



**UPSC**

**MONTHLY**  
**CURRENT**  
**AFFAIRS**  
**CAPSULES**

**DECEMBER 2020**



## E-BOOK December 2020

It is the time to start and target the UPSC CSE preparation for Prelims 2021. To ease the preparation we are providing monthly basis important news (section wise) and with that some expected questions, best strategy to prepare and tips for the beginners. Also, at the end we have provided the detailed syllabus of UPSC Prelims 2021.

*"Every day is a chance to begin again. Don't focus on the failures of yesterday, start today with positive thoughts and expectations."*

— Catherine Pulsifer

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### **AYUSH Export Promotion Council**

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of AYUSH have decided to work together to set up an Export Promotion Council to boost AYUSH exports. This decision was taken recently in a joint review of AYUSH trade and Industry by Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Shri Shripad Naik, Minister of AYUSH.
- It was also decided in the review that the entire AYUSH sector will work together to achieve price and quality competitiveness to boost AYUSH exports. More than 2000 stake-holders of the AYUSH Sector also attended the e-event through live streaming on virtual platforms.

### **CPCB raises concern on Pollution and Frothing in River Yamuna**

- CPCB monitors the water quality of River Yamuna and drains discharging into the River.
- In the past, CPCB observed froth formation and increase in ammonia levels in river Yamuna because of discharge of untreated sewage, non-operation of existing Sewage Treatment Plants, improper functioning of Effluent Treatment Plants(ETPs) installed by the industries and Common Effluent Treatment Plants(CETPs) located on the banks of river Yamuna.
- Monitoring of 22 drains carried out recently, indicated that 14 drains (Sonia Vihar, Najafgarh, Shastri Park, Shahdara, etc.) are found untapped, discharging sewage. While 05 drains are 100% tapped and no flow at downward of interception observed, 02 drains were found tapped but overflow into river Yamuna was observed. One drain (drain no. 14) has no flow at all. Due to partially/untreated discharge of sewage and industrial effluent containing phosphorus, many times, foaming also is observed.
- Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has been directed to take action against non-complying Common Effluent Treatment Plans(CETPs) and industrial units. Similar directions have also been issued to State Pollution Control Boards of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

## **Agra Metro project**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the construction of the Agra Metro Project on 7th December 2020 at 12.00 noon via video conferencing.
- Union Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Shri Yogi Adityanath, and other dignitaries will also attend the event that will be held at 15 Battalion PAC parade ground in Agra.

### *About Agra Metro Project*

- The Agra Metro project comprises 2 corridors with a total length of 29.4 km and connects major tourist attractions like Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra with railway stations and bus stands.
- The project will benefit the 26 lakh population of the city of Agra and will also cater to more than 60 lakh tourists who visit Agra every year. It will provide an environment-friendly Mass Rapid Transit System to the historic city of Agra.
- The estimated cost of the project will be Rs 8,379.62 cr which will be completed in 5 years.
- Earlier, on 8th March 2019, Prime Minister inaugurated the Agra Metro project along with the commencement of commercial operations of Lucknow Metro on the entire 23 km long North-South corridor from 'CCS Airport to Munshipulia'.

## **Innovate for India**

- Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan has appealed to the scientific community to Innovate for India and create a competitive advantage to make India Aatmanirbhar.
- Speaking at the curtain-raiser for the 6th India International Science Festival 2020, being organized by the Ministries of Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, he called upon the scientists to create products and services which can compete with the best in the world. The theme of the event was "Self-reliant India and Global Welfare."
- Underlying the role of science and innovation in the development of any society, Pradhan said that the COVID19 pandemic has once again demonstrated that we have to develop and strengthen our institutional and industrial capacity in scientific knowledge and innovation in all areas.

- Outlining the Hon. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', he said an Aatmanirbhar Bharat is a Bharat which does not only fulfils its own requirements but also is a beacon of hope for the global community, true to the spirit of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbukam.'

### **Surgery as part of Ayurveda**

- The government has notified compulsory surgical procedures for PG students of Ayurveda.
- There are two branches of surgery in Ayurveda: Shalya Tantra, which refers to general surgery, and Shalakya Tantra which pertains to surgeries related to the eyes, ears, nose, throat and teeth.
- All postgraduate students of Ayurveda have to study these courses, and some go on to specialise in these, and become Ayurveda surgeons.

### **Air Pollution**

- Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar said that the Central Government has been taking all steps possible to combat air pollution in Delhi and North India and is working towards deploying all possible technological interventions towards that.
- Speaking at the 4th Roundtable Consultation on 'Clearing the Air - Driving central and state-level actions' jointly hosted by TERI and Air Quality Asia, an international air quality advocacy group, the Environment Minister stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has put a firm resolve to improve the air quality of 100 cities in next 5 years.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change through its National Clean Air Programme, which is a city-specific plan is working in that direction with a target to achieve 20 to 30 % reduction in PM10 and PM2.5 concentrations by 2024.
- Speaking on the peculiar nature of Air Pollution in Northern India especially Delhi-NCR the minister said that the crisis of air pollution can be attributed to primary factors like industrial emissions, vehicular emissions, dust from construction and demolition sites, stubble burning for around 50-60 days in a year, biomass burning and poor legacy waste management.

- The Minister highlighted a host of initiatives including scientific and technological interventions taken by the Central government to mitigate the menace of Air Pollution in the last few years.

### **Auction for Sale (Re-issue)**

- The Government of India (GoI) has announced the Sale (Re-issue) of:
- '3.96% Government Security, 2022' for a notified amount of Rs 2,000 crore (nominal) through price based auction,
- '5.15% Government Security, 2025' for a notified amount of Rs 11,000 crore (nominal) through price based auction,
- '5.85% Government Security, 2030' for a notified amount of Rs 9,000 crore (nominal) through price based auction, and
- '6.80% Government Security, 2060' for a notified amount of Rs 6,000 crore (nominal) through price based auction.
- GoI will have the option to retain additional subscription up to Rs 2,000 crore against each of the above securities.
- The auctions will be conducted by the Reserve Bank of India, Mumbai Office, Fort, Mumbai on December 11, 2020 using multiple price method.
- Up to 5% of the notified amount of the sale of the Securities will be allotted to eligible individuals and Institutions as per the Scheme for Non-Competitive Bidding Facility in the Auction of Government Securities.
- Both competitive and non-competitive bids for the auction should be submitted in electronic format on the Reserve Bank of India Core Banking Solution (E-Kuber) system on December 11, 2020.
- The result of the auctions will be announced on December 11, 2020 and payment by successful bidders will be on December 14, 2020.

### **Two new Zoos one each in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh granted recognition**

- At the 37th General Body meeting of Central Zoo Authority chaired by Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar two new zoos the Rajgir Zoo Safari in Nalanda, Bihar and Shaheed Ashfaque Ullah Khan Prani Udyaan in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh were granted recognition.

- The Environment Minister also applauded the good progress in developing a 10-year Vision Plan for the up-gradation of 15 select zoos in the country to global standards which is hoped to 'twin' top Indian and foreign zoos and also bring in the corporate sector to invest in modernization as part of this project.
- The Minister also said that early next year an investors summit will also happen to take this agenda forward.

#### *About Rajgir Zoo Safari, Nalanda, Bihar*

- Rajgir Zoo Safari, in the eastern state of Bihar, was granted recognition during the General Body meeting of the Central Zoo Authority on December 07, 2020.
- The zoo is established exclusively comprising on only safari enclosures which, on contrary to the conventional enclosure, offer larger space for captive animals.
- There are five safari enclosures and a walk-in proposed in the zoo. The zoo proposes to house Lion, Bear, Tiger, Leopard and a mixed safari of common herbivore species such as Spotted Deer, Sambar among others.
- The zoo is located close to the historically important Nalanda and is expected to have a high footfall.
- The zoo will display wild animals in naturalistic safari enclosures and promote awareness of towards wildlife conservation.
- *About Shaheed Ashfaque Ullah Khan Prani Udyaan, Gorakhpur, U.P.*
- Shaheed Ashfaque Ullah Khan Prani Udyaan, Gorakhpur, U.P Bihar was granted recognition during the General Body meeting of the Central Zoo Authority on December 07, 2020.
- With this, the state of Uttar Pradesh has a total of 9 zoos. The establishment of the zoo is personally monitoring by the Chief Minister of the state.
- The zoo is situated in the spiritual land of Gorakhpur and has a high visitation. The zoo features enclosures for a range of birds, herbivores and carnivores.
- The zoo aims to create awareness through naturalistic enclosures and create long-lasting visitor experience through state-of-the-art visitor facilities like 4D Theatre, battery-operated train and accessibility to Divyangjan.

## Senior Scientist Award 2020

- Dr. Samir Damare, Principal Scientist and Head Analytical Services Division, at CSIR-NIO, Goa has been selected for the Senior Scientist Award for the year 2020, by the Microbiologists Society, India.
- The award is presented annually to Microbiologists working in different fields.
- Dr. Damare has received this award in recognition of his research in the field of Microbiology, Extremophiles, Biotechnology & Molecular Biology. The award will be presented during the Annual Meeting of Society.

### *About Microbiologists Society, India*

- It was established in March 1996. It has over 30 sub-units all over India and 6 units outside India, and over 70 plus Student Units in different Colleges and Universities across India. The Society has over 528 Life Members.

### *About Dr. Damare*

- Dr. Damare has 33 publications in reputed national and international journals. He has successfully guided 3 PhD students and 23 students for Internship, Project Work and Dissertation. At present 4 students are registered for PhD with him at Goa University and AcSIR.

## **SJVN signs MoU with IREDA for Green Energy Projects**

- SJVN Limited, a PSU under Ministry of Power has entered an MoU with Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA). IREDA, a PSU under Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, will provide its services to SJVN for Green Energy projects.
- The MoU was signed by Nand Lal Sharma, CMD, SJVN and Pradip Kumar Das, CMD, IREDA in the presence of Akhileshwar Singh, Director (Finance), SJVN, Surinder Pal Bansal, Director (Civil), SJVN, Chintan Shah, Director (Technical), IREDA, and other senior officials through virtual mode.
- On the occasion Nand Lal Sharma, Chairman & Managing Director told that as per MoU, IREDA will undertake Techno-Financial due diligence of Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency & Conservation Projects for SJVN.

- Under the MoU, IREDA will also assist SJVN in developing an action plan to create and acquire Renewable Energy projects for the next 5 years.
- SJVN is committed to contribute in realizing the renewable energy target of 175 GW by 2022 set by Hon'ble Prime Minister.
- The steps in this direction have already been taken and presently SJVN is developing 100 MW Dholera Solar Power Project & 100 MW Raghanseda Solar Power Project in Gujarat.

### **New Parliament Building**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone of the New Parliament Building at Sansad Marg, New Delhi on December 10, 2020.
- The new building is an intrinsic part of the vision of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and will be a landmark opportunity to build peoples' Parliament for the first time after independence, one which will match the needs and aspirations of 'New India' in the 75th anniversary of independence in 2022.
- The New Parliament Building will be modern, state-of-the-art and energy-efficient, with highly non-obtrusive security facilities to be built as a triangular-shaped building, adjacent to the present Parliament.
- Lok Sabha will be 3 times of the existing size and Rajya Sabha will be substantially bigger. The interiors of the new building will showcase a rich blend of Indian culture and diversity of our regional arts, crafts, textiles and architecture.
- The design plan includes space for a magnificent Central Constitutional Gallery, which will be accessible to the public.
- It will have high-quality acoustics and audio-visual facilities, improved and comfortable seating arrangements, effective and inclusive emergency evacuation provisions.
- The building will comply with the highest structural safety standards, including adherence to Seismic Zone 5 requirements and is designed for ease of maintenance and operations.

### **Saksham**

- It is launched recently and is the 5th and the last Offshore Patrol Vessel designed and built by Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) for Indian Coast Guard.
- These OPVs will form a formidable part of the Coast Guard Fleet and used for protection of Exclusive Economic Zone of territorial water of the Nation.

## **CII Partnership Summit**

- Union Minister of Railways, Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs and Food & Public Distribution Piyush Goyal on 16 December addressed Ministerial Session at the CII Partnership Summit 2020 whose theme is 'PARTNERSHIPS FOR LIVES, LIVELIHOOD AND GROWTH'.
- H.E. Lyonpo Loknath Sharma, Minister of Economic Affairs, Bhutan, H.E. Uz. Fayyaz Ismail, Minister of Economic Development, Maldives, H E Andres Allamand, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chile, H.E. Dmytro Senik, Deputy Foreign Minister, ,H.E.Caio Mario Paes de Andrade, Special Secretary (Vice Minister) for Debureaucratization, Management and Digital Governance, Ministry of Economy, Brazil took part in the session.
- Shri Goyal said that coming together of friendly nations will help all of them to explore new opportunities, support each other, build upon the friendship and bring benefit for the well-being of their citizens. Mentioning about the close and deep-rooted relations with the participating nations.
- India provides huge opportunity for investments, and procurement of goods and services. India is looking forward for working with friends and neighbours, and having a global footprint.
- As per Piyush Goyal, India is working to turn the Covid crisis into an opportunity, and is confident of reaching the target of \$5 Tn economy by 2025, and \$10 tn in another 7-10 years.

## **Odisha Power Generation Corporation Ltd (OPGC)**

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approves acquisition of shares of Odisha Power Generation Corporation Ltd (OPGC) by Odisha Hydro Power Corporation Limited (OHPC) under Section 31(1) of the Competition Act, 2002.

### *About OHPC*

- It is a PSU wholly-owned and controlled by the Government of Odisha. It is engaged in the business of generation of power from renewable sources namely, hydroelectric and solar power.

### *About OPGC*

- It is a state-owned joint venture enterprise with Government of Odisha holding 51% shareholding and the remaining 49% shareholding held by AES Corporation, U.S.A through AES OPGC Holding and AES India Private Limited.
- It is engaged in the business of generation of power from coal-based thermal power plants as well as mini hydro power projects.
- The proposed combination involves the acquisition by OHPC of 49% equity shares in OPGC from AES OPGC Holding and AES India, pursuant to the Share Sale and Purchase Agreement.

### **A New Digital platform 'CO-WIN'**

- A New Digital platform 'CO-WIN' is being used for COVID-19 Vaccination Delivery.
- About 30 crore line-listed for COVID-19 vaccination, includes healthcare and frontline workers, prioritized population groups.
- About 1.54 lakh ANMs working for Universal Immunization Programmes to work as COVID vaccinators, more vaccinators to be arranged in collaboration with states and UTs.
- A transparent, effective & sustained communication strategy on vaccine safety and effectiveness is crucial for educating people, dispelling doubts: Health Secretary.

### *About 'CO-WIN'*

- 'CO-WIN' is a user-friendly mobile app for recording vaccine data is working as a beneficiary management platform having various modules. In the process of forming a database of Healthcare Workers, which is in an advanced stage across all States/UTs, data is presently being uploaded on the Co-WIN platform.

### **260th Army Service Corps Day**

- The Army Service Corps (ASC), the oldest and the largest administrative service in the Indian Army, is celebrated 260th Corps Day on 08 December 2020.
- From a modest beginning during the rule of the East India Company, The Corps extended the scope of its activities, and now operates on land, water as well as in the air.

- The Corps has been a backbone to the fighting forces campaigns in three continents and over all types of terrain from dry deserts to snowy mountains, jungles and high-altitude areas.
- The brave soldiers of Army Service Corps have been awarded 568 honours pre-independence and one Maha Vir Chakra, 14 Vir Chakras, four Kirti Chakras, one Ashok Chakra, 21 Shaurya Chakras and 134 Sena Medals post-independence.
- Army Service Corps has always encouraged worthy sports persons and takes immense pride in its four Arjuna Awardees, three Hockey Olympians, the daredevil 'Tornado' motorcycle team and various other distinguished players in the fields of Archery, Boxing, Aquatics and Equestrian Sports.

### **India International Science Festival (IISF) 2020**

- Dr Harsh Vardhan virtually addresses the Curtain Raiser function of IISF 2020 organised by Defence Institute of High Altitude of DRDO, Ladakh.
- Dr. Harsh Vardhan said that "Defence Institute of High Altitude Research (DIHAR) has been chosen for the event due to its unique contributions to the region of Ladakh in improving living conditions of local population and soldiers through scientific development and also for contributing to military-civil fusion in this strategically located area."
- The theme for IISF-2020: 'Science for Self-Reliant India and Global Welfare' is very relevant in the present context when the nation is looking towards Science & Technology for accelerating growth and for spearheading vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat" said Dr. Harsh Vardhan.

### **Organic Union Territory**

- Under the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) of India, the entire Lakshadweep group of islands has been declared as an organic agricultural area.
- Lakshadweep is the first Union Territory to become 100% organic because all farming is carried out without the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, providing access to safer food choices and making agriculture a more environmentally-friendly activity.
- Earlier Sikkim in 2016 became India's first "100 per cent organic" State.
- The entire 32 square kilometres geographical land area of the UT was declared as organic after receiving required certifications and declarations under Centre's Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (organic farming improvement programme).

## **Swahid Diwas**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has paid homage to the martyrs of the Assam Movement on Swahid Diwas on 10 December, 2020.
- In a tweet, Narendra Modi said “on Swahid Diwas, we pay homage to the great martyrs of the Assam Movement. Their passion towards the progress of Assam and empowerment of the state’s citizens continues to inspire us all.”

## **ICCI’s 93rd Annual General Meeting and Annual Convention**

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will deliver the inaugural address at FICCI’s 93rd Annual General Meeting and Annual Convention on 12 December, 2020, through video conferencing.
- The Prime Minister will also inaugurate the virtual FICCI Annual Expo 2020.
- FICCI’s Annual Convention is being held virtually on 11, 12 & 14 December 2020. The theme of this year’s Annual Convention is “Inspired India”.
- The event will see the participation of several Ministers, Bureaucrats, Captains of Industry, Diplomats, International experts, and other leading luminaries.
- FICCI Annual Expo 2020 will start from 11 December 2020 and will continue for a period of one year. The virtual expo will provide an opportunity to exhibitors from across the globe to showcase their products and advance their business prospects.

## **ABTO (Association of Buddhist Tour Operators) International Convention**

- The Union Minister of State (IC) for Tourism & Culture Prahlad Singh Patel virtually inaugurated the ABTO (Association of Buddhist Tour Operators) International Convention in New Delhi on 10 December, 2020.
- ABTO Convention a three-day event is being held in partnership with Ministry of Tourism from 10-12 Dec 2020 in Bodhgaya, Bihar.
- Shri Patel stated that the Tourism Ministry is making efforts to register accommodation units in the country in the Ministry’s portal National Integrated Database of Hospitality Industry (NIDHI). Till date, around 32000 accommodation units have been registered on the portal which was activated this year.

