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# ESE-2021

## (Preliminary Examination)

### Current Issues

(December - 2021)

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**19 All India 1<sup>st</sup> Ranks in ESE**

**62 All India 1<sup>st</sup> Ranks in GATE**

# Current Issues

(December - 2021)

## POLITY OF GOVERNANCE

### PM MITRA PARKS

#### Why in News

Recently, the Government has approved setting up of 7 PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks in Greenfield/Brownfield sites with an outlay of Rs. 4445 cr for a period of seven years upto 2027-28.

- The Government of India is implementing the Scheme for Integrated Textile Park (SITP) which provides support for creation of world-class infrastructure facilities for setting up of textile units.

#### CABINET DECISION

06 OCTOBER, 2021

### Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM MITRA) Parks (1/2)



- Cabinet approves setting up of **7 PM MITRA parks**
- Total outlay of **Rs. 4,445 crore over 5 years**
- Inspired by 5F vision of PM Modi - **Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign**
- To be developed by a Special Purpose Vehicle owned by **State Government and Government of India** in PPP mode
- **MITRA parks will have**
  - Core Infrastructure - incubation Centre & Plug & Play facility, Developed Factory Sites, Roads, Power, Water and Waste Water system etc
  - Support Infrastructure - workers' hostels and housing, logistics park, warehousing, medical, training & skill development facilities



## PRIVATE MEMBERS BILL

### Why in News

Recently, Rajya Sabha reserved its decision to allow the introduction of a Private Member's Bill to amend the Preamble to the Constitution.

- The Bill seeks to change the words in the Preamble “EQUALITY of status and of opportunity” to “EQUALITY of status and of opportunity to be born, to be fed, to be educated, to get a job and to be treated with dignity”.

### Amendability of Preamble

- As a part of the Constitution, the preamble can be amended under Article 368 of the Constitution, but the basic structure of the preamble can not be amended.
  - ✓ As per the Supreme Court verdict in the Kesavananda Bharati vs State of Kerala, 1973, Parliament cannot change the basic structure of the Constitution.
- As of now, the preamble is only amended once through the 42nd Amendment Act, 1976.
  - ✓ It added three new words—Socialist, Secular and Integrity.

## Private Member's Bill



## KEY POINTS

### About:

- Any Member of Parliament (MP) who is not a minister is referred to as a private member.
- Its drafting is the responsibility of the member concerned. Its introduction in the House requires one month's notice.

- The government bills\public bills can be introduced and discussed on any day, private member's bills can be introduced and discussed only on Fridays.
  - ✓ In case of multiple Bills, a ballot system is used to decide the sequence of bills for introduction.
  - ✓ The Parliamentary Committee on Private Member's Bills and Resolutions goes through all such Bills and classifies them based on their urgency and importance.
- Its rejection by the House has no implication on the parliamentary confidence in the government or its resignation.
- Upon conclusion of the discussion, the member piloting the bill can either withdraw it on the request of the minister concerned, or he may choose to press ahead with its passage.

### Previous Private Bills:

- The last time a private member's bill was passed by both Houses was in 1970.
  - ✓ It was the Supreme Court (Enlargement of Criminal Appellate Jurisdiction) Bill, 1968.
- 14 private member's bills - five of which were introduced in Rajya Sabha - have become law so far. Some other private member bills that have become laws include-
  - ✓ Proceedings of Legislature (Protection of Publication) Bill, 1956, in the Lok Sabha.
  - ✓ The Salaries and Allowances of Members of Parliament (Amendment) Bill, 1964, introduced in the Lok Sabha.
  - ✓ The Indian Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 1967 introduced in the Rajya Sabha.

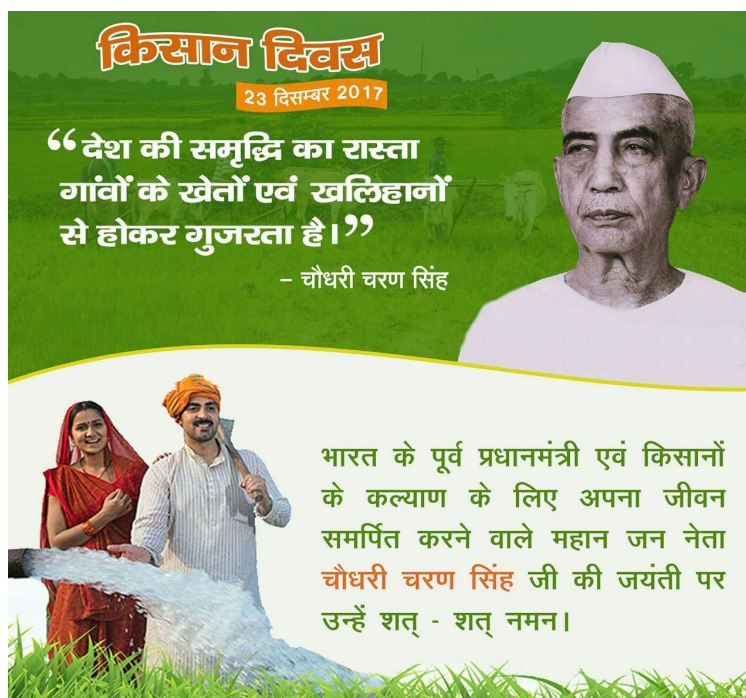
### Significance:

- The purpose of the private member's bill is to draw the government's attention to what individual MPs see as issues and gaps in the existing legal framework, which require legislative intervention.
  - ✓ Thus it reflects the stand of the opposition party on public matters.

### Public Bill vs Private Bill

<i>Public Bill</i>	<i>Private Bill</i>
1. It is introduced in the Parliament by a minister.	1. It is introduced by any member of Parliament other than a minister.
2. It reflects of the policies of the government (ruling party).	2. It reflects the stand of opposition party on public matter.
3. It has greater chance to be approved by the Parliament.	3. It has lesser chance to be approved by the Parliament.
4. Its rejection by the House amounts to the exp-ression of want of parliamentary confidence in the government and may lead to its resignation.	4. Its rejection by the House has no implication on the parliamentary confidence in the government or its resignation.
5. Its introduction in the House requires seven days' notice.	5. Its introduction in the House requires one month's notice.
6. It is drafted by the concerned department in consultation with the law department.	6. Its drafting is the responsibility of the member concerned.

### KISAN DIWAS OBSERVED ON 23RD DECEMBER





## KEY POINTS

- The nation celebrated Kisan Diwas or National Farmers' Day on 23rd December.
- The day commemorates the birth anniversary of the fifth Prime Minister of India, Chaudhary Charan Singh.
- In addition, the day is celebrated in honour of the contribution of Indian farmers and to glorify their importance in the country.
- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu paid tributes to former Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh on his birth anniversary and also expressed gratitude to the industrious farmers on Kisan Diwas.
- He said that they are the cornerstone of India's food security.
- The Vice President said that our farmers have always stood tall in the face of adversities, be it floods, drought, or even a pandemic.
- Mr. Naidu called upon all stakeholders to make every effort to make farming profitable and ensure that farmers are duly recognized and rewarded for their hard work.

## PM LAYS FOUNDATION STONE OF BANAS DAIRY SANKUL IN VARANASI



## KEY POINTS

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the White Revolution can play an important role in increasing the income of farmers that is why the government is continuously supporting the farmers in the dairy sector.

- The Prime Minister said this while launching 27 developmental projects worth over Rs 2000 crore including laying of the foundation stone for 'Banas Dairy Sankul' at Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority Food Park at Karkhiyaon in Varanasi.
- Spread across 30 acres of land, the dairy plant will be built at a cost of about Rs. 475 crore and will have a facility for processing five lakh litre of milk per day.
- Apart from milk, the Banas Dairy plant will produce 50,000 litres of ice cream, 20 ton cottage cheese, buttermilk, curd, lassi and sweets per day.
- The plant will have a bakery unit and will also include a take-home ration plant to produce nutritional supplements for women and children.
- This project will benefit the local farmers of 1,000 neighbouring villages of Purvanchal region like Varanasi, Jaunpur, Chandauli, Bhadohi, Ghazipur, Mirzapur and Azamgarh.
- The proposed biogas plant at Varanasi Milk Plant Ramnagar is also unique and it will use about 100 MT of dung per day which shall be aggregated from minimum 2000 farmers (at about 25 kg per farmer owning 2-4 animals) and Gaushalas within a radius of about 10 Km of the dairy plant.
- Farmers supplying dung shall be paid about Rs.1/kg of dung upfront and would also be supplied with solid and liquid manure at subsidised rates through reverse supply chain, Varanasi Dairy Plant shall be the first dairy plant in the country meeting its energy need from cow dung.
- The Prime Minister also inaugurated multiple urban development projects in Varanasi and projects in the education sector.

### **PM TRANSFERS RS.1000 CRORE TO SHGs BENEFITTING AROUND 16 LAKH WOMEN**



## KEY POINTS

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in a one-of-its-kind programme on women empowerment in Prayagraj attended by over 2 lakh women, many of them beneficiaries of different government schemes.
- The Prime Minister transferred a total amount of Rs.1000 crore rupees in the bank accounts of Self Help Groups (SHGs), benefiting around 16 lakh women members.
- On the occasion, the PM said, "I consider the sisters of women self-help groups to be the champions of the Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign.
- These Self Help Groups are actually National Help Groups." The Prime Minister also transferred Rs.4000 as first month's stipend in 20,000 accounts of Business Correspondent-Sakhis.
- Over Rs.20 crore were transferred to more than 1 lakh beneficiaries under the Mukhya Mantri Kanya Sumangala Scheme.
- On the occasion, the Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone of 202 Supplementary Nutrition Manufacturing Units.

## INDIAN COAST GUARD LAUNCHES WEBSITE FOR ONLINE RECRUITMENT OF OFFICERS

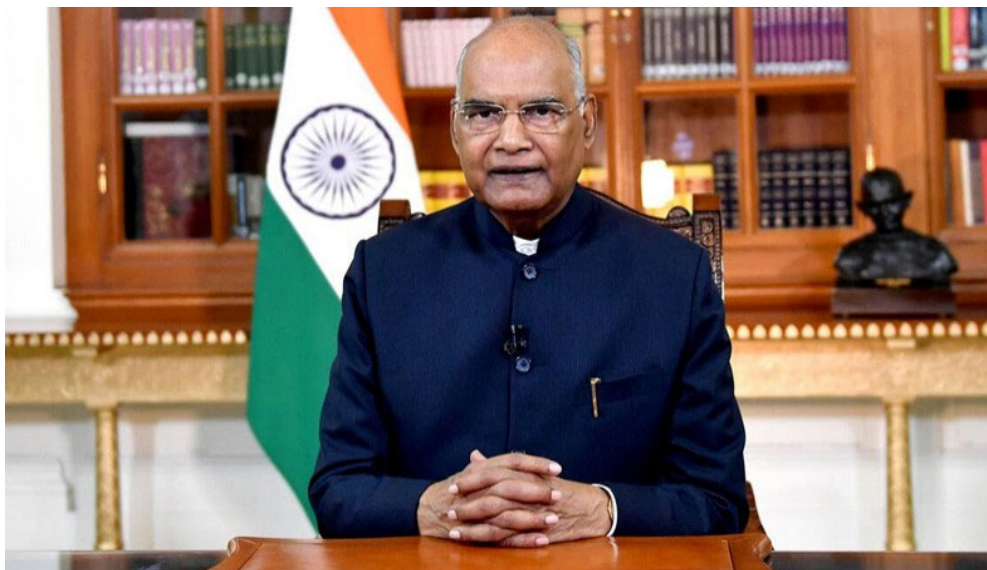


## KEY POINTS

- The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has launched a website (Joinindiancoast-guard.gov.in) for online recruitment of the officers.
- ICG said, the digital recruitment process will cover around hundred cities spread throughout the country and would be conducted twice a year ensuring far wider reach, talent and also provide an unprecedented opportunity to the individuals aspiring to serve the nation.
- Director General of Indian Coast Guard ICG, Shri Krishnaswamy Natarajan said the paradigm shift from the existing process to computer-based examination for selection of officers will enhance transparency, minimise human intervention, facilitate automation and offer equal opportunity, level-playing field to aspiring candidates, resulting In the selection of aspiring candidates from a larger pool.



