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# ESE-2022

## (Preliminary Examination)

### Current Issues

(March - 2022)

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

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# Current Issues

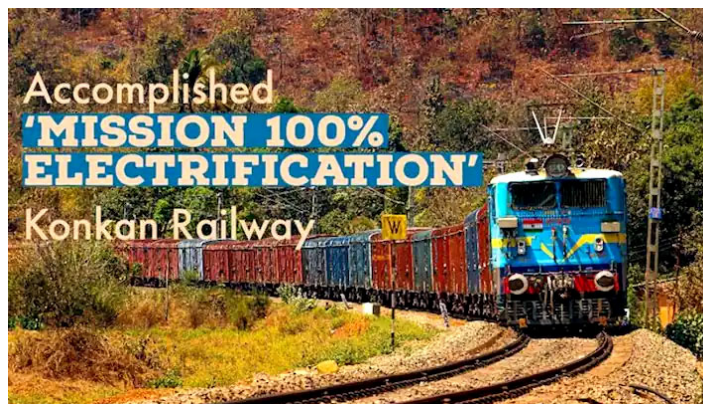
(March - 2022)

## POLITY OF GOVERNANCE

### KONKAN RAILWAY ACCOMPLISHES 100% ELECTRIFICATION

#### KEY POINTS

- Konkan Railway has accomplished 100% electrification of its entire stretch under the "Mission 100% Electrification - Moving towards Net Zero Carbon Emission" plan.



- The project aimed at electrifying its entire Broad Gauge network to provide environment friendly, green and clean mode of transport was launched by the Konkan Railway in November 2015.
- The total cost of the project covering 741 kms is Rs.1287 crore. The electrification project faced many challenges due to the difficult terrain and the COVID-19 Pandemic, but efforts were made to keep the electrification mission going non-stop.

### DOORDARSHAN FREEDISH BECOMES LARGEST DTH PLATFORM



## KEY POINTS

- Doordarshan FreeDish has become the largest DTH platform with reach of more than 43 million households.
- Information and Broadcasting Ministry said, the free DTH service of Doordarshan clocked stellar growth of almost 100 per cent from 22 Million in 2017 to 43 Million in 2022.
- Prasar Bharati's DTH service DD FreeDish is the only Free-to-Air Direct-To-Home (DTH) Service where the viewer does not have to pay any monthly subscription fee.
- With effect from 1st April 2022, bouquet of channels on DD FreeDish has been expanded to 91 Doordarshan channels, eight private Hindi general entertainment channels, 15 private Hindi Movie channels, six private Music channels, 22 private News channels, nine Bhojpuri channels, four Devotional and two foreign channels.

## PM INAUGURATES BIPLOBI BHARAT GALLERY AT VICTORIA MEMORIAL HALL, KOLKATA ON SHAHEED DIWAS



## KEY POINTS

- The nation celebrated Shaheed Diwas on 23rd March. On the occasion, Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inauguration of Biplobi Bharat Gallery at Victoria Bharat Memorial Hall, Kolkata via video conferencing.
- Biplobi Bharat Gallery depicts the political and intellectual backdrop that triggered the Revolutionary movement.
- It showcases the birth of the revolutionary movement, formation of significant associations by revolutionary leaders, spread of the movement, formation of Indian National Army, contribution of Naval Mutiny, among others.
- The purpose of this new gallery is to provide a holistic view of the events that led up to 1947 and highlight the important role played by the Revolutionaries.

## WCD MINISTRY CELEBRATES 4TH POSHAN PAKHWADA WITH FOCUS ON MODERN IT-BASED ACTIVITIES



### KEY POINTS

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development is celebrating the 4<sup>th</sup> and Poshan Pakhwada from 21st March to 4th April, 2022 with emphasis on two broad areas viz.
- Identification & celebration of Healthy Child, and integration of modern and traditional practices for healthy India within the thematic areas around Poshan MITRA (Modern, IT based, Traditional & Regional Activities).
- Under the theme, special focus was accorded to (i) Measurement of height and weight of children under 6 years who are beneficiaries in the Anganwadi Centres, (ii) Gender-sensitive water management and generating awareness in women about the importance of water conservation and promoting rainwater harvesting structures including in Anganwadi Centres, (iii) Test Treat and Talk Anaemia and (iv) Promote traditional food for healthy mother and child especially in Tribal Areas.

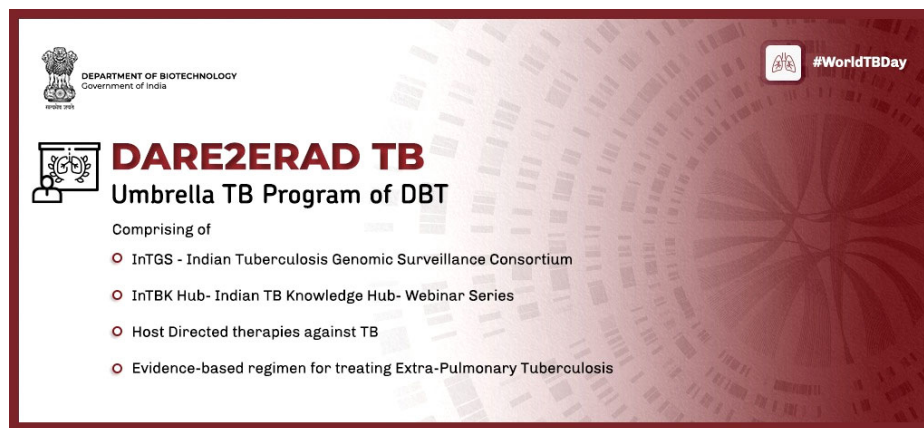
## RURAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY RELEASES COMMUNITY - BASED DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN

### KEY POINTS

- The Ministry of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj released its Disaster Management Plan on 17th March.
- The plan has been prepared with larger perspective of community-based planning starting from Village to District Panchayat level.

- Under the Plan, every Indian village would have a Village Disaster Management Plan and every Panchayat would have a Panchayat Disaster Management Plan.
- The plan aims to develop disaster resilience at the grassroots level among the Panchayats and establish a framework to align the disaster management measures in rural areas to that of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).
- Releasing the plan, Panchayati Raj Minister Shri Giriraj Singh recalled that PM Shri Narendra Modi appreciated the role of Panchayats in the management and mitigation of COVID-19 pandemic, especially in creating awareness and leading the collective battle against Coronavirus in rural areas.
- He expressed hope that Disaster Management Plan framed by Ministry of Panchayati Raj would also contribute to the efforts of the Government in bringing convergence in disaster management and planning in rural areas.

## DEPARTMENT OF BIOTECHNOLOGY LAUNCHES DARE2ERAD TB-DATA DRIVEN UMBRELLA TB PROGRAM



## KEY POINTS

- The Ministry of Science and Technology launched DARE2ERAD TB - a data-driven research to eradicate TB on the occasion of World TB Day on 24th March.
- Making the announcement, Union Minister of State for Science and Technology (Independent Charge) Dr. Jitendra Singh said that there is a need for a mass movement to get rid of Tuberculosis to realise PM Modi's dream of a "TB Mukh Bharat" by year 2025.
- The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), under the Ministry of Science & Technology has been supporting basic and applied research on TB over the past three decades with major focus on three areas - disease biology, drug discovery and vaccine development.



- The DARE2ERAD TB will be the umbrella TB program of DBT comprising of following key initiatives- (i) In TGS Indian Tuberculosis Genomic Surveillance Consortium; (ii) In TBK Hub-Indian TB Knowledge Hub-Webinar Series; (iii) Host Directed therapies against TB and developing an evidence-based regimen for treating extra-pulmonary Tuberculosis.

### PM NARENDRA MODI ADDRESSES OFFICER TRAINEES OF LBSNAA



### KEY POINTS

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the main objective of the nation is to modernize itself and to be self-reliant.
- He said that the eyes of the whole world are on us, in the circumstances created by COVID-19, a new world order is emerging and India has to develop itself at a faster pace.
- Addressing virtually the Valedictory Function of 96th Common Foundation Course at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), on 17th March 2022, the Prime Minister asked the probationers to keep the goals of 21st century India in mind, the goal of building an AtamaNirbhar Bharat, and the goal of laying the foundation of a New Modern India.
- Addressing the gathering Prime Minister said that this batch of Trainee Officers was special as it was beginning its work in the 75th year of the nation's independence, and they would be responsible for the development of the nation over the next 25 years.
- Addressing the officer trainees, he said that Sardar Patel's vision of service and duty is the most important part of training. He said if they work with principles of duty, they will not find any work burdensome.

## SC UPHOLDS CENTRE'S DECISION ON OROP

### KEY POINTS

- The Supreme Court has upheld the Government's decision on One Rank-One Pension, OROP, for defence forces as it did not find any constitutional infirmity on the OROP principle and the notification of 7th November, 2015.
- A bench comprising Justices D.Y Chandrachud, Surya Kant and Vikram Nath said, the policy decision of the Centre of OROP is not arbitrary and it is not for the court to go into the policy matters of the government.
- While disposing off a plea on implementation of the One Rank-One Pension as recommended by the Bhagat Singh Koshyari Committee with an automatic annual revision, instead of the current policy of periodic review once in five years, the Apex Court directed that the pending re-fixation exercise of OROP, should be carried out from 1st July 2019, and arrears be paid to the pensioners in three months.

## UPPER AGE LIMIT FOR NEET-UG REMOVED



### KEY POINTS

- The National Medical Commission (NMC) has removed the upper age limit for appearing in the medical undergraduate entrance exam- National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) Undergraduate (UG) examination.
- Earlier, the age limit was 25 years for general category candidates and 30 years in the case of reserved category candidates.
- Meanwhile, the government has decided that half the seats in private medical colleges will be charged at par with government medical colleges to benefit poor and middle class students.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi made this announcement while interacting with Jan Aushadhi Kendra owners and beneficiaries of the scheme via video conferencing.

## ATAL INNOVATION MISSION-SNAPCHAT COLLABORATE TO SKILL YOUTH IN AUGMENTED REALITY



### KEY POINTS

- Niti Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission has joined hands with camera firm Snap Inc, which owns social media platform Snapchat, to drive Augmented Reality (AR) skilling among country's youth. Snap's camera plays a transformative role in how people experience the world around them.
- Over a two-year timeframe, Snap Inc is expected to train over 12,000 teachers affiliated with the Atal Tinkering Labs on Augmented Reality, enabling the reach of the programme to millions of students affiliated with ATL's network of schools. Snap Inc also announced its partnership with the Atal Incubation Centers (AICs) to support the Indian startup ecosystem with AR advertising boot camps, Ad credits, and other opportunities.

