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# MANTHAN

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A General Awareness Weekly

19<sup>th</sup> July to 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2021

# PREFACE

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**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  
Launcher

## National



### Part of Constitution inserted by 97<sup>th</sup> amendment quashed

- The Supreme Court on July 20 in a 2:1 majority verdict upheld the validity of the 97<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment but struck down a part inserted by it which relates to the Constitution and working of cooperative societies.
- The 97<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment dealt with issues related to effective management of co-operative societies in the country. It was passed by Parliament in December 2011 and had come into effect from February 15, 2012. It amended Article 19(1)(c) to give protection to the cooperatives and inserted Article 43 B and Part IX B, relating to them.
- Upholding the Gujarat High Court's 2013 decision striking down certain provisions of the 97<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment, the Supreme Court held that the Parliament cannot enact laws with regard to cooperative societies as it is a State subject.
- Several intervenors have contended that the amendment made a direct in-road into the exclusive domain of states to enact laws with regard to cooperatives. However, the Centre has contended that the provision does not denude states of their power to enact laws with regard to cooperatives.
- The Centre has stated that the amendment was enacted to bring uniformity in the management of cooperative societies and it did not take away the powers of states.
- But, the Supreme Court has now said that if the Centre wanted to achieve uniformity then the only way available was to take the recourse under Article 252 of the Constitution which deals with the power of Parliament to legislate for two or more states by consent.

The subject of cooperative societies fell in the state list and “belongs wholly and exclusively to the State legislatures to legislate upon” and any change would require the ratification by at least one-half of the state legislatures as per Article 368(2) of the Constitution. Now, Part IXB of the Constitution of India is operative only in so far as it concerns multi-State co-operative societies both within the various States and in the Union territories of India.

### India urges G20 nations to bring down per capita emissions by 2030

- The target of reducing emissions to net zero by mid-century, proposed by some countries, will not be adequate in view of the fast-depleting global carbon space, India said in its official statement at the G20 energy and climate joint ministerial meeting, even as it urged the group of 20 developed nations (G20) with per capita greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions above the world average to reduce the levels by 2030.
- According to data provided by the Climate Watch by World Resources Institute, India emits 7.1% of global emissions and has per capita emissions of about 2.47 Tco2e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent), as compared to the global average of 6.45 tco2/per capita.
- In comparison to top emitters, India's per capita emissions are seven times lower than that of the United States, 3.4 times lower compared to China's and three times lower compared to the EU.

- The countries also said they recall and reaffirm the commitment made by developed countries, **to the goal of mobilising jointly USD 100 billion per year by 2020 and annually through 2025 to address the needs of developing countries**, in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation, and those funds may come from a wide variety of sources, public and private, bilateral, and multilateral, including alternative sources.

**In 2015, ahead of the UN significant climate conference in Paris, India announced three major voluntary commitments called the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC):** 1. Improving the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33–35% by 2030 over 2005 levels. 2. Increasing the share of non-fossil fuels-based electricity to 40% by 2030. 3. Enhancing its forest cover, thereby absorbing 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide. The Paris Agreement is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), dealing with greenhouse-gas-emissions mitigation, adaptation, and finance, was adopted by 196 parties at the 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of Parties in Paris, on December 12, 2015, and was enforced on November 4, 2016. On June 1, 2017, United States President Donald Trump announced that the U.S. would cease all participation in the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change mitigation and withdrawal took effect on November 4, 2020, one day after the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

### Speedy trial a fundamental right: HC

- **In the Bhima Koregaon caste violence case, highlighting the issue of undertrials**, the Supreme Court has said that **“speedy trial is a fundamental right”**. Charges are not framed in the case. Many witnesses are still being examined. They are languishing in jail without trial.
- **The main aim of the Right to Speedy trial is to inculcate Justice in the society.** It was first mentioned in that landmark document of English law, the Magna Carta. In India, it is covered under Article 21 which declares that **“no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to the procedure laid by law.”**

**1978 Babu Singh v. State of UP:** The court remarked, **“Our justice system even in grave cases, suffers from slow motion syndrome which is lethal to ‘fair trial’ whatever the ultimate decision. Speedy justice is a component of social justice since the community, as a whole, is concerned in the criminal being condignly and finally punished within a reasonable time and the innocent being absolved from the inordinate ordeal of criminal proceedings.”**

**Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar, 1979:** It formed the basis of the concept of the Speedy Trial. It was held that where under trial prisoners have been in jail for duration longer than prescribed, if convicted, **their detention in jail is totally unjustified and in violation to fundamental rights under article 21.**

**Katar Singh v. State of Punjab 1994:** It was declared that the **right to speedy trial is an essential part of fundamental right to life and liberty.**

### New nomenclature for Jammu and Kashmir High Court

- The “long-winding and cumbersome” nomenclature **‘Common High Court of UT of Jammu and Kashmir and UT of Ladakh’** has been changed to **‘High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh’**. President Ram Nath Kovind has signed the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Removal of Difficulties) Order, 2021**, to effect the change.
- It observed that the **Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019**, was enacted to provide for reorganisation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir into the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh.

**The High courts of India are the principal civil courts of original jurisdiction** in each state and union territory. However, a high court exercises its original civil and criminal jurisdiction only if the subordinate courts are not authorized by law to try such matters for lack of pecuniary, territorial jurisdiction. **High courts may also enjoy original jurisdiction in certain matters, if so designated Specially in a state or federal law. Basically, the work of most high courts primarily consists of appeals from lower courts and writ petitions in terms of Articles 226 and 227 of the constitution. Writ jurisdiction is also an original jurisdiction of a high court. Judges in a high court are appointed by the President of India in consultation with the Chief Justice of India and the governor of the state. The Calcutta High Court is the oldest high court in the country, established on 2 July 1862. There are total 25 high courts in India.**

## MeitY enables map services in UMANG App through MoU with MapmyIndia

- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has taken various initiatives in the recent past to ease the lives of citizens by facilitating online delivery of Government services.
- To further enhance the initiatives of Digital India Programme, the Ministry has enabled map services in UMANG App ‘through Memorandum of Understanding with MapmyIndia.
- As a result of integration of UMANG with MapmyIndia, citizens will be able to find government facilities nearest to their location, such as mandis, blood banks and much more, at the click of a button.
- The UMANG mobile app launched in 2017 is a Government of India single, unified, secure, multi-channel, multi-service mobile app, providing access to high impact services of various organizations. UMANG brings major government services on a single mobile app on mobile phones of citizens.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) is an executive agency of the Union Government of the Republic of India. It was carved out of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology on 19 July 2016 as a standalone ministerial agency responsible for IT policy, strategy and development of the electronics industry. Ashwini Vaishnaw is the former Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer currently serving as the Minister of Railways, Communications and Electronics & Information Technology of India, since 8 July 2021. He is a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party. In June 2019, he became a member of the Parliament of India representing Odisha State in the Rajya Sabha, the upper house.

## CJI N V Ramana’s innovation to ensure ‘FASTER’ release of prisoners granted bail

- Chief Justice N V Ramana-led bench of the Supreme Court expressed concern that even in the era of internet and Information Technology boom, it seemed jail authorities are relying on ancient mode of communication through pigeons.
- Christened as FASTER (Fast and Secure Transmission of Electronic Records), the innovative scheme is conceived for delivery of orders to concerned prisons, District Courts, High Courts, as the case may be, for instantaneous delivery of orders passed by apex court through a secure communication channel.
- The bench said the innovative scheme would revolutionize transmission of court orders to all concerned in a fast and secure manner. The Supreme Court Registry has been directed by the Bench to prepare a detailed report of a scheme for delivery of its orders for execution to all concerned through a secure, credible and authentic channel.

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.

## Gujarat: First-ever elections of Balika Panchayat successfully held at Kunariya village

- The Kunariya village of Kutch district in Gujarat has come out with a unique idea of holding Balika Panchayat. The first-ever elections of this Balika Panchayat were successfully held.
- Inspired by the TV series, Balika Vadhu, the Kunariya village in Kutch district held elections for the unique Balika Panchayat, which aims to develop leadership qualities in the girls for Future Panchayat polls. This Panchayat will be run by the girls and for the girls.
- The Sarpanch of this progressive village, Suresh Chhanga said the separate sitting arrangements will be given to these girls and they will be given to use the budget of gender sensitivity. This unique step by a small village like Kunaria aligns with PM’s vision of enhancing young women’s participation in the political process.

**Gujarat is a state on the western coast of India with a longest coastline of India 1,600 km (990 mi). Its capital city is Gandhinagar, while its largest city is Ahmedabad. Gujarat International Finance Tec-City is a business district promoted by the Government of Gujarat through a joint venture company. GIFT City is India's first operational smart city in the Ahmedabad and international financial services centre. Acharya Devvrat is Governor of Gujarat and Vijay Rupani is the current Chief Minister of Gujarat. Gujarat has become the first state to implement newly-introduced 10 per cent reservations in government jobs and higher education for the economically weaker sections in the general category and followed by Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.**

## **Maharashtra to be first state in country to issue educational documents using blockchain technology**

- **Maharashtra will be the first state in the country to issue educational documents using blockchain technology.** Maharashtra's Skill Development Minister Nawab Malik said, **one million diploma certificates will be issued using this technology.**
- **Around 10 lakh digital certificates will be issued to diploma holders of eight educational years.** Singapore, Malta and Bahrain are the only countries using this technology. **Maharashtra will be the 1<sup>st</sup> Indian state and world's largest user of Blockchain for educational certificates.**

**Maharashtra is India's second-most populous state and third-largest state by area. Nagpur is Maharashtra's second capital and hosts the winter session of the state legislature. Pune is its cultural capital. Shiv Sena President Uddhav Thackeray takes oath as the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. Uddhav Thackeray is the first of his family to be the chief minister of Maharashtra. His father Bal Thackeray founded the Shiv Sena over five decades ago. Bhagat Singh Koshyari is serving as the current Governor of Maharashtra.**

## **Government to set up a world-class 'Indian Institute of Heritage' at Noida to focus on conservation and research in India's rich tangible heritage**

- **The government has decided to set up the 'Indian Institute of Heritage' at Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar.** This will **impact higher education and research in the field related to rich Indian heritage and its conservation leading to Masters and Ph.D courses in History of Arts, Conservation, Museology, Archival Studies, Archaeology, Preventive Conservation, Epigraphy and Numismatics, Manuscriptology etc.** as well as conservation training facilities to in-service employees and the students of the Indian Institute of Heritage.
- **The Institute is being set up as Deemed to be University by integrating Institute of Archaeology (Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology), School of Archival Studies under National Archives of India, New Delhi, the National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural Property (NRLC), Lucknow, National Museum Institute of History of Art, Conservation and Museology (NMICHM) and Academic Wing of Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi.** These shall become various schools of Institute.
- **Indian Institute of Heritage will be a world-class university that would focus on the conservation and research in India's rich tangible heritage,** while offering research, development and dissemination of knowledge, excellence in the education of its students and activities associated with heritage that contribute to the cultural, scientific and economic life of India. This would be a standalone Institution of its type in the country.

**The Ministry of Culture is the Indian government ministry charged with preservation and promotion of art and culture of India. Recently the government has established the National Mission on Libraries India under this ministry. Gangapuram Kishan Reddy is currently serving as Minister of Tourism, Culture and Development of North Eastern Region of India. He is a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He is an MP representing Secunderabad (Lok Sabha constituency) since 2019.**

## **Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi appointed as Deputy Leader of House in Rajya Sabha**

- **Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi has been appointed as the Deputy Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha.**
- **He has succeeded Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, who has now taken over as the leader of House in the Rajya Sabha.**

Article 80 of the Constitution lays down the maximum strength of Rajya Sabha as 250, out of which 12 members are nominated by the President and 238 are representatives of the States and of the two Union Territories. The present strength of Rajya Sabha, however, is 245, out of which 233 are representatives of the States and Union territories of Delhi and Puducherry and 12 are nominated by the President. The members nominated by the President are persons having special knowledge or practical experience in respect of such matters as literature, science, art and social service. The Fourth Schedule to the Constitution provides for allocation of seats to the States and Union Territories in Rajya Sabha. The Vice President of India (currently, Venkaiah Naidu) is the ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, who presides over its sessions. The Deputy Chairman, who is elected from amongst the house's members, takes care of the day-to-day matters of the house in the absence of the Chairman. The Rajya Sabha held its first sitting on 13 May 1952. Mapanna Mallikarjun Kharge is the current Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha from Karnataka and Leader of the Opposition of Rajya Sabha from 16 February 2021. Uttar Pradesh is having highest number of seats (31) in the Rajya Sabha. The joint sitting of the Parliament is called by the President of India (Article 108) and is Presided over by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha or, in their absence, by the Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha, or in their absence, the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

### Government of India announces launch of National Logistics Excellence Awards

- Government announced the launch of National Logistics Excellence Awards to turn the spotlight on the logistics sector. The Awards will give due recognition to various players involved in the logistics supply chain.
- The awards are in two categories, the first group includes logistics infrastructure and service providers and second one is for various user industries. There was wide scale appreciation from user industries for giving the due recognition to various players involved in the logistics supply chain.
- The awards will highlight best practices including consolidation, process standardisation, technological upgrade, digital transformations, and sustainable practices.