## PRESIDENT RAM NATH KOVIND WRAPS UP 3-DAY VISIT TO BANGLADESH



### KEY POINTS

- President Ram Nath Kovind concluded his visit to Bangladesh on 17th December after interacting with a cross-section of Bangladeshi people including Muktiyodhas, Indian war veterans of 1971, eminent citizens and members of the Indian community.
- Pointing out the importance of connectivity for economic growth and better living standard for the people.
- President Kovind reiterated India's commitment to assist and partner Bangladesh in its journey towards a strong economy.
- During his three-day visit to attend the 50th Vijay Diwas celebrations in Bangladesh, President Ram Nath Kovind made several key announcements including the gifting of the Bangabandhu Bapu digital exhibition to the Liberation War Museum in Dhaka and the announcement of the first occupant of the Bangabandhu Chair at Delhi University.
- The scholarship scheme for the family members of the Liberation War Fighters was also extended for five years.
- The President also inaugurated the renovated Ramana Kali Mandir in Dhaka that was completely destroyed by the Pakistani army during the 1971 liberation war.
- The temple has been renovated with support from the Indian High Commission in Bangladesh.

## LOKPAL ONLINE - DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR CORRUPTION COMPLAINTS – LAUNCHED



### KEY POINTS

- The Chairperson of Lokpal, Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose inaugurated a digital platform for management of complaints called Lokpal Online.
- The digital platform can be accessed by all citizens of the country and complaints can be filed from anywhere, anytime at [www.lokpalonline.gov.in](http://www.lokpalonline.gov.in).
- Lokpal On-line is an end-to-end digital solution for the management of complaints against public servants filed under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013.
- It is a web-based facility, which will quicken the disposal of complaints in an accountable, transparent and efficient manner with benefits to all stakeholders.

## INDIA SUCCESSFULLY TESTS INDIGENOUS NEXT-GEN MISSILE BASED TORPEDO SYSTEM

### KEY POINTS

- India has successfully tested the supersonic missile assisted torpedo system developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The weapon system, launched from Wheeler Island in Odisha, is a next-generation missile-based standoff torpedo delivery system that will enhance the anti-submarine warfare capability of the Indian Navy.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the development of the system is a perfect example of building futuristic defence systems in the country.

## CDS GENERAL BIPIN RAWAT. HIS WIFE, 11 OTHER DEFENCE PERSONNEL DIE IN AIR CRASH



### KEY POINTS

- Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat passed away on 8th December 2021 after an Indian Air Force helicopter carrying him crashed in Tamil Nadu. India's first CDS and the longest-serving four-star officer.
- General Rawat was instrumental in creating the foundation of India's joint theatre commands, a major reform in Indian military establishment since Independence. CDS Rawat was commissioned into the Indian Army in December 1978.
- He previously served as Chief of the Army Staff from January 2017 to December 2019.
- He took charge of Chief of Defence Staff on January 2020.
- General Bipin Rawat's wife Madhulika Rawat and 11 other defence personnel who were accompanying the CDS also lost their lives in the fateful crash. Their last rites were performed with full military honours in New Delhi on 10th December. Meanwhile, a thorough probe is underway to ascertain the cause of the helicopter crash.

## **PARLIAMENT PASSES ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGY (REGULATION) BILL, 2021**

### **KEY POINTS**

- The Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2021 provides for setting up of a national registry which will act as a central database of all assisted reproductive technology (ART) clinics and the assisted reproductive technology banks, enabling their regulation and supervision.
- The Legislation also envisages ensuring safe and ethical practice of assisted reproductive technology services and preventing their misuse where assisted reproductive technology is required for becoming a parent or for freezing gametes, embryos, embryonic tissues for further use due to Infertility, disease or social or medical concerns.
- The legislation also clarifies that a child born through ART will be deemed to be a biological child of the commissioning couple and will be entitled to the rights and privileges available to a natural child of the commissioning couple.
- A donor will not have any parental rights over the child.

## **PARLIAMENT PASSES NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PHARMACEUTICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2021**

### **KEY POINTS**

- The National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (Amendment) Bill, 2021 seeks to amend the original Act of 1998 to declare six additional National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research as Institutions of National Importance.
- These Institutes are located in Ahmedabad, Hajipur, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Guwahati and Raebareli.
- The Bill also provides for a Council to coordinate the activities among the institutes to ensure development of pharmaceutical education and research.

## THREE FARM LAWS REPEALED

### Why in news



### KEY POINTS

- The government has issued a gazette notification to repeal the three farm laws.
- The Parliament repealed these laws on the first day of the ongoing Winter Session of Parliament.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to the nation on the 19th of November had announced that the new farm laws enacted in 2019 will be repealed, appealing to all protesting farmers to go home in good spirits.
- The PM had also said a committee would be constituted to look into all aspects of agriculture. The three Laws, now repealed, included the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

## 10 CRORE UNORGANIZED WORKERS REGISTERED ON E-SHRAM PORTAL

### Why in news



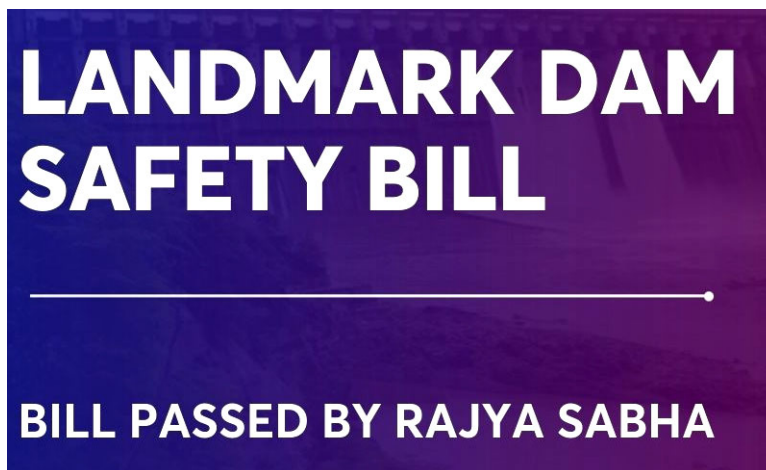


## KEY POINTS

- The e-SHRAM portal, the National Database of Unorganized Workers (UWs) which was launched on 26th August 2021, has crossed the mark of ten crore registrations.
- The database Includes details of construction workers, migrant workers, gig workers and platform workers, street vendors, domestic workers, agriculture workers, etc.
- The eSHRAM portal seeded with Aadhar will be used to deliver all the social security benefits of the Central and State Governments for the unorganized workers.
- All eligible registered workers on eSHRAM portal gets an Accidental Insurance cover of 2 Lacs under Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana from the date of issue of policy.

## PARLIAMENT PASSES LANDMARK DAM SAFETY BILL

### Why in news



## KEY POINTS

- The Rajya Sabha has passed the landmark Dam Safety Bill (2019), paving the way for enactment of the Dam Safety Act in the country.
- The Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on 2nd August 2019.
- The Bill provides for adequate surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of all the large dams in the country so as to prevent dam failure due to disasters.
- The Bill provides for an institutional mechanism at both Central and State levels to address structural and non-structural measures required for ensuring the safe functioning of dams.

- After China and USA, India is the third largest dam-owning nation in the world. There are around 5,700 large dams in the country, of which about 80% are already over 25 years old.
- Nearly 227 dams that are over 100 years old are still functional.
- Although India's track record of dam safety is at par with that of the developed nations, there have been Instances of unwarranted dam failures and of poor maintenance.

## INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

### BARBADOS: WORLD'S NEWEST REPUBLIC

#### Why in News

Recently, Barbados has officially removed Queen Elizabeth II as its head of state and become the world's newest republic nearly 400 years after the country became a British colony.

- The Caribbean island nation, 55 years after its independence, got rid of the remnants of colonial rule by separating from Britain.
- Barbados, however, will continue to be one of the 54 Commonwealth nations.

### KEY POINTS

#### About:

- **Barbados:**
  - ✓ **Location:** It is a small island country in the south-eastern Caribbean Sea.
  - ✓ **Neighbours:** Its neighbours include Saint Lucia, to the north, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, to the west, and Trinidad and Tobago to the south.
  - ✓ **Capital:** Bridgetown
  - ✓ **Independence:** On November 30, 1966, Barbados gained its independence.



- **Leadership:**
  - ✓ Dame Sandra Prunella Mason is the current President of Barbados.
  - ✓ Mia Amor Mottley is the current Prime Minister of Barbados.
- **Part of CARICOM:** Barbados is part of Caribbean Community (CARICOM) which was formed in 1973.

## INDIA AND VIETNAM



## KEY POINTS

- On 16 December 2021, India and Vietnam have signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) to develop a partnership in the fields of digital media.
- Under the LoI, both the nations will share information and experience to develop policies and regulatory norms in digital media and social networks domains.
- They also work to develop capacity building and training programs to grant training to the media professionals of both nations.

## OBSERVER STATUS TO ISA



## KEY POINTS

- On 10 December 2021, the UNO General Assembly conferred Observer Status to the International Solar Alliance (ISA), a historic decision which India said would help provide for well-defined cooperation between the Alliance and the United Nations that would benefit global energy growth and development.
- The ISA was conceived as a joint effort by India and France to mobilize efforts against climate change through the deployment of solar energy solutions.



## INDIA WAS RE-ELECTED TO IMO



### KEY POINTS

- On 8 December 2021, India was reelected to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Council for 2022-23 following elections held at the IMO Assembly in London.
- Along with Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the UAE, India's election is part of a group of ten countries having "the greatest interest in international seaborne trade".
- The International Maritime Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations which is responsible for measures to improve the safety and security of international shipping and to prevent pollution from the ship.

