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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Malta's PM sworn in after Labour party's landslide election win

- The Prime Minister of Malta, Robert Abela has been sworn in for a second term after his ruling Labour Party won the 2022 general election in a landslide victory. He was administered the oath of office by President George Vella. Abela was first sworn in as prime minister in January 2020 after the former Labour Party leader and prime minister Joseph Muscat resigned.
- It was the first electoral test for Abela, a 44-year-old lawyer since he took the helm of the tiny Mediterranean island nation in January 2020 following a Labour party vote. Labour secured a majority of almost 40,000 votes over its Nationalist Party rivals — a huge margin in the tiny EU state which has just 355,000 registered voters.

Russia delivers all the contracted 70,000 AK-203 to India

- Russia delivered all the contracted 70,000 AK-203 Kalashnikov assault rifles to the Indian Armed Forces. The Indian Armed Forces had placed an order for 670,000 rifles, for which the contract was signed on December 06, 2021, between India and Kalashnikov (Russian defence manufacturing unit). The total cost of the contract is around Rs 5,124 crore. The contract included procuring 70,000 rifles off the shelf.
- The remaining 600,000 rifles will be manufactured by an Indo-Russian joint venture company, Indo-Russia Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL), based at Amethi, Uttar Pradesh India under transfer of technology (ToT). [at Korwa Rifle Factory, Amethi]. The lightweight AK-203 Rifles will replace the military's in-service INSAS (Indian Small Arms System) Rifle.

Iran, Russia and China begin naval drill

- The Russian, Chinese and Iranian navies undertook naval exercises CHIRU-2Q22 in the Gulf of Oman. The maritime drills conducted in the northern parts of the Indian Ocean aimed at deepening practical cooperation among the navies of the three countries. The participants practised various tactics and operations, such as rescuing ablaze vessels, saving hijacked vessels, shooting at targets, nocturnal shooting at aerial targets, and other tactical manoeuvres as a part of the drill. At least 140 warships and over 60 aircraft with nearly 10,000 military personnel would be taking part in the military exercises.

Apple Retains Most Valuable Brand Title in 2022

- Apple has retained its position as the most valuable brand in 2022 as well, according to the Brand Finance 2022 Global 500 report. The brand valuation of Apple was recorded at \$355.1 billion in 2022, which is an increase of 35% from last year. This is the highest brand value ever recorded in the Brand Finance Global 500 ranking history.
- TikTok (18th) has been named the world's fastest-growing brand in the list. Its brand value increased from US\$18.7 billion in 2021 to US\$59.0 billion in 2022.
- Tech remained the most valuable industry in the list in terms of sector. This was followed by Retail, Banking, Media and Telecoms in top 5 respectively.

Malaysia to host 4 nations for Bersama Shield military drills

- Malaysia will host armed forces from 4 nations namely, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom in the annual Bersama Shield 2022 training exercise. The exercise, referred to as BS22, is conducted within the framework of the Five Power Defense Arrangements (FPDA) – a series of bilateral and multilateral defence agreements established in 1971. Bersama means together in Malay.
- The exercise will involve sea and air drills, mostly in international waters but also in part of Malaysia's exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea. The exercise, referred to as BS22, is conducted within the framework of the Five Power Defense Arrangements (FPDA). The FPDA is the oldest defense arrangement in the region and includes counter-piracy operations as well as disaster relief and humanitarian assistance.

Kuwait becomes hottest place on earth, temperature reaches 53.2 degrees Celsius

- Kuwait reached a scorching temperature of 53.2 degrees Celsius (127.7 degrees Fahrenheit), making it among the hottest places on earth. It was so hot in Kuwait last summer that birds dropped dead from the sky. Sea horses boiled to death in the bay. Dead clams coated the rocks, their shells popped open like they'd been steamed.
- The country continues to burn oil for electricity and ranks among the top global carbon emitters per capita, according to the World Resources Institute. As asphalt melts on highways, Kuwaitis bundle up for bone-chilling air-conditioning in malls. Renewable energy accounts for less than 1 per cent of demand – far below Kuwait's target of 15 per cent by 2030.

Serdar Berdimuhamedow sworn in as Turkmen president

- Serdar Berdimuhamedow has been sworn in as the President of Turkmenistan. Berdimuhamedow succeeds his father and former president Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, who became president in 2006 and served till 2022. It must be noted that the presidential elections in Turkmenistan are held every seven years. Serdar Berdymukhamedov, secured 72.97 per cent of the votes election to lead the gas-rich country.

Rajnath Singh inaugurates new flight control system integration facility to develop avionics for AMCA

- Shri Rajnath Singh, Defence Minister, inaugurated a seven-story Flight Control System (FCS) Integration facility at the Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), a DRDO laboratory in Bengaluru, Karnataka. Pilots of combat aircraft will also receive simulator training at the complex. It is one of the most essential components of the complex, according to Shri Rajnath Singh.
- The state-of-the-art complex was built in a record-breaking 45 days using in-house hybrid technology that included traditional, pre-engineered, and precast methods. The technique was developed by DRDO in collaboration with M/s Larsen & Toubro (L&T).
- IIT Madras and IIT Roorkee teams examined the design and provided technical help.
- This FCS facility would help ADE, Bengaluru, with its research and development operations for developing avionics for fighter aircraft and FCS for Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft.

Four US soldiers die during NATO training exercise in Norway

- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has organised the massive military drill 'Cold Response 2022' in Norway from March 14, 2022, and will continue till April 01, 2022. The exercise is held in Norway every second year, for NATO Allies and partners. Cold Response is a long-planned and defensive exercise where Norway and its allies exercise in defending Norway against external threats. The exercise has been planned and informed about long before the war in Ukraine.
- The Norwegian-led exercise provides an opportunity to train together in cold weather conditions over challenging terrain and demonstrates NATO's ability to respond decisively to any threat, from any direction. Around 30,000 troops from 27 nations are taking part in the 2022 edition of the exercise, with about 220 aircraft and more than 50 vessels. This is the largest 'Cold Response' being exercise conducted in Norway since the 1980s.

Bangladesh top in South Asia for women leadership in listed firms

- Bangladesh tops the list in South Asia in terms of women on board of listed companies, says a study conducted by International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE). According to the latest figures, there was an increase in the percentage of women who are independent directors on listed companies from five per cent in 2020 to six per cent, despite the impact of C-19, which has disproportionately affected women, said a press release issued by the IFC.
- The findings were revealed at an event marking International Women's Day. The IFC, DSE, UN Women, and United Nations Global Compact organised the programme. The IFC has partnered with the DSE, UN Women, and United Nations Global Compact for the seventh consecutive year to "Ring the Bell for Gender Equality".

'Mahatma Gandhi Green Triangle' unveiled in Madagascar to mark celebration of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav

- Mahatma Gandhi Green Triangle' has been unveiled in Madagascar to mark Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. Ambassador of India to Madagascar, Abhay Kumar celebrated the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav by inaugurating a Green Triangle, along with Mayor of Antananarivo Naina Andriantsitohaina. The word green in the plaque signifies their commitment to sustainable development and saving the environment. The naming of this park as Mahatma Gandhi Green Triangle is an apt tribute to Mahatma Gandhi.
- While addressing the ceremony, the Ambassador of India said that the Government of India has launched an initiative: Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM) to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of progressive India. The event was attended by members of local government, diplomatic corps, heads of international organisations, and members of the Indian Diaspora in Madagascar.

Sri Lanka received US\$1 billion line of credit from India

- The Indian government has issued a USD 1 billion line of credit (LoC) for Sri Lanka to aid in the import of food, necessary products, and medication. On March 15, 2022, Sri Lankan Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa will visit India to finalise the agreement. Sri Lanka is currently experiencing a serious economic crisis. India is extending the Line of Control as

part of its efforts to aid its neighbouring country in combating the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigating its negative impact on its development aspirations.

- The island's foreign reserves have dropped 70% in the last two years to \$2.31 billion in February, stalling critical imports including of fuel. Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa, who first announced the Indian credit line in February, will sign an agreement for it on Wednesday to pay for essentials including medicine, wheat flour, sugar and rice.

United States and Others to Revoke Most-Favored-Nation Status from Russia

- President Biden announced that the United States—along with the G7, the European Union, and NATO—will revoke Russia's Most Favored Nation (MFN) trade status. Revoking Russia's PNTR status will allow the United States to increase and impose new tariffs on all Russian imports. In the US, the "most favoured nation" status is also known as permanent normal trade relations (PNTR). Only North Korea and Cuba do not enjoy the "most favoured nation" status from the US.
- The main aim of this step is to punish the Russian government for its invasion of Ukraine. The United States will also not export luxury goods to Russia. Earlier, the United States has banned the import of Oil and energy from Russia. This action will cause economic harm to Russia by damaging its ability to export to wealthier Western markets; it will also raise costs for Americans and our trading partners that may rely on affected Russian products.

Ex-student protest leader becomes Chile's youngest president

- Gabriel Boric Font has been appointed as the new and 36th President of Chile. The 36-year-old leftist is the youngest leader to hold the office in Chile's history. He succeeds Sebastián Piñera. Boric will hold the office for the period between 2022-2026.
- As a student representative, Boric became one of the leading figures of the 2011–2013 Chilean student protests. Boric was twice elected to the Chamber of Deputies representing the Magallanes and Antarctic district, first as an independent candidate in 2013 and then in 2017 as part of the Broad Front, a left-wing coalition he created with several other parties.

Parliament elects Hungary's first ever woman president

- The Hungarian parliament has elected Katalin Novak, a close ally of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, as the EU member's first-ever female president. Novak, who most recently served as a minister for family policy, portrayed her election as a victory for women. She was elected to the mostly ceremonial role by 137 votes to 51 in the parliament dominated by Orbán's right-wing Fidesz party ahead of opposition challenger Peter Rona, an economist.
- Novak will succeed János Áder, a co-founder of Orbán's governing right-wing Fidesz party who has held the job since 2012. She will take office after Áder's term expires May 10.

Yoon Suk-yeol wins South Korea's presidential election

- Yoon Suk-yeol has been declared as the winner of the 2022 South Korean presidential election to be elected as the new President of the country. He is scheduled to assume office as president on May 10, 2022, for a fixed term of five years. Yoon Suk-yeol will succeed incumbent President Moon Jae-in.

- With more than 98 per cent of the ballots counted, Yoon had 48.6 per cent of the votes against his rival Lee Jae-Myung's 47.8 per cent. Yoon is to take office in May and serve a single five-year term as leader of the world's 10th-largest economy.

Russia becomes world's most sanctioned country

- Russia has become the most sanctioned country in the world, due to its invasion on Ukraine, according to a New York-based sanctions watchlist site Castellum.AI. Russia faced 2,778 new sanctions since February 22, 2022, led by the US and European nations, bringing the total sanctions to 5,530. The country already had 2,754 sanctions in place before February 22.
- Countries across the world are putting sanctions on Russia to stop its invasion of Ukraine. Russia has now surpassed countries like Iran and North Korea in terms of a number of sanctions. Before this, Iran was the most sanctioned country, facing 3,616 sanctions against it over the last decade, while Syria and North Korea have 2,608 and 2,077 sanctions, respectively.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard launches 2nd satellite

- Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) successfully launched a military satellite, Noor-2, into orbit at an altitude of 500 kilometres (311 miles) from the earth. This is the second military satellite launched by the Islamic Republic. The first military satellite, Noor, was launched in April 2020 at an orbit of 425km (265 miles) above the earth's surface. Noor means light in the Persian language.
- Putting the second satellite in space would be a major advance for Iran's military, raising concerns about the country's nuclear and missile programs. The three-stage Qased, or "Messenger", the carrier launched the Noor 2, from the Shahroud spaceport.

UNEA-5.2 held in hybrid form in Nairobi, Kenya

- The United Nations Environment Assembly was hosted by the UN Environment Programme. It brings together representatives from the UN's 193 member countries, corporations, civil society, and other stakeholders to agree on policies to address the world's most serious environmental concerns.
- The aim of UNEA-5 was "Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals," emphasising the importance of nature in our lives as well as in social, economic, and environmental sustainability.
- Its goal was to give nations the impetus they needed to build on and catalyse global environmental initiatives to safeguard and restore the natural world on which our economy and societies rely.

Mobile World Congress 2022 Opens in Barcelona

- The Global System for Mobile Communications Association(GSMA) has organised the 2022 Mobile World Congress (MWC), which took place in Barcelona, Spain from 28 February to 3 March. The focus on 5G and maximizing its potential for benefiting countries and economies is the centrepiece of MWC this year which is taking place amid an ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine.

- Global Mobile Economy Report expects 5G connections globally to reach 1 billion in 2022 by 5G adoption. An increase in the 5G network connection will increase the global GDP by 5% up to \$5 trillion in 2025. Global telecom industry to invest \$600 billion till 2025 in the global mobile industry's capital expenditure (CAPEX) and 85% of it will be spent on 5G. The MWC is expected to see keynote sessions from top telecom voices including Bharti Enterprises chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal, Adam Selipsky, CEO, Amazon Web Services, Jessica Rosenworcel, Chairwoman of the FCC and Cristiano Amon, President and CEO, Qualcomm among others.

Study in India meet 2022 inaugurated in the national capital of Bangladesh

- The two-day-long Study in India (SII) 2022 meeting was inaugurated in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The event organised by the High Commission of India was inaugurated by the Education Minister of Bangladesh Dr Dipu Moni and the High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh Vikram Doraiswami. Education Minister of Bangladesh said the educational exchange between the two countries will further strengthen the friendly relations between the two countries. She said that students of today have the responsibility to find solutions for the common issues like poverty that are faced by the countries of South Asia.
- A large number of students from various educational institutions took part in the event. They explored the opportunity for studying abroad provided by some of the best colleges and universities in India.
- A total of 19 educational institutions from India are taking part in the Education Fair in Dhaka. The Study in India meet will be organised in Chittagong on March 7 for the benefit of Bangladeshi students.

China launches national record 22 satellites on Long March 8 commercial rideshare

- China's second Long March 8 rocket launched carrying a domestic record 22 satellites for a range of commercial Chinese space companies. The Long March 8 lifted off from Wenchang Satellite Launch Center at 10:06 p.m. Eastern Feb. 26, with the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC) later confirming launch success.
- These satellites will be mainly used for commercial remote sensing services, marine environment monitoring, forest fire prevention and disaster mitigation. The mission marked the 409th flight of the Long March carrier rockets.

US, EU, UK agree to remove selected Russian banks from SWIFT

- Canada, U.S.A. and their European allies have come to a conclusion to remove the key Russian banks from the Interbank messaging system (IMS) of SWIFT. This is a very big step that will cut off the country from much of the worldwide financial system.
- The major global powers issued a joint statement announcing this significant retaliatory measure. It said, "This will ensure that these banks are disconnected from the international financial system and harm their ability to operate globally".
- Russia's removal from SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) will mean that the Russian banks will not be able to communicate securely with foreign banks.

- Previously, Iran has been removed from SWIFT in 2014 following developments to its nuclear program in Tehran.
- The announcement will follow several rounds of joint sanctions that will be imposed on Russia for its unprovoked attack on Ukraine.

World's largest cargo plane destroyed by Russian strikes in Ukraine,

- Russian invasion to Ukraine, Russia destroyed the largest plane in the world called "Ukraine's Antonov-225 cargo plane". The plane was destroyed outside Kyiv. According to weapons manufacturer Ukroboronprom, restoring "AN-225 Mriya" would cost over USD 3 billion and could take over five years. The aircraft was unique to the world. The An-225 aircraft was located at Hostomel Airport when Russia launched an attack on the Ukrainian airport on February 24, 2022. It was destroyed on February 27.
- The aircraft was designed to airlift Energia rocket's boosters and Buran-class orbiters for Soviet space program. It was developed to replace the Myasishchev VM-T.
- The original mission and objectives of An-225 are almost similar to that of the United States' Shuttle Carrier Aircraft. The lead designer of the An-225 was Viktor Tolmachev.
- It was 84 meters long and could transport up to 250 tonnes of cargo at a speed of 850 kilometres per hour.

International Olympic Committee Withdraws Top Olympic Honour From Vladimir Putin

- The International Olympic Committee has stripped Russian President Vladimir Putin of the Olympic Order award in response to the invasion of Ukraine. International Olympic Committee urged sports federations and organisers to exclude Russian and Belarusian athletes and officials from international events following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
- Russia's participation in the World Cup play-offs next month is also in doubt after FIFA plans to allow them to play on neutral territory were dismissed as "unacceptable" by rivals. The IOC last week urged all international sports federations to cancel forthcoming events in Russia, angry at Moscow violating an "Olympic Truce" with its attack on Ukraine.

NATIONAL NEWS

IAF unveils new initiative for refuelling its convoys

- The Indian Air Force has unveiled a new initiative with the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. Under it, IAF's convoys will be refuelled at fuel stations of the state-run energy major. As per the Defence Ministry, 'Fleet Card-Fuel on Move' has been rolled out to facilitate the refuelling of convoys belonging to the Indian Air Force. Under the existing system, the Indian Air Force procures fuel from various agencies and then distributes it within the Air Force establishment.
- With the advent of the Fleet Cards, the IAF will be able to utilise the vast network of retail fuel distributors across the country to refuel its vehicles on the move. The availability of Fleet Card will permit the convoy to refuel at any IOCL fuel station, thus increasing the pace of movement and reducing the lead time for readiness at operational locations across the nation.

Union minister G Kishan Reddy inaugurates mega northeast cultural festival 'Ishan Manthan' in Delhi

- Union Minister for Culture, Tourism & DONER, G Kishan Reddy has inaugurated the three-day North-East festival called 'Ishan Manthan' at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in New Delhi. The three-day Ishan Manthan programme will celebrate the rich ethnicity and colours of North East India, from March 25 to 27, 2022. The event will give an opportunity to know about the culture, art, music, folk dances, handicrafts and traditional cuisines of Northeast India.
- Ishan Manthan is an attempt to celebrate the plural expressions of northeast India. It can be understood as "North East Brainstorming". The inaugural session also witnessed the release of two books titled 'Lok Beyond Folk', a book on the Lok Culture which was edited by Shri J Nandalumar and 'Jewels of North East India'.

President Kovind presents President's Colour to INS Valsura for its yeoman service to nation

- President of India, Ram Nath Kovind has presented the prestigious President's Colour to Indian Naval Ship (INS) Valsura at Jamnagar in Gujarat. The 'Nishan Adhikari' Lt Arun Singh Sambyal received the President's Colour on behalf of the unit, for its 80 years of exceptional service. INS Valsura is a premier training facility of the Indian Navy established on December 05, 1942, in Jamnagar of Gujarat, to provide training in the domain of Torpedo handling (Underwater missile) and operations.
- The President's Colour is bestowed upon a military unit in recognition of exceptional service rendered to the Nation, both in peace and in war. The Indian Navy was the first Indian Armed Force, to get President Colour by then President Dr Rajendra Prasad on 27 May 1951.

Pramod Sawant takes oath as Goa CM for second consecutive term

- Pramod Sawant took oath as the Chief Minister of Goa on March 28, 2022, for the second straight five-year term. Sawant led the BJP in the recently concluded 2022 Goa Assembly elections and won 20 seats in the 40-member Goa Assembly. Mr Sawant was administered the oath by Governor PS Sreedharan Pillai at the Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee stadium near Panaji.
- Mr Sawant is an Ayurveda Medical practitioner by profession. He was sworn in as Chief Minister in March 2019 after the death of the sitting chief minister Manohar Parrikar. Mr Sawant represents the Sanquelim constituency.
- The event was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with other ministers like Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, BJP national president JP Nadda, Himachal Pradesh Governor Rajendra Arlekar, former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadanavis among others.

US, Philippines kick off their largest-ever military drills

- The United States military and the military of the Philippines kicked off the military drill Balikatan 2022. The Philippine-led annual exercise will take place across Luzon in the Philippines region near Taiwan, from March 28 to April 8, 2022. Around 8,900 Filipino and American troops are participating in the military drill, making it the largest Balikatan military exercise ever.

- According to the military, the drills will focus on “maritime security, amphibious operations, live-fire training, urban operations, aviation operations, counterterrorism, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief”. The Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) gives US troops a legal basis to be in the Southeast Asian country for bilateral exercises and governs the conduct of American armed force personnel.

K'taka govt to establish Chitrakala galleries in 6 regions across State

- Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday said Chitrakala art galleries will be set up in six places in Karnataka as he laid emphasis on extending the art of drawing and painting across the state.
- Noting that there is a demand to make Chitrakala Parishath, an autonomous institution, into a deemed university, he said steps in this direction would be taken in the next session of the State Legislature.
- "Chitrakala Parishath is the epicentre for 'Chitrakale' (art of drawing and painting) in Karnataka. It needs to be extended all over the State. Action would be taken to establish Chitrakala galleries in six regional spots," Bommai said after inaugurating the 19th edition of the 'Chitra Santhe' organised by the Parishath.

First direct flight between Gorakhpur-Varanasi under UDAN-RCS flagged-off

- The first direct flight between Gorakhpur and Varanasi was flagged-off on Sunday.
- SpiceJet was awarded the route under the RCS-UDAN 4.1, as per a press release by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- The airline will be operating daily flights and will deploy its Q400, 78-seater turboprop aircraft designed for shorter-distance flights on the route. SpiceJet is India's largest regional carrier. The airline operates 63 daily flights under UDAN connecting 14 UDAN destinations to various parts of the country, stated the press release.

Amit Shah inaugurates Integrated Command and Control Centre in Chandigarh

- Union Minister Amit Shah on Sunday inaugurated Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) here in Chandigarh under which around 2,000 CCTV cameras have been installed.
- “Chandigarh is one of the most developed cities in the country. With the inauguration of this Integrated Command and Control Centre in the UT, citizens' services, security, traffic discipline etc. can be monitored from one place,” said Union Home Minister Amit Shah.
- The inauguration ceremony was also attended by Punjab Governor and Chandigarh Administrator Banwarilal Purohit.
- Speaking on the occasion, Shah said, "I am confident that Chandigarh, in the days to come, shall become one of the most advanced cities of India and the world."

Union Minister Of Women And Child Development, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani Inaugurates Ten-Day Mega 'Red Fort Festival – Bharat Bhagya Vidhata'

- Union Minister of Women and Child Development, Smriti Irani has inaugurated the ten-day mega Red Fort Festival, 'Bharat Bhagya Vidhata' at Red Fort in Delhi. The Red Fort festival has been organised by the Union Ministry of Culture, as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. The ministry has collaborated with the Dalmia Bharat Group (DBG) to organise the event as

DBG has adopted the Red Fort as its Monument Mitra. The festival will commemorate the heritage, culture and diversity of every part of India.

- The festival aims to commemorate the heritage of the country and the culture of every part of India. The festival Bharat Bhagya Vidhata will help everyone to appreciate the diversity of India. More than 70 master craftsmen have displayed their craftsmanship at the venue.

Indian Navy conducts 20-day joint maritime exercise at Arabian Sea

- Western Naval Command of the Indian Navy conducted a joint maritime exercise Paschim Lehar (XPL-2022) off the West Coast which concluded. The exercise continued for 20 days and was conducted with an aim to enhance Inter-Service synergy among the Indian Navy, IAF, Indian Army and Coast Guard. The Western Naval Command (HQ- Mumbai) is one of the three command-level formations of the Indian Navy. The other two are Eastern Naval Command (HQ- Visakhapatnam) and Southern Naval Command (HQ- Kochi).
- A variety of weapon firings in a realistic tactical scenario, besides validation of operational missions and tasks under varying settings, were undertaken during the exercise. The exercise provided all participating forces an opportunity to operate together under realistic conditions, in responding to contemporary maritime challenges, across the areas of the Command's responsibility.

Rajasthan set to get its fourth tiger reserve

- Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary, which is among the proposed five sites in the country, is expected to be formally notified as tiger reserve (TR) soon before the Global Tiger Summit, which is to be held at Vladivostok, Russia. The Centre also announced the development during the 4th Asia ministerial conference on tiger conservation. The Centre has already given its approval of granting tiger reserve status to Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary, along with MM Hills in Karnataka, Guru Ghasidas National Park in Chhattisgarh.
- The Ramgarh Vishdhari Sanctuary will be spread across 1,071 sq kms. A 302 Sq Km area in the proposed tiger sanctuary will be left as critical habitat for Tigers and the rest of the area will act as a buffer zone for the Ranthambore National Park.
- Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary was established in 1982. The core areas of the sanctuary have 8 villages and are home to large numbers of wild animals like sambhars, caracals, wild boars, nilgai, and striped Hyena.

Yogi Adityanath Sworn In As UP Chief Minister For 2nd Time

- Yogi Adityanath takes oath as chief minister of Uttar Pradesh for his second term in office. Governor Anandiben Patel administered the oath of office and secrecy to Adityanath at Lucknow's Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Stadium in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and other central ministers.
- Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak also took oath as the Deputy Chief Ministers in the new government. The BJP-led NDA secured 274 seats out of 403, becoming the first party in over three decades to form a government for a second consecutive time in the state.
- The Yogi Adityanath-led BJP government created history with its comeback as no other CM has been able to repeat a government in the state in 37 years. The Congress had returned to

power with a majority in the state 37 years ago. After this, chief minister Yogi Adityanath has not just made history by completing five successful years of governance but by also returning to power with a thumping majority. He has become the first such BJP leader to become the CM for the second consecutive term.