## WCD MINISTRY LAUNCHES STREE MANORAKSHA PROJECT





## KEY POINTS

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MOWCD) celebrated the International Women's Day week from 1st to 8th March, 2022 as a part of nationwide celebrations of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.
- The WCD Ministry launched a new initiative 'Stree Manoraksha Project aimed at extending mental health training to 6000 One Stop Centre (OSC) functionaries across India. Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani said when a woman comes to an OSC, she requires a lot of courage to come out and admit that she has been victimized.
- Therefore, all staff at OSCs need to be trained right from counselors to the security guard and supervisor in helping distressed women.

## MODERNIZATION PLAN FOR IMPROVING EFFICIENCY OF CENTRAL ARMED POLICE FORCES



## KEY POINTS

- The Centre has approved the Modernisation Plan-IV scheme BSEN for Central Armed Police Forces.
- It will equip the forces with modern state-of-the-art weapons and equipment as per their operational requirement, keeping in view their deployment pattern in different theatres. Besides, upgraded IT solutions will also be provided to them.
- The scheme with a total outlay of Rs 1,523 crore is to be implemented by the Home Ministry from February 2022 to March 2026.
- This will bolster the government's ability to address the challenges being faced on the International Border as well as in the different theatres including areas affected by Left Wing Extremism and in Jammu and Kashmir and insurgency affected North Eastern States.

## CABINET APPROVES ROLL OUT OF AYUSHMAN BHARAT DIGITAL MISSION



### KEY POINTS

- The Union Cabinet has approved the national roll-out of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) with a budget of Rs 1,600 crore for five years.
- The National Health Authority (NHA) will be the implementing agency of the mission.
- The mission integrates digital health solutions like the COWIN, Arogya Setu and eSanjeevani for continuum of care, and effective utilization of resources.
- Under the ABDM, citizens will be able to create their ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Account) numbers, to which their digital health records can be linked.
- This will enable creation of longitudinal health records for individuals across various healthcare providers, and improve clinical decision making by healthcare providers.
- It will also catalyse innovation and generate employment across the healthcare ecosystem.

## MICROSOFT'S FOURTH DATA CENTRE IN HYDERABAD

### KEY POINTS

- Microsoft has announced to set up its fourth data centre in India in Hyderabad.
- Once inaugurated, Hyderabad Data centre will be one of the largest data centres in India. It will be operational by 2025.
- The other three data centres are in Pune, Mumbai and Chennai.
- Microsoft CEO and Chairman is Satya Nadella. Its Headquarters located in Washington, US.

## **'FREEDOM IN THE WORLD'**

### **KEY POINTS**

- Freedom in the World 2022 - The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule is a report released by Freedom House, a US-based NGO.
- According to the report, India has been termed as 'partly free' country in terms of democracy and free society.
- India scored 66 out of 100 in 2022. In 2021, India had scored 67.
- Till 2020, India was a free country when its score was 71.

## **'MUKHYAMANTRI CHAA SRAMI KALYAN PRAKALPA'**

### **KEY POINTS**

- The Tripura Government has announced a special scheme 'Mukhyamantri Chaa Srami Kalyan Prakalpa' for tea workers.
- It is a step towards bringing the 7000 tea garden workers of Tripura under the social security net.

## **EX-DUSTLIK**

### **KEY POINTS**

- The 3rd edition of the joint training exercise named EX-DUSTLIK between the Indian army and Uzbekistan army begins at Yangiariq, Uzbekistan.
- The last edition of DUSTLIK was conducted in Uttarakhand in 29 March 2021.

## **"DARE2ERAD TB"**

### **KEY POINTS**

- Dare2eraD TB, a Data-Driven Research named has been launched by the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology to eradicate TB.
- This initiative was launched on 24th March 2022 on the occasion of World TB Day

## INS VALSURA

### KEY POINTS

- The INS (Indian Naval Ship) Valsura has been awarded the prestigious President's Colour by President Ram Nath Kovind on 25th March.
- It is the highest award or honour that can be bestowed upon any of India's military units.
- This award is also called 'Nishaan' as it is an emblem that will be worn by the bestowed units officers on their left-hand sleeve of the uniform.

## INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION AND MEDIATION CENTRE

### KEY POINTS

- Chief Justice of India laid the foundation stone or construction of new building of IAMC in Hyderabad on March 12.
- It is India's first AMC for Alternative Dispute Resolution.
- ADR refers to any method of resolving disputes without litigation.

## YAMUNOTSAV 2022

### KEY POINTS

- It was organized by the National Mission for Clean Ganga to celebrate River Yamuna's glory and a pledge to keep it clean was announced.
- The events held on March 27 at Yamunotsav were street plays, live paintings, spiritual and classical performances, dance, music, etc.

## TRAINING FOR EMIRATES JOBS AND SKILLS

### KEY POINTS

- On March 27, Anurag Thakur launched Training for Emirates Jobs And Skills (TEJAS) in Dubai.
- It is an initiative under the Skill India International Project to train Indians so that they can get employed overseas.
- It is also aiming to create pathways so that the Indian workforce can get equipped for the various skills and market requirements in the UAE.

## INDIAN AGRICULTURE TOWARDS 2030

### KEY POINTS

- A book titled "Indian Agriculture towards 2030: Pathways for Enhancing Farmer's Income Nutritional Security and Sustainable Food and Farm Systems," was released by Narendra Singh Tomar, Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare on March 28.
- It was launched at an event that was organized by NITI Aayog and the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

## TRIBUTE TO 'THEM'

### KEY POINTS

- United Nations has recognised March 24 to be observed as the International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims every year.
- The day aims to pay tribute to those who have devoted their lives or lost their lives in the struggle to promote and protect human rights for all.

## EARTH HOUR

### KEY POINTS

- The Earth Hour is celebrated worldwide on the last Saturday of March month to show support for the fight against climate change and commitment towards a better planet.
- This year Earth Hour 2022 is observed on March 26.
- Theme of 2022: "Shape Our Future."

## WORLD BACKUP DAY

### KEY POINTS

- The day is observed on March 31st.
- The objective of this day is to protect our precious digital documents as we have become more reliant on technology.



## "BE(A)WARE"

### KEY POINTS

- On March 7, RBI has launched a booklet named "BE(A)WARE" which features common modus operandi used by fraudsters and precautions to be taken while carrying out various financial transactions.

## OTHERS 2041 CLIMATE FORCE ANTARCTICA EXPEDITION

### KEY POINTS

- Aarushi Verma, a national level shooter and an environmentalist has been selected to represent India at the '2041 Climate Force Antarctica Expedition' which is set to be held in March 2022.
- She will be supported and sponsored by The Hans Foundation.
- 2041 Climate Force Antarctica Expedition is a global initiative to train and develop the next generation of sustainability champions and to help corporations with their sustainability solutions.
- It aims to inspire, develop and train the next generation of leaders to promote a more sustainable future.

## INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

## PM MODI CALLS FOR STRENGTHENING BIMSTEC COOPERATION



## KEY POINTS

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given a clarion call to make Bay of Bengal the bridge of connectivity, prosperity, and security, while stressing that regional cooperation has become a greater priority in the present scenario.
- Participating in the 5th Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit virtually, the Prime Minister said recent developments in Europe have raised questions about the stability of the international order and that it has become essential to give more priority to "our regional security".
- Underscoring the necessity to make early progress on the proposal of BIMSTEC Free Trade Agreement to enhance trade, PM Modi said exchanges between entrepreneurs and StartUps of BIMSTEC countries should be increased.
- He further stated that international norms should be adopted in the field of trade facilitation.

## BRICS MEDIA FORUM

### Why in News?

Recently, the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) launched a three-month-long training programme for journalists.

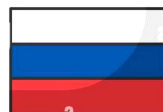
- The programme was an initiative of the BRICS Media Forum.

# BRICS

## 5 countries



Brazil



Russia



India



China



South Africa

### What is BRICS Media Forum?

- The Forum was established in 2015 by media organisations from five countries, including The Hindu (India) , Brazil's CMA Group, Russia's Sputnik, China's Xinhua and South Africa's Independent Media.
- The forum aims to establish an efficient coordination mechanism among BRICS media, advance innovationdriven media development and gather stronger momentum for the development of BRICS countries through exchange and pragmatic cooperation under the mechanism.

### INDIA ABSTAINS AT UNHRC

#### Why in News?

Recently, India abstained on a vote at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. The Council moved the resolution to set up an international commission of enquiry into Russia's actions in Ukraine.



- The move is significant in the terms that the vote followed even after India's meeting with Quad countries.
- India has also abstained from similar resolutions in the United Nations General Assembly and United Nations Security Council.
- India also abstained from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) resolution that was related to safety at four nuclear power stations and a number of nuclear waste sites including Chernobyl, as the Russians seized control of them.

## What is the UN Human Rights Council?

### About:

- The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the world.

### Formation:

- The Council was created by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006. It replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
- The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) serves as the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council.
- OHCHR is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

### Members:

- It is made up of 47 United Nations Member States which are elected by the UN General Assembly (UNGA).
  - ✓ The UNGA takes into account the candidate States' contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as their voluntary pledges and commitments in this regard.
- The Council's Membership is based on equitable geographical distribution. Seats are distributed as follows:
  - ✓ African States: 13 seats
  - ✓ Asia-Pacific States: 13 seats
  - ✓ Latin American and Caribbean States: 8 seats
  - ✓ Western European and other States: 7 seats
  - ✓ Eastern European States: 6 seats
- Members of the Council serve for a period of three years and are not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms.

### Procedures and Mechanisms:

- Universal Periodic Review: UPR serves to assess the human rights situations in all United Nations Member States.
- Advisory Committee: It serves as the Council's "think tank" providing it with expertise and advice on thematic human rights issues.
- Complaint Procedure: It allows individuals and organizations to bring human rights violations to the attention of the Council.

- **UN Special Procedures:** These are made up of special rapporteurs, special representatives, independent experts and working groups that monitor, examine, advise and publicly report on thematic issues or human rights situations in specific countries.

#### Issues:

- **Related to the Membership:** A key concern for some critics has been the composition of Council membership, which sometimes includes countries widely perceived as human rights abusers.
  - ✓ China, Cuba, Eritrea, Russia and Venezuela, all of which have been accused of human rights abuses.
- **Disproportionate Focus:** US pulled out of the Agency in 2018 due to its disproportionate focus on Israel, which has received by far the largest number of critical council resolutions against any country.
  - ✓ The US has joined the organization again.

#### India and UN Human Rights Council:

- Recently, a group of Special Rapporteurs to the United Nations (UN) has written to the Indian government expressing concerns over the draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification 2020.
- In 2020, India's National Human Rights Commission submitted its mid-term report to the Council as a part of the third round of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process.
- India was elected to the Council for a period of three years beginning 1st January 2019.