## JAMES WEBB SPACE TELESCOPE LAUNCHED



## KEY POINTS

- On 25 December 2021, the James Webb Space Telescope was launched by NASA.
- It was carried by an Ariane 5 rocket from Europe's Spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana.
- It was jointly developed by NASA, Canadian Space Agency (CSA) and the European Space Agency (ESA)
- Webb telescope will allow scientists to determine how the first galaxies were formed and will see our solar system in new ways and never-before-seen detail.

## INDIA SUPPORTS UNSC RESOLUTION ON EASING CURBS ON AID TO AFGHANISTAN

### KEY POINTS

- India has voted to support a resolution to grant exemption from sanctions for humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan at the United Nations Security Council.
- India's Permanent Representative to the UN, TS Tirumurti said that access to humanitarian assistance should be without hindrance. He added that the disbursement is non-discriminatory and accessible to all.

## INDIA HANDS OVER ONE MILLION DOSES OF COVID VACCINES TO MYANMAR



## KEY POINTS

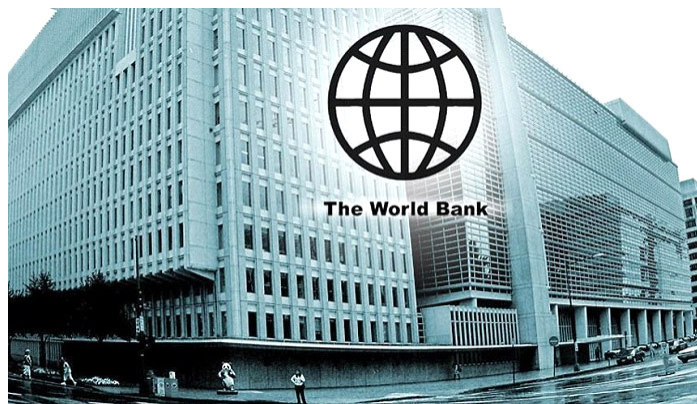
- Foreign Secretary Shri Harshvardhan Shringla handed over one million doses of 'Made in India' vaccines to the representatives of the Myanmar Red Cross Society during his two-day visit to the neighbouring country.
- The step is aimed at supporting the people of Myanmar, Including those along the India-Myanmar border, in their fight against COVID-19.
- The Foreign Secretary's visit, the first high-level visit since the seizure of power by the Myanmar Military on the 1st February 2021, came just days after a Myanmar court sentenced the deposed State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and former President Win Myint to four years In Jail on charges of inciting violence against the military and breaking the natural disaster laws of the country.
- India said that it is disturbed by the verdicts, Official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs Arindam Bagchi said that India believes in rule of law and the democratic process.
- Any development that undermines these processes and accentuates differences is a matter of deep concern.

## CHINA CONDUCTS WAR DRILL IN TIBET MILITARY REGION BORDERING INDIA

### KEY POINTS

- China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) has recently carried out a real combat drill involving anti-nuclear, chemical and biological warfare in Tibet Military Region.
- As per a report published in an official PLA news portal, the exercise was carried out in late November by a joint military brigade of PLA Including commandos, armored assault groups and soldiers trained for chemical warfare.
- Tibet Military Region comes under the Western Theatre Command (WTC), the largest of China's five commands that is responsible for guarding the Sino-India disputed border from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh.
- The report comes at a time when India and China are entangled in a protracted border stand-off in eastern Ladakh.

## WORLD BANK ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL \$93 BILLION FUND FOR POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY OF POOR COUNTRIES



### KEY POINTS

- The World Bank has announced \$93 billion fund to help the world's poorest nations in post-pandemic recovery.
- It was the biggest replenishment ever for the international Development Association (IDA), which provides grants to 74 countries, most of which are in Africa.
- The package Includes \$23.5 billion of contributions from 48 high - and middle-income countries as well as financing raised in the capital markets and the World Bank's own contributions, according to a statement.
- The World Bank said the funds will help countries better prepare for future crises, including pandemics, financial shocks, and natural disasters.

## IAEA AND IRAN REACH AGREEMENT TO REINSTALL CAMERAS AT NUCLEAR SITE



### KEY POINTS

- The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Iran have reached a deal to reinstall cameras at a centrifuge parts manufacturing facility in Karaj to replace cameras that were damaged or destroyed when the site was targeted by a sabotage attack in June this year.
- IAEA Director-General Rafael Mariano Grossi said, this is important for verification under the Iran nuclear deal, and work will continue to address other outstanding safeguards issues.
- As part of the deal, the IAEA would make available a sample camera and related technical information to Iran for analysis by its relevant security and judiciary officials, in the presence of the agency inspectors.
- However, Iran still will Keep all recordings from the cameras - part of another ongoing dispute between the agency and Tehran sparked by the nuclear deal's collapse.
- Negotiations continue in Vienna over trying to restore the nuclear deal.

## OLAF SCHOLZ SWORN IN AS GERMANY'S NEW CHANCELLOR





## KEY POINTS

- Olaf Scholz has been sworn in as Germany's new Chancellor, bringing to an end Angela Merkel's historic 16 years as leader.
- His centre-left Social Democrats win now govern alongside the Greens and the business-friendly Free Democrats.
- 63-year-old, Mr. Scholz, steered the Social Democrats to election victory in late September, positioning himself as the continuity candidate because he played a key role in the Merkel government as vice-chancellor.
- The German parliament, the Bundestag, backed his appointment by 395 votes to 303, and he was then formally appointed as the ninth Federal Chancellor by President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

## MORE COUNTRIES JOIN US-LED DIPLOMATIC BOYCOTT OF 2022 BEIJING WINTER OLYMPICS

### KEY POINTS

- The United Kingdom, Canada and Australia have joined the US-led diplomatic boycott of the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing over concerns about human rights in China.
- These announcements came after the White House confirmed diplomatic boycotts of the Winter Olympics to protest Chinese human rights abuses.
- US President Joe Biden's administration cited what the US calls genocide against minority Muslims in China's Xinjiang region.
- New Zealand has also confirmed it will not send officials to Beijing mostly because of the coronavirus pandemic, but it also voiced concern over human rights issues in China.
- Although diplomats from these countries will not be visiting China for the games, athletes from those countries will still compete in the Games that will be held between 4th and 20th February 2022.
- International Olympic Committee (IOC) Chief Thomas Bach has said the presence of government officials is a political decision for each government so the principle of IOC neutrality applies.
- Meanwhile, China has warned that a US diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Winter Olympics could harm the dialogue and co-operation between the two countries in important areas and called for politics to be kept out of sports.

- The Chinese mission to the United Nations has called the US move a reflection of "its mentality of the Cold War."

## **EUROPEAN UNION NOT TO RECOGNIZE TALIBAN REGIME IN AFGHANISTAN**

### **Why in news**

- The European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen has said that the European Union will not recognise the Taliban regime which was imposed through violence but is ready to offer assistance in mitigating the imminent economic and social collapse that the country faces.
- Meanwhile, Russia, United States, Japan, Canada, France and the UK have also made it clear that they are not planning to recognise the government formed by the Taliban.
- Afghanistan is currently battered by the deepening economic, humanitarian, and security crisis following the violent takeover by Taliban forces earlier this year.

## **INDEX**

## **FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY INDEX: WEST BENGAL, KERALA ON TOP; BIHAR, JHARKHAND RANK LOWEST**

### **KEY POINTS**

- West Bengal topped the chart and Bihar languished at the bottom in the large states' category on the 'Index on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy' - an indicator of literacy among children below 10 years.
- In the 'small states' category, Kerala grabbed the top spot and Jharkhand was adjudged the worst performer.
- The index includes five pillars comprising 41 indicators.
- The five pillars are - educational infrastructure, access to education, basic health, learning outcomes and governance.
- The statement said out of the five pillars, it has been observed that states have performed particularly worse in governance.
- The report is prepared by the Institute for Competitiveness and released by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister.

## GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY INDEX 2021

### Why in News

Recently, the Global Health Security (GHS) Index 2021 has been recently released.

- In India, NITI Aayog releases its own health index.

### KEY POINTS

#### GHS Index:

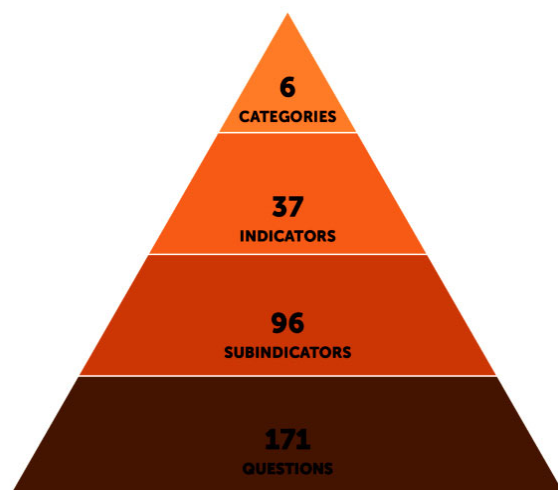
##### About:

- It is an assessment and benchmarking of health security and related capabilities across 195 countries.
- It has been developed in partnership by the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) and the Johns Hopkins Center.
  - ✓ NTI is a nonprofit global security organization focused on reducing nuclear and biological threats imperiling humanity.
  - ✓ Johns Hopkins Center was created to recognize the crucial role of communication in public health.

##### Methods of Ranking:

- The GHS Index assesses countries' health security and capabilities across six categories.

#### GLOBAL HEALTH SECURITY INDEX FRAMEWORK



- The six categories are as follows:
  - ✓ **Prevention:** Prevention of the emergence or release of pathogens.
  - ✓ **Detection and Reporting:** Early detection and reporting for epidemics of potential international concern.
  - ✓ **Rapid Response:** Rapid response to and mitigation of the spread of an epidemic.
  - ✓ **Health System:** Sufficient and robust health system to treat the sick and protect health workers.
  - ✓ **Compliance with International Norms:** Commitments to improving national capacity, financing plans to address gaps, and adhering to global norms.
  - ✓ **Risk Environment:** Overall risk environment and country vulnerability to biological threats.
- The index measures countries' capabilities from 0-100, with 100 representing the highest level of preparedness. The GHS Index scoring system includes three tiers.
  - ✓ **Low Scores:** Countries that score between 0 and 33.3 are in the bottom tier.
  - ✓ **Moderate Scores:** Countries that score between 33.4 and 66.6 are in the middle tier
  - ✓ **High Scores:** Countries that score between 66.7 and 100 are in the upper or "top" tier.

### Ranking:

#### India's:

- India, with a score of 42.8 (out of 100) and it has slipped by 0.8 points since 2019.

#### World:

- Three neighbouring countries of India like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives have improved their score by 1-1.2 points.
- The world's overall performance on the GHS Index score slipped to 38.9 (out of 100) in 2021, from a score of 40.2 in the GHS Index, 2019.
- In 2021, no country scored in the top tier of rankings and no country scored above 75.9.

## WAGE RATE INDEX (WRI)

### Why in News




Recently, the government has revised the base year for Wage Rate Index (WRI) to 2016 which will replace the old series with a base of 1963-65.