Exercise Suraksha Kavach 2- Joint Security Exercise by Indian Army and Maharashtra Police

- Indian Army's "Agnibaaz Division" organized a joint exercise "Suraksha Kavach 2" with Maharashtra Police at Lullanagar, Pune. The exercise aimed to counter any terrorist actions in Pune. The exercise involved the participation of the Counter-Terrorism Task Force (CTTF) of the Indian Army, Anti-Terrorism Squad of Maharashtra Police along with Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs), Dog Squads, and Bomb Disposal Teams of both agencies. The exercise aimed to harmonize the drills and procedures undertaken by Army and Police to counter-terrorism.

Centre Aims To Create 220 New Airports By 2025; Plans ₹1 Lakh Crore Investment In 2-3 Yrs

- Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia stated that the Government has set a target of building 220 new airports by 2025, citing the Civil Aviation industry as a critical component of India's economy. In response to the Civil Aviation Ministry's requests for grants for 2022-23, Scindia stated that India has made progress in both domestic and foreign travel during the COVID-19 period. "Cargo flights for perishable food items will be boosted by 30% in the next few years, with 133 new flights," he stated.
- Scindia stated that the pilot licence will be simplified in the coming days using cutting-edge technologies. The government intends to build 33 new domestic freight ports, 15 new pilot training schools, more jobs, and a stronger focus on the drone industry.
- In the last seven days, the minister informed the House that 3.82 lakh passengers travelled by air.
- The minister informed the House that women make up 15% of the country's entire pilot force. Another illustration of women's empowerment is this. In the last 20-25 years, the aviation business has seen significant transformations."

Indian Psychiatric Society national conference to begin in Visakhapatnam on March 24

- The 73rd Annual National Conference of Indian Psychiatric Society (ANCIPS) has been organized in Visakhapatnam from today to the 26th of March. Experts from various parts of India and a few from abroad are participating in the three-day conference held at Vizag Conventions at Madhurawada. The last national conference was held 37 years ago in Visakhapatnam.
- The focus areas would be on drug and alcohol abuse in society, stress among students and growing incidence of suicides, depression and anxiety, old-age problems and dementia. The national conference, being hosted jointly by IPS, A.P. State branch, Government Hospital Mental Care and Visakha Psychiatric Society, will be inaugurated by Justice P. Laxmana Reddy, Lokayukta of Andhra Pradesh.

Nagaland state becomes first paperless Assembly by implementing National e-Vidhan Application programme

- Nagaland has created history by becoming the first State Assembly in the country to implement the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) programme to become completely paperless. The Nagaland Assembly Secretariat has attached a tablet or e-book on each table in the 60 members' assembly amid the ongoing Budget session.
- NeVA is a work-flow system deployed on NIC Cloud, MeghRaj which helps the Chair of the House to conduct the proceedings of the House smoothly and to conduct Legislative Business of the House in a Paperless manner.
- NeVA is a device neutral and member-centric application created to equip them to handle diverse House Business smartly by putting entire information regarding member contact details, rules of procedure, list of business, notices, bulletins, bills, starred/unstarred questions and answers, papers laid, committee reports etc. in their handheld devices/tablets and equip all Legislatures/Departments to handle it efficiently.

Narasinghapettai Nagaswaram, the classical musical instrument gets GI tag

- Geographical Indication tag has been awarded to the Narasinghapettai Nagaswaram under the category of musical instruments of class 15. Narasinghapettai nagaswaram is a classical wind music instrument that is traditionally made in a village near Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu.
- On behalf of Thanjavur Musical Instruments Workers Co-operative Cottage Industrial Society Limited, the application for receiving the GI tag was filed by Tamil Nadu's Nodal Officer for GI Registration of Products.
- The nagaswaram that is being used by artists nowadays is named pari nagaswaram and that is longer than the thimiri. This musical instrument has a body that is cylindrical in shape and takes the shape of a bell at the bottom. This form of the nagaswaram provides volume and tone. The instrument's length is two and a half feet.

West Bengal celebrates Dol Utsav, welcomes spring season

- West Bengal celebrated the 'Dol Utsav' or 'Dol Jatra', the festival of colours, marking the onset of the spring season. The festival is dedicated to Lord Krishna and Radha and celebrated on full moon day. It also marks the last festival of the year as per the Bengali calendar. In the Eastern region of India, the festival of spring is celebrated as Dol Jatra, Dol Purnima, Dol Utsav, and Basanta Utsav. The majestic festival is celebrated by throwing 'gulaal' or 'aabir' on others and by singing and dancing in cultural programs.

Indian Coast Guard's fifth offshore patrol vessel Saksham commissioned in Goa

- Defence Secretary of India, Dr Ajay Kumar has commissioned the Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) Saksham. The fifth in the series of 105-metre Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) class, at Goa. The first four of the five ICGS which have already been commissioned in 2020 are ICGS Sachet (1st); ICGS Sujeet (2nd); ICGS Sarthak (3rd); and ICGS Sajag (4th) in 2021.
- The Indigenous Offshore Patrol Vessel Project was launched by the Prime Minister of India in 2016 under which five Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV) for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) were planned to be launched.

Indian Army contingent arrives in Seychelles for 9th edition of Exercise Lamitiye

- The 9th edition of the Joint Military Exercise 'LAMITIYE-2022' between the Indian Army and Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF) was held from March 22 to 31, 2022 at Seychelles Defence Academy (SDA), Seychelles. The Indian Army contingent will be represented by the 2/3 GORKHA RIFLES group (PIRKANTHI Battalion).
- Exercise LAMITIYE is a biennial training event, been conducted in Seychelles since 2001. The objective of this joint training exercise is to build and promote bilateral military relations, sharing experiences gained during various operations; exchanging skills and good practices between both armies.

Startups get up to 10 yrs for converting debt investment into equity

- According to a news release from the DPIIT, the government has extended the deadline for companies to convert debt financing into equity shares by up to 10 years, a measure that is likely to provide comfort to emerging enterprises dealing with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Previously, convertible notes may be converted into equity shares for up to five years after the initial convertible note was issued. That time frame has now been increased to ten years.
- During the investment, the investor is given the option of asking the startup to issue equity shares in the firm in exchange for the money they had previously invested as a loan/debt if the startup does well or meets certain performance benchmarks in the future.
- Since its creation in 2017, convertible notes have become more viable financing vehicles for early-stage funding of businesses, according to experts.

35th Surajkund International Crafts Mela commences in Haryana

- The Governor of Haryana, Bandaru Dattatraya and Chief Minister of Haryana, Manohar Lal Khattar formally inaugurated the 35th edition of the world-famous Surajkund International Crafts Mela at Surajkund in Faridabad district of Haryana. The event is organized jointly by the Surajkund Mela Authority & Haryana Tourism in collaboration with Union Ministries of Tourism, Textiles, Culture and External Affairs.
- In 2022, the 'Theme State' in Jammu & Kashmir and Uzbekistan is the partner nation.
- The Mela is open from March 19 to April 04, 2022. It provides an opportunity for artisans from all over India to showcase their talent and the richness and diversity of the handicrafts, handlooms, and cultural heritage of India. The Fair was first organized in 1987. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the event could not be organised in the year 2021.

Coaches of India's first rapid rail unveiled, to be used in Delhi-Meerut Rapid Rail corridor

- The coaches for the Delhi-Meerut Rapid Rail Corridor were launched by the National Capital Regional Transport Corporation (NCRTC). In the following months, deliveries of these semi-high-speed aerodynamic trainsets with dispersed power will begin. A total of 210 cars will be delivered from the Savli manufacturing factory for the first Regional Rapid Transit System corridor.
- It consists of trainsets providing regional transit services on the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut line as well as local transit services in Meerut. In the present year, the NCRTC will start the trial runs on the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor's Priority Section.

- The RRTS is a first-of-its-kind system in which trains running at 180 kmph will run every 5–10 minutes and cover the distance between Delhi and Meerut in 55 minutes with 14 stops.

With Dishaank app, land survey records at click of a button

- The Survey Settlement and Land Records (SSLR) unit of Karnataka's revenue department is ensuring easy availability of original land records through an app called Dishaank. The Dishaank app is developed under the Geographical Information System (GIS) program of the Karnataka State Remote Sensing Applications Center (KSRSAC). The KSRSAC provides satellite data to agencies such as the SSLR unit for innovative use. Dishaank leverages Karnataka's decision to digitize land records under the Bhoomi project.
- Citizens can easily avail themselves of the information about the land as recorded in the Bhoomi database. This will help in reducing land disputes and will bring transparency in the maintenance of land records. However, according to the Karnataka government, the Dishaank app's purpose is only to provide clarity on the original status of land and the app should not be used for legal purposes in any land-related disputes.

36th International Geological Congress to be held in New Delhi

- On a virtual platform, the 36th International Geological Congress (IGC) will be placed here on March 20-22, 2022, with the topic Geosciences: The Basic Science for a Sustainable Future. The 36th International Geophysical Congress is a collaboration between the Ministries of Mines and Earth Sciences, the Indian National Science Academy, and the Science Academies of Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.
- Union Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs Shri Pralhad Joshi and Minister of State Science & Technology; Minister of State Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space Dr Jitendra Singh are expected to inaugurate the Congress.
- The event would provide a one-of-a-kind forum for Geoscience knowledge and experience sharing, as well as professional networking.
- It would provide firsthand knowledge of cutting-edge mining, mineral exploration, and water, mineral resource, and environmental management technologies. It would also help boost academic output and provide chances for capacity building across geoscientific disciplines.

Delhi govt launches 'My EV' portal for purchasing, registering e-autos; buyers to get additional relief

- The Delhi government has launched an online 'My EV' (My Electric Vehicle) portal for the purchase and registration of electric autos in Delhi. It is accessible to all users on the website of the transport department of Delhi. Under the Delhi Electric Vehicle Policy, a 5% interest rate subvention will be provided on the purchase of e-autos on loans and become the first state to provide such a facility. The web portal was developed with the collaboration of the Delhi government and Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL).
- CESL has empanelled six Financial Institutions (FIs) – Mahindra Finance, Akasa Finance, Mannapuram Finance, RevFin, and Prest Loans to provide loans to EVs at attractive terms. The Interest subvention on the purchase of EVs is in addition to the applicable purchase

incentive of INR 30,000 and scrapping incentives of up to INR 7,500 under the Delhi EV Policy. The consumer will be able to avail of up to INR 25,000 additional benefits.

Karnataka launches first ever digital water data bank

- India's First Digital Water Bank, 'AQVERIUM' has been launched in Bengaluru, Karnataka which is an innovative initiative aimed at better water management. It is formed by AquaKraft Group Ventures. It is a very unique innovation combining sustainable & green technologies along with information technology, skill development & entrepreneurship. It is a curated list of water data from all institutions and sources, that will help tackle some common development challenges.
- Digital Water Data Bank can be understood as a curated list of 'Water Data' from all institutions and sources that will further aid in tackling some common development challenges.
- The digital water data bank also provides insights and evidence from research and analytics thereby providing fundamental reliable information for tackling water pollution.
- Data, in any field, facilitates building a broader picture that further enables us to harness the best evidence and make informed decisions. When it comes to making a water-secure world, data-driven decisions can greatly improve service delivery, sustain water resources and build resilience.

Indian Army dedicates 'Chair of Excellence' in memory of late CDS Gen Bipin Rawat

- On the eve of General Bipin Rawat's 65th birthday anniversary, the Indian Army has dedicated a chair of excellence in the late chief of defence staff (CDS)'s memory at the United Service Institution of India (USI), the country's oldest think tank founded in 1870. The Chair will be open to Veterans of three Services and civilians having expertise in the field of National Security.
- The purpose of Gen Bipin Rawat Memorial Chair of Excellence at USI will be to conduct research on strategic issues related to the armed forces, with a focus on the field of Jointness and Integration. The topic for 2022 research will be Jointness and Integration in the Context of Land Warfare in India. Gen MM Naravane, Chief of Army Staff handed over a cheque of Rs 5 lakhs to Director, USI, Maj Gen BK Sharma (retd), which will be paid as honorarium to the nominated Chair of Excellence.

MSME Ministry extends credit guarantee scheme for subordinate debt till March 31, 2023

- Credit Guarantee Scheme for Subordinate Debt (CGSSD) is extended upto 31.03.2023. On the 13th of May, 2020, the government announced the launch of the 'Distressed Assets Fund—Subordinate Debt for Stressed MSMEs' as part of the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Package. As a result, the Government approved the 'Credit Guarantee Scheme for Subordinate Debt' on June 1, 2020, and the scheme was launched on June 24, 2020, to provide credit to the promoters of stressed MSMEs viz. SMA-2 and NPA accounts who are eligible for restructuring as per RBI guidelines on the books of the lending institutions through lending institutions. Initially, the plan was only valid until March 31, 2021.
- The government had already extended this scheme till 31.03.2022, in order to maintain avenues of support accessible for strained MSME Units.

- The government has now agreed to prolong the plan until 31.03.2023, based on proposals from the scheme's stakeholders.
- The Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) was also extended until March 31, 2023, according to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

India to establish its first 'World Peace Center' in Gurugram

- Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti organisation established by Ambassador of Peace, Eminent Jainacharya Dr Lokeshji will establish India's first World Peace Center in Gurugram, Haryana. For this, the Haryana Government has allotted a plot to the organization in Sector 39 of Gurugram opposite Medanta Hospital and adjacent to Delhi-Jaipur Highway. 'World Peace Center' will work for the establishment of peace and harmony in the world.
- The Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti had got the plot by depositing the entire amount in the Government treasury, on which the construction work of about 25000 square feet will be completed in two years. He expressed his gratitude to the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Haryana, Manohar Lal Khattarji.

Artificial Intelligence & Robotics Technology Park comes up in Bengaluru

- Country's first Artificial Intelligence & Robotics Technology Park (ARTPARK) was launched in Bengaluru, Karnataka. It is promoted by a not-for-profit foundation set up by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru, with a seed capital of Rs. 230 crore from the State and Central governments.
- ARTPARK (AI and Robotics Technology Park) along with AI Foundry is going to launch a \$100 million venture fund to support AI and robotics innovations in India. The fund will be backed by the government, private companies, and VCs.
- The lab has technical teams working in collaboration with multiple labs at IISc. It will also work with other technical institutes and bodies, including the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur, IIT Jodhpur, the University of Aalto in Finland, Indian Council of Medical Research and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

MCL becomes largest coal producing company in India

- The Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), a subsidiary of Coal India, has announced that it has become the country's largest coal producer. In the financial year 2021-22, the company reported it produced 157 million tonnes of coal.
- The business also generated 7.62 lakh tonnes of dry fuel on March 12. In a statement, the corporation stated that it was the largest production in a single day during the current fiscal year.
- OP Singh, Chairman-cum-Managing Director of the firm, complimented all officials, workers, contracted company employees, and other stakeholders for their contributions in making MCL the country's biggest coal producer.
- In his congratulatory message to the employees, the CMD stated, "MCL has to play a bigger role in maintaining energy security for the nation."

Odisha tops list of full immunisation with 90.5% coverage

- According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5, Odisha became the top state in the list of full immunizations in India with 90.5% coverage under Mission Indradhanush. Intensified Mission Indradhanush 4.0 (IMI) was rolled out on 7 March 2022, in Odisha to provide preventive health care for mothers and children and for boosting full immunization coverage.
- 20 districts of Odisha were found above 90% in full immunization and the remaining 10 districts were less than 90%. Districts such as Ganjam, Cuttack, Kendrapara, Jharsuguda, Koraput, Keonjhar, Malkangiri, Khurda, Sambalpur, Mayurbhanj, and Sundargarh districts were selected for inclusion under IMI.

India Water Pitch-Pilot-Scale Challenge' launched by Union Minister of India

- Under the Ministry's Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) 2.0, Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) and Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Hardeep Singh Puri launched the 'India WaterPitch-Pilot-Scale Start-up Challenge.' This comes after the Hon'ble Prime Minister's ceremonial launch of AMRUT 2.0 on October 1, 2021, stakeholder discussions in Lucknow (during MoHUA's Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav festivities), and Cabinet approval of the Mission on October 12, 2021.
- Technology Sub-mission to engage startups as 'Technology Partners' has been approved by Cabinet under AMRUT 2.0, in keeping with the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.
- The Mission's goal is to help startups in the water/used-water sector thrive via innovation and design, resulting in long-term economic growth and job creation.
- The Ministry will select 100 start-ups to get Rs.20 lakhs in cash and mentorship as part of this project.

India's first medical city 'Indrayani Medicity' to set up in PUNE

- The state government of Maharashtra has announced to set up the country's first medical city named as 'Indrayani Medicity' in Pune, to provide all kinds of specialised treatment under one roof. It will come up in 300-acre of land area in Khed taluka of Pune. The project is estimated to attract investment worth over Rs. 10,000 crore.
- Indrayani Medicity will have hospitals, centres for medical research, pharmaceutical manufacturing, wellness and physiotherapy, and will be the first-of-its-kind city in the country to have all the treatments available at one place.
- The Medicity will have about 24 separate hospital buildings, each housing one department. The Medicity will not only benefit Pune but will also be useful for people from neighbouring districts who come to the city for better treatment.

First ever GI-tagged Kashmir carpets flagged off to Germany

- The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has launched quick response (QR) code for its GI-tagged Kashmiri carpet, to preserve the authenticity and genuineness of the hand-knotted carpets. The main objective of this QR Code attached to the GI tag is to help in reviving the sheen and glory of the Kashmiri carpet industry.
- The QR code will contain relevant information of the artisans, manufacturer, weaver, district, raw material used etc.

- Since the QR code label cannot be copied or misused, it will discourage the counterfeit production of carpets.
- Meanwhile, the first-ever consignment of GI-tagged hand-knotted carpets were exported to Germany from New Delhi on March 11, 2022.
- It must be noted that the Kashmiri carpets were granted GI-tag in June 2016 by the Geographical Indication Registry of the Department of Industry Promotion and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, but the registered carpets were certified from 2022.

Indian Railways' earnings to enhance! First Gati Shakti Cargo Terminal commissioned in Asansol Division

- The Asansol Division of Indian Railways has successfully commissioned private siding of Maithan Power Limited at Thaparnagar, Jharkhand, in accordance with the Prime Minister's vision Gati Shakti and the Ministry of Railways' policy regarding the Gati Shakti Multi-Modal Cargo Terminal or also known as GCT, informed the Ministry of Railways.
- Chairman and CEO of the Railway Board, V K Tripathi, said at the GCT's commissioning that the Maithan Power Project was commenced in the year 2009, and power generation began in the year 2011.
- The coal needed for the power plant was delivered via road, which is estimated to yield 120 inbound coal rakes every month.

Tripura govt announces special scheme for tea workers, aims social security

- Tripura Government has announced a special scheme 'Mukhyamantri Chaa Srami Kalyan Prakalpa' for tea workers. A special scheme, allotting Rs. 85 crores for its implementation, as a step towards bringing the 7000 tea garden workers of Tripura under the social security net. This special scheme would ensure housing, rations, and financial support to the tea garden workers by integrating the facilities that are entitled to them, by the state government and the central government.
- About 75% of the 7000 tea garden workers are women and they produce nearly 90 lakh kilograms of tea through 54 tea estates & 21 tea processing factories across the state. The tea production is mainly distributed in the North, Sepahijala, Unakoti, and West Tripura districts.
- The Union Home and Cooperation Minister, Amit Shah had recently inaugurated the year 2022 Women Empowerment Campaign and Chief Minister Shramik Kalyan Prakalp scheme for the women of Tripura on the occasion of International Women's Day & has also laid the foundation stone for National Forensic Sciences University in Agartala, capital of Tripura.

India's 1st women-owned industrial park opens in Hyderabad

- India's first fully owned by women industrial park opened its doors in Hyderabad. The park, that is promoted by the FICCI Ladies Organization – FLO in collaboration with the State government, consists of 25 units which represent 16 different sectors of green category, and all of them are owned and controlled completely by women.
- The FICCI Ladies Organization industrial park is the country's first of its sort. This park was built on 50 acres of land in Sultanpur, which is near Patancheru. It was made with a Rs 250

crore investment. Female entrepreneurs are already expressing a strong desire to launch and operate their businesses at this park.

- KT Rama Rao (IT & Industries Minister) inaugurated the park, and advised entrepreneurs to aim big and start thinking about upcoming technology. He has also advised that they should concentrate on aerospace, defence, and food production and also they should form global partnerships.
- The minister promised that the FLO women's industrial park would be expanded more by another extra 100 acres, which will be subjective to the park's concentration on unique items. He stated that women entrepreneurs will also receive an extra 10% incentive.
- He also said that the state had attracted \$32 billion in investments over the last seven and a half years, which has helped in generating 1.6 million jobs.

First 'drone school' inaugurated in Gwalior

- The Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan jointly inaugurated the first drone school in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. This drone school is one of the five Drone Schools planned to be opened in different cities of Madhya Pradesh. The other four cities are Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Satna.
- This drone school of Gwalior will not only pave the way for the youth of Madhya Pradesh to move forward by connecting them with technology, but it will also increase employment opportunities. This school will prove to be a milestone in the progress and progress of Madhya Pradesh along with Gwalior.

AIM Expanded Encourage AR Skills In Youth

- Snap Inc is anticipated to train around 12,000 instructors linked with the Atal Tinkering Labs on Augmented Reality over the course of two years, allowing the programme to reach millions of children.
- Snap Inc. also announced a collaboration with the Atal Incubation Centers (AICs) to support the Indian start-up ecosystem with AR advertising bootcamps, Ad credits, and other opportunities.
- At AIM, we're committed to using our network of state-of-the-art Atal Tinkering Labs to encourage a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, said Mission director Atal Innovation Mission Dr Chintan Vaishnav.
- Given its numerous possibilities in a fast modernising India, augmented reality is the way of the future. We're pleased to use Snap Inc.'s Augmented Reality expertise to train a generation of GenZ students in this cutting-edge technology.
- The collaboration began on International Women's Day, with the announcement of a nationwide Lensathon (AR hackathon) that would run throughout March. The hackathon will be aimed at increasing the number of girls and young women above the age of 13 who are interested in augmented reality.

Touted as India's largest, this floating solar power project generates 42M units per year

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M K Stalin has inaugurated India's largest floating solar power plant constructed at a cost of Rs 150.4 crores. The floating plant is established in Southern

Petrochemicals Industries Corporation Limited (SPIC) factory at Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu to provide clean energy. It aims to provide environmentally sustainable power generation and to reduce carbon footprint.

- The floating power plant has the capacity to produce 42 million units of electricity per annum.
- The solar power plant is owned by Greenam Energy, a wholly-owned subsidiary of AM International. SPIC worked with France-based floating solar power specialists and global leader Ceil & Terre for the constructions and designs.

Govt gives nod to establishment of WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in India

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the establishment of the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (WHO GCTM) in Jamnagar, Gujarat by signing a Host Country agreement between the Government of India and the World Health Organization (WHO).
- The WHO GCTM will be established in Jamnagar under the Ministry of AYUSH. This would be the first and only global outposted Centre (office) for traditional medicine across the globe.
- The objective is to position AYUSH systems across the globe; to provide leadership on global health matters pertaining to traditional medicine; to ensure quality, safety and efficacy, accessibility and rational use of traditional medicine; to develop norms, standards, and guidelines in relevant technical areas, tools and methodologies, for collecting data undertaking analytics, and assess impact; Envisage WHO TM Informatics centre creating a collaborative of existing TM Data banks, virtual libraries, and academic and research institutes; and to develop specific capacity building and training programmes in the areas of relevance to the objectives and conduct training programmes in campus, residential, or web-based, and through partnerships with the WHO Academy and other strategic partners.

Vishwakarma Rashtriya Puraskar presented by Minister B Yadav

- Vishwakarma Rashtriya Puraskar (VRP), National Safety Awards (NSA) for the performance year 2018 and National Safety Awards (Mines) for the contest years 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 were presented today by Shri Bhupender Yadav, Union Minister of Labour and Employment, Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- In the case of VRP, a total of 96 awards were granted for the performance year 2018, whilst in the case of NSA, a total of 141 awards (80 winners and 61 runners-up) were presented. For the contest years 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020, a total of 144 awards were given out (72 Winner prizes and 72 Runner-up prizes).
- The Directorate General Factory Advice Service & Labour Institutes (DGFASLI) in Mumbai manages VRP and NSA, whereas the Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS) in Dhanbad manages NSA (Mines).
- The Central Government is concerned about the safety, health, and welfare of workers in all mines across the country, including coal, metalliferous, and oil mines.

Chhattisgarh govt launches 'Kaushalya Matritva Yojana'

- In a state-level women's conference held at BTI Ground in Raipur, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel introduced the 'Kaushalya Matritva Yojana' by handing out Rs 5000 checks to five beneficiaries for safe motherhood.
- On the birth of a second daughter, women recipients are eligible for a lump payment aid of Rs. 5,000 under this scheme. The programme will assist in the parenting and education of girls.
- At the state level women's conference, the Chief Minister honoured Anganwadi employees who have done outstanding work in Anganwadi services, as well as self-help groups that have helped women become financially independent by utilising the Chhattisgarh Mahila Kosh.
- Similarly, he recognised officers who have excelled in the field of women's protection as part of the 'Sakhi One Stop Center' and 'Nava Bihaan Yojna.'