### INDIA ABSTAINS FROM UNGA RESOLUTION ON UKRAINE CRISIS; REITERATES CALL FOR DIALOGUE AND DIPLOMACY

#### KEY POINTS

- India chose to abstain at the voting on UN General Assembly resolution that blames Russia for the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Ukraine and urges immediate ceasefire.
- While the resolution was passed by majority of 140 countries voting in favour of the resolution and 5 voting against it, 38 nations including India abstained from voting.
- India's Permanent Representative to United Nations, TS Tirumurti said, the draft resolution didn't fully reflect our expected focus on these challenges.



- India continues to remain firm on its belief that efforts at the UN should contribute to de-escalation of the conflict, facilitate immediate cessation of hostilities to promote dialogue and diplomacy and bring parties together to find an immediate end to the suffering of the people.

## INDIA RELEASES NEW ARCTIC POLICY



## KEY POINTS

- The government has launched India's Arctic Policy titled 'India and the Arctic: Building a Partnership for Sustainable Development'.
- Emphasizing the importance of India's Arctic Policy, Minister for Earth Sciences Dr Jitendra Singh said that India's Arctic policy would play an essential role in preparing the country for a future where humankind's biggest challenges, such as climate change, can be addressed through collective will and effort.
- India's Arctic policy shall be implemented through an action plan, and an effective governance and review mechanism involving the inter-ministerial Empowered Arctic Policy Group. Implementing India's Arctic policy will involve multiple stakeholders, including academia, the research community, business, and industry.
- India has a significant stake in the Arctic. It is one of thirteen nations holding Observer status in the Arctic Council, a high-level intergovernmental forum that addresses issues faced by the Arctic governments and the indigenous people of the Arctic.

## INDIA, CHINA HOLD 15TH ROUND OF CORPS COMMANDER LEVEL MEET



### KEY POINTS

- The 15th round of China-India Corps Commander Level Meeting was held at Chushul Moldo border meeting point on the Indian side on 11th March.
- The Defence Ministry said, the two sides carried forward their discussions from the previous round held on 12th January this year for the resolution of the relevant issues along the LAC in the Western Sector.
- During the meeting, both sides had a detailed exchange of views, keeping with the guidance provided by the State Leaders to work for resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest. Both sides reaffirmed that such a resolution would help restore peace and tranquility along the LAC in the Western Sector and facilitate progress in bilateral relations.
- The two sides also agreed to maintain the security and stability on the ground in the Western Sector.
- They agreed to maintain dialogue through military and diplomatic channels to reach a mutually acceptable resolution of the remaining issues at the earliest.

## PLAQUE OF VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM IN ANTANANARIVO, MADAGASCAR



## KEY POINTS

- The Embassy of India, Antananarivo, Madagascar, organized a special unveiling ceremony of the plaque of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” in the Embassy premises on 10 March 2022 to mark the Azadi ka Amrit
- Mahotsav on the occasion of 75 years of India’s Independence.
- The event was attended by members of local government, diplomatic corps, Heads of International Organisations, and members of the Indian Diaspora in Madagascar.
- Addressing the audience, the Ambassador of India to Madagascar Abhay Kumar said – “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is one of the core philosophies of the Indian civilization.
- The concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam originates from Maha Upanishad that is a Vedic Sanskrit text of Indian philosophy.
- Vasudha means the earth, Eva provides emphasis and Kutumbakam means a family. ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ means ‘the whole earth is one family.’”

## YOON SUK YEOL ELECTED SOUTH KOREA'S NEW PRESIDENT



## KEY POINTS

- In South Korea, opposition candidate Yoon Suk Yeol, a conservative former top prosecutor has been elected as country's new President.
- Yoon Suk Yeol defeated his ruling liberal party opponent Lee Jae-myung in one of the country’s most closely fought presidential elections.
- With more than 99 percent of the ballots counted, People Power Party candidate Yoon won 48.6 percent of the votes, narrowly edging his rival Lee Jae-myung of Democratic Party, who garnered 47.8 percent.

## PM MODI CALLS FOR CONCRETE COOPERATION AMONG QUAD MEMBERS



### KEY POINTS

- The Quad comprising India, Australia, Japan and the US, have agreed on accelerating cooperation with an objective to achieve concrete outcomes by the summit in Japan later this year.
- The agreement was reached at during the Quad leaders' virtual summit on 03rd March attended by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, US President Joe Biden, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.
- Reviewing the progress on Quad initiatives since the September 2021 summit, PM Modi called for concrete and practical forms of cooperation within the Quad, in areas like humanitarian and disaster relief, debt sustainability, supply chains, clean energy, connectivity, and capacity-building.
- Developments in Ukraine were discussed in the meeting, including its humanitarian implications. The Prime Minister emphasised the need to return to a path of dialogue and diplomacy.

## NEW DELHI TO HOST ITU AREA OFFICE & INNOVATION CENTRE FOR SOUTH ASIA

### KEY POINTS

- India and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) have signed the Host Country Agreement (HCA) for the establishment of an Area Office & Innovation Centre of ITU in New Delhi.

- Other than serving as a central hub of telecommunication services for South Asian countries, the Centre will also give impetus to research and development in telecommunication technologies, providing opportunities to Indian academics, start-ups and SMEs to showcase their innovation at a global stage.

## 175 COUNTRIES ADOPT HISTORIC RESOLUTION ON PLASTIC POLLUTION



### KEY POINTS

- The fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) concluded on 02nd March in Nairobi with the adoption of a resolution to end plastic pollution, by addressing the full life cycle of plastic – from production to disposal.
- On the insistence of India, the principle of 'national circumstances and capability' while taking actions to address plastic pollution was included in the text of the resolution - "End Plastic Pollution: Towards an International Legally Binding Instrument.
- "India vouched for the inclusion of the text arguing that any legally binding international agreement should allow developing countries follow their development trajectories.



## SOCIAL ISSUES

### NCW LAUNCHES CLINIC FOR FREE LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO WOMEN IN DISTRESS



#### KEY POINTS

- In a move to make legal aid more accessible for women, the National Commission for Women (NCW) in collaboration with Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DSLSA) has launched a legal aid clinic which will act as a single-window facility for resolving grievances of women by offering them free legal assistance.
- NCW is also planning to set up similar legal services clinics in other State Commissions for Women.
- The legal aid clinic will operate out of the Commission's office in New Delhi. Any woman will be able to walk-in to the facility for accessing free legal advice and counseling where legal services advocates in the panel of DSLSA will help them.

### SAMARTH INITIATIVE

#### Why in News?

Recently, on the occasion of International Women's Day 2022, the Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), launched a Special Entrepreneurship Promotion Drive for Women –“SAMARTH”.



### What is the SAMARTH Initiative?

- Under the Samarth initiative of the Ministry, following benefits will be available to aspiring and existing women entrepreneurs:
  - ✓ 20% Seats in free Skill Development Programs organised under skill development schemes of the Ministry will be allocated for Women.
  - ✓ 20% of MSME Business Delegations sent to domestic & international exhibitions under the schemes for Marketing Assistance implemented by the Ministry will be dedicated to women owned MSMEs.
  - ✓ 20% Discount on annual processing fee on National Small Industries Corporation's (NSIC) Commercial Schemes.
    - ✓ NSIC is a Government of India Enterprise under the Ministry of MSME.
  - ✓ Special Drive for registration of women-owned MSMEs under Udyam Registration.
- Through this initiative, the Ministry of MSME is focusing on providing Skill Development and Market development Assistance to women.
  - ✓ More than 7500 women candidates from rural and sub-urban areas will be trained in the FY 2022-23.
  - ✓ Besides, thousands of women will be getting marketing opportunities to showcase their products in domestic and international exhibitions.
- Also, to enhance the participation of women entrepreneurs in Public Procurement, a special discount of 20% shall also be offered on annual processing fee on NSIC's following commercial schemes during the year 2022-23:
  - ✓ Single Point Registration Scheme
  - ✓ Raw Material Assistance and Bill Discounting
  - ✓ Tender Marketing
  - ✓ B2B Portal msmemart.com

### 2022 Theme:

- 'Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow'.

**INDEX****NATIONAL GENDER INDEX****KEY POINTS**

- NITI Aayog is set to develop a National Gender Index.
- The objective of the National Gender Index is to measure the progress and identify the persisting gaps in gender equality to make informed policy decisions.
- It will serve as a tool to map the progress of India's States and UTs on defined gender metrics and build the foundation for positive change.

**SECOND EDITION OF EXPORT PREPAREDNESS INDEX****KEY POINTS**

- The 2nd Edition of Export Preparedness Index has been released by NITI Aayog on 25th March.
- As per index, Gujarat has topped for the second time in a row.
- It is followed by Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Haryana.

**AWARDS****NINE SPORTSPERSONS CONFERRED WITH PADMA AWARDS**

## KEY POINTS

- Four Paralympic medalists including multiple medalist javelin thrower, Devendra Jhajharia, Tokyo Paralympics double medallist shooter Avani Lekhara, gold medallist javelin thrower Sumit Antil, gold winning para-shuttler Pramod Bhagat and Vandana Katarya- the first Indian woman to achieve a hat trick at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, were among the nine sportspersons who were conferred with the Padma awards by the President of India.
- While Jhajharia was honoured with the Padma Bhushan, the second highest of the Padma awards, eight sportspersons including Tokyo Olympics gold medallist Neeraj Chopra apart from Antil, Lekhara, Bhagat and Katariya were conferred with Padma Shri.

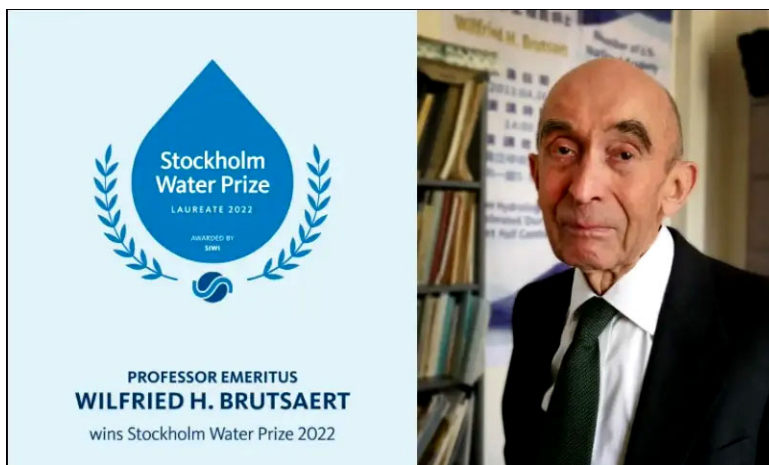
## 29 WOMEN ACHIEVERS CONFERRED NARI SHAKTI PURASKAR



## KEY POINTS

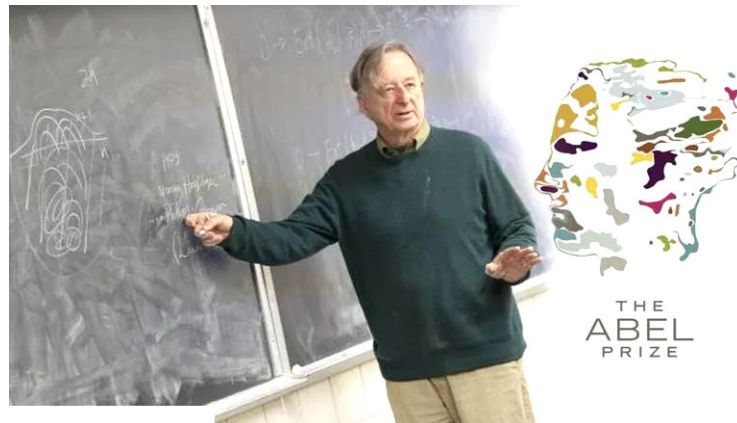
- President Ram Nath Kovind conferred the Nari Shakti Puraskar 2020 and 2021 at a special ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on the occasion of International Women's Day.
- The award was conferred on 29 outstanding women achievers in recognition of their exceptional work towards empowerment of women, especially the vulnerable and marginalised.