## Hospital Management Information System Trial Project

- Indian Railways has launched another major IT initiative towards according priority for the well-being of its workforce.
- The Hospital Management Information System (HMIS) has been launched by Dr. B. P Nanda, Director General, Railway Health services, Railway Board through virtual means on 11th December, 2020 in the presence of Sri Gajanan Mallya, General Manager, South Central Railway.
- Puneet Chawla, Chairman and Managing Director, Rail Tel Corporation of India, Dr. Prasanna Kumar, PCMD, SCR participated in the programme.
- As per B.P Nanda, the HMIS will bring a paradigm shift in the health care systems maintained by Indian Railways. The new system will improve the quality of health services and aid in utilization of resources in a transparent manner.
- Patients waiting time at the hospitals will be minimized and medical records will be available to the team of doctors at all times.

### *About HMIS IN Railways*

- The HMIS in Railways has been developed by Indian Railways in coordination with RailTel Corporation Limited. The objective of the HMIS is to provide a single-window of clearance of hospital administration activity such as clinical, diagnostics, pharmacy, examinations, industrial health etc.
- *The primary objectives of envisaged solution are:*
  - Effectively manage all the health facilities & its resources
  - Monitor performance of hospitals across the administrative channel
  - Impart quality health care services to its beneficiaries
  - Improve the patient turn-around time
  - Generate and maintain EMR (electronic medical records) of all patients

## MOHUA launches Socio-Economic Profiling

- Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched a programme of Socio-Economic Profiling of PM SVANidhi beneficiaries and their families, as an additional component of PM SVANidhi Scheme, in the presence of representatives of various Central Ministries and State officials.

- Under this, a complete profile of each PM SVANidhi beneficiary and their family members will be prepared. Based on the profiled data, benefits of the various eligible Central Schemes would be extended to them for their holistic socio-economic upliftment.
- In the first phase, 125 cities have been selected for the programme. The profile will identify potential eligibility of beneficiaries and their family members for select Central Government schemes and facilitate linkages.
- Besides this, the States/ UTs would also have an option to extend their respective State/ UT specific welfare schemes to them. M/s Quality Council of India (QCI) has been appointed as implementing partner for the programme.
- Prior to the complete roll-out, MoHUA will run a pilot program in six cities, namely Gaya, Indore, Kakching, Nizamabad, Rajkot, and Varanasi.
- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) is implementing Prime Minister Street Vendors AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Scheme since June 1, 2020, with an objective to provide affordable working capital loan up to ₹10,000 to Street Vendors for facilitating the resumption of their livelihoods adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Draft Indian Ports Bill, 2020**

- Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has circulated a draft of Indian Ports Bill 2020 for public consultation which will repeal and replace the Indian Ports Act, 1908 (Act No. 15 of 1908).
- The draft Indian Ports Bill, 2020, seeks to, inter alia, enable the structured growth and sustainable development of ports to attract investments in the Port sector for optimum utilisation of the Indian Coastline by effective administration and management of ports.
- The proposed Bill will provide measures to facilitate conservation of ports, taking into account the prevalent situation with respect to the high number of non-operational ports.
- It shall further ensure greater investment in the Indian maritime and ports sector through the creation of improved, comprehensive regulatory frameworks for the creation of new ports and management of existing ports.
- The Bill also seeks to, inter alia, create an enabling environment for the growth and sustained development of the ports sector in India through the following broad methods:

### *Constitution of Maritime Port Regulatory Authority*

- Formulation of the National Port policy and National Port plan in consultation with Coastal State Governments, State Maritime Boards and other stakeholders.
- Formulation of specialised Adjudicatory Tribunals namely Maritime Ports Tribunal and Maritime Ports Appellate Tribunal to curb any anti-competitive practises in the port sector and act as a speedy and affordable grievance redressal mechanism.
- The Bill seeks to provide increased opportunities for public and private investments in the Indian maritime and ports sector by way of removing barriers to entry, simplifying processes and establishment of agencies and bodies to plan and enable growth of the ports sector.

### **Karnataka's new anti-cow slaughter bill**

- The Karnataka government has passed the Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill (2020) in the Assembly.
- In the latest Karnataka Bill 'beef' and 'cattle' are defined as:
- 'Beef' is defined as the flesh of cattle in any form.
- 'Cattle' is defined as "cow, calf of a cow and bull, bullock, and he or she buffalo below the age of thirteen years".
- Gau Shalas': Shelters established for the protection and preservation of cattle registered with the Department of Animal Husbandry and Fisheries.
- Police officers ranked sub-inspector and above or a competent authority will have the power to search premises and seize cattle and materials used or intended to use to commit the offence.
- Such seizures, if any, will then be reported before the Sub Divisional Magistrate without unreasonable delay.
- It is a cognizable offence; violators can attract three to seven years of imprisonment.
- While a penalty between Rs 50,000 and Rs 5 lakh can be levied for the first offence, second and subsequent offences can attract penalties ranging between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 10 lakh.

## Several Development Projects in Gujarat

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will undertake a visit to Dhordo in Kutch, Gujarat on 15th December, 2020 and lay the Foundation Stone of several development projects in the State.
- These projects include a desalination plant, a hybrid renewable energy park, and a fully automated milk processing and packing plant. Chief Minister of Gujarat will be present on the occasion.
- Prime Minister will also undertake a visit to the White Rann, followed by witnessing a cultural programme.
- Gujarat is taking a significant step towards transforming seawater to potable drinking water with the upcoming Desalination Plant at Mandvi, Kutch.
- This Desalination Plant, with 10 crore litre per day capacity (100 MLD), will strengthen water security in Gujarat by complementing Narmada Grid, Sauni network and treated wastewater infrastructure.
- Nearly 8 lakh people across the regions of Mundra, Lakhpat, Abdasa and Nakhatrana talukas will receive desalinated water from this plant, which will also help in sharing the surplus to upstream districts of Bhachau, Rapar and Gandhidham.
- It is one of the five upcoming desalination plants in Gujarat besides those at Dahej (100 MLD), Dwarka (70 MLD), Ghogha Bhavnagar (70 MLD) and Gir Somnath (30 MLD).

## 2001 Parliament terror attack

- The Vice President, M. Venkaiah Naidu today said that terrorism is a serious threat to democracy, individual freedoms and global economic advancement which are the core values of present-day civilisation.
- He pays tributes to the martyrs of 2001 Parliament terror attack.
- Paying rich tributes to the security personnel who sacrificed their lives to defend the Parliament House, Shri Naidu said that their acts of sacrifice will forever be etched in the minds of our countrymen.
- Praising the courage of the CRPF Constable Kamlesh Kumari who first spotted the terrorists and kept tracking and informing about their movements in the Parliament House complex, the Vice President said that her bravery was instrumental in quickly putting down the terrorists' game plan. “

## **Vidyavachaspati Bannanje Govindacharya**

- The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has expressed grief over the demise of Vidyavachaspati Bannanje Govindacharya.
- In a tweet, the Prime Minister said, “Vidyavachaspati Bannanje Govindacharya Ji will be remembered for his great contributions to literature. His passion for Sanskrit and Kannada were admirable. His works will continue influencing future generations. Pained by his demise. Condolences to his family.

## **Financial Services Centres Authority (Bullion Exchange) Regulations, 2020**

- IFSCA notifies International Financial Services Centres Authority (Bullion Exchange) Regulations, 2020.
- In the Union Budget 2020, Union Minister of Finance Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman had made an announcement for setting up an International Bullion Exchange at the International Financial Services Centre in GIFT City, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- Subsequently, the Government of India had notified the bullion spot delivery contract and bullion depository receipt (with bullion as underlying) as Financial Products and related services as Financial Services under the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) Act, 2019.

### *About IFSCA*

- It has been entrusted with the responsibility of operationalization of this Exchange. In this regard, the International Financial Services Centres Authority (Bullion Exchange) Regulations 2020 were approved by the Authority in its meeting held on 27 October, 2020.
- The said regulations have been notified and published in the Gazette of India on 11 December, 2020.
- The regulations inter alia cover the Bullion Exchange, Clearing Corporation, Depository and Vaults.
- The regulations are divided into 16 chapters. The first half of the regulation deals with the Exchange and Clearing Corporations while the second half pertains to the Vaults and Depositories and related provisions

## **Khelo India Youth Games 2021**

- Recently, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has included Gatka, Kalaripayattu, Thang-Ta and Mallakhamba in Khelo India Youth Games 2021.
- Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) 2021, are scheduled to take place in Haryana. The 2020 edition of KIYG was held in Guwahati (Assam).
- KIYG is a part of the revamped national programme for development of sports 'Khelo India' which was approved by the Union Cabinet in 2017.

## **“Birding in India”**

- The Ministry of Tourism's Dekho Apna Desh Webinar series titled “ Birding in India” held on 12th December 2020 focused on Birds and Birding opportunities in India.
- India's biodiversity is one of the richest in the world. From the Himalayas, Desert, Coast, Rainforest and the tropical islands; India represents almost all ecoregion found on the planet and it is home with over 1300 exotic bird species and to name few Indian Roller, Hornbills, Sarus Crane, Great Indian Bustard, Woodpeckers, Kingfishers and many more!
- Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series is an effort to showcase India's rich diversity under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat and it is continuously spreading the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat through a virtual platform.
- The Webinar was presented by Mr. Saurabh Sawant, a naturalist, wildlife photographer and a filmmaker with a keen interest in studying, documenting lesser fauna. His research work mainly involves birds, amphibians & odonates.
- Birds play a very important role in Indian culture. In mythology, different birds are associated as Vahanas of Gods & Goddesses.
- Birds are also very close to human beings since ages and it has always been very inspirational to man's life since stone age to the modern era and from the Stone Age Rock Paintings, Cave Paintings, Mughal Paintings to modern era paintings birds were and are an integral part.

## **MahaSharad**

- Maharashtra Social Justice Department will launch MahaSharad.
- MahaSharad stands for Maharashtra System of Health Rehabilitation and Assistance for Divyang.
- It is a digital platform that will provide free tools required by differently-abled people.

## **Indus Valley Diet**

- According to the study published in the Journal of Archaeological Science about the diet of the people of Indus Valley Civilisation and had a prominence of meat including extensive eating of beef.
- “Lipid residues in pottery from Indus Civilisation in northwest India” study, looks at the food habits of the people on the basis of lipid residue analysis found in pottery from sites such as Alamgirpur (Meerut), Uttar Pradesh,
- Haryana:
- Masudpur, LohariRagho, Rakhigarhi city (Hisar), Khanak (Bhiwani), Farmana town(Rohtak)
- The study also finds about the dominance of animal products like the meat of pigs, cattle, buffalo, sheep and goat, as well as dairy products, from rural and urban settlements of Indus Valley civilisation.
- Cattle/buffalo out of Domestic Animals are the most abundant, averaging between 50-60% of the animal bones found whereas sheep/goat accounting for 10% animal remains.
- Across Indus populations, the High Proportions of cattle bones may suggest a cultural preference for beef consumption and supplemented by consumption of mutton/lamb.
- 90% of the cattle were kept alive at Harappa until they were three or three-and-a-half years which suggest that females were used for dairy production, whereas males were used for traction.
- Previously there have been many studies on the food habit in Indus Valley civilisation before, primarily focusing on crops.

## **Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India'**

- NITI Aayog on 14 December, 2020 released a white paper: Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India with the vision:
- To make India's public health surveillance system more responsive and predictive to enhance preparedness for action at all levels.
- A citizen-friendly public health surveillance system will ensure individual privacy and confidentiality, enabled with a client feedback mechanism.
- The improved data-sharing mechanism between Centre and states for better disease detection, prevention, and control.
- India aims to provide regional and global leadership in managing events that constitute a public health emergency of international concern.
- The white paper was released by NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Dr Rajiv Kumar; Member (Health) Dr Vinod K Paul; CEO Amitabh Kant; and Additional Secretary Dr Rakesh Sarwal.

## **About Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India'**

- It is a continuation of the work on health systems strengthening. It contributes by suggesting mainstreaming of surveillance by making individual electronic health records the basis for surveillance.
- Public health surveillance (PHS) is an important function that cuts across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of care. Surveillance is 'Information for Action'.

## **Swachhta Campaign Awards Ceremony**

- Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan on 14 December, 2020 said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made Swachhta a Jan Andolan which is drawing wide participation from society, urban and rural areas alike.
- He was speaking at the awards distribution ceremony for Swachhta Pakhwada in the petroleum industry. He also said that the petroleum industry has been contributing to this Jan Andolan, giving a boost to its momentum and appealed to intensify this further and re-dedicate to this cause.

- As India completes 75 years of its independence in 2022, we must realise the dream of a Swacch Bharat”, he further added.
- He also called for greater involvement of private sector oil and gas companies in Swacch Bharat Abhiyan and suggested to PSUs to build state-of-the-art toilet facilities at all pilgrim centres and major tourist attractions in the country.
- He handed over the awards to oil and gas PSUs for Swacchta Pakhwada and Swacchta hi Sewa campaigns.
- Shri Pradhan complimented the winners of Swachhata Hi Seva 2019 and Swachhata Pakhwada for their efforts in raising awareness on various aspects of cleanliness, including waste management and eliminating single-use plastics.
- Following Swachhata Pakhwada Awards were presented: First Prize- IOCL Second Prize- BPCL 3rd Prize- ONGC Special Award- HPCL Swacchata hi Sewa: 1st- HPCL 2nd-BPCL 3rd-IOCL.

### **Memorandum of Understanding between the Indian Navy and CSIR-NIO**

- The Indian Navy, represented by Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence (Navy) / Directorate of Naval Oceanology and Meteorology Government of India and Council of Scientific & Industrial Research's National Institute of Oceanography will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding to seal Institutional Linkages and Expertise in the field of Oceanography.
- The MoU will be signed virtually on 24th December by Commodore AA Abhyankar, Commodore Naval Oceanology and Meteorology and Prof. Sunil Kumar Singh, Director, CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography along with Commodore SMU Athar, Captain M K Mahawar and Commander Pawanjit Singh, Directorate of Naval Oceanology and Meteorology and Dr. V. Sanil Kumar, Head, Business Development, Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation & Ocean Engineering and Mr. Venkat Krishnamurthy, Collaborations Desk of CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography.
- The Indian Navy and CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography have a long history of informal cooperation in various scientific domains of interest and this MoU will now facilitate a roadmap for further meaningful interactions that is drawn on mutual strengths of the two organizations in the specific fields of Oceanography.
- CSIR-NIO by virtue of its systematic and focused research in the field of ocean data collection, environmental impact assessment, and ocean modelling, has maintained the highest standards in this domain.
- This collaboration will now facilitate utilization and sharing the expertise of both the organizations with the latest developments in the field of oceanography.

## **18 highway projects in Rajasthan**

- Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and MSMEs Nitin Gadkari will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for 18 highway projects in Rajasthan on 24 December, 2020.
- Shri Ashok Gehlot, Chief Minister, Rajasthan will preside over the virtual function, to be attended by Union Ministers Gen (Retd) V K Singh and several Ministers from the State.
- These projects for inauguration and foundation laying carry a road length of nearly 1127 kilometers, involving construction value of Rs. 8,341 crore.
- Paving the way for the development of Rajasthan, these roads will enhance better connectivity, convenience and economic growth in the State.

## **'HIMGIRI' Project**

- 'Himgiri', the first of the three Project 17A ships being built at M/s Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata was launched on 14 December, 2020.
- She made her first contact with the waters of Hoogly River at 1335 Hrs at the launch ceremony, General Bipin Rawat, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) was the Chief Guest.
- In keeping with Naval traditions Smt Madhulika Rawat, spouse of CDS launched the ship to the chanting of invocations from the Atharva Veda. The ship has taken its name and crest of the second Frigate of the Leander Class of ships, which incidentally was launched 50 years ago in 1970.
- Under the Project 17A program, a total of seven ships, four at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) and three ships at GRSE are being built with enhanced stealth features, advanced indigenous weapon and sensor fit along with several other improvements.
- The launch of 'Himgiri' has showcased GRSE's commitment towards the building of three state-of-the-art warships of P17A for Indian Navy.
- Over the years, GRSE has emerged as a leading shipyard having built over 100 ships. The yard has scaled up its infrastructure and skillsets to meet new challenges in the building of P17A ships. P17A ships are the first gas turbine propulsion and largest combat platforms ever built at GRSE.
- P17A ships have been indigenously designed by Directorate of Naval Design (Surface Ship Design Group) – DND(SSG), and are being built at indigenous yards namely MDL and GRSE

## **All India Kisan Coordination Committee**

- The office bearers from different States representing the All India Kisan Coordination Committee met Agriculture Minister Shri Narendra Singh Tomar in Krishi Bhavan.
- Farmer leaders from Telangana, Maharashtra, Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Bihar spoke to the Agriculture Minister.
- All of them were convinced that the recent Farm Acts are for the benefit of farmers across India and will save farmers from the clutches of the middlemen who exploited farmers over the years.
- They were of the opinion that the laws would ensure freedom of choice to farmers in the sale and purchase of agri-produce and allow barrier-free trade and commerce outside premises of Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees.
- They further added that giving farmers the right to enter into agreements with the buyer would enable prior price determination and transfer the risk of market unpredictability from the farmer to the sponsor.
- These farm reforms, they felt, would also enable farmers to access modern technology, better seeds and other inputs, besides attracting private investment into the agriculture sector.

## **Project to Develop Green, Resilient and Safe Highways in India**

- The Government of India and the World Bank on 22 December signed a \$500 million project to build safe and green national highway corridors in the states of Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.
- The agreement was signed by Dr Mohapatra on behalf of the Government of India and Ms Sumila Gulyani, Acting Country Director, India on behalf of the World Bank.
- The project will also enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) in mainstreaming safety and green technologies.

### *About Green National Highways Corridors Project*

- The Green National Highways Corridors Project will support MoRTH construct 783 km of highways in various geographies by integrating safe and green technology designs such as local and marginal materials, industrial byproducts, and other bioengineering solutions.

- The project will help reduce GHG emissions in the construction and maintenance of highways.
- The ultimate objective of transport infrastructure is to provide seamless connectivity and reduce logistics costs.
- The Government of India has launched many investment programs in road sector infrastructure to strengthen and improve logistics performance.
- This project will also support analytics to map the freight volume and movement pattern on the National Highway network, identify constraints, and provide innovative logistics solutions.