According to the commerce ministry, while the Indian logistics sector has been growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.5 per cent, reaching about \$215 billion in value during 2020, there are systemic, interconnected problems that must be addressed to enhance its efficiency. Comprehensive logistics costs amount to almost 14 per cent of India's gross domestic product. Closing India's competitiveness gap vis-à-vis the global average of 8 per cent, would make the Indian logistics sector advanced, organised and efficient, on par with global peers with the ambition of being amongst the top-25 countries in the global Logistics Performance Index (LPI).

### Varanasi to get Uttar Pradesh's first skywalk

- Preparations are in full swing to build Uttar Pradesh first skywalk in Varanasi. According to relevant sources, the sky walk will be made in the form of Damru, the musical instrument of Baba Bholenath.
- Giving a modern twist to the age old spiritual city, the Central and state government both have decided to turn the city into a modern hub with Banaras Rudraksh Convention Center, Varanasi Commissionerate Complex etc.
- This skywalk will be the tallest building in the entire Purvanchal. Under the proposed project regarding Skywalk, an 18-storey building will be built with transparent glass and brand new technology, this skywalk is being planned to be built on the lines of China and Japan.
- This skywalk will be of strong glass and transparent, in which more than 25 people will be able to stand at a time and they will see the entire Varanasi under the ground.

### Uttar Pradesh government to set up Panchayat Secretariat in all panchayats of state

- Uttar Pradesh Cabinet has decided to set up a panchayat secretariat in all panchayats of the state. The move is aimed at strengthening the rural democracy and providing employment to the rural youth. Panchayat secretariat will be established in all gram panchayats for the first time in the state. There are currently 58,189 gram panchayats in UP.

- The government has **decided to create about 1.6 lakh jobs**, two each in 58,189 gram panchayats in the state by appointing a computer operator and an assistant who will work from panchayat bhawans or rural secretariat buildings to be constructed at gram panchayats where such infrastructure doesn't exist at the moment.

**Uttar Pradesh** is the most populous state in India as well as the most populous country subdivision in the world. It was created on 1 April 1937 as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh during British rule, and was renamed Uttar Pradesh in 1950, giving the acronym UP. The state is divided into 18 divisions and 75 districts with the capital being Lucknow. On 9 November 2000, a new state, Uttarakhand, was carved out from the state's Himalayan hill region. The two major rivers of the state, the Ganges and Yamuna, join at Allahabad and flow further east as Ganges. The state contributes 80 seats to the lower house of the Indian Parliament, Lok Sabha and 31 seats to the upper house of the Indian Parliament, Rajya Sabha.

### Indian Navy exercises with Royal Navy carrier strike group

- Indian Navy participated in a two-day bilateral Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Navy Carrier Strike Group (CSG)-21 led by HMS Queen Elizabeth in the Bay of Bengal from 21 to 22 Jul 21. The bilateral Maritime Exercise was designed to hone the ability of the two navies to operate together in the maritime domain.
- The maiden exercise between Indian Navy and the Royal Navy's latest Aircraft Carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth included participation of CSG-21 comprising Type 23 Frigates and an Astute-class submarine in addition to the other surface combatants.
- The inter-operability achieved over the years has ensured a quantum jump in the complexity and scale of professional exchanges which is being further enhanced by the presence of the Royal Navy's Carrier Strike Group in the Indian Ocean.

### Karnataka becomes the first state in India to provide reservation for transgenders in all government services

- Karnataka has become the first state in the country to provide one per cent reservation for the 'transgender' community in all the government services. The government submitted a report to the High Court in this regard informing that a notification had already been issued after amending the Karnataka Civil Service (General Recruitment) Rule, 1977.
- The final notification issued on July 6, specifies one per cent reservation in all general as well as reserve categories for the third gender. Whenever a notification is published inviting applications for the government jobs, 'others' column must be added along with male and female columns. The notification also underlines that there should not be any discrimination to the transgenders in the process of selection.

**Karnataka** is a state in the south western region of India. It was formed on 1 November 1956, with the passage of the States Reorganisation Act. Originally known as the State of Mysore, it was renamed Karnataka in 1973. The capital and largest city is Bengaluru. Bookanakere Siddalingappa Yediyurappa served as the 19<sup>th</sup> Chief Minister of Karnataka until 28 July 2021. The current Chief Minister of Karnataka is Basavaraj Bommai. Thaawarchand Gehlot is currently serving as the Governor of Karnataka. Coffee production in India is dominated in the hill tracts of South Indian states, with Karnataka accounting for 71%, followed by Kerala with 21% and Tamil Nadu (5% of overall production with 8,200 tonnes).

### Cabinet gives nod for setting up of Central University of Ladakh

- Cabinet approvals for Central University and establishment of an integrated multi-purpose infrastructure development corporation for Ladakh, would be milestones for Ladakh development.
- Ladakh Lieutenant Governor R.K. Mathur said, 750 crore rupees Central University will be established in Khaltsi in Leh. This would influence the overall educational institutions in the region and boost women education.
- Similarly, he said, establishment of integrated multi- Purpose Corporation for Ladakh would help in employment generation and socio-economic development and will result in inclusive and integrated development of the UT of Ladakh.

Ladakh is a region administered by India as a union territory, and constitutes a part of the larger Kashmir region, which has been the subject of dispute between India, Pakistan, and China since 1947. It was established on 31 October 2019, following the passage of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act. The largest town in Ladakh is Leh, followed by Kargil, each of which headquarters a district. The Leh district contains the Indus, Shyok and Nubra river valleys. The Kargil district contains the Suru, Dras and Zaskar river valleys. Radha Krishna Mathur is a retired Indian IAS officer who is serving as the first Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh. He retired as the Chief Information Commissioner of India (CIC) in November 2018.

## Gujarat HC becomes first court to start live streaming of proceedings

- In a step towards ensuring transparency and openness in the Indian judiciary, the Gujarat High Court has become the first high court to begin live-streaming of court proceedings after Chief Justice NV Ramana launched the live broadcast of the court functioning and said the Supreme Court will start the same soon.
- Chief Justice NV Ramana had launched the live streaming of Gujarat High Court proceedings and also released the Gujarat High Court (Live Streaming of Court Proceedings) Rules, 2021 in the presence of Chief Justice of Gujarat High court Vikram Nath and Justice DY Chandrachud and other judges of the high court.
- The CJI said the judicial system had always been open to allowing general public witness court proceedings and with live-streaming, the access to justice will become a true reality, when litigants and interested parties get to witness, understand and comprehend justice dispensation first hand. The live streaming of court proceedings will remove misconceptions about the justice delivery system, the CJI added. The CJI complimented Justice Chandrachud, the present chairperson of the Supreme Court E-committee for taking the initiative in successfully executing the programme.

In 2018, the Supreme Court had allowed the live streaming of cases of national importance on the basis of the judgment of Swapnil Tripathi VS Supreme Court. The court had said, “Live streaming of Supreme Court proceedings at least in respect to cases of Constitutional and national importance, having an impact on the public at large or on a large number of people in India, maybe a good beginning”.

## Perumkulam is Kerala's first 'Book Village'

- Perumkulam, in Kollam District has been bestowed with the title Kerala's first 'Book Village'. This claim to fame results from years of concerted efforts aimed at encouraging the habit of reading.
- Perumkulam is a small village in Kulakkada near Kottarakkara in Kollam district. Bapuji Smaraka Grandhasala', a library in the village is at the forefront in this efforts of making it the first book village of the State.
- The library inculcates passion towards reading by setting up bookshelves, or 'Book Nests' placed at different corners of the village. Anybody can take books from the book nests, read them, and keep them back. Eleven such shelves have been set up in the village, and they houses more than seven thousand books.

## Madhya Pradesh launches UNESCO's 'Historic Urban Landscape' project for Gwalior, Orchha

- Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that UNESCO's 'Historic Urban Landscape Project', which was started in the year 2011, for the inclusive and well-planned development of fast-growing historical cities while preserving the culture and heritage, is very crucial.
- He said that Gwalior and Orchha cities have been selected by UNESCO in this project and they will be jointly developed by UNESCO, Government of India and Madhya Pradesh by focusing on their historical and cultural improvement.
- He was virtually launching UNESCO's 'Historic Urban Landscape' project for Gwalior and Orchha cities of State through video conferencing at Mantralaya. Madhya Pradesh's CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan said, “Gwalior and Orchha cities from Madhya Pradesh have been included as the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> cities of South Asia.” Six cities from South Asia, including Varanasi and Ajmer, are already included in the project.

UNESCO's General Conference on November 10, 2011, adopted the Recommendation on the 'Historic Urban Landscape (HUL)'. The Recommendation defines the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) as the urban area that is a result of natural and cultural values and attributes, including the area's geomorphology, topography, natural features, land use patterns, social and cultural practices, etc. The Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) project aims at the inclusive and well-planned development of fast-growing historical cities while preserving their cultural and heritage value. The Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) project offers a comprehensive and integrated approach for the identification, assessment, conservation, and management of historic urban landscapes within a sustainable development framework.

### Amitabh Kant releases book on Indian start-up ecosystem

- NITI Aayog Chief Executive Officer Amitabh Kant at the book launch ceremony has said that iVEAIN is a consortium of some of India's finest institutes. This book, which is a comprehensive guide for start-ups, is authored by some of the most prominent voices in the Indian start-up ecosystem.
- The book titled, 'Shifting Orbits: Decoding the Trajectory of the Indian Start-up Ecosystem', co-edited by Professor Rohan Chinchwadkar, a finance professor at the Shailesh J. Mehta School of Management at IIT Bombay, was launched by Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog.
- The book launch was organized, in the virtual mode, by the Innovation Venturing and Entrepreneurship in India Network (iVEIN). The Directors of IIT Bombay, IIT Madras, IIM Bangalore and IIM Kozhikode also attended the event in Mumbai.

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. 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.

### NITI Aayog and IEA launch 'Renewables Integration in India 2021'

- A report on "Renewables Integration in India 2021" was jointly launched by IEA. The report is based on the outcome of three states workshops held with the Governments of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat to understand the specific energy transition challenges faced by these renewable-rich states. The report uses IEA modelling results to show the effects of different flexibility options on the power system.
- The report highlights that India's power system can efficiently integrate renewables (175 GW by 2022 and 450 GW by 2030), but it would require identification of resources and proper planning, regulatory, policy and institutional support, energy storage and advance technology initiatives.
- Indian states need to employ a wide range of flexibility options – such as demand response, more flexible operation of coal based power plants, storage, and grid improvements – to transition to cleaner electricity systems. Larger shares of renewables can be better managed by shifting time of use in agriculture. Time of Use (ToU) tariffs will be an effective tool to incentivise demand side management and encourage flexible consumption.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) is a Paris-based autonomous intergovernmental organisation established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1974 in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis. The IEA was initially dedicated to responding to physical disruptions in the supply of oil, as well as serving as an information source on statistics about the international oil market and other energy sectors. It is best known for the publication of its annual World Energy Outlook.

### IIM Shillong to collaborate with Centre for Bhutan Studies & Gross National Happiness Research for SUSCON Conference

- IIM Shillong is going to collaborate with the Centre for Bhutan Studies & Gross National Happiness Research (CBS & GNH Research) as academic and intellectual partners for the SUSCON Conference.

- The IIM is organising its eighth edition of its International Conference on Sustainability, SUSCON. Thematically, SUSCON is focussing on Holism, Harmony and Happiness this year. The event is being held from July 26 to 30.
- In addition to this, the European SPES (Spirituality and Ethics in Society) Institute also will be a Collaborating Partner in this Conference. This year, SUSCON is being held in a unique and integrated manner. IIM Shillong's Foundation Module on Sustainability is being integrated with SUSCON in a manner where the young and fresh minds who got admitted to IIM Shillong from various parts of the country will be listening to and interacting with the Distinguished Speakers of the Conference as a part course.

## Home Minister Amit Shah plants trees at Wahshari in Meghalaya as part of Sohra Afforestation Project

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah at Meghalaya planted trees at Wahshari, Sohra erstwhile Cherrapunjee as part of the Sohra Afforestation Project for ecological restoration. In the next three years we will plant 1 million trees covering an area of 1000 hectares in the area, the Union Minister added.
- He was hopeful that under the leadership of Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma this project will be successful and once again Sohra (Cherrapunjee) will be known as the place receiving highest rainfall. He also exhorted that the war against global warming is not possible without active participation of local administration and local self-government.

Meghalaya (meaning "abode of clouds"; from Sanskrit megha, "cloud" + a-laya, "abode") is a state in Northeast India. Meghalaya was formed by carving out two districts from the state of Assam: the United Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills, and the Garo Hills on 21 January 1972. Shillong is a hill station in the northeastern part of India and the capital of Meghalaya. Shillong remained the capital of undivided Assam until the creation of the new state of Meghalaya on 21 January 1972, when Shillong became the capital of Meghalaya, and Assam moved its capital to Dispur in Guwahati. Satya Pal Malik is serving as the 21<sup>st</sup> and current Governor of Meghalaya.