## STOCKHOLM WATER PRIZE 2022



- The Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) awarded The Stockholm Water Prize 2022 to Professor Wilfried Brutsaert for his innovative work in evaluating environmental evaporation.
- This prize is considered to be the Nobel Prize for Water.
- This method is of utmost importance to the exposed local communities across the world as they will be needing to predict daily water levels as well as water levels available in the future.

## ABEL PRIZE FOR THE YEAR 2022



### KEY POINTS

- The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters has awarded the Abel Prize for the year 2022 to American Mathematician Dennis Parnell Sullivan on 23 March 2022.
- The award has been given to him for his groundbreaking contributions to topology in its broadest sense, and in particular its algebraic, geometric and dynamical aspects.

## 94TH ACADEMY AWARDS

### KEY POINTS

- The Oscars 2022 or the 94th Academy Awards ceremony which is presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.
- The event was held at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles on march 27.

### List of winners:

- Best Actress: Jessica Chastain for the movie The Eyes Of Tammy Faye
- Best Actor: Will Smith for the movie King Richard
- Best Director was won by Jane Campion for The Power Of The Dog.
- Best Original Screenplay: Belfast



## 'SUSHMA SWARAJ AWARD'

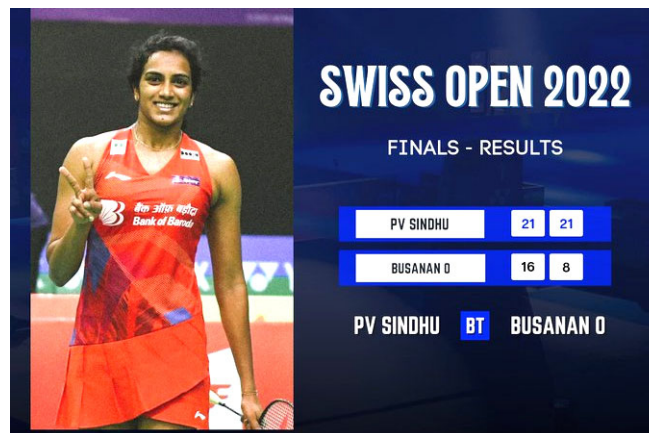


### KEY POINTS

- Haryana government has announced a 'Sushma Swaraj Award' for women for their significant achievements or contribution in different walks of life in the international and national spheres.
- The Sushma Swaraj Award will carry an award money of Rs.5 lakh along with a commendation.
- Sushma Swaraj was a senior member of the Bharatiya Janata Party, served as India's Minister of External Affairs during the first Narendra Modi government (2014-19).

## SPORTS

## PV SINDHU WINS SWISS OPEN SINGLE'S TITLE



### KEY POINTS

- In Swiss Open Badminton Championships 2022, two time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu has won the Women's Singles title beating Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan 21-16, 21-8 in straight games at Basel on 27th March.



- It was Sindhu's 16th win over Busanan in 17 meetings, having lost to the Thai only once at the 2019 Hong Kong Open. Sindhu had won the Syed Modi International Super 300 in Lucknow in January this year.

## CHENNAI TO HOST FIDE CHESS OLYMPIAD 2022



### KEY POINTS

- India has won the bid to host the FIDE Chess Olympiad 2022 in Chennai.
- It was originally scheduled to be held in Russia. But the FIDE recently announced that it pulled out from there following the Ukraine invasion.
- After the announcement, Tamil Nadu government and the All India Chess Federation made a joint bid to host the prestigious tournament and won.
- A statement by the state government says, this is the first time India hosts the FIDE Chess Olympiad since its inception in 1927.
- In the event, Chennai will host about 2000 participants from all over the world.
- India, being the host nation, will get the opportunity to send in multiple teams, increasing the probability to have a podium finish.
- The tentative dates for the FIDE Chess Olympiad are fixed to be from 26th July 2022 to 8th August 2022.

## INDIA BAGS MOST MEDALS IN ISSF WORLD CUP 2022 IN CAIRO



### KEY POINTS

- India have taken first place in the medal standing in International Shooting Sport Federation, ISSF World Cup 2022 in Cairo.
- The Indian team finished on the top of the medals tally with a total of seven medals comprising four gold, two silver and one bronze.
- In the last event of the tournament, Rhythm Sangwan and Anish Bhanwala won the 25m rapid fire pistol mixed team gold medal match against Thailand by defeating them 17-7.
- Earlier in the day, the Indian trio of Gurpreet Singh, Anish Bhanwala and Bhavesh Shekhawat lost the gold medal match of the men's 25m rapid fire pistol team competition to Germany 7-17.
- In the women's 25m pistol team event final, India defeated Singapore 17-13 to clinch their third gold of the World Cup.
- Rahi Sarnobat, Esha Singh and Rhythm Sangwan defeated the Singaporean trio of Xiu Hong, Shun Xie and Ling Chiao Nicole Tan in the gold medal match-up.
- Saurabh Chaudhary clinched India's first gold medal in Cairo defeating Michael Schwald of Germany 16-6 in the gold medal match of the Men's 10m Air Pistol event.

## INDIAN PLAYERS CLINCH GOLD IN VARIOUS INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

### KEY POINTS

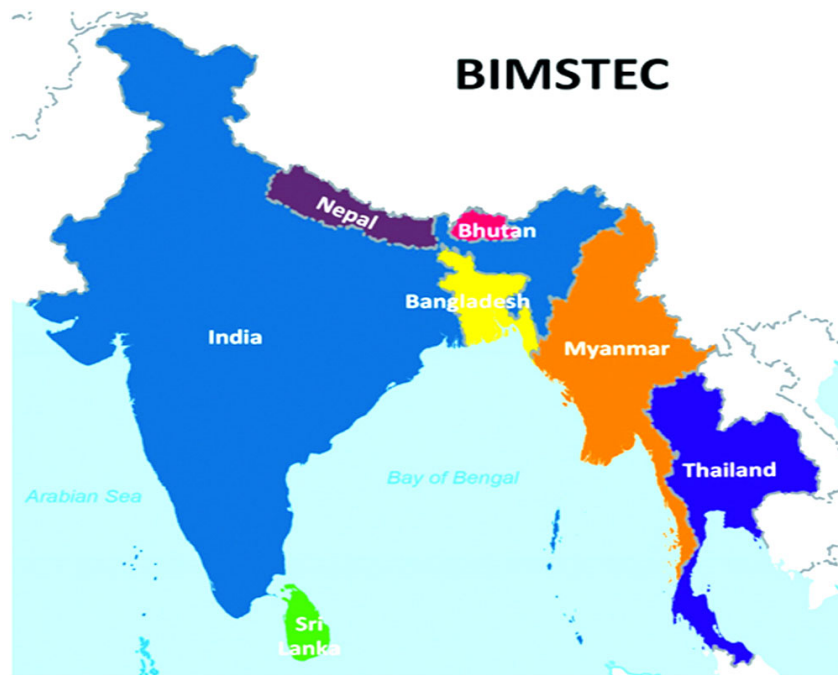
- Mirabai Chanu is set to represent India at the Commonwealth Games 2022 after securing a gold medal in the 55 kilogram category by lifting a total of 191 kilograms in the Singapore Weightlifting International.
- In Shooting, Saurabh Chaudhary clinched gold medal at the International Sports Federation (ISSF) World Cup in Cairo, Egypt.
- Meanwhile, the Indian trio of Shri Nivetha, Esha Singh and Ruchita Vinerkar combined to win the gold medal in the women's 10m air pistol team event of the ISSF World Cup.
- In the Wushu Stars Championship held in Moscow, Sadia Tariq came up with a brilliant performance to win a gold medal.

## SUMMITS

### FIFTH BIMSTEC SUMMIT

#### Why in News?

Recently, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) grouping's fifth summit took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka (Host for the Fifth Summit).



#### KEY POINTS

- BIMSTEC Charter: The signing of the BIMSTEC Charter was the main outcome of this summit.
  - ✓ Under this Charter, the members were expected to meet once every two years.
  - ✓ With the Charter, the BIMSTEC now has an international personality. It has an emblem, it has a flag.



- It has a formally listed purpose and principles that it is going to adhere to.
- In line with the development of the organisation into a formal structure, the leaders of the member-countries have agreed to divide the working of the grouping into seven segments, with India providing leadership to the security pillar.

### Pillars of BIMSTEC

<b>Bangladesh</b>	: Trade, Investment and Development
<b>Bhutan</b>	: Environment & Climate Change
<b>India</b>	: Security Sub-sectors: Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime, Disaster Management, Energy
<b>Myanmar</b>	: Agriculture and Food Security Sub-sectors: Agriculture, Fisheries & Livestock
<b>Nepal</b>	: People-to-People Contact Sub-sectors: Culture, Tourism, People-to-People Contact (forums of think tanks, media etc.)
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	: Science, Technology & Innovation (Sri Lanka) Sub-sectors: Technology, Health, Human Resource Development
<b>Thailand</b>	: Connectivity

- Master Plan for Transport Connectivity: The summit saw the declaration of the Master Plan for Transport Connectivity that would provide a framework for regional and domestic connectivity.
- Other Agreements: Member countries also signed a treaty on mutual legal assistance on criminal matters.
- A Memorandum of Association (MoA) on the establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility (TTF) in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- India will provide the (BIMSTEC) secretariat USD 1 million US dollars to increase its operational budget.