### **‘Swarnim Vijay Mashaal’**

- In December 1971, the Indian Armed Forces secured a decisive and historic Victory over Pakistan Army, which led to the creation of a Nation – Bangladesh and also resulted in the largest Military Surrender after the World War – II.
- From 16 December, the Nation will be celebrating 50 Years of Indo-Pak War, also called ‘Swarnim Vijay Varsh’. Various commemorative events are planned across the Nation.
- Inaugural event will be held at the National War Memorial (NWM) in New Delhi on 16 December, 2020 which will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. On his arrival, the Prime Minister will be received by Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh at the venue.
- The Prime Minister, Chief of Defence Staff & Tri-Service Chiefs will lay a wreath and pay homage to the fallen soldiers. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will light up the ‘Swarnim Vijay Mashaal’ from the eternal flame of NWM on the occasion.
- Four Victory Mashaals (flames) will be lit from the Eternal Flame of NWM. These Mashaals will be carried to various parts of the country including to villages of Param Vir Chakra and MahaVir Chakra Awardees of 1971 War.
- Soil from the villages of these Awardees and from areas where major battles were fought in 1971 are being brought to the NWM.
- Various commemorative events will be conducted pan-India wherein war Veterans and Veer Naris will be felicitated and events like band displays, seminars, exhibitions, equipment displays, film festivals, conclave and adventure activities are planned.

## **Meghdoot awards**

- Department of Posts conducted Meghdoot Award Function 2020 on December 15, 2020, in the Conference Hall of MeitY, Electronics Niketan, CGO Complex, New Delhi.
- The Function was graced by Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Communications, Law & Justice and Electronics & Technology as the Chief Guest and Shri Sanjay Dhotre, Minister of State for Education, Communications and Electronics & Technology as Guest of Honour.
- All the Chief Postmaster Generals and Meghdoot awardees were present in the function via video conference.
- The Meghdoot award is given every year for excellence in postal service. The meghdoot award 2019-20 were given in eight categories.
- In the function, DakPay logo was launched by India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) of India Post as part of its ongoing efforts to provide Digital Financial inclusion at the last mile.

## **CEO, Prasar Bharati elected Vice President of ABU**

- Prasar Bharati has achieved another global milestone in broadcasting today with the CEO, Shashi Shekhar Vempati being elected as the Vice President of Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), one of the largest broadcasting associations in the world.
- Shri Vempati has been elected to the office of the Vice President, ABU for three years with immediate effect.
- It is remarkable to note that almost all of the Public Broadcasters of the member countries in the Asia Pacific region strongly supported the candidature of India's Public Broadcaster which was forwarded by NHK Japan.
- The candidature of the nominee from China's NRTA was unsuccessful, failing to garner support from any of the members, paving the way for CEO Prasar Bharati India's election to the Vice Presidency of ABU.

### *About Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union*

- The Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union was formed in 1964 as a professional association of broadcasting organisations with over 286 members in 57 countries and regions, reaching the potential population of about three billion people.

## **National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5)- Data related to Women**

- The first-phase data of the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5) 2019-20 has been released recently by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. It provided data on several issues related to women in India.
- National Family Health Survey is a large-scale, multi-round survey which is conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India.
- The Phase-I provides data for 22 states/UTs and the fieldwork in the remaining 14 (Phase-II) States/UTs is under progress.
- The survey have been conducted under the stewardship of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, with the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) Mumbai, serving as the nodal agency.
- In the past half-a-decade, the Total Fertility Rate across most Indian states declined more so among urban women. This means that the population of India is stabilizing.
- Sikkim recorded the lowest TFR, with one woman bearing 1.1 children on average; Bihar recorded the highest TFR of three children per woman.
- TFRs were found to be 'below-replacement level (2.1)', in 19 out of the 22 surveyed states.
- TFR indicates the average number of children expected to be born to a woman during her reproductive span of 15-49 years.
- In 13 of the 22 States/UTs, more than half of the children and women are anaemic. It has also been observed that anaemia among pregnant women has increased in half of the States/UTs compared to NFHS-4.
- Female sterilization continues to dominate as the modern method of contraception in states like Andhra Pradesh (98%), Telangana (93%), Kerala (88%), Karnataka (84%), Bihar (78%) and Maharashtra (77%).
- Overall Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) has increased substantially in most States/UTs and it is the highest in HP and WB (74%).
- There has been an increase in child marriages in Tripura (40.1% from 33.1% in 2015-16), Manipur (16.3% from 13.7% in 2015-16) and Assam (31.8% from 30.8 % in 2015-16).

- States like West Bengal (41.6%) and Bihar (40.8%) still have high prevalence of child marriages.
- States such as Tripura, Manipur, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland have also shown an increase in teenage pregnancies.
- Karnataka witnessed the largest increase in spousal violence, from 20.6% in NFHS 4 to 44.4% in NFHS-5.

## 8 Khelo India State Centres of Excellence

- Union Minister of Sports & Youth Affairs Shri Kiren Rijiju virtually inaugurated 8 Khelo India State Centres of Excellence (KISCEs) across India in the presence of distinguished State Sports Ministers on 22 December, 2020.
- The 8 States include: Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Kerala, Telangana, Nagaland, Karnataka and Odisha.
- The Union Minister reiterated the vision is to see India in top 10 in the Los Angeles Olympics 2028.
- The Sports Ministry had identified sports facilities in these 8 states to be upgraded to the Khelo India State Centre of Excellence (KISCE). The centres identified are:
  - Nagaland- State Sports Academy, IG Stadium Kohima
  - Manipur – Khuman Lampak Sports Complex, Imphal
  - Arunachal Pradesh – Sangey Lhaden Sports Academy, Chimpu Itanagar
  - Mizoram – Rajiv Gandhi Stadium, Aizawl
  - Odisha – Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneshwar
  - Telangana – Regional Sports School Hakimpet
  - Karnataka – Sh. Jayaprakash Narayan National Youth Centre Bangalor
  - Kerala – GV Raja Sr. Sec. Sports School Thiruvananthapuram
- With a vision to make India one of the top 10 countries in 2028 Olympics, the Khelo India State Centres of Excellence will ensure that athletes proficient in a certain sport can be given the world-class specialised training and these centers become the best facilities in the country to train athletes in the priority sport for which they have been earmarked.

## 12th GRIHA Summit

- The inaugural session of the 12th Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA) Summit was organised virtually recently.
- The theme of 12th GRIHA Summit is “Rejuvenating Resilient Habits.
- Its objective is to serve as a platform to deliberate on innovative technologies and solutions which shall help in creating robust mechanisms for developing sustainable and resilient solutions for the benefit of the entire community.
- During the event, the Vice President of India launched the SHASHWAT magazine and the book '30 Stories Beyond Buildings'
- About Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA)
- It is the national rating system of India for any completed building construction.
- GRIHA is recognised as India's own green building rating system in India's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- It was conceived by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and developed jointly with the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

## Himalayan Serow

- For the first time in the Himalayan cold desert region, a Himalayan Serow has been sighted in Spiti Himachal Pradesh.
- It resembles like a cross between a goat, a donkey, a cow, and a pig.
- It's a medium-sized mammal with a large head, thick neck, short limbs, long, mule-like ears, and a coat of dark hair.
- There are several species of serows, and all of them are found in Asia.
- The Himalayan serow, or *Capricornis sumatraensis* thar, is restricted to the Himalayan region.
- Taxonomically, it is a subspecies of the mainland serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*).

## ASSOCHAM Foundation Week 2020

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver the keynote address at ASSOCHAM Foundation Week 2020 on 19th December at 10:30 AM via video conferencing.
- Prime Minister will also present the 'ASSOCHAM Enterprise of the Century Award' to Shri Ratan Tata, who will receive the award on behalf of the TATA Group.

### *About ASSOCHAM*

- ASSOCHAM was established in 1920 by promoter Chambers representing all regions of India.
- Having in its fold over 400 Chambers and Trade Associations, and serving over 4.5 lakh members across India, ASSOCHAM has emerged as the fountainhead of knowledge for Indian industry.

### **PM-WANI – Public Wi-Fi Access Network Interface**

- Recently, the Union Cabinet cleared a proposal by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to set up public Wi-Fi access network interfaces.
- In 2017, the public Wi-Fi Access Network Interface, which will be called 'PM-WANI', was first recommended by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).
- This is essentially a nationwide network of public Wi-Fi hotspots, termed public data offices (PDOs) after the public call office (PCO) concept rolled out by the Indian government to set up a nationwide network of landline public pay-phones.

### *About PM-WANI*

- It will involve multiple players, including PDOs, PDOAs, app providers, and a central registry. PM-WANI infrastructure can be structured in the form of a pyramid.
- It will increase the proliferation of internet services in the country.
- It will offer a cost-effective option for the common man.
- It has the potential to generate over 2 crore jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities, besides offering a cost-effective means of mass connectivity.

### **Livelihood Enterprise Development Programme**

- Second Batch of the Livelihood Enterprise Development Programme(LEDP) on Food Processing & Bakery sanctioned by Goa Regional Office was inaugurated by Smt. Usha Ramesh, General Manager, NABARD, Goa in a function organized by Agnel Entrepreneurship Development Institute in Village Hasapur, Pernem on 16 December 2020.

- Shri Vasant Savardekar, DGM, NABARD, Shri Sushil L Naik, DDM, Master trainers and 30 women members drawn from various SHGs were present during the occasion.
- In her inaugural address, Ms. Usha Ramesh, GM urged the participants to undergo the training in the right spirit, upgrade their skill and use the opportunity provided by the upcoming Mopa International Airport in the village to their benefit by taking up such livelihood activities.
- The State Government is in the process of GI tagging local food delicacies and this will also come handy.

### **Annual Summit of Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI)**

- The Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers Shri D.V. Sadananda Gowda inaugurated the two-day Annual Summit of the Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI) on 17 December, 2020.
- The Minister Conferred the lifetime achievement and Special Recognition awards during the summit.
- While addressing the summit Shri Gowda said that the contribution of Indian pharmaceutical sector has been reinforced during this pandemic year when the companies, global and Indian, stepped in and stepped up their efforts in service of the country. India is often referred to as ‘the pharmacy of the world.’
- This has been proven completely true during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic when India continued to produce and export critical life-saving medicines to the rest of the world , the minister added.
- The Minister said that India has attracted large scale inflow of foreign direct investment to the pharmaceutical sector and the Medical Devices sector. More and more foreign companies wanted to set up their research, manufacturing and clinical trials in India.
- The Union Minister said that as a matter of record, pharmaceuticals export from India was over 20 billion dollars in the year 2019-20 and is expected to cross 25 billion dollars by the end of the current financial year.
- This was at a time when the domestic market has crossed 22 billion dollars last year. It is indeed poised for much higher growth.

## **Vivad se Vishwas Scheme**

- Income Tax Department, Goa has held an online seminar on Vivad se Vishwas Scheme with Goa Chamber of Commerce & Industry ,Chartered Accountants, Tax Professionals and other stakeholders attending.
- Principal Commissioner of Income Tax Panaji Ms. Amrapalli Das addressed the participants and highlighted the benefits of the scheme. She has requested the participants to impress upon the taxpayers who will be immensely benefited by opting for the scheme.
- She has also advised the taxpayers to file the declaration before 31st December, 2020 so as to avoid last minute rush. Further, she has also said that the last date for filing declaration is 31.12.2020.

### *About the scheme and benefits*

- Vivad se Vishwas Scheme is a well thought scheme brought out by the Government of India to put an end to pending direct tax disputes.
- The benefit under the Scheme is available for all the taxpayers who are in appeal at different levels of appeal matrix.
- The taxpayer can simply pay the disputed tax and can save the interest levied and leviable, further, any penalties levied and leviable.
- It is also available for the taxpayers in whose case the Department is in appeal against the revenue adverse orders. However, in such a case the taxpayers will be asked to pay half of the disputed tax or penalty.
- To get the maximum benefits the taxpayers have to pay the disputed tax on or before 31.03.2021. The scheme caters to all the taxpayers having income tax disputes in India including the non-resident assesseees.

## **CII, FICCI to seek a pause on wage code**

- Representatives of industry bodies, including those from CII and FICCI, have requested the Labour Ministry to hold back implementation of a new definition of wages, which would increase social security deductions and reduce the take-home pay of workers.
- The new definition of wages is part of the Code on Wages, 2019 passed by Parliament last year.
- The new definition would result in a major cut in take-home salaries and also place a burden on employers.

## **'FRUITS' portal for land records launched**

- The 'FRUITS' portal, a project of e-governance by Karnataka Government. Here 'FRUITS' stands for Farmer Registration and Unified Beneficiary Information System.
- The portal was integrated into the Bhoomi portal of the State for fetching and validating land details.
- It will eliminate the visit of farmers to sub-registrar offices.
- All the farmers will be registered and given an FID Number in this portal.
- By using this number, the financial and lending institutions can access the land details of the farmers as well as their borrowings and take a quick decision on lending to the farmers depending on their requirements.
- All financial institutions would be brought on to the portal so that at one place, all the data pertaining to the loans of the farmers would be available.

## **Haldibari – Chilahati rail link**

- Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi and Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Ms. Sheikh Hasina on 17 December, 2020 jointly inaugurated a railway link between Haldibari in India and Chilahati in Bangladesh during the PM level virtual bilateral summit.
- Later on the day, a goods train was flagged off by the Railway Minister of Bangladesh Md. Nurul Islam Sujan from Chilahati station which entered India passing through the international border thus heralding a new era for the people living in both the countries.
- The railway network of India and Bangladesh are mostly inherited from British Era Indian Railways. After partition in 1947, 7 rail links were operational between India and the then East Pakistan (up to 1965). Presently, there are 4 operational rail links between India and Bangladesh.
- They are, Petrapole (India) – Benapole (Bangladesh), Gede (India) – Darshana (Bangladesh), Singhabad (India)-Rohanpur (Bangladesh), Radhikapur (India)-Birol (Bangladesh). The Haldibari – Chilahati rail link being made functional from 17.12.2020 is the 5th rail link between India and Bangladesh.
- The Haldibari – Chilahati rail link was operational till 1965. This was part of the Broad Gauge main route from Kolkata to Siliguri during partition.

- Trains traveling to Assam and North Bengal continued to travel through the then East Pakistan territory even after partition. For example, a train from Sealdah to Siliguri used to enter East Pakistan territory from Darshana and exit using the Haldibari – Chilahati link.
- However, the war of 1965 effectively cut off all the railway links between India and the then East Pakistan. So on the Eastern Sector of India partition of the railways thus happened in 1965. So the importance of the reopening of this rail link can be well imagined.
- This newly opened rail link will enhance rail network accessibility to the main ports, dry ports, and land borders to support the growth in regional trade and to encourage economic and social development of the region.
- Common people and businessman of both the countries will be able to reap the benefit of both goods and passenger traffic, once passenger trains are planned in this route.
- With this new link coming into operation, tourist from Bangladesh will be able to visit places like Darjeeling, Sikkim, Dooars apart from countries like Nepal, Bhutan etc easily. Economic activities of these South Asian countries will also be benefitted from this new rail link.

### **Visva Bharati's 100 years**

- Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah has said that Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Visva Bharati and Shantiniketan have always been centers of attraction in India and abroad.
- Addressing the faculty, students and intellectuals at Visva Bharati University at Shantiniketan in West Bengal on 20 December, 2020, Amit Shah said that whether it be the new ideas in the country's cultural heritage, art and tradition, or the freedom struggle, Bengal has been 50 years ahead of the times than other parts of the country in every aspect.
- The Union Home Minister said that Visva Bharati is going to complete its 100 years. There must have been some ideas at the time when it was founded, and now, on the completion of 100 years, it should be an effort to renew Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's ideas from this institution.
- He said that Shantiniketan and Visva Bharati have contributed to the framework of the education system in the country.

- Shri Amit Shah said that this journey that started from a Brahmacharya Ashram in 1901 has contributed a lot to the Cultural Heritage of India. He said that Gurudev said that the purpose of education is to make the person fearless by thinking beyond all limits of narrowness.
- Viswa Bharti's journey will be considered successful only if the ideas emanating from here will change our education system as per the mantra given by Gurudev Ravindra Nath Tagore.
- He also said that the purpose of education is to groom personalities who will break free of luxurious life, attachment and all kinds of social bindings in search of peace and cultivate such minds whose quest to know the truth never stops.
- The Union Home Minister said that the Visva Bharati has given the nation several people who have excelled in various fields.
- In the hundredth year of Visva-Bharati, we should take a pledge that this tradition will not stop and after 50 years, when we will celebrate the 150th anniversary of Visva Bharati, we should aim to nurture at least ten people who excel in various fields and instil Gurudev Tagore's ideas across the country and make them a part of life and society.

### **Indian Information Service**

- Madhav Krishna Pardhi, a retired Indian Information Service officer celebrated his 100th birthday on 18 December, 2020. Poet, journalist, storyteller, actor and critic, he served in the Indian Information Service from 1950 to 1978.
- M. K. Pardhi was born in a humble family at Savner in Maharashtra. He started his career as a journalist at a Marathi newspaper Navshakti. He proudly remembers his days when he reported on the "Quit India" movement led by Mahatma Gandhi.
- In 1945, when Prabhakar Padhye was the editor of Navshakti, Shri Pardhi worked as the deputy editor for five years.
- Shri Pradhi recounts his association with the All India Radio "I spent large part of my career in the All India Radio. I joined the News Services Division of All India Radio in New Delhi in 1950. I worked in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry till my retirement.
- But my association with radio goes even beyond. I was associated with radio broadcast work since Mahatma Gandhi's 1942 Quit India movement in AIR Mumbai, where I also worked as casual reporter and occasionally as a poet."

## **8th producing Basin of India – Bengal Basin**

- Bolstering efforts to meet one of the vital essentials- the energy need for AtmaNirbhar Bharat, Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel on 20 December, 2020 dedicated the Bengal Basin, the 8th producing basin of India, to the nation.
  - Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, while dedicating the Asokenagar discovery to the nation, said that the discovery would play a role for India's energy security.
  - He stated that the discovery would definitely add to our commitment towards Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi's clarion call for reducing oil import dependence.
  - Shri Pradhan congratulated ONGC and said that with this discovery, around seven decades of relentless endeavours by scientists and engineers of India have borne fruits, giving a new hope for robust development of West Bengal. Bengal Basin finally looks set to find a place on the oil & gas map of the world, he added.
  - ONGC took a major step by commencing oil production from the well Asokenagar-1, Bengal Basin in 24 Paragana district. The well Asoknagar-1 was completed as an oil producer under Early-Monetization Plan issued by Government of India.
  - This makes ONGC having discovered and put to production seven out of the eight producing basins of India covering 83 percent of established oil & gas reserves. ONGC is India's largest oil and gas producer contributing 72 percent of the country's hydrocarbon production.
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- **Centenary Celebrations of AMU**
  - Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the centenary celebrations of Aligarh Muslim University on 22 December, 2020 at 11 AM via video conferencing. Prime Minister will also release a postal stamp during the event.
  - Chancellor of the University His Holiness Syedna Mufaddal Saifudin and Union Education Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank will also be present on the occasion.

