Highway Tunnel** above 10,000 Feet' by the World Book of Records.

Atal tunnel is a Highway tunnel built under Rohtang Pass in eastern **Pir Panjal Himalayan range** on **Leh-Manali Highway**.

It is the **longest highway single-tube tunnel** above 10,000 feet in the world with a length of about 9.02 km.

World Book of Records, UK is an organization that catalogues, verifies extraordinary records with authentic certification around the globe.

WHO LAUNCHED 'QUIT TOBACCO APP'



The **World Health Organization (WHO) South-East Asia Region (SEAR)** has launched a **'Quit Tobacco App'**. This application helps

people to give up the use of tobacco in all forms, including smokeless and other newer products.

The App was launched by Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director, WHO-SEAR, during WHO's year-long **'Commit to quit' campaign**, is the latest tobacco control initiative by the WHO South-East Asia Region.

The app, the first such by WHO, and the first that targets all forms of tobacco, helps users to identify the triggers, set their targets, manage cravings, and stay focused to quit tobacco.

Tobacco is the **world's leading cause of preventable death and kills nearly 8 million persons every year.**

It claims 1.6 million lives in the WHO **South-East Asia Region** which is amongst the largest producers and consumers of tobacco products.

World Health Organization Headquarters: **Geneva, Switzerland.**

World Health Organization Founded: **7 April 1948.**

World Health Organization Director-General: **Tedros Adhanom.**

WATER TAXI SERVICES IN MUMBAI

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways & AYUSH, Sarbananda Sonowal **virtually flagged off the 'Most Awaited' Water Taxi for citizens** of Mumbai, Maharashtra.



The **Water Taxi services** will commence from the **Domestic Cruise Terminal (DCT)** and will also connect nearby locations at Nerul, Belapur, Elephanta island and JNPT.

The service promises a comfortable, stress-free journey, is time-saving and promotes eco-friendly transport."

The **Ministry also informed that the newly constructed Belapur jetty**, built at a cost of Rs. 8.37 crore was funded in the 50-50 model under the Sagarmala scheme of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways. .

HIMACHAL PRADESH GETS ITS 1ST BIODIVERSITY PARK

Himachal Pradesh gets the first biodiversity park to make its contribution towards the conservation of endangered Himalayan herbs. **This park is set**



to come up at Mandi's Bhulah valley.

With the cost of Rs 1 crore, the biodiversity park is set up under the **National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS)** by HP's forest department.

The aim of the park is to link tourism activities along with extending new opportunities for researchers to conduct in-depth exploration of various medicinal herbs found in the Himalayas that are on the verge of extinction.

Why Biodiversity parks are Important?:

Biological diversity is a precious resource intended for the continued existence of mankind, and hence, conserving biodiversity is concerned with restoring the **equilibrium between humans & the atmosphere.**

CORBEVAX VACCINE APPROVED FOR 12-18 YEARS



The **Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI)** has approved the Corona Vaccine Biologicals E Ltd Corbeaux for children in the age group of 12 to 18 years.

Hyderabad-based pharmaceutical company **Biological E Ltd** said its coronavirus vaccine Corbevax, is also India's third homegrown vaccine. **Bharat Biotech's Covaxin** is being given to children aged 15 to 18 years from January 3.

About the Corbevax:

Corbevax is called a **protein subunit** and currently, we have an example of the hepatitis B vaccine which is also similarly a protein subunit vaccine.

Corbevax and the other vaccine in India, we have Covovax from **Serum Institute.**

CANADA APPROVED PLANT-BASED COVID-19 VACCINE

Canada became the **first country in the world that has authorized the use of a plant-based COVID-19 vaccine.**



The two-dose vaccine of Medicago Inc. (a biopharma company owned by **Mitsubishi Chemical and Philip Morris**), can be given to adults who are aged between 18 to 64, but little data is available on the shots received by people aged 65 and above.

The **decision to authorize the vaccine was based on a study conducted on 24,000** adults that showed the efficacy rate of the vaccine is 71% at preventing COVID-19 – although the tests were conducted before the omicron variant emerged.

Covifenz is the name given to this vaccine. Canada agreed to buy 20 million doses of this plant-based vaccine, with an option to purchase 56 million additional doses.

MULTILATERAL AIR EXERCISE 'COBRA WARRIOR-22'

The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** has decided not to send its aircraft in the multilateral air exercise '**Cobra Warrior-22**' in the **United Kingdom**, due to the deepening crisis in Ukraine, arising out of the Russian military attack in that country.

The exercise is scheduled to **take place from March 6 to 27, 2022, at Waddington in the United Kingdom.** The announcement by the IAF comes just three days after it confirmed its participation in the drills.

Why does this happen?

The announcement by the IAF came hours after India abstained from voting on a UN Security Council resolution on the Russian military aggression against Ukraine.

India retained the option of reaching out to all relevant sides to find a middle ground and foster dialogue and diplomacy to resolve the crisis.

RUSSIA DESTROYED LARGEST PLANE IN WORLD

On the fourth day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, **Russia destroyed the largest plane in the world called "Ukraine's Antonov-225 cargo plane"**. The plane was destroyed outside Kyiv.



According to weapons manufacturer Ukroboronprom, restoring **"AN-225 Mriya"** would cost over **USD 3 billion** and could take over five years.

The aircraft was unique to the world. It was 84 meters long and could transport up to 250 tonnes of cargo at a speed of 850 kilometres per hour.

Missile has been named **Mriya**, which means **"dream"** in Ukrainian.

Maria was initially built as part of the Soviet aeronautical program. It made its first flight in 1988. **Mriya has been operated by Ukraine's Antonov Airlines for cargo flights**. It was in high demand during Covid-19 pandemic.

INDIA'S FIRST ELECTRONIC WASTE ECO-PARK

The **Delhi Cabinet has approved setting up India's first of its kind electronic-waste eco-park**. It has also agreed to devise 'Delhi Film Policy 2022', as a thrust to promote tourism.

The electronic waste eco-friendly park is to be built on 20 acres of land in Delhi. Nearly, 2 lakh tonnes of e-waste are thrown by Delhi every year.

This **eco-park will recycle, refurbish and dismantle e-waste in a scientific and safe way**.

About the eco-park: This eco-park will act as an Integrated Facility, by engaging in dismantling, segregating, refurbishing, material-wise storage, testing and plastic recycling.

It will also **have precious metal extraction facilities, especially from Printed Circuit Boards (PCBs)** through high-end technologies.

The **Delhi Film Policy 2022 is to promote tourism in Delhi**, making the National Capital- a Brand. It will also make it a hub for modern film-making, meeting European Standards.

The government is to **create an 'e-Film Clearance Portal'** and provide aid of **Rs 3 crores for film production**. It has also decided to incentivize hiring locals in the cinema industry.

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FORM FILLING ASSISTANCE FOR
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