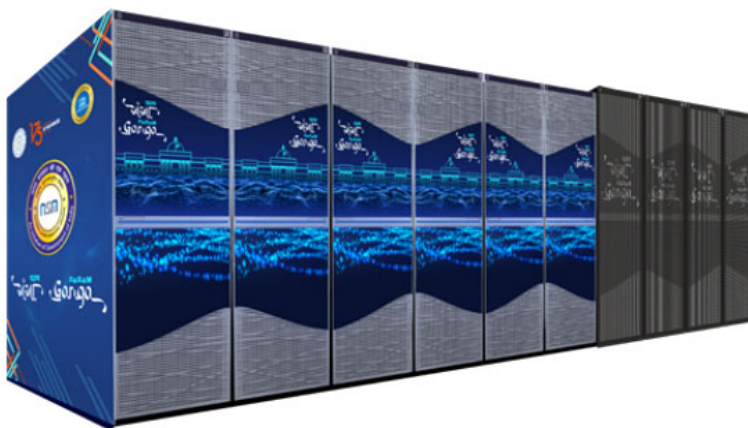
## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### SUPERCOMPUTER PARAM GANGA : NSM

#### Why in News?

The National Supercomputing Mission (NSM) has deployed PARAM Ganga-a High-Performance Computational (HPC) facility at IIT Roorkee, with a supercomputing capacity of 1.66 Petaflops.

- Earlier, the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru installed the supercomputer 'Param Pravega'.



#### KEY POINTS

- It has been established by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under the approach of NSM.
- The basic idea behind building a Petascale Supercomputer with manufactured in India components is to lead the path towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat and accelerate the problem-solving capacity in multidisciplinary domains simultaneously.
  - ✓ It will aid researchers to solve complex problems of national importance and global significance.
- It will serve as an essential computer environment for the modern-day research along with their theoretical and experimental work.
- The focus is to provide computational power to the user community of IIT Roorkee and neighbouring academic institutions.

## EARTH OBSERVATION SATELLITE (EOS-04)

### Why in News?

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) developed Monolithic Microwave Integrated Circuits (MMICs) have been used in radar imaging satellite modules of EOS 04, which was launched by ISRO

- Many of the Monolithic Microwave Integrated Circuits (MMIC) were designed/ developed and produced at Solid State Physics Laboratory (SSPL) DRDO and Gallium Arsenide Enabling Technology Centre (GAETEC) foundry of DRDO.

### About Earth Observation Satellite (EOS-04)

- **Launch Vehicle:** It was launched by PSLV C- 52 launch vehicle from the first launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota.  
**Weight:** Its weight is around 1,170 kg.  
**Orbit:** It will be placed in a sun synchronous polar orbit of 529 km away from earth.
- **Feature:** It is a radar-imaging satellite, designed to provide high-quality images under all weather conditions.

### Applications: It includes:

- ✓ Agriculture,
- ✓ Forestry & plantations,
- ✓ Soil moisture and hydrology, and
- ✓ Flood mapping
- **PSLV-C52 mission :** Two small satellites as co-passengers namely:
- **INSPIRESat-1:** It is a student satellite from the Indian Institute of Space Science & Technology in association with the Laboratory of Atmospheric & Space Physics at the University of Colorado, Boulder and
- **INS-2TD:** It is a technology demonstrator satellite from ISRO.

### Recent Achievements of ISRO:

#### Amazonia-1:

- It is the first dedicated commercial mission of NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), a Government of India company under Department of Space.
- It was launched by PSLV-C51 in 2021.



- It is a optical earth observation satellite of National Institute for Space Research (INPE), would provide remote sensing data to users for monitoring deforestation in the Amazon region and analysis of diversified agriculture across the Brazilian territory.

### UNITYsat and Satish Dhawan SAT (SDSAT):

- The PSLV-C51 launch vehicle successfully launched Indian student satellites UNITYsat and Satish Dhawan SAT (SDSAT) on February 28, 2021.
- UNITYsat: It is intended for providing Radio relay services
- SDSAT: It is a nano satellite intended to study the radiation levels/space weather and demonstrate long range communication technologies.

### CMS-01 Mission:

- It is India's communication satellite was launched by PSLV-C50 in 2020.
- It was injected into an elliptical sub- Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit.
- It is envisaged for providing services in extended C Band frequency spectrum.

## KAVACH: AUTOMATIC TRAIN PROTECTION SYSTEM

### Why in News?

Recently, the Indian Railways tested 'Kavach'- Automatic Train Protection System by making two trains move towards each other at full speed.

- The Kavach system was announced in the 2022 Union Budget as a part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative. Around 2,000 km of rail network is planned to be brought under the indigenous system to enable safety and capacity augmentation in 2022-23.

### What is Kavach?

- It is India's own automatic protection system, which is in development since 2012, under the name Train Collision Avoidance System (TCAS), which got rechristened Kavach or "armour".
- It is a set of electronic devices and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) devices installed in locomotives, in the signalling system as well as the tracks.
- They connect to each other using ultra high radio frequencies to control the brakes of trains and also alert drivers, all based on the logic programmed into them.
  - ✓ TCAS or Kavach includes the key elements from already existing, and tried and tested systems like the European Train Protection and Warning System, and the indigenous Anti Collision Device.

- ✓ It will also carry features of the high-tech European Train Control System Level-2 in future.



- The current form of Kavach adheres to the highest level of safety and reliability standard called Safety Integrity Level (SIL)4.
  - ✓ SIL comes from two voluntary standards used by plant owners/operators to quantify safety performance requirements for hazardous operations.
  - ✓ There are four SIL Levels (1-4). A higher SIL Level means a greater process hazard and a higher level of protection required.
- In the new avatar, India wants to position Kavach as an exportable system, a cheaper alternative to the European systems in vogue across the world.
- While now Kavach uses Ultra High Frequency, work is on to make it compatible with 4G Long Term Evolution (LTE) technology and make the product for global markets.
- Work is on to make the system such that it can be compatible with other already installed systems globally.

## QUANTUM KEY DISTRIBUTION

### Why in News?

A joint team of scientists from DRDO and IIT Delhi, for the first time in the country successfully demonstrated Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) link between Prayagraj and Vindhyachal in Uttar Pradesh, a distance of more than 100 kilometers.

### What is Quantum key distribution?

- Quantum key distribution (QKD) is a secure communication method for exchanging encryption keys only known between shared parties.

- The communication method uses properties found in quantum physics to exchange cryptographic keys in such a way that is provable and guarantees security.
- QKD enables two parties to produce and share a key that is then used to encrypt and decrypt messages.
- Specifically, QKD is the method of distributing the key - not the key itself or the messages it can enable users to send.

### How does QKD work?

**The security of QKD is based on a fundamental characteristic of quantum mechanics:**

- The act of measuring a quantum system disturbs the system.
- Thus, an eavesdropper trying to intercept a quantum exchange will inevitably leave detectable traces.
- The legitimate exchanging parties can decide either to discard the corrupted information, or reduce the information available to the eavesdropper to nought by distilling a shorter key.

**A QKD implementation typically includes the following components:**

- A fiber or free-space quantum channel to send quantum states of light between the transmitter (Alice) and receiver (Bob). This channel does not need to be secured
- A public but authenticated communication link between the two parties to perform post-processing steps and distill a correct and secret key
- A key exchange protocol that exploits quantum properties to ensure security by detecting eavesdropping or errors, and by calculating the amount of information that has been intercepted or lost
- Both errors and potential information leakage are removed during subsequent error correction and privacy amplification post-processing steps, leaving Bob and Alice with a shared key known only to them.

### Advantages of QKD

- QKD uses the laws of physics to guarantee its security.
- This is as opposed to its classical counterparts which rely on computational hardness and mathematical intractability.
- QKD is also future-proof. This means that it is impossible to store information obtained during the key exchange process and hack it at a later time.
- This makes it very attractive in securing data that have lengthy lifespans.
- QKD gives the ability to detect eavesdropping which is also a distinct advantage.

## BRAHMOS SUPERSONIC CRUISE MISSILE

### Why in News?

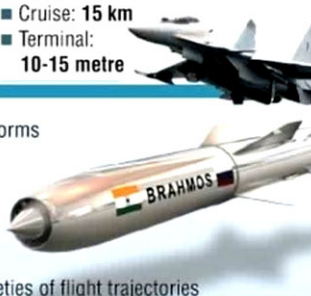
The Indian Navy successfully demonstrated the accuracy of an extended-range land attack Brahmos supersonic cruise missile from the stealth destroyer INS Chennai.

### About

- The BrahMos is a medium-range ramjet supersonic cruise missile that can be launched from submarine, ships, aircraft, or land.
- It is the fastest supersonic cruise missile in the world.
- BRAHMOS is a joint venture between the Defence Research and Development Organisation of India (DRDO) and the NPOM of Russia.
- Brahmos is named on the rivers Brahmaputra and Moskva.
- It is a two-stage (solid propellant engine in the first stage and liquid ramjet in second) air to surface missile with a flight range of around 300 km.
- However, India's entry into the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) has extended the range of the BRAHMOS missile to reach 450 km-600km, a shade above its current MTCR capped range of 300 km.
- Brahmos is a multiplatform i.e., it can be launched from land, air, and sea and multi capability missile with pinpoint accuracy that works in both day and night irrespective of the weather conditions.
- It operates on the "Fire and Forgets" principle i.e., it does not require further guidance after launch.
- Brahmos is one of the fastest cruise missiles currently operationally deployed with speed of Mach 2.8, which is 3 times more than the speed of sound.

<b>Technical Specifications</b>	
Maximum range <b>400+ km</b>	Warhead mass <b>200-300 kg</b>
Velocity <b>Mach 2.8</b>	Altitude
Weight <b>2.5 tonnes</b>	■ Cruise: <b>15 km</b>
	■ Terminal: <b>10-15 metre</b>

<b>Special Features</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Universal for multiple platforms</li> <li>■ "Fire and Forget" principle of operation</li> <li>■ High supersonic speed all through the flight</li> <li>■ Long flight range with varieties of flight trajectories</li> <li>■ Low radar signature</li> <li>■ Shorter flight times leading to lower target dispersion and quicker engagement</li> <li>■ Pin point accuracy with high lethal power aided by large kinetic energy on impact</li> </ul>	

**Compared to existing state-of-the-art subsonic cruise missiles, BrahMos has**

- 3 times more velocity
- 2.5 to 3 times more flight range
- 3 to 4 times more seeker range
- 9 times more kinetic energy

### About Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is an agency of the Government of India, charged with the military's research and development.
- It is headquartered in Delhi, India and has its 50+ labs all across the country.
- It was formed in 1958.
- It is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Defence, Government of India.
- With a network of 52 laboratories, which are engaged in developing defence technologies covering various fields, like aeronautics, armaments, electronics, land combat engineering, life sciences, materials, missiles, and naval systems, DRDO is India's largest and most diverse research organisation.

### Objectives of DRDO

- Design, develop and lead to production state-of-the-art sensors, weapon systems, platforms and allied equipment for our Defence Services.
- Provide technological solutions to the Services to optimise combat effectiveness and to promote well-being of the troops.
- Develop infrastructure and committed quality manpower and build strong indigenous technology base.