### *About AMU*

- AMU became a University in 1920, through an Act of Indian Legislative Council by elevating the Mohammedan Anglo Oriental (MAO) College to the status of a Central University.
- MAO College was set up in 1877 by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. The University has a campus spread over 467.6 hectares of land in the city of Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh.
- It also has three off-campus centres in Malappuram (Kerala), Murshidabad-Jangipur (West Bengal) and Kishanganj (Bihar).

### **Memorandum of Agreement signed between CGWB and CSIR-NGRI for High-Resolution Aquifer Mapping & Management in Arid Region of North-Western India**

- A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was signed today between Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), Ministry of Jal Shakti and CSIR-NGRI, Hyderabad for use of advanced heliborne geophysical survey and other scientific studies in parts of the States of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Haryana under the Aquifer Mapping Programme.
- The MoA was signed by Chairman, CGWB and Director, CSIR-NGRI in the august presence of the Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri Gajendra Singh Sekhawat, and Union Minister of Science and Technology, Health and Family Welfare and Earth Sciences, Dr. Harshvardhan in New Delhi.
- Under phase- I of the project, an area of nearly 1 lakh sq km spreading over nearly 65,500 sq km of western arid Rajasthan (covering parts of Bikaner, Churu, Ganaga Nagar, Jalor, Pali, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Sikar districts), 32,000 Sq. Km arid parts of Gujarat (covering Rajkot, Jamnagar, Morbi, Surendranagar and Devbhumi Dwarka districts) and nearly 2500 sq km of Haryana (covering Kurukshetra and Yamuna Nagar districts) would be covered at an estimated cost of 54 Crores.
- The major objectives of the study include High resolution aquifer mapping using heliborne geophysical studies, including identification of Sites for artificial recharge, 3D Geophysical model, Geophysical Thematic maps at horizontal and vertical plains.
- Aquifer Geometry of principal aquifer with demarcation of de-saturated and saturated aquifers, Aquifer system with relatively fresh and saline zones; Spatial and depth wise distribution of paleochannel network if any and its linkage with aquifer system; Selecting suitable sites for groundwater withdrawal and water conservation through artificial or managed aquifer recharge.

## **Foundation Stone of 100 Bedded ESIC Hospital**

- Minister of State (I/C) for Labour and Employment Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar laid the foundation stone of 100 bedded Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) Hospital at Ompura, Budgam on 21 December, 2020.
- Lt. Governor Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha was the Chief Guest at the foundation stone laying ceremony.
- The four-storied, 100 bedded hospital will be built over an area of five acres and will provide services covering 23 specialities and three super specialities.
- The facility will come up at an expenditure of Rs 160 Crore and is expected to be completed in the next one and a half years.
- Besides covering registered Insured Persons (IPs), the healthcare facilities will also be available to the general population.
- ESIC has been working for the past 66 years and has a presence in over 80 per cent of the districts of the country. He said that Srinagar has around 20 thousand IPs and they deserve the best healthcare as is available to their counterparts in other regions of the country.

## **Aesthetic Dhokra Decorative Pieces Added to the Tribes India Collection**

- Exquisite Dhokra products from different tribes of India were among the main items added in its 7th edition of “From Our Home to your Home” campaign on Tribes India, which focusses on sourcing new, natural, attractive as well as immunity – boosting tribal products and bringing them to the customer.
- 35 new products were included in the Tribes India catalogue over the past week. Key among them are the dhokra style metal work. Dhokra is a non-ferrous metal casting style which uses the lost-wax technique.
- This style of metal casting has been in vogue in all parts of India for centuries. The dhokra products reflect the simplicity and motifs of tribal and folk life and make for excellent gifting options. Hence they are popular both in India and abroad.
- Among the dhokra products being introduced on Tribes India are attractive statues of fish, elephants and hangers in the boat jail design from the Lohra tribes of Jharkhand.

- From the Sadeibarainitribals from Odisha, Ganesha statues, including a dancing Ganesha, a mask of Goddess Durga and Lord Jagannath, a Buddha Jaali and beautiful diyas in different shapes have been sourced. These reasonably priced items will enhance the decor of any house and make for thoughtful gifts.
- Other products include products from the Kattunayakan tribes of Tamil Nadu. These include different variants of pure, unadulterated honey, tasty pickles such as amla, vadu mango, ragi and types of rice.
- From the tribes of Assam, pure ghee, organic poha, pickles, raw honey have been sourced. All the new products introduced are available in 125 Tribes India outlets, Tribes India mobile vans and also on online platforms such as the Tribes India E-marketplace (tribesindia.com) and e-tailers.

### **CII-ITC Sustainability Awards 2020**

- Country's largest power producer, NTPC Ltd has been conferred "Excellence" in the prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Awards 2020 in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Domain.
- NTPC has been honoured in the Corporate Excellence Category, Commendation for Significant Achievement.
- The recognition was received by D. K. Patel, Director (HR) in the august presence of Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs at the 15th CII-ITC Sustainability Awards 2020 held through the virtual platform.
- This is the highest award conferred by CII-ITC in CSR domain. NTPC is the only PSU to receive the award in the Corporate Excellence category.
- NTPC wins the prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Awards in Corporate Excellence category second time in a row i.e. in the year 2019 and 2020.

### **Global Indian Scientists & Technocrats (GIST) meet**

- Union Minister for S&T, ES and MoHFW, Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the Global Indian Scientists & Technocrats (GIST) meet which is being organized as a part of the Indian International Science Festival (IISF) 2020.
- According to Dr. Harsh Vardhan, "No country can achieve global solutions in isolation; Such challenges can be addressed through cooperation, particularly seamless scientific and technological cooperation."
- Further, he stated that "There is enormous untapped potential in connecting and engaging with the Indian scientific diaspora – not only for the benefit of our national development but also for the global good."

## **TRIFED Signs MoU with MOFPI for the upliftment of Tribal Lives through the implementation of the PM- FME Scheme**

- TRIFED under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been exploring convergences and partnerships with like-minded organisations to create synergies together with the main aim of furthering tribal empowerment and improving their livelihoods.
- In this regard, TRIFED has started tying up with government departments and other like-minded organisations. One of the departments with whom TRIFED has aligned with is Minister of Food Processing (MoFPI).
- MoFPI is implementing the Prime Minister Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PM-FME) Scheme, which is a landmark initiative under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan to support micro-level food entrepreneurs, FPOs, SHGs and co-operatives.
- An important component of this scheme is the tribal sub-plan.
- Other than the MOU was also signed between TRIFED and MoFPI to detail the key areas of collaboration. It has been agreed that TRIFED, as the nodal agency working for tribal upliftment would develop a new range of tribal food products, TriFood.
- With the necessary funding under the PM-FME Scheme of MoFPI, the TriFood range of tribal food products would be developed, branded, and packaged by TRIFED.
- It has also been agreed that the SHGs working under the Van DhanYojana would be provided support under the PM-FME Scheme including for handholding, training, capital investment, and working capital.
- TRIFED will identify the eligible SHGs and their members and “Van DhanYojana” groups and their members engaged in food products and create a list with necessary details on their level of operations, type of product, marketing channels, means of production, production facilities, training, etc. and share them with State Government and MoFPI.

## **PM-JAY SEHAT**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY SEHAT to extend coverage to all the residents of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir on 26th December 2020 via video conferencing.
- The scheme will ensure Universal Health Coverage and focus on providing financial risk protection and ensuring quality and affordable essential health services to all individuals and communities. Union Home Minister and Lieutenant Governor of J&K will also be present on the occasion.
- The Scheme provides free of cost insurance cover to all the residents of the UT of J&K.
- It provides financial cover up to Rs 5 lakh per family on a floater basis to all residents of the UT of J&K. It provides for an operational extension of PM-JAY to 15 lakh (approx) additional families.
- The scheme will operate on insurance mode in convergence with PM-JAY. The benefits of the scheme will be portable across the country.
- The hospitals empanelled under PM-JAY scheme shall provide services under this scheme as well.

### *About Universal Health Coverage (UHC)*

- Universal Health Coverage (UHC) includes the full spectrum of essential, quality health services, from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care and enables everyone to access the services, protecting people from the financial consequences of paying for health services out of their own pockets and reducing the risk that people will be pushed to poverty.
- The Ayushman Bharat program, with its two pillars – Health and Wellness Centres and Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna – is envisaged to achieve UHC.

## **Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020**

- These rules serve to “empower” consumers with rights that would allow them to access a continuous supply of quality, reliable electricity.
- The following areas are covered under the rules:
- Rights of consumers and Obligations of Distribution licensees;
- Release of new connection and modification in existing connection;

- Metering arrangement;
- Billing and payment;
- Disconnection and reconnection;
- Reliability of supply;
- Consumer as 'prosumer';
- Standards of performance of licensee;
- Compensation mechanism;
- Call centre for consumer services;
- Grievance redressal mechanism.

### **'Tour of Duty' recruitment model**

- Months after it was first proposed by the Army, India's defence establishment is actively considering expanding the scope of the 'Tour of Duty' model of recruitment to the Air Force and Navy as well.
- There are plans to expand the scheme over the next few years to ensure that close to 40 per cent of the strength of the Army is recruited through it.
- India's political leadership is keen on the scheme, given its future potential to generate large-scale employment, and is pushing to working out its modalities.
- Currently, the only option apart from regular permanent commission into the armed forces is the Short Service Commission, in which officers are recruited for a period of 14 years. A large number of SSC officers eventually opt for permanent commission, subject to eligibility.
- The Army had, in May, proposed the 'Tour of Duty' model of recruitment that would let young individuals voluntarily serve for a temporary period of three years. It will be a voluntary engagement.
- It is for youths who "do not want to make defence services their permanent vocation, but still want to experience the thrill and adventure of military professionalism".
- The proposal is a shift from the concept of permanent service/job in the Armed Forces, towards 'internship'/temporary experience for three years.

## **Rajasthan becomes 6th State to complete ease of doing business reforms**

- Rajasthan has become the 6th State in the country to successfully undertake “Ease of Doing Business” reform stipulated by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.
- Thus, the State has become eligible to mobilise additional financial resources of Rs. 2,731 crore through Open Market Borrowings. Permission for the same was issued by the Department of Expenditure on 24th December, 2020.
- Rajasthan has now joined the five other States namely, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, who have achieved this feat.
- On completion of reforms facilitating ease of doing business, these six States have been granted additional borrowing permission of Rs.19,459 crore.

### *About Ease of doing business*

- The ease of doing business is an important indicator of the investment-friendly business climate in the country. Improvements in the ease of doing business will enable faster future growth of the state economy.
- Therefore, the Government of India had in May 2020, decided to link grant of additional borrowing permissions to States who undertake the reforms to facilitate ease of doing business.
- So far 10 States have implemented the One Nation One Ration Card System, 6 States have done ease of doing business reforms, and 2 States have done local body reforms.
- Total additional borrowing permission issued so far to the States who have done the reforms stands at Rs.---50,253 crore.

### **First batch of Indian Institute of Skills**

- With the vision of propelling India to the forefront of skill development and job creation under Skill India Mission and to provide an impetus to Skill India programme through private sector participation, the first batch of trainings at the Tata-Indian Institute of Skills, Mumbai was launched at a virtual event on 25 December 2020 by Dr. Mahendra Nath Pandey, Union Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

- The institute is a joint initiative between Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Government of India and Tata Indian Institute of Skills. Formal agreement for setting up institute has been signed between MSDE and TATA IIS on 11th November, 2020.
- The first batch at TATA-Indian Institute of Skills will commence training with two courses in Factory Automation, with duration ranging from 1 to 4 weeks, depending upon the pre-qualification profile of the trainee.
- The institute will also offer scholarships to the first 100 students along with attractive fee options during this initial launch phase. An early bird scholarship scheme of 75% has also been announced for the first 100 students/trainees.
- The primary goal behind setting up the institute is to create an industry-ready workforce as per the evolving demands of the national and global markets. It aspires to be one of the most premier training institutions in the country and will be equipped with world-class vocational training facilities.
- The institute plans to provide training in highly specialized areas such as defense, oil & gas, aerospace, and other emerging businesses to meet industry demands.

## **27 Highway projects in Assam**

- Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and MSMEs Shri Nitin Gadkari inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for 27 highway projects in Assam on 25 December 2020.
- Chief Minister of the State Shri Sarbanand Sonowal presided over the function.
- These projects carry a road length of nearly 439 kilometers, involving a construction value of Rs. 2,366 crore.
- These projects will ease the transportation of commercial goods within and across the State, will improve connectivity at the borders, enhance employment opportunities, save time and fuel, improve tourism and infra development, and will result in providing connectivity for agricultural produce up to larger markets.
- The Minister also unveiled a life-size bronze statue of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on the birthday of the late leader on 25 December, 2020.
- Shri Gadkari announced enhancement in the NHO amount for Assam from Rs 1,213 crore to Rs 2,578 crore for the current financial year.

- The Minister also announced that construction of Dhuvri-Phoolbari bridge will begin in the coming month. He said a sum of Rs 4,497 crore will be spent on this 19 km bridge
- This will reduce the distance between these two places in Assam and Meghalaya by 203 kms.
- He further informed that the DPR is ready and the tender has been floated for the 6.75 km Majuli bridge, which is part of the 131 km long Majuli project worth Rs 900 crore.

### **Good Governance Day**

- Good governance day is celebrated annually on 25 December, the anniversary of the birth of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- In line with the objectives of boosting transparency and accountability while ensuring ease of living for the citizens, the Directorate of Estates, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs today dedicated to the nation, a new Web Portal and Mobile App, e-Sampada.
- The new application provides a single-window for all these services including an allotment for over one lakh government residential accommodations, office space allotment to government organisations in 45 office complexes in 28 cities, booking of 1,176 holiday home rooms and venues like 5, Ashoka Road for social functions etc.
- In its endeavour to provide 'One Nation, One System', the erstwhile four websites (gpra.nic.in, eawas.nic.in, estates.gov.in, holidayhomes.nic.in), and two Mobile Apps (m-Awas & m-Ashoka5) of the Directorate of Estates have been integrated into one, which paves the way for all services on the same platform throughout the country.
- The website and mobile app was launched by Shri Hardeep S Puri, Minister of State(I/C) for Housing & Urban Affairs in the presence of Shri Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, MoHUA and other senior officials on 25 December 2020.
- The portal provides online facility to users across India to lodge complaints, submit documents and appear for a virtual hearing. It will reduce administrative cost and will save time and resources by reducing visits to Directorate of Estate.
- e-Sampada Mobile App and Chatbot facility has been provided for better user experience. Service level benchmarks and activity log for officials are incorporated to ensure accountability.

## **About PASSEX**

- A passing exercise is an exercise done between two navies to ensure that the navies are able to communicate and cooperate in times of war or humanitarian relief. Common drills include flashing light drills, semaphore drills, and flag hoist drills.

## **About Visva-Bharati**

- It is a public research central university and an Institution of National Importance located in Santiniketan, West Bengal, India.
- It was founded by Rabindranath Tagore who called it Visva-Bharati, which means the communion of the world with India.
- It was declared to be a central university and an institution of national importance by an Act of Parliament in 1951.

## **18th Convocation ceremony of Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology, Nagpur**

- Union Education Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' virtually addressed the students at 18th Convocation ceremony of Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology, Nagpur.
- Minister of State for Education Shri Sanjay Dhotre was the guest of honour J. D. Patil, whole-time Director, and Senior Executive Vice President for L&T's Defence Business & L&T-NxT also attended the programme.
- During this 18th Convocation; VNIT awarded a total of 1134 degrees, that included
  - 61 Doctor of Philosophy,
  - 268 Master of Technology,
  - 94 Master of Science,
  - 648 Bachelor of Technology in various engineering disciplines and
  - 63 Bachelor of Architecture
- This year VNIT felicitated students and research scholars with 45 medals, prizes and awards for their academic meritorious achievements.

- This year, the prestigious Sir Visvesvaraya Medal was given to Abdul Sattar Mohammad Ashraf Mapara, B. Tech. in Computer Science Engineering for securing highest CGPA amongst all disciplines of B. Tech. programs.
- The second newly constituted Late Shri Vishramji Jamdar medal for 2nd highest CGPA in B. Tech. (Metallurgical & Materials Engineering) was bagged by Sagar Kulkarni. At the end, a vote of thanks was proposed by The Registrar, Dr. S. R. Sathey.

### **7th NHM National Summit on Good, Replicable Practices**

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare digitally inaugurated the 7th National Summit on Good, Replicable Practices through a video conference on 28 December, 2020.
- Dr. Vardhan also launched New Health Management Information System (HMIS) along with the Operational Guidelines for TB services at AB-HWCs and the Operational Guidelines 2020 on Active Case Detection and Regular Surveillance for Leprosy.
- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare holds the National Summit on Good, Replicable Practices and Innovations in Public Healthcare Systems in India.

### **Battle of Panipat: In Light of Rediscovered Paintings**

- An independent U.S.-based researcher of art history, Manoj Dani has assimilated rare paintings pertaining to the battle and its key players in a work titled Battle of Panipat: In Light of Rediscovered Paintings.
- The book contains rare paintings from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BnF), the British Library, the National Museum in Delhi, Bonhams of the U.K. and the Pune-based Bharat Itihas Sanshodak Mandal (BISM).
- The book also tells about the battle. There is a myriad of myths surrounding Panipat. Far from a well-established narrative of this pivotal event, we have only scratched the surface of this crucial episode, and that whatever we know is only from a handful or selected sources of dubious veracity.
- The paintings depict key players such as Ahmad Shah Abdali, Sadashivrao Bhau, Najib Khan Rohilla, Dattaji Shinde, Vishwas Rao, Suraj Mal Jat and other Maratha, Afghan, Rohilla and Jat chiefs.
- The book deftly weaves analysis from original archival sources, casting a revealing light on the shifting alliances of 18th-century Indian politics.

## Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor

- PM inaugurated the New Bhaupur- New Khurja section and the Operation Control Centre of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor.
- Eastern Corridor is projected to cater to a number of traffic streams-coal for the power plants in the northern region of U.P., Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and parts of Rajasthan from the Eastern coalfields, finished steel, food grains, cement, fertilizers, limestone from Rajasthan to steel plants in the east and general goods.
- The length of the Eastern Corridor is 1856 km. It consists of two distinct segments namely an electrified double-track segment & an electrified single-track segment.
- It starts from Sahnewal near Ludhiana (Punjab) and will pass through the states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand to terminate at Dankuni in West Bengal.
- It is constructed by Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited (DFCCIL), that has been set up as a special purpose vehicle to build and operate Dedicated Freight Corridors.

## Inner Line Permit

- The civil society groups of Meghalaya's have renewed calls for British-era Inner Line Permit.
- Fear among the indigenous people of Northeast against an "illegal immigrant influx", its effects and long-term damages. Northeast India shares borders with countries such as China, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

### *About ILP*

- It is a document required by non-natives to visit or stay in a state that is protected under the ILP system.
- At present, four Northeastern states are covered, namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland.
- Both the duration of stay and the areas allowed to be accessed for any non-native are determined by the ILP.
- The ILP is issued by the concerned state government and can be availed both by applying online or in person.
- An ILP is only valid for domestic tourists.

## Investment Promotion Award 2020

- The United Nations (UNCTAD) has declared Invest India- the National Investment Promotion Agency of India as a winner of the 2020 United Nations Investment Promotion Award.
- The award ceremony took place on 7th December 2020 at UNCTAD Headquarters in Geneva.
- The award recognizes and celebrates the outstanding achievements and best practices of Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) across the globe.
- The evaluation was based on UNCTAD's assessment of work undertaken by 180 Investment Promotion Agencies.
- In March 2020, UNCTAD constituted a team to monitor the response of IPAs to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- UNCTAD reported best practices from Investment Promotion Agencies in the IPA Observer publications in April and July 2020.
- UNCTAD highlighted good practices followed by Invest India, such as the Business Immunity Platform, Exclusive Investment Forum webinar series, its social media engagement and focus COVID response teams including business reconstruction, stakeholder outreach and supplier outreach created as a response to the pandemic, in its publications.

### *About United Nations Investment Promotion Award*

- It is the most coveted award for Investment Promotion Agencies. UNCTAD is a central agency that monitors the performance of IPAs and identifies global best practices. Germany, South Korea and Singapore have been some of the past winners of the award.

## 2020 United Nations Investment Promotion Award

- The Union Home Minister, Amit Shah has greeted Invest India for winning the UNCTAD's 2020 United Nations Investment Promotion Award.
- In his tweet, the Union Home Minister said, "Kudos to Invest India for winning the UNCTAD's 2020 United Nations Investment Promotion Award. This remarkable achievement echoes Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tireless efforts and visionary leadership to make India a preferred investment destination with a focus on ease of doing business."

### *About the United Nations Investment Promotion Award*

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- UNCTAD highlighted good practices followed by Invest India, such as the Business Immunity Platform, Exclusive Investment Forum webinar series, its social media engagement and focus COVID response teams (such as business reconstruction, stakeholder outreach and supplier outreach) created as a response to the pandemic, in its publications.

### **Havana Syndrome**

- A mysterious neurological illness namely "Havana Syndrome", nearly four years ago started to afflict American diplomats and intelligence operatives in Cuba, China, and other countries.
- National Academies of Sciences (NAS) report found that "directed" microwave radiation to be its "plausible" cause.

### *About 'Havana syndrome'*

- US diplomats and other employees stationed in Havana in late 2016 reported feeling ill after hearing strange sounds and experiencing odd physical sensations in their hotel rooms or homes.
- The symptoms are nausea, severe headaches, fatigue, dizziness, sleep problems, and hearing loss, which have since come to be known as "Havana Syndrome".

### **Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research signs MOU with cGanga (think-tank of NMCG)**

- India Water Impact Summit continues with many more experts from India and abroad sharing their insights on the topic of conservation and development.
- Experts from Norway joined their Indian counterparts to discuss 'Arth Ganga – River Conservation Synchronised Development' on 4th day of the summit.

- In a session on Sludge management, Dr. B. Bala Bhaskar, Ambassador of India to Norway said, “We need to take advantage of best practises of Norway in India and see how they can be adapted to local needs.” He extended his support to NMCG and cGanga.
- Ms. Karina Asbjørnsen, Norwegian Diplomat in India shared that Norway intends to deepen the relationship with India especially in the prevention of climate change and conservation of the environment. “
- In a key development Dr. Ola Stedje, Research Scientist, announced that his company has signed an MOU for development of sludge management framework in India jointly by The Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research (NIBIO) and cGanga.
- India Water Impact 2020 is a five-day-long summit, hosting experts and academicians from all over the world to discuss and debate issues related to water conservation, water security and river rejuvenation. The event is co-organised by National Mission for Clean Ganga and Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies.

### **U.S., China dominate the arms market**

- A report has been released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute on the arms market across the world.
- *As per the report;*
- The U.S. arms industry accounted for 61% of sales by the world’s “Top 25” manufacturers last year, ahead of China’s 15.7%.
- In terms of global arms spending, China and the United States are the two biggest states
- Total sales by the “Top 25” rose by 8.5% to \$361 billion, or 50 times the annual budget of the UN’s peacekeeping operations.
- A company from West Asia for the first time made it into the “Top 25”: EDGE, of the United Arab Emirates. In 2019, it was formed by the consolidation of some 25 defence entities.

### *About SIPRI*

- In 1966, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) was established. It is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.

### **Government of India and World Bank sign \$400 million project**

- The Government of India and the World Bank today signed a \$400 million project to support India's efforts at providing social assistance to the poor and vulnerable households, severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This is the second operation in a programmatic series of two. The first operation of \$750 million was approved in May 2020.
- The programme will strengthen the capability of state and national governments in India to provide coordinated and adequate social protection to the poor and vulnerable from the shocks triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This programme will help further expand and deepen the coverage of India's social protection systems by helping these vulnerable groups in urban and peri-urban areas across the country.
- The agreement was signed by Dr. Mohapatra on behalf of the Government of India and Ms Sumila Gulyani, Acting Country Director, India, on behalf of the World Bank.
- The programme was prepared in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and Kreditanstalt Für Wiederaufbau (KfW).
- The \$400 million credit is from the International Development Association (IDA) – the World Bank's concessional lending arm.

### **DST-CII Technology Summit**

- Dignitaries from India and Portugal discussed areas like water, healthcare, agritech, waste management, cleantech climate solutions, and ICT in which the two countries can collaborate to bring about solutions for societal challenges and build a holistic and mutually beneficial relationship at the high-level Tech Leadership Plenary Session of the DST-CII Technology Summit.

- Both Portugal and India have identified sectors such as water, healthcare, agritech, waste management, cleantech, and ICT as the priority sectors.
- India offers huge market opportunities in each of these identified sectors and, therefore, partnership possibilities to address shared societal challenges. Most of these sectors are also the strengths for Portugal.
- Mr. Eduardo Maldonado, President ANI (National Innovation Agency), Portugal, pointed out that the two countries with the extremely high qualified young generation and excellent technological skills hold great opportunities for enhancing cooperation through collaborative research and innovation projects, staff exchanges in research and academic institutions and mobility which can be done bilaterally or with Portugal as an entry point in joint European projects.

### **Post- Brexit deal**

- The UK and European Union have finally agreed to a deal that will define their future relationship.
- Ever since the UK left the EU on 31 January, both sides have been talking about what the new rules should be.

#### *About the deal*

- The deal contains new rules for how the UK and EU will live, work and trade together.
- No taxes on each other's goods when they cross borders (known as tariffs).
- No limits on the amount of things which can be traded (known as quotas).
- Tariff-free and quota-free access to one of the world's biggest markets is the backbone of the Brexit deal and goes beyond the EU's deals with Canada or Japan.
- There will be mutual recognition of trusted trader programmes. This means UK producers will have to comply with both UK and EU standards.
- There will be no more automatic recognition for doctors, nurses, architects, dentists, pharmacists, vets, engineers. They will now have to seek recognition in the member state they wish to practise in.
- UK nationals no longer have the freedom to work, study, start a business or live in the EU. Visas will be required for stays over 90 days.
- The UK will leave the common fisheries policy.

## **India and UN-Based Better Than Cash Alliance**

- India and UN-Based Better Than Cash Alliance organized a joint Peer learning exchange on fintech solutions for responsible digital payments at the last mile.
- Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance today hosted a learning session “Accelerating Responsible Digital Payments: Unlocking the Role of Fintech in Last-Mile Service Delivery” with leaders from States and Union Territories across India.
- This Peer Exchange is a result of the tremendous success and opportunities highlighted during COVID-19 and is co-organized with the UN-based Better Than Cash Alliance.
- United Nations, the Better Than Cash Alliance is a partnership of over 75 governments, companies and international organizations committed to accelerate the transition from cash to digital payments to advance the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Based on the report of the Steering Committee, DEA has been driving fintech-related interventions while also promoting the usage of new-age technologies by both public sector and private sector entities.
- The webinar brought together leaders of Central and State Governments to deliberate on the opportunities and the role of fintech in enabling digitization in sectors of national importance – land, agriculture, financial inclusion among others.
- State governments of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Odisha, and Himachal Pradesh presented learning from successful fintech partnerships. Some States have announced FinTech Policies, while some have announced Blockchain and AI Policies.

## **MoRTH signs MoU with Austria on Technology Cooperation in Road Infrastructure Sector**

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology of the Republic of Austria on Technology Cooperation in the Road Infrastructure Sector.
- The MOU was signed by the Additional Secretary, MoRTH Shri K.C. Gupta and the Ambassador of Austria Brigitte Oppinger-Walchshofer.

- The MoU aims to create an effective framework for bilateral cooperation in the field of Road Transportation, Road/Highways infrastructure development, management and administration, Road safety and Intelligent Transport Systems between both countries.
- It will further strengthen ties, promote long-standing bilateral relations and enhance trade and regional integration between the two countries.
- India has had good diplomatic relations with Austria since the establishment of bilateral ties between the two countries in 1949.
- Both countries share a history of friendly economic and diplomatic relations. Austria has state of the art technologies for roads and highways, such as electronic toll systems, intelligent transportation systems, traffic management systems, tunnel monitoring system, geo-mapping and landslide protection measures.
- The Indo-Austria bilateral cooperation in the road transport sector would be beneficial both from the perspective of enhanced road safety as well as attractive financing possibilities for the sector, thus fostering and intensifying the already good relations between the two countries.

### **India Switzerland Relations**

- Recently, a virtual meeting took place between an Indian Minister and his Swiss Counterpart.
- Both the Ministers reiterated the desire to move forward on the India-EFTA Trade & Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) negotiations.
- The proposed agreement covers trade in goods and services, investments, trade facilitation, customs cooperation, protection of intellectual property and public procurement.
- India-Switzerland Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) which is under negotiation was also discussed.

### **Revised height of Mount Everest**

- Recently, Nepal and China have announced the revised height of Mount Everest as 8,848.86 metres.
- The new height is 86 cm more than the previous measurement.

- The new height of 8,848.86 meters replaced the long-associated 8,848 metre-height, which was, as per a measurement carried out by the Survey of India in 1954.
- Here the common declaration is meant that the two countries have shed their long-standing difference in opinion about the mountain's height — 8,844 m claimed by China and 8,847 m by Nepal.
- Resolving the three-metre difference, attributed to China calculating the “rock height” underneath the snow and Nepal using the “snow height” which included the snowcap, was the aim of a joint project.
- In Nepal, Everest is also known as Sagarmatha and in China, Mount Qomolangma.
- The mountain lies on the border between Nepal and Tibet and the summit can be accessed from both sides.

### **Eswatini Prime Minister Ambrose Mandvulo Dlamini**

- The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has expressed grief over the demise of Ambrose Mandvulo Dlamini, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini.
- In a tweet, the Prime Minister said, “My deepest condolences to the Government and people of the Kingdom of Eswatini for the tragic demise of Prime Minister Ambrose Mandvulo Dlamini. Our prayers and thoughts are with the bereaved family.”

### **Hannukkah Festival**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has greeted the people of Israel and Jewish friends all over the world on Hannukkah festival.
- In a tweet, Narendra Modi said “Chag Hannukkah Sameach to the friendly people of Israel and Jewish friends all over the world. May the festival bring peace and light in our lives and kindle more warmth to the relationship between our people.”
- The tweet was tagged to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Reuven Rivlin of Israel. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also tweeted in Hebrew.

### **S-400 deal**

- The United States has imposed sanctions (Under CAATSA) on Turkey over Ankara's acquisition of Russian S-400 air defence systems.

### *About S-400 air defence missile system*

- The S-400 Triumf is a mobile, surface-to-air missile system (SAM) designed by Russia.
- It is the most dangerous operationally deployed modern long-range SAM (MLR SAM) in the world, considered much ahead of the US-developed Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD).
- India's acquisition is crucial to counter attacks in a two-front war, including even high-end F-35 US fighter aircraft.
- Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)'s core objective is to counter Iran, Russia and North Korea through punitive measures.

### **India and Sweden**

- Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal today said that India and Sweden should work together to build a more resilient & strong partnership.
- Speaking at the CEO Forum of India-Sweden strategic business partnership, he said that the year 2020 has been a challenging year, but let us convert this crisis into an opportunity.
- Piyush Goyal said "We would like Sweden to be a part of our efforts to expand Indian economy, to reach a higher level of prosperity & design an India suitable for global engagement in the modern 21st-century world. I am sure that the CEO forum & Sweden-India strategic business partnership will help us expand this friendship at every level & make Sweden an important part of India's own growing economy."
- The Minister said that India, with 1.35 billion people, provides one of the world's largest business opportunities. "
- We have a very large & growing middle class, aspiring for a better quality of life. I am sure Swedish companies would love to work in India & explore better opportunities. We believe our renewed focus on technology will help us re-align India's priorities and Sweden will have an important role to play, being our natural partner for innovation & growth.", he added.

## 5th India – Myanmar bilateral meeting

- The 5th India- Myanmar Bilateral Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation between the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), India and the Central Committee on Drug Abuse Control, Myanmar was held virtually on 10th December, 2020.
- The Indian delegation was led by the Director-General Narcotics Control Bureau, Shri Rakesh Asthana, and the Myanmar delegation was led by the Commander of the Drug Enforcement Division (DED) cum Joint Secretary of the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control, Pol. Brig. Gen. Win Naing.
- The Director-General NCB, Shri Rakesh Asthana, highlighted issues particularly the trafficking of Heroin and Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS) in the country. He said that the high prevalence of drug abuse in the North Eastern States abutting the Myanmar border is a major cause of concern for India.
- Apart from porosity of the India-Myanmar border, drug trafficking through the maritime route in the Bay of Bengal has emerged as a new challenge for both countries
- NCB has remained committed towards strengthening the existing mechanism of sharing information and assistance with Myanmar, for combating the drug menace in the region.

## Lancet Citizens' Commission for Universal Health Coverage

- The Lancet Citizens' Commission on Reimagining India's Health System has been launched online which is a step towards achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in India.

### *About Lancet Citizens' Commission on Reimagining India's Health System*

- It is a first-of-its-kind participatory, countrywide initiative, in collaboration with the world's leading health journal The Lancet and the Lakshmi Mittal and Family South Asia Institute, Harvard University.
- Its objective is to enable participatory public engagement to develop a citizens' blueprint for the implementation of UHC.
- It will be focus on the architecture of India's health system.

- The Commission will be guided by four principles which are:
  - UHC covers all health concerns.
  - Prevention and long-term care are key.
  - The concern is financial protection for all health costs.
  - Aspiring for a health system that can be accessed by all who enjoy the same quality.

### **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)**

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare digitally addressed an event by Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) on 17 December, 2020 through Video Conference.
- The theme of the event was “Build Back Better: building resilient health infrastructure and supply chains.”
- Dr Vardhan applauded the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure for organising the webinar with a forward looking perspective on how to make health infrastructure and supply chains more resilient.
- Reiterating that disaster resilience as an essential area of common interest globally, he stated, “Over the past decades, India and nations of the world have seen unprecedented progress in economic and human development.
- However, as COVID-19 has shown, all of this notable progress is at risk if we do not make our systems resilient. The key lesson from the pandemic is that the principles of resilience must be integral to our quest for economic growth as individual nations and the international community.

### **4th India – Indonesia Virtual Bilateral Meeting**

- The 4th Bilateral Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting between the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) India and the National Narcotics Board (BNN), Indonesia was held on 17th December, 2020.
- The Indian delegation was led by Shri Rakesh Asthana, Director General, Narcotics Control Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India and the Indonesian delegation was led by Mr. Puji Sarwono, Deputy of Legal Affairs and Cooperation, National Narcotic Board of Indonesia.

- Shri Rakesh Asthana, Director General (DG), NCB, India expressed his gratitude to the Government of Indonesia and the Head of BNN, Indonesia for conducting this virtual meeting amid the global pandemic COVID-19.
- DG, NCB highlighted issues particularly the trafficking of Heroin and Amphetamine Type Stimulant (ATS) in the country through land and maritime routes originating from the Golden Triangle. He also mentioned the new emerging challenge of trafficking of drugs through the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea.
- He also emphasized on the emerging trends in the production and trafficking of New Psychoactive Substances and usage of Darknet markets.
- Both the countries agreed on exchange of intelligence information in a timely manner to conduct follow-up investigation in drug seizure cases, New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and their precursors.
- It was decided to exchange information on illegal entry and exit points of illicit drug trafficking on the Indonesia-India borders and information on technology being used to interdict drug trafficking.
- The 5th India – Indonesia Bilateral Joint Working Group (JWG) Meeting on Drug Control Cooperation will be in India in 2021.

### **India-Vietnam Leaders' Virtual Summit**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a Virtual Summit with H.E. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.
- The two Prime Ministers reviewed ongoing bilateral cooperation initiatives, and also discussed regional and global issues.
- A 'Joint Vision for Peace, Prosperity and People' document was adopted during the Summit, to guide the future development of the India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Both leaders also welcomed the signing of a Plan of Action for period 2021-2023 to implement the Joint Vision.
- The leaders affirmed the importance of enhancing bilateral cooperation in all areas of engagement. They agreed to support each other's national development priorities and work together towards the shared objective of a peaceful, stable, secure, free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific region.
- The Prime Ministers agreed to explore new and practical collaborations in the maritime domain based on convergence between India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative and the ASEAN's Outlook on Indo-Pacific to achieve shared security, prosperity and growth for all in the region.

