
MANTHAN

A General Awareness Weekly

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PREFACE

Dear Students,

The 'Current Affairs' section is an integral part of any examination. This edition of Manthan has been developed by our team to help you cover all the important events of the Week. This comprehensive bulletin will help you prepare the section in a vivid manner. We hope that our sincere efforts will serve you in a better way to fulfill aspirations.

Happy Reading

Team CL



Career
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National



Centre forms panel to revisit ₹8 lakh income limit for EWS quota

- The Centre has formed a three-member committee to review the ₹8 lakh annual income limit to identify economically weaker section (EWS) for providing 10% quota in public jobs and educational institutions, the social justice and empowerment ministry said in an official memorandum.
- The Centre informed the Supreme Court that it had taken a “considered decision” to revisit the “criteria” for determining EWS to provide them reservation. The submissions came following repeated grilling by the top court over the last two months as regards to the methodology adopted by the Centre in fixing the income criteria for EWS uniformly across the country.
- “In accordance with the commitment given to the Supreme Court to revisit the criteria for determining the economically weaker sections in terms of the provisions of the explanation to Article 15 of the Constitution, the Government hereby constituted a committee” the ministry said in the memorandum.
- The ministry said that the committee will re-visit the criterion in determining EWS category keeping in view the observations of the Supreme Court. “It will also examine various approaches so far followed in the country for identifying economically weaker sections, and recommend criteria that may be adopted for identifying EWS category in future,” it said. The 10% EWS quota was introduced under the 103rd Constitution (Amendment) Act, 2019 which is under challenge before a five-judge Constitution bench of the Supreme Court.
- Since the Act has not been stayed by the apex court, the government issued a notification on July 29 introducing 10% EWS quota along with 27% quota for OBC within AIQ seats for postgraduate medical courses from this academic year. By this decision, 2,500 PG seats in government medical colleges would go to OBCs and 1,000 to those from EWS.
- This decision was challenged in a clutch of petitions that came up for hearing. The income criterion of ₹ 8 lakh fixed by the Centre was one of the grounds taken by the petitioners to question the July 29 decision.

The One Hundred and Third Amendment of the Constitution of India, officially known as the Constitution (One Hundred and Third Amendment) Act, 2019, introduces 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of society for admission to Central Government-run educational institutions and private educational institutions (except for minority educational institutions), and for employment in Central Government jobs. The Amendment does not make such reservations mandatory in State Government-run educational institutions or State Government jobs. However, some states have chosen to implement the 10% reservation for economically weaker sections. Currently, the quota can be availed by persons with an annual gross household income of up to Rs. 8 lakh. Families that own over 5 acres of agricultural land, a house over 1,000 square feet, a plot of over 100-yards in a notified municipal area or over a 200-yards plot in a non-notified municipal area cannot avail the reservation. Persons belonging to communities that already have reservations such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the “creamy layer” of Other Backward Classes are also not eligible for reservation under this quota.

NITI Aayog releases report on Online Dispute Resolution policy for speedy access to justice

- NITI Aayog has pushed for Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) for speedy access to justice. NITI Aayog released the report 'Designing the Future of Dispute Resolution: the ODR Policy Plan for India', to scale dispute avoidance, containment, and resolution online.
- It said, the rollout of the recommendations in the report can help make India a world leader in using technology and innovation through ODR, for effective access to justice for every individual. The report is a culmination of the action plan made by a committee constituted at the peak of the Covid crisis by NITI Aayog on ODR in 2020 and chaired by Supreme Court Justice A K Sikri.
- ODR is aimed at resolving disputes outside of the court system through arbitration, mediation, and negotiation. "ODR can help reduce the burden on the court and efficiently resolve these categories of cases. It can be integrated to support the judiciary through technology integration in court-annexed ADR centres and introduced within Government departments for its internal disputes, as well as through e-Lok Adalats," wrote Sekri in the foreword of the report.
- In 2017-18, the expenditure incurred by the central government in contesting cases in the Supreme Court alone was Rs. 47.99 crore. The report cited the Legal Information Management and Briefing System portal and added as of September 23, 2020, the government had 5,80,132 cases pending in different courts across the country.

The National Institution for Transforming India, also called NITI Aayog, was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on January 1, 2015. It was established to replace the Planning Commission which followed a top-down model. The Planning Commission was an institution in the Government of India, which formulated India's Five-Year Plans, among other functions. After India achieved independence, a formal model of planning was adopted, and accordingly the Planning Commission, reporting directly to the Prime Minister of India, was established on 15 March 1950, with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru as the Chairman. Authority for creation of the Planning Commission was not derived from the Constitution of India or statute; it is an arm of the Central Government of India. The first Five-Year Plan was launched in 1951, focusing mainly on development of the agricultural sector. NITI Aayog is the premier policy 'Think Tank' of the Government of India, providing both directional and policy inputs. The current chairman of NITI Aayog is Shri Narendra Modi, current Vice Chairman is Dr. Rajiv Kumar and the current Chief Executive Officer is Shri Amitabh Kant.

Varanasi became the first Indian city to start ropeway service as a mode of public transport

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's constituency Varanasi has become the first Indian city to start ropeway service as a mode of public transport. The proposed ropeway will be constructed between Cantt Railway Station (Varanasi Junction) to Church Square (Godauliya) to ease the traffic congestion.
- Its outlay is over Rs 400 crore which is divided between Central Government and State Government at 80:20. India will be the third country in the world after Bolivia and Mexico to use a ropeway for public transport.

Jal Shakti Minister launches River Cities Alliance and National Urban River Management Plan for Kanpur

- Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat launched River Cities Alliance and National Urban River Management Plan for Kanpur in New Delhi.
- Mr. Shekhawat said, the alliance is for clean and preserving rivers across India and its core motto is to improve rivers and cities together. Thirty major cities across the country joined hands to transform river's life in their cities. He said, although we have many resources but cannot be preserved until people connect with it and we need to make it a people's movement.

Ministry of Jal Shakti ('water power/capabilities') is a ministry under Government of India which was formed in May 2019 under the second Modi ministry. This was formed by merging of two ministries; Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat is from Rajasthan who is currently serving as Union Cabinet Minister in Ministry of Jal Shakti. He is a member of parliament from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) representing Jodhpur in the Lok Sabha.

Centre clears eight hydroelectric projects in Indus basin

- The Centre has cleared eight hydroelectric projects in the Indus basin. Out of the eight projects cleared, Seven are in Ladakh and one in Jammu & Kashmir. The centre has cleared seven projects with a capacity of 140 Megawatts at an estimated cost of 2072 crore rupees in Durbuk Shyok, Sankoo, Nimmu Chilling, Rongdo, Mangdum Sangra, Hunderman Kargil and Tamasha in Ladakh.
- All the hydroelectric projects in Ladakh are with no irrigation benefits. However, Ratan Nag project in Kishtwar district of J&K with 10.50 MW at an estimated cost of over 315 crore rupees has irrigation benefits as well.

Hydroelectric power, also called hydropower, electricity produced from generators driven by turbines that convert the potential energy of falling or fast-flowing water into mechanical energy. In the generation of hydroelectric power, water is collected or stored at a higher elevation and led downward through large pipes or tunnels (penstocks) to a lower elevation; the difference in these two elevations is known as the head. At the end of its passage down the pipes, the falling water causes turbines to rotate.

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated InFinity Forum

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated InFinity Forum, a thought leadership Forum on FinTech, on the 3rd of December via video conferencing. The event is being hosted by International Financial Services Centres Authority under the aegis of Government of India in collaboration with GIFT City and Bloomberg.
- Indonesia, South Africa and the U.K. are partner countries in the first edition of the Forum. InFinity Forum brings together leading minds of the world in policy, business, and technology. They discussed and come up with actionable insight into how technology and innovation can be leveraged by the FinTech industry for inclusive growth and serving humanity at large.
- The agenda of the Forum will focus on the theme of 'Beyond'. The sub-themes include FinTech beyond boundaries, FinTech beyond Finance, and FinTech Beyond Next, with a focus on how Quantum Computing could impact the nature of the Fintech industry in the future and promote new opportunities.
- NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog, Invest India, FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry) and NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Service Companies) are some of the key partners of 2021's Forum.

Indian Railways Jiriram-Imphal Line: World's tallest railway bridge pier coming up in Manipur

- Indian Railways has constructed the world's tallest railway bridge pier at Noney Valley in the state of Manipur with a height of 141 metres. As a part of the ambitious 111 Kilometre long Jiribam-Imphal railway line, which aims to connect the capital of Manipur with the broad gauge network of the country, the travel time of 10 to 12 hours will be reduced to just 2.5 hours.
- The bridge at Noney Valley, which is being developed at a pier height of 141 metres, will surpass the Mala – Rijeka viaduct's existing record of 139 meters, located in Montenegro, Europe. The distance between Jiribam and Imphal (NH-37), At present, is 220 kilometres, which takes about 10 to 12 hours of travelling. Once the construction is completed, the bridge crossing Noney valley will become the highest pier bridge in the world.

Indian Railways (IR) is the fourth-largest railway network in the world by size. There are a total of 18 Railway zones. South Coast Railway Zone is the newest and 18th railway zone, headquartered at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Ashwini Vaishnaw is currently serving as the Minister of Railways and Commerce in the Government of India. He was elected as the BJP candidate from Maharashtra for the Rajya Sabha on 3 June 2016. The practice of a separate Railway Budget was started by the British in 1924 under the recommendation of a 10-member Acworth Committee headed by British economist William Mitchell Acworth in 1920-21. On 21 September 2016, Government of India approved the merger of the Railway Budget with the Union budget of India, and thus came to end — a 92-year-old practice of separate rail and general budgets.

India joins G20 'Troika' with Indonesia and Italy; to assume G20 Presidency in December

- **India has joined the G20 Troika.** Apart from India, **Troika consists of Indonesia and Italy.** India will assume the **G20 Presidency** in December 2022 from Indonesia and will **convene the G20 Leaders' Summit** for the first time in the country in 2023. India will work closely with **Indonesia and Italy** to ensure consistency and continuity of the G20's agenda as a Troika member.
- **Indonesia has assumed the G20 Presidency** and will **convene various G20 meetings** throughout the year culminating with the **G20 Leaders' Summit in October** next year under the overall theme of **'Recover Together Recover Stronger'**. The G20 is a **premier forum for international economic cooperation.** As a **founding member of the G20,** India has used the platform to raise issues of vital importance.

The G20 (or Group of Twenty) is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union (EU). Founded in 1999 with the aim to discuss policy pertaining to the promotion of international financial stability, the G20 has expanded its agenda since 2008 and heads of government or heads of state, as well as finance ministers, foreign ministers and think tanks, have periodically conferred at summits ever since. It seeks to address issues that go beyond the responsibilities of any single nation. The G20 members are: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, India, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union.