## Ministry of Women & Child Development launches web based portal pmcaresforchildren.in

- Union Women and Child Development Ministry has launched a web based portal to facilitate submission of applications, identification of children eligible to receive support under the 'PM CARES for Children' scheme. The web portal is [www.pmcaresforchildren.in](http://www.pmcaresforchildren.in).
- The scheme aims to ensure comprehensive care and protection of children who have lost their parents to COVID pandemic, in a sustained manner. The module on Child registration and identification of beneficiaries has been made functional.
- PM CARES for Children scheme was announced by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi for supporting children who have lost both parents or legal guardian due to COVID-19 pandemic. It enables their wellbeing through health insurance, empower them through education and equip them for self-sufficient existence with financial support of ten lakh rupees on reaching 23 years of age.

The government has announced a special "PM-CARES for Children" scheme for all those orphaned due to Covid-19. Children who have lost both parents or their lone surviving parent or their legal guardian or adoptive parent due to Covid-19. Also, there has been a rise in cases of child trafficking. A corpus of Rs. 10 lakh will be allocated to each of these children from the PM CARES fund. This corpus will be used to give a monthly stipend from 18 years of their age, for the next five years and on reaching the age of 23 years, he or she will get the corpus amount as one lump-sum for personal and professional use. All children will be enrolled as a beneficiary under Ayushman Bharat Scheme with a health insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh. The premium amount will be paid by PM-CARES till a child turns 18. The education expenses of younger children will be supported by way of admission to Kendriya Vidyalayas and private schools up to higher secondary level. These children will also be supported during their higher education through either a scholarship equivalent to the tuition fees or educational loans where the interest on the loan will be paid by the PM-CARES fund.



### UK Strike Force joins Indian and Quad navies to put a stamp on Indo-Pacific

- **The Queen Elizabeth carrier strike group brings the focus on Quad and the Indo-Pacific** when the **naval force exercises with Indian Navy's Rajput class guided missile destroyer, an attack submarine and anti-submarine warfare aircraft in the Bay of Bengal while enroute to the contested South China Sea.**
- An armada of 12 warships, more than 30 aircraft, two submarines and over 4,500 personnel from Indian and Royal Navy will exercise from July 22-23 under the annual Exercise Konkan rubric. **The Elizabeth CSG is on a maiden deployment with state of the art F-35B fighters on board and is accompanied by top of the line destroyers from the US and Netherlands.** The CSG after exercising with Indian Navy will head towards the Indo-Pacific and exercise with Japanese, South Korean, New Zealand and Australian Navies.
- **The Elizabeth CSG deployment is part of Britain's Indo-Pacific tilt post-Brexit** and dovetails into Quad coalition of democracies efforts to **stand up to the Chinese Navy's growing ambitions and aggression in the Indo-Pacific.** As a part of this effort, Britain has decided to permanently station two of its patrol boats in the Indo-Pacific in an order to ensure freedom of navigation and rule of law in the sea.
- **The Elizabeth CSG will be exercising with Japanese maritime forces and will make a port call to Yokosuka,** the homeport of USS Ronald Reagan, the only forwardly deployed super carrier of the US. Japanese urgency to ramp up its military capabilities and deepen military cooperation with Quad and other allies comes at a time when China has emerged as country's top security threat. Only last week, **Chinese propaganda machines threatened to nuke Japan if it interferes in Taiwan or East China Sea by saying that Beijing will revisit its no first use option. Japan has a running land dispute with China over Senkaku Islands in East China Sea.**
- **After touring the Indo-Pacific, the Elizabeth CSG will conduct tri-services exercises with the Indian military off the coast of Goa in Arabian Sea.** The joint exercises will be **held on October 21-23 in Karwar harbour and in high seas on October 24-27** with complex amphibious landing manoeuvres and joint operations in all three spectrums. **CSG Elizabeth will make a port call at Karwar and Mumbai ports** with top officials of the Indian military going on-board the aircraft carrier for operational meetings.

**The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, commonly known as the United Kingdom (UK or U.K.), or Britain, is a sovereign country in north-western Europe, off the north-western coast of the European mainland. The United Kingdom includes the island of Great Britain, the north-eastern part of the island of Ireland, and many smaller islands within the British Isles. The United Kingdom's capital is London. Boris Johnson has been Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Leader of the Conservative Party since July 2019. Elizabeth II (Elizabeth Alexandra Mary) is Queen of the United Kingdom and 15 other Commonwealth realms. Pound sterling is the official currency of the United Kingdom.**

### Israel launches commission to probe Pegasus spyware

- **Israel has established a commission to review allegations that NSO Group's controversial Pegasus phone surveillance software was misused amid a hacking scandal that has roiled governments globally.**
- **The announcement by the head of the Israeli parliament's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee came amid revelations that the Israeli firm's spyware appears to have been used by governments in the surveillance of heads of states, opposition figures, activists and journalists, whose names were among some 50,000 potential targets on a list leaked to rights group Amnesty International and Paris-based Forbidden Stories.**

- **Israel and India have made an agreement on July 15, 2020, to expand their cooperation in the field of Cybersecurity.** This agreement comes as a significant move during the COVID19 pandemic which has pushed Governments across the world to ramp up their initiatives of digitization.

**Pegasus is a type of malicious software or malware classified as a spyware. It is designed to gain access to devices, without the knowledge of users, and gather personal information and relay it back to whoever it is that is using the software to spy.** Pegasus has been developed by the Israeli firm NSO Group that was set up in 2010. The earliest version of Pegasus discovered, which was captured by researchers in 2016, infected phones through what is called spear-phishing – text messages or emails that trick a target into clicking on a malicious link. Since then, however, NSO’s attack capabilities have become more advanced. Pegasus infections can be achieved through so-called “zero-click” attacks, which do not require any interaction from the phone’s owner in order to succeed. These will often exploit “zero-day” vulnerabilities, which are flaws or bugs in an operating system that the mobile phone’s manufacturer does not yet know about and so has not been able to fix. **Budapest Convention on Cybercrime is an international treaty that seeks to address Internet and computer crime (cybercrime) by harmonizing national laws, improving investigative techniques, and increasing cooperation among nations. It came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2004. India is not a signatory to this convention. International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is a specialized agency within the United Nations which plays a leading role in the standardization and development of telecommunications and cyber security issues.**

### **Eswatini’s King Mswati appoints new Prime Minister**

- **Eswatini’s King Mswati III appointed Cleops Dlamini as the southern African nation’s new Prime Minister,** replacing Ambrose Mandvulo Dlamini, who died in December. **Dlamini was previously Chief Executive of the Public Service Pension Fund.**

**Eswatini, officially the Kingdom of Eswatini and formerly and still commonly known in English as Swaziland (officially renamed in 2018) is a landlocked country in Southern Africa. Mbabane is a city in Eswatini (previously called Swaziland), and is one of the two capitals (along with Lobamba), serving as the executive capital. The lilangeni is the currency of Eswatini.**

### **Africa becomes first continent to complete collection of digital land use data**

- **Africa has become the first continent in the world to complete the collection of accurate, comprehensive and harmonised digital land use and land use change data** under the Africa Open DEAL initiative. DEAL stands for Data for the Environment, Agriculture and Land Initiative.
- The data collection and analysis initiative is led by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the African Union Commission (AUC). **“Africa Open DEAL initiative has made Africa the first continent to complete the collection of accurate, comprehensive and harmonised digital land use and land use change data”.** There are around seven billion trees outside forests in Africa, the continent-wide survey revealed. It also disclosed more arable lands in Africa than before.

**Africa is the world’s second-largest and second-most populous continent, after Asia in both cases. It contains 54 fully recognised sovereign states (countries), eight territories and two de facto independent states with limited or no recognition. Algeria is Africa’s largest country by area, and Nigeria is its largest by population. African nations cooperate through the establishment of the African Union, which is headquartered in Addis Ababa. According to paleoanthropologists (One who studies the human fossils scientifically), Africa is the oldest territory of the Earth where the human species evolved. It is the only continent to extend from the northern temperate zone to the southern temperate zone. The Dark Continent was named so because it was unexplored by the Europeans and because of the savagery that was expected to be found on the continent. The term Dark Continent was used to refer to Africa by a British explorer Henry M. Stanley in his book.**

### **Lebanon’s PM-designate Saad Hariri resigns as crisis escalates**

- **Lebanon Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri stepped down after failing to form a government for over the past eight months. Hariri resigned following a brief meeting with President Michel Aoun at Baabda Palace.**

Lebanon is an Arabic speaking country in the Middle-East, located in Western Asia. It is bordered by Syria to the north and east and Israel to the south, while Cyprus lies just west of it across the Mediterranean Sea. Beirut is the capital and largest city of Lebanon. The Lebanese pound is the currency of Lebanon.

### China's 600 kph maglev train makes public debut

- China has unveiled a high-speed maglev train with a designed top speed of 600 kms per hour. It is stated to be the world's fastest ground vehicle. The new maglev transportation system made its public debut in the coastal city of Qingdao, China's east Shandong province.
- Launched in October 2016, the high-speed maglev train project saw the development of a magnetic-levitation train prototype with a designed top speed of 600 kms per hour in 2019, and conducted a successful test run in June 2020. The train can travel with two to 10 carriages, each holding more than 100 passengers. The train provides the best solution for trips within the range of 1,500 kms.

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.

### Liverpool stripped of World Heritage status

- Liverpool has been stripped of its World Heritage status after a UN committee found developments threatened the value of the city's waterfront. The decision was made following a secret ballot by the UNESCO Committee at a meeting in China.
- UNESCO had previously warned that the developments, including the new Everton FC stadium, had resulted in a "serious deterioration" of the historic site. The city was awarded the much-coveted title in 2004 in recognition of its historical and architectural impact, joining places including the Taj Mahal, Egypt's Pyramids and Canterbury Cathedral.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites are the important places of cultural or natural heritage as described in the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, established in 1972. It is headquartered at the World Heritage Centre in Paris, France. India accepted the convention on 14 November 1977, making its sites eligible for inclusion on the list. The first sites to be inscribed were Ajanta Caves, Ellora Caves, Agra Fort, and Taj Mahal, of which all were inscribed in the 1983 session of the World Heritage Committee. The latest site to be inscribed is Ramappa Temple, Telangana in 2021. As of July 2021, 19 of the 36 States and union territories of India are home to the World Heritage Sites, with Maharashtra having highest number of sites (6). Presently, there are 39 World Heritage Sites located in India. Out of these, 31 are cultural, 7 are natural, and 1 is mixed (meeting both cultural and natural criteria), as determined by the organization's selection criteria. India has the sixth largest number of sites in the world. Khangchendzonga National Park also Kanchenjunga Biosphere Reserve is a national park and a Biosphere reserve located in Sikkim, India. It was inscribed to the UNESCO World Heritage Sites list in July 2016, becoming the first "Mixed Heritage" site of India.

### Haiti: Ariel Henry sworn in as new Prime Minister

- In Haiti, Ariel Henry has been sworn in as the new prime minister, around two weeks after the country's President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated. Moïse had asked Henry to take up the role days before he was

murdered in the capital Port-au-Prince. Mr Henry replaces interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph, who had led the country since the 7 July attack at Mr Moïse's private home.

Haiti is a Caribbean country that shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic to its east. Port-au-Prince is the capital city. Gourde is the official currency of it. Ariel Henry is the acting President of it. Ariel Henry is the current Prime Minister.

### Tunisian President suspends Parliament, fires PM

- **Tunisian President Kais Saied announced the suspension of parliament and dismissal of Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi** following a day of protests against the ruling party, who condemned the move as a “coup d'état”.
- **Since Saied was elected president in 2019**, he has been **locked in a showdown with Mechichi and parliament speaker Rached Ghannouchi**, a rivalry that has blocked ministerial appointments and diverted resources from tackling Tunisia's many economic and social problems.

Tunisia is the northernmost country in Africa. It is a part of the Maghreb region of North Africa, and is bordered by Algeria to the west and southwest, Libya to the southeast, and the Mediterranean Sea to the north and east. Cape Angela; and its capital and largest city is Tunis, located on its northeastern coast, which lends the country its name. The dinar is the currency of Tunisia.

