

MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

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#KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK: A NET CARBON EMITTER

Recently a research published, which showed that **Kaziranga National Park** in Assam, is **releasing more carbon than it is absorbing**.

- It also showed that as the planet warms further, the **ability of the Kaziranga National Park (KNP) to absorb carbon would further decrease**.
- Earlier, it was found that the **Amazon rainforest** is now emitting more carbon dioxide than it is able to absorb.



- Researchers found that Kaziranga absorbed the **most amount of carbon dioxide during the pre-monsoon season** of March, April and May.
- A forests, or trees in a forest, take up carbon dioxide for the process of photosynthesis and release carbon dioxide when they breathe.
- What are the Key Points Related to KNP?
- **Location:** It is located in the State of Assam and covers **42,996 Hectare (ha)**. It is the **single largest undisturbed and representative area** in the Brahmaputra Valley floodplain.
- **Legal Status:** It was declared as a **National Park in 1974**. It has been declared a **tiger reserve since 2007**. It has a total tiger reserve area of 1,030 sq km with a core area of 430 sq. km.
- **International Status:** It was declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 1985.
- It is recognized as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International.
- **Biodiversity:** It is the home of the **world's most one-horned rhinos**.
- **Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary** has the highest density of one-horned rhinos in the world and second highest number of Rhinos in Assam after Kaziranga National Park.
- Much of the focus of conservation efforts in Kaziranga are **focused on the 'big four' species - Rhino, Elephant, Royal Bengal tiger and Asiatic water buffalo**.
- Kaziranga is also home **to 9 of the 14 species** of primates found in the Indian subcontinent.

#INDIA'S TARGET TO TEACH CARBON NEUTRALITY BY 2070

Recently, India announced that it will **reach carbon neutrality by 2070** as part of a **five-point action plan** that included reducing emissions to 50% by 2030.



- India made this pledge at the **Conference of the Parties (COP) 26 climate summit in Glasgow**, where it also urged developed countries to deliver on their promise of **climate financing**.
- India hasn't submitted an updated **Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs)** with these commitments to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** yet.

About:

- Net Zero is a **state in which a country's total emissions are offset by absorptions of carbon dioxide** from the atmosphere, like that done by trees and forests, and physical removal of carbon dioxide through futuristic technologies.
- More than **70 countries have promised to become Net Zero by the middle of the century**, and this is being considered vital for meeting the Paris Agreement goal of keeping global temperatures within 2 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial times.
- India's Net Zero target of 2070 silences its critics but it is along expected lines.
- The big thing here is not the target itself but the fact that **India finally relented and decided to take up a target**, something it had been holding back on for quite some time.
- In its climate action plan submitted under the **Paris Agreement**, India had promised to reduce its emissions intensity, or emissions per unit of **Gross Domestic Product**, by 33 to 35% by the year 2030 compared to 2005 levels.

Reducing India's Emissions:

- India **has the lowest per capita emissions** of the world's major economies -- emitting **5% of the total**, despite accounting for **17% of the world's population**.
- According to the **World Resources Institute**, India's total **greenhouse gas** emissions were about 3.3 billion tonnes in 2018.
- It's **projected to rise above 4 billion tonnes per year by 2030**.
- That would mean between now and 2030, **India could be emitting anywhere between 35 to 40 billion tonnes** at the current rates of growth.
- Cutting 1 billion tonnes would, therefore, represent a reduction of **2.5 to 3% in its absolute emissions** in the business-as-usual scenario in the next nine years.

India's New Renewable Target:

- In 2019 India announced that it would take up its installed capacity of **renewable energy to 450 GW by 2030**.
- At that time, India's publicly stated target was **175 GW by the year 2022**.
- The installed renewable capacity has been growing rapidly in the last few years, and the **enhancement as per it's pledge from 450 GW to 500 GW is not likely to be very challenging**.

- In fact, India has already said **it does not plan to start any new coal power plants after 2022.**
- As of now, India was already targeting 40% electricity production through non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.

Climate Finance:

- India's efforts though will have to be supported by the **availability of climate finance from developed countries.** Without foreign capital, on concessional terms, this transition will prove to be difficult.
- India **demands USD 1 trillion of climate finance as soon as possible** and will monitor not just climate action, but deliver climate finance.
- Most importantly, India has called, once again, for a **change in lifestyles.**

#PM MODI LAUNCHED GREEN GRIDS INITIATIVE?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the **Green Grids Initiative – One Sun One World One Grid (GGI-OSOWOG) initiative** jointly with his UK counterpart Boris Johnson at the event 'Accelerating Clean Technology Innovation and Deployment' at COP26 Climate Summit at Glasgow.
- In May 2021, India and the UK had agreed to combine the Green Grids Initiative and the One Sun One World One Grid and jointly launch GGI-OSOWOG at the COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow in November 2021.



What is Green Grids Initiative – (GGI-OSOWOG) Initiative?

- With sustainable development and climate change mitigation at the heart of the **Green Grids Initiative – One Sun One World One Grid (GGI-OSOWOG) initiative**, the (GGI-OSOWOG) initiative can aid in developing a common and strong global grid.
- The GGI-OSOWOG initiative is being developed by India, UK jointly in collaboration with the **World Bank and India's International Solar Alliance (ISA).**
- The GGI-OSOWOG initiative was unveiled by the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, India Presidency of the ISA, and the UK COP Presidency at COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow on November 2, 2021.

What is One Sun One World One Grid initiative?

- The **idea of the One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG) initiative** was proposed by PM Narendra Modi at the First Assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) in October 2018.
- The OSOWOG initiative aims at interconnecting global grids to harness solar energy.
- The **vision of OSOWOG is 'The Sun Never Sets'.** In simple terms, OSOWOG will establish a single global grid to share solar energy across different countries, power the world with clean & renewable energy, and reduce dependence or usage of non-renewable energy such as coal.

#PLEDGES MADE AT COP26 SUMMIT

Recently, leaders at the **CoP26 global climate conference in Glasgow** have pledged to **stop deforestation** by the end of the decade and slash emissions of **methane** to help slow **climate change**.

- Earlier, India announced that it will reach **carbon neutrality by 2070 as part of a five-point action plan** that included reducing emissions to 50% by 2030.