Sikkim Aama Yojana 2022 - Rs. 20,000 to Non Working Mothers

- Chief Minister of Sikkim, Prem Singh Tamang has announced that the State Government will soon implement 'Aama Yojana, a scheme for helping non-working mothers & 'Bahini Scheme' benefitting girl students of the state. The complete details of the Aama Yojna and Bahini Yojana are given below.
- Aama Yojna scheme aims to inculcate the habit of saving among non-working mothers in the state and hence the Government will provide them Rs. 20,000 each in their bank accounts annually. The scheme covers only those whose names are enrolled in the electoral roll of the state and a sum of Rs. 100 crores have been allocated for it in the budget.
- Bahini Scheme is to reduce the dropout rate of girl students due to the lack of accessibility/availability of Sanitary Napkins & also to ensure menstrual health and hygiene. Under this scheme, over 18,000 girl students who study in class 9 and above are provided with free sanitary napkins in the state.

Haryana: Govt presents Rs 1.77 lakh cr Budget

- Haryana government has announced Matrushakti Udaymita Scheme to provide support to women entrepreneurs, on International Women's Day. Under the scheme, the women whose family annual income is less than 5 lakh rupees based on Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP) verified data, will be provided access to soft loans by financial institutions to the extent of 3 lakh rupees. Subsequently, the interest subvention of 7% will also be provided for three years through the Haryana Women Development Corporation.

India's largest reclining statue of Lord Buddha to be open for devotees next year

- India's largest reclining statue of Lord Buddha is being built in Bodh Gaya. Built by Buddha International Welfare Mission, the statue will be 100 feet long and 30 feet high. Lord Buddha is in the sleeping posture in the statue. The construction of the giant statue started in the year 2019. It is being made with fibreglass and built by sculptors from Kolkata. Bodh Gaya is an important pilgrimage centre for Buddhism and is visited by devotees from all over the world.

- The idol of this posture of Lord Buddha is in Uttar Pradesh's Kushinagar where he attained his Mahaparinirvana. The giant statue of Lord Buddha will be open for devotees from February 2023.

PM Modi unveils Shivaji Maharaj statue, launches Metro rail project in Pune

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has unveiled a tall statue of great Maratha warrior Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Pune, Maharashtra. The Statue is made up of 1,850 kg of gunmetal and is about 9.5-feet tall. He also launched a 12-km stretch of 32.2-km-long metro rail project at a total cost of more than ₹ 11,400 crores in Pune. Pune Metro is the first project in India to have aluminium body coaches, indigenously manufactured under the 'Make in India'.
- PM Modi also laid the foundation stone for the rejuvenation and pollution abatement of the Mula-Mutha River projects in Pune. The rejuvenation will be done in a 9 km stretch of the river under the project which will cost more than Rs 1080 crore.

Labour Ministry Launched 'Donate-a-Pension' Scheme Under the (PM-SYM)

- Union Labour and Employment Minister, Bhupender Yadav has launched the 'Donate-a-Pension' campaign under Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM-SYM) scheme, on March 07, 2022, from his residence and donated the same to his gardener. Under the new initiative, citizens can contribute to the pension fund of their immediate support staff such as domestic workers, drivers, helpers etc, by donating the premium amount.
- The 'Donate-a-Pension' program is part of various initiatives to be launched in the 'Iconic Week' celebrations by the Labour Ministry from March 7 to 13, 2022. It is an initiative under (PM-SYM) pension scheme where citizens can donate the premium contribution of their immediate support staff such as domestic workers, drivers, helpers etc.

2,000 km of rail network will be brought under 'Kavach' in 2022-'23: Railway Minister

- The trial of the 'Kavach' functioning system between Gullaguda and Chitgidda Railway stations was examined by Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister of Railways, Communication, Electronics and Information Technology. 2,000 km of railway network will be brought under Kavach for safety and capacity augmentation in 2022-23, as a part of Prime minister's Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- During the testing, both locomotives were travelling towards each other, creating a head-on collision situation.
- The 'Kavach' system activated the automatic braking mechanism, bringing the locomotives to a complete stop 380 metres apart.
- The locomotive was also tested crossing the red light; however, the locomotive did not pass the red signal because 'Kavach' required the automated deployment of brakes.
- When the gate signal neared, the automatic whistle sounded loud and clear. During the trial, the crew did not touch the sound or brake systems manually.

MSME Ministry launches 'SAMARTH' to promote women entrepreneurship

- Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises has launched a Special Entrepreneurship Promotion Drive for Women named – "SAMARTH". The drive was launched by Union

Minister for MSME, Shri Narayan Rane along with Minister of State for MSME, Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma in New Delhi.

- To provide Skill Development and Market Development Assistance to women and to train more than 7500 women candidates from rural and sub-urban areas in the FY 2022-23.
- 20% Seats in free Skill Development Programs organized under skill development schemes of the Ministry will be allocated for Women. More than 7500 women will be benefitted.
- 20% of MSME Business Delegations sent to domestic & international exhibitions under the schemes for Marketing Assistance implemented by Ministry will be dedicated to women-owned MSMEs.
- 20% Discount on annual processing fee on NSIC's Commercial Schemes Special Drive for registration of women-owned MSMEs under Udyam Registration.

India-Sri Lanka maritime exercise SLINEX begins in Visakhapatnam

- The 9th edition of India – Sri Lanka Bilateral Maritime Exercise named SLINEX (Sri Lanka–India Naval Exercise) is held at Visakhapatnam from 07 Mar to 10 Mar 2022. The aim of the exercise is to enhance interoperability and improve mutual understanding between the navies of the two neighbouring countries in the strategically significant Indian Ocean Region.
- The exercise was held in two phases; First is the Harbour Phase at Visakhapatnam on 07-08 Mar 22 followed by the second phase i.e. Sea Phase on 09-10 Mar 22 in the Bay of Bengal.
- Indian Navy is being represented by INS Kirch, a guided missile corvette while Sri Lanka Navy will be represented by SLNS Sayurala, an advanced offshore patrol vessel. Sri Lanka Navy is being represented by SLNS Sayurala, an advanced offshore patrol vessel and the Indian Navy by INS Kirch, a guided missile corvette.

PM Modi inaugurates Rs 11,400 crore-worth Pune Metro

- The Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi has inaugurated Pune Metro Rail Project on March 06, 2022, and also interacted with differently-abled, visually impaired students present inside the metro coach, during his 10-minute ride in the Pune Metro. Pune Metro Rail Project has been built at a total cost of INR 11,420 Crore. It has a total length of 33.2 km and 30 stations.
- Pune Metro is the first metro project in the country to have Aluminum body coaches, indigenously manufactured under the Make in India policy of GoI. PM Modi also unveiled the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at the premises of the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) and laid the foundation stone and inaugurated multiple developmental projects in Pune.

India's first indigenous flying trainer completes set level trials

- India's first indigenously developed Flying Trainer, 'HANSA-NG', successfully completed the sea-level trials at Puducherry. HANSA-NG was flown from Bengaluru to Puducherry on February 19, covering a distance of 140 nautical miles in 1.5 hours at a cruising speed of 155 km/hr. The objectives of sea level trials is to evaluate handling qualities, climb / cruise performance, balked landing, structural performance including positive & negative G, power plant and other systems performance.

- The aircraft has been designed and developed by CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL), under the aegis of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).
- HANSA-NG is one of the most advanced flying trainers, designed to meet the Indian flying club needs and it is an ideal aircraft for Commercial Pilot Licensing (CPL) due to its low cost and low fuel consumption.
- A trainer aircraft is designed specifically to facilitate flight training of pilots and aircrews.

Telangana Tops the Country in terms of Per Capita Net State Domestic Product at Current Prices

- Telangana became the top-performing state in India with a population over one crore in terms of the growth rate of Per Capita Net State Domestic Product at Current Prices by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). It succeeded other states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.
- The Gross State Domestic Price (GSDP) of Telangana increased from Rs 359434 crores in 2011-12 to Rs 1,154,860 crores in 2021-22. It recorded GSDP growth by 31.12 per cent from 2011-12. It is one of the highest growth rates for any state in the country.
- In terms of the percentage growth in GSDP, Telangana has shown the most rapid increase in its growth rate by around 17% from 2020 to the present.
- Major projects include Rythu Bandhu scheme for farmers, the world's largest lift irrigation Kaleshwaram project to provide water to the fields, and the Arogya Laxmi scheme for pregnant and lactating women.

India's first FSRU arrives at H-Energy's Jaigarh terminal

- H-Jaigarh Energy's Terminal in Maharashtra has received India's first floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU). On April 12, 2021, the FSRU Höegh Giant arrived at Jaigarh Terminal in Maharashtra after sailing from Keppel Shipyard in Singapore. This will be India's first FSRU-based LNG receiving terminal, as well as Maharashtra's first year-around LNG facility.
- The Höegh Giant, which was erected in 2017, has a storage capacity of 1,70,000 cubic metres and a regasification capacity of 750 million cubic feet per day (equivalent to about six million tpa). FSRU has been chartered for a 10-year period by H-Energy.
- The Höegh Giant LNG terminal will be connected to the national gas grid via the 56-kilometer Jaigarh-Dabhol natural gas pipeline.
- The facility will also deliver LNG to onshore distribution via truck loading facilities. Reloading LNG into small-scale LNG vessels for bunkering services is also possible at the plant
- H-Energy also plans to boost the region's small-scale LNG market, utilising FSRU for LNG storage and reloading into smaller boats.

India & US hold 19th Military Cooperation meeting in Agra to strengthen defence cooperation

- The 19th edition of the India-US Military Cooperation Group (MCG) meeting was conducted in Agra, Uttar Pradesh. The discussion was co-chaired by Air Marshal BR Krishna, Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC), and Lieutenant General Stephen D Sklenka, Deputy Commander, US Indo-Pacific Command, represented the US side.

- The conference took place when Russia was engaged in a significant military operation in Ukraine. Western countries, such as the United States, have implemented severe economic sanctions against Russia.
- Around 70% of India's defence equipment is made in Russia.
- According to the Defence Ministry, the India-US military cooperation group was established to advance defence collaboration between the two nations through regular meetings at the strategic and operational levels between the Headquarters of the Integrated Defence Staff and the US Indo-Pacific Command.

'Sagar Parikrama' from March 5 to showcase marine fisheries sector wealth

- Marine fisheries sector wealth would be showcase by 'Sagar Parikrama' from 5th March. Oceans, the world's largest ecosystem, covering nearly three-quarters of the earth's surface, are critical to the economies, security, and livelihoods of lakhs of people in India, which has a 8,118-kilometre coastline spanning nine states and four Union Territories, according to an official statement.
- It is at the forefront of reforming the fisheries sector by developing fisheries management plans and a legislative framework for effective fisheries governance in order to promote sustainable and responsible development through an ecosystem approach.
- An evolutionary journey of 'Sagar Parikrama' is being planned around the coastal belt to demonstrate unity with all fisherfolk, fish growers, and stakeholders concerned in the spirit of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat.'
- The 'Sagar Parikrama' trip will focus on achieving a sustainable balance between the use of marine fisheries resources for national food security and livelihoods of coastal fisher communities, as well as the protection of marine ecosystems, according to the statement.

Rajasthan govt announces Rs 10 crore budget to promote cattle rearing

- Rajasthan, the state government has announced a 'Camel Protection and Development Policy' in its budget 2022-23. According to the government figures, less than two lakh camels are left in Rajasthan and in the entire country, the number of camels has reduced by 1.5 lakh since 2012. There were about 2.5 lakh camels left when counted last in 2019.
- Camel is the state animal of Rajasthan and their number is continuously decreasing. The Rajasthan government had declared the camel as the state animal in 2014. About 85 per cent of the country's camels are found in Rajasthan followed by Gujarat, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh.

Assam government has declared the entire State of Assam as 'disturbed area' up to 6 months

- The Assam government has extended the contentious Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) in the state for six more months. The notification came into effect from February 28. Initially, it was the Assam Disturbed Area Act of 1955 during the agitation by Nagas in undivided Assam. This Act gave freehand to some extent to the Army that was repealed with the incorporation of the Armed Forces (Special Power) Act, 1958. AFSPA was imposed in Assam in November 1990 and has been extended every six months since then after a review by the government.

- AFSPA, which gives sweeping powers to the security forces to maintain public order in 'disturbed areas', has been a contentious issue in the north-east states. Civil society members and activists have claimed that AFSPA gives security personnel a free hand to carry out excesses.

International Monsoons Project Office launched

- On the occasion of National Science Day 2022, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh, launched the International Monsoons Project Office (IMPO) through a high-level virtual event.
- For the first five years, the International Monsoons Project Office (IMPO) will be housed at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, which is part of the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Indian government.
- The establishment of the IMPO emphasises the importance of monsoons to the country's economy. Under the guidance of the World Climate Research Programme and the World Weather Research Programme, it would cover activities and relationships relating to international monsoon research that would be recognised and supported.

Now Chennai's street animals get an ambulance of their own

- India's first ambulance for street animals has been launched in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. It has been started by the Blue Cross of India in collaboration with the international animal welfare organization "Four Paw". Madras High Court Justice Dr Anitha Sumanth launched the ambulance. The Stray Animal Care programme will be a "hospital on wheels" with an onboard veterinarian to provide on-site treatment to injured and sick street animals.
- Apart from the veterinarian, the animal ambulance will also include a para veterinary-worker-cum-driver. The ambulance will include a treatment table, two fans, an inverter, a fridge, and drawers for sterile products and bandages. It will also come with a washbasin, an anti-skid shock-absorbing mat, a stretcher trolley, a retractable doctor's seat, a retractable tarpaulin, dog-catching equipment, two movable cages to hold dogs, and overhead cupboards. There will also be a provision to administer intravenous fluids and oxygen on board.

President Kovind inaugurates 'Arogya Vanam' at Rashtrapati Bhavan in presence of PM Modi

- The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind has inaugurated a newly developed 'Arogya Vanam' at the President's Estate, (Rashtrapati Bhavan) in New Delhi. The objective of this Arogya Vanam is to promote the importance of Ayurvedic plants and their effects on the human body. The concept of Arogya Vanam has been conceived with the aim of publicising the importance of Ayurvedic plants and their effects on the human body.
- Spread in 6.6 acres, the Arogya Vanam has been developed in the shape of a human sitting in the Yoga Mudra. It consists of around 215 herbs and plants used for therapeutic purposes in Ayurveda. Some of the other features of this Vanam are water fountains, Yoga platform, water channel, lotus pond and a viewpoint. This Vanam will be now open for public viewing.

Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya inaugurates seminar “Industry Connect 2022”: Industry and Academia Synergy in New Delhi

- Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Chemicals & Fertilizers has inaugurated the seminar on “Industry Connect 2022”: Industry and Academia Synergy. The stress is on the importance of innovation & technology for the progress of the country and it is for the greater industry-academia partnerships. The innovative zeal and manufacturing quality products at scale will help the Prime Minister’s vision of Make in India and Make for the World.
- During the Seminar, there were two technical sessions organised. Many officials from the CIPET, TDB (Technology Development Board) and various industry associations were also present on in this seminar.

SPORTS

Canada routs Jamaica to reach World Cup for first time since 1986

- Canada has qualified for the Qatar 2022 football World Cup for the first time in 36 years, after thoroughly beating Jamaica 4-0 in Toronto. The North American nation have booked their place at the finals for the first time since Mexico in 1986. Canada is top of the CONCACAF qualifying group and has now secured its place at a World Cup finals tournament for the first time since 1986.
- Canada becomes the 20th team to qualify for the 2022 FIFA World Cup which will feature 32 nations vying for the ultimate prize in Qatar from November 21 to December 18. The remaining 12 teams will be decided in the coming days before the draw on April 1 to determine the eight groups.

Darshan, Varsha win maiden SAFF and National Cross Country men’s and women’s titles

- In Kohima, Darshan Singh of the Services and Varsha Devi of the Railways finally defended their men’s and women’s titles in the National Cross Country Championships by winning their 10 Km events on the picturesque but difficult course, which was made more difficult by 60 per cent humidity and wind gusts.
- After playing crucial roles in their respective teams’ successes, they were ecstatic to win the South Asian crowns at the second SAFF Cross Country Championships, which were held concurrently.
- They tasted international victory right away, despite missing out on the 2020 competition in Sri Lanka, which was first postponed and then relocated here.
- Darshan Singh was grouped at the front with his Services teammates Rajendra Nath, Deepak Singh Rawat, Dipak Suhaug, reigning champion Parasappa Madevappa Hajilol, and Railways Narendra Pratap Singh even before the runners had completed the first loop of 2 kilometres. He never lost his beat or his place.

Indian team clinches SAFF U-18 Women's Championship title

- India has been declared the winner of the 3rd edition of the SAFF U-18 Women’s Football Championship. The 2022 edition of the international football competition for women’s under-18 national teams was held in Jharkhand at JRD Tata Sports Complex, Jamshedpur.

The valuable player of the tournament and the highest goal scorer was Lynda Kom who scored five goals in total.

- Although India lost to Bangladesh, 0-1 in the final league match, but still emerged champions of the tournament on account of better goal difference. India enjoyed a better goal difference of +11 in comparison to +3 of Bangladesh.

F1 2022: Max Verstappen Wins Saudi Arabian Grand Prix

- Max Verstappen (Red Bull – Netherlands) has won the Formula One 2022 Saudi Arabian Grand Prix at Jeddah Corniche Circuit, Saudi Arabia. Charles Leclerc (Ferrari- Monaco) came second and Carlos Sainz Jr. (Ferrari – Spain) came third. It was the second edition of the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix and the second round of the 2022 Formula One World Championship. Lewis Hamilton managed to get a point on the board after coming 10th.

Railway lifts Obaidullah Khan Hockey Cup

- Indian Railways' men Hockey team won the prestigious Obaidullah Khan Heritage Hockey Cup held at Bhopal (MP) from 21.03.2022 to 27.03.2022. In the final match held on Sunday, Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) team beat Army XI.
- The prestigious hockey tournament was played at Major Dhyan Chand Stadium, Bhopal where Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan inaugurated the tournament on 21st March.
- Started in year 1931 as Obaidullah Gold Cup, the prestigious tournament carried on for decades and has produced many international players during its journey. It was last played in year 2016 and was organized after a gap of six years this year. Last time, in the year 2016, the tournament was won by BPCL and Railways team was runners up.

Hyderabad FC wins maiden cup as Kerala's trophy drought continues

- Hyderabad FC has clinched their maiden Indian Super League title after defeating Kerala Blasters in the penalty shoot-out in the summit clash. Goalkeeper Laxmikant Kattimani made three stunning saves. Hyderabad beat Kerala 3-1 in the shoot-out after the match ended 1-1 in the regulation and extra time.
- For Hyderabad, Joao Victor, Khassa Camara and Halicharan Narzary scored while only Ayush Adhikari found the target in the shoot-out as Kerala suffered heartbreak for the third time in the finals.

2022 BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament

- The 2022 BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament, also known as the 2022 Indian Wells Masters, was held from March 07 to 20, 2022 at Indian Wells, California, US. The BNP Paribas Open is the largest two-week combined event outside of the four Grand Slams and the most-attended WTA 1000 and ATP World Tour Masters 1000 tennis tournament in the world.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc wins F1 season-opening Bahrain GP

- Charles Leclerc (Ferrari- Monaco) has won the Formula One Bahrain Grand Prix 2022 at the Bahrain International Circuit, a motor racing circuit in the west of Bahrain. Carlos Sainz Jr.

(Ferrari – Spain) came second while Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes-Great Britain) came third. This was the first Formula One race of 2022.

Pankaj Advani wins Asian Billiards title for eighth time

- Indian cueist Pankaj Advani has defeated Dhruv Sitwala to win his eighth title at the 19th Asian 100 UP Billiards Championship 2022. It was held in Doha, Qatar. Overall this is Advani's 24th international title and 8th Asian crown. Earlier, Advani had held off the stiff challenge of Pauk Sa of Myanmar to secure a spot in the final. He managed a 5-4 win after his opponent fought back strongly to level the match at four frames each.

'Mecca of Chess' Chennai To Host 2022 FIDE Chess Olympiad

- India has been picked as the host nation for the FIDE Chess Olympiad 2022. The 44th edition of the Olympiad is scheduled to be held in Chennai, from 26th July 2022 to 8th August 2022. This is the first time that India will host the FIDE Chess Olympiad since its inception in 1927. The event was originally scheduled to be held in Russia, but FIDE pulled out from there following the Ukraine invasion.
- The venue will be the Four Points by Sheraton Mahabalipuram Resort & Convention Center, 60 kilometres south of central Chennai. It is located in Mamallapuram, one of the famous tourist sites in India and a UNESCO World Heritage Site of seventh- and eighth-century Hindu monuments.

Shreyas Iyer and Amelia Kerr voted ICC Players of the Month for February 2022

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced India's star all-format batter Shreyas Iyer and White Ferns all-rounder Amelia Kerr were voted ICC Players of the Month for February 2022. Fans can continue to vote every month for their favourite male and female cricketers across all formats of international cricket as part of the ICC Player of the Month initiative.
- Shreyas Iyer, the fast-rising India batter, has won the ICC 'Men's Player of the Month' for February 2022. Shreyas Iyer earned the ICC Player of the Month award on the back of his brilliant white-ball exploits during the home series against West Indies and Sri Lanka respectively last month.
- New Zealand all-rounder Amelia Kerr bagged the ICC 'Women's Player of the Month' award for February 2022. Amelia Kerr, the 21-year-old New Zealand all-rounder, was named the Women's POTM, following her supreme consistency with both bat and ball during the home white-ball series against India. Kerr was chosen ahead of fellow nominees, India captain Mithali Raj and all-rounder Deepti Sharma for the award.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurates 11th Khel Mahakumbh in Ahmedabad

- The 11th edition of the Khel Mahakumbh was started on Saturday at Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. PM Modi claimed that he appointed Khel Mahakumbh as Gujarat's Chief Minister in 2010. Khel Mahakumbh, which began in Gujarat in 2010 with 16 sports and 13 lakh participants, now includes 36 general sports and 26 para-sports. The 11th Khel Mahakumbh has received over 45 lakh registrations.

- Due to COVID-19, we were not able to organize Khel Mahakumbh. Started in 2010 with 16 sports & 13 lakh participants, Khel Mahakumbh increased to 36 general sports & 26 para-sports in 2019.”

Tearful Tiger Woods Inducted Into World Golf Hall of Fame

- Famous Golfer, Tiger Woods was formally inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame. The 46-year-old Woods entered the storied hall as part of the Class of 2022 along with retired PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem, U.S. Women’s Open champion Susie Maxwell Berning and Marion Hollins, a U.S. Women’s Amateur champion and golf course architect who was recognised posthumously.
- During his career, Woods has broken many golfing records, establishing himself as arguably the greatest golfer of all time. He has won 15 majors, surpassed only by Jack Nicklaus’ 18, as well as a joint-record 82 wins on the PGA Tour.

S Sreesanth announces retirement from all forms of first-class cricket

- India pacer S Sreesanth has announced his retirement from all forms of domestic cricket. Sreesanth played 27 Tests and 53 ODIs for India, taking 87 and 75 wickets respectively. He has also taken seven wickets in 10 T20 Internationals. The temperamental pacer was also popular for his exuberant celebrations after taking wickets but his life and career went downhill after the spot-fixing scandal.
- In September 2020, Sreesanth’s ban for alleged spot-fixing came to an end, concluding a seven-year punishment that was originally meant to be for life and was aggressively contested by the flamboyant bowler. Sreesanth’s life ban for alleged spot-fixing in the 2013 edition of the IPL was reduced to seven years by BCCI Ombudsman DK Jain last year. The BCCI banned Sreesanth in August 2013 along with his Rajasthan Royals teammates Ajit Chandila and Ankeet Chavan.

Mondo Duplantis sets new pole vault world record in Belgrade

- Sweden’s Olympic pole vault champion Armand Gustav “Mondo” Duplantis cleared 6.19m to smash his own world record by one centimetre at the World Indoor Tour Silver meeting in Belgrade. Duplantis set the record of 6.18 in February 2020 indoors in Glasgow.
- This is the fourth world record of the 22-year-old’s career. His first record came in February 2020 when he surpassed London 2012 gold medallist Renaud Lavillenie’s world record by clearing 6.17m in Torun, Poland before improving that the following week in Glasgow. In September of that year, he cleared 6.15m at the Rome Diamond League meeting to eclipse Sergey Bubka’s outdoor pole vault world best of 6.14m set in Sestriere in July 1994.

Indian GM S L Narayanan wins Cattolica International Open chess tourney

- In Chess, Indian Grandmaster, S L Narayanan was declared the winner in the Grandiscacchi Cattolica International Open, held in Italy. Meanwhile, his compatriot R Praggnanandhaa came second. Though Narayanan and six others, including Praggnanandhaa, finished equal first with 6.5 points after nine rounds. But, Narayanan took the top spot on the basis of a better tie-break score. The 24-year old S L Narayanan from Thiruvananthapuram earned the title of Grandmaster in 2015 and is the 41st Grandmaster from India.

The 23rd Woman Grandmaster: Priyanka Nutakki

- 19-year-old Priyanka Nutakki has secured her final WGM-norm at MPL's forty-seventh National Women Chess Championship. She became India's twenty-third Woman Grandmaster. She is from Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh. Priyanka Nutakki scored her first WGM-norm in January 2019 and crossed the 2300 rating criteria in the next two months. However, much like a lot of players, the Covid-19 pandemic delayed her title hopes.
- Priyanka braved the odds, resumed playing over-the-board tournaments in October 2021 at ChessMood Open. In her third over-the-board tournament of the year, she scored her second WGM and maiden IM-norm at the 7th Sunway Sitges Open 2021.