Amid din in Lok Sabha, Rijiju introduces Judges Bill

- **The Lok Sabha introduced a bill which seeks to bring clarity on when Supreme Court and high court judges are entitled to an additional quantum of pension or family pension on attaining a certain age.**
- **The High Court and Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2021,** which was **introduced by Law Minister Kiren Rijiju amid din by opposition over farmers' issues,** proposes to **amend the High Court Judges (Salaries and Condition of Service) Act and the Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Condition of Service) Act.**
- According to the bill, **in 2009 the two laws were amended to provide that every retired judge or after his death, the family, as the case may be, will be entitled to an additional quantum of pension or family pension.** Accordingly, the additional quantum of pension to retired judges of the high courts and the Supreme Court is being sanctioned on **completing the age of 80 years, 85 years, 90 years, 95 years and 100 years, as the case may be.**
- However, in a writ petition filed by a retired high court judge **Virendra Dutt Gyani, the Gauhati High Court in its order of March 15, 2018 had held that benefit of additional quantum of pension as per the High Court Judges Act in the first slab would be available to a retired Judge from the first day of his 80th year.**

The **Supreme Court of India came into being on 28 January 1950.** It replaced both the **Federal Court of India and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council** which were then at the **apex of the Indian court system.** The **first Chief Justice of India was Sir H J Kania.** Originally, the **Constitution of India envisaged a supreme court with a chief justice and seven judges;** leaving it to **parliament to increase this number.** At present, **SC is consisting of the Chief Justice of India and 33 sanctioned other judges.** The **motto of the Supreme Court is 'Yato Dharmastato Jayah'**, means "whence law (dharma), thence victory". It is also referred to – as the **wheel of righteousness, encompassing truth, goodness and equity.** As per the **Article 142 of the Constitution,** it is the **duty of the President of India to enforce the decrees of the Supreme Court** and the court is conferred with the inherent jurisdiction to pass any order deemed necessary in the interest of justice. **The Supreme Court has replaced the British Privy Council as the highest court of appeal.**

India and EU agrees to set up Clean Energy and Climate Partnership

- **India and European Union (EU) have agreed to step up their Clean Energy and Climate Partnership.** They jointly agreed on a detailed work programme until 2023 to implement the 2016 India-EU Clean Energy and Climate Partnership.

- **The Panel agreed on increased technical cooperation in energy efficiency, renewable energy, green hydrogen, grid integration, storage, power market design, interconnection, cold chain, and sustainable financing. The Panel also agreed to explore further avenues to strengthen India-EU cooperation within the context of the International Solar Alliance. EU expressed its support for the close cooperation between India and the International Energy Agency. India and EU also agreed to exchange closely on clean energy in the frame of G20.**

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of 27 member states that are located primarily in Europe. A monetary union was established in 1999, coming into full force in 2002, and is composed of 19 member states which use the euro currency. The union and EU citizenship were established when the Maastricht Treaty came into force in 1993. The EU traces its origins to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Economic Community (EEC), established, respectively, by the 1951 Treaty of Paris and 1957 Treaty of Rome. The original member states of what came to be known as the European Communities were the Inner Six: Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany. The United Kingdom became the first member state to leave the EU on 31 January 2020. Ursula Gertrud von der Leyen is a German politician and physician who has been President of the European Commission since 1 December 2019. Charles Michel is a Belgian politician serving as President of the European Council.

IGI Airport adjudged the ‘Best Airport in India and Central Asia’ this year by Skytrax

- **The Centre has said the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi has been adjudged the ‘Best Airport in India and Central Asia’ this year by Skytrax. Delhi airport along with the others in Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Bengaluru feature in the World To 100 airports list published by Skytrax.**
- **This prestigious award is considered the most significant award for the airport industry, and Delhi has been adjudged after votes by customers in the survey. For the uninitiated, Skytrax is best known to assess customer service and facilities over 550 airports across the globe. It is considered one of the most prestigious accolades for the airport industry and is announced based on the votes by customers in an annual global airport customer satisfaction survey.**
- **According to the reports, the announcement was made by the GMR-led consortium — Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) which operates the national capital’s Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA).**

11th edition of Exercise EKUVERIN between India and Maldives to be conducted at Kadhdhoo Island

- **The 11th edition of Exercise EKUVERIN-21 between India and Maldives, held at Kadhdhoo Island, Maldives. Ekuverin means “Friends” in the Dhivehi language. It is an Indo – Aryan language. It is spoken in India, Lakshadweep and Maldives.**
- **The exercise enhances synergy and inter-operability between the Armed Forces of both nations in terms of understanding transnational terrorism both on land and at sea, conducting Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency Operations and sharing best military practices and experiences.**
- **The 11th edition of Exercise EKUVERIN between India and Maldives was conducted at Kadhdhoo Island, Maldives. The exercise will enhance synergy and inter-operability between the Armed Forces of both nations in terms of understanding transnational terrorism both on land and at sea, conducting Counter-Terrorism and Counter-Insurgency Operations and sharing best military practices and experiences. Besides rigorous training, the joint military exercise also included cultural and sports activities to enhance defence cooperation and bilateral relations.**
- **The exercise will go a long way in strengthening India’s relations with the Maldives amidst emerging security dynamics in the Indian Ocean Region. The Exercise is being conducted between India and Maldives since 2008. In 2019, the exercise was held in Pune, Maharashtra and in 2018, it was held in the Maldives.**

Maldives is a South Asian country, located in the Indian Ocean, situated in the Arabian Sea. Male is the capital and most populated city, traditionally called the “King’s Island” for its central location. Maldivian rufiyaa is the currency of the Maldives. Ibrahim Mohamed Solih is the current President of the Maldives.

Himachal Pradesh first in India to jab all eligible adults with both doses of COVID-19 vaccine

- **Himachal Pradesh became the first state in India to achieve 100 per cent vaccination against COVID-19 among all eligible adults. Himachal Pradesh was also the first state to achieve 100 per cent vaccination of the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine in August earlier this year. Kinnaur became the first district in Himachal Pradesh to declare full vaccination for both doses last month followed by Bilaspur, Solan and Lahaul-Spiti.**

Himachal Pradesh (“Province of the Snow-laden Mountains”) is a state in the northern part of India. Situated in the Western Himalayas, it is one of the eleven mountain states and is characterized by an extreme landscape featuring several peaks and extensive river systems. Himachal Pradesh is the northernmost state of India and shares borders with the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh to the north, and the states of Punjab to the west, Haryana to the southwest, Uttarakhand to the southeast and a very narrow border with Uttar Pradesh to the South. Himachal Pradesh is also known as ‘Dev Bhoomi’ or ‘Land of God’ and ‘Veer Bhoomi’ which means ‘Land of Braves’. Jai Ram Thakur is currently serves as the Chief Minister of the state of Himachal Pradesh in India. Rajendra Arlekar is the current Governor of Himachal Pradesh.

Assam CM Announces ‘Assam Baibhav’ Award To Industrialist Ratan Tata

- **On the occasion of Asom Divas or Assam Day, the state Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced to confer the most prestigious ‘Asom Baibhav’ award to the industrialist Ratan Tata.**
- **Asom Baibhav award is the biggest award of the state. Ratan Tata is the chairman of the Tata group and the respected industrialist in the world. He served as the chairman of Tata groups from 1990-2012.**

Ghaziabad’s Nehru World School becomes UP’s first PASCH certified school

- **Ghaziabad’s Nehru World School (NWS) has become the first school in Uttar Pradesh to be integrated into the PASCH network, a cooperative organization of schools around the globe supported by the German Federal Foreign Office. These schools promote the teaching of German as a foreign language. This makes NWS only the fifth school across India and the only school from Uttar Pradesh to gain this recognition.**
- **For the unversed, PASCH is an initiative of the German Federal Foreign Office in cooperation with the Central Agency for Schools Abroad, the Goethe-Institute, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Educational Exchange Service (PAD) of the Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Federal Republic of Germany.**
- **The PASCH stands for “Schools: Partners for the Future” and aims at awakening interest and enthusiasm for Germany, motivating young people to learn German and creating an international network of schools.**

5th Indian Ocean Conference held in Abu Dhabi

- **Union Minister of External Affairs (EAM) Subrahmanyam Jaishankar has visited Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) to attend the 5th Indian Ocean Conference on December 4-5, 2021. The theme of the conference was ‘Indian Ocean: Ecology, Economy, Epidemic’. The Conference is chaired by Sri Lankan President, Gotabaya Rajapaksa & Vice Chairs are S.Jaishankar, Vivian Balakrishnan, Sayyid Badr Bin Hamad Bin Hamoud Al Busaidi.**
- **External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar has stressed on the importance of respecting and facilitating freedom of navigation and overflight and unimpeded commerce in a globalised world. One is the American withdrawal from Afghanistan and the second is the impact of Covid on a region that is particularly vulnerable to health and economic stresses.**

The Indian Ocean is the third-largest of the world’s five oceanic divisions, covering 70,560,000 km² or 19.8% of the water on Earth’s surface. It is bounded by Asia to the north, Africa to the west and Australia to the east. The Indian Ocean has been known by its present name since at least 1515 when the Latin form Oceanus Orientalis Indicus (“Indian Eastern Ocean”) is attested, named for India, which projects into it. It was earlier known as the Eastern Ocean.



World's first floating city to set Sail in South Korea by 2025

- South Korea is soon going to get the world's first floating city, to deal with the problem of floods due to rising sea levels. The floating city project is a joint effort by the UN Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habit) and OCEANIX. The city will be built off the coast of Busan in South Korea and is likely to be completed by 2025.
- An MoU was signed between the UN-Habitat, Republic of Korea, and Oceanix to build a full-fledged floating city near the banks of Busan that can withstand floods, tsunamis, and level 5 hurricanes.
- 'Oceanix,' a company dedicated towards making futuristic floating cities, got backing from the United Nations Human Settlement Programme, UN-Habitat, one of the most credible organizations in the world to build a floating city in South Korea.
- The floating city will have 'flood-proof infrastructure' and comprise several man-made islands to eliminate the risk of flooding. The self-sufficient city will be specifically designed to withstand natural disasters like tsunamis, floods, and Category 5 hurricanes.

South Korea, officially the Republic of Korea (ROK), is a country in East Asia, constituting the southern part of the Korean Peninsula and sharing a land border with North Korea. South Seoul is the Capital of South Korea. Moon Jae-in is the current President of South Korea. Kim Boo-kyum is currently the Prime Minister.

Romania President Klaus Iohannis nominates Defence Minister Nicolae Ciuca as PM

- Romanian President Klaus Iohannis has nominated Defence Minister Nicolae Ciuca to form a new government as Prime Minister.
- Earlier, the National Liberal Party (PNL), the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) reached an agreement to form a coalition government, which enjoys the support of the 18 MPs representing the country's minorities.

Romania is a country at the crossroads of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Its capital and largest city is Bucharest. The Romanian leu is the currency of Romania. Nicolae Ionel Ciuca has been serving as Prime Minister of Romania since 25 November 2021 after receiving widespread parliamentary support.

Japan to get world's first operational dual-mode bus and rail vehicle

- Japan to get world's first operational dual-mode bus and rail vehicle. The vehicles will run on a 50-kilometer course connecting the town of Kaiyo in Tokushima Prefecture and the city of Muroto in Kochi Prefecture, of which 10 km will be on a railway track.
- Asa Seaside Railway Corp. in Tokushima Prefecture said it will roll out the DMV on Dec. 25, having cleared safety checks by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism.