- The Prime Minister reaffirmed India's commitment to its development and capacity building partnership with Vietnam, through initiatives such as Quick Impact Projects, ITEC and e-ITEC initiatives, PhD fellowships, as well as projects to support Vietnam's SDGs, digital connectivity and heritage conservation efforts.
- Both Prime Ministers appreciated the successful implementation of the US\$ 100 million Defence Line of Credit extended by Government of India to Vietnam, and the completion of seven Development Projects with Indian 'Grant-in-Aid' Assistance for the benefit of local community in Vietnam's Ninh Thuan province.

### **India – Nepal Defence Cooperation**

- A webinar and expo between India and Nepal were held on 21 December, 2020.
- The theme of webinar was "Exploring Synergies and Strengthening Defence Cooperation with Nepal". It was organized under the aegis of Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence through SIDM.
- This webinar is the part of Aero India 21 series of webinars which are being organized to boost defence cooperation and engagements with friendly foreign countries and achieve defence export target of \$5 billion in the next five years.
- Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India Kathmandu; Shri Anurag Bajpai, Joint Secretary (DIP), Ministry of Defence, Govt of India; Mr Ram Prasad Acharya, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Defence, Govt of Nepal and other senior MoD officials from both sides participated in the webinar.
- Both sides envisaged close, cordial and multi-dimensional relationship between the two nations which is based on goodwill, mutual respect and appreciation of each other's aspirations and sensitivities.
- Shri Anurag Bajpai, Joint Secretary (DIP) mentioned that our cultural ties are 2500 years old when Lord Buddha was born in Lumbini in Southern Nepal whose valuable teachings nurture the society.
- He further said that Defence cooperation with Nepal is not a new phenomenon and is almost 70 years old when India and Nepal signed Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1950.
- In accordance with the "Neighbourhood First" policy of the government, India remains a committed development partner for a stable, prosperous and peaceful Nepal.
- The webinar was attended by more than 100 participants and more than 100 virtual exhibition stalls have been set up in the Expo.

## Legion of Merit Award from the US

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that he is deeply honoured for being awarded Legion of Merit by the US Government.
- In a series of tweets, he said, “I am deeply honoured to be awarded the Legion of Merit by @POTUS @realDonaldTrump. It recognises the efforts of the people of India & the US to improve bilateral ties, reflected in the bipartisan consensus in both countries about the Indo-US Strategic Partnership.
- The 21st century presents both unprecedented challenges as well as opportunities. The India-US relationship can leverage the vast potential of our people’s unique strengths to provide global leadership for the benefit of the entire humanity.



### **Novel species of Muraingrass**

- A new species of Indian Muraingrasses known for their ecological and economic importance, such as fodder, have been spotted by scientists in Goa in the Western Ghats, one of the four global biodiversity hotspots of India.
- The species has adapted to survive harsh conditions, low nutrient availability, and blossoms every monsoon.
- Globally 85 species are known from *Ischaemum*, of which 61 species are exclusively found in India. The Western Ghats have 40 species with the highest concentration of the genus.
- Careful observations and critical morphological studies identified the species as a novel one. The species was named *Ischaemumjanarthanamii* in honour of Prof. M. K. Janarthanam, Professor of Botany, Goa University, for his contribution to the Indian grass taxonomy and documentation of the floristic diversity of Goa state.
- The first collection of this new species was made in the 2017 monsoon. The population was kept under observation for the next two years to confirm the consistency of its characters.
- Morphological and molecular data of the species were used to confirm the novelty of the species.
- *Ischaemumjanarthanamii* grows on low altitude lateritic plateaus in the outskirts of Bhagwan Mahavir National Park, Goa. The vegetation is exposed to extreme climatic conditions like desiccation in drier months and soils with low nutrient availability.

### **Aerosols in Indo-Gangetic Plain**

- Scientists have found that aerosols like black carbon and dust, which makes the Indo-Gangetic Plain one of the most polluted regions of the world, have led to increased incidents of high rainfall events in the foothills of the Himalayan Region.
- The Indo-Gangetic Plain is located in South and upwind of the Himalayan foothills.

- The region is associated with high aerosol loading, much of which is black carbon and dust, and thus provides an opportunity for studying how aerosol affects extreme rainfall events, particularly when air mass is forced from a low elevation to a higher elevation as it moves over rising terrain technically called orographic forcing.
- A team of researchers from National Institute of Technology Rourkela, Leipzig Institute for Meteorology (LIM), University of Leipzig, Germany, Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur supported by the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India under DST Climate Change program.
- They have highlighted the crucial role of the aerosol direct radiative effect on high precipitation events over the Himalayan region. The findings of the current work have been accepted for publishing in the scientific journal 'Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics' recently.
- They showed that particulate emissions can alter the physical and dynamical properties of cloud systems and, in turn, amplify rainfall events over orographic regions downwind of highly polluted urban areas.

### **Optical fibre cable**

- The Union Cabinet has approved laying of undersea optical fibre cable to connect 11 islands of Lakshadweep with Kochi by May 2023.
- It will help to improve broadband connectivity in the Union Territory.
- The project will be funded by the Universal Service Obligation Fund.
- In August, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched the submarine cable connectivity to Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- He had then announced the aim to connect Lakshadweep with undersea optical fibre cable as well in 1,000 days.

### **Indigenous mRNA vaccine**

- India's first indigenous mRNA vaccine candidate has received approval from Indian Drug regulators to initiate Phase I/II human clinical trial.
- The novel mRNA vaccine candidate, HGCO19 has been developed by Gennova, Pune and supported with seed grant under the Ind-CEPI mission of Department of Biotechnology of M/o Science & Technology.

## *About mRNA Vaccine*

- The mRNA vaccines do not use the conventional model to produce an immune response. Instead, the mRNA vaccine carries the molecular instructions to make the protein in the body through a synthetic RNA of the virus.
- The host body uses this to produce the viral protein that is recognized and thereby making the body mount an immune response against the disease. mRNA-based vaccines are scientifically the ideal choice to address a pandemic because of their rapid developmental timeline.
- The mRNA vaccine is considered safe as is non-infectious, non-integrating in nature, and degraded by standard cellular mechanisms.
- They are expected to be highly efficacious because of their inherent capability of being translatable into the protein structure inside the cell cytoplasm.
- Additionally, mRNA vaccines are fully synthetic and do not require a host for growth, e.g., eggs or bacteria. Therefore, they can be quickly manufactured in an inexpensive manner under cGMP conditions to ensure their “availability” and “accessibility” for mass vaccination on a sustainable basis.
- *Development of mRNA Vaccine*
- Gennova, in collaboration with HDT Biotech Corporation, Seattle, USA, has worked together to develop an mRNA vaccine candidate.
- HGC019 has already demonstrated safety, immunogenicity, neutralization antibody activity in animals. The neutralizing antibody response of the vaccine in mice and non-human primates was comparable with the sera from the convalescent patients of COVID-19.
- Gennova’s vaccine candidate uses the most prominent mutant of spike protein (D614G) and also uses the self-amplifying mRNA platform, which gives the advantage of a low dosing regimen compared with the non-replicating mRNA or traditional vaccines.
- HGC019 is stable at 2-8°C for two months. Gennova has completed all preliminary work and should be initiating the Phase I/II Human clinical trial soon since the approval from the DCGI office has been received.

- The Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India is implementing the IndCEPI mission 'India Centric Epidemic Preparedness through Rapid Vaccine Development: Supporting Indian Vaccine Development' which is aligned with the Global Initiative of CEPI and aims to strengthen the development of vaccines and associated competencies/technologies for the diseases of epidemic potential in India.
- The Ind-CEPI mission of DBT is implemented by its PSU, Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC).

### **P Ovale Malaria**

- A not very common type of malaria namely Plasmodium ovale has been identified recently in a jawan in Kerala. It is believed that the soldier has contracted it in Sudan, where Plasmodium ovale is endemic.
- One of the five kinds of malarial parasites is Plasmodium ovale. The others are Plasmodium falciparum, Plasmodium vivax (the commonest ones), Plasmodium malariae, and Plasmodium Knowlesi.
- It is known as ovate because its 20% of the parasite's cells are oval in shape.
- For a long time in the spleen or liver the parasite can remain for a long time after the mosquito bite and the person could become symptomatic later.

### **“eSanjeevani” telemedicine**

- India has crossed a landmark milestone in its eHealth journey. eSanjeevani telemedicine service of the Health Ministry has crossed 1 million (10 lakh) tele-consultations on 14 December, 2020.
- Telemedicine entails delivery of health services from a distance using the internet and it not only extends the reach of health services but also improves the quality of health services besides saving time and money.
- The roll-out of eSanjeevani in India is supposedly the first of its kind of digital transformation in the delivery of health services at the national scale by a developing country.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, eSanjeevani not only brought about a huge digital transformation in the delivery of health services but had also boosted the digital health ecosystem in the country.

- eSanjeevani initiative of Health Ministry is serving in two streams in 28 States and Union Territories.
- The eSanjeevaniAB-HWC enables the doctor to doctor teleconsultations and is being used at around 6000 Health & Wellness Centres which are being served by specialists and doctors in around 240 hubs which have been set up by States in District Hospitals or Medical Colleges etc.
- Over 20,000 paramedics, doctors and specialists have been trained to use eSanjeevaniAB-HWC.
- The second stream eSanjeevaniOPD is or providing remote health services to patients in the confines of their homes. eSanjeevaniOPD enables contactless, risk-free, and safe consultations between a doctor and a patient.
- It received a huge reception by both the patients and the doctors. Around 8000 doctors have been trained and onboarded on eSanjeevaniOPD and on an average around 1500 doctors practice telemedicine daily in around 225 onlineOPDs of which 190 are speciality OPDs and around 30 are general OPDs. Of late, daily eSanjeevani has been serving around 14,000 patients across the country.
- The top ten States with highest consultations through eSanjeevani and eSanjeevaniOPD platforms are Tamil Nadu (319507), Uttar Pradesh (268889), Madhya Pradesh (70838), Gujarat (63601), Kerala (62797), Himachal Pradesh (49224), Andhra Pradesh (39853), Karnataka (32693), Uttarakhand (31910) and Maharashtra (12635).

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### **VigyanYatras**

- VigyanYatras to promote Scientific Temper among Masses being organised by various institutions ahead of IISF 2020.
- This science journey will be organized around 30 locations across the country.
- VigyanYatra is a promotional activity of the India International Science Festival. In this activity, the mobile science exhibition vans flag off from many cities of the country and the vision behind this science journey is to promote scientific temper and inculcate the culture of science among the masses.
- This program also ignites the minds of the youngsters because of science exhibition mobile vans are viewed by all local school/university students that create interest in science and generate awareness about the IISF.

- This 6th edition of IISF is going to be organized on the virtual platform due to the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic. Around 30 locations have been identified across the country where this science journey will be organized.
- Indian Association of the Cultivation of Science (IACS), Kolkata organised this VigyanYatra virtually recently. Prof. Santanu Bhattacharya, Director, IACS inaugurated the programme. Chief Guest Prof. M.M. Sharma, FRS and Padma Vibhushan shed light on the importance of International Science Festival and the need and outcomes of this unique activity 'VigyanYatra'.
- Eminent science communicators, innovators, teachers, students and research scholars of the locality will be felicitated.
- CSIR-Central Institute of Mining and Fuel Research (CIMFR), Dhanbad also organized 'VigyanYatra' on Youtube platform, under the East segment of four segments (East, West, North and South) cover the whole country.
- CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa, Prof. Sunil Kumar Singh, Director, CSIR-NIO gave the welcome address. Director-General, CSIR and Secretary, DSIR, Dr Shekhar C. Mande in his presidential address, said that this science festival is going to impact and benefit every segment of society.

### **Most dangerous drug**

- UN removes cannabis from 'most dangerous drug' category.
- The United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) voted to remove cannabis and cannabis resin from Schedule IV of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, decades after they were first placed on the list.
- With this, Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) has chosen to affirm a World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendation from 2019 to remove cannabis from its 'most dangerous' category.
- India was part of the voting majority, along with the US and most European nations.
- China, Pakistan and Russia were among those who voted against, and Ukraine abstained.

### *About Cannabis plant*

- According to the WHO, cannabis is a generic term used to denote the several psychoactive preparations of the plant Cannabis sativa.
- The major psychoactive constituent in cannabis is Delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

## **Geminids meteor shower**

- The Geminids meteor shower, believed to be the strongest of the year.
- It is active from December 4-December 20, with December 13 and 14 considered to be the best nights for viewing these meteor showers.
- The Geminids meteor showers are unique because their origin does not lie in a comet, but what is believed to be an asteroid or an extinct comet.
- The Geminids emerge from 3200 Phaethon, which meteor scientists consider to be an asteroid.
- The asteroid is over 5 km in diameter and was named after the Greek myth of Phaethon, the son of Sun god Helios.
- According to NASA, the Geminids rate will be better this year because the shower's peak overlaps with a nearly new moon, which means there will be darker skies and no moonlight to wash out the fainter meteors.

## **Black Fungus**

- Recently in the news that the occurrence of Covid triggered mucormycosis with high morbidity and mortality.
- Also called as Mucormycosis or zygomycosis and is a serious but rare fungal infection.
- Caused by a group of moulds called mucormycetes which exist in the environment.
- Mucormycosis mainly affects people who have health problems or take medicines that lower the body's ability to fight germs and sickness.
- Symptoms are face numbness, one-side nose obstructions or swelling of eyes, or pain.
- Early detection and treatment can help.

## **Intentional genomic alteration (IGA) and GalSafe pigs**

- The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a first-of-its-kind intentional genomic alteration (IGA) in a line of domestic pigs referred to as GalSafe pigs.
- These pigs may be used for food and human therapeutics. This will be the first time that the regulator has approved an animal biotechnology product for both food and biomedical purposes.
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### *About Intentional genomic alteration*

- Intentional genomic alteration in animal's means making specific changes to the genome of the organism using modern molecular technologies that are popularly referred to as "genome editing" or "genetic engineering".
- Such changes in the DNA sequence of an animal may be carried out for research purposes, to produce healthier meat for human consumption and to study disease resistance in animals among other reasons.

### **'Christmas Star' conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter**

- After nearly 400 years, Saturn and Jupiter the two largest planets in our solar system will be brought closest in the night sky by an astronomical event called the "great conjunction" and popularly referred to as the "Christmas Star".

### *About "Great Conjunction"*

- A conjunction is not unique to Saturn and Jupiter however, it is the name given to any event where planets or asteroids appear to be very close together in the sky when viewed from the Earth.
- Astronomers use the word "great" for the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn because of the planets' sizes.
- The "Great Conjunction" happens once in about 20 years because of the time each of the planets take to orbit around the Sun.

### **60 percent rise in Leopard population**

- Releasing the Status of Leopards report in New Delhi on 21 December, 2020, Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Prakash Javadekar has said that increase in Tiger, Lion & Leopards numbers over the last few years is a testimony to the conservation efforts and of the fledgling wildlife & biodiversity of the country.
- India now has 12,852 leopards as compared to the previous estimate of 7910 conducted 2014. More than 60% increase in population has been recorded.
- The States of Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra recorded the highest leopard estimates at 3,421, 1,783 and 1,690 respectively.

- India's world record tiger survey also estimated the population of leopards and the tiger range was found home to 12,852 (12,172-13,535) leopards. They occur in prey rich protected areas as well as multi-use forests.
- A total of 5,240 adult individual leopards were identified in a total of 51,337 leopard photographs using pattern recognition software. Statistical analysis estimates the leopard population at – 12,800 leopards within the tiger's range.

### **Mutated Novel Coronavirus**

- A mutated variant of the novel Coronavirus has been associated with recent infections in England.
- The virus has undergone several mutations since it first infected humans.
- The mutant virus has been identified as N501Y and is likely to be a mutation in the spike protein.
- It is the coronavirus spike protein that binds to a human protein to initiate the process of infection. Changes here could possibly affect how the virus behaves in terms of its ability to infect, or cause severe disease, or escape the immune response made by vaccines.
- There has been a single nucleotide change in one portion of the spike protein, so there would be no bearing on the disease biology or even diagnostics.

### **Monkey Rehabilitation Centre**

- Recently, in Telangana, a rescue and rehabilitation centre for monkeys (Primate) was opened.
- It is the second such facility for the primates in the country. The other such facility in the country is in Himachal Pradesh.
- Previously the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change had declared Monkeys (Rhesus Macaque) as 'vermin' in Himachal Pradesh.
- A primate is any mammal of the group that includes lemurs, lorises, tarsiers, monkeys, apes, and humans.
- Rhesus Macaque monkeys are protected species under Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The law allows for it to be hunted by declaring it 'vermin' for a specific period if it poses a danger to human life or property.

## Early Health Warning System

- The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) is developing a unique Early Health Warning System which is expected to forecast the possibility of disease outbreaks in the country.
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is also involved in the development studies and the process.
- The model being developed is based on the relationship between weather changes and incidence.
- There are certain diseases where weather patterns play a crucial role like malaria, for which particular temperatures and rainfall patterns can approximately predict whether an area is likely to have an outbreak with fairly reasonable accuracy.
- The model is expected to predict outbreaks of vector-borne diseases, particularly malaria and diarrhoea. Subsequently, it is likely to monitor non-communicable diseases (NCDs) as well.

## Successful Maiden Launch of MRSAM

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) achieved a major milestone on 23 December, 2020 with the maiden launch of Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM), Army Version from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, off the Coast of Odisha around 1600 hrs.
- The missile completely destroyed a high speed unmanned aerial target which was mimicking an aircraft with a direct hit.
- Army version of MRSAM is a surface to Air Missile developed jointly by DRDO, India and IAI, Israel for use of the Indian Army.
- MRSAM Army weapon system comprises of Command post, Multi-Function Radar and Mobile Launcher system.
- The complete Fire Unit has been used during the launch in the deliverable configuration. The team from the users i.e. Indian Army also witnessed the launch. A number of range instruments such as Radar, Telemetry and Electro-Optical Tracking System were deployed and captured the complete mission data, validating the weapon system performance including the destruction of the target.