Methane Pledge:

- The **European Union (EU)** and the **US** have launched a landmark **pledge to slash emissions of the powerful greenhouse gas methane**, a commitment that could prevent 0.2 degrees Celsius of global warming.
- The alliance's members will seek to lower global emissions of methane - the second-largest contributor to climate change after carbon dioxide - by 30% below 2020 levels by 2030.
- Besides the EU and the US, **more than 103 countries have signed up so far**, including major methane emitters like Nigeria and Pakistan.
- The **Global Methane Pledge (US)**, first announced in September 2021, now covers emissions from two-thirds of the global economy.
- **China, Russia and India - have not signed up**, while Australia has said it will not back the pledge.

Methane: A Concern

- Methane is more **short-lived in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide but 80 times more potent** in warming the earth.
- Humanity has also boosted the **greenhouse gases** in the atmosphere by hacking away at the forests that absorb roughly 30% of carbon dioxide emissions, according to the nonprofit **World Resources Institute**.
- Human sources of methane include landfills, oil and natural gas systems, agricultural activities, coal mining, wastewater treatment, and certain industrial processes.

Call for Climate Finance:

- India noted that **climate finance** cannot continue at the levels decided in 2009 (100 billion USD), and emphasised that it **should be at least USD 1 trillion to meet the goals of addressing climate change**.
- India underlined the unity and strength of **Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDC)** as fundamental in the **UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)** negotiations.
- India requested the LMDC members to join hands with India to support the global initiatives it has pioneered, including the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)** and the **Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT)**.

Infrastructure for Resilient Island States:

- India launched this initiative as a **part of the CDRI** that would **focus on building capacity**, having pilot projects, especially in small island developing states.

- **Small Island Developing States or SIDS** face the biggest threat from climate change, India's space agency **ISRO** will build a special data window for them to provide them timely information about cyclones, coral-reef monitoring, coast-line monitoring etc. through satellite.

#HOYSALA TEMPLES NOMINATED FOR WORLD HERITAGE SITES

- India has finalised the **Hoysala Temples in Karnataka** as its nominations for consideration in the World Heritage Sites List for 2022-23.
- The **Hoysala temples in Belur and Halebeedu in Hassan district and Somanathapura in Mysuru district have been nominated**. They were finalized by the Union Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- UNESCO is expected to communicate back by early March, after which the site evaluation will happen around September /October 2022 and the nomination will be taken up for consideration in July-August 2023.



Hoysala Temples in Karnataka

- The Hoysalas temples of Belur, Halebid and Somnathapur were reportedly built in the 12th-13th centuries.
- The masterpieces represent and attest to the creativity and skill of the Hoysala artists and architects. Hoysala architecture is the building style that was developed by architects under the rule of the Hoysala Empire between the 11th and 14th centuries.
- The Hoysala influence was at its peak in the 13th century and several large and small temples built during the era remain today as examples of the Hoysala architectural style. The Hoysala temples include **Chennakesava Temple at Belur, the Hoysaleswara Temple at Halebidu and the Kesava Temple at Somanathapura**.
- There are several other examples of Hoysala craftsmanship such as the temples at **Hosaholalu, Belavadi, Amruthapura, Basaralu, Mosale, Arasikere, Nuggehalli and Kikkeri**.
- The Hoysala architectural style reveals a negligible Indo-Aryan influence and a more distinct impact of Southern Indian style.

- The Hoysala temples are protected monuments under the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**.
- Their conservation and maintenance is done by ASI but the Karnataka state government will ensure the conservation of state-protected monuments around these three monuments.

#DHOLAVIRA: 40TH WORLD HERITAGE SITES

Recently, **UNESCO** has announced the Harappan city of **Dholavira** in Gujarat as India's **40th world heritage site**. It is the first site of **Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC)** in India to be included on the coveted list.

- With this successful nomination, India now enters the **Super-40 club for World Heritage Site inscriptions**.
- Apart from **India, Italy, Spain, Germany, China and France** have 40 or more World Heritage sites.
- India has **40 world heritage sites** overall, which includes 32 cultural, 7 natural and one mixed property. **Ramappa Temple (Telangana)** was India's **39th World Heritage Site**.

About Dholavira:

- It is one of the most remarkable and well-preserved **urban settlements** in South Asia.
- It was **discovered in 1968** by archaeologist **Jagat Pati Joshi**.
- After **Mohen-jo-Daro, Ganweriwala and Harappa in Pakistan** and **Rakhigarhi in Haryana of India**, **Dholavira is the fifth largest metropolis** of Indus Valley Civilization (IVC).
- IVC flourished around 2,500 BC, in the western part of South Asia, what today is Pakistan and Western India. It was basically an urban civilization and the people lived in well-planned and well-built towns, which were also the centers for trade.
- The site contains ruins of an ancient IVC/Harappan city. It comprises two parts: a **walled city** and a **cemetery** to the west of the city.
- The walled city consists of a **fortified Castle with attached fortified Bailey and Ceremonial Ground, and a fortified MiddleTown and a Lower Town**.
- A series of **reservoirs** are found to the east and south of the Citadel.

World Heritage Site:

- **Any of various areas or objects inscribed** on the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage List**.
- The sites are designated as having "**outstanding universal value**" under the **Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage 1972**.
- The **World Heritage Centre is the Secretariat** to the 1972 Convention.
- It provides a **framework for international cooperation** in preserving and protecting cultural treasures and natural areas throughout the world.
- **There are three types of sites:** Cultural, Natural, and Mixed.
- Cultural heritage sites include **hundreds of historic buildings and town sites, important archaeological sites, and works of monumental sculpture or painting**.
- Natural heritage sites are **restricted to those natural areas that have excellent ecological and evolutionary processes, unique natural phenomena, habitats of rare or endangered species etc.**
- Mixed heritage sites **contain elements of both natural and cultural significance**.

#WORLD WETLANDS DAY OBSERVED ON 2ND FEB

- World Wetlands Day is observed every year on February 2 to raise awareness about the importance of wetlands and the need to preserve them.
- The day commemorates the date when the Convention on Wetlands was adopted in 1971. **The World Wetlands Day 2022 is significant as this is the first time that the day will be observed as a United Nations International Day.**
- World Wetlands Day 2022 theme is "Wetlands Action for People and Nature".** The theme aims to highlight the importance of actions that ensure that wetlands are conserved and sustainably used.



World Wetlands Day 2022 Focus

- The World Wetlands Day 2022 focus is **on taking action for wetlands**. The day calls for more human, financial and political capital investment to preserve the world's wetlands and save them from disappearing and restore those that have been degraded.
- World Wetlands Day 2022 Slogans**
 - Wetlands not a Wasteland
 - Stop draining the life from wetlands, use wisely
 - Rewet, reforest, restore Wetlands

What are wetlands?