### France's "King Of Lighthouses" Wins UNESCO Heritage Listing

- **Battered by the wind and swell for 400 years and nicknamed the “king of lighthouses”**, France's Cordouan beacon won recognition from UNESCO. The lighthouse, which will be added to UNESCO's World Heritage List, is the last to be inhabited in France and only the second after Spain's La Coruna to win the plaudit from the world heritage body.
- **Cordouan was built at the very end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and stands in the Atlantic Ocean** at the mouth of the Gironde estuary in southwestern France in a ‘highly exposed and hostile environment’, according to UNESCO's World Heritage Committee. **The lighthouse was designed by engineer Louis de Foix**, and was later remodelled by engineer Joseph Teulere in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### Germany to become first major economy to phase out coal, nuclear power

- **German lawmakers have finalized the country's long-awaited phase-out of coal as an energy source**, backing a plan that environmental groups say isn't ambitious enough and free marketeers criticise as a waste of taxpayers' money.
- Bills approved by both houses of parliament envision **shutting down the last coal-fired power plant by 2038 and spending some 40 billion euros (\$45 billion) to help affected regions cope with the transition.**
- **The plan is part of Germany's ‘energy transition’** - an effort to wean Europe's biggest economy off planet-warming fossil fuels and generate all of the country's considerable energy needs from renewable sources. Achieving that goal is made harder than in **comparable countries such as France and Britain** because of Germany's existing commitment to also phase out nuclear power by the end of 2022.
- The days of coal are numbered in Germany, Environment Minister Svenja Schulze said. **Germany is the first industrialized country that leaves behind both nuclear energy and coal.** Greenpeace and other environmental groups have staged vocal protests against the plan, including by dropping a banner down the front of the Reichstag building Friday.
- They argue that the government's road map won't reduce Germany's greenhouse gas emissions fast enough to meet the targets set out in the Paris climate accord.

Germany is a country in Central Europe. It is the second-most populous country in Europe after Russia, and the most populous member state of the European Union. The nation's capital and largest city is Berlin, and its financial centre is Frankfurt; the largest urban area is the Ruhr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier is serving as the President of Germany since 19 March 2017. Euro is the official currency of it.

## ‘Great Spas Of Europe’ Added To World Heritage List

- A group of major European spa towns was added to the highly prized World Heritage list for their “exceptional testimony to the European spa phenomenon” from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the 1930s, UNESCO said.
- This includes Baden bei Wien in Austria, Spa in Belgium, Karlovy Vary, Frantiskovy Lazne and Marianske Lazne in the Czech Republic, Vichy in France, Bad Ems, Baden-Baden and Bad Kissingen in Germany, Montecatini Terme in Italy, and Bath in the United Kingdom.

## UN adopts first resolution on vision

- The UN General Assembly approved its first-ever resolution on vision calling on its 193 member nations to ensure access to eye care for everyone in their countries which would contribute to a global effort to help at least 1.1 billion people with vision impairment who currently lack eye services by 2030.
- The “Vision for Everyone” resolution, sponsored by Bangladesh, Antigua, and Ireland, and co-sponsored by over 100 countries, was adopted by consensus by the world body.
- It encourages countries to institute a “whole of government approach to eye care.” And it calls on international financial institutions and donors to provide targeted financing, especially for developing countries, to address the increasing impact of vision loss on economic and social development.

**United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. Under the Charter, the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 Members, and each Member has one vote. Under the Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions. The permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (also known as the Permanent Five, Big Five, or P5) are China (formerly the Republic of China), Russia (formerly the Soviet Union), France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Antonio Guterres is a Portuguese politician and diplomat who is serving as the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations. Previously, he was the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees between 2005 and 2015.



## FDI limit in NPS fund managers hiked to 74%

- The government notified a hike in the foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in pension fund management to 74% from 49% under the national pension system (NPS), opening doors for experienced foreign partners in this space and facilitating more competition in the fledgling segment.
- The higher foreign investment limit in pension fund managers (PFMs) follows a Parliament nod in March to hike FDI limit in insurance business to 74% from 49%. The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Act links the FDI ceiling in the sector to the same in the insurance sector.
- Four out of seven PFMs managing the NPS corpus namely HDFC Pension Management, ICICI Prudential Pension Funds, Kotak Mahindra Pension Fund and Aditya Birla Sun Life Pension Management have significant foreign investments. LIC Pension Fund, SBI Pension Funds and UTI Retirement Solutions are the other three PFMs for NPS.
- NPS assets under management (AUM) stood at about Rs 6.2 lakh crore as on July 10, 2021. Recently, the PFRDA chairman Supratim Bandyopadhyay told FE that NPS AUM may rise over 30% year-on-year to near Rs 7.5 lakh crore in FY22.

‘FDI’ or ‘Foreign Direct Investment’ means investment through capital instruments by a person resident outside India – in an unlisted Indian company or in ten per cent or more of the post-issue paid-up equity capital on a fully diluted basis of a listed Indian company. In India, foreign investment can be made mainly under two routes: **Automatic Route:** Under the Automatic Route, the non-resident investor or the Indian company does not require any approval from Government of India for the investment. **Reserve Bank of India is in charge of Automatic Route. Government Approval Route:** Under the Government Approval Route, prior to investment, approval from the Government of India is required. A foreign direct investment (FDI) is an investment in the form of a controlling ownership in a business in one country by an entity based in another country.

## India emerges as 5<sup>th</sup> largest foreign exchange reserves holder in world after China, Japan, Switzerland, and Russia

- India has emerged as the fifth-largest foreign exchange reserves holder in the world after China, Japan, Switzerland and Russia. In 2020-21, India’s balance of payments recorded surplus in both current account and capital account which contributed to the increase in foreign exchange reserves during the year.
- The Minister stated that India’s foreign exchange reserves position is comfortable in terms of import cover of more than 18 months and provides cushion against unforeseen external shocks. Government and RBI are closely monitoring the emerging external position calibrating policies or regulations to support robust macroeconomic growth.
- Giving more details, the Minister said that RBI takes regular steps for diversification of forex reserves by scaling up operations in forex swap and repo markets, acquisition of gold and exploring new markets/products, while adhering to safety and liquidity standards. Variation in India’s forex reserves is primarily the outcome of RBI’s intervention in the foreign exchange market to smoothen exchange rate volatility, valuation changes due to movement of US dollar against other international currencies in the

reserve basket, movement in gold prices, interest earnings from deployment of foreign currency assets and inflow of aid receipts.

- The Minister further stated that **a current account deficit, accompanied by increasing foreign exchange reserves, reflects a surplus on the balance of payments i.e., the magnitude of the net capital inflows exceeds the volume of the current account deficit. In 2020-21, India's balance of payments recorded surplus in both current account and capital account which contributed to the increase in foreign exchange reserves during the year.**

**In India, Foreign Exchange Reserves are the foreign assets held or controlled by the Reserve Bank of India. The reserves are made of gold or a specific currency. They can also be special drawing rights and marketable securities denominated in foreign currencies like treasury bills, government bonds, corporate bonds and equities and foreign currency loans. Purpose of keeping foreign exchange reserves are 1. To keep the value of their currencies at a fixed rate. 2. Countries with a floating exchange rate system use forex reserves to keep the value of their currency lower than the US Dollar. 3. To maintain liquidity in case of an economic crisis. 4. The central bank (RBI) supplies foreign currency to keep markets steady. 5. To ensure that a country meets its foreign obligations and liabilities. As of June 2021, India has USD \$608.081 billion forex reserves. India ranks fourth in the world in forex reserves. China is in first position, followed by Japan and Switzerland.**

### **Qatar Airways named world's best airline for 2021**

- **Qatar Airways has toppled Air New Zealand to become the world's best carrier at a time when the aviation industry is badly hit by the pandemic, according to an aviation safety and product rating agency.**
- **AirlineRatings.com released its annual list of top 20 airlines in the world, applauding Qatar Airways for its "dedication and commitment to continue to operate" throughout the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic.**
- **Qatar Airways achieved a host of industry firsts, which helped it achieve the top spot on the list. It was the first carrier to complete IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) and the first to be fully audited and compliant for Covid-19 by both AirlineRatings and Skytrax. Qatar Airways has also been awarded Best Business Class, Best Catering, and Best Middle East Airline.**

### **IOC to build India's first green hydrogen plant at Mathura refinery**

- **India's largest oil firm (IOC) will build the nation's first 'green hydrogen' plant at its Mathura refinery, as it aims to prepare for a future catering to the growing demand for both oil and cleaner forms of energy.**
- **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has drawn a strategic growth path that aims to maintain focus on its core refining and fuel marketing businesses while making bigger inroads into petrochemicals, hydrogen and electric mobility over the next 10 years. This will be the nation's first green hydrogen unit. Previously, projects have been announced to produce 'grey hydrogen' using fossil fuels such as natural gas.**

**Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) is an Indian state owned oil and Gas Company with registered office at Mumbai and primarily headquartered in New Delhi. It is the largest commercial enterprise in the country.**

### **Shiv Nadar named Chairman Emeritus of HCL Technologies**

- **HCL Technologies founder Shiv Nadar will take on the role of Chairman Emeritus and Strategic Advisor to the company's board.**
- **Nadar, Chief Strategy Officer and Managing Director of the company, on completing 76 years of age, has tendered his resignation as the MD as well as the Director.**

**HCL Technologies is an Indian multinational information technology (IT) services and consulting company, headquartered in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India. It is a subsidiary of HCL Enterprise. Originally a research and development division of HCL, it emerged as an independent company in 1991 when HCL entered into the software services business. In 1976, a group of six engineers, all former employees of Delhi Cloth & General Mills, led by Shiv Nadar, started a company that would make personal computers. Roshni Nadar Malhotra is an Indian businesswoman, the chairperson of HCL Technologies and the first woman to lead a listed IT company in India.**

## Andhra Pradesh's first centre for financial literacy comes up in Amaravati

- Stating that the Union government is giving high priority to financial inclusion of all citizens, **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) regional director K Nikhila** observed that **this is an inseparable part of an inclusive developmental agenda.**
- She noted that creating awareness about banking operations and government schemes, particularly among women, would play a key role in their financial empowerment. **She launched the first centre for financial literacy (CFL) of the state in Amaravati. She also launched nine other centres in Guntur district through the virtual mode.**

Andhra Pradesh is the first state in India to have Five Deputy Chief Ministers one each from Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, backward, minority and Kapu communities. YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is the current Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh is the first state in India to have three capital cities; there are Visakhapatnam (Executive capital), Amaravati (Legislative capital) and Kurnool (Judiciary). Andhra Pradesh High Court imposed a stay on implementation of 3 capitals. Andhra Pradesh is the first state to be formed on a linguistic basis in India on 1 October 1953. On 2 June 2014, Telangana was separated from the northwestern part of Andhra Pradesh as the newly formed state with Hyderabad as its capital.

## Centre likely to sell stake in two stages

- **The government is likely to sell 10 percent of its stake in the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) in two stages, with the first chunk being 5-6 percent and the second of the remainder.**
- While offer size is not officially known, the 10 percent stake sale is expected as the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) rules **mandate at least 10 percent public holding for companies sized Rs 1 lakh crore and more in two years and 25 percent in five years.**
- **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her Union Budget 2021 speech, said the government had set a divestment target of Rs 1.75 lakh crore for the fiscal, of which the majority was expected to be met through stake sale in public sector companies. So far, only Rs 7,645.70 crore of this target has been met.**

**Life Insurance Corporation of India (abbreviated as LIC) is an Indian government owned insurance and investment corporation under the ownership of Ministry of Finance, Government of India. The Life insurance Corporation of India was established on September 1, 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. It is based in Mumbai.**

## RBI planning to launch Central Bank Digital Currency in near future

- **Reserve bank of India is planning to launch Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) in the near future.** Deputy Governor T Rabi Shankar said, **RBI is currently working towards a phased implementation strategy and examining use cases which could be implemented with little or no disruption.** Conducting pilots in wholesale and retail segments may be a possibility in near future.
- **High Level Inter-Ministerial Committee constituted by Ministry of Finance in November 2017 to examine the policy and legal framework for regulation of virtual currencies** had recommended the introduction of CBDC. **CBDCs are digital currencies issued by a central bank, and generally take on a digital form of the nation's existing fiat currency such as the rupee.**

**The Reserve Bank of India was founded on 1 April 1935 to respond to economic troubles after the First World War. RBI was conceptualised as per the guidelines, working style and outlook presented by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his book titled "The Problem of the Rupee – Its origin and its solution" and presented to the Hilton Young Commission. The bank was set up based on the recommendations of the 1926 Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance, also known as the Hilton–Young Commission. In 1969, the Indira Gandhi-headed government nationalised 14 major commercial banks. Upon Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1980, a further six banks were nationalised. The first Governor of the RBI was British banker Osborn Smith and C.D. Deshmukh was the first Indian Governor of RBI. Shashikant Das is the current Governor of RBI.**

## India better UN trade facilitation survey score

- **India** has substantially improved its score on a trade facilitation survey conducted by the United Nations for a total of 143 countries, scoring **90.32** per cent in the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific's (UNESCAP) latest Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, and improving from 78.49 per cent in 2019.
- In its evaluation of 143 economies, the Survey for 2021 has pointed out India's improvement in the scores on all five key indicators — transparency, formalities, institutional arrangement and cooperation, paperless trade and cross-border paperless trade. Under the transparency indicator, India scored **100** per cent in 2021, up from 93.33 per cent in 2019.
- The score for 'paperless trade' improved to **96.3** per cent from **81.48** per cent, while that for institutional arrangement and cooperation indicator rose to 88.89 per cent from 66.67 per cent.
- The survey is conducted every two years by UNESCAP and includes an assessment of **58** trade facilitation measures covered by the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement. A higher score for a country helps businesses in their investment decisions.
- These 58 measures include publications of existing import-export rules on internet, risk management, advance ruling on tariff classification, pre-arrival processing, independent appeal mechanism expedited shipments, automated customs system, among others.
- "The CBIC (Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs) has been at forefront of path breaking reforms under the umbrella of 'Turant' Customs to usher in a Faceless, Paperless and Contactless Customs by way of a series of reforms. This has had a direct impact in terms of the improvement in the UNESCAP rankings on digital and sustainable trade facilitation," according to the Finance Ministry.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is one of the five regional commissions under the jurisdiction of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. It was established in order to increase economic activity in Asia and the Far East, as well as to foster economic relations between the region and other areas of the world. The commission is composed of 53 Member States and nine Associate members, mostly from the Asia and Pacific regions. In addition to countries in Asia and the Pacific, the commission's members includes France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States. The region covered by the commission is home to 4.1 billion people, or two-thirds of the world's population, making ESCAP the most comprehensive of the United Nations' five regional commissions.