Naruhito is the Emperor of Japan. He acceded to the Chrysanthemum Throne on 1 May 2019, beginning the Reiwa era, following the abdication of his father, Emperor Akihito, on 30 April 2019. He is the 126th monarch according to Japan's traditional order of succession. Tokyo is the capital city of Japan and yen is the official currency of Japan and it is the third most traded currency in the foreign exchange market after the United States dollar and the euro. Fumio Kishida is the current Prime Minister of Japan since 4 October 2021. He has also served as President of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) since 29 September 2021.

Caribbean island Barbados becomes newest republic cut links with the Queen

- At midnight, the Caribbean island Barbados has become the world's newest republic and in doing so removes the Queen as its head of state.
- Republicanism has been rumbling for some time in Barbados. **Prime Minister Mia Mottley** described it as a **chance for the island to assert itself** and show greater self-confidence. She said it was time to fully leave our colonial past.

Barbados is an island country in the Lesser Antilles of the West Indies, in the Caribbean region of the Americas, and the most easterly of the Caribbean Islands. Bridgetown is the capital and largest city of Barbados. The Dollar has been the currency of Barbados since 1935.

The world's most expensive city for first time

- **Tel Aviv is now the world's most expensive city to live in**, according to a survey published. **The Israeli city has climbed five rungs to bag the top spot for the first time** due to the strength of the national currency, the shekel as well as soaring inflation, according to Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
- **The Worldwide Cost of Living Index is compiled by comparing prices in US dollars** for goods and services in 173 cities. **After Tel Aviv, Paris and Singapore came joint second**, followed by Switzerland's Zurich, and Hong Kong. New York ranked sixth and Geneva seventh.

Israel is a country in the Middle East, Jerusalem is one of the oldest cities in the world, and is considered holy to the three major Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Both Israel and the Palestinian Authority claim Jerusalem as their capital, however, neither claim is widely recognized internationally. Knesset is the unicameral national legislature of Israel. Israeli new shekel is the currency of Israel. Naftali Bennett is an Israeli politician serving as the 13th and current Prime Minister of Israel since 13 June 2021. Isaac Herzog is serving as the current president of Israel since 7 July 2021.

Bangladesh and US kick off bilateral maritime exercise CARAT for a free and open Indo-Pacific

- **Bangladesh Navy (BN) and the US military personnel kicked off the annual Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) maritime exercise.** The exercise will be carried out virtually and in the Bay of Bengal, said the Commander of the US 7th Fleet.
- **The nine-day engagement focuses on a full spectrum of naval capabilities and features Cooperative activities** that highlight the ability of US and Bangladesh to work together toward the common goal of ensuring a free and open Indo-pacific. **The objectives of CARAT include enhancing regional cooperation and building relationships.**
- **The at-sea phase of the exercise takes place in the Bay of Bengal where US Navy forces will join with ships and aircraft from the Bangladesh Navy** for partnered training to build interoperability and to strengthen relationships.
- **Bangladesh Navy has been taking part in the CARAT exercise since 2011. CARAT exercise is observing its 27th anniversary.** It is designed to address shared maritime security concerns and strengthen partnerships between regional navies.

Bangladesh is a country in South Asia. It shares land borders with India and Myanmar (Burma). Nepal, Bhutan and China are located near Bangladesh but do not share a border with it. Dhaka is its capital and largest city, followed by Chittagong, which has the country's largest port. Bangladeshi taka is the currency of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman often shortened as Sheikh Mujib or Mujib, was a Bangladeshi politician, statesman and Founding Father of Bangladesh who served as the first President and later as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh from 17 April 1971 until his assassination on 15 August 1975. Mohammad Abdul Hamid is the 16th and current President of Bangladesh, in office since April 2013. Sheikh Hasina is the current Prime Minister of the Bangladesh. India shares its longest international border with Bangladesh (4,096-kilometer) (2,545-mile).

Japan-India-Vietnam trilateral could be created for Indo-Pacific stability

- Vietnam's PM Pham Minh Chin's recent visit to Japan to strengthen strategic partnership aimed at creating peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region amid China's hegemonistic designs has opened up the creation of a prospective trilateral – Japan-India-Vietnam which can be termed as JIV.
- While there has been no formal move to create this trilateral in the Indo-Pacific region, there is enough potential for such a grouping amid expanding strategic ties between India and Japan, India and Vietnam and Vietnam and Japan.
- This would be appropriate as India and Vietnam celebrate 50 years of creation of diplomatic ties in 2022. Ahead of this, the Chairman of National Assembly of Vietnam plan to visit India in December. The celebration of 50 years of creation of diplomatic ties and fifth anniversary of the Indo-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2021 are testimony to the growing partnership between New Delhi and Hanoi.
- At the virtual summit held last December PM Narendra Modi had said that Vietnam is an important pillar of India's Act East policy and a vital partner of its Indo-Pacific Vision. On that occasion the two sides signed seven pacts across key sectors including defence and energy and released a joint vision for peace and prosperity eyeing to contribute to the South China Sea region's stability.
- India as an emerging global power should play an important role in maintaining Freedom of Navigation and Freedom of Overflight in the South China Sea (SCS) region amid China's territorial claims. The prospective JIV could contribute to maintaining peace in the SCS region. India and Japan are not new to trilaterals being part of India-Japan-USA; India-Japan-Australia; and emerging India-Japan-Russia.

Vietnam is the easternmost country on the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia. Hanoi is the capital of Vietnam. The dong has been the currency of Vietnam since May 3, 1978. Nguyen Xuan Phuc is the current President of Vietnam. Pham Minh Chinh is the current Prime Minister of Vietnam.

South Sudan to end child marriages by 2030

- South Sudan's Government has promised to end child marriage by 2030 in line with the African Union's campaign to end child marriages in the continent. Paramount chiefs from 10 regional states and the three administrative areas are meeting in the capital, Juba, for the second national conference on ending child marriages.
- South Sudan is one of 40 countries in the world with the highest rates of child marriages. A survey conducted in 2010 found that about seven per cent of girls marry before the age of 15 and 40 per cent before the age of 18.

South Sudan is a landlocked country in east/central Africa. South Sudanese pound is the official currency of the Republic of South Sudan. Salva Kiir Mayardit has been President of South Sudan since its independence in 2011.

Polls opened for first election since EX- President Yahya Jammeh fled the Gambia

- Polls have opened in The Gambia for the first election since former President Yahya Jammeh left office and fled the country in 2017. Six presidential candidates, including the incumbent Adama Barrow, are running.
- The election is seen as a litmus test for the West African nation's democratic transition. Some nine lakh sixty thousand voters, almost half of the country's population, are eligible to cast ballots.

The Gambia is a country in West Africa. It is the smallest country within mainland Africa and is surrounded by Senegal, except for its western coast on the Atlantic Ocean. Banjul is the Gambian capital and the country's largest metropolitan area. Adama Barrow is the current President of the Gambia, in office since 2017.



Indian tech wizard Parag Agrawal takes over as CEO of Twitter

- **Indian tech wizard Parag Agrawal takes over as CEO of the social media platform Twitter** following the departure of its co-founder CEO. **Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey has stepped down as chief executive of the company** paving way for the current chief technical officer, **Parag Agrawal, to take over.** Mr Dorsey has been serving as chief executive of both Twitter and payment firm Square.
- **Parag Agrawal, IIT alumnus, joins the likes of Sundar Pichai and Satya Nadella as Indian-origin techies** at the help of the **biggest tech companies of the world.** A **Computer Science and Engineering graduate from IIT Bombay, Agrawal is a Ph.D. from Stanford University.**

Twitter is an American microblogging and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages known as “tweets”. Registered users can post, like, and retweet tweets, but unregistered users can only read them. **Twitter was created by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams in March 2006 and launched in July of that year.**

IFFCO ranks first among top 300 cooperatives in the world, retains position

- **The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) has been ranked ‘number one Cooperative’ among the top 300 cooperatives in the world,** withholding its position from last year.
- **The ranking is based on the ratio of turnover over the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita.** It signifies that IFFCO is contributing significantly to the GDP and economic growth of the nation.
- It also relates the **turnover of the enterprise to the wealth of the country according to the 2021 edition of the 10th Annual World Cooperative Monitor (WCM) report published by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA).** IFFCO has also stepped up to **60th Position in overall Turnover ranking from 65th position in last financial year.**

Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited, also known as IFFCO, is a multi-state cooperative society engaged in the business of manufacturing and marketing of fertilisers headquartered in New Delhi, India. Started in 1967 with 57 member cooperatives, it is today the biggest co-op in the world by turnover on GDP per capita, with around 35,000 member cooperatives reaching over 50 million Indian farmers. With around 19% market share in urea and around 29% market share in complex fertilisers (P2O5 terms) IFFCO is India’s largest fertiliser manufacturer.

Mahindra becomes first Indian automaker to enter Dow Jones Sustainability Index

- **Mumbai-based automotive-to-technology major Mahindra & Mahindra has entered the World Index list of companies in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) 2021.**
- **Interestingly, of the 5 Indian companies that have featured in the World Index this year, two are Mahindra Group companies – Mahindra & Mahindra and Tech Mahindra of which M&M is the first Indian ‘automobile and components’ company to enter the World Index of DJSI.**

Mahindra & Mahindra Limited is an **Indian multinational automotive manufacturing corporation** headquartered in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**. It was established in **1945** as **Muhammad & Mahindra** and later renamed as **Mahindra and Mahindra**. It is **one of the largest vehicle manufacturers by production in India**. It's subsidiary **Mahindra Tractors** is the **largest manufacturer of tractors in the world by volume**. It is a part of the **Mahindra Group**, an Indian conglomerate. **Anand Gopal Mahindra** is the **chairman of Mahindra Group**.

LIC gets RBI approval to raise stake in Kotak Mahindra Bank

- **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)** has received approval from the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to increase its stake in the **Kotak Mahindra Bank**.
- **The approval is to raise LIC's stake in the bank up to 9.99 per cent from the current 4.96 per cent** it has in the private lender. Prior approval is required from the central bank to make an acquisition in any private banks of more than 5 per cent stake.

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is an **Indian statutory insurance and investment corporation**. It is under the ownership of **Ministry of Finance**. The **Life insurance Corporation of India** was established on **1 September 1956**, when the Parliament of India passed the **Life Insurance of India Act** that nationalized the insurance industry in India. Over 245 insurance companies and **provident societies were merged to create the state-owned Life Insurance Corporation of India**. **LIC also holds a 51% stake in IDBI Bank**, making it the only insurer in India to own a bank, since regulations prohibit insurers from holding more than 15% stake in any company, **LIC will have to decide a timeline for paring its stake in IDBI bank**.

Jack Dorsey steps down as Twitter CEO, Parag Agrawal to replace him

- **Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey** will step down as **CEO of the social media platform**, the company announced. **Twitter's Chief Technology Officer Parag Agrawal**, who is an **alumnus of IIT-Bombay**, will **replace outgoing CEO Jack Dorsey**, the microblogging site announced. Agrawal has been with **Twitter since 2011** and has served as **Chief Technology Officer (CTO) since October 2017**.

GIFT city emerging India's first Greenfield smart city

- Now operational with more than 200 entities which have set up their offices where more than 12,000 people are working, **the Gujarat International Finance Tec City (GIFT City) is India's first and only International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) where banks, stock exchanges and financial services firms have set up their global operations**.
- Around seven km from Gujarat's capital Gandhinagar, **on the banks of the Sabarmati river in approximately 886 acres, once a barren land along the river is now emerging as the country's first greenfield integrated city** — a dream project Prime Minister Narendra Modi had envisaged as Chief Minister.

Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) is an **under-construction central business district in Gandhinagar in Gujarat, India**. It is **India's first operational greenfield smart city** and **international financial services center**, which the Government of Gujarat promoted as a greenfield project, **The city is located on the banks of the Sabarmati River** and is around 12 km from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport.

India's first-ever standalone metal debit card's launch announced

- **IDFC FIRST Bank** announced the **launch of FIRST Private Infinite, the country's first-ever standalone metal debit card, in partnership with Visa**, the global leader in digital payments. **FIRST Private Infinite is a lifetime free card designed specifically for customers who are part of the Bank's FIRST Private program, a premium savings and wealth offering**.
- **The FIRST Private program offers an unrivalled banking and investment experience** to customers and comes with a range of exceptional investment, banking, lifestyle and wellness benefits. **FIRST Private Infinite is crafted from hybrid metal with details etched in silver, created to deliver an exclusive payment experience**. True to its top-of-the-line proposition, the benefits of **FIRST Private Infinite debit card** are specifically curated for premium cardholders and include complimentary domestic and international lounge access for cardholders and companions.

IDFC First Bank (formerly **IDFC Bank**) is an **Indian private sector bank that forms part of IDFC**, an integrated infrastructure finance company. **The bank started operations on 1 October 2015**, after receiving a universal banking licence from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in July 2015. **V. Vaidyanathan** is MD and CEO of **IDFC First Bank Ltd** and **Rajiv B. Lall** is the **managing director and vice chairman of bank**.

Dubai to host Middle East's first India Global Forum

- **India-based businesses are gearing up for their first Middle East edition of India Global Forum Dubai.** The event will be focusing on unicorns and their global ambitions. The forum will host **250 delegates and 20+ founders and senior leaders of Indian and UAE Unicorns participating.**
- **The forum is endorsed by the UAE and Indian governments.** Co-hosts are the Consul General of India in Dubai and the Embassy of UAE in New Delhi. India's Ministry of External Affairs and Invest India are its Supporting Partners. The Dubai based Indian Business & Professional Council are Business Association Partners.

NSE Indices launches new Nifty Bharat Bond index

- **The Bharat Bond index series follows a target maturity date structure** wherein each index in the series measures the **performance of a portfolio of "AAA" rated bonds issued by government owned entities** maturing in a specific year.
- **Nifty Bharat Bond Index – April 2032-** has been **launched within the Nifty Bharat Bond index series.** NSE Indices launched the first two indices in the **Bharat Bond index series with maturities in April 2023 and April 2030**, and in **July 2020**, further two indices with maturities in April 2025 and April 2031 were launched.

National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE) is the **leading stock exchange of India, located in Mumbai, Maharashtra.** It is under the ownership of some leading financial institutions, banks, and insurance companies. **NSE was established in 1992 as the first dematerialized electronic exchange in the country.** NSE was the **first exchange in the country to provide a modern, fully automated screen-based electronic trading system that offered easy trading facilities to investors spread across the length and breadth of the country.** **Vikram Limaye** is the **Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of NSE.**

Uber launched ride-booking via WhatsApp in India

- **In a global first, Uber and WhatsApp announced a new partnership in India,** wherein customers will be able to **book a cab using the ride-share service's official WhatsApp chatbot.** The feature has been built on the WhatsApp Business Platform.
- **Uber is rolling this out on a pilot basis in Lucknow first** and will be expanded to other Indian cities soon. **Uber and WhatsApp announced a partnership that allowed people in the country to book a ride via WhatsApp -** a global-first initiative by the ride-hailing platform.
- With this integration, **riders will no longer need to download or use the Uber app.** Everything - from user registration, booking a ride and getting a trip receipt - will be **managed within the WhatsApp chat interface.**
- **The integration is a global-first for Uber,** and it will **make booking a ride as easy as sending a WhatsApp message,** it added. It is being rolled out on a **pilot basis in the northern part of Lucknow first** and will be **expanded to other Indian cities soon.**

Uber Technologies, Inc., commonly known as Uber, is an **American mobility as a service provider based in San Francisco,** with operations in over 900 metropolitan areas worldwide. **In 2009, Uber was founded as Ubercab by Garrett Camp, a computer programmer and the co-founder of StumbleUpon, and Travis Kalanick,** who sold his Red Swoosh startup for \$19 million in 2007. Its services include ride-hailing, food delivery (Uber Eats and Postmates), package delivery, couriers, freight transportation, electric bicycle and motorized scooter rental via a partnership with Lime, and ferry transport in partnership with local operators. **Uber does not own any vehicles; instead, it receives a 25% commission from each booking.** Fares are quoted to the customer in advance but vary using a **dynamic pricing model based on the local supply and demand at the time of the booking.**

SBI lists \$650 mn green bonds on India INX, Luxembourg Stock Exchange

- State Bank of India (SBI) listed its \$650-million green bonds simultaneously on the India International Exchange (India INX) and the Luxembourg Stock Exchange. India INX, the international arm of BSE, had announced its memorandum of understanding with the Luxembourg Stock Exchange (LuxSE) for cooperation in financial services industry, maintenance of orderly markets in securities respective country, ESG (environmental, social and governance) and green finance in the local market.

On April 1, 2017, the State Bank of India, which was India's largest bank, merged with five of its associate banks (State Bank of Bikaner & Jaipur, State Bank of Hyderabad, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Patiala and State Bank of Travancore), and with the Bharatiya Mahila Bank. Dinesh Kumar Khara is the current chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI). Imperial Bank of India was the oldest and the largest commercial bank of the Indian subcontinent, and was subsequently transformed into State Bank of India in 1955.

Time-Travelling Currency: World's First Chinese Banknote NFT Series Launched

- Banking on their two significant inventions - papermaking and printing - the Chinese developed, arguably, the world's first currency in the 7th century during the time of the Tang dynasty.
- It was only six centuries later that Europe developed its own paper money, largely owing to the discoveries of explorers such as Marco Polo who brought the knowledge of many technologies of the Orient to the West. And now, in the 21st century, China has scored another first when it comes to currencies.
- IZBLU Labs, a digital arts hub that promotes Chinese heritage and culture through blockchain technology, launched the Time Travel X Banknote NFT series - a project that brings to life authentic and antique, rare Chinese banknotes from the country's past - in September 2021. Each animated NFT note is beautifully designed, replete with Chinese mottos, symbols, landmarks and period-specific imagery that offer one a glimpse into China's rich history and culture.

China is a country in East Asia and the world's most populous country, with a population of around 1.404 billion. Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China. Xi Jinping is serving as president of the People's Republic of China. National People's Congress is the national legislature of the People's Republic of China. With 2,980 members in 2018, it is the largest parliamentary body in the world. China's currency yuan joins the International Monetary Fund's basket of reserve currencies. China claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea, a huge source of hydrocarbons. However, several ASEAN member countries, including Vietnam, Philippines and Brunei, have made counterclaims. Chinese claims in the South China Sea are described in part by the nine-dash line. China and India are the two neighbouring countries in Asia. India shares 3488 km of border with China that runs along the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh. The Belt and Road Initiative, known in Chinese and formerly in English as One Belt One Road or OBOR for short, is a global infrastructure development strategy adopted by the Chinese government in 2013 to invest in nearly 70 countries and international organizations.

Gujarat displaces Maharashtra to become largest manufacturing hub in country

- Gujarat has pipped Maharashtra to emerge the largest manufacturing hub in the country, with the former's Gross Value Addition (GVA) in manufacturing growing 15.9 per cent annually on average between FY12 and FY20 to touch Rs 5.11 lakh crore, according to the data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- Maharashtra's annual growth rate during the period was 7.5 per cent per annum, taking the state's total manufacturing GVA to Rs 4.34 lakh crore in FY20. It continues to lead as the nation's biggest services hub.
- The worst performers among states, which were already among the top 10 manufacturing ones during the period, were Rajasthan, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, with average annual growth rates of 3.8 per cent, 5.5 per cent and 6.9 per cent, respectively.
- GVA is essentially GDP minus net product taxes and reflects growth in supply of goods and services. The other states with the highest manufacturing GVA were Tamil Nadu at Rs 3.43 lakh crore, Karnataka at Rs 2.1 lakh crore and Uttar Pradesh at Rs 1.87 lakh crore

Gita Gopinath: India-born economist who is set to be IMF's number two

- Chief economist Gita Gopinath will become the number two official at the Washington-based crisis lender IMF next month.
- The India-born economist will succeed Geoffrey Okamoto as first deputy managing director, serving under IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva. For the first time, IMF will have two women holding the top leadership roles.
- The elevation to the post of first deputy managing director (FDMD) came just months after Gopinath had said she intended to re-join Harvard University in January 2022 to retain her tenured faculty post after completing three years at the IMF.
- As its chief economist, Gopinath led the IMF's research department through the unprecedented Covid-19 crisis and a global economic meltdown, the worst peacetime debacle since the Great Depression. Gopinath joined the IMF at the start of 2019, replacing Maury Obstfeld, after having taught in Harvard's economics department since 2005.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an organization of 190 countries, working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty around the world. Created in 1945, the IMF is governed by and accountable to the 190 countries that make up its near-global membership. Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, from Bulgaria, is Managing Director and Chairman of the Executive Board of International Monetary Fund (IMF) from October 1, 2019. Prominent Indian-American economist Gita Gopinath has joined as the chief economist of the International Monetary Fund, becoming the first woman to occupy the top post at the global lender. The latest currency that was added to the basket of currencies by the International Monetary Fund to determine the value of XDR is the Chinese renminbi in 2016. The other international currencies in the basket of currencies are British Pound, Japanese Yen, US Dollar, and Euro. XDR is the currency code of Special Drawing Rights. Andorra has joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to become its 190th member.

Kotak Mahindra Mutual Fund launches India's first Nifty Alpha 50 ETF

- Kotak Mahindra Mutual Fund has launched India's first ever Nifty Alpha 50 ETF called the Kotak Nifty Alpha 50 ETF. It is an open-ended scheme that will track Nifty Alpha 50 index and gives investors an opportunity to invest in a well-diversified portfolio of stocks with high Alphas.
- According to the fund house, this ETF can also be used as a tool to balance investors' active portfolios. Kotak's Nifty Alpha 50 ETF will track the performance of 50 stocks listed with NSE with high Alpha in the last one year. As per the criteria, these companies are selected from top 300 companies by average free-float market capitalization and average daily turnover for the last six months.

Sambit Patra appointed as Chairman of ITDC

- BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra has been appointed as the Chairman of India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC).
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the Tourism Ministry's proposal to split the post of chairman and managing director of ITDC.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) decides appointments to several top posts under the Government of India. The committee is composed of the Prime Minister of India (who is the Chairman) and the Minister of Home Affairs. Originally the Minister-in-charge of the concerned Ministry was also part of the committee but as of 14 July 2016, is not.