- Wetlands are land flooded by water, either permanently or seasonally.**
- Wetlands are considered to be among the **most biologically diverse of all ecosystems**, as the flooding results in the prevailing of oxygen-free process and create an ideal condition for the growth of highlight adapted plants and species.
- They are home to a wide range of plant and animal species and play a critical role in maintaining natural cycles. The wetlands are primary source of freshwater for many, as they purify and filter the waste from the region and regulate the water supply.

Classification of wetlands

- The wetlands are classified mainly on the basis of the dominant plants or the source of the water like given below:**
 - **Marshes:** Wetlands dominated by emergent vegetation such as reeds, cattails and sedges.
 - **Swamps:** Wetlands dominated by woody vegetation such as shrubs and trees.
 - **Tidal Wetlands:** The wetlands formed due to oceanic tides.
 - **Estuaries-** The wetlands formed from tides and river waters.
 - **Floodplains:** The wetlands formed from excess water from overflowed rivers or lakes.
 - **Springs:** The wetlands formed from the discharge of groundwater on the surface.
 - **Vernal ponds, bogs:** The wetlands formed from rainfall or melted water.

Why are wetlands important?

- Wetlands are important as they are among the most productive ecosystems in the world like the rain forests.
- The world's largest wetlands include the Amazon River basin, West Siberian Plain, Sundarbans in Ganges-Brahmaputra Delta in India and Pantanal in South America.

When World Wetlands Day was first celebrated?

- **World Wetlands Day was first celebrated in 1997.** The day marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the Caspian Sea shore on February 2, 1971.
- The **United Nations General Assembly** adopted a resolution to mark World Wetlands Day on February 2nd every year.
- The Government of India recently added two new Ramsar sites. **The sites were added on the World Wetlands Day.** The 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 Wild life sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh and Khijadia 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 flood plain 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 breeding ground for resident birds and a staging ground for number of migratory birds.
- The **dominant ones are Chana and Labeo rohita.** The wetland is the breeding ground for the grey-headed swamphen. It is also called purple swamp hen or Indian purple moorhen. It is locally called Kaima.
- The wetland is connected to the Bakhira canal. The canal runs 15 kms supplying water for irrigation to the nearby villages.

Khijadia 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 abundant in the sanctuary. It is not found anywhere else in India.**
- 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.

#WORLD CANCER DAY OBSERVED ON 4TH FEB

- World Cancer Day is marked on **February 4th every year** to raise awareness about cancer and encourage its early detection and prevention. According to World Health Organization, cancer is a leading cause of death worldwide, accounting for nearly one in six deaths.
- The **World Cancer Day 2022 theme is "Close the Care Gap"**. The theme aims to increase awareness about the inequities in cancer care. The theme has been launched as a three-year campaign.



When is world cancer day?

- World Cancer Day is observed every year on February 4th to raise awareness about the life-threatening disease. The **primary objective of World Cancer Day** is to significantly reduce illness and death caused by cancer.

What is the theme of World Cancer Day?

- The theme of World Cancer Day 2022 is '**Close the Care Gap**'. The three-year campaign will highlight barriers related to socioeconomic factors, stigma and discrimination that prevent many people from accessing potentially life-saving preventive services, screening, treatment and care.
- The first year of the '**Close the Care Gap**' campaign will focus on understanding and recognizing the inequities in cancer care around the globe.
- The year will focus on helping in reducing stigma and listening to the perspectives of the **people living with cancer and their communities and let those experiences guide our thoughts and actions**.

World Cancer Day Significance

- As per recent studies, about **one out of six people in the world die from cancer**, which is more than the number of deaths caused by tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and malaria combined.
- In India alone, a 2020 WHO study revealed that one in every 10 Indians will develop cancer and one in every 15 will die. According to the study, India has a population of almost 1.35 billion reported around 1.16 million new cancer cases and 784,800 cancer deaths in 2018.
- Overall, India ranks third among nations in terms of the highest number of cancer cases. **The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** has estimated a 12 percent rise in cancer cases in India by the next five years.

What is Cancer?

- Cancer is the uncontrolled growth of cells in the body.** It is one of the deadliest diseases and a leading cause of death around the world. It can occur at any age and can increase the risk of death if not detected at the right time and is not treated.
- Why World Cancer Day is celebrated on 4th February?**
- World Cancer Day was founded on February 4, 2000** at the first World Summit Against Cancer for the New Millenium, which was held in Paris. Every year since then, the day has been observed with a different theme to spread awareness about the disease, its prevention and treatment and to improve

the quality of life of cancer patients.

- The day is a global initiative that is led by **Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)**. It supports the goals of the World Cancer Declaration, which were written in 2008.

RELATED: NATIONAL CANCER AWARENESS DAY: 7TH NOVEMBER

National Cancer Awareness Day is observed on **7th November** each year in the country to spread awareness about the need of early cancer detection to fight the deadly disease timely.

- **Global Initiative:** The **International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)** was created in **1965** by a resolution of the World Health Assembly, as the **specialized cancer agency of the World Health Organization**.
- **World Cancer Day** is observed on **4th February** every year.

Indian Initiatives:

- **National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS)** is being implemented under **National Health Mission (NHM)** for up-to the district level activities.
- Under the ambit of **Ayushman Bharat, Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)** is being implemented to reduce the financial burden for poor and vulnerable groups arising out of catastrophic hospital episodes and to provide access to quality health services.
- **National Cancer Grid (NCG)** is a network of major cancer centers, research institutes, patient groups and charitable institutions across India with the mandate of establishing uniform standards of patient care for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer, providing specialized training and education in oncology (study of cancer) and facilitating collaborative basic, translational and clinical research in cancer. It was **formed in August 2012**.
- **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)** had launched a **Pilot on Trade Margin Rationalisation** for 42 anti cancer drugs in february 2020 as a step towards making healthcare more affordable for the suffering patients. This led to **reduction in prices of drugs**.

#INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY: 21ST FEB

Every year, the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** celebrates **21st February** as **International Mother Language Day** to promote mother tongue-based multilingual education.

- The **theme of 2022** is: **"Using technology for multilingual learning: Challenges and opportunities"**, it focuses on the potential role of technology to advance multilingual education and support the development of quality teaching and learning for all.



What is International Mother Language Day?