- The Wage Rate Index Number measures the relative changes in wage rates over a period of time; high or low Wage Rate Index in an industry does not necessarily indicate high or low wage rate in that industry as compared to other industries.
- A base year is the first of a series of years in an economic or financial index and is typically set to an arbitrary level of 100.

## More inclusive

The new series seeks to cover 700 occupations and makes the wage rate index more representative, expanding the number of industries, sample size and the weightage of industries.

### Wage rate index base revision to 2016

Sector	No. of industries		Weights (in %)		Sample units	
	1963-65	2016	1963-65	2016	1963-65	2016
 Manufacturing	14	30	48.78	82.57	923	2,627
 Mining	4	4	17.01	11.23	110	163
 Plantation	3	3	34.21	6.2	223	91
Total	21	37	100	100	1,256	2,881



## AWARDS

### NILMANI PHUKAN, DAMODAR MAUZO CONFERRED GYANPEETH AWARDS



### KEY POINTS

- Noted Assamese poet Nilmani Phukan has won the 56th Gyanpeeth Award and renowned Konkani short story writer and novelist Damodar Mauzo has won the 57th Gyanpeeth Award for their contribution to Indian literature.
- Phukan has written thirteen volumes of poetry.
- Some of his Immortal creations include Surya Heno Nami Ahe El Nadiyedi, Manas-Pratima and Phuli Thaka Surya-mukhi Phultor Phale.
- Padma Shri Phukan was conferred with Sahitya Akademi Award in 1981.
- His works have been translated into many Indian and foreign languages.
- Damodar Mauzo is the most prolific contemporary Konkani writer and has been writing for more than the last fifty years and has footprints in many genres that include short stories, novels, criticism and children literature.
- However, short stories remained his forte and love.
- His novel Karmelin had bagged Sahitya Akademi award In 1983.
- His several short stories are translated into other languages and have appealed in various magazines.

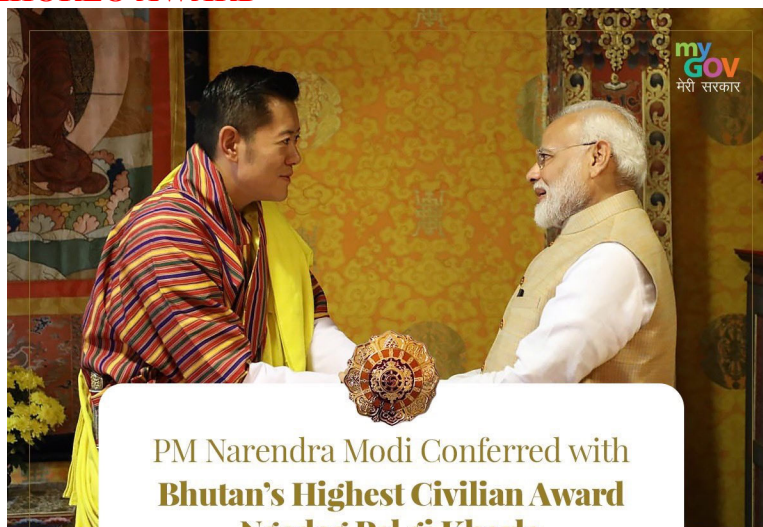
## BHUTAN CONFERS HIGHEST CIVILIAN AWARD TO PRIME MINISTER SHRI NARENDRA MODI



### KEY POINTS

- Bhutan has conferred its highest civilian award Ngadag Pel gi Khorlo on Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.
- While conferring the award, Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wang-chuck highlighted the support PM Modi has extended to Bhutan over the years and particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### NGADAG PEL GI KHORLO AWARD



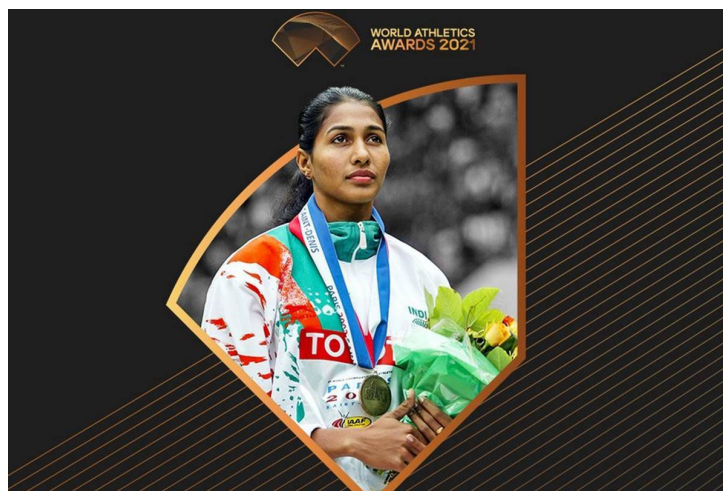
PM Narendra Modi Conferred with  
**Bhutan's Highest Civilian Award**  
**Ngadag Pel gi Khorlo**

Honoured for his  
“unconditional friendship & support extended over  
the years & particularly during the pandemic”

## KEY POINTS

- On 17 December 2021, Bhutan conferred its highest civilian award Ngadag Pel gi Khorlo on PM Narendra Modi on the eve of the country's National Day. Every year, on December 17, Bhutan marks the national day in memory of the birth of the Wangchuk dynasty in 1907.
- PM Modi is the first foreign head of government to receive Bhutan's highest civilian award. Bhutan conferred honour on PM Modi for his outstanding contribution to bilateral relations and his services to the Bhutanese nation and people.

## ANJU BOBBY GEORGE WINS WORLD ATHLETICS WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD



## KEY POINTS

- Former international long jump star Anju Bobby George has been awarded the Woman of the Year Award by World Athletics (WA) for grooming talent in the country and advocating gender equality.
- The 44-year-old, best recognized for her bronze haul in the 2003 World Athletics Championships in long jump, was named for the award in the world body's annual awards night on December 1.
- Senior Vice President of the Indian Athletics Federation, Bobby George is also a constant voice for gender equality and mentors schoolgirls for future leadership positions in sports.
- Anju said she was "truly humbled and honoured" by the award.

## IFFI HONOURS BEST OF INDIAN AND WORLD CINEMA



### KEY POINTS

- Japanese director Masakazu Kaneko's 'Ring Wandering, about an aspiring manga artist, won the Golden Peacock Award at the closing ceremony of the 52nd edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa on 29th November 2021.
- The Silver Peacock award for best director went to Czech director Vaclav Kadrnka's 'Saving One Who Was Dead.' Jitendra Joshi won the Silver Peacock for best actor (male) for filmmaker Nikhil Mahajan's Marathi drama 'Godavari.'
- The Silver Peacock for best actor (female) went to Angela Molina for her Paraguay film 'Charlotte by Simon Franco.
- Argentine filmmaker Mari Alessandrini's 'Zahori' bagged the best debut feature film at the festival.
- 'Lingul - The Sacred Bonds', helmed by Mahamat-Saleh Haroun from Chad, won the ICFT UNESCO Gandhi Award.
- Noted lyricist and CBFC chairman Prasoon Joshi, and veteran Actor Hema Malini were felicitated with the Indian Personality of the Year honour.



**SPORTS****KIDAMBI SRIKANTH WIN SILVER IN BWF****KEY POINTS**

- On 19 December 2021, the Shuttler Kidambi Srikanth became the first Indian man to win a silver medal at the BWF World Championships. Singapore's Loh Kean Yew defeated Kidambi in the summit clash 21-15,22-20.
- This is the first time that a men's player from Singapore won gold at the BWF World Championships.

**NATIONAL DOPE TESTING LABORATORY REGAINS WADA ACCREDITATION**

## KEY POINTS

- The National Dope Testing Laboratory has regained the World Anti-Doping Agency, WADA accreditation.
- Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Anurag Thakur said restoration of the accreditation is a boost to India's efforts to achieve the highest global standards of excellence in sports.
- He termed it as a result of untiring efforts by the government.

## 148 ATHLETES SELECTED FOR TARGET OLYMPIC PODIUM SCHEME



## KEY POINTS

- A total of 148 athletes, including 20 new inductees, have been identified for support under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme, TOPS for the 2024 Olympic Games.
- The Mission Olympic Cell, MOC, of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports approved the list of athletes in Cycling.
- Sailing, Shooting, Swimming, Table Tennis, Weightlifting and Wrestling.
- It also approved a list of athletes to compete In Para Sports - Archery Athletics, Badminton, Shooting, Swimming and Table Tennis.
- The Sports Ministry said that Archery, Athletics, Badminton, Boxing. Equestrian, Fencing Golf Gymnastics, Judo Rowing and Tennis will be taken up in the next meeting of the MOC.



## JHILLI DALABEHERA, SANKET MAHADEV CLINCHE GOLD AT COMMONWEALTH WEIGHTLIFTING CHAMPIONSHIPS



### KEY POINTS

- Jhilli Dalabehera has won the gold medal in the women's 49kg category at the Commonwealth Weight-lifting Championships in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- Dalabehera lifted the total weight of 167kg with 73kg in snatch and 94kg in clean and jerk to win the yellow metal in the 49kg category.
- In the men's 55kg snatch category, Sanket Mahadev has clinched the gold medal as he lifted the weight of 113kg, With this lift, Sanket created the new snatch national record.
- Meanwhile, S Bldyarani Devi has won silver at the women's 55kg category at the Commonwealth Weightlifting Championships.
- Devi lifted a total of 198kg to finish second behind Nigeria's Adijat Olarinoye who had an effort of 203kg in the Commonwealth Championships.
- The gold winners in each category in the Commonwealth Championships qualify directly for next year's Commonwealth Games In Birmingham.

## WOMEN'S WORLD CUP QUALIFIER 2021 CALLED OFF

### Why in news



**KEY POINTS**

- The International Cricket Council has called off the Women's World Cup Qualifier 2021 at Harare in Zimbabwe has been called off due to the imposition of travel restrictions from a number of countries, including the host country Zimbabwe, following the breakout of a new COVID-19 variant In southern Africa.
- The International Cricket Council has announced that the qualifiers will now be decided according to the team rankings as detailed in the tournament playing conditions.

## SUMMITS

### FIRST DEMOCRACY SUMMIT

#### Why in News

Recently, the Summit for Democracy was hosted by the United States “to renew democracy at home and confront autocracies abroad”.

- The US President also announced the establishment of the Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal that will provide foreign assistance initiatives.
  - ✓ The initiative will be powered by \$424.4 million and will be aimed to support free media, fight corruption, strengthen democratic reforms, for use of technology for democracy and for defence of free and fair elections.

### KEY POINTS

#### About:

- It aims to show how open, rights-respecting societies can work together to effectively tackle the challenges of present time, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the climate crisis, and inequality.
- **The Summit was centered around three principal themes:**
  - ✓ Defending against authoritarianism
  - ✓ Addressing and fighting corruption
  - ✓ Advancing respect for human rights

#### 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 decentralisation of power.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### FACIAL RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGY

#### Why in News

After a delay of three years, passengers will be able to use a face scan as their boarding pass at four airports (Varanasi, Pune, Kolkata and Vijayawada) in the country from 2022.