## INDIA SUCCESSFULLY TESTS MEDIUM-RANGE SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE SYSTEMS

### KEY POINTS

- India has successfully tested two Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile systems from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur off the Odisha coast.
- The launches were carried out on 30th March establishing the accuracy and reliability of the weapon system against targets covering the sea-skimming and high altitude functionality within the envelope.
- According to the Defence Ministry, performance of all weapon system components including missile, weapon system radar and command post have been validated during these trials.

## MILITARY SATELLITE NOOR-2

### KEY POINTS

- Iran successfully launched a military satellite, Noor-2, into orbit at an altitude of 500 kilometres (311 miles) from the earth.
- This is the second military satellite launched by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.
- Noor was the first military satellite, launched in April 2020.
- Noor means light in the Persian language.



## ENERGY SECTOR

### CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN POWER GRID TECHNOLOGY LAUNCHED



#### KEY POINTS

- The Ministry of Power has launched the Virtual Smart Grid Knowledge Center (SGKC) and Innovation Park as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav Programme.
- The SGKC has been established by POWERGRID for demonstration and advancement of frontier smart grid technologies.
- SGKC aims to be one of the leading Centers of Excellence globally to foster innovation, entrepreneurship and research in smart grid technologies and create capacities in the power distribution sector.

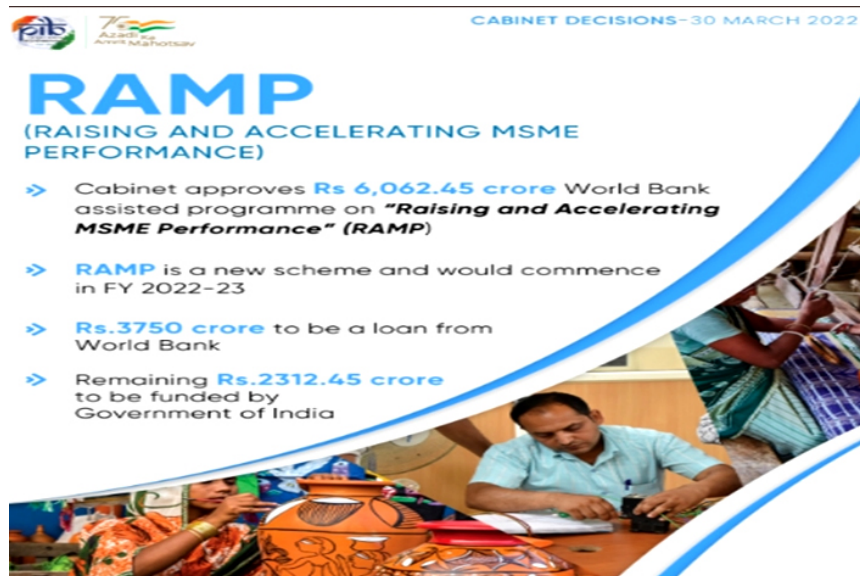
### INDIA'S LARGEST FLOATING SOLAR POWER PLANT

#### KEY POINTS

- MK Stalin, the Chief minister of Tamil Nadu has inaugurated India's largest floating solar power plant constructed at a cost of Rs. 150.4 crores.
- The floating plant is established in Southern Petrochemicals Industries Corporation Limited factory at Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu to provide clean energy.
- It aims to provide environmentally sustainable power generation and to reduce carbon footprint.

## SCHEMES

### CABINET APPROVES NEW SCHEME FOR ACCELERATING MSMEs' PERFORMANCE



#### KEY POINTS

- The Union Cabinet has approved the implementation of the World Bank-assisted programme on "Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance" (RAMP).
- Slated to commence in Financial Year 2022-23 - this new central sector scheme will have a total budgetary outlay of Rs 6,062.45 crore USD 808 Million, out of which Rs.3750 crore or USD 500 Million would be a loan from the World Bank and the remaining Rs.2312.45 crore or USD 308 Million would be funded by the Government of India.
- RAMP programme will address the generic and COVID related challenges in the MSME sector by way of impact enhancement of existing MSME schemes, especially, on the competitiveness front. Further, the programme will bolster the inadequately addressed blocks of capacity building, handholding, skill development, quality enrichment, technological upgradation, digitization, outreach and marketing promotion, amongst other things.
- RAMP programme, through enhanced collaboration with States, will be a job-enabler, market promoter, finance facilitator, and will support vulnerable sections and greening initiatives.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGY

### APPLICATION ECOSYSTEM FOR INTEGRATION OF PROCUREMENT PORTALS

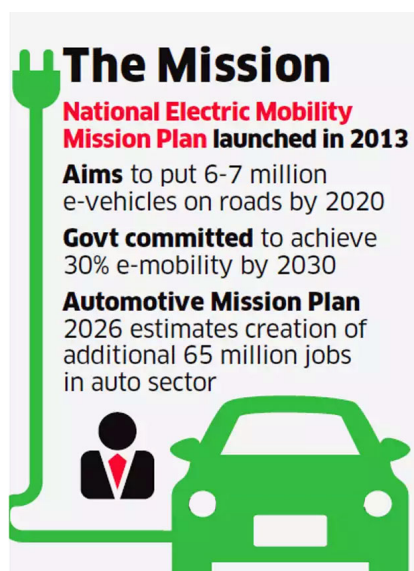
#### Why in News

Recently, the Department of Food and Public Distribution has developed an application ecosystem for integration of procurement portals of all state governments

### ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) BATTERY SWAPPING POLICY

#### Why in news?

NITI Aayog is holding a consultation on the upcoming electric vehicle (EV) battery swapping policy.



#### What is battery swapping?

- Battery swapping or batter-as-a-service allows EV owners to replace the discharged batteries with charged ones at the swap stations.
- When the battery is discharged, the owner can change it with a fully charged one.

#### How will the Battery Swapping Policy work?

- The policy is likely to focus on battery swap services for three-wheeled auto rickshaws and two-wheelers such as electric scooters and motorcycles.

- Under the policy, EV owners may get incentives of up to 20% on the subscription or lease cost of the battery.

### Advantages of Battery Swapping:

- It will address the problem of setting up charging stations and also reduce range anxiety of drivers.
- It can help EV owners save the cost of purchasing a battery.
- It is less time consuming and takes only a few minutes compared to charging at a battery station which could take hours.
- It also requires minimum infrastructure.

### Barriers to Battery Swapping:

- High Cost of Battery (Batteries account for close to 60% of the cost for an e-two-wheeler)
- Lack of standardization among batteries
- Unsuitable battery pack design
- Higher GST on separate batteries (18% versus 5% for EVs)

## ‘SUJALAM 2.0’ GREY WATER RECYCLING PROJECT

### Why in News?

On the World Water Day (22nd March), the Ministry of Jal Shakti launched a countrywide project to reuse grey water, or run-offs from kitchens, bathing and laundry.

### What is Grey water?

- Grey water is defined as wastewater that is produced from household processes (e.g. washing dishes, laundry and bathing).
- Grey water can contain harmful bacteria and even faecal matter that contaminates soil and groundwater.
- So far, India does not have a focused policy framework for management and usage of grey water in urban and rural areas. However, some guidelines for treatment of wastewater do exist.
  - ✓ For example, the Central Public Health and Environmental Engineering Organisation (CPHEEO) has specified permitted discharge standards for treated water; use of treated wastewater in agriculture and horticulture (MoHUA, 2012).
  - ✓ The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB, 2000) directs that treated wastewater can be used as a source of artificial ground water recharge once it meets standards and is compatible with existing groundwater.

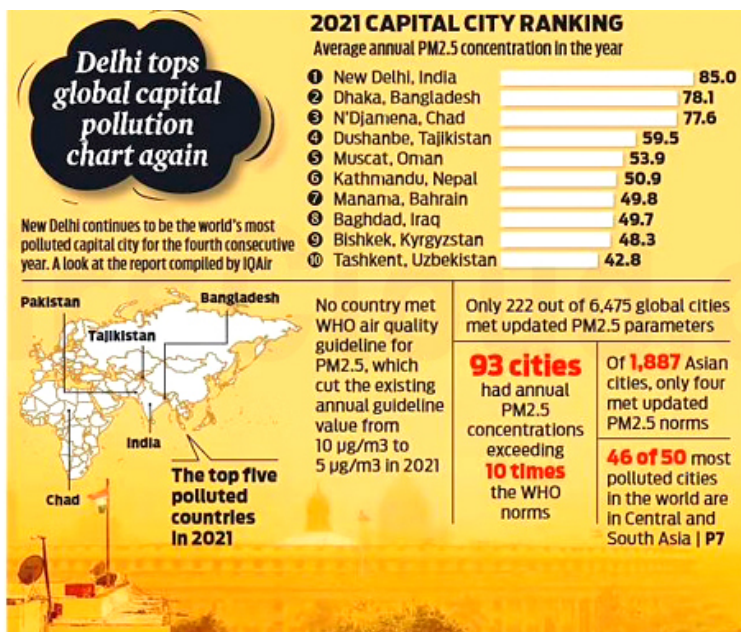
## REPORTS

### WORLD AIR QUALITY REPORT 2021

#### Why in News?

Recently, the 2021 World Air Quality Report was released, the report presented an overview of the state of global air quality in 2021.

- IQ Air, a Swiss group that measures air quality levels based on the concentration of Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5.
- IQ Air endeavours to engage, educate, and inspire governments, researchers, Non-Government Organisations, companies, and citizens to work together to improve air quality and create healthier communities and cities.



#### What is the Need for the Report?

- Air pollution is now considered to be the world's largest environmental health threat, accounting for seven million deaths around the world every year.
- Air pollution causes and aggravates many diseases, ranging from asthma to cancer, lung illnesses and heart disease.
- The estimated daily economic cost of air pollution has been figured at USD 8 billion, or 3 to 4% of the Gross World Product (GWP)

- ✓ GWP is the combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of all the countries in the world equals the total global GDP.
- Air pollution affects those that are most vulnerable the most. It is estimated that in 2021, the deaths of 40,000 children under the age of five were directly linked to PM2.5 air pollution.
- Further, in this age of Covid-19, researchers have found that exposure to PM2.5 increases both the risk of contracting the virus and of suffering more severe symptoms when infected, including death.

### How is PM 2.5 measured?

- The report is based on PM2.5 air quality data from 6,475 cities in 117 countries, regions and territories around the world.
- PM2.5, particulate matter consisting of fine aerosol particles measuring 2.5 microns or smaller in diameter, is one of six routinely measured criteria air pollutants and is commonly accepted as the most harmful to human health due to its prevalence in the environment and broad range of health effects.
- PM2.5 is generated from many sources and can vary in chemical composition and physical characteristics.
  - ✓ Common chemical constituents of PM2.5 include sulphates, nitrates, black carbon, and ammonium.
- The most common human-made sources include internal combustion engines, power generation, industrial processes, agricultural processes, construction, and residential wood and coal burning.
- The most common natural sources for PM2.5 are dust storms, sandstorms, and wildfires.