- UNESCO declared 21st February as **International Mother Language Day** in 1999 and the World has been **celebrating the same since 2000**.
- The day also commemorates **a long struggle by Bangladesh to protect its mother language Bangla**.
- The resolution to mark 21st February as the International Mother Language Day was suggested by **Rafiqul Islam, a Bangladeshi living in Canada**.
- He proposed the said date to commemorate the 1952 killings in Dhaka during the **Bangla Language Movement**.
- The aim is to protect the **diverse culture and intellectual heritage of different regions** of the world.
- According to the **United Nations (UN)**, every two weeks, a language disappears and the world loses an entire cultural and intellectual heritage.
- Due to **globalisation**, the rush for learning foreign languages for better job opportunities is a major reason behind the disappearance of mother languages.

What are Global Efforts for Protection of Languages?

- The UN has designated the period between 2022 and 2032 as the **International Decade of Indigenous Languages**.
- Earlier, the **United Nations General Assembly** had proclaimed 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL).
- The **Yuelu Proclamation**, made by UNESCO at Changsha (China) in 2018, plays a central role in guiding the efforts of countries and regions around the world to protect linguistic resources and diversity.

What are India's Initiatives to Protect Mother Tongues?

- The recently announced **National Education Policy 2020** has given maximum attention to the development of mother tongues.
- The Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT) is providing **publication grants towards the publications of University Level Books** in regional languages.
- It was established in 1961 to evolve technical terminology in all Indian Languages.
- The **National Translation Mission (NTM)** is being implemented through the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore under which the text books of various subjects prescribed in Universities and Colleges are being translated in all languages of the Eighth Schedule.
- **"Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages"** scheme for conservation of threatened languages.

What are the Related Constitutional and Legal Provisions?

- **Article 29 of the Constitution** (Protection of interests of minorities) gives all citizens right to conserve their language and **prohibits discrimination on the basis of language**.
- **Article 120** (Language to be used in Parliament) provides for use of Hindi or English for transactions of Parliament but gives the right to members of Parliament to **express themselves in their mother tongue**.
- **Part XVII** of the Indian Constitution deals with the **official languages in Articles 343 to 351**.

- **Article 350A (Facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at primary stage)** provides that it shall be the endeavour of every State and of every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for **instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education** to children belonging to linguistic minority groups.
- **Article 350B (Special Officer for linguistic minorities):** The President should appoint a **special officer for linguistic minorities** to investigate all matters relating to the constitutional safeguards for linguistic minorities and to report to him.
- The President should place all such reports before the Parliament and send them to the state government concerned.
- **The Eighth Schedule** recognises following 22 languages: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Bodo, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri.
- **Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009** says that the medium of instruction shall, as far as practicable, be in a child's mother tongue.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

- **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** is a specialized agency of the **United Nations (UN)**. It seeks to **build peace through international cooperation in Education, the Sciences and Culture**.
- It is also a member of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)**, a coalition of UN agencies and organizations aimed at fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- UNESCO's **Headquarters** are located in **Paris** and the Organization has more than 50 field offices around the world.
- It has **193 Members and 11 Associate Members** (As of April 2020) and is governed by the General Conference and the Executive Board.
- Three UNESCO member states are not UN members: **Cook Islands, Niue, and Palestine**.
- While three UN member states (**Israel, Liechtenstein, United States**) are not UNESCO members.

#EIU RELEASED DEMOCRACY INDEX 2021

- The Economic Intelligence Unit recently released the **Democracy Index Report, 2021**. The report described the state of democracy in 165 countries.
- The report was prepared based on five parameters. They were functioning of the government, electoral process and pluralism, political participation, civil liberties and political culture.
- Norway topped the index. The country scored 9.75. Following Norway, New Zealand was at the second position. Finland, Sweden and Iceland were at the third, fourth and fifth position respectively.
- **Afghanistan scored the least with 0.32**. Earlier North Korea was at the bottom most position.



Countries that showed improvement

- Singapore, UAE, Uruguay, Guyana, Montenegro, Republic of Congo, India, Moldova, Qatar, Indonesia, Zambia.

Report about Democracy

- One – third of the world population is living under authoritarian rule. 6.4% is having full democracy. The **current global democracy score is 5.28 out of 10.**

Report about India

- India ranked 46 in the index. The overall score of India was 6.91. The individual scores of the country are as follows:
 - Political Culture: 5
 - Electoral process and Pluralism: 8.67
 - Civil liberties: 6.18
 - Political participation: 7.22
 - Functioning of government: 7.5

Ranking of India's neighbor

- China was ranked at 148th position. Myanmar: 166, Nepal: 1010, Pakistan: 104, Bhutan: 81, Bangladesh: 75, Sri Lanka: 67

Region – wise ranking

- **North America was ranked at first position.** North America was followed by Western Europe and Latin America in second and third position respectively. Asia was ranked at fourth position.
- **Report about Latin America:** Of all the regions in the world, **the least performing was the Latin American region.**
- There are 17 countries in Latin American region. The region has the largest diasporas of Japanese, Lebanese, Portuguese, Spaniards, Italians, black Africans. **The Latin American countries are Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Argentina, Venezuela, Guatemala, Chile, Bolivia, Haiti.**

#RELATED: INDIA INVITED AT BIDEN'S DEMOCRACY SUMMIT

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



Who is invited?

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

Who is not invited?

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

Three principal themes at democracy summit

- While announcing the Democracy Summit the US had said that the meeting on democracy **will stimulate the initiatives and commitments across three principal themes:**
- Defending against authoritarianism
- Fighting Corruption
- Promoting Respect for Human Rights

Democracy Summit: Why it is being organized?

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

India's Stand:

- **Democracies should jointly deal with social media and crypto currencies**, so that they are used to empower democracy, not to undermine it.
- India is the **largest democracy in the world** which has 2,500-year-old democratic traditions and **proposes to share India's democratic experience** through digital solutions.

- Referred to the **civilisational tradition of democracy in India** citing the ancient city states under the Lichhavis and other people that flourished in India during the late Vedic and Buddhist period and continued to the early medieval period.
- **Democracy has taken various shapes across the world** and there is a need to work on the **democratic practices and symptoms**.
- It is needed to constantly **improve the democratic practices and systems** and to continuously enhance inclusion, transparency, human dignity, responsive grievance redressal and decentralization of power.

#LEGENDARY SINGER LATA MANGESHKAR PASSED AWAY

- **Legendary Singer Lata Mangeshkar** took her last breath on February 6, 2022, at the age of 92.
- She was an asset to the film industry and won numerous awards throughout her extensive singing career.
- **Bharat Ratna, Padma Bhushan, Filmfare awards, National Awards, State Awards** etc are few honours to her.