RuPay named Official Partner for Tata IPL

- Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)'s, Indian Premier League (IPL) Governing Council has announced National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)'s flagship product RuPay as an official partner for the Tata IPL 2022. This will be a multi-year partnership. RuPay offers tech-led, innovative, and customized offerings to people across India, being accepted in India and internationally.
- Tata IPL 2022 will be co-presented by Dream11 and co-powered by Tata and CRED. Swiggy, Prystin Care, Zepto, Livspace, L'Oreal, and Spinny have been signed-on as associate sponsors.
- The 15th edition of Tata IPL 2022 will start on 26th March 2022. A total of 70 league matches will be played across four international venues in Mumbai and Pune. The venue for the playoff matches will be decided later.

Mithali Raj becomes first woman to play in six World Cups

- Indian women cricket captain, Mithali Raj has become the first woman to appear in six World Cups. She is the only third cricketer overall to play six world cup after Sachin Tendulkar and Javed Miandad. She has played in the ICC women's cricket world cup events in 2000, 2005, 2009, 2013, 2017 and now in 2022. The ICC women's cricket world cup 2022 is being held in New Zealand.
- In the women's game, the Indian batter surpassed former New Zealand cricketers, Debbie Hockley and Charlotte Edwards of England. Fast bowler Jhulan Goswami, Raj's India teammate for the longest time, stands second on the list with five World Cup appearances.

2022 Women's Cricket World Cup

- The ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2022 has kicked off on March 04, 2022, in New Zealand. This is the 12 edition of the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup, being held in New Zealand from March 04 to April 03, 2022. The opening match of the ICC Women's World Cup 2022 was held at the Bay Oval in Mount Maunganui between West Indies and New Zealand, in which West Indies women beat New Zealand by 3 runs. India will open against Pakistan on the 6th of March.

Strandja Memorial: Nikhat Zareen and Nitu clinch gold medals at Europe's oldest competition

- Indian boxers Nikhat Zareen (52kg) and Nitu (48kg) has won gold medals at the 73rd Strandja Memorial Boxing Tournament, held in Sofia, Bulgaria. The Indian contingent ended their campaign at the tournament with three medals including two golds and one bronze.
- Nikhat bagged her second gold medal at Europe's oldest international boxing tournament with a 4-1 win in the women's 52kg final. She had previously won the Strandja Memorial title in 2019.
- Nitu outpunched the reigning Youth World Championships bronze medallist Italy's Erika Prisciandro 5-0 without breaking a sweat in the women's 48 kg final.
- With Nandini also finishing on the podium in the 81kg category and signing off with a bronze medal, the Indian contingent concluded their campaign with three medals at the tournament, which was part of India's first exposure trip this year.

ISSF World Cup: India's Shri Nivetha, Esha, Ruchita win gold in women's 10m air pistol team event

- India's Shri Nivetha, Esha Singh, and Ruchita Vinerkar have won the gold medal in the women's 10m air pistol team event of the ISSF World Cup in Cairo, Egypt. With this win, India is leading the medal table with three medals, including two gold and silver. Andrea Katharina Heckner, Sandra Reitz and Carina Wimmer of Germany settled for the silver medal.
- Germany and Italy are joint seconds on the table with one gold, two silver and one bronze medal each. A total of 17 countries have won medals so far.

Australian Open : Rafael Nadal Book & Record 2022

- Rafael Nadal was two sets down in the final of the Australian Open 2022. But he came back strongly to win a long five-set single match with Daniil Medvedev and claim a record 21st Grand Slam men's title in the Australian Open final.
- Rafael Nadal won the war of attrition to move ahead of rivals Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer on the a list of men's Major winners.

Dabang Delhi wins PKL8, beats Patna Pirates 37-36 in final

- Dabang Delhi K C defeated Patna Pirates by 36-37 in the final of the Pro Kabaddi League Season 8 in Bengaluru, Karnataka. Dabang Delhi beat three-time champion Patna Pirates. Pawan Sehrawat was awarded with the Raider of the season award for his 304 raid points in 24 matches. The winner of the Pro Kabaddi League Season 8 got a cash prize of 3 crores.

31st Southeast Asian Games to open despite Covid-19 in Vietnam

- The 31st Southeast Asian Games will be held in Vietnam from May 12 to 23, 2022. It is the biggest sporting event of Southeast Asia and is a biennial event. The event was originally scheduled to take place in November 2021 however it was postponed due to the Covid pandemic. The Games will feature 40 sports with 526 events, attracting around 10,000 participants, organisers announced at a press conference here.
- The Vietnamese capital Hanoi will be the main venue alongside 11 neighbouring localities including Quang Ninh, Phu Tho and Bac Ninh, Xinhua news agency reported. Moto of 31st Southeast Asian Games- "For a Stronger South East Asia".

Pooja Jatyan wins silver at Para Archery World Championships

- Para-archer, Pooja Jatyan has scripted history as she became the first Indian to win a silver in an individual section of the Para World Championships in Dubai, UAE. She lost to Italy's Patrilli Vincenza in the final to be content with the silver medal. India ended its campaign with two silver medals, a first for the country.
- India has won 2 Silver medals for the first time in the Para Archery World Championship. The compound mixed pair of Shyam Sundar Swamy and Jyoti Baliyan had earlier opened India's account by winning a silver medal.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ISRO launches Young Scientist Programme "YUVIKA" for students

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is organizing a special programme for school children called "YUva Vigyani KARYakram" (YUVIKA) or "Young Scientist Programme". Aimed at creating awareness about emerging trends in science and technology, this programme is expected to encourage more students to pursue research and a career in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).
- The ISRO Young Scientist Programme is a residential programme and will span over two weeks during the summer vacations from May 16, 2022, to May 28, 2022.
- This program includes invited talks, experience sharing by eminent scientists, experimental demonstrations, facility and lab visits, exclusive sessions for discussions with experts, practical and feedback sessions.

Petascale supercomputer 'PARAM Ganga' installed at IIT Roorkee

- The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) has designed and installed a supercomputer named "PARAM Ganga", at IIT Roorkee, under Phase II of National Supercomputing Mission (NSM). PARAM Ganga has a supercomputing capacity of 1.66 Petaflops.
- NSM is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeiTY) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST).
- The mission is implemented by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore.
- The NSM Mission aims to build and deploy 24 facilities with cumulative compute power of more than 64 Petaflops.
- Till date 11 systems have been deployed by C-DAC at IISc, IITs, IISER Pune, JNCASR, NABI-Mohali and C-DAC under NSM Phase-1 and Phase-2 with a cumulative computing power of more than 20 Petaflops.

Microsoft's largest data centre in India to come up in Hyderabad

- Tech giant, Microsoft has announced to set up its fourth data centre in India in Hyderabad, Telangana. Hyderabad Data centre will be one of the largest data centres in India and will be operational by 2025. Microsoft already has a data centre in three Indian regions across Pune, Mumbai, and Chennai. The new data centre will add to the growing demand for

Microsoft's cloud services from both the private enterprises as well as the government sector.

- To set up the data centre, Microsoft has signed a definitive agreement with the Telangana state government with a total investment of Rs 15,000 crore.
- In terms of Microsoft's own expansion plans the company stated that they are expanding their Hyderabad campus and the total campus is now spread over a 2.5 mn Sq.ft area with 18,000 full-time employees.
- The Hyderabad centre of Microsoft is the largest centre for the tech giant after Redmond. In India, Microsoft has 14,000 partners and it serves around 340,000 companies in the country.

OBITUARY

Belgian Footballer Miguel Van Damme Dies Aged 28

- Veteran Belgian footballer, Miguel Van Damme has passed away aged 28 after a long battle with leukaemia. Van Damme was diagnosed with leukaemia in 2016 and was undergoing treatment for cancer for over five years. During his eight-year professional career, Van Damme played for Cercle Brugge and made 40 appearances for the team.

Country singer Jeff Carson dies of heart attack at age 58

- Country music star and Academy of Country Music award-winner Jeff Carson died of a heart attack at Williamson Medical Center in Franklin, Tennessee on Saturday night. He was 58 years old.
- Born Jeffrey Lee Herndon in Tulsa, Oklahoma on December 16, 1963, Carson pursued a number of musical outlets, performing with bands in Arkansas and Missouri, before finding his commercial success in Nashville.

Former Chief Justice of India RC Lahoti dies at 81

- Former Chief Justice of India Ramesh Chandra Lahoti passed away at the age of 81 years. Justice Lahoti was appointed as the 35th chief justice of India on June 1, 2004. He retired on November 1, 2005.
- Born on November 1, 1940, he joined the Bar in Guna district in 1960 and enrolled as an advocate in 1962. He was recruited directly to the bench in April 1977, from the Bar to the State Higher Judicial Service and was appointed as a district and sessions judge.
- After serving in the post for a year, Justice Lahoti resigned in May 1978 and returned to the Bar to practice mainly in the High Court.
- He was appointed an additional judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on May 3, 1988, and made a permanent judge on August 4 the next year.

Bangladesh's ex-interim president Shahabuddin Ahmed passes away

- Shahabuddin Ahmed, the former President of Bangladesh has passed away at the age of 92 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. He was the interim head of state as the consensus nominee of all parties amid a mass upsurge in 1990 to topple ex-military dictator HM Ershad. Shahabuddin Ahmed also served as the President of Bangladesh from 1996 to 2001. He was responsible for holding a "free and credible" election in the country in February 1991.

WWE legend Scott Hall aka 'Razor Ramon' passes away aged 63

- The two-time WWE Hall of Famer, Scott Hall has passed away, due to heart attack. He was 63. His tenure with World Wrestling Federation (WWF, now WWE) began in May 1992. With WWE, he was famously known by his ring name as 'Razor Ramon'. He went on to become a four-time WWE Intercontinental champion.
- In 2014, Scott Hall was inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame as an individual wrestler and then again in 2020 as part of NWO. Scott Hall is a two-time world champ with WWC Universal Heavyweight Championship and the USWA Unified World Heavyweight Championship.

Former Andhra Pradesh Governor 'Ms Kumudben Joshi' passes away aged 88

- The former Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Kumudben Manishankar Joshi has passed away. She was 88. Ms Joshi served as the Governor of Andhra Pradesh from 26 November 1985 to 7 February 1990. She was the second female Governor of the state after Sharda Mukherjee. Joshi had been a member of the Rajya Sabha thrice.
- Kumudben Manishankar Joshi also became Deputy Minister of Information and Broadcasting (October 1980 – January 1982) and Deputy Minister of Health and Family Welfare (January 1982 – December 1984).

Zambia's former president Rupiah Banda dies aged 85

- The former President of Zambia, Rupiah Banda has passed away after a two-year battle with cancer. He was 85. Banda had served as the fourth president of Zambia from 2008 and 2011. Banda had held senior diplomatic posts under first President Kenneth Kaunda before being eventually named as vice president in 2006 by then-President Levy Mwanawasa.
- Banda served as acting president in mid-2008 when Mwanawasa suffered a stroke. Banda narrowly won the October elections the same year on a ruling party ticket.

Rodney Marsh, Australian cricket great, dies aged 74

- Former Australia cricketer (wicketkeeper), Rodney William Marsh has passed away in Adelaide Australia. He was the 1st Australian wicketkeeper to score a century in test cricket and finished his career with 3 centuries. He held a test record of 355 dismissals by a wicketkeeper, including 95 off the bowling of pace bowler Dennis Lillee. He has played 96 test matches for Australia from 1970 to 1984 and 92 One-Day Internationals (ODIs) for Australia and later retired from top-flight cricket in February 1984.

Shane Warne, Australia's legendary legspinner, dies aged 52

- Legendary Australia spinner, Shane Warne has passed away at the age of 52. Shane Warne, one of the greatest-ever cricketers to have played the sport, picked up 708 wickets in 145 Tests. His career spanned over 15 years from 1992 to 2007. He was also a World Cup winner with Australia in 1999. He is regarded as one of the greatest-ever bowlers in the history of the sport as he was an integral part of the dominant Australian sides in the 1990s and early 2000s.
- Shane Warn took more wickets than any other bowler in Ashes cricket, the tally standing at 195. In 2013, he was inducted into the ICC Hall of Fame. He also won the inaugural edition of

the Indian Premier League as the captain of Rajasthan Royals. He is regarded as the greatest captain that Australia ever had.

Noted film critic, writer Jaiprakash Chouksey dies at 82

- Film critic, writer Jaiprakash Chouksey has passed away due to cardiac arrest at the age of 82 years. He has penned scripts and dialogues for several films including 'Shayad' (1979), 'Qatl' (1986) and 'Bodyguard' (2011), and was also involved in writing for television serials. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, state Congress chief Kamal Nath and several other leaders condoled Chouksey's death.

West Indies spin legend Sonny Ramadhin passes away at 92

- West Indies spin legend, Sonny Ramadhin has passed away at the age of 92. He was a part of the side that won its first away series in England in 1950. He made his Test debut against England at Old Trafford in 1950. Ramadhin ended up playing 43 Tests and taking 158 wickets at an average of 28.98. Ramadhin played 184 first-class matches and scalped 758 wickets at an average of 20.24. He moved to England after taking retirement from the sport in the late 1960s.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

IFS officer Renu Singh appointed FRI director

- Dr Renu Singh has been appointed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF) as the next director of the Forest Research Institute (FRI) in Dehradun. She will be the institute's second woman director. Singh joined as FRI director after AS Rawat, director-general, ICFRE, handed over his additional charge of director FRI to her.
- Dr Renu Singh has an extensive experience in Forest Policy, Forest Management and Research Issues. She has a special interest in gender and development, climate change adaptation and mitigation issues in the forestry sector.
- She has participated in and represented various biodiversity, forest and climate change-related issues in international conventions like United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

Indian-origin Raj Subramaniam appointed as CEO of FedEx

- The world's largest express transportation company FedEx has announced that its new Chief Executive Officer will be Indian American Raj Subramaniam. He has more than 30 years of global experience across strategy and operations and has led the company through a period of tremendous growth.
- The US multinational courier delivery giant was previously helmed by Frederick W Smith. Smith, chairman and CEO, will step down from this position on June 1. He will now be its executive chairman. In his new role, Smith said he looks forward to focusing on Board governance as well as issues of global importance, including sustainability, innovation, and public policy. Smith had founded FedEx in 1971.

Himanta Biswa Sarma re-elected as BAI president

- The incumbent president of the Badminton Association of India (BAI), Himanta Biswa Sarma has been re-elected unopposed for a second four years term, from 2022 to 2026. He was elected during the General Body Meeting of BAI in Guwahati on March 25, 2022. He is also the current Chief Minister of Assam. He was first elected as BAI chief in 2017. Apart from this, Sarma also serves as Vice President of Badminton Asia and a member of the Badminton World Federation Executive Council.
- Badminton Association of India is the governing body of badminton in India. BAI is an association registered under the Society's act. It was formed in 1934 and has been holding national-level tournaments in India since 1936.

Uday Kotak to step down as the Chairman of IL&FS

- Uday Kotak has announced to step down as the Chairman of the board of the Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS), after his term ends on April 2, 2022. CS Rajan, Managing Director, IL&FS has been appointed as Chairman and Managing Director for six months with effect from April 3 by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- Crisis-hit Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Ltd (IL&FS) has resolved nearly 55% of the group's outstanding debt over the last three-and-a-half years, managing director C.S. Rajan said on Tuesday. Among others, the company sold its iconic headquarters at Bandra Kurla Complex for ₹1,080 crore to reduce debt.

New Director-General of the International Labour Organization elected

- Gilbert Houngbo from Togo will be the next Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Houngbo was elected by the UN agency's governing body, comprising representatives of governments, workers and employers during their meeting in Geneva. Houngbo, former Prime Minister of Togo, will be the 11th head of the agency and the first African to hold the post. His five-year term will begin on October 1, 2022. The current Director-General, Guy Ryder, from the United Kingdom, has held office since 2012.

Shashi Sinha appointed as new BARC India Chairman

- The board of Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) India has elected IPG Mediabrands India CEO Shashi Sinha as the new chairman. He will take over from Punit Goenka, who served as chairman of the TV viewership measurement agency for the last three years. Sinha, who also represents the Advertising Agencies Association of India as its board member, has played a key role in the formation of BARC.
- The Broadcast Audience Research Council India is a joint industry body founded by organisations that represent Indian broadcasters, advertisers, and advertising and media agencies. It is the world's largest television measurement science industry body.

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw elected Fellow of Royal Society of Edinburgh

- Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, the executive chairperson of Biocon and Biocon Biologics, has been elected as a fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) in Scotland. She will be joining RSE's current fellowship of around 1,700 fellows who are recognised as being some of the greatest researchers and practitioners working in or with Scotland.

- RSE is one of the world's oldest and most respected academic societies. Fellows are elected to join the RSE from across the fields of science, arts, education, business and public life in recognition of their impact in improving the world around them. The Biocon chief is among the 80 luminaries to be appointed to the RSE's Fellowship this year.

Stoltenberg extends NATO term by a year amid Ukraine crisis

- According to a NATO statement, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) extended Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg's tenure by a year until September 30, 2023.
- After a NATO conference in Brussels, US President Joe Biden and other NATO leaders decided to extend Stoltenberg's tenure.
- In October 2014, Stoltenberg, a former Norwegian prime minister, was named NATO Secretary-General. In September 2021, his term was set to end.
- I am honoured by #NATO Heads of State and Government's decision to extend my term as Secretary-General until September 30, 2023. "We remain united to keep our Alliance strong and our people safe as we face the greatest security crisis in a century," Stoltenberg tweeted.

CSB Bank appoints Pralay Mondal as interim MD & CEO from Apr. 1

- The Reserve Bank of India has approved the appointment of Pralay Mondal as the interim Managing Director and CEO of CSB Bank. Presently he is the Managing Director at CSB Bank. The post of MD and CEO at CSB Bank was lying vacant after its full-time MD and CEO, C V R Rajendran announces early retirement on health grounds (w.e.f March 31, 2022). RBI has approved the appointment of Pralay for three months from April 1, or till the appointment of a regular Managing Director and CEO of CSB Bank, whichever is earlier.

Pushkar Dhama sworn in as Uttarakhand CM

- Pushkar Singh Dhama has taken oath as 11th Chief Minister of Uttarakhand. He will take over the reins of the state for the second time in a row. Governor Lieutenant General Gurmit Singh administered him the oath of office and secrecy at the Parade Ground in Dehradun.
- The BJP contested the Assembly elections under Dhama's leadership and secured a comfortable majority in the 70-member House, winning 47 seats. Dhama, who lost from the Khatima constituency in the Uttarakhand, led the party's poll effort as Chief Minister during the assembly polls held last month.
- The son of an ex-serviceman, Dhama was born in 1975 in Kanalicchhina village in Pithoragarh district. He holds a law degree and worked as a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) volunteer. He also had been a member of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP). Dhama served as the president of BJP Yuva Morcha in Uttarakhand twice between 2002 and 2008. He is believed to be a protege of former Uttarakhand Chief Minister Bhagat Singh Koshyari.

N Biren Singh takes oath as Manipur chief minister for second term

- Senior BJP leader N Biren Singh took the oath as Chief Minister of Manipur for a second consecutive five-year term on March 21, 2022. The ruling BJP party contested all 60 seats in

the Manipur Assembly election in 2022 and won 32 seats. Nongthombam (N) Biren Singh started his career as a footballer, then turned to journalism, before joining politics.

- In the recently held Assembly polls, the BJP won an absolute majority by winning 32 seats in the 60-member House. Moreover, the Janata Dal (United), the NPF, the newly formed Kuki People's Alliance (KPA) and two Independent MLAs have extended their unconditional support to the saffron party. The JD(U) won six seats, NPF won five and the KPA won two seats.

Indian economist Jayati Ghosh named by UN to high-level advisory board on multilateralism

- United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres has announced the appointment of Indian development economist Jayati Ghosh as a member of the UN's newly established Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism. The 12-member high-level advisory board on effective multilateralism will be co-chaired by former Liberian president and Nobel laureate Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and former Swedish prime minister Stefan Lofven.
- The new advisory board will be asked to build on the ideas in Our Common Agenda including the centrality of women and girls, and the need to take into account the interests of young people and future generations to make concrete suggestions for more effective multilateral arrangements across a range of key global issues.

TCS re-appoints Rajesh Gopinathan as MD and CEO for five years

- The board of IT major, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has announced the re-appointment of Rajesh Gopinathan as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the company for five years. His second term will begin from February 21, 2022, to February 20, 2027. Rajesh Gopinathan was first appointed as the CEO and MD of TCS in 2017.
- Under his leadership, the company has strengthened its position with the revenues increasing from \$17.6 billion in the financial year ended March 31, 2017, to \$22.2 billion in the financial year ended March 31, 2021.

Flipkart Health+ names former Apollo Health exec Prashant Jhaveri as CEO

- Flipkart Health+ announced the appointment of Prashant Jhaveri as its new CEO. He will be in charge of Flipkart's entry into India's fast-growing healthcare sector. Jhaveri was the CEO of Apollo Health and Lifestyle Limited and MediBuddy before joining Flipkart Health+. Earlier in his career, he worked with Medi Assist Group as the chief business officer.
- With the right technology solutions and customer value propositions, there is a huge opportunity to provide healthcare to the most remote corners of India. "I'm looking forward to working with a fantastic team at Flipkart Health+ as we try to solve the accessibility and affordability of quality healthcare products and services for millions of Indian customers," Jhaveri said.
- In November 2021, Flipkart Health+ was created to create an end-to-end digital healthcare platform to address the concerns of inexpensive and high-quality healthcare.
- We are thrilled to welcome Prashant Jhaveri to the Flipkart Health+ team as it embarks on its adventure. His extensive healthcare knowledge will be invaluable as we work to establish Flipkart Health+ as India's foremost tech-enabled healthcare platform serving a billion or

more Indians.” Ajay Veer Yadav, Senior Vice-President and Head of Flipkart Health+, said in a statement.

Tata Sons' chief N Chandrasekaran appointed Air India chairman

- The chairman of Tata Sons, N Chandrasekaran has been appointed as the chairman of Air India. In February 2022, N Chandrasekaran was reappointed as chairman of Tata Sons for a second term of five years. Tata Sons will soon announce a new MD and CEO for Air India to replace Ilker Ayci who was to take charge next month but resigned in the wake of controversies regarding his appointment.
- Chandrasekaran also serves as the non-executive chairman of several other Tata Group companies, including Tata Consultancy Services, Tata Motors, Tata Steel, Tata Chemicals and Tata Consumer Products. He was reappointed Tata Sons' executive chairman last month for another five years.

Bajaj Allianz MD & CEO gets extension for five years

- Bajaj Allianz General Insurance has announced a five-year extension for its MD and CEO, Tapan Singhel. Bajaj Allianz General Insurance said in a statement that the new term will begin on April 1, 2022. Under Singhel's leadership, the company has grown to become one of the country's largest and most profitable private general insurers, ensuring growth, profitability, and customer-centricity.
- During his decade as MD and CEO, the business has made a cumulative underwriting profit of more than Rs 350 crore, grown revenue at a CAGR of 16 per cent, grown net profit (PAT) at a CAGR of more than 30 per cent, and more than doubled its solvency ratio from 156 per cent to around 350 per cent.

Ajay Bhushan Pandey appointed as NFRA Chairman

- Ajay Bhushan Pandey has been appointed as the chairman of the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) for a period of 3 years. Pandey, a 1984-batch Maharashtra cadre IAS officer, retired as revenue secretary in February last year.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of former revenue secretary ABP Pandey as the chairperson of NFRA for a period of three years from the date of assumption of charge or till the incumbent attains the age of 65 years.
- The NFRA acts as an independent regulator for the auditing profession. The body has powers to review the financial statement of companies, can seek explanations and probe irregularities with respect to accounting and auditing issues. The setting up of the NFRA, envisaged under the Companies Act, 2013, was approved by the Cabinet in May 2018.

Prabha Narasimhan named CEO and MD of Colgate-Palmolive India

- Prabha Narasimhan has been appointed as the CEO and MD of Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited. She succeeded Ram Raghavan, who has been promoted to the role of President, Enterprise Oral Care, at Colgate Palmolive Company. Prior to this, she was working as executive director of Hindustan Unilever (HUL). Colgate-Palmolive (India) provides oral care products under the 'Colgate' brand. It also provides personal care products under the 'Palmolive' brand name.

- Colgate-Palmolive (India) provides oral care products under the 'Colgate' brand. It also provides personal care products under the 'Palmolive' brand name. The company reported 2% rise in net profit to Rs 252 crore on a 4% increase in sales to Rs 1,271 crore in Q3 FY22 over Q3 FY21. Shares of Colgate-Palmolive (India) were almost flat at Rs 1496 on the BSE.

Supreme Court names AK Sikri as chairman of Char Dham panel

- The Supreme Court of India has named Justice (retd) AK Sikri as Chairperson of the High Powered Committee (HPC), of the Chardham project. The previous Chairperson Professor Ravi Chopra had resigned from his post in February 2022, after being appointed as the chairperson of the HPC on August 8, 2019. A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Surya Kant accepted the resignation of Professor Ravi Chopra as chairperson of the committee after he wrote a letter in January wishing to relinquish his post.
- The HPC would look after the environmental concerns and other issues related to the Chardham project as well as the cumulative and independent impact of the Chardham project on the entire Himalayan valley.
- On December 14, last year, the top court had allowed double lane widening of the strategic Chardham highway project in Uttarakhand, observing that the country's security concerns may change over time and the recent past has thrown serious national security challenges.

