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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Dutch King Willem-Alexander unveils 'world's largest' sea lock

- The world's largest canal lock has been inaugurated at IJmuiden, a small port city, in the Port of Amsterdam, The Netherlands. The sea lock was inaugurated by Dutch King Willem-Alexander. The IJmuiden sea lock is 500-meter (1,640-feet) long and 70-meter wide. Construction on the massive infrastructure project began in 2016 and was meant to be done by 2019. It also went over the initially planned budget by around €300 million (\$338 million).
- The IJmuiden lock was designed to allow large, modern cargo ships to reach the port of Amsterdam. The structure is also deep enough that ships will no longer have to wait for a favourable water level to enter the canal. With almost nine meters above the sea level, the structure is also a defence against the threat of flooding.

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.

NATO to hold major naval drills in the Mediterranean Sea

- The NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) member countries will be conducting a 12-day maritime exercise in the Mediterranean Sea from January 24, 2022. The name of the maritime exercise is "Neptune Strike '22". The naval drill will end on February 04, 2022. The main purpose of this exercise will be to demonstrate and test NATO's wide range of maritime capabilities.
- The US announced the decision to hold NATO naval drills, which will involve the participation of the USS Harry Truman aircraft carrier, a day after Russia said it would demonstrate its own naval capabilities for two months, January and February, from the Pacific to the Atlantic Sea.

Barbados PM Mia Mottley sworn in after 2nd consecutive elections

- Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley was sworn in for a second term in office on 20 January 2022, following a landslide victory by her party in the 2022 election. She is serving

as the Prime Minister of Barbados since 2018. She is the leader of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) since 2008. She is the first woman prime minister of the country as well as first PM under a republic system.

Indonesia has announced that its new capital will be called Nusantara

- Indonesia will move its capital to mineral-rich East Kalimantan, an Indonesian province on the island of Borneo. The name of the new capital will be Nusantara, which means “archipelago” in Javanese. It will be based in the regions of North Penajam Paser and Kutai Kartanegara. The new project is likely to cost around 466 trillion rupiah (\$32 billion).
- The heavily populated city of Jakarta is home to 10 million people (30 million if you include the greater metropolitan area) and has been facing the growing issue with the overuse of groundwater by home drilling due to large-scale city developments. The problem is worsened when combined with rising sea levels. This shift of development is set to slow down the rate at which Jakarta sinks into the Java Sea.

'Anxiety' is Oxford University Press' Children's Word of the Year 2021

- The Oxford University Press (OUP) has picked up ‘Anxiety’ as the Children’s Word of the Year 2021, based on their recent research.
- The Oxford University Press (OUP) has picked up ‘Anxiety’ as the Children’s Word of the Year 2021, based on their recent research. Apart from “anxiety” (21%), “Challenging” (19%), “isolate” (14%), “Wellbeing” (13%) and “resilience” (12%) were the children’s top five words. In 2020, Coronavirus was the Children’s Word of the Year by OUP.
- Over 8,000 children from across 85 schools in the UK, spanning Year 3 to Year 9, were surveyed and asked to choose the top words they would use when talking about health and wellbeing. The research highlights the widespread impact lockdown and school closures had on children, with almost a quarter of all surveyed choosing anxiety (21 per cent) as their number one word, closely followed by challenging (19 per cent) and isolate (14 per cent). However, wellbeing (13 per cent) and resilience (12 per cent) closely followed as their top words, signalling children’s positive attitude in the face of recent challenges.

First BRICS Sherpas meeting of 2022 held under Chinese chairship

- The first BRICS Sherpas meeting of 2022 was held virtually on January 18-19 2022, with the members thanking India for its BRICS chairship in 2021.
- The first BRICS Sherpas meeting of 2022 was held virtually on January 18-19 2022, with the members thanking India for its BRICS chairship in 2021. China has taken on the rotating chairmanship of BRICS in 2022. BRICS is a grouping of five major emerging economies — Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.
- Meanwhile, Sanjay Bhattacharyya India’s BRICS Sherpa said that Last year we saw a significant achievement that our foreign ministers brought about in terms of the document on the strengthening and reform of the multilateral systems. These issues of global governance, particularly the UN systems and other institutions, are extremely important. And I’m happy that we shall continue to attach high importance to its continued relevance.