About Lata Mangeshkar

- **Lata Mangeshkar** was an Indian playback singer and occasional music composer. She is considered as one of the greatest and most influential singers in the country.
- Her career spanned for seven decades, in which she gained titles like **Nightingale of India, Queen of Melody and Voice of the Millennium**, because of her contribution to Indian music industry.
- **Songs in different languages:** She recorded songs in more than thirty-six Indian languages as well as a few foreign languages. Hindi, Bengali and Marathi were her primary languages.

Her Prestigious recognitions

- She received several honours and recognition, throughout her career.
- In 1969 **she received Padma Bhushan**. She was bestowed **with Dadasaheb Phalke Award, in 1989**.
- In 2001, she was awarded the Bharat Ratna, which is India's highest civilian honour. She became only the second female singer, **after M. S. Subbulakshmi, to receive Bharat Ratna**.
- She was also conferred **with highest civilian award of France in 2007**, called Officer of the National Order of the Legion of Honour.

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.
- **Guinness Book of World Records:** She was recognised in Guinness Book of World Records in 1974, for singing maximum number of songs in the world.

International Honours

- In 1980, the legend was presented with key of the city of Georgetown, Guyana in South America. She also received the Honorary Citizenship to Republic of Suriname in South America in the same year.
- In 1985, June 9 was declared as Asia Day, to honour her arrival in Toronto, Canada. She was given Honorary Citizenship of Houston & Texas in 1987.
- First Recipient: She was the first recipient of Noorjehan Award and Maharashtra Ratna in 2001.

#DADASAHEB PHALKE INT. FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS 2022

- **Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2022** were conferred to the recipients in a ceremony held on February 20, 2022.
- **Ranveer Singh** received the award for Best Actor for '83'; **Kriti Sanon** won the Best Actress award for her role in 'Mimi'. Ken Gosho received the DFIFF 2022 **Best Director award for 'State of Siege: Temple Attack'** and **Best Film award went to 'Shershaah'**.
- **DFIFF 2022 Film of the Year award went to 'Pushpa: The Rise'** and Best International Feature Film award went to Another Round, a comedy-drama film directed by Thomas Vinterberg and Asha Parekh was honoured with Outstanding Contribution to Films award.



Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival (DFIFF) Awards 2022: List of Winners

- **Outstanding Contribution to Films:** Asha Parekh
- **Film of the Year:** Pushpa: The Rise
- **Best Film:** Shershaah
- **Best Director:** Ken Ghosh for film State of Siege: Temple Attack
- **Best International Feature Film:** Another Round
- **Best Actor:** Ranveer Singh for 83
- **Best Actress:** Kriti Sanon for Mimi
- **People's Choice Best Actor:** Abhimanyu Dasani
- **People's Choice Best Actress:** Radhika Madan
- **Best Debut:** Ahan Shetty for film Tadap
- **Best Playback Singer Male:** Vishal Mishra

- **Best Playback Singer Female:** Kanika Kapoor
- **Critics Best Film:** Sardar Udham Singh
- **Best Actor in Web Series:** Manoj Bajpayee for The Family Man 2
- **Best Actress in Web Series:** Raveena Tandon for Aranyak
- **Best Web Series:** Candy

#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 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 endangered species?

- **Population of Koalas is declining dramatically** across the country because of habitat loss, impact of prolonged drought, black summer bushfires, Urbanisation 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 decline in population by 62 percent in New South Wales and 50 percent in Queensland since 2001.

What does Endangered status mean?

- **Endangered status to koala means,** the species and their forest homes should be provided with greater protection in accordance with Australia's national environment law.
- This would not only protect Koala but many other species living alongside them.

About Koala

- The koala is an arboreal herbivorous marsupial, native to Australia. It is the **only extant representative of Phascolarctidae family.** Its closest living relatives are wombats, which are the members of Vombatidae family.
- This species is found in coastal areas of Australia's eastern and southern regions, **inhabiting New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales.**
- It is recognised by its stout, large head, tailless body, round & fluffy ears and large, spoon-shaped nose. It has a body length of 60–85 cm while and weighs 4–15 kg. Fur colour of Koala ranges from silver grey to chocolate brown.

#1ST NATIONAL MARITIME SECURITY CO-ORDINATOR

- Following the **26/11 terrorist attack**, India has been consistently trying to augment the nation's maritime security.
- In regard to this, the government has appointed **Vice Admiral (retd) G Ashok Kumar** as the nation's first **national maritime security coordinator** with the view of strengthening the country's maritime security.
- This move has been made with the aim of ensuring cohesion among the various defense stakeholders of the nation with the **primary aim of securing the country's interest**.
- Last year, the security cabinet committee had given its approval for the creation of the said post. Kumar's appointment, who retired in the month of July last year, has been seen as a move made by the government to enhance the **nation's maritime security keeping in mind the 26/11 terrorist attack that the terrorists commenced via the sea route**.
- Since the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai, the government has authorized a plethora of security measures to ensure that a repeat of such attacks does not occur again.



Working of the National Maritime Security Coordinator (NMSC)

- The **NMSC works in tandem with the National Security Council** which is headed by Ajit Doval (NSA). The NMSC is tasked with coordinating with the Coast Guard, the Indian Navy, and various other security agencies who are involved in providing maritime and coastal security, in 13 Union Territories and coastal states of the country.
- About Vice Admiral (retd) G Ashok Kumar:** He served as the nation's 35th Navy Vice Chief. He assumed this position in the year 2019 and served till July 2021.

About 26/11 attacks

- On 26th November 2008, 10 terrorists from **Pakistan made their way into Mumbai via the sea route to create mayhem in the city**.
- They carried out terrorist attacks in various locations of the city killing 166 people and injuring many. **They were gunned down by the nation's army after a prolonged gunfight**.

RELATED: INDIAN NAVY DAY OBSERVED ON 4TH DECEMBER

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

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

Background of the operation Trident

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

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

- INS Nipat
- INS Nirghat
- INS Veer

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

Aftermath of Operation Trident

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

About Indian Navy

- The operational and administrative control of the **Indian Navy is exercised by the Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS)** from the Integrated Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence (Navy). The Navy has three Commands, each under the control of a Flag officer Commanding-in-Chief.
 - The Western Naval Command (**Headquarters at Mumbai**)
 - The Eastern Naval Command (**Headquarters at Visakhapatnam**)
 - The Southern Naval Command (**Headquarters at Kochi**)
- Indian Navy plays a significant role in **securing the marine borders of the nation** as well as accelerating the international relations of India through various means like seaport visits, joint ventures, patriotic missions, calamity relief, and many others.
- Modern-day Indian Navy has been transformed in order to improve the position of the navy to the Indian Ocean area.
- There are three divisions in the **Indian Armed Forces: Indian Army, Navy and Air Force**. The Indian Army protects our land, the Navy in water, and the Air Force protects us in the sky.