Lupin signs boxing champion Mary Kom as brand ambassador for Shakti campaign

- Global pharma major Lupin Limited (Lupin) has announced that it has signed on six-time world boxing champion, Mary Kom as the brand ambassador for its Shakti campaign. The campaign is aimed at increasing awareness of heart diseases among women. With Mary Kom anchoring the campaign, to drive the much-needed awareness on the issue and encourage women to sign up for early screening checks and take corrective measures to avoid the future risk of heart diseases.
- Lupin's Shakti campaign is aimed at engaging with the target audience across India through multiple activities, both offline and online through interactive social media sessions, sharing informative videos from doctors, and in-clinic awareness activities for patients to establish a better understanding of cardiovascular diseases among women. In its next phase, the campaign aims to help women improve their health and significantly contribute to the wellbeing of society as they are its backbone and play a pivotal role in shaping the nation.

Delhi HC Chief Justice DN Patel next TDSAT Chairperson

- The Central Government has appointed Justice Dhirubhai Naranbhai Patel, Chief Justice of Delhi High Court, as the Chairperson of Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT). He was appointed as Chief Justice of Delhi High Court on June 7, 2019, and is now given the Chair of TDSAT, days before his retirement on March 12, 2022.
- Ministry of Law and Justice issued a notification regarding the approval of his appointment by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), stating that he will serve the Chair for a period of 4 years from the date of assumption of charge of the post, or till attaining the age of 70 years, or until further orders, whichever is the earliest. The conditions of his service will be governed by the provisions of the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021 and the Tribunal (Conditions of Service) Rules, 2021.

Singapore's T Raja Kumar appointed president of global money laundering watchdog

- T Raja Kumar, a Singaporean, has been named president of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the world's anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism financing agency. His appointment is for a set two-year term, which begins on July 1. During the FATF plenary, he was chosen to succeed Dr Marcus Pleyer of Germany.
- Mr Raja's nomination marks the first time Singapore has assumed the president of the organisation, according to a joint news release issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the Ministry of Finance (MOF), and the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) on March 7.
- Mr Raja is a senior advisor at MHA and has been the leader of Singapore's FATF mission since January 1, 2015. Since July 2018, he has also been a member of the steering group, which advises the FATF president.
- The FATF is an intergovernmental organisation set up by the G7 in 1989 to prevent and combat money laundering, terrorism, and proliferation finance.

SBI appoints ex-Ujjivan Small Finance Bank CEO Nitin Chugh as Deputy Managing Director

- State Bank of India (SBI) has appointed former Ujjivan Small Finance Bank CEO, Nitin Chugh as Deputy Managing Director (DMD) to drive digital banking operations. He has been appointed for an initial term of three years. Prior to this appointment, Chugh was CEO and managing director of Ujjivan Small Finance Bank. He joined there from HDFC Bank where he served as the Group Head of Digital Banking.
- According to public notice by SBI, the position would be responsible for envisioning, developing and executing of bank's digital banking strategy and business plan for imparting digital knowledge/skills in a constructive, empowering and collaborative way.

LIC Mutual Fund names TS Ramakrishnan as MD and CEO

- LIC Mutual Fund has announced the appointment of TS Ramakrishnan as its Managing Director & CEO, effective. Ramakrishnan, as the MD and CEO, LIC Mutual Fund Asset Management, will succeed Dinesh Pangtey, its former Wholetime Director and CEO.
- Ramakrishnan is a Bachelor of Commerce (Hons.) and PGDIM and has been awarded Fellowship from the prestigious Insurance Institute of India. He has experience of over 34 years at LIC and its subsidiaries/associate companies, the release said. He joined LIC Mutual Fund AMC on April 28, 2021.
- LIC Mutual Fund is one of the oldest and leading mutual funds operating in India. offer a complete basket of 26 products covering debt, equity, hybrid, passive and solution-oriented schemes. The Average Assets under Management (AAuM) is Rs 18,625.52 crores as on January 31, 2022.

World Bank's India head Junaid Ahmad appointed vice president of operations

- Junaid Kamal Ahmad, the World Bank's India Director, has been named a Vice President of the international lending agency. Ahmad, who will lead the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) as Vice President, Operations, is only the second Bangladeshi to

be chosen to such a high position in the bank's history. He will start his new job on April 16, according to a press statement.

- On the operational side, Faisal Chaudhary was the first Bangladeshi native to hold the position of vice president.
- Ahmad will work to advance and enhance MIGA's brand partnering across the World Bank Group as well as with financial institutions, private investors, and development actors; originate and pursue meaningful, impact-driven projects; and lead the Operations team to deliver on MIGA's mandate of mobilising private finance for development projects in Emerging Market Developing Economies, according to a statement from the bank.

Ashneer Grover resigned as BharatPe MD & Director

- Ashneer Grover, co-founder and Managing Director (MD) of BharatPe, a leading Indian fintech company, has resigned as the MD and director of the board of BharatPe. Ashneer Grover, who owns a 9.5% stake worth Rs 1915 crore in BharatPe, will continue as the single largest individual shareholder of the company. BharatPe became the 19th Indian startup to become a unicorn in 2021.
- Shashwat Nakrani, the co-founder of BharatPe, owns 7.8% and Sequoia Capital India, a venture capital (VC) investor and the largest shareholder of BharatPe, holds 19.6%, followed by Coatue at 12.4% and Ribbit Capital at 11%. As of August 2021, Tiger Global, Steadview Capital, and Beenext together hold a 60.4% stake in BharatPe.

Yash Raj Films names Akshaye Widhani as CEO

- Film production and distribution company Yash Raj Films (YRF) has named Akshaye Widhani as chief executive officer. Widhani was serving as senior vice-president, finance and business Affairs and head of operations at YRF Studios. He used to head corporate and business development activities for YRF, including finance, business extensions, strategic alliances, joint ventures, co-productions.
- Widhani joined YRF 17 years ago, has been responsible for setting up and running several business verticals for the company. His first stint was as studio manager, in charge of setting up operations for YRF Studios in 2005. Later, he took up leadership roles in corporate finance, strategy and operations. A graduate from Kelley School of Business, Indiana University with a dual major in finance and entrepreneurship, Widhani has also been spearheading recent initiatives for The Yash Chopra Foundation.

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Day of Drug Checking 2022: 31st March

- The International Day of Drug Checking takes place on March 31 every year since 2017 to ensure people are educated on drugs and aware of their effects. The day aims to promote harm reduction initiatives of drugs and reduce drug-related risks. Along with it, it also marks promoting harm reduction actions of drugs and reduces drug-related risks. Their goal on the 31st of March is to raise public awareness of the availability of drug checking services and companies from across the planet.
- By raising awareness and sharing the knowledge they hope to improve the accessibility of numerous substance oriented harm reduction methods – not only for users but also for the

governmental organizations worldwide who have been searching for a solution to the substance use issues that their citizens face on a daily basis.

International Transgender Day of Visibility 2022 : 31st March

- The International Transgender Day of Visibility (TDOV) occurs annually on March 31 to raise awareness of discrimination faced by transgender people worldwide, while also celebrating their contributions to society. The day is dedicated to celebrating transgender people and raising awareness of discrimination faced by transgender people worldwide, as well as celebrating their contributions to society.
- The day was founded by US-based transgender activist Rachel Crandall of Michigan in 2009. As a reaction to the lack of LGBT recognition of transgender people, citing the frustration that the only well-known transgender-centred day was the Transgender Day of Remembrance which mourned the murders of transgender people but did not acknowledge and celebrate living members of the transgender community. The first International Transgender Day of Visibility was held on March 31, 2009. It has since been spearheaded by the U.S.-based youth advocacy organization Trans Student Educational Resources.

World Backup Day 2022:31st March

- World Backup Day is marked every year on March 31. The day reminds us to protect our precious digital documents as we've become more reliant on technology. It is a day for people to learn about the increasing role of data in our lives and the importance of regular backups. Originally, World Backup Day began as World Backup Month, by a hard drive company named Maxtor which was later acquired by Seagate Technology.
- The aim of the day is simple, to raise awareness of how to safely backup data to introduce people to the 3-2-1 strategy. This strategy leads the backup campaign and is a solid tried and tested approach that's easy for anyone to adapt.
- 3-2-1 backup is all about having three copies of your data, one on your computer, one on an external storage device and another offsite on a cloud storage solution.

October 5 to be National Dolphin Day, decides National Board for Wildlife

- The Union Ministry for Environment, Forest and Climate Change has designated the 5th of October to be celebrated as National Dolphin Day every year as a historic step in creating awareness for the conservation of Dolphins, beginning from 2022. This information was given by Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupendra Yadav on March 25, 2022, during the 67th meeting of the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wild Life in New Delhi.
- Dolphins act as ideal ecological indicators of a healthy aquatic ecosystem and conservation of the dolphins will, therefore, benefit the survival of the species and also, the people dependent on the aquatic system for their livelihood.

Earth Hour 2022 : 26th March

- Every year, the Earth Hour is celebrated worldwide on the last Saturday of March month to show support for the fight against climate change and commitment towards a better planet.

Earth Hour 2022 is being marked on March 26, 2022. The Earth Hour 2022 theme will focus on 'Shape Our Future.

- The Day is a worldwide movement organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), encouraging individuals, communities, corporates, and households to turn off their lights for one hour, from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. It was started as a lights-off event in Sydney, Australia, in 2007 to raise awareness for energy consumption and its effects on the environment.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2022: 27th January

- International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust (International Holocaust Remembrance Day) is observed on 27 January. In 2022, the theme guiding the United Nations Holocaust remembrance and education is "Memory, Dignity and Justice". The objective of the day is to commemorate the anniversary of the tragedy of the Holocaust that occurred during the Second World War.
- A genocide occurred during World War II in which Nazi Germany, aided by its collaborators, systematically murdered some six million European Jews, around two-thirds of the Jewish population of Europe, between 1941 and 1945. United Nations designated the day in 2005 to serve as a date for official commemoration of the victims of the Nazi regime and to promote Holocaust education throughout the world.

International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade 2022: 25th March

- International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is marked on 25 March every year to raise awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudice. The Day is observed with ceremonies and activities at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at United Nations offices around the world.
- 2022 Theme: "Stories of Courage: Resistance to Slavery and Unity against Racism".
- International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is a United Nations international observance designated in 2007 to be marked on 25 March every year. It was first observed in 2008 with the theme "Breaking the Silence, Lest We Forget".

International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members 2022: 25th March

- The United Nations observes the International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members on 25 March every year. This is a day to mobilize action, demand justice and strengthen our resolve to protect UN staff and peacekeepers, as well as our colleagues in the non-governmental community and the press.
- The International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members has taken on even greater importance in recent years, as attacks against the United Nations intensify. This is a day to mobilize action, demand justice and strengthen our resolve to protect UN staff and peacekeepers, as well as our colleagues in the non-governmental community and the press.

World Tuberculosis Day 2022: 24th March

- World Tuberculosis Day is observed every year on 24 March to create awareness among the public about the global epidemic of tuberculosis (TB) and efforts to eliminate the disease. The date marks the day in 1882 when Dr Robert Koch announced that he had discovered the bacterium that causes TB, which opened the way towards diagnosing and curing this disease.
- The theme of World TB Day 2022 – ‘Invest to End TB. Save Lives.’ –conveys the urgent need to invest resources to ramp up the fight against TB and achieve the commitments to end TB made by global leaders.
- Tuberculosis (TB) is a potentially serious infectious disease that mainly affects your lungs. The bacteria that cause tuberculosis are spread from one person to another through tiny droplets released into the air via coughs and sneezes.

International Day for the Right to the Truth 2022: 24th March

- United Nations has recognised March 24 to be observed as the International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims every year. The day aims to pay tribute to those who have devoted their lives or lost their lives in, the struggle to promote and protect human rights for all.
- This day is observed on 24th March every year to pay tribute to “Monsignor Óscar Arnulfo Romero” as he was murdered on 24 March 1980. He was actively engaged in criticizing violations of the human rights of the most vulnerable individuals in El Salvador. The day was proclaimed by the United Nations in December 2010, to say no to all forms of violence, injustice and oppression against humanity.

World Meteorological Day 2022: 23rd march

- World Meteorological Day is celebrated globally on March 23rd every year. The day is celebrated as the establishment of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and it concentrates on the behaviour of Earth’s atmosphere. The day also helps people be aware of their role in protecting Earth’s atmosphere. World Meteorological Day is a significant day as it focuses on the global acknowledgement of different issues of planet earth. The day is conducted by raising awareness about multiple concerns of the Earth around the globe.
- World Meteorological Day is celebrated with a different motto every year. This year World Meteorological Day is celebrated keeping the theme of Early Warning and Early Action.

Shaheed Diwas 2022: 23rd March

- Every year, the Nation was observed on March 23rd as Martyrs Day (Shaheed Diwas or Sarvodaya Day). The day was observed to pay tribute to the death anniversary of the freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, and Shivaram Rajguru, who laid their lives for the freedom of India. Also, 30 January is observed as Martyr’s Day or Shaheed Diwas in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi.
- On March 23, three heroes of our nation were hanged to death, namely Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru, and Sukhdev Thapar by the British. No doubt, they also sacrificed their lives for the welfare of our nation. These heroes fought for the welfare of people and sacrificed their lives for the same cause. For many young Indians, Bhagat Singh, Rajguru,

Sukhdev have become a source of inspiration. Even during British rule, their sacrifice urged many people to come forth and fight for their freedom. Therefore, in order to homage to the three of these revolutionaries, India has commemorated March 23 as Shaheed Diwas.

World Poetry Day 2022: 21st March

- On 21st March, World Poetry Day is celebrated every year to recognise the unique ability of poetry to capture the creative spirit of the human mind. World Poetry Day celebrates one of humanity's most treasured forms of cultural and linguistic expression and identity.
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted this day during UNESCO's 30th session in Paris in 1999 with the aim of supporting linguistic diversity through poetic expression and increasing the opportunity for endangered languages to be heard. Some countries also celebrate World Poetry Day on October 15 to mark the birthday of Virgil, a Roman poet who is famous for his epic Aeneid.

World Down Syndrome Day 2022: 21st March

- World Down Syndrome Day (WDS) is observed every year on 21 March. It is a global campaign that is observed annually to spread awareness about Down Syndrome. The Day is commemorated as a global initiative to increase awareness about hereditary disorders. An individual with Down Syndrome has an extra chromosome.
- The theme of World Down Syndrome Day this year is "Inclusion Means". It calls for making efforts to include people with down syndrome in all matters of life and not discriminate against them.

World Water Day 2022: 21st March

- World Water Day is celebrated globally on 22nd March every year. The day aims to highlight the importance of freshwater. It is used to advocate for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. This 2022, the focus is groundwater, an invisible resource with an impact visible everywhere. Relevant issues include water scarcity, water pollution, inadequate water supply, lack of sanitation, and the impacts of climate change that are looked upon on this day.
- The World Water Day theme 2022 is "Groundwater, Making the Invisible Visible". Groundwater is a crucial resource that provides almost half of all drinkable water across the world.

CRPF celebrates 83rd Raising Day on 19th March 2022

- Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has celebrated its 83rd Raising Day with zeal and ceremonial fervour on 19 March 2022. The 83rd Raising Day parade was organised at the Maulana Azad Stadium in Jammu. This was for the first time that the CRPF celebrated its Raising Day outside the national capital. Union Home Minister Amit Shah took the salute at the parade and also presented the Gallantry medals and trophies for exceptional achievements in different categories to CRPF personnel.
- The CRPF came into existence on July 27, 1939, as Crown Representative's Police. It was renamed the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) on December 28, 1949, upon the enactment of the CRPF Act.

- On March 19, 1950, the then Home Minister, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel presented Presidential colours to the CRPF for its commendable services, following which CRPF started celebrating the day as their Raising Day.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 22 March 2022

- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on 21 March to remind people about the negative consequences of racial discrimination. The 2022 edition of the International Day focuses on the theme “VOICES FOR ACTION AGAINST RACISM”.
- This edition aims, in particular, at: highlighting the importance of strengthening meaningful and safe public participation and representation in all areas of decision-making to prevent and combat racial discrimination; reaffirming the importance of full respect for the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and of protecting civic space; and recognizing the contribution of individuals and organizations that stand up against racial discrimination and the challenges they face.

International Day of Forests 2022: 21st March

- The International Day of Forests (also known as World Forestry Day) is celebrated every year on March 21. The main aim of the day is to raise awareness of the significance of all types of forests. The day is to celebrate to raise awareness of the importance of all types of forests, and trees outside forests, for the benefit of current and future generations as well as to increase the public awareness among communities about the values, significance and contributions of the forests to balance the life cycle on the earth.
- The theme for 2022 is “Forests and sustainable production and consumption.”
- The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21 March the International Day of Forests (IDF) in 2012. The Day celebrates and raises awareness of the importance of all types of forests. On each International Day of Forests, countries are encouraged to undertake local, national and international efforts to organize activities involving forests and trees, such as tree planting campaigns. The theme for each International Day of Forests is chosen by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

World Sparrow Day 2022: 20th March

- World Sparrow Day (WSD) is celebrated every year on March 20th. This day is meant to raise awareness about the house sparrow and the dangers it confronts. The purpose of World Sparrow Day is to raise awareness and protect the bird all across the world. A few years ago, house sparrows were commonly seen in people’s homes. As a result of rising noise pollution, the bird is now on the edge of extinction.
- The theme of World Sparrow Day is “LOVE Sparrows.” More individuals are likely to join in a range of events and campaigns geared at sparrow conservation as a result of focusing on this issue.

World Oral Health Day 2022: 20th March

- The World Oral Health Day is marked every year on March 20. The day aims to raise global awareness of the issues around oral health and the importance of oral hygiene so that

governments, health associations and the general public can work together to achieve healthier mouths and happier lives.

- The theme for World Oral Health Day 2021-2023 is: Be Proud Of Your Mouth.
- The FDI World Dental Federation launched World Oral Health Day in 2007. The day was originally celebrated on 12th September in remembrance of FDI founder, Dr Charles Godon. Later, it was changed to 20th March in 2013 to avoid conflict with the FDI World Dental Congress in September.

International Day of Happiness 2022: 20th March

- International Day of happiness is observed every year around the world on March 20. The United Nations started celebrating this day in 2013, but the resolution for the same was passed on July 12, 2012. The resolution was initiated by Bhutan which shed the light on the importance of National Happiness.
- The theme for Happiness Day 2022 is Keep Calm, Stay Wise and Be Kind. Keeping cool and calm in every possible situation is the key to happiness and satisfaction. Staying wise in tough situations lead to wiser steps and success. Being Kind to others in their needs, mistakes and errors will help them grow and also make them feel better.

India's Ordnance Factories' Day 2022: 18th March

- The Ordnance Factories' Day is observed on the 18th of March every year. The production of India's oldest Ordnance Factory, which is at Cossipore of Kolkata, was started on the 18th of March, 1802. OFB is the 37th largest defence equipment manufacturer in the world, 2nd largest in Asia, and the largest in India.
- The day is celebrated by displaying the rifles, guns, artillery, ammunition etc in exhibitions all over India. The celebrations start with a parade and the exhibition will also display the photographs of various mountaineering expeditions.

World Sleep Day 2022: 18th March

- World Sleep Day is observed on the Friday before the March equinox every year to highlight the importance of quality sleep. This year, it falls on March 18. World Sleep Day is a celebration of sleep and a call to action on important issues related to sleep, including medicine, education, social aspects and driving. It is organized by the World Sleep Day Committee of the World Sleep Society with the objective to lessen the burden of sleep problems on society through better prevention and management of sleep disorders.
- 'Quality Sleep, Sound Mind, Happy World' is the theme for World Sleep Day this year to raise awareness about the impact of sleep on the mind and body.

Global Recycling Day 2022: 18th March

- The Global Recycling Day is observed every year on the 18th of March to recognise the importance of recycling as a resource, not waste. The day strives to urge world leaders that recycling must be a global issue and encourage people to think resourcefully and not waste when it comes to the goods around us.
- This year, the event's focus will be on the "recycling fraternity" – those who put themselves on the frontline to collect waste and recycling during the multiple lockdowns.

- Global Recycling Day was created in 2018 by the Global Recycling Foundation founded by Ranjit Baxi – who is also the founder of International Recycling Ltd, an international business that exports waste materials from Europe and the USA for recycling into new products in Asia. It is a day to raise awareness of the importance recycling plays in preserving our primary resources and securing the future of our planet.

UN declares March 15 International Day to Combat Islamophobia

- The U.N. General Assembly approved a resolution to proclaim March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia every year, starting from 2022. The resolution, adopted by the 193-member UN General Assembly, was introduced by Pakistan's ambassador Munir Akram on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), on March 15, 2022. It marks the day when a gunman entered two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, killing 51 worshippers and wounding 40 others in the terror attack.
- The resolution, introduced by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), was co-sponsored by Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Yemen.

National Vaccination Day 2022:16th March

- In India, the National Vaccination Day (also known as National Immunisation Day (IMD)) is observed on 16 March every year, to convey the importance of vaccination to the entire nation. The day was first observed in the year 1995. In 2022, the National Immunization Day is important since the Government of India has started the COVID-19 vaccination for children between 15 to 18 years of age and booster dose for senior citizens. The theme for National Vaccination Day or National Immunisation Day 2022 is "Vaccines Work for all".
- It was in 1995 that India started the Pulse Polio Programme and the first dose of Oral Polio Vaccine was given. According to the World Health Organization, immunization is a process through which an individual's immune system becomes fortified against foreign harm causing agents.

RANKING

Maternal Mortality Ratio: Kerala dropped from 42 to 30

- Kerala has yet again emerged on top when it comes to maternal and child health, with the State recording the lowest Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) of 30 (per one lakh live births) in the country. According to the latest data, India's maternal mortality ratio (MMR) has improved to 103 for the period 2017-19.
- The Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) of Kerala has dropped from 42 to 30. Kerala has achieved the UN Sustainable Development Goals of MMR in the year 2020 itself. Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) is defined as the number of maternal deaths per 100000 live births.
- Kerala, Telangana, and Maharashtra are included in the top 3 states with the lowest MMR in India.

International Day of Mathematics 2022: 14th March

- International Day of Mathematics (IDM) is observed globally on the 14th of March every year. It is also known as the Pi Day because the mathematical constant π (pi) can be rounded down to 3.14. It aims to educate people about the essential role of mathematics in science and technology, improve quality of life, empower women and girls, and contribute to sustainable development. This is a relatively new event that was created just a couple of years back. The theme for 2022 IDM is “Mathematics Unites!”.
- The proclamation of March 14 as the International Day of Mathematics was adopted in the 205th session of the UNESCO’s Executive Council. The day was then adopted in the 40th session of the General Conference of UNESCO in November 2019. Later in 2020, the world celebrated its First International Day of Mathematics on March 14, 2020.

World Rotaract Day 2022:13th March

- World Rotaract Day is celebrated on the 13th of March every year to acknowledge the services provided by the rotaractors across the world. The theme of World Rotaract Day 2022 is “Rotary Making a Difference”. World Rotaract Week will be held from 11 March 2022 to 18 March 2022.
- Rotary Club is the community service organization for young men and women. They take part in international service projects, in a global effort to bring peace and international understanding to the world.
- Rotaract means rotary in action. Rotary is an organization of business and professional people who unite worldwide to provide humanitarian service, encourage high ethical standards in all vocations and help build goodwill and peace in the world. World Rotaract Day is commemorated to honour the beginning of the first such club, Rotary International, in 1968 at North Carolina, USA. Now it has transformed into a major Rotary-sponsored organization with more than 9,539 clubs spread around the world.

International Day of Women Judges 2022: 10th March

- March 10 marks the International Day of Women Judges. On this day, the United Nations reaffirms its commitment to develop and implement appropriate and effective strategies and plans for the advancement of women in the judicial system and institution at the managerial and leadership level.
- Women in the judiciary system are a key to ensuring that courts represent their citizens, address concerns and give out good judgments. Women’s presence in the judiciary system enhances the legitimacy of courts and sends a powerful message saying that they’re open and accessible to those who want to seek justice.

CISF raising day 2022 :10th March

- In the year 1969, the CISF was set up on March 10 and three battalions were formed under the CISF act 1968, which was passed by the Parliament of India. Since then, the day is celebrated as CISF Raising Day every year. Central Industrial Security Force, is for the central armed police force in India. It is one of the six paramilitary forces in India functioning under the Union Home Ministry.

- The CISF, which was set up in 1969, is assigned to look after the security of the vital government and industrial buildings. The CISF was established under the CISF Act, which has a strength of over 3,000. In 2017, the government raised the sanctioned strength of personnel from 145,000 to 180,000.

No Smoking Day 2022: 9th March

- No Smoking Day is celebrated on the second Wednesday in the month of March every year across the world. This year No Smoking Day will be celebrated on 9th March. The day is celebrated to help those who wish to quit smoking as well as to raise awareness about the implications of smoking on an individual's health.
- The main reason to observe this day is to spread awareness and educate people about the adverse impacts of tobacco on their health through cigarettes and other means. No Smoking Day was first observed in the year 1984 in the Republic of Ireland on Ash Wednesday. It was on this day that the clergy determined that giving up cigarettes will be a good thing for Lent.