## SBI selects Paisalo Digital as National Corporate Business Correspondent

- State Bank of India (SBI) has selected Paisalo Digital as National Corporate Business Correspondent of the Bank for financial inclusion by providing banking services through kiosks. The signing of the Service Level Agreement and other formalities shall be done shortly.
- Ensuring superior financial inclusion and increasing the outreach, the financial solutions company shall extend its services and its reach to the general public including its existing customers and new customers. As a business correspondent for State Bank of India, they will focus and improve the synergy with the thrust of the already up and running fully digital small loan business under SBI-Paisalo Loan Co-origination.

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.



## Inventions/Discoveries

### Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos back on earth after 10-min flight to space on Blue Origin's New Shepard spacecraft

- Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos back on earth after 10-min flight to space on Blue Origin's New Shepard spacecraft. He was accompanied by brother Mark Bezos, Wally Funk, and 18-year-old passenger Oliver Daemen. The astronauts experienced three to four minutes of zero-g and travelled above the Kármán Line, the internationally-recognised boundary of space.
- It is a rocket system meant to take tourists to space successfully. The system is built by Blue Origin. New Shepard has been named after astronaut Alan Shepard, the first American to go to space. It offers flights to space over 100 km above the Earth and accommodation for payloads. The system is a fully reusable, vertical takeoff and vertical landing space vehicle.
- It is a rocket system that has been designed to take astronauts and research payloads past the Karman line – the internationally recognised boundary of space. The idea is to provide easier and more cost-effective access to space meant for purposes such as academic research, corporate technology development and entrepreneurial ventures among others.

Amazon.com, Inc. is an American multinational technology company based in Seattle, Washington, which focuses on e-commerce, cloud computing, digital streaming, and artificial intelligence. It is one of the Big Five companies in the U.S. information technology industry, along with Google, Apple, Microsoft, and Facebook. Amazon was founded by Jeff Bezos in Bellevue, Washington, on July 5, 1994. It started as an online marketplace for books but expanded to sell electronics, software, video games, apparel, furniture, food, toys, and jewelry. He is the world's richest man in the world.

### IISc's 'warm' Covid vaccine effective against all major variants of concern

- A heat-tolerant COVID-19 vaccine formulation developed by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru has proven effective against all current SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern, according to a study in animals.
- The research, published in the ACS Infectious Diseases journal showed the vaccine formulations by IISc-incubated biotech start-up Mynvax triggered a strong immune response in mice. The formulation also protected hamsters from the virus and remained stable at 37 degrees Celsius up to a month, and at 100 degrees Celsius for up to 90 minutes, the researchers said.

### Amazon forests are no longer acting as a carbon sink

- The Amazon forests in South America, which are the largest tropical forests in the world, have started emitting carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) instead of absorbing carbon emissions. In a study published in the journal Nature, scientists who conducted this research over a period of nine years in the eastern Amazon forests have said that a significant amount of deforestation in eastern and southeastern Brazil has turned the forest into a source of CO<sub>2</sub> that has the ability to warm the planet.

- **Not only the Amazon rainforests, some forests in Southeast Asia have also turned into carbon sources in the last few years as a result of formation of plantations and fires.** The Amazon basin is huge with an area covering over 6 million square kilometres, it is nearly twice the size of India. **The Amazon rainforests cover about 80 per cent of the basin and as per NASA’s Earth observatory, they are home to nearly a fifth of the world’s land species** and is also home to about 30 million people including hundreds of indigenous groups and several isolated tribes.
- Other than this, **the basin produces about 20 per cent of the world’s flow of freshwater into the oceans. Over the last few years, the forest has been under threat due to deforestation and burning. In 2019, fires in the Amazon were visible from space. Forest fires, according to Brazil’s National Institute for Space Research (INPE), have doubled since 2013.** One reason that they happen is when farmers burn their land to clear it for the next crop. An editorial published in the journal Science Advances in 2019 noted that “the precious Amazon is teetering on the edge of functional destruction and, with it, so are we”.
- **Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon, which comprises about two-thirds of the area of the rainforest, started in the 1970s and 1980s** when large-scale forest conversion for cattle ranching and soy cultivation began. NASA’s Earth Observatory notes that state policies that encourage economic development, such as railway and road expansion projects have led to “unintentional deforestation” in the Amazon and Central America.
- **Over the years as fossil-fuel emissions across the world have increased, the Amazon forests have absorbed CO2 from the atmosphere, helping to moderate the global climate. But researchers are not saying that because of significant levels of deforestation (over the course of 40 years) there has been a long-term decrease in rainfall and increase in temperatures during the dry season.** Because of these reasons the eastern Amazon forests are no longer carbon sinks, whereas the more intact and wetter forests in the central and western parts are neither carbon sinks nor are they emitters.
- **Another reason for the eastern region not being able to absorb as much CO2 as it did previously is the conversion of forests into agricultural land, which has caused a 17 per cent decrease in the forest cover, an area that is almost the size of continental US.** In the southeast region, which forms about 20 per cent of the Amazon basin and has **experienced about 30 per cent of the deforestation in the last four decades,** scientists have recorded a **25 per cent reduction in precipitation and a temperature increase of at least 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit or 1.5 degrees Celsius during the dry months of August, September and October.**
- **This means that if the ability of tropical forests to act as carbon sinks is to be maintained, fossil fuel emissions need to be reduced and temperature increases need to be limited as well.**

The Amazon rainforest, alternatively, the Amazon jungle or Amazonia, is a moist broadleaf tropical rainforest in the Amazon biome that covers most of the Amazon basin of South America. This basin encompasses are covered by the rainforest. This region includes territory belonging to nine nations and 3,344 formally acknowledged indigenous territories. **The majority of the forest is contained within Brazil, with 60% of the rainforest, followed by Peru with 13%, Colombia with 10%, and with minor amounts in Bolivia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname, and Venezuela.** Plants and trees take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen back into the air in their process of photosynthesis. This is why the Amazon, which covers 2.1 million square miles, is often referred to as the “lungs of the planet”: The forest produces 20% of the oxygen in our planet’s atmosphere.

### **Prasar Bharati, IIT-K to collaborate on NextGen Broadcasting Technology Center of Excellence**

- **Prasar Bharati and IIT Kanpur will collaborate on NextGen Broadcasting Technology Center of Excellence to spur Aatmanirbhar Bharat in Media and Broadcasting.** As a follow up to the Memorandum of Understanding, **signed between Prasar Bharati and the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, a Center of Excellence for Media and Broadcasting Technologies will be established at IIT Kanpur.**
- Subsequent to the collaboration agreement, three areas have been identified to be taken up under the **aegis of the Center of Excellence - Direct to Mobile Broadcasting and Convergence with emerging 5G standards, Artificial Intelligence and advanced algorithms** for audio-visual media. **Prasar Bharati and IIT Kanpur will explore the development of direct to mobile broadcasting capabilities with an aim to align emerging technologies with the global standards for 5G.**

Next Gen TV, also known as ATSC 3.0, offers 4K ultra high definition video quality, theater-like sound, mobile reception and innovative new features to enhance and expand your broadcast viewing experience. Next Gen TV lets local TV stations better personalize their broadcasts with information and interactive features so you can get the content and features most relevant to you. For broadcasters, this means a more compelling and interactive way to tell our stories, whether it is breaking news, live sports or your favorite drama or reality show. Next Gen TV is based on Internet Protocol (IP), just like online video services, and uses web languages for interactivity, so you can expect more innovation and new services, bringing you the best combination of online and broadcast television.

### India will be first to make DNA-based jab

- **Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya** that **India will be the first country to develop a DNA-based Covid-19 vaccine** even as other manufactures are steadily ramping up production.
- “It is a matter of great pride for us that our scientists will be **the first to develop a DNA vaccine**,” the minister said, referring to **Zydus Cadila**, which has applied for emergency use authorisation of its DNA vaccine.
- Mandaviya said while **Serum Institute of India has begun providing 11-12 crore doses of Covishied vaccine every month**, **Biological E is conducting third-phase trial of its vaccine**, which is expected to come in the market by September-October with 7.5 crore doses.

**Mansukh Laxmanbhai Mandaviya** is an Indian politician currently serving as the **Minister of Health & Family Welfare and Chemical and Fertilizers** of India. He is also a **Rajya Sabha member from Gujarat**.

### DRDO successfully flight-tests New Generation Akash Missile

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO** successfully flight-tested the **New Generation Akash Missile**, a surface-to-air Missile from Integrated Test Range off the coast of Odisha.
- **The missile system has been developed by Defence Research and Development Laboratory, Hyderabad in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories.** During the test, the missile **demonstrated high manoeuvrability required for neutralising fast and agile aerial threats.** The **New Generation Akash Missile** will prove to be a force multiplier for the air defence capability of the Indian Air Force.
- **Akash (“Sky”) is a medium-range mobile surface-to-air missile (SAM) system developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and produced by Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL).** Surveillance and Fire control radar, tactical control and command center and missile launcher are developed by **Bharat Electronics (BEL), Tata Power Strategic Engineering Division and Larsen & Toubro.**
- **The Akash missile system can target aircraft up to 50–80 km (31–50 mi) away, at altitudes up to 18,000 m.** It has the capability to neutralise aerial targets like fighter jets, cruise missiles and air-to-surface missiles as well as ballistic missiles. It is in operational service with the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force.

**Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** is an agency of the Republic of India, charged with the military’s research and development, headquartered in New Delhi, India. It was formed in 1958 by the merger of the **Technical Development Establishment** and the **Directorate of Technical Development and Production** with the Defence Science Organisation. **Dr G. Sathesh Reddy** is the **current Chairman of DRDO.**

### First ‘moon-forming’ disc surrounding exoplanet detected by astronomers

- **For the first time, scientists have clearly identified a ring of gas and dust circling a planet outside our solar system – a discovery that could help reveal how planets and moons are formed.** The disc surrounds an exoplanet dubbed **PDS 70c**, one of two gas giants similar in size and mass to **Jupiter** that orbit the star **PDS 70**, nearly 400 light years from our solar system. Astronomers from the **European Southern Observatory** discovered **PDS 70c** in 2019 using their **Very Large Telescope.**
- Those observations combined with **high-resolution images from the ALMA telescope, also in Chile, allowed them to conclude that PDS 70c’s disk holds material that will allow moons to form around the planet.** Astronomers have known since 2006 that the star **PDS 70** is surrounded by a very large ring of material but limitations on the observational equipment only allowed them to guess at the presence of a planet between the star and the ring.

## DRDO conducts successful flight-test of New Generation Akash missile

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- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted a successful flight-test of New Generation Akash missile from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.**
- **The test was carried out against a high-speed unmanned aerial target which was successfully intercepted by the missile.** The test was carried out amidst inclement weather conditions proving the all-weather capability of the weapon system.
- **The system performance was validated through the data captured by a number of Radar, Telemetry and Electro Optical Tracking systems deployed by Integrated Test Range, Chandipur.**

## A nutrient-rich weed for a climate stressed world

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- **Climate change has brought to the fore concerns of ensuring food security for a growing population in a sustainable manner.** In recent years, attention has turned to plants that are naturally drought resilient and consume less water.
- **Many of these are ‘orphan’ crops** – those that are **historically and indigenously important**, but have recently been put on the back burner due to a dietary homogenisation brought about by globalisation.
- **Examples familiar to the workaday Indian would include small grasses like sorghum, pearl millet, finger millet; and tubers like elephant yams and sweet potatoes.**
- **Purslane (Portulaca oleracea), a crop historically consumed through much of the Old World (Europe, Africa, Asia), but has of-late been dismissed as a peripheral, if not an outright useless byproduct. Its nicknames include duck’ weed’ and fat weed.**

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# SPORTS



## Sports Personalities in News

### Collin Morikawa Wins the British Open

- **Collin Morikawa wins debut appearance, matches Bobby Jones.** Collin Morikawa pulled away late on the front nine and held off Jordan Spieth down the stretch, **winning the 149<sup>th</sup> British Open in his first appearance** in the event and claiming his second major title in only eight career starts.