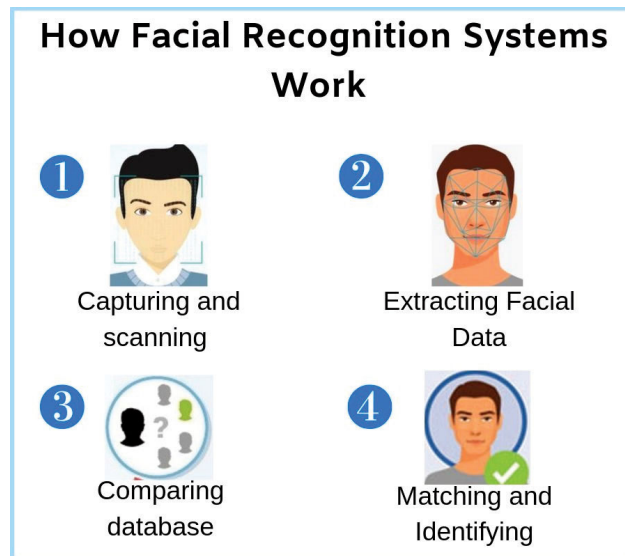
#### KEY POINTS

##### Facial Recognition:

- It is a biometric technology that uses distinctive features of the face to identify and distinguish an individual.
  - ✓ Over a period of almost 6 decades, it has evolved in many ways- from looking at 3D contours of a face to recognizing skin patterns.
- In the Automated Facial Recognition System (AFRS), the large database (containing photos and videos of peoples' faces) is used to match and identify the person.
- Image of an unidentified person, taken from CCTV footage, is compared to the existing database using Artificial Intelligence technology, for pattern finding and matching.

##### Working:

- The facial recognition system works primarily by capturing the face & its features through the camera and then using various kinds of software to reconstruct those features.
- The captured face along with its features is stored into a database, which can be integrated with any kind of software that may be used for security purposes, banking services, etc.



#### Need:

##### Authentication:

- It is used for identification and authentication purposes with a success rate of almost 75%.

##### Force Multiplier:

- In India, where there are just 144 constables per 1 lakh citizens, this can act as a force multiplier. It neither requires too much manpower nor regular upgradation.
- Hence, this technology coupled with the present manpower in place can act as a game-changer

## ABUNDANCE OF LITHIUM IN STARS

#### Why in News

Recently, Scientists have found a clue to the mystery behind the high abundance of Lithium in some evolved stars.

- The mystery is the reason behind the high abundance of Lithium in stars, which according to predicted models must get destroyed in the hot plasma of the star.
- Lithium is a trace element on Earth, and a key component of rechargeable batteries.



## KEY POINTS

- **Sample for Research:** The research involved the investigation of lithium among red giants showed that just about 1% of sun-like red giants had a lithium enriched surface.
- **Research Methodology:** The research surveyed (called GALAH - named after a common Australian bird) a collection of about 500,000 stars with well-determined physical and chemical properties, including lithium abundances.
- **Findings of Research:** Regarding the reason for Lithium production, scientists have for the first time confirmed that all the lithium-rich stars are burning helium in their core.
  - ✓ They speculated that lithium production is linked to the violent helium-core flash.
  - ✓ It is proposed to be a simple and short sequence of nuclear reactions involving a collision between the two stable helium isotopes which led to a stable lithium isotope.

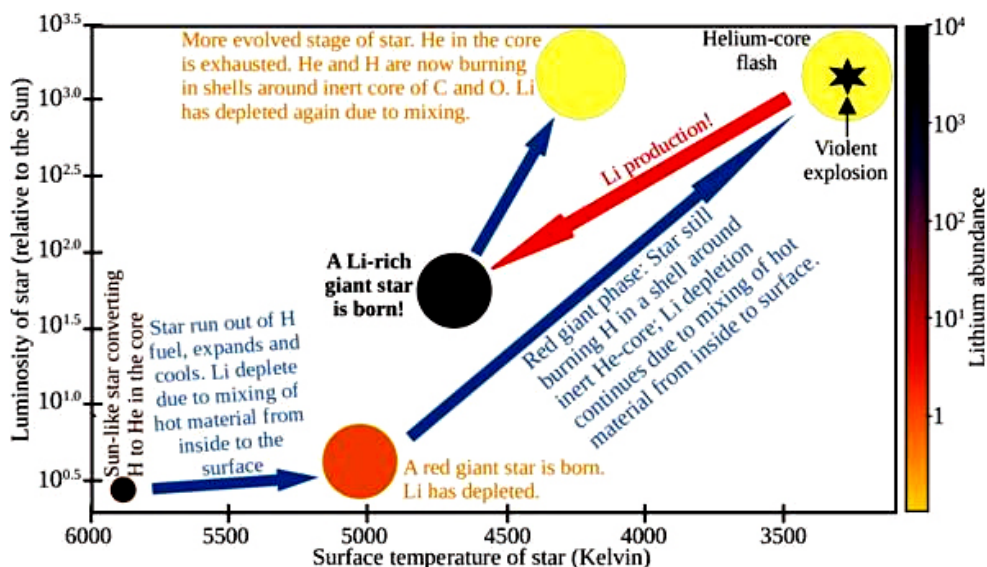


Figure 1: A cartoon illustration of the evolution of lithium (Li) in a Sun-like star. Color of the star symbol (filled circle) is proportional to star's Li abundance as shown in the color bar. Here, H is hydrogen, He is helium, C is carbon and O is oxygen.

- The survey revealed the rare presence of lithium-rich giants in all the Sun-like low-mass stars.

## About Lithium

### Properties of Lithium:

- It is a chemical element with the symbol Li.
- It is a soft, silvery-white metal.
- Under standard conditions, it is the lightest metal and the lightest solid element.
- It is highly reactive and flammable, and must be stored in mineral oil.



- Lithium has become the new ‘white gold’ as the demand for high performing rechargeable batteries is rising.
- Rising global lithium demand and surging prices have drawn increased interest in the so-called ‘lithium triangle’ that spans parts of Argentina, Bolivia and Chile.

## **VL-SRSAM**

### **KEY POINTS**

- On 7 December 2021, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) announced that India successfully test-fired the Vertically Launched Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM) from off the coast of Odisha.
- The air defence system, which can engage targets at around 15 km.

## **AIR VERSION OF THE BRAHMOS TEST FIRED**

### **KEY POINTS**

- On 8 December 2021, India successfully test-fired the air version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile. The Ministry of Defence described the launch as a 'major milestone' in BrahMos development.
- The missile was successfully test-fired from Indian Air Force's (IAF) Sukhoi 30 MKI supersonic fighter air-craft from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), based in Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha.
- BrahMos is a joint India-Russia venture, between the DRDO and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya, which, together, formed the Brahmos Aerospace. The missile derives its name from two rivers: the Brahmaputra in India and the Moskva of Russia.

## **PRESIDENT'S STANDARD TO THE 22ND MISSILE VESSEL SQUADRON**

### **KEY POINTS**

- On 8 December 2021 Ram Nath Kovind, the President of India, awarded the President's Standard to the 22nd Missile Vessel Squadron, also known as the Killers Squadron of the Indian Navy in Mumbai.
- The 22nd Missile Vessel Squadron is based in Mumbai and comprises missile vessels Prabal, Pralaya, Nashak, Nishank, Vipul, Vibhuti, Vinash and Vidyut.
- The year 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the victory in the 1971 War and is also the 50th year of the Killers Squadron.

## ENERGY SECTOR

### INDIA ACHIEVES 40% NON-FOSSIL FUEL-BASED ELECTRICITY CAPACITY

#### Why in news



#### KEY POINTS

- India has achieved the ambitious target of 40 per cent of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel sources.
- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has said that the total installed non-fossil fuel-based capacity stands at 156.83 Giga Watts.
- It said, the country has achieved this target in November 2021, way ahead of the target year 2030 set at the Conference of the Parties-21 (CoP21) held in France in 2015.
- Currently, India's installed Renewable Energy capacity stands at 150.05 Giga Watts while its nuclear energy-based installed electricity capacity stands at 6.78 Giga Watts, together accounting for 40.1 per cent of the total installed electricity capacity of over 390 Giga Watts.
- The Ministry said, the government is committed to achieve 500 Giga Watts of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by the year 2030 in line with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement at the recently concluded CoP-26.

## NATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION AWARDS

### Why in News

Recently, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) felicitated various industrial units, institutions and establishments with 31st National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA) on the occasion of National Energy Conservation Day (14th December) to showcase India's achievements in energy efficiency and conservation.

- A new award - National Energy Efficiency Innovation Awards (NEEIA) is also institutionalized.

14th DECEMBER

**National Energy  
Conservation  
DAY 2021**



### Bureau of Energy Efficiency

- The BEE is a statutory body established through the Energy Conservation Act, 2001 under the Union Ministry of Power.
- It assists in developing policies and strategies with the primary objective of reducing the energy intensity of the Indian economy.
- BEE coordinates with designated consumers, designated agencies, and other organizations to identify and utilize the existing resources and infrastructure, in performing its functions.

## KEY POINTS

### About:

- The Ministry of Power had launched a scheme in 1991, to give national recognition through awards to industries and establishments that have taken special efforts to reduce energy consumption while maintaining their production.

- ✓ The awards were given away for the first time on 14th December, 1991, which was declared as the National Energy Conservation Day.
- It recognizes the energy efficiency achievements in 56 sub-sectors across industry, establishments and institutions.

### Energy Efficiency in India:

- Energy efficiency means using less energy to perform the same task – that is, eliminating energy waste.

**Energy efficiency brings a variety of benefits:** reducing GreenHouse Gas (GHG) emissions, reducing demand for energy imports, and lowering our costs on a household and economy-wide level.

- India's energy sector is set for a transition with recent developmental ambitions of the government e.g.
  - ✓ 175 GW of installed capacity of renewable energy by 2022, 24×7 Power for all, Housing for all by 2022, 100 smart cities mission, promotion of e- mobility, electrification of railway sector, 100% electrification of households, Solarization of agricultural pump sets, and promotion of clean cooking.
- India can avoid building 300 GW of new power generation up to 2040 with implementation of ambitious energy efficiency policies.
- Successful implementation of energy efficiency measures contributed to electricity savings of 7.14% of total electricity consumption of the country and emission reduction of 108.28 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> during 2017-18.

### Efforts Related to Energy Efficiency and Conservation:

#### Indian:

- **Energy Conservation Act, 2001:**
  - ✓ The Act provides regulatory mandates for: Standards & labeling of equipment and appliances; Energy conservation building codes for commercial buildings; and Energy consumption norms for energy intensive industries.

- **PAT Scheme:**

- ✓ Perform Achieve and Trade Scheme (PAT) is a market based mechanism to enhance the cost effectiveness in improving the Energy Efficiency in Energy Intensive industries through certification of energy saving which can be traded.

- **Standards and Labeling:**

- ✓ The scheme was launched in 2006 and is currently invoked for equipment/appliances Room Air Conditioner (Fixed/VariableSpeed), Ceiling Fan, Colour Television, Computer, Direct Cool Refrigerator etc.