Vice Admiral Hari Kumar took charge as Navy Chief

- **Vice Admiral Hari Kumar** on November 30, 2021, took charge as the new Chief of Naval Staff.
- **Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar** was commissioned on January 1, 1983, into the executive branch of the Indian Navy.
- The **Vice-Admiral R Hari Kumar**, during his long and distinguished service which spanned nearly 39 years, has served in a variety of command, staff and instructional appointments. Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar's **sea command includes INS Nishank, Missile Corvette, INS Kora and Guided Missile Destroyer INS Ranvir**.
- Vice Admiral Kumar has also commanded Indian Navy's aircraft carrier INS Viraat. He also served as the Fleet Operation Officer of the Western Fleet. Vice Admiral Kumar, before serving as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command, was the Chief of Integrated Staff Committee of headquarters, Integrated Defence Staff.
- **Vice Admiral R Hari Kumar has been decorated with-**
 - Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM)
 - Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM)
 - Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM)

Role of Chief of Naval Staff

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

#ILKER AYCI AS NEW CEO & MD OF AIR INDIA

- Tata Sons announced on February 14, 2022 that **Ilker Ayçi** has been appointed as the new CEO and MD of Air India.
- The Chairman of Tata Sons, N Chandrasekaran was a special invitee to the board meeting.

About Ilker Ayçi

- Born in Istanbul in 1971, Ilker Ayçi is 1994 alumni of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Bilkent University.
- He was serving as the **Chairman of Turkish Airlines from 2015 to 2022**. He has also previously served as the advisor of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in 1994.
- Air India's strong heritage to **make it one of the best airlines in the world**.



Air India

- Air India was founded by **JRD Tata** and the airline's history is synonymous with the annals of civil aviation in India. The first-ever Air India flight took off on October 15, 1932. **Since then, it has pioneered India's aviation sector and become one of the major international airlines.**
- Air India has a vast international and domestic network connecting the far-east, south-east Asia, US, UK, Europe, Canada, Australia, the Gulf and India's north-east, Ladakh and Andaman and the Nicobar Islands.
- **Air India Express** was launched as India's first budget international carrier in 2006 to connect smaller towns directly to the Gulf and South East Asia regions.
- Air India along with Air India Express has played a major role in evacuating stranded Indians in times of crisis such as the **Kuwait Invasion** and **COVID-19 outbreak**.

#RELATED: AIR INDIA HANDED OVER TO TATA GROUP

- The Government of India successfully **handed over Air India to the Tata Group** on January 27, 2022, nearly 69 years after it was taken from the TATAs.
- The **Tata Group**, as part of the deal with the Government, is also handed over the Air India Express and a 50% stake in the ground handling arm of Air India SATS.
- While this will be the Government of India's first privatization since 2003-2003, Air India will be the third airline brand in **Tata's stable as the conglomerate holds a majority interest in AirAsia India and Vistara**. It is a joint venture by Singapore Airlines Ltd.



Air India: Key Points

- Maharaja is the official mascot of Air India. The airlines operate globally apart from domestic operations.
- Air India has also been carrying a substantial number of the latest aircraft in its fleet from both Airbus and Boeing which is also Air India's strength.

#SALE OF AIR INDIA

- **Tata Sons and a group led by SpiceJet Chairman Ajay Singh** placed financial bids **for Air India**. This is a step towards the privatization of India's flag carrier Air India and the second attempt of the government to sell the loss-making national carrier.
- The Tata Sons submitted bids through its 100 per cent arm Talace Private Ltd and SpiceJet CEO Ajay Singh submitted its bids in his personal capacity along with some investment funds.

Who were bidding for Air India?

- **Tata Sons**, who operate Vistara and AirAsia India is the frontrunner in the bidding process for the sale of Air India. The Tata Sons submitted **bids through its 100 per cent arm Talace Private Ltd**.
- The shareholders of the Company had approved a **fund-raise programme of Rs 40,000 crore** via non-convertible debentures to finance acquisitions and invest in businesses.
- If Tata Sons emerge as the successful bidder, then Air India will be back in the control of its founders. Tata Group had set Tata Airlines in 1932 which was renamed Air India in 1946. The Indian government took control of Air India in 1953.

Air India Privatization: What will the successful bidder get?

- The successful bidder from the sale of **Air India** will get control of 4,400 domestic and 1,800 international landing and parking slots at domestic airports. The winning bidder will also get 900 slots across airports overseas.
- The successful bidder will also get 100 per cent of the low-cost arm **Air India Express** and **50 per cent of Air India SATS Airport Services Private Limited (AISATS)** which offers cargo and ground handling services at major Indian airports.

Air India sale: Background

- In 2018, the government attempted to sell a 76 per cent stake in Air India but failed. Two years ago, the government trying to retain a 26 per cent stake in the loss-making **national carrier was a major hurdle in the disinvestment of Air India**.
- The **private sector was apprehensive in the airline privatization process** with a government-appointed board member.
- The government in its second attempt has sweetened the deal to complete the **Air India sale by December 2021**.
- The government in 2021 is willing to sell its 100 per cent stake in the Air India airline along with two other subsidiaries: low-cost Air India Express and a 50 per cent stake of **Air India SATS Airport Services Private Limited (AISATS)**.
- In order to further ease the Air India privatization process, **the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)** has also offered tax relief on the transfer of capital assets of Air India to a holding company.
- The total debt of Air India has reached Rs 43,000 crores of which Rs 22,000 crores will be transferred to the **Air India Asset Holding Limited (AIAHL)** and the remaining will be borne by the successful bidder. The government will bear the amount transferred to AIAHL before the airline is transferred to the successful bidder.

#FIRST WOMAN TO BE CURED OF HIV

Recently, a US patient with leukemia has become the first woman and the third person to date to be cured of HIV after receiving a stem cell transplant from a donor who was naturally resistant to the virus that causes Acquired ImmunoDeficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

- Leukemia is a **blood cancer** caused by a rise in the number of **white blood cells** in the body.
- AIDS is a set of symptoms or syndrome caused by HIV. But it is **not necessary that a person infected with HIV will definitely develop AIDS**.



What is Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)?