Inventions/Discoveries

India's first 2 Omicron cases reported in Karnataka, One is Foreigner

- **Two COVID-19 cases of the Omicron variant** have been detected in India, making it the 30th country in the world to report the coronavirus strain that has triggered global alarm. Both the cases have been reported in Karnataka with the patients being two men aged 66 and 46.
- **First discovered in southern Africa**, Omicron represents a fresh challenge to global efforts to battle the pandemic with several nations already re-imposing restrictions many had hoped were a thing of the past. It is the latest coronavirus strain to emerge since the start of the pandemic, including the currently dominant Delta variant, which was first detected in India in October 2020.
- **The B.1.1.529 variant** was first reported to WHO from South Africa on 24 November 2021. The epidemiological situation in South Africa has been characterized by three distinct peaks in reported cases, the latest of which was predominantly the Delta variant. In recent weeks, infections have increased steeply, coinciding with the detection of B.1.1.529 variant. The first known confirmed B.1.1.529 infection was from a specimen collected on 9 November 2021.

Coronaviruses are a group of related RNA viruses that cause diseases in mammals and birds. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a contagious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The first known case was identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. The disease has since spread worldwide, leading to an ongoing pandemic. Symptoms of COVID-19 are variable, but often include fever, cough, headache, fatigue, breathing difficulties, and loss of smell and taste. Symptoms may begin one to fourteen days after exposure to the virus. At least a third of people who are infected do not develop noticeable symptoms.

First of its kind program for lateral entry for women researchers in joint R&D projects between India and Germany launched

- A first-of-its-kind programme to promote women in the field of research and development through lateral entry was launched. The programme called Women's Involvement in Science and Engineering Research (WISER) program was launched by Indo-German Science & Technology Centre (IGSTC) for encouraging women researchers in joint R&D projects.
- This program by IGSTC, a joint initiative of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), Government of Germany, will support women scientists holding regular/long term research positions in academia or research institutes/industry.
- The involvement in the program will be possible through lateral entry. There is neither requirement of break-in-career nor any age limit, and it will enable easy participation. Mr. SK Varshney, Indian co-chair and Head, International Cooperation Division, DST, pointed out that WISER will enable gender equality and women's participation in Science and Technology through IGSTC's program. IGSTC is going to support the awardees with a maximum amounting to Rs. 39 L from the Indian side & € 48000 from the German side. WISER program offers 20 awards per year.

Startup displays India's first privately developed, 3D-printed cryogenic engine

- **Hyderabad-based startup Skyroot Aerospace has successfully demonstrated the country's first privately developed cryogenic rocket engine named Dhawan-1** after eminent rocket scientist Satish Dhawan.
- The engine has been **completely 3D printed and made in India. The company used a superalloy for 3D printing the engine, which reduced the manufacturing time by 95%.**

Scientists who created world's first 'living' robots, now say they can reproduce

- After creating the world's first living robots, United States-based scientists have discovered that they can now reproduce in a way different from any plant or animal.
- Xenobots are sized less than a millimetre, created from the stem cells of the African clawed frog – scientifically known as *Xenopus laevis* – from where it derives the name. The scientists believe that the new discovery could serve fruitful in the medical field.
- “These are very small, biodegradable and biocompatible machines, and they're perfectly happy in freshwater,” he said, adding that near-term applications could include collecting microplastics from waterways.

In a first, India's fertility rate falls below replacement level

- **The latest findings of the NFHS survey have revealed that India's national Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has fallen below the replacement level for the first time. The latest set of findings of the NFHS 2019-21 survey released by the Union Health Ministry revealed that the average number of children born to a woman over her lifetime has dropped below the replacement level for the first time.**
- **The national Total Fertility Rate was found to be 2.2 in the NFHS 2015-16 survey, down from 2.7 in the NFHS 2005-06 survey. The same has now declined to 2.1 in rural areas and 1.6 in urban areas, as per the latest NFHS survey.**

The total fertility rate (TFR) of a population is the average number of children that would be born to a woman over her lifetime if: 1. she was to experience the exact current age-specific fertility rates (ASFRs) through her lifetime. 2. She was to live from birth until the end of her reproductive life. It is obtained by summing the single-year age-specific rates at a given time.

Russia Carries Out another Successful Test of Zircon Hypersonic Missile

- **Russia had carried out another successful test of its Zircon hypersonic cruise missile, as world powers race to develop the advanced weaponry.**
- **Russia, the United States, France and China have all been experimenting with so-called hypersonic glide vehicles – defined as reaching speeds of at least Mach 5. The missile has undergone a number of recent tests, with Russia planning to equip both warships and submarines with the Zircon.**
- **As part of “the completion of tests” of Russia's hypersonic missile weapons, the Admiral Gorshkov warship launched a Zircon missile at a target in the Barents Sea at a range of 400 kilometres (about 250 miles). The missile has undergone a number of recent tests, with Russia planning to equip both warships and submarines with the Zircon.**
- **Putin revealed the development of the new weapon in a state of the nation address in February 2019, saying it could hit targets at sea and on land with a range of 1,000 kilometres (about 620 miles) and a speed of Mach 9.**
- **Russia's latest Zircon test came after Western reports that a Chinese hypersonic glider test flight in July culminated in the mid-flight firing of a missile at more than five times the speed of sound over the South China Sea.**

Russia or the Russian Federation is a transcontinental country spanning Eastern Europe and Northern Asia. It is the largest country in the world; covering over 17,125,191 square kilometres (6,612,073 sq mi), consisting of more than one-eighth of the Earth's inhabited land area, extending to eleven time zones, and has bordering sixteen sovereign nations. Vladimir Putin is serving as the current President of Russia since 2012, previously being in the office from 1999 until 2008. He was also Prime Minister from 1999 to 2000 and again from 2008 to 2012. Russian ruble or rouble is the currency of the Russian Federation. Mikhail Mishustin is serving as Prime Minister of Russia since 16 January 2020.

One year on this exoplanet is just 16 hours long

- **Astronomers have found a giant, hot exoplanet that orbits around its star once every 16 hours. Named TOI-2109b, the planet is being pulled towards its star, and “in one or two years, if we are lucky, we may be able to detect how the planet moves closer to its star,”** says Dr Ian Wong, lead author of the discovery in a release.
- “In our lifetime we will not see the planet fall into its star. But give it another 10 million years and this planet might not be there.” **TOI-2109b is about five times the mass of Jupiter and is located about 855 light-years away from Earth. The researchers estimated that the exoplanet is spiraling into its star at a rate of 10 to 750 milliseconds per year.**

An exoplanet or extrasolar planet is a planet outside the Solar System. The first possible evidence of an exoplanet was noted in 1917, but was not recognized as such. The first confirmation of detection occurred in 1992. This was followed by the confirmation of a different planet, originally detected in 1988. As of 1 December 2021, there are 4,878 confirmed exoplanets in 3,604 planetary systems, with 807 systems having more than one planet.

MoS IT launches India’s first indigenous server Rudra

- **Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar launched the first indigenous server, Rudra, developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).**
- The server design can be used for manufacturing classical standalone commercial servers and also as building blocks for building large supercomputing systems of tens of petaflops of computing performance.
- A wide spectrum of sectors, including high-performance computing (HPC) systems, hyperscale data centres, edge computing, banking & commerce, manufacturing, oil & gas industry and healthcare, can benefit from the indigenously-built server.

Hot little planet as dense as iron zips around red dwarf star

- **Scientists have spotted one of the smallest planets ever discovered outside our solar system, a scorching-hot world a bit larger than Mars and just about as dense as pure iron zooming around its home star every eight hours.**
- The researchers said they managed to detect the planet, located a relatively close 31 light years from Earth, and discern some of its important traits, illustrating the improvements in recent years in the ability to characterize smaller-sized planets beyond our solar system.
- Scientists are eager to find exoplanets, as these alien worlds are known, that might harbor life. **The newly discovered one, called GJ 367b, certainly could not, possessing ferocious surface temperatures and perhaps a molten lava surface on the side facing its star.**

Nasa launches first-of-a-kind mission to kick an asteroid off course

- **The DART (Double Asteroid Redirection Test) is a real proof-of-concept experiment, should humanity ever need to stop a giant space rock from wiping out life on Earth. The goal is to slightly alter the trajectory of Dimorphos, a “moonlet” around 525 feet (160 meters, or two Statues of Liberty) wide that circles a much larger asteroid called Didymos (2,500 feet in diameter). The pair orbit the Sun together.**

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is an independent agency of the executive branch of the United States federal government responsible for the civilian space program, as well as aeronautics and aerospace research. **President Dwight D. Eisenhower established NASA in 1958. Sen. Bill Nelson was sworn in as the 14th NASA administrator on May 3, 2021, tasked with carrying out the Biden-Harris administration’s vision for the agency.**



Sports Personalities in News

Paramjeet Kumar becomes first Indian para powerlifter to win medal at World Championships

- Paramjeet Kumar became the first powerlifter from India to clinch a medal in the World Para Powerlifting Championships.
- Competing in the men's up to 49 kg category, Paramjeet Kumar of Punjab clinched bronze in the ongoing Championships in Tbilisi, Georgia. Parmjeet's medal-winning lift was 158 kg.

Shreyas Iyer becomes first Indian to score century and half-century on Test debut

- Shreyas Iyer became the first Indian to score a century and a half-century on Test debut. With 170 runs in the match, Iyer became the third-highest run-scorer for India on debut. Shikhar Dhawan (187) against Australia in Mohali in 2012 is still the highest scorer for India while Rohit Sharma (177) stands second.

Indian tennis player Ramkumar Ramanathan wins maiden singles title on ATP Challenger Tour

- Indian tennis player Ramkumar Ramanathan won his maiden Challenger level singles title after 12 years turning a Pro. He outplayed Evgeny Karlovskiy in the summit clash of the ATP 80 Manama event, in Manama, Bahrain.

Argentina's Lionel Messi claims Ballon d'Or for seventh time

- Popular Argentine striker Lionel Messi won the 2021 Ballon d'Or, adding the seventh golden ball to his account. The 34-year-old who is also the star player of Paris St-Germain football club, has won Ballon d'Or in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015, 2019 and 2021. Bayern Munich's Robert Lewandowski ranked second and Chelsea's Jorginho stood third as runners up to the Ballon d'Or.

Athlete Anju Bobby George wins World Athletics Women of year award

- The 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.
- 44-year-old only Indian known for winning a medal in the World Championships with a long jump bronze in the 2003 edition was named for the award in the world body's annual awards. 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 within the sport producing a world U20 medallist.

Viktor Axelsen, Tai Tzu Ying named BWF Male and Female Player of the Year

- Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen and Tokyo Games silver medallist Tai Tzu Ying were named the BWF Male and Female Player of the Year respectively in recognition of their stellar runs this season.
- It was the first season-ending award in this category for both Axelsen and Tai Tzu Ying — the All England champions of 2020. All eight winners were honoured in a virtual broadcast. Axelsen was rewarded for his extraordinary run starting from the Barcelona Spain Masters. The Dane made 10 finals in 11 individual tournaments, winning seven of those, including gold at the Tokyo Games.

Junior Men's Hockey World Cup: Argentina thumps Germany for first title in 16 years

- **Argentina showcased its organised game with great composure to beat six-time champion German side 4-2 and win the title after 16 years** in the men's hockey Junior World Cup at the Kalinga Stadium.
- An error-prone **India lost to a better-prepared France 3-1 to finish fourth for a second time**. It was the 2016 champion's second loss to France in this edition.