- **Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC):**

- ✓ It was developed for new commercial buildings in 2007.
- ✓ It sets minimum energy standards for new commercial buildings having a connected load of 100kW (kilowatt) or contract demand of 120 KVA (kilovolt-ampere) and above.

- **Demand Side Management:**

- ✓ DSM is the selection, planning, and implementation of measures intended to have an influence on the demand or customerside of the electric meter.

### Global:

- **International Energy Agency:**

- ✓ IEA works with countries around the world to shape energy policies for a secure and sustainable future.

- **Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL):**

- ✓ It is an international organization that works in partnership with the United Nations and leaders in government, the private sector, financial institutions and civil society to drive faster action towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7).

- **Paris Agreement:**

- ✓ It is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.

- **Mission Innovation (MI):**

- ✓ It is a global initiative of 24 countries and the European Commission (on behalf of the European Union) to accelerate clean energy innovation.

## INDIA'S ACHIEVEMENTS OF RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGET

### Why in News

India has achieved its target of achieving 40% of its installed electricity capacity from non-fossil energy sources by 2030 in November 2021.

- India had committed to this target at COP 21 (UNFCCC), as part of its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) (Paris Agreement).

### KEY POINTS

#### Renewable Energy (RE) Capacity of India:

- The country's installed Renewable Energy (RE) capacity stands at 150.54 GW (solar: 48.55 GW, wind: 40.03 GW, Small hydro Power: 4.83, Bio-power: 10.62, Large Hydro: 46.51 GW) as on 30,th Nov. 2021 while its nuclear energy based installed electricity capacity stands at 6.78 GW.  
✓ India has the 4<sup>th</sup> largest wind power capacity in the world.
- This brings the total non-fossil based installed energy capacity to 157.32 GW which is 40.1% of the total installed electricity capacity of 392.01 GW.
- At the COP26 India is committed to achieving 500 GW of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by the year 2030.

#### Challenges in Achieving the Target:

##### Mobilization of the Necessary Finance:

- Gearing up the banking sector for arranging finances for larger deployment goals, exploring low-interest rate, long-term international funding, and developing a suitable mechanism for risk mitigation or sharing by addressing both technical and financial bottlenecks are major challenges.



### Land Acquisition:

- Identification of land with Renewable Energy potential, its conversion (if needed), clearance from land ceiling Act, decision on land lease rent, clearance from revenue department, and other such clearances take time.
- State governments have to play a major role in acquisition of land for RE projects.

### Creating Ecosystem:

- Creating an innovation and manufacturing ecosystem in the country.

### Other:

- Integrating a larger share of renewables with the grid.
- Enabling supply of firm and dispatchable power from renewables.
- Enabling penetration of renewables in the so called hard to decarbonize sectors.

INITIATIVES TAKEN	
<b>PM-KUSUM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was launched by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) to support installation of off-grid solar pumps in rural areas and reduce dependence on grid, in grid-connected areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme :</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production Linked Incentive Scheme Linked "National Programme on High Incentive Efficiency Solar PV Modules" was introduced with an outlay of Rs. 4500 crores to support and promote manufacturing of high efficiency solar PV modules, including the upstage vertical components like cells, wafers, ingots and polysilicon in India and thus reduce the import dependence in Solar Photovoltaic (PV) sector.</li> </ul>
<b>Solar Parks Scheme :</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To facilitate large scale grid connected solar power projects, a scheme for "Development of Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects" is under implementation with a target capacity by March 2022.</li> </ul>
<b>Roof Top Solar Programme Phase - II :</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It provides for financial assistance of upto 4 GW of solar roof top capacity to the residential sector and there is a provision to incentivise the power distribution companies for incremental achievement over the previous year.</li> </ul>

<b>Central Public Sector Undertaking (CPSU) Scheme :</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A scheme for setting up 12 GW Grid- Connected Solar PV Power Projects by Central Public Sector Undertakings with domestic cells and modules is under implementation. Viability Gap Funding support is provided under this scheme.</li> </ul>
<b>Hydrogen Mission :</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Prime Minister announced the launch of the National Hydrogen Mission and stated the goal to make India a global hub for Green Hydrogen production and export.</li> </ul>
<b>International Solar Alliance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ISA is an intergovernmental treaty-based organisation with a global mandate to catalyse solar growth by helping to reduce the cost of financing and technology. Recently, the United States of America has become the 101<sup>st</sup> member country to join the ISA.</li> </ul>
<b>OSOWOG :</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The OSOWOG was jointly released by India and UK at the COP26 Climate Meet in Glasgow.</li> </ul>
<b>National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy :</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main objective of the National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy, 2018 is to provide a framework for promotion of large grid connected wind-solar PV hybrid systems for optimal and efficient utilization of wind and solar resources, transmission infrastructure and land.</li> </ul>
<b>National Offshore Wind Energy Policy :</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Offshore wind energy policy was notified in October 2015 with an objective to develop the offshore wind energy in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) along the Indian coastline of 7600 km.</li> </ul>
<b>Other Renewables for Power Generation :</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme on Energy from Urban, Industrial and Agricultural Wastes/ Residues</li> <li>• Scheme to support Promotion of Biomass based cogeneration in sugar mills and other industries</li> <li>• Biogas Power (Off-Grid) Generation and Thermal application Programme (BPGTP)</li> <li>• New National Biogas and Organic Manure Programme (NNBOMP)</li> </ul>

## SCHEMES

### ATMANIRBHAR HASTSHILPKAR SCHEME FOR THE ARTISANS



Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Government of India





**Launched**  
**Atmanirbhar**  
**hastshilpkar**  
**Scheme**

today for grass root  
Artisans in North East

**17 Artisans** received credit  
assistance of **Rs.1 lakh**  
per artisan during the  
launch ceremony

**G Kishan Reddy**

Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Government of India



### KEY POINTS

- The North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd, (NEDFI) has introduced the Atmanirbhar Hastshilpkar scheme for the grass root artisans of the North East region.
- Under the scheme, a total of 17 artisans have been provided with credit assistance of Rs.1 lakh per artisan.
- The credit facility is collateral free and carries a subsidized interest rate of 6% p.a., which is repayable in 24 months.
- For regular repayment, an incentive of 1% on the interest rate is provided, which will be refunded to the artisans on successful repayment of loans.
- The Interested artisans can apply for the scheme at NEDFI registered office Guwahati and any of its branch offices.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGY

### GAGANYAAN MISSION

#### Why in News

Recently, the Union Minister of Atomic Energy and Space informed that the crewed Gaganyaan mission will finally be launched in 2023.

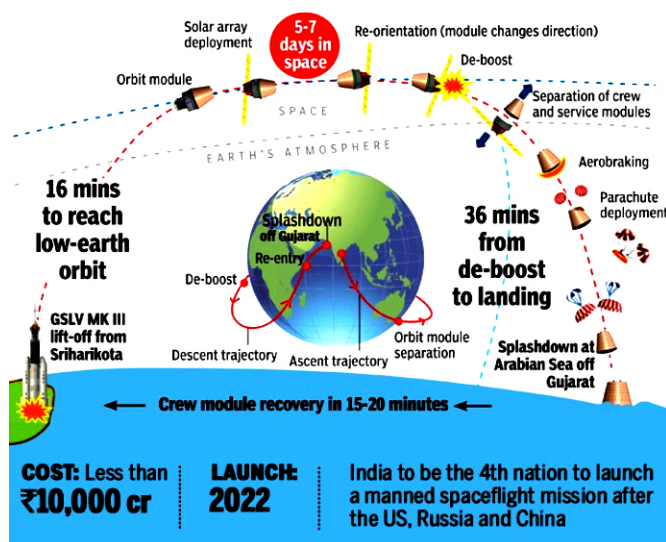
- The country's first space station is likely to come up by 2030.

### KEY POINTS

#### About:

- Gaganyaan is a mission by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- **Under the Gaganyaan schedule:**
  - ✓ Three flights will be sent into orbit.
  - ✓ There will be two unmanned flights and one human spaceflight.
- The Gaganyaan system module, called the Orbital Module, will have three Indian astronauts, including a woman.
- It will circle Earth at a low-earth-orbit at an altitude of 300-400 km from earth for 5-7 days.
- With that launch, India will be in the elite club of nations (America, China and Russia).

### MANNED MISSION



**Payloads:**

- The payload will consist of:
  - ✓ **Crew module** - spacecraft carrying human beings.
  - ✓ **Service module** - powered by two liquid propellant engines.

It will be equipped with emergency escape and emergency mission abort.

**Launch:**

- GSLV Mk III, also called the LVM-3 (Launch Vehicle Mark-3,) the three-stage heavy lift launch vehicle, will be used to launch Gaganyaan as it has the necessary payload capability.
  - ✓ Gaganyaan's major missions like the test vehicle flight for the validation of crew escape system performance and first uncrewed mission of Gaganyaan (G1) are scheduled during the beginning of the second half of next year (2022).
  - ✓ This will be followed by the second uncrewed mission at the end of 2022 carrying 'Vyommitra', a spacefaring human robot developed by Isro, and finally the first crewed Gaganyaan mission in 2023.

**Significance:**

- It will help in enhancement of science and technology levels in the country and help inspire youth.
- Gaganyaan will involve numerous agencies, laboratories, disciplines, industries and departments.
- It will help in the improvement of industrial growth.
  - ✓ A new organisation, IN-SPACe, part of reforms to increase private participation in the space sector was announced last year (2021).
- It will help in the development of technology for social benefits.
- It will help in improving international collaboration.
  - ✓ One International Space Station (ISS) put up by multiple countries may not be enough. Regional ecosystems will be needed and Gaganyaan will focus on regional needs: food, water and energy security.

## NUCLEAR ENERGY & CLIMATE

### Why in News

According to a recent study published by the Global Carbon Project (GCP), the global carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions are set to soar 4.9% in 2021, compared with the previous year. This calls into question the world's efforts to tackle the climate crisis.

- The energy sector continues to be the largest emitter of greenhouse gases, with a share of 40% - and rising. In this context, nuclear energy is touted as a non-polluting option.
- However, the scientific community is divided on the opinion of replacing nuclear energy with fossil fuel to tackle climate change.

### KEY POINTS

#### Pros of Nuclear Energy:

- **Non-Intermittent Power Supply:** The consistent criticism of renewable energy like wind and solar is that they only produce power when the wind is blowing or the sun is shining.
  - ✓ Nuclear power, however, is not intermittent, as nuclear power plants can run without any interruptions for a year and more without interruptions or maintenance, making it a more reliable source of energy.
- **Cheaper to Run:** Nuclear power plants are cheaper to run than their coal or gas rivals.
  - ✓ It has been estimated that even factoring in costs such as managing radioactive fuel and disposal nuclear plants cost between 33 to 50% of a coal plant and 20 to 25% of a gas combined-cycle plant.
- **Achieving Target of Paris Agreement:** With the adoption of the Paris Agreement in 2015, it is essential for all countries to control GHG emissions and limit the increase of global mean surface temperature by the end of the century to below 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels.
  - ✓ Nuclear power can play an important part in meeting climate pledges.