- HIV attacks CD4, a type of **White Blood Cell** (T cells) in the body's immune system.
- T cells are those cells that move **around the body detecting anomalies and infections in cells**.
- After entering the body, HIV multiplies itself and destroys CD4 cells, thus severely damaging the human immune system.
- Once this virus enters the body, it can never be removed.
- The CD4 count of a person infected with HIV reduces significantly. In a healthy body, CD4 count is between 500- 1600, but in an infected body, it can go as low as 200.

What is the Prevalence of HIV/AIDS in India?

- As per the **India HIV Estimation 2019 report**, the estimated adult (15 to 49 years) HIV prevalence trend has been declining in India since the epidemic's peak in the year 2000 and has been stabilizing in recent years.
- In 2019, HIV prevalence among adult males was estimated at 0.24% and among adult females at 0.20% of the population.
- There were **23.48 lakh Indians living with HIV in 2019**. Maharashtra had the maximum numbers followed by Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

#WORLD AIDS DAY OBSERVED ON DEC. 1ST

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



World AIDS Day 2021 theme

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

History of World AIDS Day

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

Why is World AIDS Day important?

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

#CORBEVAX VACCINE GET NOD FOR EMERGENCY USE

- The **Central Drugs Standard Control Organization** has granted emergency use authorization to COVID-19 vaccine, CORBEVAX for 12-18 year age group.
- The vaccine is India's 1st indigenously developed Receptor Binding Domain Protein sub-unit vaccine against COVID-19.
- The Subject Expert Committee (SEC) of the Drugs Controller General of India's had earlier recommended granting restricted emergency use approval to Biological E's COVID-19 vaccine, Corbevax, for use among adolescents aged between 12 to 18 years subject to certain conditions.
- **Corbevax is a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine**, which will be administered through intramuscular injection in a gap of 28 days just like Covaxin.
- It has been developed by the Hyderabad-based **pharmaceutical company, Biological E.**



Significance

- **Corbevax has become the second vaccine** to receive emergency use approval in India for those aged below 18 years after Covaxin.
- The approval will speed up the ongoing vaccination drive for children aged between 15 and 18 years of age.

Corbevax vaccine: All you need to know!

- **Corbevax is India's first indigenously** developed RBD protein sub-unit vaccine against Covid-19.
- The vaccine triggers an immune response by using fragments of the **virus-like the spike protein, instead**

of using the whole virus.

- The vaccine contains a harmless S-protein antigen technology that binds to the **Angiotensin-Converting Enzyme-2 (ACE2)** receptor on the host cell membrane and enables virus entry.
- Once an individual's immune system recognizes the S protein, it will produce antibodies as white blood cells to protect against the infection.

#OTHER COVID-19 VACCINE ADMINISTERED IN INDIA

- **COVISHIELD:** It is the name given to an **Oxford-AstraZeneca** Covid-19 vaccine candidate which is technically referred to as **AZD1222 or ChAdOx 1 nCoV19**.
- **Produced By:** It is a version of the vaccine developed by the **University of Oxford** in collaboration with **Swedish-British drug-maker AstraZeneca**.
- **Serum Institute of India (SII)** is the manufacturing partner in India.
- **Significance:** It had triggered an immune response in humans against the **novel coronavirus** in early trials and is considered to be one of the global frontrunners for the Covid-19 vaccine.

COVAXIN:

- It is India's only indigenous **Covid-19** vaccine.
- **Produced By:** Developed by **Bharat Biotech**, Hyderabad in collaboration with the **Indian Council of Medical Research's National Institute of Virology**, Pune
- **Significance:** COVAXIN is more likely to work against newer variants of the virus, including the **UK variant**, as it contains **immunogens (epitopes)** from other genes in addition to those from Spike protein.
- **Immunogen** is a stimulus that produces a humoral or cell-mediated immune response, whereas antigens are any substance that binds specifically to an antibody.
- All immunogens are antigens, but all antigens may not be immunogens.
- Approval of **COVAXIN** ensures India has an additional vaccine shield especially against potential **mutant strains** in a dynamic pandemic situation.

Indian Council of Medical Research

- Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is the **apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research**.
- Its mandate is to conduct, coordinate and implement medical research for the benefit of the Society; translating medical innovations into products/processes and introducing them into the public health system.
- It is **funded by** the Government of India through the Department of Health Research, **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**.

Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO)

- The CDSCO is the Central Drug Authority for discharging functions assigned to the Central Government under the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act**.
- **Major Functions:**
- Regulatory control over the import of drugs, **approval of new drugs and clinical trials**.
- Approval of certain licences as Central Licence Approving Authority.

Drug Controller General of India (DCGI)

- DCGI is responsible for **approval of licences of specified categories of drugs** such as blood and blood products, IV fluids, vaccines and sera in India.
- It comes under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

#RATAN TATA HONOURED WITH ASSAM BAIBHAV

- **Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma** conferred the state's highest civilian award "**Assam Baibhav**" upon eminent Indian industrialist Ratan Tata in Mumbai.

Assam Baibhav Award

- The '**Assam Baibhav**' award carries a medal, a citation and a cash amount worth Rs 5 lakh. **The award is the highest civilian award of the state.**
- **Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma** had officially declared the award on the occasion of Assam Day or "Asom diwas" on December 2, 2021. So this was the first-ever conferral of the award.
- The recipient of the award can also avail medical treatment throughout his life at the state government's expense.
- **Rata Tata** was honoured for his contribution in setting up cancer treatment facilities in the state.
- Tata Trusts had signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the Assam government in 2018 to deliver comprehensive cancer care and **ensure affordable quality cancer treatment to the cancer patients in the state.**



RELATED: ASOM DIWAS OR ASSAM DAY

- Every year, **Asom Divas or Assam Day is celebrated on 2 December** to commemorate the rule of Chalong Sukapha. Sukapha ruled over Assam in the 13th century and is credited with founding the Ahom dynasty that ruled over the region for six centuries.

Who was Sukapha?

- Asom Divas has been marked by the Assam government to commemorate the rule of the 13th century king and the founder of the Ahom dynasty.
- **He is believed to have left Maulang in the year 1215** with over 9,000 people and wandered around for years, before settling in Upper Assam's Charaideo in the year 1235.
- It was in this place **that Sukapha laid the foundation of the Ahom dynasty.**
- He maintained cordial ties with many groups living in the region such as the **Sutias, Kacharis and Morans.**
- The intermarriage between the communities also strengthened the assimilation process, **leading to the Sukapha being called as the architect of greater Assam.**

#RELATED: 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.