## Science & Technology Media Conclave

- The 'Science and Technology Media Conclave' is a prominent event of the India International Science Festival 2020.
- This conclave looks at the soaring emergence of digital media and its various avatars. The power of responsible science communication to cope with disasters such as pandemic was also one of the focal points of discussion at the conclave.
- The inaugural session of the S&T Media Conclave was attended by Science communicators, journalists, scientists and policymakers to discuss various facets of science and media engagement.
- The conclave will emphasize the power of responsible science communication and which can help to fight with 'infodemic' arising during the pandemic.
- A Science Media Virtual Exhibition showcasing cover pages of popular science magazines and science newspapers was also inaugurated in this occasion.
- The Traditional Crafts and Artisan Meet and Expo programme aims at showcasing the Indian scientific achievements and innovations for students, young researchers and the general public and to display India's contribution in the field of S&T and to motivate young scientists to find solutions to the burning issues of our society. CSIR-AMPRI, Bhopal is the Principal Organizing Institute for the event.

### *About the event*

- This is a unique event of this kind. In this event, a National level virtual Meet and Expo are being organised, which emphasize the science behind the traditional Indian Arts and Crafts, their history, technological and policy interventions to improve the quality of handicrafts and the life of the artisans, future prospects, etc.
- The event throws light on implementation and development activities of primitive tribes of the country like Agaria, Bharia, and many more.
- The Expo has live streaming and demonstration for extraction and processing of the fibre, yarn and rope making, handicrafts and other products.
- This program brings together traditional craftsmen and artisans, researchers, scientists, entrepreneurs, cottage industries, self-help-groups, policymakers and students to discuss the improvement in traditional crafts to make them competitive at the global level and augmenting self-reliance (Atmanirbharta).

## **Plant-based mock egg**

- The innovation of plant-based mock egg by Prof Kavya Dashora, IIT Delhi has secured first prize at Innovate4SDG contest by 'UNDP (United Nation Development Program) Accelerator Lab India'.The award includes a sum of \$5000.
- The development of the mock egg meets the protein needs of the diet-specific, health-conscious, vegan and vegetarian people, claims IIT-Delhi.
- This innovation addresses SDG 2 and 3 (zero hunger and good health and well-being).

### *About Mock egg*

- The mock egg has been developed from very simple farm-based crop proteins, which not only looks and tastes like an egg but also very close in nutritional profile to a poultry egg.

## **Country's First Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine**

- Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare today inaugurated India's first pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV).
- The vaccine "Pneumosil" has been developed by the Serum Institute of India Private Limited (SIIPL) in collaboration with partners like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- Recognizing SIIPL as the world's largest manufacturer of vaccines by a number of doses and its contribution to India's economy, Dr. Harsh Vardhan remarked that Serum Institute's Vaccines are used in 170 countries and every third child in the world is immunized with the manufacturer's Vaccine.
- SIIPL developed and got the license of first indigenous Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) from Government of India during COVID-19 pandemic lock-down in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji's vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.
- Dr. Harsh Vardhan said, "Serum Institute's first Indigenous Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine will be available in the market under the brand name "Pneumosil" at an affordable price in a single dose (vial and pre-filled syringe) and Multidose (vial) presentations".
- Pneumonia is the single largest infectious cause of death among children under five years of age worldwide, accounting for nearly 10 lakhs deaths globally.

### **Dibru-Saikhowa National Park**

- Assam has asked the State's Forest and Revenue departments to permanently rehabilitate the indigenous forest dwellers of the Dibru-Saikhowa National Park.
- Rehabilitation of some 10,000 people has been hanging fire since 1999 when the Dibru-Saikhowa Wildlife Sanctuary was upgraded to a national park.
- The park, home to a few wild horses, had been in focus since May when a blowout at an Oil India Limited gas well in the vicinity posed an ecological threat.

#### *About Dibru-Saikhowa National Park*

- DSNP is a national park in Assam located in Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts.
- It was designated a Biosphere Reserve in July 1997 with an area of 765 sq. km.
- The park is bounded by the Brahmaputra and Lohit Rivers in the north and Dibru river in the south.
- It mainly consists of moist mixed semi-evergreen forests, moist mixed deciduous forests, canebrakes and grasslands.
- It is the largest Salix swamp forest in north-eastern India, with a tropical monsoon climate with a hot and wet summer and cool and usually dry winter.

### **Sea of Galilee**

- The Sea of Galilee, well-known in Jewish, Christian and Islamic lore, has swelled up due to recent rains, according to reports in the Israeli media.

#### *About Sea of Galilee*

- The lake lies in northern Israel, between the occupied Golan Heights and the Galilee region. It is fed by underground springs but its major source is the Jordan River.
- The lake has risen to 209.905 metres below sea level due to heavy rainfall in the surrounding areas.
- The Jordan flows into the lake and then exits it before ending in the Dead Sea, the saltiest and the lowest point on the planet.
- Water is not extracted from the Sea of Galilee. But it is considered to be an important barometer of the water situation in Israel.

## Rahim's Tomb

- The tomb is in a run-down situation but undergoing renovation.
- The historical and cultural significance is more than the archaeological and architectural significance, so restoring the dignity of the burial place has been very important.

### *Rahim and his work*

- Dating back to 1598, during the rule of Akbar, Abdur Rahim Khan I Khanan was one of the Navratna in the court.
- Winning wars with his military training and hearts with his dohas and translated texts — he was a man who survived despite his father Bairam Khan's assassination when he was just four.
- Meant to be a dedication of a husband to his wife, the tomb ended up housing his own remains too when he died in 1627.
- Apart from writing various dohas, Rahim translated Babar's memoirs, Baburnama from Chagatai language to the Persian language, which was completed in 998 (1589–90) AD.
- He had an excellent command over the Sanskrit language.
- In Sanskrit, he wrote two books on astrology, Khetakautukam and Dwatrimshadyogavali.

## Caspian Sea

- The Caspian is actually a lake, the largest in the world and it is experiencing a devastating decline in its water level that is about to accelerate.
- By the end of the century, the Caspian Sea will be nine metres to 18 metres lower. That's a depth considerably taller than most houses.
- The Caspian's surface is already dropping by 7 cm every year, a trend likely to increase.
- It means the lake will lose at least 25 per cent of its former size, uncovering 93,000 sq km of dry land.
- If that new land were a country, it would be the size of Portugal.

### *About Caspian Sea*

- The Caspian Sea is the world's largest inland body of water, variously classed as the world's largest lake or a full-fledged sea.
- As an endorheic basin, it lies between Europe and Asia.
- An endorheic basin is a drainage basin that normally retains water and allows no outflow to other external bodies of water, such as rivers or oceans, but converges instead into lakes or swamps, permanent or seasonal that equilibrates through evaporation.

### **Temple architecture of Hampi**

- Tourists can no longer get too close to the iconic stone chariot in front of the Vijaya Vittala Temple due to a protective ring by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

### **Hampi- The Vijayanagara Capital**

- Hampi or Hampe, also referred to as the Group of Monuments at Hampi, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in east-central Karnataka.
- Hampi was the capital of the Vijayanagara Empire in the 14th century.
- The old city of Hampi was a prosperous, wealthy and grand city near the Tungabhadra River, with numerous temples, farms and trading markets.
- By 1500 CE, Hampi-Vijayanagara was the world's second-largest medieval-era city after Beijing, and probably India's richest at that time, attracting traders from Persia and Portugal.
- The Vijayanagara Empire was defeated by a coalition of sultanates; its capital was conquered, pillaged and destroyed by sultanate armies in 1565, after which Hampi remained in ruins.

### **Bhashan Char Island**

- Bangladesh has transported more than 1,600 Rohingya refugees to a low-lying island in the first phase of a controversial planned relocation of 1,00,000 people.

### *About Bhashan Char Island*

- Bhasan Char also known as Char Piya, is an island in Hatiya, Bangladesh.
- Located 34 kilometres (21 miles) from the mainland, its name in Bengali means “floating island.”
- The island was formed with Himalayan silt in 2006 spanning 40 square kilometres.
- It is underwater from June to September annually because of the monsoon, and it has no flood fences.
- In June 2015, the Bangladeshi government suggested resettling Rohingya refugees on the island under its Ashrayan Project.
- The proposal was characterized by the UN Refugee Agency as “logistically challenging”.



## KNOWLEDGE BOOSTER OR POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Malaria cases globally numbered about 229 million, an annual estimate that has remained virtually unchanged over the last four years. In 2019, it claimed about 4,09,000 lives, compared to 4,11,000 in 2018.
- India is the only high endemic country which has reported a decline of 17.6% in 2019 of Malaria cases as compared to 2018.
- Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge was launched among 243 major cities on the World Toilet Day (19th November).
- Manual scavenging is defined as “the removal of human excrement from public streets and dry latrines, cleaning septic tanks, gutters and sewers”.
- The Union Education Minister has set up a task force for preparing a roadmap on imparting technical education in the mother tongue of students. The Task force will be set-up under the chairmanship of the secretary, higher education, Amit Khare.
- The Jharkhand Government has banned consumption of any form of tobacco products for all State Government employees.
- India ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) in 2004.
- Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) Test is a test that can ascertain the composition of a product at the molecular level. It is an analytical chemistry technique used in quality control and research for determining the content and purity of a sample as well as its molecular structure.
- A new study from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has found that an additional 207 million people could be pushed into extreme poverty by 2030 due to the severe long-term impact of the coronavirus pandemic, bringing the total number of the world’s extremely poor to more than a billion.
- Rat-hole Mining is a term used for a hazardous and arduous mining technique where miners crawl into winding underground tunnels that are just 4-5 feet in diameter to extract coal from the deep seams with a pickaxe.

- In April 2018, the Ministry of Coal launched the Unlocking Transparency by Third Party Assessment of Mined Coal (UTTAM) Application for coal quality monitoring.
- In January 2020, the Parliament passed the Mineral Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020.
- Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has standardised health policies across all health insurers to even cover robotic and bariatric surgeries. Bariatric surgery is an operation that helps lose weight by making changes to the digestive system.
- Recently, India became the first country to perform a telerobotic coronary surgery on humans.
- The HL-2M Tokamak reactor is China's largest and most advanced nuclear fusion experimental research device, and scientists hope that the device can potentially unlock a powerful clean energy source.
- As per the Census, India had 45.6 crore migrants in 2011 (38% of the population) compared to 31.5 crore migrants in 2001 (31% of the population).
- According to a report published by ChildLine India the pandemic and the subsequent lockdown have proved to be new drivers of child marriages in rural Madhya Pradesh.
- Childline India foundation is a non-government organisation (NGO) in India that operates a telephone helpline called Childline, for children in distress. It was India's first 24-hour, toll free, phone outreach service for children
- Morocco became the fourth Arab country, after the UAE, Bahrain (Abraham Accords) and Sudan, to set aside hostilities with Israel in the past four months.
- The Movimiento San Isidro started two years ago and has now become a platform for Cuban dissidents both within and outside the nation.
- India's first fully indigenously developed pneumococcal conjugate vaccine "Pneumosil" has been launched. It is developed by a Serum Institute of India (SII), through a collaboration with PATH and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- The Prime Minister has inaugurated the country's first fully automated Metro, (Driverless Metro) on Delhi Metro's Magenta Line. He also extended the fully operational National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) to the Airport Express Line of the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC).

- The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has made it mandatory for businesses with a monthly turnover of more than Rs. 50 lakh to pay at least 1% of their Goods and Services Tax (GST) liability in cash. It will be effective from 1st January 2021.
- A recent report published by the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CBER) has predicted that India will again overtake the UK to become the fifth largest economy in 2025 and race to the third spot by 2030. CBER is a UK based company that gives independent economic forecasts for public and private firms.
- 'Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dhरोhar, Apni Pehchaan' Project was launched on 27th September, 2017 (World Tourism Day). It is a collaborative effort by the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), State/UTs Governments. Its aim is to develop tourism amenities at heritage/natural/ tourist sites spread across India for making them tourist friendly, in a planned and phased manner.
- The Prime Minister of India has inaugurated a 351-km section of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC) and an Operation Control Centre (OCC) between Khurja and Bhaupur in Uttar Pradesh.
- The Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC) is a 1,839-km project billed as the largest rail infrastructure being built in independent India and has been in the making since 2006.
- the Ministry of Earth Sciences inaugurated the web-based application DigitalOcean developed by Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) in New Delhi.
- Digital Ocean is a new state of the art data platform for Ocean Data Management. It is the first such platform to provide ocean data related services at one place. It includes a set of applications developed to organize and present heterogeneous oceanographic data by adopting rapid advancements in geospatial technology.
- India has added Tso Kar Wetland Complex in Ladakh as its 42nd Ramsar site, a conservation status conferred by International Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Previously, the Lonar lake in Maharashtra and Sur Sarovar (also known as Keetham lake) in Agra were added to the list of Ramsar sites.
- The Indian Naval Ship (INS) Kiltan has arrived at Sihanoukville Port, Cambodia as part of ongoing Mission Sagar-III.
- The Prime Minister has flagged off the 100th "Kisan Rail" service from Sangola in Solapur district of Maharashtra to Shalimar in West Bengal via video-conferencing.

## EXPECTED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR UPSC 2021 PRELIMS

1. The 'Sthanakvasi' sect with reference to the religious practices in India belongs to:

- (a) Jainism
- (b) Buddhism
- (c) Vaishnavism
- (d) Shaivism

**Ans: (a)**

2. Consider the following statements regarding Hampi.

- 1. It was the last capital of the last great Hindu Kingdom of Vijayanagar.
- 2. It was a part of the Mauryan Empire back in the third century BC.
- 3. Its name is derived from Pampa which is the old name of the Tungabhadra River on whose banks the city is built.

Which of the following statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- (a) Only 1
- (b) 2 and 3
- (c) 1 and 3
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: 2(d)**

3. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct about the Roshni Act of J&K?

- 1. Enacted in 2001, the law sought to regularise unauthorised land.
- 2. The Act envisaged the transfer of ownership rights of state land to its occupants, subject to the payment of a cost, as determined by the government.
- 3. The government said the revenue generated would be spent on commissioning hydroelectric power projects, hence the name "Roshni".

Which of the following statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 2 and 3
- (c) Only 3
- (d) 1 and 3

**Ans: (a)**

4. **Name the following groups of plants that were domesticated in the 'New World' and introduced into the 'Old World'?**

- (a) Cotton, coffee and sugarcane
- (b) Tobacco, cocoa and rubber
- (c) Tobacco, cotton and rubber
- (d) Rubber, coffee and wheat

**Ans: (b)**

5. **Consider the following statements regarding LAF and choose the correct option:**

1. RBI has decided to extend the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) to Regional Rural Banks (RRB) to make liquidity management more efficient.
2. The LAF was introduced in RBI in 1998 based on the recommendations of the Narasimham Committee on Banking Sector Reforms.

**Options:**

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: (c)**

6. **Which of the following statements is/are correct about migratory bird festival this year?**

1. Bihar is planning its first-ever migratory bird festival this year.
2. This is a three-day festival to be organised in Bhagalpur District.
3. It is to be jointly organised by Bhagalpur forest division, Bombay Natural History Society and the local Mandar Nature Club.

**Options:**

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Only 1 and 3
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (d)**

7. **The #indiasupportscaa campaign was launched via which app?**

- (a) MyGov
- (b) UMANG
- (c) Twitter
- (d) NaMo

**Ans: (d)**

8. **Consider the following statements:**

1. Malaysian Mangur is a catfish that was banned by the National Green Tribunal as it was harming the local ecosystem and the consumers' health.
2. It also has high demand because it is cheaper when compared to other seafood. Recently, thousands of tons of this banned catfish were found to be illegally bred in over 125 artificial ponds in rural Thane, Maharashtra.

Which of the above statement is/are NOT correct?

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: (a)**

9. **Consider the following statements:**

1. Several drug makers are seeking Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) for the COVID-19 vaccine.
2. Pfizer had applied for the EUA in the UK and has been approved by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency of the country.
3. Also, the Serum Institute of India and Moderna have also applied for the Emergency Use Authorisation of COVID-19.

Choose the correct option:

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Only 1 and 3
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (d)**

**10. Who among the following has won the Western and Southern Open tennis tournament?**

- (a) Roger Federer
- (b) Rafael Nadal
- (c) Dominic Thiem
- (d) Novak Djokovic

**Ans: (d)**

**11. Consider the following statements regarding Eco-Bridges and choose the correct option:**

1. The Eco-Bridges or Eco-Ducts are constructed to enhance the wildlife connectivity that are usually disrupted due to logging or highways.
2. The Ramnagar Forest Division in the Nainital district of Uttarakhand built the first eco-bridges for smaller mammals and reptiles.

**Options:**

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: (c)**

**12. Which of the following statements is/are correct about the Global Climate Change Performance Index?**

1. The Global Climate Change Performance Index was recently released by the New Climate Institute, Germanwatch and CAN (Climate Action Network).
2. The index has been rating the fifty-seven greenhouse emitters in the world since 2005. These countries account to 90% of global emissions.
3. The index aims to enable comparison of mitigation efforts, enhance transparency in international climate politics.

**Options:**

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Only 1 and 3
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (d)**

**13. Consider the following statements and choose the correct option:**

1. The Home Minister Amit Shah has released the Smuggling in India Report 2019-20.
2. The report was released during the 63rd founding day celebrations of Directorate of Revenue Intelligence.
3. The report analyses the smuggling trends on narcotic drugs, gold and foreign currency, security and commercial frauds.

Options:

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2 and 3
- (c) Only 3
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (b)**

**14. Fausta, a female black rhino, believed to be the world's oldest rhino, had recently died in the Tanzanian conservation area. What is the IUCN status of the black rhinos?**

- (a) Endangered
- (b) Critically Endangered
- (c) Least concern
- (d) Near threatened

**Ans: (b)**

**15. Which of the following became the first country to ban sun screens, that is toxic to coral reefs and sea life?**

- (a) Palau
- (b) Papua New Guinea
- (c) Philippines
- (d) Indonesia

**Ans: (a)**

**16. The Transiting Exo-planet Survey Satellite (TESS) has discovered a new habitable exo-planet, that belongs to which space agency?**

- (a) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
- (b) Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)
- (c) China National Space Administration (CNSA)
- (d) National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

**Ans: (d)**

**17. Which of the following is related to a Shopper?**

- (a) e-Commerce website
- (b) Malware
- (c) Robot
- (d) Electric vehicle for shopping

**Ans: (b)**

**18. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct about National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)?**

1. Constituted under Companies Act, 2013
2. The President of the Tribunal and the chairperson and Judicial Members of the Appellate Tribunal shall be appointed after consultation with the Chief Justice of India.
3. Term of office of chairperson and members is 5 years and they can be reappointed for additional 3 years.