## DEMOCRACY REPORT

### KEY POINTS

- Recently, Democracy Report was released by the V-Dem Institute at Sweden's University of Gothenburg.
- The study was titled 'Democracy Report 2022: Autocratisation Changing Nature?'
- The report classifies India as an electoral autocracy ranking it 93rd on the LDI, out of 179 countries.
- Top 5 are Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Costa Rica, New Zealand.



## ECONOMY SCENARIO

### WINGS INDIA 2022

#### Why in the News?

The Ministry of Civil Aviation, Airports Authority of India (AAI) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) is jointly organising Wings India 2022 from 24th – 27th March 2022, Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad, India.

- It is Asia's largest event on Civil Aviation (Commercial, General and Business Aviation).



#### What is the Objective of Wings India 2022?

- It is in synergy with India's commitment to transform the country into World's top aviation hub.
- It seeks to provide a congenial forum catering to the rapidly changing dynamics of the sector, focusing on new business acquisition, investments, policy formation and regional connectivity.
- It will provide a much-desired fillip to the aviation and restructured focused forums shall be instrumental in attaining the objective of connecting the Buyers, Sellers, Investors, and other stakeholders at a common vantage forum 'Wings India 2022'.

#### What are highlights of the Indian Civil Aviation Market?

- Aviation Sector:** India's Civil Aviation is among the fastest-growing aviation markets globally and will be a major growth engine to make India a USD 5 trillion economy by 2024.
- Passenger Traffic:** 3rd largest aviation market by domestic air passenger traffic which stood at 274.05 million in FY20. It grew at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 12.91% during FY16-FY20.

- **Airports:** 75 airports opened in 75 years of Civil Aviation in India while under the aegis of Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN), within a span of 3 years, work has been initiated to provide scheduled connectivity to 76 unserved / 20 underserved airports, 31 heliports and 10 water aerodromes.
- **Fleet Strength:** 713 aircraft of scheduled Indian carriers operating year around; private scheduled airlines plan to add over 900 aircrafts in the next 5 years
- **Commitment to Greener Airspace:** Comprehensive regulatory policies and strategies adopted to reduce aviation carbon footprints
- **Ensuring Hassle-free Travel:** Incorporated systematic approaches to redress passenger grievances, and improve operational efficiencies across the system

### What are Opportunities Under Indian Aviation Market?

- **FDI:** 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) allowed under Automatic route for Ground Handling Services and Maintenance Repair and Overhaul Services (MRO) and for both green and brownfield projects.
- **Scope of Growth:** The Indian civil Aviation MRO market, at present, stands at around USD 900 million and is anticipated to grow to USD 4.33 billion by 2025 increasing at a CAGR of about 14- 15%.
  - ✓ The nation's airplane fleet is projected to quadruple in size to approximately 2500 airplanes by 2038.
- **Connecting New Airports:** The government aims to develop 100 airports by 2024 (under the UDAN Scheme) and create world-class civil aviation infrastructure to be at par with global standards.

## UPI 123 PAY AND DIGISAATHI

### Why in News

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched new UPI services for feature phones called UPI 123Pay for non internet users to make digital payments, also launched a 24 × 7 helpline for digital payments called 'Digisaathi'.

- 'Digisaathi' has also been set up by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to provide users with automated responses on information related to digital payment products and services. Presently it is available in English and Hindi language.

## ना नेट की जरूरत ना स्मार्टफोन की जरूरत

कॉल करो, यूज़ करो, ओर पे करो



## RBI UPI 123 Pay Send Money

मनी ट्रांसफर, रिचार्ज, ओर बैंक बैलेंस  
एक छोटे फ़ोन में सब कुछ

### What is Unified Payments Interface (UPI)?

- It is an advanced version of Immediate Payment Service (IMPS)- round-the-clock funds transfer service to make cashless payments faster, easier and smoother.
- UPI is a system that powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application (of any participating bank), merging several banking features, seamless fund routing & merchant payments into one hood.
- UPI is currently the biggest among the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) operated systems including National Automated Clearing House (NACH), Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), Aadhaar enabled Payment System (AePS), Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS), RuPay etc.
- The top UPI apps today include PhonePe, Paytm, Google Pay, Amazon Pay and BHIM, the latter being the Government offering.

### What is UPI 123 Pay?

#### About:

- It will work on simple phones that do not have an internet connection.
  - ✓ As of now, the UPI features are mostly available only on smartphones.
- The UPI service for feature phones will leverage the RBI's regulatory Sandbox on Retail Payments.
  - ✓ A regulatory sandbox usually refers to live testing of new products or services in a controlled/test regulatory environment for which regulators may permit certain regulatory relaxations for the limited purpose of the testing.

- The UPI service will enable digital transactions through a mechanism of ‘on-device’ wallet in UPI applications.”
- The users will be able to undertake a host of transactions based on four technology alternatives including- IVR (interactive voice response) number, missed call-based approach, app functionality in feature phones and proximity sound-based payments.

**Benefits:**

- The new service for feature phones will enable individuals to make direct payments to others without smartphones and internet.
- Users can initiate payments to friends and family, pay utility bills, recharge the FAST Tags of their vehicles, pay mobile bills and also allow users to check account balances.
- It will allow customers to use feature phones for almost all transactions except scan and pay.
- UPI123Pay will benefit an estimated 40 crore feature phone users and enable them to undertake digital payments in a secure manner. This will bring non-smartphone users under the digital payment system.

**FINANCIAL STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL****Why in news?**

The 25th meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) was held in Mumbai.

**Highlights:**

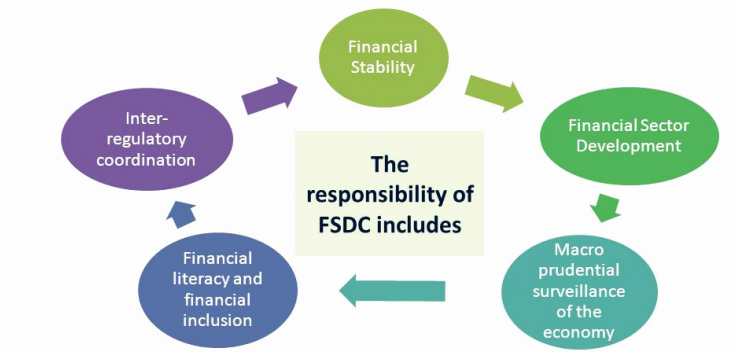
- The Council deliberated on the various mandates of the FSDC and major macro-financial challenges arising in view of global and domestic developments.
- The Council noted that Government and all regulators need to maintain constant vigil on the financial conditions and functioning of important financial institutions, especially considering that it could expose financial vulnerabilities in the medium and long-term.
- The Council discussed measures required for further development of the financial sector and to achieve an inclusive economic growth with macroeconomic stability.
- The Council discussed operational issues relating to currency management. It also took note of the activities undertaken by the FSDC Sub-Committee chaired by the RBI Governor and the action taken by members on the past decisions of FSDC.

## About Financial Stability Development Council (FSDC)

The Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) was constituted by an Executive Order of the Union Government as a non-statutory apex body under the Ministry of Finance in 2010.

### Financial Stability and Development Council

*The FSDC, set up in 2010, is a body consisting all regulators and the Ministry of Finance. It is the highest forum in matters relating to financial stability. The Council is chaired by the Union Finance Minister*



- The idea to create such a super regulatory body was first mooted by the Raghuram Rajan Committee in 2008.
- No funds are separately allocated to the council for undertaking its activities.
- The FSDC was formed to bring greater coordination among financial market regulators.

## Composition of the FSDC

The membership of the FSDC is as discussed below:

- The Finance Minister is the Chairman of the FSDC.
- The council is headed by the finance minister and has the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor and chairpersons of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) and Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) as other members along with finance ministry officials.
- Other members are Finance Secretary, Chief Economics Advisor and Secretary of the Department of Financial Services.

## Functions and Responsibilities of the FSDC

- The FSDC was formed to bring greater coordination among financial market regulators.
- To strengthen and institutionalize the mechanism of maintaining financial stability and responsibilities of FSDC as shown in the below image

## SWIFT

### Why in news?

The U.S., Europe and several other western nations are moving to exclude Russia from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), an international network for banks to facilitate smooth money transactions globally. This could be the strongest economic sanction against Russia over its military moves in Ukraine, as it will potentially cut off the country from receiving international payments.

### What is SWIFT?

- SWIFT is a messaging network used by banks and financial institutions globally for quick and faultless exchange of information pertaining to financial transactions.
- The Belgium-headquartered SWIFT connects more than 11,000 banking and securities organisations in over 200 countries and territories.
- Each participant on the platform is assigned a unique eight-digit SWIFT code or a bank identification code (BIC).
- **Example:** If a person, say, in New York with a Citibank account, wants to send money to someone with an HSBC account in London, the payee would have to submit to his bank, the London-based beneficiary's account number along with the eight-digit SWIFT code of the latter's bank.
- Citi would then send a SWIFT message to HSBC.
- Once that is received and approved, the money would be credited to the required account.
- SWIFT is merely a platform that sends messages and does not hold any securities or money.
- It provides standardised and reliable communication to facilitate the transaction.

### Exclusion from SWIFT

- If a country is excluded from the most participatory financial facilitating platform, its foreign funding would take a hit, making it entirely reliant on domestic investors.
- This is particularly troublesome when institutional investors are constantly seeking new markets in newer territories.



- An alternative system would be cumbersome to build and even more difficult to integrate with an already expansive system.
- SWIFT, first used in 1973, went live in 1977 with 518 institutions from 22 countries, its website states.
- SWIFT itself had replaced the much slower and far less dynamic Telex.
- Certain Iranian banks were ousted from the system in 2018 despite resistance from several countries in Europe.
- "This step, while regrettable, was taken in the interest of the stability and integrity of the wider global financial system, and based on an assessment of the economic situation," SWIFT states on its website.

### How is the organisation governed?

- SWIFT claims to be neutral. Its shareholders, consisting of 3,500 firms across the globe, elect the 25-member board, which is responsible for oversight and management of the company.
- It is regulated by G-10 central banks of Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States, Switzerland, and Sweden, alongside the European Central Bank.
- Its lead overseer is the National Bank of Belgium.
- The SWIFT oversight forum was established in 2012.
- The G-10 participants were joined by the central banks of India, Australia, Russia, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, the Republic of Turkey, and the People's Republic of China.
- In 2021, the SWIFT financial messaging platform had recorded an average of 42 million FIN messages per day, as per the data on its website.
- The full-year figure was an 11.4% growth on a year-over-year basis.
- Europe, West Asia, and Africa, combined sent approximately 4.66 billion messages.
- The Americas and the United Kingdom stood second with 4.42 billion interactions, with the Asia Pacific on third with an approximate 1.50 billion messages.