### Ishan Kishan becomes first ever indian batsman to hit fifty on both T20I and ODI Debut

- **Ishan Kishan has also become the first Indian batter to smash a half-century on T20I and ODI debut.** Robin Uthappa had also scored a half-century in his maiden ODI (against England) and T20I innings (against Pakistan) but his debut T20 game against Scotland had ended in a washout.

### ICC inducts Mongolia, Tajikistan & Switzerland as new members

- **The International Cricket Council inducted Mongolia, Tajikistan and Switzerland as the newest member countries.** Mongolia and Tajikistan are the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> members of the Asia region, while Switzerland is Europe's 35<sup>th</sup> Member, with the ICC now comprising 106 Members in total, including 94 Associates.
- **Meanwhile, Zambia, which was suspended at the ICC AGM in 2019, is no longer a member due to continued non-compliance with ICC Membership Criteria.** Russia too has been suspended and, according to a release, has until the time of the next ICC AGM to demonstrate compliance or risk having its membership terminated.

### Qatar's Ras Abu Aboud stadium is the first built in World Cup history that was meant to be torn down

- **It is Qatar's Ras Abu Aboud stadium – the first built in World Cup history that was meant to be torn down.** Molded out of 974 shipping containers atop Doha's port, the Ras Abu Aboud will host seven matches up to the quarterfinals of the 2022 World Cup
- All the containers are made from recycled steel, and **the number – 974 – symbolizes Qatar's dialing code.** It's both a symbol of the country's sustainability pledge and a reflection of its identity.

### Formula One: Hamilton roars back to win British GP

- **In Formula One, Lewis Hamilton roared back from a first-lap incident that sent championship leader Max Verstappen to the hospital and overcame a 10-second penalty to win the British Grand Prix** and reignite his title defence. The seven-time champion won at his home track to snap a run of five races without a victory.

### Australia's Brisbane to host 2032 Summer Olympic Games

- **Without any rival bid, Brisbane was confirmed as host of the 2032 Summer Olympics at the 138<sup>th</sup> IOC Session on 21 July 2021 in Tokyo, Japan.** As per the new format of choosing future Olympic Games host cities from the IOC's Agenda 2020, the vote was in a form of a referendum to the 80 IOC delegates. According to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 72 of the delegates voted Yes, 5 voted No, and 3 other voters abstained.

- The International Olympic Committee announced that **Australian city of Brisbane will host the 2032 Summer Olympic Games. Brisbane will also host the Paralympic Games.**
- **From the selection of the city as the host for the 2032 Summer Olympics, Brisbane has 11 years to prepare for the games.** The Brisbane bid relied on the premise that **over 80 per cent of the venues needed to host the games were already existing infrastructure.** A **2019 feasibility study suggested that over \$A900 million would be needed from both state and federal funding to host the games.** The bid received federal government support in 2019.

### **First Gold for India In World Wrestling Championship**

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- **Wrestler Priya Malik has just made the country proud at an International level after she managed to win gold at the World Wrestling Championship.** With Olympics mania and Mirabai Chanu's silver medal at **Tokyo Olympics 2020**, the news of Priya winning gold at WWC is bringing in equal glory and pride.

### **Indian wrestler Tannu wins 43 kg title in Cadet World Championship**

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- **Young Indian wrestler Tannu sealed the crown in a dominant fashion, grabbing the 43 kg title without conceding a single point** as the country's spectacular run continued at the Cadet World Championship.
- **The final initially seemed to be a gripping contest but Tannu soon turned it into a one-way traffic with her all-round game and won it by fall against Belarus' Valeryia Mikitsich.**

### **Mirabai Chanu wins silver at Tokyo Olympics**

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- **Mirabai Chanu's silver medal on Day 1 of the Tokyo Olympics gave India its perfect start and netizens are coming up with creative ways to congratulate the Olympics medalist winners.**
- The 26-year-old **bagged the silver for the country after she lifted 202 kg (87 kg + 115 kg) in the 49 kg category to better Karnam Malleswari's bronze in the 2000 Sydney Olympics.** The medal comes as a great achievement to Mirabai, who had failed to log a single legitimate lift in Rio 2016 Olympics.



## MISCELLANEOUS

### School Innovation Ambassador programme launched to train 50,000 teachers in India

- **Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda launched the School Innovation Ambassador Training Program for 50,000 school teachers.**
- To strengthen the mentoring capacity of teachers, **CBSE, in collaboration with the Innovation Cell, AICTE, Ministry of Education, launched the programme to train 50,000 school teachers.**
- These teachers will become mentors and guide these young students to pursue innovation and entrepreneurship in line with the NEP's emphasis on nurturing young students for problem-solving and critical thinking at the school level.

### NCP leader Supriya Sule launches 'Jivlag' scheme to help children orphaned due to Corona virus pandemic

- **NCP leader Supriya Sule has launched 'Jivlag' scheme to help children orphaned due to the Corona virus pandemic.** The scheme was launched to mark Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar's birthday.
- During the launch, which was attended by party patriarch Sharad Pawar via video conferencing, it was announced that **the party will support at least 450 children in every possible way.** A NCP volunteer was present at each of these homes during the launch to get acquainted with the caregivers and the child in particular.

### Centre to set up cultural centre in Kurukshetra

- **The Haryana government has got in-principle approval to set up a cultural centre in Kurukshetra** from the central government. Further, the Centre and the Haryana government will work together to expand and develop 'International Surajkund Craft Mela' into a grand affair.
- In-principle approval to set up a 'North Zone Cultural Centre' in Kurukshetra has been given by the central government. Currently, there is a 'North Zone Cultural Centre' in Patiala.

### Dalit Bandhu Scheme to Start from Huzurabad in Telangana

- **Chief Minister of Telangana, K Chandrasekhar Rao announced that he will start the state government's Dalit Bandhu scheme from the Huzurabad, erstwhile Karimnagar.** It will empower the poor SCs to get Rs 10 lakh through a protective fund with a supportive structure.

### Meghalaya Cabinet approves proposed Meghalaya Youth Policy 2021

- **Meghalaya Cabinet has approved the proposed Meghalaya Youth Policy 2021 to channelize 31 percent of the entire population** of the State who falls under the youth category. A detailed policy considering only the youths have been prepared by the Government looking into different aspects. The policy contains exciting programmes and plans which will cater to all the youths.

# PERSONS IN NEWS

## Dr Kambhampati Hari Babu sworn in as new Governor of Mizoram

- **Dr Kambhampati Hari Babu is sworn in as the new Governor of Mizoram. The Gauhati High Court Judge, Justice Michael Zothankhuma administered the oath of office** to the new governor at the Darbur Hall of Raj Bhavan in Aizawl. Dr Kambhampati Hari Babu is the 22<sup>nd</sup> governor of Mizoram.

## Hyderabad doctor Raghu Ram is first Indian to receive ASGBI honour

- **P Raghu Ram, a Hyderabad-based doctor attained the rare distinction of being the first Indian to be conferred with the honorary fellowship of the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland (ASGBI). ASGBI represents the surgical fraternity in the UK and Ireland.**

## Nisha Ramachandran becomes first South Asian American to be named executive director of CAPAC

- **Indian-American Nisha Ramachandran has been elected as the new executive director of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC).**
- **She is the first person of South Asian American descent to serve in the role.** Nisha Ramachandran, a former aide to Democratic leader Ami Bera (D-CA 7<sup>th</sup> District), assumed the new role on July 22.

## FinMin officer Rasmi R Das among 25 global experts appointed to UN tax committee

- **Rasmi Ranjan Das, a Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, has been appointed as a member of the UN tax committee for the 2021 to 2025 term.** Das is among the tax experts from around the world who has been appointed as a member of the UN tax committee.
- **The committee, formally known as the UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, guides countries' efforts to advance stronger and more forward-looking tax policies** adapted to the realities of globalised trade and investment, an increasingly digitalised economy and worsening environmental degradation.
- **It assists countries in their efforts to prevent double or multiple taxations** as well as non-taxation, broaden their tax base, strengthen their tax administrations, and curb international tax evasion and avoidance.

## Indian businessman Yusuffali MA appointed vice-chairman of top govt business body in Abu Dhabi

- **Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan has appointed prominent Indian businessman Yusuffali MA as the vice-chairman of the apex government body** for all businesses operating from the UAE's capital city, making him the only person from India on the 29-member board.
- **Yusuffali, is the Chairman and Managing Director of Abu Dhabi-based LuLu Group** which operates supermarkets and retail companies in many countries.

## Former RBI governor Bimal Jalan traces India's economic history & lessons for future in a new book

- **Former RBI governor Bimal Jalan's new book 'The India Story' focuses on India's economic history** and aims to provide lessons for the future of India's political economy.
- **Referencing the post-2014 political moment and BJP-led majority government, Jalan introduces the concept of putting** in place long-standing political and economic reforms nationwide.
- **With that in mind, he traces India's economic policies from 1991 to 2019 to offer insights on learning from the past, before moving 'Beyond the Metrics of Economy'** to talk about the role of governance in implementing these policies.

# AWARDS

## Indian film on student activism wins Cannes award

- **Mumbai-based filmmaker and Film and Television Institute (FTII), Pune, alumnus Payal Kapadia won the L'Oeil d'Or: Le Prix du documentaire, an award for best documentary, at the Cannes Film Festival for her film 'A Night of Knowing Nothing', which foregrounds student protests in the country. The film uses the device of a letter, written by L to K, to highlight the cracks in Indian society at present and the "truth of everyday life of a young person in the country".**

## Cannes 2021: 'Titane' wins Palme d'Or, Julia Ducournau 2<sup>nd</sup> female director ever to bag the top honour

- **Julia Ducournau's "Titane," a wild body-horror thriller won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, making Ducournau just the second female filmmaker to win the festival's top honor in its 74 year history.**
- **The awards of the 74<sup>th</sup> Cannes Film Festival were decided by a jury chaired by Spike Lee and handed out at the event's closing ceremony in the Grand Theatre Lumiere.**
- **For the first time in history, women outnumbered men five to four in the Cannes Film Festival's main international competition jury.**
- **The women members of the jury were Mati Diop, Mylene Farmer, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Jessica Hausner and Melanie Laurent. Kleber Mendonca Filho, Tahar Rahim and Song Kang-ho served alongside the quintet.**
- **Ducournau burst on the scene with "Raw", which bowed in the International Critics' Week in 2016. She is only the second female director to ever win the Cannes top prize.**
- **New Zealand's Jane Campion was the first woman to win the Palme d'or for "The Piano" in 1993. The Grand Prix, regarded as the festival's runners-up prize, was shared by two films —Iranian Asghar Farhadi's "A Hero" and Finnish director Juho Kuosmanen's "Compartment No. 6".**
- **Leos Carax won the Best Director Award for the pop-opera musical "Annette", the Marion Cotillard-Adam Driver starrer with which the festival kicked off on July 6.**

## Cachar district received National Silver SKOCH award

- **Cachar Deputy Commissioner, Keerthi Jalli received the National Silver SKOCH Award a few days ago for 'Pushti Nirbhor' (nutrition-dependent), a convergence project on transformation and development entailing setting up Nutri-gardens at houses in Dinnathpur Bagicha village. The village is near the India-Bangladesh border in the Katigorah circle of the Cachar district.**
- **30,000 seedlings of vegetables, fruits and herbal plants were distributed among 140 beneficiaries. Each household of the village was also given payment for 75 man-days to implement the project. Instituted in 2003, SKOCH Award salutes people, projects and institutions that go the extra mile to make India a better nation.**

## 2-Indian organisations win UNDP Equator Prize 2021

- **Aadhimalai Pazhangudiyinar Producer Company Limited and Snehakunja Trust are among the 10 awardees of the prestigious Equator Prize 2021 for their work in the field of conservation and biodiversity. The UNDP gives a biennial award to recognize community efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.**

## Shibaji Banerjee to be conferred with Mohun Bagan Ratna posthumously

- **Former India and Mohun Bagan shot-stopper Shibaji Banerjee, who famously denied Brazil's legendary football player Pele from scoring a goal in an exhibition match in 1977, will be conferred with Mohun Bagan Ratna posthumously. The friendly match against New York Cosmos at the iconic Eden Gardens ended in a thrilling 2-2 draw. Banerjee played for Bagan for 11 years and died at the age of 68 four years ago.**

# IMPORTANT DAYS

## World Chess Day 20 July

- On 12 December 2019, the General Assembly proclaimed **20 July as World Chess Day to mark the date of the establishment of the International Chess Federation (FIDE) in Paris in 1924.**
- **Under initiative of FIDE, July 20 has been observed as International Chess Day** by chess players around the world since 1966.
- This year FIDE's motto is, **“Teach someone how to play chess.”** - Chess is a mental game and it can also end as quickly as two moves. - **The longest game of chess is possible and that is 5,949 moves.**

## World Brain Day being observed

- The day is dedicated to raising awareness and promoting advocacy related to brain health. **It is celebrated on July 22. This year, the World Federation of Neurology (WFN) and MS International Federation (MSIF) are at the forefront,** leading the campaign to spread awareness about multiple sclerosis (MS), a neurological disease whose effects range from cognitive impairment to significant physical disability.
- **The theme of this year's World Brain Day is “Stop Multiple Sclerosis”,** which entails raising global awareness about multiple sclerosis.