ILO Report 2022: Global unemployment level projected at 207 million

- The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has released its World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2022 (WESO Trends) report. The report analyses comprehensive labour market projections for 2022 and 2023 and assesses how labour market recovery has unfolded worldwide. In the WESO 2022, ILO has downgraded its forecast for labour market recovery in 2022.
- The global unemployment level in 2022 is estimated at 207 million, compared to 186 million in 2019.
- Total working hours globally in 2022 is projected to be 2% below the pre-pandemic level, and that is equivalent to the loss of 52 million full-time jobs.
- The global labour force participation rate in 2022 is projected to remain 1.2 percentage points below that of 2019 before the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic began.

Shaped Like An Infinity Symbol, Dubai Opens Incredible ‘Infinity Bridge’ To Traffic For The First Time

- Iconic ‘Infinity Bridge’ in Dubai, United Arab Emirates has been formally opened to traffic for the first time on 16th January 2022. Its design resembles a mathematical sign for infinity (∞). It represents the limitless, infinite goals of Dubai. It consists of six lanes in each direction and a combined 3-metre track for pedestrians and cyclists. It is 300 meters long and 22 meters wide.
- The bridge consists of six lanes and improves the link between Deira and Bur Dubai. It features a combined 3-metre track for pedestrians and cyclists. First announced in 2018, the Infinity Bridge is part of an Al Shindagha Corridor Project. Consisting of six lanes in each direction, the bridge has an arch-shaped like the infinity symbol – which symbolises Dubai’s unlimited ambitions.

Malta’s MEP Roberta Metsola takes over EU parliament presidency

- Roberta Metsola, a Christian Democrat from Malta, was elected president of the European Union’s parliament. Her election comes a week after the shock death of outgoing parliament president David Sassoli, who was due to step down as part of a power-sharing pact. She is only the third woman elected to the post. she is the European Parliament’s youngest president. Metsola was the candidate of the parliament’s biggest group, and she received 458 of the 616 votes cast.

Maya Angelou Is the First Black Woman to Appear on the U.S. Quarter

- The US Treasury has minted coins featuring poet Maya Angelou – the first black woman ever featured on the US 25-cent coin known as a quarter. Angelou, a poet and activist, was the first black woman to write and perform a poem at a presidential inauguration. In 2010, she was given a Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest US civilian award by President Barack Obama.
- The new coin still features George Washington’s visage on the “heads” side, while the “tails” side honours Angelou by evoking one of her most famous works, the autobiography “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings.”

South Africa Launches Satellites to Monitor Shipping off its Coastline

- South Africa has launched its first satellite constellation developed entirely in the continent of Africa. Three locally produced nanosatellites, which made up the country's first Maritime Domain Awareness Satellite (MDASat) constellation, were launched from Cape Canaveral in the United States, as part of American aerospace company SpaceX's Transporter-3 mission.
- Transporter-3, SpaceX's third dedicated rideshare mission, carried a total of 105 spacecraft for various organisations and governments, including CubeSats, microsats, PocketQubes and orbital transfer vehicles.

Indian, Russian Navies carry out joint exercise in Arabian Sea

- Indian Navy and Russian Navy undertook PASSEX exercises at the port of Cochin, in the Arabian Sea. The Indian Navy's indigenously designed and built guided-missile destroyer, INS Kochi, took part in the exercise. Russian Federation Navy was represented by RFS Admiral Tributs.
- Two other Russian naval ships Russian Naval Missile Cruiser Varyag, and Russian Tanker Boris Butoma were also accompanied. The exercise showcased cohesiveness and interoperability between the two navies and included tactical manoeuvres, cross-deck helicopter operations and seamanship activities.