India's Ananya Bansal wins Silver at Asia Youth Paralympic Games in Bahrain

- **India's Ananya Bansal won the country's first silver medal in shotput** in the F-20 category at the Asia Youth Paralympic Games in Manama, Bahrain.
- **Ananya Bansal is an athlete with an intellectual impairment**. Deepa Malik, the President of the Paralympic Committee of India lauded Ananya for her performance in the showpiece event.

India to host first-ever world yogasana championship in June

- **India is set to host the first-ever yogasana world championship** in June next year. The National Yogasana Sports Federation (recognised by the Sports Ministry) is working towards building a strong culture of fitness, competition, well-being, and growth through practice and development of yogasana. **The opening ceremony of India's first Physical National Yogasana Sports Championships in Bhubaneswar.**



MISCELLANEOUS

Nagaland police launches 'Call your Cop' mobile App for citizens

- Nagaland DGP T. John Longkumer officially launched the 'Call your Cop' mobile App at Police Headquarters in Kohima. The App will enable all citizens of the state especially those in distress to get in touch directly with the police as easily available with just one click away.
- This initiative is also in keeping with the total modernization of the police department not only in Nagaland but all over the country. This is also on the drive to stop violence against weaker sections.

Arunachal Pradesh became the first state in the country to obtain an organic certification for its kiwis

- Kiwis of Ziro Valley — located in Lower Subansiri district — were certified as organic following a standard three-year-process.
- In October, Arunachal Pradesh became the first state in the country to obtain an organic certification for its kiwis.

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh launches unique Face Recognition Technology for Pensioners in New Delhi

- Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Dr. Jitendra Singh launched unique Face Recognition Technology for Pensioners in New Delhi.
- He said that Face Recognition Technique of giving Life Certificate is a historic and far-reaching reform and this will bring ease of living for the retired and the elderly citizens.

AP govt disburses ₹686 cr under Vidya Deevana scheme

- Andhra Pradesh government has released ₹686 crore as the third tranche of the 'Jagananna Vidya Deevana' education assistance scheme. The amount has been credited to the accounts of 9.87 lakh mothers of 11.03 lakh students.

Shillong to host the famous Cherry Blossom Festival

- Shillong's famous Cherry Blossom Festival is back this year after being cancelled due to COVID outbreak last year. Meghalaya's capital city, Shillong has turned into a live painting with beautiful shades of purples and pinks. The annual Cherry Blossom Festival was cancelled and this year the event is planned between November 25 and 27.

PERSONS IN NEWS

Smriti Irani turns author with 'Lal Salaam', novel pays tribute to 76 CRPF personnel martyred in 2010 Dantewada attack

- Bollywood actress-turned-politician, **Smriti Zubin Irani** has turned author with her debut novel 'Lal Salaam'. The Union Minister's debut novel is based on the lives of the **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) officers serving the country in violence-hit areas**. The novel's plot revolves around the **massacre that unfolded on April 2010 in Dantewada in which 76 CRPF personnel were martyred**.

Bangladesh: First transgender elected as Union Parishad Chairperson

- A transgender person **Nazrul Islam Ritu** has been elected as the Chairperson of the Union Parishad of **Trilochanpur Union of Kaliganj in Jhenaidha district of Bangladesh**. Ritu is the first transgender to be elected as Chairperson in the Union Parishad elections of Bangladesh.

Ace mountaineer Harshwanti Bisht elected as first woman president of Indian Mountaineering Foundation

- **Noted mountaineer from Uttarakhand Harshwanti Bisht** has earned the distinction of being elected the first woman president of the **Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF)**.
- **She was elected to the coveted post** on November 20, **winning 60 out of a total of 107 votes**. It is for the first time that a woman has been elected as the president of the IMF, which was founded in the year 1958.

Senior Bureaucrat Alka Upadhyaya Appointed National Highways Authority of India Chief

- **Senior bureaucrat Alka Upadhyaya** has been **appointed as the chairperson of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** as part of a major bureaucratic reshuffle effected by the Centre.
- **Ms Upadhyaya, a 1990-batch IAS officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre, is currently Additional Secretary, Department of Rural Development**. Sanjay Bandopadhyay, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, has been named chairman, Inland Waterways Authority of India, a Personnel Ministry order said.

Admiral Hari Kumar takes charge as new Indian Navy chief

- **Admiral R Hari Kumar** took charge as the new chief of the Indian Navy, replacing **Admiral Karambir Singh** who superannuated after serving over 41 years.
- **Admiral Hari Kumar is the twenty fifth Chief of the Naval Staff**. Admiral Hari Kumar is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla. He was commissioned into the Indian Navy on January 1, 1983.

AWARDS

Dadabhai Naoroji biography wins Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2021

- A biography of Dadabhai Naoroji, one of the founders of the Indian National Congress, by Dinyar Patel was named winner of the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2021. “Naoroji: Pioneer of Indian Nationalism” was selected from the six shortlisted books that covered a variety of themes and subjects and showcased some of the finest non-fiction writing about India, organisers New India Foundation said.
- The winner was selected by a jury chaired by political scientist Niraja Gopal Jayal and also comprising entrepreneurs Nandan Nilekani and Manish Sabharwal and historians Srinath Raghavan and Nayanjot Lahiri.

IFFI 2021: Japanese movie ‘Ring Wandering’ bags Golden Peacock Award

- Japanese director Masakazu Kaneko’s “Ring Wandering”, about an aspiring manga artist, won the top honour at the closing ceremony of the 52nd edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI),
- The film won the coveted Golden Peacock Award, which consists of a cash prize of Rs 40 lakh to be shared equally between Kaneko and producer Takashi Shiotsuki.

Nizamuddin Basti conservation project gets two UNESCO Awards

- Nine projects from six countries — Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Malaysia, and Thailand — have been honoured by a jury of heritage experts. The Nizamuddin Area comprises the World Heritage Site of Humayun’s Tomb, the centuries-old settlement of Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti and Sunder Nursery, in addition to the 16th Century Batashewala Tomb-Garden Complex, tomb of 16th Century courtier poet Khan I Khanan ‘Rahim’, and the Mughal-period caravanserai of Azimganj Serai.
- The Urban Renewal project, which started in 2007, has successfully unified these segregated zones of the conservation area into an urban historic district of considerable cultural significance.
- The conservation is being undertaken by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) in partnership with the South Delhi Municipal Corporation, Archaeological Survey of India, Delhi Urban Heritage Foundation, and the Dargah Committee/resident community groups of Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti.
- Since 2000, the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation programme has been recognising the efforts of private individuals and organisations in restoring, conserving, and transforming structures and buildings of distinct heritage value in the region.

Mathematician Nikhil Srivastava, 2 colleagues selected for inaugural Ciprian Foias Prize

- Eminent Indian-American mathematician Nikhil Srivastava, who teaches at the University of California, Berkeley, has been jointly selected for the inaugural Ciprian Foias Prize in Operator Theory by American Mathematical Society (AMS).
- Along with Srivastava, the two other awardees are Adam Marcus and Daniel Spielman. Adam Marcus holds the Chair of Combinatorial Analysis at the Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne (EPFL) in Switzerland. Spielman is Sterling Professor of Computer Science, a professor of statistics and data science, and a professor of mathematics.
- The award recognises their highly original work that introduced and developed methods for understanding the characteristic polynomial of matrices, namely the iterative sparsification method (also in collaboration with Batson) and the method of interlacing polynomials.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Nation celebrates National Organ Donation Day on 27th Nov

- **In India, the ‘National Organ Donation Day’ is observed every year on 27 November** since past 10 years. The day aims to promote awareness and recognize the selfless contribution made by deceased donors to healthcare and mankind re-instill our faith in humanity. 2021 marks the 12th National Organ Donation Day. It is organised by the National Organ & Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- **Organ donation is retrieving a donor’s organ like heart, liver, kidneys, intestines, lungs, and pancreas** after the donor is deceased and then transplanting into another person who is in need of an organ. In India, organ donation has always been on a small scale. **As per estimates, only 0.65 organ donations per million population take place in the country.**
- There has been a considerable decline in organ donation in India as well as the **entire world due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are only three percent registered organ donors in India.**
- As per the 2019 data of the **All Institute of Medical Sciences, annually 1.5 to two lakh people require a kidney transplant. But only around 8,000, meaning four percent people get it.** Similarly, every year around 80,000 patients require a liver transplant, but only 1,800 eventually get it.
- Around one lakh patients require corneal or eye transplants annually, but less than half of people get it. **Even for a heart transplant, of the 10,000 who need a heart transplant, only 200 matches with donors.**

Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare, 30 November

- **The Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention**, at its 20th Session, decided that a memorial **Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare** was **observed on 30 November each year or, when appropriate, on the first day of the regular session of the Conference.** The only appropriate tribute to the victims of chemical warfare is to rid the world of chemical weapons once and for all.

World AIDS Day 1 December

- **Every year, on 1 December, the world commemorates World AIDS Day.** People around the world unite to show support for people living with and affected by HIV and to remember those who lost their lives to AIDS. This World AIDS Day, UNAIDS is highlighting the urgent need to end the inequalities that drive AIDS and other pandemics around the world.
- **The Theme of World's AIDS Day 2021 is “End inequalities. End AIDS”.**

International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, 2 December

- **The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, 2 December**, marks the date of the adoption, by the General Assembly, of the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.
- **The focus of this day is on eradicating contemporary forms of slavery, such as trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, the worst forms of child labour, forced marriage, and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.**
- **2021 Theme: “Ending Slavery’s Legacy of Racism: A Global Imperative for Justice”.**

International Volunteer Day 5 December

- **The United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV) coordinates International Volunteer Day on 5 December every year to recognize and promote the tireless work, not just of UN Volunteers, but of volunteers across the globe.** Every day, volunteers dedicate time and effort to ensure the inclusion of those often left behind, drive climate action and advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **2021 Theme: Volunteer now for our common future.**