#### Cons of Nuclear Energy:

- **Nuclear power is Not Emissions-Free:** Depending on the process of electricity generation, or take into account the entire life cycle of a nuclear power plant, the nuclear energy also produces CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.



- ✓ A report released in 2014 by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), for example, estimated a range of 3.7 to 110 grams of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per kilowatt-hour (kWh).
- ✓ Further, new nuclear power plants generate more CO<sub>2</sub> during construction than those built in previous decades, due to stricter safety regulations.
- **Poor than Other Renewable Alternatives:** If the entire life cycle of a nuclear plant is included in the calculation, nuclear energy certainly comes out ahead of fossil fuels like coal or natural gas.
  - ✓ However, the picture is drastically different when compared with renewable energy.
  - ✓ According to several data sources, nuclear power releases many times more CO<sub>2</sub> per kilowatt-hour than photovoltaic solar panel systems, wind and hydro power.
- **High Initial Cost:** Nuclear power plants are about four times as expensive as wind or solar, and take five times as long to build.
  - ✓ Further, it takes too long for nuclear energy to become available (time taken to reach criticality).
  - ✓ Thus, nuclear energy requires high inputs to have a noticeable effect on climate change.
- **Effect of Climate Change on Nuclear Energy:** Nuclear energy itself has been affected by climate change.
  - ✓ During the world's increasingly hot summers, several nuclear power plants have already had to be temporarily shut down or taken off the grid.
  - ✓ Further, nuclear power plants depend on nearby water sources to cool their reactors, and with many rivers drying up, those sources of water are no longer guaranteed.
- **Threat of Nuclear Accident:** Anti-nuclear campaigners will cite the three major nuclear meltdowns of recent times, Three Mile Island in 1979, Chernobyl in 1986 and most recently Fukushima in 2011.
  - ✓ Despite all the safety measures in place for these nuclear plants, different factors caused them to go into meltdown, which was devastating for the environment and for local inhabitants who had to flee the affected areas.
- **Nuclear Waste:** One side effect of nuclear power is the amount of nuclear waste it produces.
  - ✓ Nuclear waste can have drastically bad effects on life, causing cancerous growths, for instance, or causing genetic problems for many generations of animals and plants.

Nuclear Power plants in Operation	Nuclear Power Plants under Construction	Planned Nuclear Power Plants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rawatbhata (Rajasthan)</li> <li>▪ Tarapur (Maharashtra)</li> <li>▪ Kudankulam (Tamil Nadu)</li> <li>▪ Kakrapar (Gujarat)</li> <li>▪ Kalpakkam (Tamil Nadu)</li> <li>▪ Narora (Uttar Pradesh)</li> <li>▪ Kaiga (Karnataka)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kakrapar 3&amp;4 (Gujarat)</li> <li>▪ Rawatbhata (Rajasthan)</li> <li>▪ Kudankulam 3&amp;4 (Tamil Nadu)</li> <li>▪ Kalpakkam PFBR (Tamil Nadu)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Jaitapur (Maharashtra)</li> <li>▪ Kovvada (Andhra Pradesh)</li> <li>▪ Mithi Virdi (Gujarat)</li> <li>▪ Haripur (West Bengal)</li> <li>▪ Gorakhpur (Haryana)</li> <li>▪ Bhimpur (Madhya Pradesh)</li> <li>▪ Mahi Banswara (Rajasthan)</li> <li>▪ Kaiga (Karnataka)</li> <li>▪ Chutka (Madhya Pradesh)</li> <li>▪ Tarapur (Maharashtra)</li> </ul>

## CLIMATE CHANGE & INFECTIOUS DISEASES

### Why in News

According to a recent study published in the journal ‘Science of the Total Environment’, scientists have found that climate change parameters accounted for 9-18% of the total infectious disease cases.

- Climate change driven by anthropogenic activities may challenge the gains in public health over the past many years, particularly in a country like India that ranks high in the list of climate-vulnerable countries in the world.

### KEY POINTS

#### Highlights of the Report:

- **Vulnerability of Children:** Globally, it is estimated that children are to bear most of the burden of disease due to climate change, with the poorest disproportionately affected.

- ✓ The higher risk associated with children is due to the combination of physiological vulnerability as well as the risk of exposure.
- **Affecting Factors:** Climate parameters like temperature, humidity, rainfall, solar radiation, and wind speed were significantly associated with the infectious diseases-- gastrointestinal diseases, respiratory diseases, vector-borne diseases, and skin diseases.
- **Impact:** Socio-economic conditions and child anthropometry (study of the measurements and proportions of the human body) modified the climate-disease association with a high proportion of children found suffering from stunting, wasting, and underweight conditions.

### Example of Climate Change and Infectious Diseases Linkage:

- Malaria is of great public health concern, and seems likely to be the vector-borne disease most sensitive to long-term climate change.
  - ✓ Malaria varies seasonally in highly endemic areas. The link between malaria and extreme climatic events has long been studied in India, for example.
  - ✓ Early last century, the river-irrigated Punjab region experienced periodic malaria epidemics.
  - ✓ Excessive monsoon rainfall and high humidity was identified early on as a major influence, enhancing mosquito breeding and survival.
  - ✓ Recent analyses have shown that the malaria epidemic risk increases around five-fold in the year after an El Niño event.

Environmental changes	Example diseases	Pathway of effect
Dams, canals, irrigation	Schistosomiasis	▲ Snail host habitat, human contact
	Malaria	▲ Breeding sites for mosquitoes
	Helminthiasis	▲ Larval contact due to moist soil
	River blindness	▼ Blackfly breeding, ▼ disease
Agricultural intensification	Malaria	Crop insecticides and ▲ vector resistance
	Venezuelan haemorrhagic fever	▲ rodent abundance, contact
Urbanization, urban crowding	Cholera	▼ sanitation, hygiene; ▲ water contamination
	Dengue	Water-collecting trash, ▲ <i>Aedes aegypti</i> mosquito breeding sites
	Cutaneous leishmaniasis	▲ proximity, sandfly vectors
Deforestation and new habitation	Malaria	▲ Breeding sites and vectors, immigration of susceptible people
	Oropouche	▲ contact, breeding of vectors
	Visceral leishmaniasis	▲ contact with sandfly vectors
Reforestation	Lyme disease	▲ tick hosts, outdoor exposure
Ocean warming	Red tide	▲ Toxic algal blooms
Elevated precipitation	Rift valley fever	▲ Pools for mosquito breeding
	Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome	▲ Rodent food, habitat, abundance

▲ increase ▼ reduction

**REPORTS****SIPRI REPORT****KEY POINTS**

- The Swedish think-tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) released the report titled 'Top 100 arms-producing and military services companies, 2020'.
- As per the report, India's three defence manufacturers companies namely Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) got 42nd rank, Indian Ordnance Factories got 60th rank and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) secured 66th rank among the top 100 lists at the global level.
- The first position was marked by Lockheed Martin Corp of USA.
- The companies of India contribute 1.2% of total arms sales of companies in the SIPRI Top 100 list of 2020, whereas the USA share stands at 54%.
- SIPRI was established in 1966. It is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.

**WORLD MIGRATION REPORT 2022****KEY POINTS**

- On 1 December 2021, the World Migration Report 2022 was launched by International Organization for Migration (IOM).
- This is the 11th edition of the report by IOM. It mentions an increase in internal displacement due to situations like disasters, conflict and violence particularly when the mobility was at a halt state due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.
- Antonio Vitorino, the Director-General of IOM revealed the report said that the internal displacement due to disaster, conflict, and violence is increased to 40.5million (up from 31.5 million in 2019).

**WORLD TALENT RANKING REPORT 2021****KEY POINTS**

- The World Talent Ranking Report 2021 was released by International Institute for Management Development (IMD) World Competitive Centre.
- The report analysed and ranked the ability of nations in developing, attracting and retaining talent.
- As per the report, India got 56th rank. The first rank got by Switzerland.

## NHA REPORT ON HEALTH EXPENDITURE

### Why in News

Recently, National Health Accounts (NHA) reported that the government has increased the expenditure on health, making the decline of Out-Of Pocket Expenditure (OOPE) to 48.8% in 2017-18 from 64.2% in 2013-14.

- This report was produced by the National Health Systems Resource Centre, designated as the National Health Accounts (NHA) Technical Secretariat in 2014 by the Health Ministry.
- The NHA estimates are prepared by using an accounting framework based on the internationally accepted System of Health Accounts 2011, provided by the World Health Organization (WHO).

### National Health Systems Resource Centre

- It was established in 2006-07 under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) of Government of India to serve as an apex body for technical assistance.
- Its mandate is to assist in policy and strategy development in the provision and mobilization of technical assistance to the states and in capacity building for the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).

## KEY POINTS

### Increased Government Share in the Total GDP:

- For 2017-18, there had been an increase in the share of Government health expenditure in the total GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of the country.
- It has increased from 1.15% in 2013-14 to 1.35% in 2017-18.

### Increased Government Spending on Per-Capita Terms:

- In per capita terms, the Government health expenditure has increased from Rs 1,042 to Rs 1,753 between 2013-14 to 2017-18.

### Share of Primary Health Care:

- The share of primary healthcare in current Government health expenditure has increased from 51.1% in 2013-14 to 54.7% in 2017-18.
- Primary and secondary care accounts for more than 80% of the current Government health expenditure.

**Social Security Expenditure on Health:**

- Also the share of social security expenditure on health, which includes the social health insurance programme, Government financed health insurance schemes, and medical reimbursements made to Government employees, has increased.

**Decline in out-of-pocket expenditure:**

- The rise in government spending on healthcare led to an increase in the share of government expenditure in the total health expenditure to 40.8% and a decline in out-of-pocket expenditure to 48.8% for 2017-18.
  - ✓ The fall in OOPE is attributed to the increased utilisation of government health facilities and reduction in the cost of services at these facilities.

**LOCALIZATION OF SDGS THROUGH PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS REPORT RELEASED****KEY POINTS**

- Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj released a report titled 'Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)' on 7th December 2021.
- The report enumerates various guidelines to attain the SDGs which will act as a roadmap for development of Indian villages.
- The report has been compiled by a group of experts constituted in May 2021 to provide policy guidance to the Ministry of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj for localization of SDGs.
- The ministry has also launched a dedicated dashboard to monitor the progress of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).
- Another portal has been launched to provide various training and capacity-building programmes for the elected representatives and functionaries of Panchayati Raj institutions.
- India, along with other countries, had signed the declaration on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, comprising of seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the Sustainable Development Summit of the United Nations in September 2015.



## ECONOMY SCENARIO

### BANK-NBFC CO-LENDING

#### Why in News

Recently, several banks have entered into co-lending ‘master agreements’ with registered Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs), and more are in the pipeline. In 2020, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) allowed the co-lending model based on a prior agreement.

- However, there are some criticisms associated with the co-lending.