## World Drowning Prevention Day 25 July

- **World Drowning Prevention Day, declared in April 2021 by General Assembly is held annually on 25 July.**
- **This global advocacy event serves as an opportunity to highlight the tragic and profound impact of drowning** on families and communities and to offer life-saving solutions to prevent it.
- The WHO has also suggested a special activity that some organizations may wish to undertake, **“Going Blue for World Drowning Prevention Day”.**

### References:

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# QUESTIONS

1. Recently, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda launched the School Innovation Ambassador Training Program for \_\_\_\_\_ school teachers.  
(a) 25,000 (b) 50,000 (c) 70,000 (d) 90,000
2. Recently, Haryana government has got in-principle approval to set up a cultural centre in \_\_\_\_\_ from the central government.  
(a) Faridabad (b) Gurugram (c) Kurukshetra (d) Hisar
3. To enhance the initiatives of Digital India Programme, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has enabled map services in UMANG App 'through Memorandum of Understanding with \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) MapmyIndia (b) MapBharat (c) Mapmycountry (d) MapmyIndiacompletely
4. Recently, Eswatini's King Mswati III appointed Cleops Dlamini as nation's new Prime Minister. Eswatini is a country located in:  
(a) Africa (b) Asia (c) Europe (d) South America
5. Which has become the first continent in the world to complete the collection of accurate, comprehensive and harmonised digital land use and land use change data?  
(a) South America (b) North America (c) Africa (d) Australia
6. Recently, Government of India notified a hike in the foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in pension fund management to \_\_\_\_\_ under the national pension system (NPS).  
(a) 49% from 24% (b) 74% from 49% (c) 100% from 74% (d) 51% from 26%
7. According to a study in animals, A heat-tolerant COVID-19 vaccine formulation developed by the \_\_\_\_\_ has proven effective against all current SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern.  
(a) Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru  
(b) Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal  
(c) Indian Forest Research Institute, Dehradun  
(d) Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur
8. Name the rainforest which is now emitting more carbon dioxide than it is able to absorb.  
(a) Congo Rainforest (b) Southeast Asian Rainforest  
(c) Amazon Rainforest (d) Daintree Rainforest
9. Who won the 149<sup>th</sup> British Open Golf Tournament?  
(a) Collin Morikawa (b) Jordan Spieth (c) Louis Oosthuizen (d) Bobby Jones
10. Name the Indian filmmaker who won the L'Oeil d'Or: Le Prix du documentaire, an award for best documentary, at the Cannes Film Festival for her film A Night of Knowing Nothing.  
(a) Rohini Kataria (b) Payal Kapadia (c) Chetana Sharma (d) Mohini Jha
11. Recently, The government has decided to set up the 'Indian Institute of Heritage' at \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Ghaziabad (b) Gautam Buddha Nagar  
(c) Meerut (d) Lucknow
12. The first state in the country to issue educational documents using blockchain technology is  
(a) Gujarat (b) Rajasthan (c) Maharashtra (d) Karnataka
13. Recently, Meghalaya Cabinet has approved the proposed Meghalaya Youth Policy 2021 to channelize \_\_\_\_\_ percent of the entire population of the State who falls under the youth category.  
(a) 16 (b) 21 (c) 27 (d) 31

14. Recently, Dr Kambhampati Hari Babu is sworn in as the new Governor of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Manipur (b) Nagaland (c) Tripura (d) Mizoram
15. Which of the following countries Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri recently stepped down after failing to form a government for over the past eight months?  
 (a) Oman (b) Jordan (c) Lebanon (d) Libya
16. Recently, India has emerged as the \_\_\_\_\_ largest foreign exchange reserves holder in the world.  
 (a) Second (b) Third (c) Fifth (d) Seventh
17. The Prasar Bharati and \_\_\_\_\_ will collaborate on NextGen Broadcasting Technology Center of Excellence to spur Aatmanirbhar Bharat in Media and Broadcasting.  
 (a) IIT Kanpur (b) IIT Hyderabad (c) IIT Delhi (d) IIT Kharagpur
18. Who is the first Indian cricketer to smash a half-century on T20I and ODI debut?  
 (a) Rishabh Pant (b) Prithvi Shaw (c) Surya Kumar Yadav (d) Ishan Kishan
19. Which is not among the newest added member country by the International Cricket Council?  
 (a) Malaysia (b) Mongolia (c) Tajikistan (d) Switzerland
20. Which of the following films won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival 2021?  
 (a) A Hero (b) Titane (c) Nitram (d) Compartment No. 6
21. Recently, which of the following Indian state's Kunariya village has come out with a unique idea of holding Balika Panchayat?  
 (a) Rajasthan (b) Gujarat (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Haryana
22. Who has been recently appointed as the Deputy Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha?  
 (a) Dr. Anil Agrawal (b) Shri Ashok Bajpai  
 (c) Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi (d) Shri Anil Baluni
23. Which of the following countries has unveiled a high-speed maglev train with a designed top speed of 600 kms per hour, stated to be the world's fastest ground vehicle?  
 (a) Japan (b) USA (c) China (d) Israel
24. Recently, AirlineRatings.com released its annual list of top 20 airlines in the world. Which air carrier became the world's best carrier at a time when the aviation industry is badly hit by the pandemic?  
 (a) Air New Zealand (b) Singapore Airlines (c) Qatar Airways (d) Qantas
25. India's largest oil firm IOC will build the nation's first 'green hydrogen' plant at \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Dibrugarh refinery (b) Bareilly refinery (c) Numaligarh refinery (d) Mathura refinery
26. Name the founder of HCL Technologies who will take on the role of Chairman Emeritus and Strategic Advisor to the company's board.  
 (a) Azim Premji (b) Shiv Nadar (c) Ajay Piramal (d) Nandan Nilkeni
27. Recently, Billionaire Jeff Bezos blasted into space in the first crewed flight of his rocket ship \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) New Generation (b) New Shepard (c) New Space (d) New Vision
28. In Formula One, who won the British Grand Prix 2021 and reignite his title defence?  
 (a) Lewis Hamilton (b) Sebastian Vettel (c) Nico Rosberg (d) Max Verstappen
29. The Ras Abu Aboud stadium is the first built in World Cup history that was meant to be torn down. This stadium is in:  
 (a) Oman (b) Jordan (c) Qatar (d) Saudi Arabia

30. Around the world since 1966 \_\_\_\_\_ has been observed as International Chess Day by chess players.  
 (a) July 11 (b) July 14 (c) July 17 (d) July 20
31. The first skywalk in Uttar Pradesh will come up in:  
 (a) Lucknow (b) Ghaziabad (c) Varanasi (d) Gorakhpur
32. Perumkulam, in \_\_\_\_\_ District has been bestowed with the title Kerala's first 'Book Village'.  
 (a) Kollam (b) Thrissur (c) Kozhikode (d) Palakkad
33. Which of the following states has decided to set up a panchayat secretariat in all panchayats of the state?  
 (a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Bihar (c) Rajasthan (d) Uttar Pradesh
34. Which of the following states has become the first state in the country to provide one per cent reservation for the 'transgender' community in all the government services?  
 (a) Haryana (b) Punjab (c) Karnataka (d) Maharashtra
35. Recently, Ariel Henry has been sworn in as the new Prime Minister of:  
 (a) Suriname (b) Haiti (c) Cuba (d) Philippines
36. Which of the following cities has been recently stripped of its World Heritage status after a UN committee found developments threatened the value of the city's waterfront?  
 (a) Lyon (b) Liverpool (c) Calgary (d) San Diego
37. Recently, Andhra Pradesh's first centre for financial literacy comes up in \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Guntur (b) Tirupati (c) Amaravati (d) Visakhapatnam
38. Which of the following will be the first country to develop a DNA-based Covid-19 vaccine?  
 (a) India (b) Japan (c) USA (d) Russia
39. The International Olympic Committee announced that \_\_\_\_\_ will host the 2032 Summer Olympic Games.  
 (a) Canberra (b) Brisbane (c) Alabama (d) Mexico City
40. Name the Hyderabad-based doctor who attained the rare distinction of being the first Indian to be conferred with the honorary fellowship of the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland (ASGBI)?  
 (a) Deepak Chudasama (b) P Raghu Ram (c) J Venkatraman (d) L K Narayansami
41. Recently, Cabinet approvals for Central University and establishment of an integrated multi-purpose infrastructure development corporation for \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Jammu & Kashmir (b) Ladakh (c) Puducherry (d) Andaman & Nicobar Islands
42. Recently, Indian Navy participated in a two-day bilateral Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Navy Carrier Strike Group (CSG)-21 of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) UK (b) Thailand (c) Vietnam (d) Australia
43. Which of the following Indian political parties has launched 'Jivlag' scheme to help children orphaned due to the Corona virus pandemic?  
 (a) Shiv Sena (b) BJP (c) NCP (d) YSRCP
44. Which of the following states High Court became the first court in the country to formally start live streaming of proceedings?  
 (a) Delhi High Court  
 (b) Gujarat High Court  
 (c) Chhattisgarh High Court  
 (d) Rajasthan High Court

45. Recently, Madhya Pradesh CM launches UNESCO's 'Historic Urban Landscape' project for \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Gwalior, Orchha (b) Jabalpur (c) Satna (d) Dhar
46. Recently, Dalit Bandhu scheme was launched in:  
 (a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Chhattisgarh (c) Telangana (d) Madhya Pradesh
47. Who has been recently appointed as a member of the UN tax committee for the 2021 to 2025 term?  
 (a) Deepanjan Luthra (b) Manoj Kumar Sharma (c) Rasmi Ranjan Das (d) Atul Padmakar
48. For the first time, scientists have clearly identified a ring of gas and dust circling a planet outside our solar system – a discovery that could help reveals how \_\_\_\_\_ are formed.  
 (a) Planets and Moons (b) Asteroids (c) Pulsars (d) Comets
49. Name the former RBI governor whose new book 'The India Story' focuses on India's economic history and aims to provide lessons for the future of India's political economy.  
 (a) Dr Raghuram Rajan (b) Dr Bimal Jalan (c) Dr Y V Reddy (d) Dr Urjit Patel
50. World Brain Day is celebrated every year on:  
 (a) July 15 (b) July 17 (c) July 19 (d) July 22
51. Name the title of book released recently by Amitabh Kant on Indian start-up ecosystem?  
 (a) Shifting Orbits: Decoding the Trajectory of the Indian Start-up Ecosystem  
 (b) Every Creature Has a Story: What Science Reveals about Animal Behaviour  
 (c) The Ecological Indian – Myth & History  
 (d) Big Ideas Simply Explained
52. Recently, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted a successful flight-test of New Generation \_\_\_\_\_ missile from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.  
 (a) Akash (b) Naag (c) Trishul (d) Pinaka
53. Recently, A report on "Renewables Integration in India 2021" was jointly launched by NITI Aayog along with \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) IEA (b) Amnesty International (c) World Bank (d) UNSC
54. Name the Indian-American who has been elected as the new executive director of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC).  
 (a) Vibha Narayanan (b) Abha Jha (c) Mithilesh (d) Nisha Ramachandran
55. The government is likely to sell 10 percent of its stake in the \_\_\_\_\_ in two stages, with the first chunk being 5-6 percent and the second of the remainder.  
 (a) Life Insurance Corporation of India (b) IDBI Bank  
 (c) Air India (d) Port Trust of India
56. Name the Wrestler who won gold at the World Wrestling Championship.  
 (a) Aditi Thapa (b) Mrinalini Saha (c) Priya Malik (d) Roopa Khetan
57. Recently, the "Vision for Everyone" resolution, sponsored by Bangladesh, Antigua, and Ireland, and co-sponsored by over 100 countries, was adopted by consensus by \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) SAARC (b) UN (c) World Bank (d) ASEAN
58. World Drowning Prevention Day is held annually on \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) 25 July (b) 26 July (c) 27 July (d) 29 July