## INDIA'S MERCHANDISE EXPORT TOUCHES NEW HIGH OF USD 400 BILLION



### KEY POINTS

- Merchandise exports from India have crossed \$400 billion in Financial Year 2021-22.
- This is far higher than the previous record of USD 330 billion achieved in 2018-19.
- The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles, Shri Piyush Goyal said that the achievement of USD 400 billion exports was the result of a concerted, collective effort by every sector, every stakeholder in the nation.
- Underscoring the direct linkage that exports have with employment generation, especially in labour intensive sectors, the Minister said that when products of a brass trader from Moradabad and farmers from Varanasi get appreciated in the global market, it is a testimony to the fact that employment and prosperity is increasing from exports.
- The Minister also appreciated Indian exporters for maintaining the momentum throughout the year despite challenges caused by successive COVID-19 waves.

## SUCCESSFUL TRAINEES OF PROJECT UNNATI FELICITATED

### KEY POINTS

- Union Minister of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Shri Giriraj Singh felicitated 75 trained candidates of Project Unnati under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA on 24th March 2022 at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi as part of the celebration of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

- Along with 75 Trained Candidates of Project Unnati the Minister also felicitated Bankers associated with the Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETI) of States/UTs who have contributed towards Project Unnati.
- He emphasized that 20% of active workers' households of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA should get training under the skilling and livelihoods programme of the Ministry.
- The purpose of the project is to connect the rural people to various available livelihood opportunities and lead them to self-reliance and sustainable development.
- According to the Ministry, a total of 2,00,000 beneficiaries shall be imparted training under this project in a span of three years in 26 States and 2 UTs. More than 18000 candidates have been trained under Project Unnati so far.

## BANGLADESH TOP IN SOUTH ASIA IN TERMS OF WOMEN ON BOARD OF LISTED COMPANIES



### KEY POINTS

- Bangladesh tops the list in South Asia in terms of women on board of listed companies, says a study conducted by International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE).
- According to the latest figures, there was an increase in the percentage of women who are independent directors on listed companies from five percent in 2020 to six percent, despite the impact of COVID-19, which has disproportionately affected women, said a press release issued by the IFC. A 2020 IFC-DSE study showed at the time around 18 percent of listed company board directors were women, which has remained the same.

## **WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED GREEN HYDROGEN FUEL CELL ELECTRIC VEHICLE LAUNCHED IN NEW DELHI ROAD**



### **KEY POINTS**

- Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari launched the world's most advanced technology-developed Green Hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle Toyota Mirai in New Delhi on 16th March.
- He said it is an important initiative in promoting clean energy and protecting the environment by reducing dependence on fossil fuels and thereby making India 'Energy Self-reliant by 2047.
- Toyota Kirloskar Motor and International Center for Automotive Technology are conducting a Pilot Project to study and evaluate the world's most advanced Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle Toyota Mirai which runs on hydrogen, on Indian roads and climatic conditions.
- This is a first of its kind project in India which aims at creating a Green Hydrogen based ecosystem in the country by bringing awareness about the unique utility of Green Hydrogen and FCEV technology.
- Introduction and adoption of technology to tap into the Green hydrogen's potential will play a key role in securing a clean and affordable energy future for India

## DD INDIA ONBOARDS GLOBAL OTT PLATFORM

### KEY POINTS

- Public broadcaster Prasar Bharati has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Yupp TV, an over-the-top (OTT) platform, which is a gateway for television viewers across the globe.
- With this, DD India is now available on the OTT platform of Yupp TV in USA, UK, Europe, Middle East, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand.
- Through Yupp TV, one can watch live TV anytime anywhere in the world. It is aimed at expanding the global reach of DD India channel to put forth India's perspective on various international developments on global platforms and to showcase the country's culture and values to the world.

## DONATE-A-PENSION PROGRAMME LAUNCHED



### KEY POINTS

- The government has launched Donate-a-Pension programme - an initiative under the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) pension scheme where citizens can donate the premium contribution of their immediate support staff including domestic workers, drivers and helpers.
- Under the programme, workers in the unorganised sector in the age group of 18 to 40 years can register themselves and deposit a minimum of 660 to 2400 rupees every year depending on their age.
- After they attain 60 years they will receive the minimum assured pension of three thousand rupees per month.

## **e-BILL PROCESSING SYSTEM LAUNCHED FOR SEAMLESS PAYMENTS**

### **KEY POINTS**

- The Ministry of Finance has launched the Electronic Bill (e-Bill) processing system, announced in Union Budget 2022-23.
- Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt. Sitharaman said that this is part of 'Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) and Digital India Eco-system' to bring in broader transparency and expedite the process of payments.
- It will enhance transparency, efficiency and faceless-paperless payment system by allowing suppliers and contractors to submit their claim online which will be traceable in real time basis.
- The pilot phase of the e-Bill system will be rolled out in 9 Pay & Account Office (PAO) Accounts of Central Ministries and Departments.

## **SINDHUDURG TO HAVE MSME-TECHNOLOGY CENTRE**

### **KEY POINTS**

- The Ministry for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) has announced the establishment of an MSME-Technology Centre with an outlay of Rs. 200 Crore in Sindhudurg.
- The Centre will provide the best of technology, incubation as well as advisory support to the industry, especially MSMEs, to enhance their competitiveness and provide skilling services for the employed and unemployed youth of the area to enhance their employability.
- The Centre is part of the strategy to promote entrepreneurship and trade opportunities for MSMEs in the Konkan region by handholding them in use of technology, product development and skilling.



## PERSONS IN NEWS

### MISS POLAND KAROLINA BIELAWSKA CROWNED MISS WORLD 2021



- Miss Poland Karolina Bielawska, who's currently studying for a Master's Degree in Management won the coveted 69th Miss World 2021 crown at the coronation that took place at the Coca-Cola Music Hall in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

### AUSTRALIA'S LEGENDARY CRICKETER SHANE WARNE DIES



- Australian cricket legend Shane Warne has died at the age of 52 after a suspected heart attack in Koh Samui, Thailand. Warne is widely considered one of the best players in history, having taken 708 wickets in 145 Test matches.

### DHIRUBHAI NARANBHAI PATEL



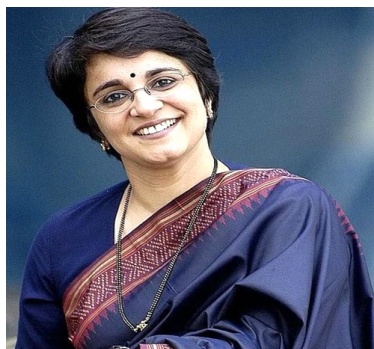
- The Central Government has appointed Justice Dhirubhai Naranbhai Patel, Chief Justice of Delhi High Court, as the Chairperson of Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal.
- He will serve the Chair for a period of 4 years from the date of assumption of charge of the post, or till attaining the age of 70 years whichever is earlier.

### **HYDERABAD'S FIRST WOMAN SHO TAKES CHARGE**



- A woman inspector was appointed as Station House Officer (SHO) of a law and order police station for the first time in the 174-year history of Hyderabad police commissionerate.
- This was done by the city police on the occasion of International Women's Day.

### **NEW CHAIRPERSON OF SEBI**



- Madhabi Puri Buch has been appointed as the new chairperson of SEBI On February 28.

- She is the first woman chairperson of the Securities and Exchange Board of India.
- Earlier, she was the head of ICICI Securities.
- She will replace Ajay Tyagi as the chairperson of SEBI.NFRA New chairman.
- On March 10, Ajay Bhushan Pandey has been appointed as the chairman of the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) for a period of 3 years or till the attainment the age of 65 years.
- He is a 1984 batch Maharashtra cadre IAS officer. The NFRA acts as an independent regulator for the auditing profession.

### **THE AIRBUS H145 HELICOPTER**

- B Ravi Pillai, chairman of RP Group of companies, became the first Indian to own the Airbus H145 helicopter. The helicopter got delivered to its new owner in Kovalam.

### **IPS VSK KAUMUDI**

- 1986 batch IPS officer VSK Kaumudi has been given additional charge of the post of Secretary (Security), Cabinet Secretariat. He is presently serving as Special Secretary (Internal Security), Ministry of Home Affairs.

### **AIR MARSHAL B CHANDRA SEKHAR**

- Air Marshal B Chandra Sekhar has taken over as Commandant of Air Force Academy, Indian Air Force.
- The Air Marshal hails from Telangana state and underwent his schooling in Hyderabad prior to joining National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla.

### **NEW CHAIRMAN OF IRDAI**

- Government appointed Debashish Panda as the new Chairman of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI). He has been appointed for 3 years.

### **SUNGAZER HIRA RATAN MANEK PASSES AWAY**

- Indian researcher of the method of Solar Healing Hira Ratan Manek passed away. He was 85 and was undergoing treatment at a private hospital. He was the founder of the 'Hira Ratan Manek Phenomenon' that propagated the idea of sun gazing for health without the intake of food.

### **RANJIT RATH**

- Ranjit Rath has been appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director of Oil India Limited on March 13.
- He will replace current chairman and managing director Sushil Chandra Mishra, who will superannuate on June 30, 2022.
- Rath is a recipient of the prestigious National Geosciences Award 2016 from the President of India.

### MOEF NEXT DIRECTOR

- On march 29 Dr Renu Singh has been appointed as the next director of the Forest Research Institute by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF) in Dehradun.
- She has been replaced by AS Rawat.
- Dr Renu Singh has an extensive experience in Forest Policy, Forest Management and Research Issues.

### KATALIN NOVAK

- On March 10 The Hungarian parliament has elected Katalin Novak, as the EU member's first-ever female president.
- Novak will succeed Janos Ader, a cofounder of Orban's governing right-wing Fidesz party who has held the job since 2012.
- Hungary's Capital City is Budapest.

### HALARI DONKEY

- On March 12th, Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Parshottam Rupala called for a roadmap for conservation of Halari breed of Donkey. It is native to Gujarat.
- At present, it is in a threatened condition and requires immediate steps towards conservation reverse the declining trend in the population.

### NFRA NEW CHAIRMAN

- On March 10, Ajay Bhushan Pandey has been appointed as the chairman of the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) for a period of 3 years or till the attainment the age of 65 years. He is a 1984 batch Maharashtra cadre IAS officer.
- The NFRA acts as an independent for the auditing profession.

**SANJIV KAPOOR**

- Sanjiv Kapoor has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Jet Airways. He will be joining from April 4, 2022.
- He has worked as the Chief Strategy and Commercial Officer of Vistara Airlines for three years, and Chief Operating Officer of SpiceJet for two years.