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.**

About Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

- It is an **American private foundation formed by Bill Gates and Melinda French Gates**. It was founded in 2000 in Seattle, Washington, and as of 2020, it is the world's second-largest charity foundation, with \$49.8 billion in assets.
- The foundation's objectives are to improve healthcare and reduce extreme poverty around the world, as well as to promote educational opportunities and information technology access.

#RAMANUJAN PRIZE FOR YOUNG MATHEMATICIAN

- On February 2022, **Professor Neena Gupta**, conferred the Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians 2021.
- Neena Gupta is a mathematician from **Indian Statistical Institute in Kolkata**.
- She conferred the award for her outstanding work in affine algebraic geometry and commutative algebra.



About Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians

- The Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians is a mathematics prize that is awarded annually by "International Centre for Theoretical Physics" in Italy. It has been named after Indian mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan. **The prize was founded in 2004 and first awarded in 2005.**
- The **Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians** is awarded to researcher from a developing country who are aged below 45 years and has conducted outstanding research in developing country.
- It is supported by **Ministry of Science and Technology (India)** as well as Norwegian Academy of Science & Letters through the Abel Fund, in cooperation of "International Mathematical Union".

Who was Srinivasa Ramanujan?

- **Srinivasa Ramanujan was an Indian mathematician.** He lived during the British Rule in India.
- **He had almost no formal training in pure mathematics**, but he made substantial contributions to mathematical analysis, infinite series, number theory, continued fractions, and solutions to mathematical problems, that were then considered unsolvable. Initially, He developed his own mathematical research in isolation.

International Mathematical Union (IMU)

- IMU is an international non-governmental organization, dedicated to international cooperation in mathematics worldwide. It is a member of International Science Council (ISC).
- It supports the International Congress of Mathematicians. National mathematics organizations from about 80 countries are its members.

#OTHER PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS IN MATHS

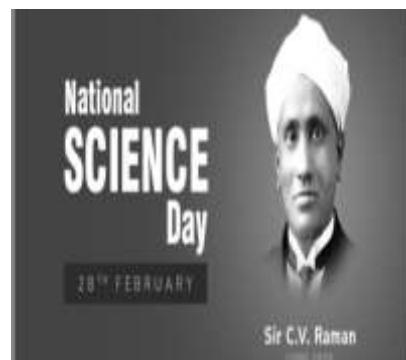
- The **Abel Prize** was established by the **Norwegian government in 2002 on the occasion of the 200th birth anniversary of the 19th century Norwegian mathematician Niels Henrik Abel**. The Abel Prize recognizes contributions to the field of mathematics that are of extraordinary depth and influence.
- The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters awards the Abel Prize based on a recommendation from the Abel committee. The prize carries a **cash award of 6 million Norwegian kroner (\$7, 03,000)** and has been awarded **annually since 2003**.
- In addition to honouring outstanding mathematicians, the Abel Prize also contributes towards raising the status of mathematics in society and stimulating the interest of children and young people in mathematics.

Breakthrough Prize in Mathematics

- There is no Nobel Prize in mathematics, and for decades, the most prestigious awards in math were the Fields Medals, **Breakthrough Prize in Mathematics**.
- The **Breakthrough Prize in Mathematics** is an annual award of the Breakthrough Prize series announced in 2013.
- It is funded by Yuri Milner and Mark Zuckerberg and others. The annual award comes with a cash gift of \$3 million. The Breakthrough Prize Board also selects up to three laureates for the **New Horizons in Mathematics Prize** which awards \$100,000 to early-career researchers.
- The **Nobel Prizes** regarded as the most prestigious awards given for intellectual achievement in the world are awarded annually from a fund bequeathed for that purpose by the **Swedish inventor and industrialist Alfred Nobel**. It is announced every year for excellence in Physics, Chemistry, Medicine, Literature, Economics, and a distinguished achievement towards humanity – **commonly known as the Nobel Peace Prize**.

#NATIONAL SCIENCE DAY OBSERVED ON 28TH FEB

- India celebrates National Science Day every year on February 28. National Science Day 2022 recognizes the contributions of scientists towards the development of India which helped the country in marking its place in the world.
- **National Science Day** also holds great prominence as it was on this day in 1928 that the **Indian Physicist Chandrashekhara Venkata Raman** made a significant discovery in the field of Spectroscopy. The discovery was later named after him and was known as the 'Raman Effect'.
- National Science Day 2022 provides an opportunity to look up to great scientists of India whose discoveries made this country a renowned nation.



- National Science Day 2022 is observed every year in India on February 28 to mark an important discovery by CV Raman in the field of Spectroscopy.
- **National Science Day** greetings to all scientists and science enthusiasts. Let us reaffirm our commitment towards fulfilling our **collective scientific responsibility and leveraging the power of science for human progress**.

National Science Day 2022 Theme

- The **theme of National Science Day 2022** is 'Integrated approach in Science and Technology for Sustainable Future'. National Science Day 2022 theme was announced by the Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh in January 2022.
- The **theme of National Science Day** highlights a folds integrated approach for science and technology for a sustainable future.

National Science Day 2022 History

- In 1986, the **National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC)** had asked the Government of India to announce February 28 as the National Science Day in India.
- The Government of India declared the day as National Science Day. The country celebrated the first National Science Day on February 28, 1987.
- **India celebrates National Science** every year to raise awareness on the significance of Science in the country.
- On February 28, 1928, **CV Raman** had made a significant discovery in the field of Spectroscopy. The discovery was later named after him and was known as the 'Raman Effect'.

What is Raman Effect?

- **Professor CV Raman** created interest in this phenomenon on his trip to Europe where he got curious to know the reason behind the blue color of the Mediterranean Sea.
- With the use of a spectrograph that was developed by him, CV Raman discovered that when light traverses a transparent material, the deflected changes its wavelength and frequency.
- This phenomenon which they called '**modified scattering**' was later termed the '**Raman Effect**' or **Raman Scattering**.

- **National Science Day 2022: 5 Interesting facts about CV Raman**
- In 1930, **CV Raman received a Nobel Prize for his discovery in the field of Spectroscopy**. He became the first Asian to receive a Nobel Prize in any branch of Science.
- CV Raman had completed his secondary and **higher secondary education at the ages of 11 and 13, respectively**.
- In 1917, CV Raman was appointed the **first Palit Professor of Physics at the Rajabazar Science College under Calcutta University**.
- In 1926, CV Raman founded the Indian Journal of Physics. In 1933, he moved to Bangalore to become the first Indian Director of the Indian Institute of Science. He also founded the Indian Academy of Science in the same year.
- In 1948, **CV Raman established the Raman Research Institute** where he worked until his last days.

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