International Women's Day 2022 :8th March

- International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated globally on March 8 every year. The day recognises the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The event celebrates women's achievements and raises awareness about women's equality and lobbies for accelerated gender parity.
- The theme of 2022 International Women's Day is "gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow".
- International Women's Day is celebrated to recognise the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. Organisations like colleges and institutions across the world celebrate International Women's Day by holding public speeches, rallies, exhibitions, workshops and seminars on themes and concepts, debates, quiz competitions and lectures.

Jan Aushadhi Diwas 2022:7th March

- The Jan Aushadhi Diwas is celebrated on 7 March 2022 by the Pharmaceuticals & Medical Devices Bureau of India (PMBI). The day is observed to spread awareness about the usages of generic medicines and the benefits of Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana. The theme of the 4 Janaushadhi Diwas is "Jan Aushadhi-Jan Upyogi".
- On this occasion, Doctors, Health Workers, Nurses, Pharmacists, and Jan Aushadhi Mitra will discuss the Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana. The government has set a target to increase the number of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras (PMBJKs) to 10,500 by March 2025.

CISF 53rd Raising Day 2022: 6th March

- The 53rd Raising Day ceremony of Central Industrial Security Forces (CISF) was organised on March 06, 2022, in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. Union Home Minister Amit Shah has attended and addressed the Raising Day ceremony of CISF at Ghaziabad's Indirapuram. The CISF, which functions under the Union Home Ministry, is a central armed police force and among one of the six paramilitary forces of India. Over 30 lakh passengers in Delhi Metro and 10 lakh passengers in airports across the country pass through the security of CISF.

- CISF was set up under an Act of the Parliament of India on 10 March 1969, to provide security cover to industrial units, government infrastructure projects and facilities and establishments located all over India.
- Eventually, it was made an armed force of the Republic of India by another Act of Parliament passed on 15 June 1983.
- CISF is one of six paramilitary forces in India and functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs. Its headquarters is in New Delhi.

World Obesity Day 2022 : 4th March

- World Obesity Day is observed every year on March 04. It is observed to spread awareness about obesity and encourage action towards its elimination. The day is organised by the World Obesity Federation, a non-profit body that is in official relations with the World Health Organisation.
- The theme of World Obesity Day 2022 is 'Everybody Needs to Act'. The campaign aims to improve the world's understanding, prevention and treatment of obesity.
- Obesity is one of the biggest health crises in the world, affecting 800 million people with millions more at risk, according to worldobesity.org. To spread awareness about the same and encourage action towards its elimination.

National Safety Day 2022 : 4th March

- The National Safety Day (NSD) is celebrated every year on the 4th of March to commemorate the foundation of the National Safety Council (NSC) of India. The day aims to raise public awareness of all safety principles, including road safety, workplace safety, human health safety, and environmental safety. The year 2022 marks 51st NSD.
- Every year, this day is celebrated with a different theme. This year, the National Safety Council of India announced the theme to be 'Nurture young minds – Develop safety culture'.

National Security Day 2022: 4th March

- In India, March 4 is celebrated as National Security Day (Rashtriya Suraksha Diwas) every year, in the honor of the Indian Security Forces. The day aims to show gratitude to all the security forces, including policemen, para-military forces, commandos, guards, army officers, and other persons involved in security, who sacrifice their life in maintaining the peace and security of the people of the country. Apart from this, National Security Week 2022 is being celebrated from March 4 to March 10, 2022.
- 4 March also marks the day when the National Security Council (NSC) of India was established, in 1966 by the Ministry of Labour under the Government of India. The first National Security Day (NSD) was held in 1972.
- World Hearing Day is held on 3rd March each year by World Health Organisation (WHO). The day aims to raise awareness on how to prevent deafness and hearing loss and promote ear and hearing care across the world. On World Hearing Day 2022, WHO will focus on the importance of safe listening as a means of maintaining good hearing across the life course. In 2021, WHO launched the World report on hearing that highlighted the increasing number of people living with and at risk of hearing loss. It highlighted noise control as one of the

seven key H.E.A.R.I.N.G. interventions and stressed the importance of mitigating exposure to loud sounds.

- The World Hearing Day 2022 with the theme “To hear for life, listen with care” will focus on the importance and means of hearing loss prevention through safe listening.

World Wildlife Day 2022 : 3rd March

- The World Wildlife Day is observed every year on March 3 to raise awareness about the world’s wild fauna and flora. The day also reminds us of the need to fight against wildlife crime and human-induced reduction of species causing various wide-ranging economic, environmental and social impacts.
- World Wildlife Day will be celebrated in 2022 under the theme “Recovering key species for ecosystem restoration”, as a way to draw attention to the conservation status of some of the most critically endangered species of wild fauna and flora, and to drive discussions towards imagining and implementing solutions to conserve them.

Zero Discrimination Day 2022: 01st March

- The Zero Discrimination Day is held every year on the 1st of March. The day aims to ensure right to equality, inclusion and protection of all people without any discrimination in their law and policies to live a full life with dignity regardless of any barriers. Zero Discrimination Day highlights how people can become informed about and promote inclusion, compassion, peace and, above all, a movement for change. Zero Discrimination Day is helping to create a global movement of solidarity to end all forms of discrimination.
- The theme of Zero Discrimination Day 2022: “Remove laws that harm, create laws that empower”, UNAIDS is highlighting the urgent need to take action against discriminatory laws.

Janaushadhi Diwas week 2022: 1st March to 7th March

- Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers will organize the Janaushadhi Diwas from 1st March to 7th March 2022. On 7th March 2022, the 4th Jan Aushadhi Diwas will be celebrated. The theme of 4th Janaushadhi Diwas: “Jan Aushadhi-Jan Upyogi”. The Government has set a target to increase the number of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras (PMBJKs) to 10,500 by the end of March 2025.
- To create awareness about the usages of generic medicines and the benefits of Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana. Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) was launched by the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers, Government of India in November 2008 to provide quality generic medicines available at affordable prices to all.

International Women’s Day Week 2022 begins

- The Women and Child Development Ministry celebrates the International Women’s Day week from the 1st of March as an Iconic Week as a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. As a part of the week-long celebration, the Ministry will organize various events and social media campaigns covering a variety of themes related to women’s safety and empowerment.
- This will mark an occasion to celebrate the progress made towards achieving gender equity and women’s empowerment but also to critically reflect on accomplishments and strive for

a greater momentum towards gender equality. It will kick off tomorrow in collaboration with the Bureau of Police Research and Development to raise awareness on the safety and security of women.

SUMMITS AND MOU'S

Ahmedabad IIM sets up retail tech consortium with Flipkart and other partners

- The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) in Ahmedabad's Centre for Digital Transformation recently launched a retail tech consortium, with intentions to partner with a number of retail and technology companies in India. The consortium, according to the centre, will strive to improve collaboration among retail technology firms in the country.
- Flipkart has joined the consortium as a main partner for the first year, bringing its industry knowledge, experience, and consumer insights into the internet ecosystem to the table.
- This collaboration would bring neutral customer perspectives on retail digitalization to the fore, allowing merchants to better understand their customers.
- The retail industry has experienced considerable change in the two years after the outbreak began. Retail digitalisation has occurred at a rapid speed, affecting both online and traditional businesses.

Lt Governor addresses Gulf Countries' Investment Summit at Srinagar

- Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has addressed the Gulf Countries' Investment Summit at SKICC, Srinagar which is aimed at providing a platform for the foreign business delegates to explore a host of investment opportunities in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir. The Lt Governor highlighted the scope for J&K and GCC companies' economic cooperation to make Jammu and Kashmir the most beautiful investment destination in the world.
- The visit of CEOs of top companies, entrepreneurs, start-up representatives, exporters in Jammu and Kashmir is an expression of confidence of the industry leaders in the potential for business cooperation between J&K and Gulf countries. The development of the power sector, trade, horticulture, rural infrastructure, roads and air links, medical education and health services, Industrial Training Institutes, Information Technology and storage facilities for the products are the diverse areas that have been addressed.

IIT Madras and TCS partner to launch M.Tech in Industrial Artificial Intelligence

- The Indian Institute of Technology Madras has teamed up with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) to offer a web-based, user-friendly programme on "Industrial AI," aimed at upskilling employees and incorporating AI applications to industrial concerns.
- IIT M will provide the 18-month programme, which was developed in collaboration with TCS, in a wholly online live teaching method via virtual classrooms. TCS students will make up the program's initial cohort.
- This programme, established in conjunction with TCS, will offer strong theoretical courses and labs covering significant issues in data science and AI."
- Theoretical courses will address essential mathematical approaches needed to comprehend data science algorithms, time series analysis, multivariate data analysis, machine learning, deep learning, and reinforcement learning."

NMDC signs pact with IIT Kharagpur for drone-based mineral exploration

- The country's largest iron ore producer, NMDC Ltd, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for drone-based mineral research with IIT Kharagpur. The National Mining and Development Corporation (NMDC) is increasingly dependent on technical innovation and the digitisation of its exploration and mining database. The government has taken the first step in regulating and monitoring drone usage and operations in India, which are now employed in agriculture, urban planning, forestry, mining, disaster management, surveillance, and transportation, among other industries.
- NMDC and IIT Kharagpur will collaborate to create spectrum products, methodologies, and algorithms for drone (UAV) mining exploration.
- The collaboration will also lead to the development of software spectral tools for mineral excavation and mining technology capacity-building programmes.

Australian Army Research Centre (Aarc) Signs Memorandum of Understanding (Mou) with Centre for Land Warfare Studies (Claws), India

- From March 8 to March 10, 2022, Lt Gen Richard Burr, the Chief of the Australian Army, was in India for three days. The Australian Army Chief paid a visit to the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), an Indian Army think tank in New Delhi.
- Lt. Gen Richard Burr met with Vice Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Manoj Pande, Chairman, Board of Governors, CLAWS, and Director CLAWS, Lt Gen Dr Ranbir Singh (Retd). CLAWS research efforts and outreach strategies were briefed to the visiting General. On the sidelines of the tour, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Australian Army Research Centre (AARC) and the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) to create academic cooperation and engagement.

Shri Narayan Rane launches MSME Innovative Scheme 2022

- Union Minister for MSME, Narayan Rane has announced the MSME Innovative Scheme (Incubation, Design, and IPR) as well as the MSME IDEA HACKATHON 2022. Shri Rane, speaking on the occasion, stated that MSMEs play an essential role in Atmanirbhar Bharat. He claims that these programmes will assist entrepreneurs in launching new businesses.
- MSME Innovation" Scheme, according to the Minister of State for MSME Shri Bhanu Pratap Verma, will develop and foster latent innovation in the MSME sector.
- During the opening of the MSME Innovation Scheme, Shri B.B Swain, Secretary MSME, made the keynote address, stating that it will serve as a hub for innovation activities, facilitating and directing the development of ideas into viable business propositions that benefit society directly.
- MSME Innovative is a comprehensive approach that unifies, synergizes, and converges three sub-components and interventions to achieve a single goal.

New Delhi: Sports Minister Anurag Thakur to inaugurate National Youth Parliament Festival

- The 3rd edition of the National Youth Parliament Festival (NYPF) has been organised jointly by the Lok Sabha Secretariat and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports on March 10 and 11, 2022, in the Central Hall of Parliament, New Delhi. Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur

will address the inaugural session of NYPF on March 10, while the Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will address the valedictory function on March 11.

- The objective of the NYPF is to hear the voice of the youth, between 18 and less than 25 years of age, who will join various careers in the coming years, including public services. The top three National level youth winners will get an opportunity to speak before the Lok Sabha Speaker during the valedictory function.

India signs Host Country Agreement with the International Telecommunication Union for the establishment of Area Office & Innovation Centre at New Delhi

- The Government of India has signed the Host Country Agreement (HCA) with International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for the establishment of an Area Office & Innovation Centre of ITU in New Delhi. The Host Country Agreement provides the legal and financial framework for the establishment and operations of the Area Office. The Area Office and Innovation Centre of ITU at New Delhi will serve South Asian countries comprising of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and India.
- The agreement was signed between Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister of Communications and H.E. Houlin Zhao, Secretary-General of ITU, in a virtual ceremony during the World Telecommunications Standardisation Assembly-20 (WTSA-20) being held in Geneva, Switzerland.

Minister of State for Electronics and IT, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar inaugurates NIC Tech Conclave 2022

- National Informatics Centre (NIC) has partnered with governments on digital initiatives. We've constructed state-of-the-art PAN-India ICT infrastructure, digital platforms, and solutions for the government's exclusive usage over the years. We've helped the federal and state governments automate their procedures and deliver public services electronically.
- It is critical to stay current with the latest technologies because the IT industry is always upgrading and improving. It is also critical that government personnel become aware of and adapt to new and evolving technologies.
- NIC has been hosting a Tech Conclave on Emerging Technologies, which are particularly useful in e-Government. "Next Gen Technologies for Digital Government" is the theme of this year's Tech Conclave.
- Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology, Railways and Communications, will inaugurate the 3rd edition of the NIC Tech Conclave 2022, a two-day event held by the National Informatics Centre (NIC), on March 3rd and 4th, 2022 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

HPCL signs MoU with SECI for renewable energy, electric mobility, alternative fuels

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on February 24, 2022 in New Delhi between Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI) to accomplish green energy targets and the Government of India's efforts towards a carbon-neutral economy.
- Shuvendu Gupta who is the Chief General Manager of HPCL for Biofuels and Renewables, and Sanjay Sharma who Executive Director of SECI, signed the MoU.

- The Memorandum of Understanding envisions cooperation and collaboration in the fields of renewable energy, electric mobility, and alternative fuels, as well as the development of ESG Projects.
- HPCL plans to diversify further in the RE and Electric Mobility sectors, as well as pursue the development of ESG projects, in order to meet the Government of India's target to increase the RE capacity and accelerate the adoption of electric mobility in India.

DST collaborates with Intel India to boost AI readiness among high school students

- 'Building AI Readiness among Young Innovators', a program by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, in partnership with Intel India, was launched by Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State for Science and Technology (I/C). The program aims to build digital readiness among the students from classes 6 to 10, enrolled under DST's INSPIRE-Awards MANAK scheme.
- The flagship program of DST reaches out to students pan India with an aim to create a culture of creativity and innovative thinking. Intel said its commitment to promoting AI readiness in the country is in synergy with the government's vision of leveraging AI to make India a leader in the field while utilizing the technology to address its socio-economic challenges.
- The program will bring both these together and seek to build an AI-ready generation by empowering the students with the knowledge and skills to leverage AI in an inclusive way.

Indian Institute of Technology Madras and NIOT conduct OCEANS

- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras and National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai, are jointly conducted OCEANS 2022 Conference and Exposition, the bi-annual event for global marine researchers, technologists and engineers, students, and policymakers. It is being in India for the first time and coordinated by the Department of Ocean Engineering, IIT Madras, on behalf of the Institution of Electrical and Electronics Engineering Ocean Engineering Society (IEEE OES) and Marine Technology Society (MTS). The conference is being held in a hybrid model.
- Inspire-Innovate-Sustain' is the main theme of the conference. The delegates will be sharing their experiences on topics related to climate change, global warming, vagaries of weather, combating coastal erosion, marine pollution and microplastics through nearly 400 presentations.

28th DST-CII India-Singapore Technology Summit 2022 Held virtually

- Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), New Delhi in partnership with the Department of Science & Technology (DST), GoI hosted the 28th edition of the DST – CII Technology Summit on 23rd and 24th of February 2022. The Summit was held virtually. Singapore is the Partner Country for this year's Technology Summit. Technology Summit has been very crucial in providing significant opportunities to build and improve bilateral technology partnerships over a period of more than two decades. Dr Jitendra Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister of State, Ministry of Science and Technology, GoI.

- This Technology summit will provide the right platform to further improve the interaction; will help to explore more opportunities in the businesses and investment areas, and to upgrade the bilateral cooperation.
- It is expected that the summit is going to be a turning point by leading to interaction amongst a big and important group of technology experts, government leaders, elite scholars, industry stalwarts and start-ups from both countries.
- The focus of the summit would be making Smarter Cities, Space, Industry 4.0 and Advanced Engineering, Healthcare, Precision Medicine, etc.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

President Ram Nath Kovind to confer National Water Awards

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind has presented the 3rd National Water Awards in New Delhi. National Water Awards is given for exemplary work in the field of water resource management. The first National Water Award was launched in 2018, by the Jal Shakti Ministry. A total of 57 National Water Awards for 2022 have been conferred to states, organizations and others in 11 different categories.
- Uttar Pradesh has been awarded first prize, followed by Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.
- The 'Best District' awards for the north zone was bagged by Muzaffarnagar (Uttar Pradesh) and Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar (Punjab);

Deepika Padukone gets inaugural TIME100 Impact Award

- Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone has been named as one of the awardees of the TIME100 Impact Awards 2022. The actress has got featured on the inaugural TIME100 Impact Awards list for her work in mental health struggles and raising awareness, through her LiveLoveLaugh Foundation. The award recognizes global leaders who have gone above and beyond to move their industries and the world forward. Apart from Deepika, six other global leaders have also been honored with the award. The awards were presented at the Museum of the Future in Dubai.

Cochin International Airport bags 'Covid Champion Award'

- The Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) has won the 'Covid champion' award at Wings India 2022. The Covid champion award was received by CIAL Managing Director S Suhas IAS from Civil Aviation Minister, Jyotiraditya Scindia. CIAL has been awarded for the successful implementation of a meticulous project named 'Mission Safeguarding' during the pandemic time to ensure safe travel at Kochi Airport.
- The Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru won two the 'Best Airport' under the General Category and the 'Aviation Innovation' Award at the event.
- Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) won the 'Aviation Sustainability & Environment' award by Wings India Awards 2022 for its efficient green practices.

Abel prize for 2022 goes to American mathematician Dennis P. Sullivan

- The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters has awarded the Abel Prize for the year 2022 to American Mathematician Dennis Parnell Sullivan. The citation mentions that the

award has been given, "For his groundbreaking contributions to topology in its broadest sense, and in particular its algebraic, geometric and dynamical aspects."

- Topology is a field of mathematics which was born in the nineteenth century and has to do with properties of surfaces that do not change when they are deformed. Topologically, a circle and a square are the same; similarly, surfaces of a doughnut and a coffee mug with one handle are topologically equivalent, however, the surface of a sphere and a coffee mug are not equivalent.

The inspiring architect from Burkina Faso who lifted world's biggest prize

- Architect, educator and social activist Francis kéré has been announced as the 2022 laureate of the Pritzker architecture prize 2022, the award often referred to as architecture's highest honour. He was born in the small village of gando in Burkina Faso, kéré is the first black architect to win the coveted award.
- Established by the Hyatt Foundation in 1979, the Pritzker architecture prize is bestowed on architects whose built work demonstrates a combination of talent, vision, and commitment. In 2021, the award went to French architects Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal while in 2020 saw Shelley McNamara and Yvonne Farrell of Grafton architects were honoured.

Neeraj Chopra wins Sportsman of the Year (Track and Field) award at Sportstar Aces 2022

- Tokyo Olympic gold medallist, Neeraj Chopra claimed the coveted 'Sportstar of the Year (Male)' award at the 2022 Sportstar Aces Awards. Weightlifter Mirabai Chanu, who claimed the silver medal at the Tokyo Olympics, received the 'Sportstar of the Year (Female)' award. The Aces Awards celebrate the spirit of excellence in sport and hope to inspire our athletes and sportspersons to continue to strive to break new records and reach new pinnacles of glory.

India's Suresh Raina gets 'Sports Icon' award from Maldives govt

- Former India cricketer Suresh Raina has been awarded the prestigious 'Sports Icon' award at the Maldives Sports Awards 2022. The Maldives government felicitated Raina for his various achievements throughout his career. Raina was nominated alongside 16 international sportspersons, including former Real Madrid player Roberto Carlos, Jamaican Sprinter Asafa Powell, former Sri Lankan captain and cricketer Sanath Jayasuriya and Dutch football legend Edgar Davids among others.
- Raina is known for aiding the Indian cricket team to its World Cup glory back in 2011 and has also won the Indian Premier League(IPL) trophy four times with the Chennai Super Kings(CSK) franchise. He is the first Indian player to score 6000 as well as 8000 runs in a Twenty20 career and the first-ever cricketer to reach 5,000 runs in IPL. He also holds the record for scoring the most fifties in Champions League T20 history.

Poland's Karolina Bielawska wins Miss World 2021 crown

- Karolina Bielawska from Poland has won the title of Miss World 2021. She was crowned by 2019 Miss World Toni-Ann Singh of Jamaica. She beat the USA, Indonesia, Mexico, Northern Ireland and Cote d'Ivoire to clinch the coveted title. Indian-American Shree Saini from the United States bagged the first runner-up title, followed by Olivia Yace from Cote d'Ivoire.

- The 70th edition of the Miss World international beauty pageant was held in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Miss World 2019 Toni-Ann Singh performed 'The Prayer' during the 70th Miss World pageant to express solidarity with Ukraine amid the Russia-Ukraine crisis.
- Femina Miss India World 2020 Manasa Varanasi represented India at the Miss World 2021. Manasa Varanasi reached the Top 13 contestants but could not make it to the Top 6 finalists.

Narayan Pradhan Selected for GD Birla Award for Scientific Research

- Professor Narayan Pradhan has been selected for the 31st GD Birla Award for Scientific Research for his outstanding contribution in the field of material sciences. He has provided his expertise in crystal modulations to help design new shapes of these tiny lighting materials.
- Pradhan's research work focused on understanding the chemistry and physics of light-emitting semiconductor nanocrystals. His research group has significantly contributed to the surface construction of the newly emerged light-emitting halide perovskite nanocrystals, which are expected to be the next-generation lighting materials for photovoltaics and making LEDs. He has provided his expertise in crystal modulations to help design new shapes of these tiny lighting materials.

J&K Bank wins National Award for SHG

- Union Minister of Rural Development, Giriraj Singh honoured the Jammu and Kashmir Bank (J&K Bank) with the "National Award for Outstanding Performance for FY 2020-21" in recognition of its best performance in Self-Help Group Bank Linkage. Kirti Sharma, Zonal Head, Delhi, J & K Bank, accepted the award on the bank's behalf from Union Minister Giriraj Singh.
- The award was presented during the event organized as a part of International Women's Day (8th March 2022) at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, Delhi. In line with the Bank's commitment to extend banking facilities and financial services into the under-banked areas of Jammu and Kashmir, J&K Bank has commissioned 4 Business Units (BUs) in the region.

6 Indian Airports Won the ACI World's ASQ Awards 2021

- From India, six airports have found a place among the 'Best Airport by Size and Region', by the Airports Council International (ACI), in its Airport Service Quality (ASQ) survey for the year 2021. The airports have been adjudged among the Asia Pacific region in different categories based on annual passenger traffic. The ACI Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Awards takes into account 33 parameters related to passenger amenities to recognize airport excellence in customer experience.

Ispat Rajbhasha Award for 2018-19 and 2020-21

- National Mineral Development Corporation Ltd Country's largest Iron Ore producer, a CPSE under Ministry of Steel received 1st prize in the Ispat Rajbhasha Award for 2018-19 and 2020-21 and company also received the Ispat Rajbhasha Prerna Award for 2019-20. The award ceremony was held in the meeting of the Hindi Salahakar Committee of the Ministry of Steel held in Madurai on 3rd March 2022. The Union Minister of Steel, Shri Ram Chandra

Prasad Singh, presented the accolades to Shri Sumit Deb, Chairman and Managing Director, NMDC.

- NMDC, a Navratna PSU under the Ministry of Steel and one of the most profitable PSUs of the Government of India also it is an eco-friendly mining company and the largest producer of iron ore in India.

President Kovind Presents 29 Women With Nari Shakti Award on Women's Day

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind has conferred the 'Nari Shakti Puraskar' for the years 2020 and 2021, on the occasion of International Women's Day on March 08, 2022, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi. Overall 29 women have been conferred the award for the years 2020 and 2021 in recognition of their outstanding and exceptional work towards the empowerment of women, especially the vulnerable and marginalised. There were a total of 28 awards which included 14 awards each for the years 2020 and 2021. The award ceremony for the year 2020 could not be held in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

National ICT Award 2022: MoS for Education Annapurna Devi to felicitate school teachers today

- Smt Annpurna Devi, who is the union MoS for Education has given National ICT Awards to 49 teachers from all over the country. In her speech on this event, she told that the NEP-2020 emphasizes on the efficient use of technology in the field of teaching, which will remove the language barriers and increase access for DIVYANG students.
- The Information and Communication Technology [ICT] intervention under Samagra Shiksha also has inclusions to provide technological upgradations to schools and Teacher Education Institutes (TEIs).
- DIKSHA, school MOOCs on SWAYAM, PMeVIDYA, ePathshala, ICT Curriculum for Teachers and Students and National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement integrated teacher training programme through online mode are among the flagship projects to bridge the digital divide.
- The role of teachers in nation-building is appreciable and a Guru (teacher) is given the most respectful person in Indian Society.
- The recent budget announcements by the Govt. of India have provided the impetus to each and every digital education initiative.