QUESTIONS

- Which of the following cities has become the first Indian city to start ropeway service as a mode of public transport?
(a) Prayagraj (b) Hardwar (c) Varanasi (d) Shimla
- Which of the following countries gets world's first operational dual-mode bus and rail vehicle?
(a) India (b) Japan (c) Norway (d) Sweden
- Recently, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat launched River Cities Alliance and National Urban River Management Plan for _____.
(a) Hardwar (b) Rishikesh (c) Varanasi (d) Kanpur
- Which of the following countries President Klaus Iohannis has nominated Defence Minister Nicolae Ciuca to form a new government as Prime Minister recently?
(a) Romania (b) Nicaragua (c) Madagascar (d) Peru
- The World's first floating city is to set sail in _____ by 2025.
(a) South Korea (b) Vietnam (c) Russia (d) Chile
- Which of the following companies has entered the World Index list of companies in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) 2021 recently?
(a) Jeep (b) Mahindra & Mahindra
(c) Tata Motors (d) Ford
- Which of the following Asian countries has been elected to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee for 2021-25?
(a) Bangladesh (b) Japan (c) India (d) Maldives
- Name the first power lifter from India to clinch a medal in the World Para Powerlifting Championships recently.
(a) Gautam Rathi (b) Anmol Veer (c) Gunjan Mathur (d) Paramjeet Kumar
- Who is the first Indian to score a century and a half-century on Test debut recently?
(a) Axar Patel (b) Shreyas Iyer (c) Venkatesh Iyer (d) Prithvi Shaw
- Name the noted mountaineer from Uttarakhand who has earned the distinction of being elected the first woman president of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF)?
(a) Anamika Jain (b) Pallavi Mathur (c) Harshwanti Bisht (d) Manorama Tewari
- Ratan Nag project is located in _____.
(a) Himachal Pradesh (b) Jammu & Kashmir (c) Uttarakhand (d) Sikkim
- Name the Hyderabad-based startup which has successfully demonstrated the country's first privately developed cryogenic rocket engine named Dhawan-1 after eminent rocket scientist Satish Dhawan.
(a) Aniruddh Aerospace (b) Skyroot Aerospace
(c) Mistech Aerospace (d) Kalyani Aerospace
- Name the Indian tennis player who won his maiden Challenger level singles title.
(a) Dev Gautam (b) Ramkumar Ramanathan
(c) Devranjan Verma (d) Amit Kulshrestha
- Who will succeed the Twitter's current CEO Jack Dorsey?
(a) Deven Mohanthy (b) Parag Agrawal
(c) Greem Smith (d) Neven Thyuin

15. Recently, “Ring Wandering” won the top honour at the closing ceremony of the 52nd edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI). This movie is in _____ language.
 (a) American (b) Swedish (c) Japanese (d) Chinese
16. Recently, Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to raise LIC’s stake in the bank up to _____ per cent from the current 4.96 per cent it has in the private lender.
 (a) 6.12 (b) 7.38 (c) 9.99 (d) 11.45
17. Who has been turned as author with her debut novel ‘Lal Salaam’?
 (a) Kangana Ranaut (b) Smriti Zubin Irani (c) Konkana Sen (d) Maneka Gandhi
18. Name the first transgender to be elected as Chairperson in the Union Parishad elections of Bangladesh.
 (a) Nazrul Islam Ritu (b) Mohiduddin Rayini
 (c) Nayeem Khan (d) Shamim Ahmed
19. The Memorial Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare is observed on _____.
 (a) 26 November (b) 30 November (c) 2 December (d) 5 December
20. Which of the following has become the world’s newest republic and in doing so removes the Queen as its head of state?
 (a) Barbados (b) Suriname (c) Fiji (d) Maldives
21. Which of the following banks announced the launch of FIRST Private Infinite, India’s first-ever standalone metal debit card, in partnership with Visa, the global leader in digital payments?
 (a) HDFC (b) IDFC FIRST (c) ICICI (d) Bandhan
22. Which of the following states officially launched the ‘Call your Cop’ mobile App recently?
 (a) Sikkim (b) Nagaland (c) Mizoram (d) Manipur
23. The latest findings of the NFHS survey have revealed that India’s national Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has fallen below the replacement level for the first time. The national Total Fertility Rate was found to be _____ in the NFHS 2015-16 survey, down from 2.7 in the NFHS 2005-06 survey.
 (a) 2.5 (b) 2.4 (c) 2.2 (d) 1.9
24. Which is India’s first and only International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) where banks, stock exchanges and financial services firms have set up their global operations?
 (a) Haryana International Finance Tec City
 (b) Punjab International Finance Tec City
 (c) Himachal Pradesh International Finance Tec City
 (d) Gujarat International Finance Tec City
25. Who won the 2021 Ballon d’Or, adding the seventh golden ball to his account?
 (a) Neymar Jr (b) Cristiano Ronaldo (c) Lionel Messi (d) Luka Modric
26. According to Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), which is now the world’s most expensive city to live in?
 (a) Madrid (b) Paris (c) Tel Aviv (d) Lisbon
27. The world commemorates World AIDS Day every year on _____.
 (a) 26 November (b) 29 November (c) 1 December (d) 3 December
28. Who took charge as the new chief of the Indian Navy?
 (a) Admiral Karambir Singh (b) Admiral M K Jha
 (c) Admiral P N Ahuja (d) Admiral R Hari Kumar

29. Recently, Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Dr. Jitendra Singh launched unique Face Recognition Technology for _____ in New Delhi.
 (a) Students (b) Pensioners (c) Army Personal (d) Widows
30. The famous Cherry Blossom Festival is of _____, and is back this year after being cancelled due to COVID outbreak last year.
 (a) Aizawl (b) Shillong (c) Guwahati (d) Gangtok
31. The Indian Railways is constructing the world's tallest railway bridge pier at Noney Valley in the state of _____ with a height of 141 metres.
 (a) Mizoram (b) Manipur (c) Meghalaya (d) Tripura
32. According to the 2021 edition of the 10th Annual World Cooperative Monitor (WCM) report published by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA). Which of the following has been ranked 'number one Cooperative' among the top 300 cooperatives in the world?
 (a) IFFCO (b) SIDBI (c) State Bank of India (d) NABARD
33. Recently, The Centre has formed a three-member committee to review the _____ annual income limit to identify economically weaker section (EWS) for providing 10% quota in public jobs and educational institutions.
 (a) ₹4 lakh (b) ₹6 lakh (c) ₹8 lakh (d) ₹10 lakh
34. Which of the following country navies and the US military personnel kicked off the annual Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) maritime exercise?
 (a) India (b) Bangladesh (c) Pakistan (d) Malaysia
35. India-based businesses are gearing up for their first Middle East edition of India Global Forum at _____.
 (a) Abu Dhabi (b) Masdar (c) Dubai (d) Sharjah
36. Which of the following states became the first state in the country to obtain an organic certification for its kiwis?
 (a) Sikkim (b) Arunachal Pradesh (c) Meghalaya (d) Manipur
37. Recently, Indian tech wizard Parag Agrawal took over as CEO of the social media platform _____.
 (a) Facebook (b) Whatsapp (c) Google (d) Twitter
38. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated InFinity Forum, a thought leadership Forum on FinTech via video conferencing. Which is not among partner countries in the first edition of the Forum?
 (a) Indonesia (b) South Africa (c) Russia (d) U.K.
39. Which of the following countries had carried out another successful test of its Zircon hypersonic cruise missile?
 (a) Japan (b) China (c) Russia (d) India
40. Which of the following released the report 'Designing the Future of Dispute Resolution: the ODR Policy Plan for India', to scale dispute avoidance, containment, and resolution online?
 (a) NITI Aayog (b) NABARD (c) RBI (d) Ministry of Finance
41. Recently, Two COVID-19 cases of the Omicron variant have been detected in India in _____.
 (a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Karnataka (d) Kerala
42. Recently, which of the following airports has been adjudged the 'Best Airport in India and Central Asia' this year by Skytrax?
 (a) Indira Gandhi International Airport
 (b) Rajiv Gandhi International Airport
 (c) Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel International Airport
 (d) Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport

43. Few Asian countries have been opened up for the creation of a prospective trilateral which can be termed as JIV. Which of the following countries is not part of “JIV”?
 (a) Japan (b) India (c) Vietnam (d) Indonesia
44. Which of the following African countries has promised to end child marriage by 2030 in line with the African Union’s campaign to end child marriages in the continent?
 (a) South Sudan (b) Egypt (c) Eritrea (d) Somalia
45. Which of the following has been launched within the Nifty Bharat Bond index series recently?
 (a) Nifty Bharat Bond Index – June 2024 (b) Nifty Bharat Bond Index – February 2028
 (c) Nifty Bharat Bond Index – April 2032 (d) Nifty Bharat Bond Index – July 2036
46. In India, Uber launched ride-booking via WhatsApp on a pilot basis in _____.
 (a) New Delhi (b) Lucknow (c) Kolkata (d) Varanasi
47. The world’s first currency developed in the 7th century is _____.
 (a) Japan (b) South Korea (c) Vietnam (d) China
48. Recently, Astronomers have found a giant, hot exoplanet named TOI-2109b that orbits around its star once every _____.
 (a) 8 hours (b) 12 hours (c) 16 hours (d) 24 hours
49. Recently, who has been awarded the Woman of the Year Award by World Athletics (WA) for grooming talent in the country and advocating gender equality?
 (a) Karnam Malleshwari (b) Anju Bobby George
 (c) Sania Mirza (d) Konneru Hampi
50. Whose biography by Dinyar Patel was recently named winner of the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2021?
 (a) G K Gokhale (b) Dadabhai Naoroji (c) Bal Gangadhar Tilak (d) Mahatma Gandhi
51. Recently, Three countries have joined the G20 Troika. Which of the following is not included in the Troika?
 (a) Indonesia (b) Iran (c) Italy (d) India
52. Recently, India and _____ have agreed to step up their Clean Energy and Climate Partnership.
 (a) BRICS (b) European Union (EU)
 (c) ASEAN (d) G-20
53. Which of the following banks listed its \$650-million green bonds simultaneously on the India International Exchange (India INX) and the Luxembourg Stock Exchange?
 (a) Punjab National Bank (PNB) (b) State Bank of India (SBI)
 (c) Canara Bank (d) Union Bank of India (UBI)
54. According to the data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which of the following states has pipped to emerge the largest manufacturing hub in the country?
 (a) Maharashtra (b) Gujarat (c) Haryana (d) West Bengal
55. Who among the following will become the first deputy managing director of IMF, serving under IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva?
 (a) Kaushik Basu (b) Gita Gopinath (c) Viral V Acharya (d) Raghuram Rajan
56. Which of the following banks has launched India’s first ever Nifty Alpha 50 ETF called the Kotak Nifty Alpha 50 ETF?
 (a) HDFC Mutual Fund (b) ICICI Mutual Fund
 (c) Kotak Mahindra Mutual Fund (d) Axis Mutual Fund