59. According to data provided by the Climate Watch by World Resources Institute, India emits \_\_\_\_\_ of global emissions.  
 (a) 4.2% (b) 5.6% (c) 7.1% (d) 8.9%
60. Recently, A group of major \_\_\_\_\_ spa towns was added to the highly prized World Heritage list for their “exceptional testimony to the European spa phenomenon” from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the 1930s.  
 (a) African (b) North American (c) South American (d) European
61. Which of the following Indian Institutes is going to collaborate with the Centre for Bhutan Studies & Gross National Happiness Research (CBS & GNH Research) as academic and intellectual partners for the SUSCON Conference?  
 (a) IIM Lucknow (b) IIM Shillong (c) IIM Ahmadabad (d) IIM Indore
62. Name prominent Indian businessman who has been appointed as the vice-chairman of the apex government body for all businesses operating from the UAE’s capital city, making him the only person from India on the 29-member board.  
 (a) BR Shetty (b) Thumbay Moideen (c) Yusuffali MA (d) Raghuvinder Katariya
63. Which of the following countries Cordouan beacon nicknamed the “king of lighthouses” recently won recognition as World Heritage Site from UNESCO?  
 (a) Italy (b) Germany (c) France (d) Portugal
64. Recently, President Kais Saied announced the suspension of parliament and dismissal of Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi. Kais Saied is the present President of:  
 (a) Liberia (b) Tunisia (c) Egypt (d) Angola
65. Which of the following is planning to launch Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) in the near future?  
 (a) Reserve bank of India (b) NITI Aayog  
 (c) State Bank of India (d) SIDBI
66. Recently, Union Home Minister Amit Shah at \_\_\_\_\_ planted trees at Wahshari, Sohra as part of the Sohra Afforestation Project for ecological restoration.  
 (a) Nagaland (b) Meghalaya (c) Sikkim (d) Manipur
67. Which of the following Indian banks has selected Paisalo Digital as National Corporate Business Correspondent of the Bank for financial inclusion by providing banking services through kiosks?  
 (a) Union Bank of India (b) Punjab National Bank  
 (c) State Bank of India (d) Canara Bank
68. Name the Indian wrestler who sealed the crown in a dominant fashion, grabbing the 43 kg title at the Cadet World Championship.  
 (a) Komal (b) Kusum (c) Tannu (d) Meeta
69. Which of the following Indian ministries has launched a web based portal to facilitate submission of applications, identification of children eligible to receive support under the ‘PM CARES for Children’ scheme?  
 (a) Union Women and Child Development Ministry (b) Union Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Ministry  
 (c) Union Finance Ministry (d) Union Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry
70. India has substantially improved its score on a trade facilitation survey conducted by the United Nations for a total of 143 countries. Under the transparency indicator, India scored \_\_\_\_\_ per cent in 2021, up from 93.33 per cent in 2019.  
 (a) 95 (b) 96.6 (c) 97.75 (d) 100

# ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. b Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda launched the School Innovation Ambassador Training Program for 50,000 school teachers.
2. c The Haryana government has got in-principle approval to set up a cultural centre in Kurukshetra from the central government.
3. a Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has taken various initiatives in the recent past to ease the lives of citizens by facilitating online delivery of Government services. To further enhance the initiatives of Digital India Programme, the Ministry has enabled map services in UMANG App 'through Memorandum of Understanding with MapmyIndia.
4. a Eswatini, officially the Kingdom of Eswatini and formerly and still commonly known in English as Swaziland, is a landlocked country in Southern Africa. Eswatini's King Mswati III appointed Cleops Dlamini as the southern African nation's new prime minister, replacing Ambrose Mandvulo Dlamini, who died in December.
5. c Africa has become the first continent in the world to complete the collection of accurate, comprehensive and harmonised digital land use and land use change data under the Africa Open DEAL initiative.
6. b The government notified a hike in the foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in pension fund management to 74% from 49% under the national pension system (NPS), opening doors for experienced foreign partners in this space and facilitating more competition in the fledgling segment.
7. a A heat-tolerant COVID-19 vaccine formulation developed by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru has proven effective against all current SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern, according to a study in animals.
8. c The Amazon rainforest is now emitting more carbon dioxide than it is able to absorb, scientists have confirmed for the first time. The emissions amount to a billion tonnes of carbon dioxide a year, according to a study.
9. a Collin Morikawa wins debut appearance, matches Bobby Jones. Collin Morikawa pulled away late on the front nine and held off Jordan Spieth down the stretch, winning the 149<sup>th</sup> British Open in his first appearance in the event and claiming his second major title in only eight career starts.
10. b Mumbai-based filmmaker and Film and Television Institute (FTII), Pune, alumnus Payal Kapadia won the L'Oeil d'Or: Le Prix du documentaire, an award for best documentary, at the Cannes Film Festival for her film A Night of Knowing Nothing, which foregrounds student protests in the country.
11. b The government has decided to set up the 'Indian Institute of Heritage' at Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar.
12. c Maharashtra will be the first state in the country to issue educational documents using blockchain technology.
13. d Meghalaya Cabinet has approved the proposed Meghalaya Youth Policy 2021 to channelize 31 percent of the entire population of the State who falls under the youth category.
14. d Dr Kambhampati Hari Babu is sworn in as the new Governor of Mizoram.
15. c Lebanon Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri stepped down after failing to form a government for over the past eight months.
16. c India has emerged as the fifth-largest foreign exchange reserves holder in the world after China, Japan, Switzerland and Russia.

- 17. a** Prasar Bharati and IIT Kanpur will collaborate on NextGen Broadcasting Technology Center of Excellence to spur Aatmanirbhar Bharat in Media and Broadcasting.
- 18. d** Ishan Kishan has also become the first Indian batter to smash a half-century on T20I and ODI debut.
- 19. a** The International Cricket Council inducted Mongolia, Tajikistan and Switzerland as the newest member countries.
- 20. b** Titane - an outlandish film packed full of sex and violence - has won the top award at the 2021 Cannes Film Festival.
- 21. b** The Kunariya village of Kutch district in Gujarat has come out with a unique idea of holding Balika Panchayat. The first-ever elections of this Balika Panchayat were successfully held.
- 22. c** Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi has been appointed as the Deputy Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha.
- 23. c** China has unveiled a high-speed maglev train with a designed top speed of 600 kms per hour. It is stated to be the world's fastest ground vehicle.
- 24. a** Qatar Airways has topped Air New Zealand to become the world's best carrier at a time when the aviation industry is badly hit by the pandemic, according to an aviation safety and product rating agency.
- 25. d** India's largest oil firm IOC will build the nation's first 'green hydrogen' plant at its Mathura refinery, as it aims to prepare for a future catering to the growing demand for both oil and cleaner forms of energy.
- 26. b** HCL Technologies founder Shiv Nadar will take on the role of Chairman Emeritus and Strategic Advisor to the company's board.
- 27. b** Billionaire Jeff Bezos blasted into space in the first crewed flight of his rocket ship, New Shepard.
- 28. a** In Formula One, Lewis Hamilton roared back from a first-lap incident that sent championship leader Max Verstappen to the hospital and overcame a 10-second penalty to win the British Grand Prix and reignite his title defence.
- 29. c** It is Qatar's Ras Abu About stadium – the first built in World Cup history that was meant to be torn down.
- 30. d** Under initiative of FIDE, July 20 has been observed as International Chess Day by chess players around the world since 1966.
- 31. c** Preparations are in full swing to build Uttar Pradesh first skywalk in Varanasi. According to relevant sources, the sky walk will be made in the form of Damru, the musical instrument of Baba Bholenath.
- 32. a** Perumkulam, in Kollam District has been bestowed with the title Kerala's first 'Book Village'. This claim to fame results from years of concerted efforts aimed at encouraging the habit of reading.
- 33. d** Uttar Pradesh Cabinet has decided to set up a panchayat secretariat in all panchayats of the state. The move is aimed at strengthening the rural democracy and providing employment to the rural youth.
- 34. c** Karnataka has become the first state in the country to provide one per cent reservation for the 'transgender' community in all the government services.
- 35. b** In Haiti, Ariel Henry has been sworn in as the new prime minister, around two weeks after the country's President Jovenel Moïse was assassinated.

- 36. b** Liverpool has been stripped of its World Heritage status after a UN committee found developments threatened the value of the city's waterfront. The decision was made following a secret ballot by the UNESCO Committee at a meeting in China.
- 37. c** Andhra Pradesh's first centre for financial literacy comes up in Amaravati.
- 38. a** Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya that India will be the first country to develop a DNA-based Covid-19 vaccine even as other manufactures are steadily ramping up production.
- 39. b** The International Olympic Committee announced that Australian city of Brisbane will host the 2032 Summer Olympic Games.
- 40. b** P Raghu Ram, a Hyderabad-based doctor attained the rare distinction of being the first Indian to be conferred with the honorary fellowship of the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland (ASGBI).
- 41. b** Cabinet approvals for Central University and establishment of an integrated multi-purpose infrastructure development corporation for Ladakh, would be milestones for Ladakh development.
- 42. a** Indian Navy participated in a two-day bilateral Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Royal Navy Carrier Strike Group (CSG)-21 led by HMS Queen Elizabeth in the Bay of Bengal from 21 to 22 Jul 21.
- 43. c** NCP leader Supriya Sule has launched 'Jivlag' scheme to help children orphaned due to the Corona virus pandemic.
- 44. b** Gujarat High Court became the first court in the country to formally start live streaming of proceedings.
- 45. a** Madhya Pradesh CM launches UNESCO's 'Historic Urban Landscape' project for Gwalior, Orchha.
- 46. c** Chief Minister of Telangana, K Chandrasekhar Rao announced that he will start the state government's Dalit Bandhu scheme from the Huzurabad, erstwhile Karimnagar.
- 47. c** Rasmi Ranjan Das, a Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, has been appointed as a member of the UN tax committee for the 2021 to 2025 term. Das is among the tax experts from around the world who has been appointed as a member of the UN tax committee.
- 48. a** For the first time, scientists have clearly identified a ring of gas and dust circling a planet outside our solar system – a discovery that could help reveal how planets and moons are formed.
- 49. b** Former RBI governor Bimal Jalan's new book 'The India Story' focuses on India's economic history and aims to provide lessons for the future of India's political economy.
- 50. d** The day is dedicated to raising awareness and promoting advocacy related to brain health. It is celebrated on July 22.
- 51. a** The book titled, 'Shifting Orbits: Decoding the Trajectory of the Indian Start-up Ecosystem'.
- 52. a** Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO conducted a successful flight-test of New Generation Akash missile from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.
- 53. a** NITI Aayog and IEA launch 'Renewables Integration in India 2021'.
- 54. d** Indian-American Nisha Ramachandran has been elected as the new executive director of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC). She is the first person of South Asian American descent to serve in the role.

- 55. a** The government is likely to sell 10 percent of its stake in the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) in two stages, with the first chunk being 5-6 percent and the second of the remainder.
- 56. c** Wrestler Priya Malik has just made the country proud at an International level after she managed to win gold at the World Wrestling Championship.
- 57. b** The “Vision for Everyone” resolution, sponsored by Bangladesh, Antigua, and Ireland, and co-sponsored by over 100 countries, was adopted by consensus by the world body. The UN General Assembly approved its first-ever resolution on vision calling on its 193 member nations to ensure access to eye care for everyone in their countries.
- 58. a** World Drowning Prevention Day, declared in April 2021 by General Assembly is held annually on 25 July.
- 59. c** According to data provided by the Climate Watch by World Resources Institute, India emits of global emissions and has per capita emissions of about 2.47 Tco2e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent), as compared to the global average of 6.45 tco2/per capita.
- 60. d** A group of major European spa towns was added to the highly prized World Heritage list for their “exceptional testimony to the European spa phenomenon” from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the 1930s.
- 61. b** IIM Shillong is going to collaborate with the Centre for Bhutan Studies & Gross National Happiness Research (CBS & GNH Research) as academic and intellectual partners for the SUSCON Conference.
- 62. c** Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan has appointed prominent Indian businessman Yusuffali MA as the vice-chairman of the apex government body for all businesses operating from the UAE’s capital city, making him the only person from India on the 29-member board.
- 63. c** Battered by the wind and swell for 400 years and nicknamed the “king of lighthouses”, France’s Cordouan beacon won recognition from UNESCO.
- 64. b** Tunisian President Kais Saied announced the suspension of parliament and dismissal of Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi following a day of protests against the ruling party, who condemned the move as a “coup d’etat”.
- 65. a** Reserve bank of India is planning to launch Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) in the near future.
- 66. b** Union Home Minister Amit Shah at Meghalaya planted trees at Wahshari, Sohra erstwhile Cherrapunjee as part of the Sohra Afforestation Project for ecological restoration.
- 67. c** State Bank of India (SBI) has selected Paisalo Digital as National Corporate Business Correspondent of the Bank for financial inclusion by providing banking services through kiosks.
- 68. c** Young Indian wrestler Tannu sealed the crown in a dominant fashion, grabbing the 43 kg title without conceding a single point as the country’s spectacular run continued at the Cadet World Championship.
- 69. a** Union Women and Child Development Ministry has launched a web based portal to facilitate submission of applications, identification of children eligible to receive support under the ‘PM CARES for Children’ scheme.
- 70. d** India has substantially improved its score on a trade facilitation survey conducted by the United Nations for a total of 143 countries, scoring 90.32 per cent in the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific’s (UNESCAP) latest Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation, and improving from 78.49 per cent in 2019.