Deepak Dhar First Indian To Get Boltzmann Medal

- Physicist Professor, Deepak Dhar has become the first Indian to be awarded the Boltzmann Medal. The Commission on Statistical Physics of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP) presents this medal once in three years for contributions in the field of statistical physics. The medal presentation ceremony will be held during the StatPhys28 conference scheduled to be held in Tokyo in August this year. He shares the medal with John J Hoefield of Princeton University.
- Prof Dhar is presently the emeritus faculty at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune.
- Prof Dhar was born in 1951 and completed his graduation in Science in 1970 from the University of Allahabad, then Masters's in Physics from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur in 1972.

RANKING

Virat Kohli tops celebrity brand rankings for fifth straight year

- According to the Celebrity Brand Valuation Report 2021 (7th Edition) titled “Digital Acceleration 2.0.” released by Duff & Phelps (Now Kroll), Indian Cricketer Virat Kohli was ranked as the most valued celebrity for the 5th consecutive time in 2021. The brand value of Virat Kohli has dropped from USD 237.7 million in 2020 to USD 185.7 million in 2021.
- Alia Bhatt has ranked 4th with a brand value of USD 68.1 million and has become the most valued female celebrity. She is the youngest celebrity among the top 10 and she is the most valued brand amongst female Bollywood actors.

Info - Hurun Global U40 Self-made Billionaires 2022

- Hurun Research Institute has released the Hurun Global Forty and Under Self-Made Billionaires 2022, which ranks the self-made billionaires in the world (in terms of US dollars) aged forty years and under. The Hurun Report 2022 lists 87 Self-Made Billionaires in the world aged 40 and under, which is up by 8 from last year.
- The USA leads the list with 37 self-made billionaires. China is second with 25 billionaires, followed by the United Kingdom (8), India (6) and Sweden (3) respectively in the top five.
- Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg is the world’s richest self-made billionaire aged 40 and under with a total wealth of \$76 billion. He is followed by ByteDance CEO Zhang Yiming, FTX CEO Sam Bankman-Fried, Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky, and Facebook co-founder Dustin Moskovitz, respectively.
- 20 of the Hurun Global U40 are born and brought up in countries different to where they live today. These immigrant billionaires chose the USA (8), UK (7) and UAE (2) to live in today, and came originally from Russia mostly, followed by China, India and Ireland.

India ranks 85th out of 180 countries in Corruption Perceptions Index

- Transparency International has released the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2021 in which India has been ranked at 85th spot (Score of 40). The ranking has been topped jointly by three countries- Denmark, Finland and New Zealand (Score of 88). This ranking measures how corrupt each country’s public sector is perceived to be. The results are given on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). 180 countries are ranked in it.
- Last year (for 2020) India was ranked 86th with a score of 40. This year’s Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) reveals that corruption levels are at a worldwide standstill. The global average remains unchanged for the tenth year in a row, at just 43 out of 100 points.

Gujarat again tops Export Preparedness Index of NITI Aayog

- Gujarat topped Niti Aayog’s Export Preparedness Index 2021, followed by Maharashtra and Karnataka in second and third place, respectively. Gujarat has topped the Niti Aayog rankings for the second year in a row “s Export Preparedness Index 2021, which is intended to assess states’ preparation in terms of export potential and performance.
- According to the government think tank, Gujarat was followed by Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, and

Telengana “s document. Union territories and states such as Lakshadweep, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Ladakh, and Meghalaya ranked worst.

- NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar, speaking at the launch of the study, claimed that India’s exports are growing at 36%, while global trade is growing at 30%. “
- After a long time, we will see India’s share of world goods trade increase from 1.6 to 1.7 percent,” he added, adding that sectors such as cars, electrical machinery, and iron and steel contributed to the expansion.

India ranks 51st in global list of annual rise in housing prices

- India has improved its rank by five spots to be placed at 51st position in the ‘Global House Price Index Q4 2021’ released by property consultant Knight Frank. India was placed at 56th position in Q4 of 2020. India witnessed a 2.1 per cent annual appreciation in housing price rates during the October-December quarter of 2021 against Q4 of 2020.
- Turkey saw the highest annual price growth rate by 59.6 per cent in Q4 2021.
- New Zealand (22.6 per cent), Czech Republic (22.1 per cent), Slovakia (22.1 per cent) and Australia (21.8 per cent) are among the top 5 countries respectively in the latest research report.
- Malaysia, Malta and Morocco markets recorded a decline in housing prices by 0.7 per cent, 3.1 per cent and 6.3 per cent, respectively, in the year 2021.

World Happiness Report: India among ‘unhappiest’ nations, languishes at 136th spot

- India has improved its rank by three spots to acquire 136th position in the United Nations’ World Happiness Report for the year 2022, which ranked 146 countries. In 2021, India’s rank was 139. Finland has topped the 2022 World Happiness Report, for the fifth continuous year. Afghanistan has been ranked as the unhappiest country in the world, at 146th position.

Reliance Retail Ranked 56th & Walmart Inc Tops the List

- According to the global consulting firm Deloitte’s report titled “Global Powers of Retailing 2022: Resilience Despite Challenges”, The Indian brand, Reliance Retail, ranked 56th on the Top 250 list based on the retail revenue growth for FY2020. Walmart Inc., an American multinational retail corporation, tops the list, followed by Amazon, Inc., Costco Wholesale Corporation, Schwarz Group, and The Home Depot, Inc.
- China’s JD.com, Inc tops the list of companies from APAC, ranking 9th amongst the list with total revenue of around USD 94.4 billion. Japan leads the APAC region with 29 companies on the list followed by China/Hong Kong SAR (14), South Korea (5) and Australia (4).
- The top 5 fastest-growing retailers in FY2019 were Coupang of South Korea a(1st), Reliance Retail Limited of India (2nd), Wayfair Inc of United States (3rd), Mobile World Investment Corporation of Vietnam (4th) and A101 Yeni Mağazacılık A.S from Turkey (5th).

Hurun Global Rich List 2022: Tesla's Elon Musk tops the Billionaires List

- SpaceX and Tesla founder Elon Musk has bagged the top position on the 2022 M3M Hurun Global Rich List, with a total net worth of \$205 billion. The 2022 M3M Hurun Global Rich List

is published by research and luxury publishing group Hurun India in association with realty firm M3M.

- Amazon.com Inc executive chairman Jeff Bezos ranked second with \$188 billion in net worth.
- With a net worth of \$153 billion, Bernard Arnault, the chief executive of LVMH Moët Hennessy – Louis Vuitton SE, the world's largest luxury-goods company, ranked third.
- From India, Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) Chairman Mukesh Ambani was the only Indian to feature in the top 10 list of 2022 Hurun Global Rich List' to emerge as India's as well as Asia's richest man. Ambani occupied the ninth rank globally with a net worth of \$103 billion.

India emerges as the largest importer of arms in 2017-21

- The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has released its latest report on Trends in International Arms Transfer, 2021. As per the report, India and Saudi Arabia emerged as the largest importers of arms between 2017-21. Both two countries accounted for 11% of all global arms sales. Egypt (5.7%), Australia (5.4%) and China (4.8%) were the next three largest importers respectively in the top 5.
- The report placed India at the top of the list. 85% of India's overall imports were from three countries. Russia (46%), France (27%), and the USA (12%) were the top three largest exporters of arms to India during the period.

RailTel Ranks 124 in 2022 Fortune India The Next 500 list

- RailTel Corporation of India Limited (RailTel), owned by the Indian Railways, Ministry of Railways, has ranked 124th in the 8th Edition Fortune India The Next 500 (2022 edition) of top midsize companies operating in India. It is the only Telecom Public Sector Undertakings (PSU) of the Government of India (GoI) on the list. It was ranked 197 in the 2021 list of top midsize companies operating in India.
- Apart from RailTel, IRCTC is the only Railway PSU featuring in the list, at the rank of 309. This Fortune India The Next 500 is published annually by Fortune India English Monthly magazine. RailTel is one of the largest neutral telecom infrastructure services providers in the country.

India ranks 2nd for global investment in digital shopping

- According to the London & Partners analysis of Dealroom. co-investment data, India is the second-largest global venture capital investment hub for digital shopping companies, growing by a whopping 175% from \$8 billion in 2020 to \$22 billion in 2021. On a global scale, India came in second to the US last year, which attracted \$51 billion in investment, followed by China at third with \$14 billion and the UK at fourth with \$7 billion.
- Within India, Bengaluru comes out on top globally with \$14 billion worth of Venture Capital (VC) investments in digital shopping in 2021, followed by Gurugram at No. 7 with \$4 billion and Mumbai at No. 10 with \$3 billion.

Andhra Pradesh retains top rank in Skoch State of Governance ranking in 2021

- Andhra Pradesh has retained its number one spot in the SKOCH State of Governance rankings for the second consecutive year. According to a release, the State retained the first

rank for the second consecutive year. In 2020 too, Andhra Pradesh bagged top rank in governance. Andhra Pradesh was ranked at second position in 2018 and later it slipped to 4th position in 2019, according to Skoch.

- The second rank was bagged by West Bengal and Odisha was ranked 3, Gujarat was ranked 4 and Maharashtra was ranked 5. Neighbouring Telangana was ranked 6.
- The SKOCH Group has released the SKOCH Governance Report Card for 2021 in New Delhi, ranking the states according to their performance in various projects at state, district, and Email Article Print Article municipal levels.

India ranked 'partly free' again in Freedom House report

- For the second consecutive year, India has been termed as 'partly free' country in terms of democracy and free society, according to the annual report. The report titled "Freedom in the World 2022 – The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule" by Freedom House, a US-based NGO that 'assesses political rights and civil liberties. India scored 66 out of 100 in 2022. The country had scored 67 in 2021. India was a free country till 2020 when its score was 71.
- India scored a mere 49, the same score as that of Uganda. Here too, the score has come down. The reasons are – the increasing internet shutdowns by governments, low internet penetration and poor infrastructure.
- India's freedom scores are similar to that of Bolivia, Hungary and Albania. The countries that have scored the worst include South Sudan, Syria, Tibet, Turkmenistan, Eritrea and North Korea.
- Sixty-nine countries are currently not free worldwide. This makes the situation worse than in 1973 when only 63 countries were not free.

Floods, droughts making India, Pak most vulnerable to climate change: IPCC report

- Extreme climatic conditions are threatening the food security in South Asia with escalated floods and droughts making India and Pakistan the most vulnerable to climate change, cautioned the latest IPCC report released.
- If emissions are not dramatically reduced, 'wet bulb' temperatures in India, which measure both heat and humidity, will exceed 31 degrees Celsius, which is fatal for humans, according to the paper. Despite the fact that India is one of the South Asian countries with the greatest urban adaptation measures, these plans are hampered by inequitable funding and "priority," with larger cities receiving more attention.

India ranks 3rd in billionaire population globally: Knight Frank

- India is ranked 3rd in terms of most number of billionaires' population globally in 2021, as per Knight Frank's latest edition of The Wealth Report 2022. The number of ultra-high-net-worth-individuals (UHNWIs) in India increased by 11% YoY in 2021 to 145 billionaires, the highest percentage growth in the Asia Pacific (APAC) region. UHNWIs are individuals with net assets of US\$ 30m or more (Rs 226 crore).
- The list has been topped by the United States (748) and China (554) respectively.
- Bengaluru recorded the highest growth in the number of UHNWIs in 2021 at 17.1% to 352 billionaires. It was followed by Delhi (12.4% to 210) and Mumbai (9% to 1596) in 2021.

Niti Aayog developing National Gender Index

- NITI Aayog is in the process to develop a National Gender Index. The objective of the National Gender Index is to measure the progress and identify the persisting gaps in gender equality to make informed policy decisions. It will serve as a tool to map the progress of India's States and UTs on defined gender metrics and build the foundation for positive change. The information was released in the Annual Report 2021-22 of NITI Aayog.
- Niti Aayog has also developed a draft State Energy and Climate Index to assess the performance of states on indicators such as discoms' viability and competition; access, affordability and reliability of energy; clean energy initiatives; energy efficiency; generation capacity; and environmental sustainability and new initiatives. The index will help states to efficiently manage their energy resources and provide better access to energy to the people.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

NITI Aayog and FAO Launched A Book "Indian Agriculture towards 2030"

- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoA&FW), Narendra Singh Tomar has released a book titled "Indian Agriculture towards 2030: Pathways for Enhancing Farmers' Income, Nutritional Security and Sustainable Food and Farm Systems", at an event organized by NITI Aayog and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.
- Indian Agriculture towards 2030 captures the outcomes of the deliberative process of national dialogue by NITI Aayog and the Ministries of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare; and Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, and facilitated by FAO since 2019.

Granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi inaugurates 'Modi Story'

- The granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi 'Sumitra Gandhi Kulkarni' has inaugurated the web portal 'Modi Story'. The Modi story website is a volunteer-driven initiative which aims to bring together "inspiring" stories related to Prime Minister Narendra Modi from those who have interacted with him during his life journey over the decades. The portal can be accessed at modistory.in
- Any person who has closely witnessed the Prime Minister's life can submit write-ups, audio or visual stories of any such experience or anecdote along with photos with PM Modi, letters or personal memorabilia associated with him. The website has several stories shared by the people who crossed paths with the Prime Minister at some point in his life.

Book 'The Little Book of Joy' authored by Dalai Lama & Desmond Tutu

- A picture book edition co-authored by Nobel Peace Prize winners 14th Dalai Lama (Tenzin Gyatso) & Archbishop Desmond Tutu, titled "The Little Book of Joy" will be released in September 2022. The illustrations provided by artist Rafael López and Rachel Neumann & Douglas Abrams collaborated on the text. This book focuses on the meaning of true happiness, which is not in the materialistic world but lies in the nature of human beings.
- In 2016, they also co-authored the book titled "The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World", which became a bestseller & sold more than 1 million copies and translated into more than 40 languages.

Cricketing legend G.R. Vishwanath launches his autobiography titled 'Wrist Assured'

- Former Indian cricket captain Gundappa Ranganatha Vishwanath has penned his autobiography titled "Wrist Assured: An Autobiography", co-authored by senior journalist R Kaushik. The book traces the cricketing journey of Gundappa Vishwanath who played Test Cricket for India between 1969 and 1986, making 91 appearances and scoring more than 6000 runs.
- Former Indian cricketers Kapil Dev and Sunil Gavaskar released the book at the ceremony held on the first day of the 2nd day/night Test between India and Sri Lanka in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

Book "More than Just Surgery: Life Lessons Beyond the OT" authored by Dr Tehemton Erach Udwadia

- Padma Awardee Dr Tehemton Erach Udwadia has authored a new book titled "More than Just Surgery: Life Lessons Beyond the OT", a personal account of people, incidents, mentors, failures, and absurdities against the backdrop of surgery. The book maps the journey of Dr Tehemton Erach Udwadia from his student years through residency, research, surgical practice and surgical teaching as a means of sharing the lessons he learned.
- Dr Tehemton Erach Udwadia, who hails from Mumbai, is a general and gastrointestinal surgeon. He was the first surgeon in India to introduce laparoscopy in surgery in 1972 and he was the first to perform laparoscopic surgery in the developing world in 1990. He is widely known as the 'Father of laparoscopy in India'.
- The government of India honoured him with the Padma Shri in 2006 for Medicine and Padma Bhushan in 2017 for Medicine. He also received the Order of the British Empire (OBE) from Queen Elizabeth II in 2006.

Book 'Road to 1000' released by Sportstar and The Hindu group

- Sportstar and The Hindu group released a coffee-table book, 'Road to 1000', at the 2022 Sportstar Aces Awards at The Taj Mahal Palace hotel. The book is a 520-page, special collection with 1000 pictures to commemorate Indian cricket's journey. 'Road to 1000' was released by former India cricketers Sunil Gavaskar, Syed Kirmani, Dilip Vengsarkar, Mohammad Azharuddin, Chandrakant Pandit and Nilesch Kulkarni here.
- On February 6, India played its 1,000th ODI against the West Indies in Ahmedabad, becoming the first team to record the feat. India's World Cup triumphs in 1983 and 2011, under Kapil Dev and M. S. Dhoni respectively, remain the major highlights in Indian ODI history. Sportstar reporters and photographers travelled the world to cover the Indian cricket team in the 1980s and 1990s. This is the best tribute to Indian cricket.

Sahitya Akademi publishes 'Monsoon', a book-length poem by Indian poet and diplomat Abhay K

- Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters has published a book-length poem 'Monsoon' by Indian poet-diplomat Abhay K. Monsoon is a poem of 150 stanzas of 4 lines each that commence its journey in Madagascar and follows the path of the monsoon invoking the rich flora and fauna, languages, cuisine, music, monuments, landscapes, traditions, myths and legends of the places through which monsoon travels and acts as a

messenger to carry the poet's message from Madagascar to his beloved in Srinagar in the Himalayas.

- Sahitya Akademi was established on 12th March in 1954. Its logo was designed by Satyajit Ray himself and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was its first President. The first book published by the Academy was Bhagwan Buddha by D.D. Koshambi in 1956. It was a translation from Marathi into Hindi.

'Modi @ 20': Book Capturing 20 Years Of PM's Political Life To Launch In April

- The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has announced to release a book on the life of Prime Minister Narendra Modi titled Modi@20: Dreams Meet Delivery. It is set to hit stands in April 2022. The book is a compilation of pieces written by intellectuals & experts and has been edited & compiled by BlueKraft Digital Foundation.
- The book captures the political life of PM Modi's past 20 years, ranging from his tenure as Gujarat CM to Prime Minister of India and has been compiled by eminent intellectuals and personalities from industry and politics.
- Those who have contributed to the book include Sudha Murty, Sadhguru, Nandan Nilekani, Home Minister Amit Shah, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, late legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, industrialist Uday Kotak, actor Anupam Kher, badminton star PV Sindhu and former principal secretary to PM Nripendra Mishra.

Geetanjali Shree's Tomb of Sand becomes first Hindi novel nominated for International Booker Prize

- Author Geetanjali Shree's translated Hindi novel "Tomb of Sand" is among 13 books long-listed for the International Booker Prize. It is the first Hindi language work of fiction to make it to the long list of the prestigious literary prize. The book was originally published as 'Ret Samadhi' and translated into English by Daisy Rockwell. It will compete for the GBP 50,000 prize, which is split evenly between the author and translator.

Book "Role of Labour in India's Development" launched by Bhupender Yadav

- Minister of Labour and Employment and MoEFCC, Bhupender Yadav has launched a book titled "Role of Labour in India's Development". V V Giri National Labour Institute has published the book. The publishing of the book is part of the 'Iconic Week' celebrations of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.
- 'Role of Labour in India's Development' book has 12 articles outlining the contribution of labour in the development journey of India. These articles are written by experts in this field and the book is published by V V Giri National Labour Institute. V V Giri National Labour Institute is an autonomous body of the Ministry of Labour and Employment. It was established in 1974 as a premier institute of Labour research, training and education. Dr H. Srinivas is the current Director General of the institution.

Book "The Queen Of Indian Pop: The Authorised Biography released

- The biography of pop icon Usha Uthup titled "The Queen of Indian Pop: The Authorised Biography of Usha Uthup" was released. The book was originally written in Hindi titled "Ullas Ki Naav" by author Vikas Kumar Jha. "The Queen of Indian Pop: The Authorised

Biography of Usha Uthup” is the English translation of the book, translated by the writer’s daughter Srishti Jha. The book is published by Penguin Random House India (PRHI).

- The 74-year-old pop icon, who completed 50 years as a professional singer in 2020, is widely known for evergreen hits such as “Hari Om Hari”, “Rambha Ho” and “Jeete Hain Shaan Se”. She has sung in several Indian and foreign languages including Bengali, Hindi, English, German, Italian and Sinhalese.

Book ‘The Blue Book’ authored by Amitava Kumar

- Indian writer and journalist, Amitava Kumar has come out with a new book titled ‘The Blue Book: A Writer’s Journal’. The book has been published by HarperCollins India. The Blue Book is the outcome of the diary-keeping by the author during the time of lockdown due to pandemics. The author has used watercolour drawings as well as words to depict the experience, both individual and collective, of the pandemic.
- The Blue Book is a rare species of magical realism where words become paintings, and paintings turn into beguiling (charming) literary anthropology of ‘reality and surreality’ that leaves us stunned. Known for his visceral post-colonial novels of exile and homelessness with shape-shifting itinerant memories of cities, places and people, Kumar uses the alchemical power of the drawings in his genre-defying diary to evoke a world that is together redemptive and regressive in the most frightening times of a global pandemic.

Bhajan Samrat Anup Jalota released a book

- Bhajan Samrat Anup Jalota has released the book “Udaan Ek Majdoor Bachhe Ki” by Captain AD Manek in a glittering program organized by Shailesh B Tiwari of P Club Education Pvt Ltd in Mumbai. The author of this book is Mithilesh Tiwari. This book is about the life journey of Captain AD Manek, how he travelled from zero to pinnacle in his career graph.
- The family of Captain AD Manek is also known as the Flying Family of India. His wife is a hobby flyer while his two sons are professional pilots. One daughter-in-law is the air hostess and the other daughter-in-law is the aircraft dispatcher. All 6 members of this family are serving in the Indian Aviation Industry. They also help aspiring pilots financially. Her students include India’s first woman helicopter pilot Captain Aruna Dukhande and India’s youngest commercial pilot Ms. Maitri Patel (19 years) and India’s first youngest glider pilot Richa Waiker (15 years old).

Rahul Gandhi Releases CM Stalin's Autobiography 'Ungalil Oruvan', First Volume Traces Early Years

- Congress leader Rahul Gandhi launched the first volume of Tamil Nadu chief minister MK Stalin’s autobiography Ungalil Oruvan (One Among You) in Chennai. The first part of the autobiography contains his early life experiences. In it, he traces his school and college days, adolescence, early political contributions, marital life and the MISA struggle, recalling 23 years up to 1976.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

Bank of India allotted shares in NARCL under preferential allotment

- On March 21, the Bank of India (BoI) announced a Rs 109 crore investment in National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd. (NARCL). In a regulatory statement, the bank stated, "We thus announce that on March 21, 2022, the bank invested Rs 108.81 crore in National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd (NARCL) under preferential share issue."
- As of March 21, 2022, the bank's stake in NARCL will be nine per cent. NARCL is a government-backed asset reconstruction firm that was founded in July 2021.
- On the BSE, BoI shares closed at Rs 47.50 per share, down 1.14 per cent from the previous close.

SIDBI inks MoU with Meghalaya govt for MSME ecosystem to grow

- The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), a financial institution for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), has announced that it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Meghalaya's Meghalaya Infrastructure Development and Finance Corporation Ltd. [MiDFC] to develop the state's MSME ecosystem.
- SIDBI and the Government of Meghalaya will collaborate closely to support the growth of the MSME ecosystem in the state, according to the MoU.
- Among the MoU's general aims are the growth of entrepreneurship in the state, the establishment of MSME clusters, and the capacity building of NGOs, development organisations, and MSMEs. Support and promote replicable livelihood projects that are compatible with the State's priorities.
- Expanding digital products for the state's SMEs, mapping state-specific livelihood opportunities with the help of expert consultants SIDBI's Promotional and Developmental Initiatives in the State are being expanded.

PVR, INOX announce merger, combined entity to be named PVR INOX Limited

- Multiplex companies INOX Leisure Ltd and PVR Ltd have announced the merger of their two companies. Inox will have a 16.66% stake in the new firm and PVR will have a 10.62% stake. After the formalities of the merger, the company will be known as PVR Inox Limited. Ajay Bijli will be Managing Director of PVR Inox Limited, Sanjeev Kumar will be executive director and Pavan Kumar Jain will be non-executive chairman of the consolidated board.
- The merger is subject to approval by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), stock exchanges, and other regulatory approvals as required. Merger to bring together two of India's best cinema brands to deliver an unparalleled consumer experience with a network of 1,546 screens across 341 properties in 109 cities.

Government approves PMC Bank merger with Unity Small Finance Bank

- The Government of India has sanctioned and notified the Scheme for the amalgamation of the Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank Ltd with Unity Small Finance Bank Ltd. This means that from January 25, 2022 all the branches of the PMC Bank will function as branches of Unity Small Finance Bank Ltd. Unity Small Finance Bank Limited is promoted by

Centrum Financial Services Limited along with Resilient Innovation Private Limited. Both the promoters have infused capital of Rs 1105.10 crore in the bank.

- After the amalgamation of PMC Bank with Unity SFB, Unity SFB will pay the customers of PMC Bank the amount it receives from DICGC (maximum up to amount insured by DICGC i.e Rs 5 Lakh) in instalments of 10 years. Section 45 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 empowers the Reserve Bank of India to prepare a scheme of reconstruction or amalgamation of banking companies (which include co-operative banks).

IMF cuts India's GDP forecast for FY22 to 9% from 9.5%

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has cut India's economic growth forecast for the current fiscal 2021-22 (FY22) to 9 per cent, in its latest world economic outlook report. Earlier this was estimated at 9.5%. IMF has projected the growth forecast for India in 2022-23 (FY23) at 7.1% IMF has projected the global growth rate in 2022 to 4.4%, and in 2023 to 3.8%.
- According to the IMF, India's prospects for 2023 are marked up on expected improvements to credit growth and, subsequently, investment and consumption, building on the better-than-anticipated performance of the financial sector. A revised assumption removing the Build Back Better fiscal policy package from the baseline, earlier withdrawal of monetary accommodation, and continued supply shortages produced a downward 1.2 percentage-point revision for the United States.