57. Recently, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar launched the first indigenous server _____ developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).
 (a) Shiva (b) Rudra (c) Krishna (d) Shaurya
58. Who have been named the BWF Male and Female Player of the Year respectively in recognition of their stellar runs this season?
 (a) Andy Murray and Nozomi Okuhara (b) Viktor Axelsen and Tai Tzu Ying
 (c) Vishwanathan Anand and Serena Williams (d) Max Verstappen and Carolina Marin
59. Which of the following conservation projects gets two UNESCO Awards recently?
 (a) Agrasen ki Bawli (b) Nizamuddin Basti (c) Rani ki Vav (d) Sun Temple Konark
60. Name the eminent Indian-American mathematician who has been jointly selected for the inaugural Ciprian Foias Prize in Operator Theory by American Mathematical Society (AMS) recently.
 (a) Atul Mahajan (b) Nikhil Srivastava (c) Mukesh Dhanjani (d) Gaurav Kirpal
61. The 11th edition of Exercise EKUVERIN between _____ will be conducted.
 (a) India and Malaysia (b) India and Seychelles (c) India and Maldives (d) India and Sri Lanka
62. On the occasion of Asom Divas or Assam Day, the state Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced to confer the most prestigious 'Asom Baibhav' award to the industrialist _____.
 (a) Anand Mahindra (b) Ratan Tata (c) Gautam Adani (d) Mukesh Ambani
63. Which of the following became the first state in India to achieve 100 per cent vaccination against COVID-19 among all eligible adults?
 (a) Haryana (b) Punjab (c) Goa (d) Himachal Pradesh
64. Recently, 5th Indian Ocean Conference began in _____.
 (a) Dubai (b) Abu Dhabi (c) Jeddah (d) Masdar
65. Recently, which of the following has become the first school in Uttar Pradesh to be integrated into the PASCH network?
 (a) Ghaziabad's Nehru World School (NWS) (b) Noida's Gurukul Public School
 (c) Lucknow's City Montessori School (d) Varanasi's Sunbeam school
66. Recently, Polls have opened in _____ for the first election since former President Yahya Jammeh left office and fled the country in 2017.
 (a) The Gambia (b) Tanzania (c) Djibouti (d) Eritrea
67. Who has been appointed as the Chairman of India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) recently?
 (a) Prakash Javadekar (b) Sambit Patra (c) Amit Mitra (d) Babul Supriyo
68. Which of the following teams won the title after 16 years in the men's hockey Junior World Cup at the Kalinga Stadium?
 (a) Germany (b) Argentina (c) Russia (d) India
69. The United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV) coordinates International Volunteer Day on _____ every year to recognize and promote the tireless work, not just of UN Volunteers, but of volunteers across the globe.
 (a) 27 November (b) 2 December (c) 5 December (d) 8 December
70. Who of the following won recently India's first silver medal in shotput in the F-20 category at the Asia Youth Paralympic Games in Manama, Bahrain recently?
 (a) Ananya Bansal (b) Aditi Bharadwaj (c) Meenakshi Jha (d) Amrita Rao

ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. c Varanasi has become the first Indian city to start ropeway service as a mode of public transport.
2. b Japan gets world's first operational dual-mode bus and rail vehicle.
3. d Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat launched River Cities Alliance and National Urban River Management Plan for Kanpur in New Delhi.
4. a Romanian President Klaus Iohannis has nominated Defence Minister Nicolae Ciuca to form a new government as Prime Minister.
5. a World's first floating City to Set Sail in South Korea by 2025.
6. c Mumbai-based automotive-to-technology major Mahindra & Mahindra has entered the World Index list of companies in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI) 2021.
7. c External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar said that India has been elected to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee for 2021-25.
8. d Paramjeet Kumar became the first power lifter from India to clinch a medal in the World Para Powerlifting Championships.
9. b Shreyas Iyer became the first Indian to score a century and a half-century on Test debut.
10. c Noted mountaineer from Uttarakhand Harshwanti Bisht has earned the distinction of being elected the first woman president of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF).
11. b Ratan Nag project in Kishtwar district of J&K with 10.50 MW at an estimated cost of over 315 crore rupees has irrigation benefits as well.
12. b Hyderabad-based startup Skyroot Aerospace has successfully demonstrated the country's first privately developed cryogenic rocket engine named Dhawan-1 after eminent rocket scientist Satish Dhawan.
13. b Indian tennis player Ramkumar Ramanathan won his maiden Challenger level singles title after 12 years turning a Pro.
14. b Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey will step down as CEO of the social media platform, the company announced. He will be succeeded by Twitter's current Chief Technology Officer Parag Agrawal.
15. c Japanese director Masakazu Kaneko's "Ring Wandering", about an aspiring manga artist, won the top honour at the closing ceremony of the 52nd edition of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI).
16. c Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to increase its stake in the Kotak Mahindra Bank. The approval is to raise LIC's stake in the bank up to 9.99 per cent from the current 4.96 per cent it has in the private lender.
17. b Bollywood actress-turned-politician, Smriti Zubin Irani has turned author with her debut novel 'Lal Salaam'.
18. a A transgender person Nazrul Islam Ritu has been elected as the Chairperson of the Union Parishad of Trilochanpur Union of Kaliganj in Jhenaidha district of Bangladesh. Ritu is the first transgender to be elected as Chairperson in the Union Parishad elections of Bangladesh.

- 19. b** The Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, at its 20th Session, decided that a memorial Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare would be observed on 30 November each year or, when appropriate, on the first day of the regular session of the Conference.
- 20. a** At midnight, the Caribbean island Barbados has become the world's newest republic and in doing so removes the Queen as its head of state.
- 21. b** IDFC FIRST Bank announced the launch of FIRST Private Infinite, the country's first-ever standalone metal debit card, in partnership with Visa, the global leader in digital payments.
- 22. b** Nagaland DGP T. John Longkumer officially launched the 'Call your Cop' mobile App at Police Headquarters in Kohima.
- 23. c** The national Total Fertility Rate was found to be 2.2 in the NFHS 2015-16 survey, down from 2.7 in the NFHS 2005-06 survey.
- 24. d** Now operational with more than 200 entities which have set up their offices where more than 12,000 people are working, the Gujarat International Finance Tec City (GIFT City) is India's first and only International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) where banks, stock exchanges and financial services firms have set up their global operations.
- 25. c** Popular Argentine striker Lionel Messi won the 2021 Ballon d'Or, adding the seventh golden ball to his account.
- 26. c** Tel Aviv is now the world's most expensive city to live in, according to a survey published.
- 27. c** Every year, on 1 December, the world commemorates World AIDS Day.
- 28. d** Admiral R Hari Kumar took charge as the new chief of the Indian Navy, replacing Admiral Karambir Singh who superannuated after serving over 41 years.
- 29. b** Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Dr. Jitendra Singh launched unique Face Recognition Technology for Pensioners in New Delhi.
- 30. b** Shillong's famous Cherry Blossom Festival is back this year after being cancelled due to COVID outbreak last year.
- 31. b** Indian Railways is constructing the world's tallest railway bridge pier at Noney Valley in the state of Manipur with a height of 141 metres.
- 32. a** The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) has been ranked 'number one Cooperative' among the top 300 cooperatives in the world, withholding its position from last year.
- 33. c** The Centre has formed a three-member committee to review the ₹8 lakh annual income limit to identify economically weaker section (EWS) for providing 10% quota in public jobs and educational institutions, the social justice and empowerment ministry said in an official memorandum.
- 34. b** Bangladesh Navy (BN) and the US military personnel kicked off the annual Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) maritime exercise.
- 35. c** India-based businesses are gearing up for their first Middle East edition of India Global Forum Dubai.
- 36. b** Arunachal Pradesh became the first state in the country to obtain an organic certification for its kiwis.

- 37. d** Indian tech wizard Parag Agrawal takes over as CEO of the social media platform Twitter following the departure of its co-founder CEO.
- 38. c** Indonesia, South Africa and the U.K. are partner countries in the first edition of the Forum.
- 39. c** Russia had carried out another successful test of its Zircon hypersonic cruise missile, as world powers race to develop the advanced weaponry.
- 40. a** NITI Aayog released the report Designing the Future of Dispute Resolution: the ODR Policy Plan for India, to scale dispute avoidance, containment, and resolution online.
- 41. c** Two COVID-19 cases of the Omicron variant have been detected in India, making it the 30th country in the world to report the coronavirus strain that has triggered global alarm. Both the cases have been reported in Karnataka with the patients being two men aged 66 and 46.
- 42. a** The Centre has said the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi has been adjudged the 'Best Airport in India and Central Asia' this year by Skytrax.
- 43. d** Vietnam's PM Pham Minh Chin's recent visit to Japan to strengthen strategic partnership aimed at creating peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region amid China's hegemonistic designs has opened up the creation of a prospective trilateral – Japan-India-Vietnam which can be termed as JIV.
- 44. a** South Sudan's Government has promised to end child marriage by 2030 in line with the African Union's campaign to end child marriages in the continent.
- 45. c** Nifty Bharat Bond Index – April 2032- has been launched within the Nifty Bharat Bond index series.
- 46. b** Uber launched ride-booking via WhatsApp in India. It is being rolled out on a pilot basis in Lucknow first, and will be expanded to other Indian cities soon.
- 47. d** Banking on their two significant inventions - papermaking and printing - the Chinese developed, arguably, the world's first currency in the 7th century during the time of the Tang dynasty.
- 48. c** Astronomers have found a giant, hot exoplanet that orbits around its star once every 16 hours.
- 49. b** The 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.
- 50. b** A biography of Dadabhai Naoroji, one of the founders of the Indian National Congress, by Dinyar Patel was named winner of the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2021.
- 51. b** India has joined the G20 Troika. Apart from India, Troika consists of Indonesia and Italy.
- 52. b** India and European Union (EU) have agreed to step up their Clean Energy and Climate Partnership. They jointly agreed on a detailed work programme until 2023 to implement the 2016 India-EU Clean Energy and Climate Partnership.
- 53. b** State Bank of India (SBI) listed its \$650-million green bonds simultaneously on the India International Exchange (India INX) and the Luxembourg Stock Exchange.
- 54. b** Gujarat has pipped Maharashtra to emerge the largest manufacturing hub in the country, with the former's Gross Value Addition (GVA) in manufacturing growing 15.9 per cent annually on average between FY12 and FY20 to touch Rs 5.11 lakh crore, according to the data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

- 55. b** Chief economist Gita Gopinath will become the number two official at the Washington-based crisis lender IMF next month. The India-born economist will succeed Geoffrey Okamoto as first deputy managing director, serving under IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva.
- 56. c** Kotak Mahindra Mutual Fund has launched India's first ever Nifty Alpha 50 ETF called the Kotak Nifty Alpha 50 ETF.
- 57. b** Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeve Chandrasekhar launched the first indigenous server, Rudra, developed by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM).
- 58. b** Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen and Tokyo Games silver medallist Tai Tzu Ying were named the BWF Male and Female Player of the Year respectively in recognition of their stellar runs this season.
- 59. b** Nizamuddin Basti conservation project gets two UNESCO Awards.
- 60. b** Eminent Indian-American mathematician Nikhil Srivastava, who teaches at the University of California, Berkeley, has been jointly selected for the inaugural Ciprian Foias Prize in Operator Theory by American Mathematical Society (AMS).
- 61. c** The 11th edition of Exercise EKUVERIN between India and Maldives will be conducted at Kadhdhoo Island, Maldives.
- 62. b** On the occasion of Asom Divas or Assam Day, the state Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced to confer the most prestigious 'Asom Baibhav' award to the industrialist Ratan Tata.
- 63. d** Himachal Pradesh became the first state in India to achieve 100 per cent vaccination against COVID-19 among all eligible adults.
- 64. b** 5th Indian Ocean Conference began in Abu Dhabi.
- 65. a** Ghaziabad's Nehru World School (NWS) has become the first school in Uttar Pradesh to be integrated into the PASCH network, a cooperative organization of schools around the globe supported by the German Federal Foreign Office.
- 66. a** Polls have opened in The Gambia for the first election since former President Yahya Jammeh left office and fled the country in 2017.
- 67. b** BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra has been appointed as the Chairman of India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC).
- 68. b** Argentina showcased its organised game with great composure to beat six-time champion German side 4-2 and win the title after 16 years in the men's hockey Junior World Cup at the Kalinga Stadium.
- 69. c** The United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV) coordinates International Volunteer Day on 5 December every year to recognize and promote the tireless work, not just of UN Volunteers, but of volunteers across the globe.
- 70. a** India's Ananya Bansal won the country's first silver medal in shotput in the F-20 category at the Asia Youth Paralympic Games in Manama, Bahrain.