Choose the correct answer

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 2 and 3
- (c) 1 and 3
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (a)**

**19. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct about the Participatory Guarantee System?**

1. PGS is a process of certifying organic products, which ensures that their production takes place in accordance with laid-down quality standards.
2. The certification is in the form of a documented logo or a statement.
3. It is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

Choose the correct answer

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 1 and 2
- (c) 2 and 3
- (d) 1 and 3

**Ans: (a)**

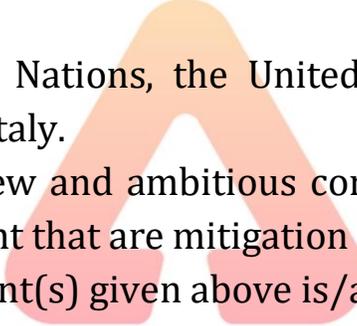
**20. Consider the following statements regarding Climate Ambition Summit 2020.**

1. It is hosted by the United Nations, the United Kingdom and France in partnership with Chile and Italy.
2. Its objective is to set out new and ambitious commitments under the two pillars of the Paris Agreement that are mitigation and adaptation.

Which of the following statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: (a)**



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# BEST STRATEGY TO PREPARE FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICES EXAM 2021

The journey of UPSC can prove to be a life-changing experience in the life of any candidate. UPSC has decided the date for Prelims exam for 2021 and it is 27 June. So, the clock has been started for the candidates who are planning to appear for UPSC CSE 2021. The most common question that comes in everyone's mind especially the beginners that How to Prepare for UPSC Civil Services Exam 2021.

It will be better to read some basic books at the starting of the preparation or at the initial stages so that an understanding is developed which is required to crack the examination and also to fulfil the responsibilities of a civil servant effectively.

*It is rightly said, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail."*

Here, we are mentioning some essential books and plan to create an understanding regarding the syllabus of the UPSC Civil Services Prelims Exam and how to prepare.

## **Names of the Books are as follows:**

- All NCERTs (6th class to 12th class)
- For Polity Laxmikanth
- For Ancient Indian history Tamil Board book
- For Modern Indian History Spectrum
- For Science and tech Tata Mcgrawhill
- For Indian art and culture Nitin Singhania
- For Environment ICSE Books, Monthly magazines and newspapers

## **Things to Remember:**

- It is necessary to understand that strategy should always be Mains perspective. If you are preparing for Mains automatically most of the Prelims will be prepared and also try to finish the maximum syllabus of Mains before prelims.
- Or we can say that complete the Mains syllabus at least once before the Prelims.
- Answer writing practise should be there and it will be better to have a good answer writing practice before Prelims.
- Revise the whole week work on Sunday or frequent revision is required.
- If you want you can also make short notes of General Studies topics.

- Analyse previous Years questions before starting with any subject.
- Cover the newspaper on daily basis do not leave for many days incomplete.
- Study daily with consistency for about 6 to 8 hours or according to your capacity. During the course of preparation, you may don't feel like studying on some days but you will have to study and focused.

**List of the basic minimum resources or books with some important topics subject-wise are mentioned. This will help the freshers to plan the preparation accordingly.**

Subject	Sources
Economy	Indian Economic Development- 11th NCERT Macroeconomics- 12th NCERT Economic Survey, Budget Niti Aayog Report Agriculture- Recent Trends & Problems, Schemes, initiatives & programmes (From magazines, PIB, newspaper, etc.)
Polity	M.Laxmikanth D.D. Basu Focus on Bills, Acts in the news as it can be asked in Prelims and Mains RSTV videos
Geography	Class 8th NCERT (Resources and developments) Class 9th NCERT ( Contemporary India -1) Class 10th NCERT (Contemporary India -2) Fundamentals of Physical Geography- 11th NCERT Physical Environment of India- 11th NCERT Human Geography- 12th NCERT Indian People and Economy- 12th NCERT Certificate Geography- G.C. Leong Map book Mains- Savinder Singh, Khullar/Majid Hussain Interlink with Mains topics such as Disaster Management.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Sources</b>
Environment	<p>Biology class 12th NCERT- Last 4 Chapters</p> <p>ICSE Books</p> <p>Newspaper, Monthly magazine</p> <p>Topics to be covered are:</p> <p>Introduction to Environment &amp; Ecology</p> <p>Ecological Hierarchy: Habitat &amp; Niche</p> <p>Ecological Principles</p> <p>Ecological Succession</p> <p>Ecosystems Definition &amp; Concept</p> <p>Ecosystem Dynamics: Pyramids, Food web</p> <p>Biomagnification and Biochemical cycles</p> <p>Biomes: Forests, Grasslands, Mountain &amp; Desert Ecosystem</p> <p>Aquatic Life: Zones of the Ocean, Coral Reefs &amp; Mangroves</p> <p>Aquatic Life: Conventions-Montreux, Ramsar Convention</p> <p>Biodiversity: Basics and Concepts</p> <p>Biodiversity: Keystone, Indicator and Invasive species</p> <p>Biodiversity Hotspots, Eco-regions &amp; Megadiverse Regions</p> <p>Biodiversity: Uses &amp; Values</p> <p>Biodiversity: Biogeographic Classification of India</p> <p>Biodiversity: IUCN Classification &amp; Red List</p> <p>Biodiversity: Ex-situ &amp; In-situ Conservation</p> <p>Biodiversity: UNESCO, CBD &amp; Cartagena Protocol</p> <p>Biodiversity: Nagoya Protocol; Aichi Targets</p> <p>Environment: Pollution-Air, Water; carcinogens</p> <p>Environment Impact Assessment: Recent issues</p> <p>Environmental Laws &amp; Institutions</p> <p>Environment: Schemes &amp; Policies</p> <p>International Environmental Governance, etc.</p>

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Sources</b>
History	<p>Ancient History: Cover Old NCERT,(Class XIth, RS Sharma)  Tamil Board, (Class: 8,10,11,12,13,14 (Ancient India) Quiz  Indian Medieval History- Satish Chandra( Old NCERT )  Indian freedom struggle- Spectrum  Bipin Chandra- India’s struggle for Independence  Bipin Chandra- India’s struggle after Independence  World History- Arjun Dev NCERT</p>
Art and culture	<p>An introduction to Indian Art- 11th NCERT  Focus on art and culture chapters of Indian Ancient History-  R S Sharma (Old NCERT)  Indian Medieval History- Satish Chandra (Old NCERT)  CCRT  Art &amp; Culture: Nitin Singhania’s notes  Watch videos on youtube. Audio-visual helps memorize better,</p>
IR	<p>Focus on country-country relations – static and current  developments  Newspapers and Magazines will help  V.N Khanna  Topics to be covered:  India and its neighbourhood-relations.  Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving  India and/or affecting India’s interests.  Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing  countries on India’s interests.  The Indian diaspora, Important International institutions,  agencies and fora, their structure, mandate etc.</p>
General science	<p>NCERT- 9th  NCERT – 10th  Newspaper and monthly magazine</p>

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Sources</b>
Ethics	<p>ARC- Ethics in Governance  Remember definitions  Subba Rao- For case studies  Topics to be covered are:  Fundamentals of Ethics, Morality &amp; Legality  Determinants of Ethics &amp; Ethics in Public Life  Dimensions/Branches of Ethics  Human Values: Values &amp; Skills  Fundamental Values Vs. Instrumental Values  Aptitude &amp; Foundational Values of Civil Services  Concepts of Neutrality, Anonymity and Commitment; Morality of Civil Servants  Contributions of Western Moral Thinkers  Contributions of Western Moral Thinkers  Contributions of Indian Thinkers  Contributions of Indian Religious Philosophy  Attitude: Types &amp; Functions of Attitude  Ethics &amp; Law: Enforcement of Ethics through Civil Services  Conduct Rules &amp; Code of Ethics  Ethics &amp; the Law: RTI Act, Citizens' Charters  The challenge of Corruption: Laws and Regulations  Probity in Governance  Emotional Intelligence  Components of Emotional competencies  Corporate Governance: Ethics and Probity  Case Studies Session  Ethics: Paper related Terms &amp; Glossary  Aptitude and foundational values for Civil Service; associated case studies  Ethics and Human Interface: Essence, determinants and consequences of Ethics in human actions; associated case studies.  Ethics, integrity, impartiality and non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication to public service; associated case studies, etc.</p>

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Sources</b>
Other Mains topics	<p>Society- Indian Society- 12th NCERT, Social change and Development- 12th NCERT</p> <p>Governance- ARC report, Adda Videos and study material</p> <p>Social Issues- ARC reports, Newspaper, PIB, PRS, Frontline</p> <p>Disaster Management- ARC Report ( Crisis Management )</p> <p>Security- Challenges to Internal Security of India- Ashok Kumar</p> <p>Topics for Society:</p> <p>Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.</p> <p>Role of women and women’s organization, population and associated issues. Poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies.</p> <p>Effects of globalization on Indian society. Social empowerment, communalism, regionalism &amp; secularism, etc.</p> <p>Topics for Governance:</p> <p>Governance: Meaning &amp; Concepts</p> <p>Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability</p> <p>Ministries &amp; Departments of Government</p> <p>E-Governance-applications &amp; models</p> <p>E-Governance: Successes, limitations, and potential</p> <p>Role of Civil Services in a Democracy</p> <p>Transparency &amp; Accountability: Meaning &amp; Concepts</p> <p>Citizens charters, RTI, institutional and other measures</p> <p>Transparency &amp; Accountability: Public Services Delivery Act, SEVOTTAM Model</p> <p>Vulnerable sections: Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections</p> <p>Schemes &amp; Programmes: performance and evaluation</p> <p>Issues relating to poverty and hunger</p> <p>Issues relating to the development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources</p>

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Sources</b>
	<p>Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States, etc.</p> <p>Topics for Disaster Management:</p> <p>Introduction to Disaster Management</p> <p>Types of Disasters: Classification</p> <p>The occurrence of Disasters worldwide</p> <p>Disaster Management Act &amp; Apparatus [Evolution &amp; Future]</p> <p>National Disaster Management Plan</p> <p>Government Initiatives to reduce vulnerabilities</p> <p>Application of ICT &amp; Space Technology in Disaster Mitigation</p> <p>International Organisations &amp; Associations dealing with Disasters</p> <p>Economic &amp; Social Impact of Disasters, etc.</p>
Social issues	<p>Topics to be covered are:</p> <p>Vulnerable Sections: Basic meaning &amp; Indexes</p> <p>Role of Women, NGOs and associations</p> <p>Women: Laws and their analysis</p> <p>Women: Schemes &amp; Policies</p> <p>Children: Laws &amp; analysis</p> <p>SCs/STs: Constitutional Safeguards and laws</p> <p>Schemes &amp; Policies related to SCs/STs</p> <p>Senior Citizens-Constitutional Provisions &amp; Schemes</p> <p>Judiciary and Vulnerable sections</p> <p>LGBT: Legal status; jurisprudence and challenges</p> <p>Discussion on Mains Answer writing</p> <p>Disability and Disabled: Legal provisions &amp; Challenges</p> <p>Role of NGOs, SHGs, Donor agencies</p> <p>Effects of Globalisation on Indian Society</p> <p>Urbanisation: Problems &amp; Solutions</p> <p>Communalism, Regionalism &amp; Secularism</p> <p>Caste &amp; Religion</p> <p>Population issues: Decoding Census-2011, etc.</p>

Subject	Sources
Internal Security	<p>Topics to be covered are:</p> <p>Role of External State and Non-state Actors in creating challenges to Internal Security.</p> <p>Challenges to Internal Security through Communication Networks, Role of Media and Social Networking Sites in Internal Security</p> <p>Challenges, Basics of Cyber Security; Money-Laundering and its prevention.</p> <p>Insurgency in North East</p> <p>Naxalism in India: Causes &amp; Solutions</p> <p>Militancy in North East</p> <p>Internal Security &amp; International Relations Affairs linkage</p> <p>Linkages between Development and Spread of Extremism, etc.</p>
Current affairs	<p>Read newspaper keeping both Prelims and Mains syllabus</p> <p>As per your capacity and interest make notes</p> <p>Cover Current Affairs issue- wise and not date wise</p> <p>Revise Current Affairs with a monthly magazine</p> <p>Attempt test series</p> <p>And current notes of Adda247</p> <p>Videos based on current burning topics of Adda247</p>

It will be better to separate the topics or study as per your level. We have just provided an idea that in this way you can cover topics and strategize your preparation.

### Key facts:

It is important to know the basics of the exam. Analyse previous years papers, you should know how and what is asked in the exam. You can also see some Youtube channels of experts including Adda247. This will help in the preparation and understanding the basics of an exam.

Strengthen and build your foundation: Cover NCERTS from 6th to 12th class and develop regular reading newspaper habit. For building the foundation start reading some standard books for each subject. Always remember it is necessary to limit the resources and frequent revision. It will be better to read one book for each subject with a thorough understanding and revise it multiple times.

The key to success is revision and consistency in studies.

Answer- writing practice for Mains also plays an important role in the examination. You can start Prelims focused preparation about two months before the Prelims. Try to give full mock tests in a simulated environment and also take precautions while giving Mock tests due to COVID-19.

For Interview preparation, you should be confident about yourself, work on soft skills, groom personality, read newspapers regularly, etc.

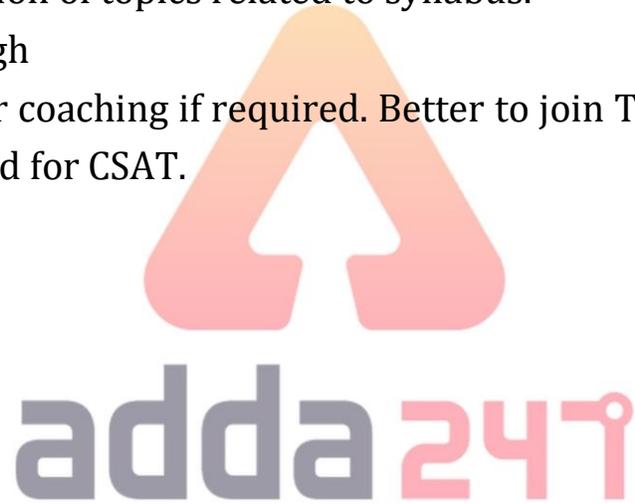
We can't ignore the fact that each stage of the UPSC Civil Services Exam is an elimination round where the UPSC declares cutoff after the declaration of the result. So, it will be better to check out the cutoff for all the three stages.

Adda247 brings you online courses and Youtube videos of several current burning topics and also subject-oriented to help in the preparation. During COVID-19 you will be able to start the preparation of the UPSC Civil Services Exam from home itself under the guidance of an expert. Check out the details and courses.

The logo for Adda247, featuring the word 'adda' in a grey sans-serif font and '247' in a pink sans-serif font, with a large, stylized pink number '7' behind it.

## UPSC PREPARATION TIPS FOR BEGINNERS (IN SHORT)

- Read the Syllabus Carefully
- Good Planner: Plan your studies in a way that helps you optimize your output.
- There is no alternative to NCERTs. Always start your preparation from NCERTs and then move on.
- Save the Notes for Last if possible
- Make a habit for revision: Frequent revision can be a key to success
- A Strong Foundation is a Key
- Read the Newspaper
- If possible reduce Socializing
- Set Deadlines for completion of topics related to syllabus.
- Always keep the Spirit High
- Opt for Online Lectures or coaching if required. Better to join Test Series Chapter wise for GS for Prelims and for CSAT.



# UPSC PRELIMS SYLLABUS 2021: GENERAL STUDIES AND CSAT FOR CSE

The Preliminary Examination of UPSC Civil Services is the first elimination round which consists of two papers. Or we can say that it is a screening stage of the Civil Services Exam which is conducted by the Union Public Services Commission every year.

In this article, we are providing the syllabus of UPSC Prelims 2021 in-depth that will be helpful for preparing the UPSC Civil Services Exam 2021 for the IAS aspirants.

*The competitive examination comprises two successive stages:*

- Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination (Objective Type) for the selection of candidates for Main Examination; and
- Civil Services (Main) Examination (Written and Interview) for the selection of candidates for the various Services and posts.

## UPSC Prelims Syllabus

It is divided into two parts:

1. General Studies Paper I
2. CSAT or General Studies Paper-II

The preliminary examination of UPSC (IAS) Civil Services is for screening purpose only. It is of qualifying nature that is the marks obtained in the UPSC prelims examination qualifies the candidate to take the UPSC Main examination and will not be counted for determining a candidate's final order of merit.

Both the papers are conducted on the same day. Paper I in the morning session and Paper-II in the evening session. The maximum limit to complete both the papers is two hours. The questions will be of multiple-choice, objective type.

No Change in UPSC Exam Pattern and No Proposal to drop CSAT- Check Details here

## General Studies Paper I (200 marks); Duration (Two hours)

- Current events of national and international importance.
- History of India and Indian National Movement.
- Indian and World Geography-Physical, Social, Economic Geography of India and the World.
- Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.
- Economic and Social Development-Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector Initiatives, etc.
- General issues on Environmental ecology, Bio-diversity and Climate Change – that do not require subject specialization.
- General Science

### Paper I: Subject-Wise Division

Subject-Wise Division	Syllabus in Detail
Current Events: Events covered are of National and International Importance	Current Affairs Current Affairs with all Dimensions
History: Indian History and Indian Freedom Struggle	Ancient History of India Medieval History of India Modern History (1857-1947) Indian National Movement
Geography: Geography of India and Concept of Physical Geography	Physical Geography Human Geography Economic Geography World Geography
Polity: Indian Polity and Governance issues	Constitutional Framework Union Executives State Executives Federalism in India Judicial System Panchayati Raj

Subject-Wise Division	Syllabus in Detail
Economy: Indian Economy and Social Development	– Basic Principles of Indian Economy Social Schemes of Government Social Development through Economic Empowerment Sustainable Development Demographics Poverty, Inclusion, etc.
Environment and Ecology: Principles of Environment and Ecology	General Principles Climate Change and Climate Summits and Conferences Biodiversity, etc.
General Science: Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Science and Technology	General Principles Latest Science and Technological Development

### CSAT/ General Studies Paper-II (200 marks); Duration (Two hours)

- Comprehension
- Interpersonal skills including communication skills
- Logical reasoning and analytical ability
- Decision making and problem-solving
- General mental ability
- Basic numeracy (numbers and their relations, orders of magnitude, etc.) (Class X level)
- Data interpretation (charts, graphs, tables, data sufficiency etc. (Class X level)
- Paper-II of the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination will be a qualifying paper with minimum qualifying marks fixed at 33%.
- It is mandatory for the candidate to appear in both the Papers of Civil Services (Prelim) Examination for the purpose of evaluation. Therefore a candidate will be disqualified in case he/she does not appear in both the papers of Civil Services (Prelim) Examination.



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