FinMapp Gets Licence To Sell NPS, Insurance From PFRDA And Irdai

- FinMapp, a financial services firm, announced that it has been granted a licence under the National Pension Scheme by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA). It has also obtained a registration certificate as a corporate agent from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai).
- On its app, the organisation offers a variety of financial goods, from mutual funds to bank accounts. "A one-stop marketplace for all financial products made digitally available by prominent banks, NBFCs, insurance companies, mutual funds institutions, and capital markets," according to the company."
- The licences would allow FinMapp to provide insurance and NPS products to its clients as a verified seller, allowing the company to extend its customer base, according to the company's statement.
- In the next months, the company will make NPS available as an investment tool on its app.

ICICI Bank partners with Chennai Super Kings, launches co-branded credit card

- ICICI Bank announced that it has partnered with Chennai Super Kings (CSK), one of India's most successful cricket teams, to introduce a co-branded credit card. The card, dubbed the 'Chennai Super Kings ICICI Bank Credit Card,' has been expressly developed with a range of exclusive perks for the iconic team's millions of cricket fans.
- The new card is part of a limited-edition line of co-branded credit cards offered by the Bank to allow sports fans to interact with their favourite teams while also taking advantage of credit card features.

- The new card is another addition to an exclusive set of co-branded credit cards offered by the Bank to enable sports enthusiasts to connect with their favourite teams as well as avail benefits of a credit card.
- ICICI Bank and Manchester United, a professional football club in England, launched a co-branded credit card four years ago.

HDFC Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Axis Bank acquire 7.84% stake each in ONDC

- HDFC Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, and Axis Bank have each purchased a 7.84 percent stake in ONDC, an open public digital infrastructure framework business.
- Each of the three banks has put in Rs 10 crore in the company.
- In a regulatory statement on Wednesday, HDFC Bank said it now owns 7.84 percent of ONDC's equity share capital after allotting 10 lakh equity shares for Rs 10 crore.
- "Kotak Mahindra Bank has subscribed to 10,00,000 equity shares of Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) for Rs 10 crore, translating into an equity shareholding of 7.84 percent in ONDC as of March 22,," according to another filing.
- Axis Bank said in a separate filing that ONDC allotted 10,00,000 equity shares with a face value of Rs 100 apiece for a consideration of Rs 10 crore on March 22.
- The bank now owns 7.84 percent of ONDC following the allotment.
- The lenders stated that their investment in ONDC is intended to assist in the development and transformation of the Indian digital commerce ecosystem.

Fitch cuts FY23 growth forecast to 8.5%, cites soaring energy prices

- Fitch Ratings has slashed India's GDP growth forecast for the fiscal FY 2022-2023 to 8.5 per cent in its Global economic Outlook-March 2022. Earlier this rate was estimated at 10.3%. The downwards projection is due to sharply higher energy prices because of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. The Rating agency Fitch has revised upwards the GDP growth forecast for the current fiscal FY 2021-2022, by 0.6 percentage points to 8.7 percent.
- With the Omicron wave subsiding quickly, containment measures have been scaled back, setting the stage for a pick-up in GDP growth momentum in the June quarter this year.

PhonePe acquires freelance entrepreneur network GigIndia to strengthen enterprise offerings

- PhonePe, a digital payments and financial services company, has acquired GigIndia, a network for independent micro-entrepreneurs based in Pune. PhonePe will be able to integrate 1.5 million entrepreneurs and over 100 businesses as customers, in addition to its own employees, as a result of the acquisition. PhonePe will use GigIndia's network of freelancing microentrepreneurs to assist corporations and businesses in expanding their customer bases and distribution channels.
- PhonePe's key services are payments and financial services, and the Walmart-owned company has a 47 percent share of monthly Unified Payments Interface (UPI) volumes.
- UPI is the platform's primary client acquisition channel, allowing it to cross-sell revenue-generating items such as mutual funds, gold, and insurance to customers while also facilitating bill payments.
- PhonePe's acquisition of GigIndia, on the other hand, is a departure from the firm's main operations, as it will allow the company to use GigIndia's network of freelance

microentrepreneurs to assist corporates and companies in acquiring more clients and scaling up their distribution channels.

UPI lite announced for offline transactions

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) designed the “UPI Lite – On-Device wallet” (“UPI Lite”) functionality for UPI users for small value transactions. About 75% of the total volume of retail transactions (including cash) in India are below Rs 100 transaction value. Further, 50% of the total UPI transactions are having a transaction value of up to Rs 200/-. To easily process such small value transactions, NPCI has launched this facility of “UPI Lite”.
- UPI Lite will process transactions in near offline mode i.e. debit offline and credit online, and at a later point, UPI Lite will process transactions in complete offline mode i.e. debit and credit both offline.
- The upper limit of a UPI Lite payment transaction shall be Rs. 200. The total limit of UPI Lite balance for an “On-device wallet” shall be Rs. 2,000 at any point of time.
- Replenishment of funds in UPI Lite shall only be allowed in online mode with additional factor authentication (AFA) or using UPI AutoPay which has been registered by the User in online mode with AFA.

BPCL becomes the first company to offer digital payment to non-internet users

- Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), a ‘Maharatna’ and Fortune Global 500 company, has teamed up with UltraCash Technologies Pvt. Ltd. to provide BharatGas customers with a voice-based digital payment option for booking LPG cylinders. Customers who do not have access to a smartphone or the internet can use this feature to book cylinders and pay via the ‘UPI 123PAY’ system. Customers can call the common number 080 4516 3554 from a non-internet phone to reserve a BharatGas cylinder for themselves or for friends in simple steps and in a secure manner thanks to the collaboration with Ultra Cash.
- Around 4 crore BharatGas customers in rural India will benefit from the implementation of this option.
- After the RBI Governor announced the launch of UPI 123PAY last week, BPCL is the first company in India to offer their service to consumers. UltraCash is a mobile payment app created by UltraCash Technologies Pvt Ltd and approved by India’s National Payment Corporation (NPCI).

CAMS launches central record keeping agency under NPS

- The go-live and opening of the Central Record Keeping Agency (CRA) under the National Pension System has been announced by Computer Age Management Services Limited (CAMS), India’s largest registrant and transfer agent of mutual funds (a SEBI regulated business). CAMS was chosen as a CRA by the sector regulator, the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), to broaden the services available to NPS subscribers and the ecosystem.
- The National Pension Scheme (NPS), a voluntary retirement scheme created and administered by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), was launched by the Central Government on January 1, 2004 to assist in the building of a retirement corpus.

Mahila Money and Visa Team Up to support women entrepreneurs with Mahila Money Prepaid Card

- The digital payments network Mahila Money, Visa, and Transcorp Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPI) have launched Mahila Money Prepaid Card to help women entrepreneurs easily collect payments, loans and get incentives for transactions. The prepaid card has been designed keeping in mind the needs of digital entrepreneurs, small business owners and women.
- The card is for community members who want the convenience of a bank account with added flexibility, safety and convenience. This collaboration will pave the way to economic freedom and financial inclusion for millions of women entrepreneurs.

SBI to set up Innovation, Incubation and Acceleration Centre

- The State Bank of India (SBI) will set up an Innovation, Incubation, and Acceleration Centre (IIAC) at Hyderabad, Telangana which will be operational in six to nine months of on-boarding a consultant. This Centre will be the bank's in-house capability to enhance its current performance and drive higher top-line growth through innovation. It will help the bank to develop a set of technologies, knowledge, and skills for the introduction of new products and services. It will act as a central body to govern and drive fin-tech partnerships and implement change across the bank.

IIT Madras Incubation Cell and RBI Innovation Hub come together to nurture financial inclusion

- IIT Madras Incubation Cell (IITMIC) and RBI Innovation Hub (RBIH), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India, inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate in establishing the ecosystem needed to support and expand fintech businesses in India. The two organisations will collaborate to give early-stage entrepreneurs with unique and disruptive ideas with incubation support and speed their scale-up journey.
- "India's startup ecosystem contributes significantly to the country's economic prosperity." We seek to create a robust ecosystem conducive to the growth of fintech start-ups in the country through such incubation collaborations," Rajesh Bansal, CEO of RBI Innovation Hub (RBIH), said.
- RBIH will consider select startups incubated at IITM Incubation Cell for co-incubation from time to time, and they will receive strategic and operational guidance, as well as training and mentoring sessions from RBIH leadership and domain experts, market access, and connections to a larger ecosystem of startups, vendors, investors, and other resources.

ICICI Bank launches co-branded credit cards with Emirates Skywards

- In collaboration with Emirates Skywards, the loyalty programme of Emirates and flydubai, ICICI Bank created the 'Emirates Skywards ICICI Bank Credit Card'. Customers can earn reward points – known as Skywards Miles – on travel, lifestyle, and everyday purchases with the collection of cards. These cards, according to the private sector lender, offer best-in-class rewards and advantages and are a perfect fit for affluent consumers who travel abroad frequently.

- ICICI Bank is the first Indian bank to join together with Emirates Skywards to offer the exclusive credit card programme in India.
- The Emirates Skywards ICICI Bank Emerald Credit Card, Emirates Skywards ICICI Bank Sapphire Credit Card, and Emirates Skywards ICICI Bank Rubyx Credit Card are all Visa-powered co-branded credit cards.

Moody's lowers India's GDP growth forecast for 2022 from 9.5% to 9.1%

- Rating agency Moody's has revised downwards the economic growth forecast of India by 40 basis points to 9.1 per cent in the Calendar Year 2022 (CY2022), due to adverse effects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on the global economy. Earlier in February 2022, Moody's estimated India's GDP in CY2022 to 9.5 percent. Moody's has projected India's GDP growth forecast for the Calendar Year (CY) 2023 at 5.4 percent.
- Moody's, in a statement, said India is particularly vulnerable to high oil prices given that it is a large importer of crude oil. Because the country is a surplus producer of grain, agricultural exports will benefit in the short term from high prevailing prices.

HSBC Mutual Fund launches HSBC CRISIL IBX 50:50 Gilt Plus SDL Apr 2028 Index Fund (HGSF)

- The HSBC CRISIL IBX 50:50 Gilt Plus SDL Apr 2028 Index Fund (HGSF), an open-ended Target Maturity Index Fund that tracks the CRISIL IBX 50:50 Gilt Plus SDL Index – April 2028, has been introduced by HSBC Mutual Fund. According to the fund house, the programme has a high interest rate risk and a low credit risk.
- According to the press release, HGSF intends to provide improved risk-adjusted performance and liquidity by combining quality debt papers.
- The fund will be managed by Kapil Punjabi, SVP – Fund Manager Fixed Income, and will be benchmarked against the CRISIL IBX 50:50 Gilt Plus SDL Index – April 2028. The fund intends to concentrate on the six-year target maturity sector in order to profit from the current volatile long-term securities outlook.
- The fund will invest in government securities, which will be included in the GSec portion of the CRISIL IBX 50:50 Gilt Plus SDL Index – April 2028, as well as State Development Loans securities, which will be included in the SDL portion of the CRISIL IBX 50:50 Gilt Plus SDL Index – April 2028.

Retail inflation hits 8-month high in February, inches up to 6.07%

- In February, India's retail inflation rate climbed to an eight-month high, maintaining above the central bank's comfort level of 6% for the second month in a row, while wholesale price inflation continued to be in double digits for continuous eleventh month in a row. With mounting threats to growth in Asia's third-largest economy, this might make inflationary management difficult. The consumer price index (CPI)-based inflation rate increased to 6.07 percent in February from 6.01 percent the previous month, according to data issued by the statistics department, with food and beverages, apparel and footwear, and fuel and light groups driving the increase.
- Food and beverage inflation reached a 15-month high of 5.85 per cent, owing to significant inflation in vegetables and edible oils.

- The wholesale pricing index (WPI)-based inflation rate climbed to 13.11 per cent in February after falling for two months, according to data issued by the industry department.

Razorpay acquires fifth payments tech startup IZealiant Technologies

- Razorpay, a fintech unicorn, announced the purchase of IZealiant Technologies, a renowned Fintech business that provides banks with payments technology solutions, for an undisclosed sum. IZealiant is a Pune-based startup that offers banks and financial institutions mobile-first, API-enabled, and cloud-ready payment processing tools.
- Razorpay's Banking Solutions Arm will be strengthened by the purchase of IZealiant, which will develop revolutionary payment banking solutions for partner banks, allowing businesses and their end-customers to enjoy a faster, more seamless, and secure payment experience.
- Razorpay's Banking team has worked on a number of important projects in India, including Razorpay TokenHQ, India's first multi-network RBI compliant card tokenization solution, and MandateHQ, an API-based, plug-and-play recurring payments interface for banks.
- "We are pleased to have the IZealiant team join the Razorpay family today," said Harshil Mathur, CEO and Co-founder of Razorpay, in response to the purchase. I am certain that the combined strength of two technological firms will provide our partner banks with the required assistance in developing next-generation solutions and changing market dynamics in the new normal."

IIFL Securities launches primary markets investment

- IIFL Securities Limited (Formerly India Infoline Limited) launched 'OneUp', India's first primary markets investment platform. Through this platform, investment can be made in initial public offerings (IPOs), non-convertible debentures (NCDs) and sovereign gold bonds (SGBs), among others. On the OneUp platform, the IPO applications are accepted 24x7 and up to three days before the IPO bidding opens.
- It enables buyers to analyze, transact and handle new investment alternatives, all on one single platform. Another unique feature of the platform is that it allows investors to place bids for others as well, be it, friends or family members.
- India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL) has raised Rs 1,500 crore in debt to promote long-term infrastructure finance in India. It raised the funds through private placement of Non-Convertible Debt Securities for Rs 500 crore and it has a greenshoe option of Rs 1,000 crore. The issue was oversubscribed 6 times.

L&T launches SuFin, a B2B E-Commerce platform for MSMEs

- Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has established the L&T-SuFin e-commerce platform. It is the country's first complete e-commerce platform for industrial products and services sold to other businesses. The platform's transaction cost is roughly 1.5 per cent. Through its B2B e-commerce platform, the company aimed to empower businesses, particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises, by allowing them to obtain industrial items digitally and cost-effectively across India.
- "With digital technology, L&T SuFin is positioned to alter the Indian business landscape, resulting in the formalisation of traditional supply chains and a win-win situation for suppliers and buyers," the company said in a statement.

- All forms of construction and industrial products will be available on the platform. At the same time, logistics and finance would be assisted in an effort to sell industrial items to MSMEs across the country, according to L&T's Business Head Bhadresh Pathak.

Morgan Stanley cuts India's GDP growth forecast to 7.9% for FY23

- Rating Agency Morgan Stanley has projected India's GDP growth forecast for 2022-23 (FY23) at 7.9%. This is 50 bps less than its earlier projection due to the impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on oil prices. Furthermore, Stanley raised the country's retail inflation estimate to 6%, meanwhile, current account deficits are seen to widen by 3% of GDP.
- India is affected through three key channels — higher prices for oil and other commodities; trade, and tighter financial conditions, influencing business/investment sentiment. Analysts at the brokerage also raised their inflation forecast to 6 per cent – the upper end of the tolerance band for the RBI – and flagged stagflation risks because of the ongoing events.

Provident fund interest rate for FY22 lowered to four-decade low of 8.1%

- The retirement fund body, Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has slashed the interest rate on provident fund deposits to 8.10% for 2021-22. This rate is 0.4% lower than the previous year. The interest rate on PF deposits was 8.5% in 2020-21 and 2019-20.
- This is the lowest in more than four decades. EPFO had credited 8.0% as interest rate in 1977-78. Since then, it has been either 8.25% or more.
- The interest rate of 8.1% has been declared based on EPFO's estimated income for the year at Rs 76,768 crore and this will leave the retirement fund body with a surplus of Rs 450 crore.
- The move is expected to hit the earnings of over sixty million EPFO subscribers.

NaBFID to be Regulated as All India Financial Institution under RBI Act

- Reserve Bank of India has announced that National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) will be regulated and supervised by it as an All India Financial Institution (AIFI) under the RBI Act, 1934. NaBFID will be regulated and supervised by RBI as an AIFI under Sections 45L and 45N of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.
- Presently RBI has four AIFIs under it namely EXIM Bank, NABARD, NHB and SIDBI. NaBFID will be the fifth AIFI under RBI. NaBFID has been set up as a Development Financial Institution (DFI) to support the development of long-term infrastructure financing in India.

Star Health introduces women-centric medical insurance policy

- Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Limited, a health insurance company launched "Star Women Care Insurance Policy". It is a woman-centric comprehensive health cover specially designed to protect the healthcare needs of women at every stage of their lives. The policy can be purchased through premiums that can be paid in quarterly or half-yearly instalments, and this policy can also be taken for 1 year, 2 year or 3-year terms.
- The Star Women Care Insurance Policy is available as both an individual policy and a floater policy. Individual Sum – Insured only for females aged between 18 years and 75 years. Floater Sum Insured – Adult 18 years to 75 years with at least one female in the family along with the spouse and dependent children.

Crisil retains GDP growth forecast at 7.8 per cent for 2022-23

- Domestic rating agency CRISIL retained its real GDP growth forecast at 7.8% for the fiscal year 2023, as compared with the 8.5% projected in the Economic Survey. FM Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget proposals focused on loosening the purse strings by boosting capital expenditure and going slow on fiscal consolidation are aimed in the right direction. The agency expects the nominal growth to come at 12-13%, higher than the 11.1% Budget Estimate, and the headline inflation to average 5.2%.

HDFC MF launches financial empowerment initiative for women

- HDFC Mutual Fund has launched a women-led financial empowerment initiative 'LaxmiForLaxmi' which will connect women investors to a woman financial expert near them through a unique missed call service. The female financial expert will guide and address the queries of the woman investor. Through this initiative, HDFC Mutual Fund aims to support women investors in their journey to become financially independent while making mutual fund investments accessible to them.
- The initiative is based on the fact that it is easier for a person to understand a concept when it is taught by someone who comprehends them and is like-minded. This is a financial empowerment campaign for women through which the fund house aims to support women investors in becoming financially independent while making mutual fund investments more accessible to them.

Sebi raises UPI limit for investing in debt issues

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has raised the investment limit for retail investors applying in public debt securities issuance via the universal payments interface (UPI) mechanism to Rs 5 lakh from Rs 2 lakh previously. The move comes after the National Payments Corporation of India NPCI decided to increase the per transaction limit for UPI-based applications supported by blocked amount ASBA initial public offering.
- It has been decided to enhance the ceiling for investment through UPI mechanism to 5 lakh based on consultations with market participants, in order to bring about uniformity in the requirements and for ease of investment for investors.
- From May 1, 2022, the new investment limit will apply to public debt securities offerings.
- Investors can apply in public debt securities issues with the option of blocking money through the UPI (unified payment interface) mechanism for an application value of up to Rs 2 lakh, according to current Sebi rules.

Airtel and Axis Bank announce partnership to bolster India's digital ecosystem

- Axis Bank and Bharti Airtel have entered into a strategic partnership to strengthen the growth of the digital ecosystem in India, through a range of financial solutions. The partnership would enable access to credit and various digital financial offerings from Axis Bank to Airtel's 340 million-plus customers. These will include first-of-its-kind co-branded credit card 'Airtel Axis Bank Credit Card' with industry-leading benefits, pre-approved instant loans, Buy Now Pay Later offerings and many more.

- The Airtel Axis Bank Credit Card will offer a host of benefits such as cashback, special discounts, digital vouchers and complimentary services to Airtel customers.
- The credit card users will enjoy exciting rewards like 25 per cent cashback on Airtel Mobile/DTH recharges, Airtel Black and Airtel Xstream Fiber payments, 10 per cent cashback on electricity/gas/water bill payments via Airtel Thanks app, 10 per cent cashback on spends with preferred merchants – BigBasket, Swiggy, Zomato, 1 per cent cashback on all other spends and Amazon e-voucher of Rs 500 on card activation within 30 days of issuance.

Now, Paytm QR code UPI payments enabled at railway stations

- Paytm, a digital payments company, announced that it has expanded its partnership with the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) to provide consumers with digital ticketing services via Automatic Ticket Vending Machines (ATVM) installed at railway stations across the country. Passengers will be able to scan QR codes generated on the screens to purchase unreserved train ride tickets, platform tickets, renew their seasonal tickets, and recharge smart cards.
- This is the first time Indian Railways has made it possible for customers to pay for tickets services online using UPI on ATMs, promoting cashless commuting.
- The ATVMs that have been installed at railway stations are touch-screen ticketing kiosks that will allow travellers to pay digitally without the use of smart cards.
- Passengers will now be able to scan QR codes that would be generated on the screens that can be used to purchase unreserved train ride tickets, platform tickets, renew their seasonal tickets, and recharge smart cards.
- Paytm allows passengers to pay using a variety of methods, including Paytm UPI, Paytm Wallet, Paytm Postpaid, Net Banking, Credit Card, and Debit Card.
- The new digital payment method based on Quick Response (QR) codes has already gone live across all ATVM machines at Indian railway stations.

Reliance Industries opens country's 'largest biz, commerce hub' in Mumbai

- Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has announced the opening of the Jio World Centre, which will be India's largest and most prestigious multi-faceted destination. The Centre, which covers 18.5 acres in Mumbai's Bandra Kurla Complex and was envisioned by Nita Ambani, Director Reliance Industries and Founder-Chairperson of Reliance Foundation, and it is set to become a historical business, commerce, and culture destination, which will provide the people of India with a world-class landmark.
- The Jio World Centre will open in phases over the course of this and next year, beginning with the dedication of Dhirubhai Ambani Square and the musical Fountain of Joy to Mumbai and the Jio World Convention Centre.
- The Jio World Centre is a first-of-its-kind destination in India, with a cultural centre, a musical fountain, premium shops, a curated selection of cafés and fine dining restaurants, serviced apartments and offices, and a state-of-the-art convention facility.
- The Dhirubhai Ambani Square, set to become a new landmark in Mumbai, is a free-entry, open public place that promises to become a must-see destination for locals and tourists from around the world.

Future Generali launches health insurance plan for pet dogs

- Future Generali India Insurance Company Limited (FGI) has announced the launch of FG Dog Health Cover, comprehensive health insurance for pet dogs, along with industry-first 'Emergency Pet Minding' cover. The FGI also focuses on a digital campaign named 'Oh My Dog!' with an aim to create awareness on purchasing dog health insurance cover and also targets on social media like Instagram and Twitter.
- The insurance policy covers pet dogs aged between six months to four years for giant breeds and seven years for small, medium, and large breeds. The exit age is ten years for small, medium, and large breeds and six years for giant breeds.
- This comprehensive cover will protect pet parents against the cost of their dogs' surgery and hospitalisation, terminal illness, mortality, and funeral expenses. With add-on covers, pet parents will, also, be able to insure their dogs against third-party liability, theft or loss, emergency pet minding, veterinary consultation, and doctor on call.
- With FG Dog Health Cover, pet parents will be able to choose their a veterinarian, budget their pet care costs, and avoid the dip into emergency funds with easy documentation.

RBI cancels licence of Maharashtra-based Sarjeraodada Naik Shirala Sahakari Bank

- Reserve Bank of India has cancelled the license of Sarjeraodada Naik Shirala Sahakari Bank, Sangli, Maharashtra, as it did not have adequate capital and earning prospects. With the cancellation of the licence, Sarjeraodada Naik Shirala Sahakari Bank Ltd has ceased to carry on banking business with effect from the close of business hours on 2 March. The bank is not complying with various sections of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- On liquidation, every depositor would be entitled to receive deposit insurance claim amount of his/her deposits up to a monetary ceiling of Rs 5 lakh from the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC).

GST collections in Feb stand at ₹1.3L cr, a slight dip from Jan

- Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection crossed the Rs 1.30-lakh crores mark for the fifth time in February 2022. The gross GST revenue collected in the month of February 2022 is Rs 1,33,026 crore of which CGST is Rs 24,435 crore, SGST is Rs 30,779 crore, IGST is Rs 67,471 crore (including Rs 33,837 crores collected on import of goods) and cess is Rs 10,340 crore (including ₹638 crores collected on import of goods).
- The February mop-up was impacted by the Omicron wave that swept through the country and hence, the gross sales tax collection was lower than the record Rs 1,40,986 crore netted in January. The revenues for the month of February 2022 are 18% higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year and 26% higher than the GST revenues in February 2020.

Union Cabinet approves FDI of up to 20% in LIC of India

- As per the sources, the Cabinet approved up to 20% FDI in the LIC's IPO-bound Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) via the automatic route on Saturday, February 26. The government hopes that by doing so, it will make it easier for India's largest insurer to be disinvested.

- The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, made the decision to approve 20% FDI via the automatic method.
- The government has approved the listing of LIC shares on the stock market through an initial public offering (IPO) in which it would sell a portion of its investment in the insurer and raise new equity capital.
- Foreign investors may be interested in taking part in this mammoth IPO. The existing FDI laws, on the other hand, include no special provision for foreign investment in LIC, a statutory corporation constituted under the LIC Act, 1956.

Indias GDP growth slows to 5.4% in Q3, estimated to rise 8.9% in FY22

- National Statistical Office (NSO) has released the second advance estimates of national accounts. The GDP growth rate projection as per NSO for 2021-22 (FY22) and 2020-21 (FY21) is given below:
- For 2021-22 (FY22)= 8.9% (earlier it was 9.2% in first advance estimates)
- For 2020-21 (FY21)= -6.6% (earlier it was -7.3%)
- According to NSO data, Gross Value Added (GVA) growth in the manufacturing sector growth remained almost flat at 0.2 per cent in the third quarter of 2021-22, compared to a growth of 8.4 per cent a year ago.