### KEY POINTS

#### About the Co-Lending Model:

- **Background:** In September 2018, the RBI had announced co-origination of loans” by banks and NBFCs for lending to the priority sector.
  - ✓ The arrangement entailed joint contribution of credit and sharing of risks and rewards. Colending or co-origination is a set-up where banks and non-banks enter into an arrangement for the joint contribution of credit for priority sector lending.
  - ✓ These guidelines were later amended in 2020 and rechristened as co-lending models (CLM) by including Housing Finance Companies and some changes in the framework.
  - ✓ Under priority sector norms, banks are mandated to lend a particular portion of their funds to specified sectors, like weaker sections of the society, agriculture, MSME and social infrastructure.
- **Objective:** The primary focus of the ‘Co-Lending Model’ (CLM) is to “improve the flow of credit to the unserved and underserved sector of the economy.
  - ✓ It also envisages making available funds to the ultimate beneficiary at an affordable cost.
- **Underlying Idea:** CLM seeks to better leverage the respective comparative advantages of the banks and NBFCs in a collaborative effort.
  - ✓ The lower cost of funds from banks
  - ✓ Greater reach of the NBFCs.
  - ✓ For example, CLM will enhance last-mile finance and drive financial inclusion to MSMEs.
- **Example of CLM:** SBI, the country’s largest lender, signed a deal with Adani Capital, a small NBFC of a big corporate house, for co-lending to farmers to help them buy tractors and farm implements.

### Risk in Co-lending:

- **Majority of Responsibility Lies with the Banks:** Under the CLM, NBFCs are required to retain at least a 20% share of individual loans on their books.
  - ✓ This means 80% of the risk will be with the banks who will take the big hit in case of a default.
  - ✓ In effect, while the banks fund the major chunk of the loan, the NBFC decides the borrower.
- **Corporates in Banking:** While the RBI hasn't officially allowed the entry of big corporate houses into the banking space, the NBFCs are mostly floated by corporate houses.
  - ✓ This is risky, especially when four big private finance firms - IL&FS, DHFL, SREI and Reliance Capita have collapsed in the last three years despite tight monitoring by the RBI.
- **Limited Reach of NBFCs:** While the RBI has referred to "the greater reach of the NBFCs", the small INBFCs with 100-branch networks will fall short in serving underserved and unserved segments.

### BANK DEPOSIT INSURANCE PROGRAMME

#### Why in News

Recently, the Prime Minister said that Rs 1,300 crore had been paid to over 1 lakh depositors who could not access their money as their banks faced financial crises.

- The deposits worth Rs 76 lakh crore were insured under the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) Act providing full coverage to around 98% of bank accounts.
- Earlier, the Union Cabinet cleared the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) Bill, 2021.

**Deposit Insurance:** It is a protection cover against losses accruing to bank deposits if a bank fails financially and has no money to pay its depositors and has to go in for liquidation.

**Credit Guarantee:** It is the guarantee that often provides for a specific remedy to the creditor if his debtor does not return his debt.

## KEY POINTS

### Limit for Deposit Insurance:

- Currently, a depositor has a claim to a maximum of Rs 5 lakh per account as insurance cover. This amount is termed 'deposit insurance'.
  - ✓ The cover of Rs 5 lakh per depositor is provided by the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC).
- Depositors having more than Rs 5 lakh in their account have no legal recourse to recover funds in case a bank collapses.
- Premium for the insurance has been raised from 10 paise for every Rs 100 deposit, to 12 paise and a limit of 15 paise has been imposed.
  - ✓ The premium for this insurance is paid by banks to the DICGC, and not be passed on to depositors.
  - ✓ The Insured banks pay advance insurance premiums to the corporation semi-annually within two months from the beginning of each financial half year, based on their deposits as at the end of previous half year.

## MONETARY POLICY REPORT: RBI

### Why in News

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released the Monetary Policy Report (MPR) for the month of December 2021.

- It kept the policy rate unchanged for the Ninth time in a row maintaining an accommodative stance.

## KEY POINTS

- Unchanged Policy Rates:
  - ✓ Repo Rate - 4%.
  - ✓ Reverse Repo Rate - 3.35%.
  - ✓ Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) - 4.25%.
  - ✓ Bank Rate- 4.25%.

## **FM CHAIRS CONSULTATION MEETINGS FOR UNION BUDGET 2022-23**

### **KEY POINTS**

- Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman chaired the pre-budget consultation meetings with stakeholders for Union Budget 2022-23 on 22nd December.
- The stakeholder groups included representatives and experts from Agriculture and Agro-Processing Industry.
- Infrastructure and Climate Change, Financial Sector and Capital Markets, Services and Trade, Social Sector Trade Union and Labour Organization.
- The FM also held consultations with prominent economists.
- The stakeholder groups made several suggestions on various issues that included increased Research and Development spending, infrastructure status for digital services and Incentives to hydrogen storage.
- Suggestions were also received for fuel cell development rationalisation of income tax slabs and investments in online safety measures.

## **NITI AAYOG LAUNCHES VERNACULAR INNOVATION PROGRAM FOR INNOVATORS, ENTREPRENEURS**

### **KEY POINTS**

- Under the Atal innovation Mission, the NITI Aayog has launched the first of its kind Vernacular innovation Program (VIP) which enables innovators and entrepreneurs to have access to the innovative ecosystem in 22 mother tongue languages.
- By providing access to learning in one's language and culture, Atal Innovation Mission aims to create equal opportunity for the vernacular innovators.
- To build the necessary capacity for the Vernacular Innovation Program, NITI Aayog has identified a Vernacular Task Force in each of the 22 scheduled languages.
- Each task force comprises vernacular language teachers, subject experts, technical writers, and the leadership of regional Atal Incubation Centres.
- Launching the program, NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Dr.Rajiv Kumar said through this, innovation can become a Jan Andolan because people are more creative when they think in their own mother tongues rather than in English.

## INDIA REGISTERS HIGHEST EVER FDI INFLOW OF \$81.97 BILLION IN 2020-21

### KEY POINTS

- India has registered the highest ever annual Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow of \$ 81.97 billion in 2020-21.
- According to the Commerce and Industry Ministry, the total FDI inflow in the last seven financial years is over \$440 billion, which is nearly 58 per cent of the total FDI inflow in last 21 financial years.
- The Ministry said, top five countries from where FDI equity inflows were received during 2014 to 2021 are Singapore. Mauritius, USA, Netherlands, and Japan.
- Computer software and hardware sector attracted the largest share of FDI inflows, followed by service, trading and telecommunications.

## GLOBAL DEBT RISES TO RECORD \$226 TRILLION IN 2020 AMID COVID-19: IMF



### KEY POINTS

- Global debt rose to a record \$226 trillion in 2020 as the world was hit by the raging Covid-19 pandemic and a deep recession, according to the international Monetary Fund (IMF).
- Global debt rose by 28 percent, to 256 percent of gross domestic product in 2020, the largest one-year debt surge since World War II, the Director of the IMF's Fiscal Affairs Department, wrote in a blog, citing figures from the IMF's latest Global Debt Database.

- Debt increases are particularly striking in advanced economies where public debt rose from around 70 percent of GDP in 2007 to 124 percent of GDP in 2020.
- Meanwhile, private debt rose at a more moderate pace from 164 to 178 percent of GDP in the same period, according to the IMF.
- The IMF officials noted that a crucial challenge for policymakers is to strike the right mix of fiscal and monetary policies in an environment of high debt and rising inflation as the debt surge amplifies vulnerabilities.

## INDIA'S GDP FOR Q2 CLOCKS FASTEST GROWTH AMONG MAJOR ECONOMIES

### Why in news



### KEY POINTS

- India's Gross Domestic Product, GDP, for the second quarter of the current fiscal logged fastest growth among major economies in the world.
- As per the National Statistics Office, NSO data, India's GDP grew by 8.4 percent from a year ago.
- Manufacturing output increased 5.5 percent during the period while construction segment grew 7.5 percent in the second quarter.
- This indicates that India's economy has gained momentum as demand of goods and services has gradually returned to normal levels, recovering from the disruptions caused by the COVID pandemic.
- The economy had contracted 7.5 percent in the same period last year. Meanwhile, Chief Economic Advisor K V Subramanian has said that India is likely to have a double-digit growth this year.



- Mr Subramanian said, India is expected to grow at 6.5 to 7 per cent in 2022-23 and over 7 per cent thereafter.
- The financial sector has emerged stronger and the pace of growth in manufacturing sector is also positive.
- The cumulative annual growth rate between 2015-2019 has been higher for India than China in manufacturing gross value, merchandise exports and manufactured goods exports.
- Mr Subramanian said that the fiscal deficit target of 6.8 per cent of GDP for current financial year Is likely to be met

## PERSONS IN NEWS

### WORLD'S MOST ADMIRED MEN OF 2021



## KEY POINTS

- Manchester United icon Cristiano Ronaldo and Paris Saint Germain (PSG) superstar Lionel Messi were named among the world's most admired men by YouGov for the year 2021.
- Master Blaster Sachin Tendulkar and Indian Test skipper Virat Kohli have also featured in the special list shared by the British international Internet-based market research and data analytics firm.
- As per the survey, Kohli, Tendulkar, Ronaldo and Messi are among the world's top 20 most admired men for the year 2021.
- The men's list has been topped by former US ex-president Barack Obama, who is followed by Microsoft co-founder and business magnate - Bill Gates.
- Former US president Obama managed to retain his numero uno spot.
- Legendary cricketer Tendulkar is ranked above Test skipper Kohli in the most admired men's rankings for 2021.
- The Master Blaster is occupying the 12th spot while batting maestro Kohli is ranked 18th in the list.
- Ace footballer Ronaldo climbed two places to secure the fourth spot in the world's most admired list for the year 2021.
- Ronaldo's Ballon d'Or arch-rival Messi jumped four places although the PSG and Argentine stalwart failed to surpass Ronaldo in the top 10 list.
- Messi, who ended his long association with FC Barcelona by joining forces with Neymar and Kylian Mbappe at PSG was placed 11th in the men's list last year.
- Messi's former El Clasico rival Ronaldo has achieved his best-ever ranking (4) in the men's list since the inception of YouGov's most admired rankings.

## INDIAN-ORIGIN NEELI BENDAPUDI NAMED PENN STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT



## KEY POINTS

- Indian-origin professor Neeli Bendapudi has created history as the first woman and person of colour to be named as the president of America's prestigious Pennsylvania State University, the educational institution announced, December 9.

## ELON MUSK IS TIME'S 2021 PERSON OF THE YEAR



## KEY POINTS

- Elon Musk has been named Time's 2021 Person of the Year.
- Musk, the richest person on Earth, is the CEO of the aerospace company Space X and electronic car company Tesla.

## 'SHE IS A CHANGEMAKER'

## KEY POINTS

- On 7th December 2021, the National Commission for Women (NCW) launched a pan-India capacity building programme, 'She is a Changemaker' to improve leadership skills of grassroots women political leaders, for women representatives at all levels, gram pan-chayats to parliament members and political workers including office bearers of National/ State political parties.
- The capacity building programme will be undertaken in association with region-wise training institutes to undertake capacity building of women political leaders and improve their decision making and communication skills including, oration, writing, etc.