Philippines confirms move to acquire BrahMos cruise missiles in \$375 mn deal

- Philippines has become the first foreign country to place an order for the purchase of the BrahMos Shore-Based cruise Missile System for its navy. This agreement will give a big boost to India's defence manufacturing system. The estimated deal cost is worth \$374.9 million. The BrahMos Aerospace Pvt Ltd will supply the missile, under the Shore-Based Anti-Ship Missile System Acquisition Project, for Philippine Navy.

Nicaragua's Ortega sworn in for fourth term as U.S., EU impose sanctions

- Nicaraguan President José Daniel Ortega Saavedra, leader of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), was sworn in for a new presidential term. This marks his 5th term and 4th consecutive term as the President of Nicaragua. He will remain in the office until January 2027. He received the presidential sash from Gustavo Porras, head of the National Assembly. Ortega's first stint in power ended in 1990 and upon returning as president in 2007, he quickly set about gaining control of key state institutions.

Cyprus Finds C-19 Infections That Combine Delta and Omicron

- Cyprus has detected a new variant dubbed as "Deltacron", that has a similar genetic background to the Delta variant, coupled with 10 mutations from Omicron. The variant has already affected 25 people in Cyprus. According to Dr Leondios Kostrikis, the head of the laboratory of biotechnology and molecular virology at the University of Cyprus, of the 25 samples taken in Cyprus, 11 were hospitalised due to the virus, while 14 were from the general population.
- The new variant from the lineage named B.1.640.2 is believed to have infected 12 people in the country, according to the yet-to-be peer-reviewed study supported by the French

government. Studies have shown that the co-existence of Delta and Omicron increases the chances of a new variant as a result of them trading genes.

Man in the US receives a genetically-modified pig heart in the world's first transplant of its kind

- A US man has become the first person in the world to get a heart transplant from a genetically-modified pig. David Bennett, 57, is doing well three days after the experimental seven-hour procedure in Baltimore. The possibility of using animal organs for so-called xenotransplantation to meet the demand has long been considered, and using pig heart valves is already common.
- Pigs are increasingly becoming popular candidates for organ transplantation. This is because their organs are anatomically similar to those of humans. What's more, porcine components are more tuned for genetic engineering.

Pakistan to get its first woman Supreme Court judge as Justice Ayesha Malik

- Pakistan has moved closer to appointing the first woman judge of the Supreme Court, after a high-power panel approved the elevation of Lahore High Court judge Ayesha Malik to the apex court. The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP), headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed, approved Malik's elevation by a majority of five votes against four.
- This is the second time that the JCP held a meeting to decide on Justice Malik's elevation. Justice Malik's name first came before the JCP on September 9 last year but the panel was equally split, resulting in the rejection of her candidature.

Senior Chinese diplomat Zhang Ming takes charge of Secretary-General of SCO

- China's senior diplomat Zhang Ming has taken charge as the new Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in which India is a member. He has taken charge from Vladimir Norov, former Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan for a three-year term. He was until recently China's ambassador to the European Union.
- The SCO comprises eight member states: India, Kazakhstan, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It also comprises four countries with "observer" status and six more as "dialogue partners". India joined SCO at the Astana summit in 2017. 2022 will be an important year for India at SCO as, for the first time, it will assume the presidency of SCO, after Uzbekistan, for the period 2022-2023 which will culminate with the SCO Summit to be hosted by the Indian side in 2023. The SCO Summit is the meeting of the Council of Heads of States (HOS) and along with the Council of Heads of Government (HOG) makes two most important dialogue mechanisms among SCO member states.

Antigua, Barbuda joins International Solar alliance in presence of Indian High Commission in Guyana

- The Caribbean nation of Antigua and Barbuda joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA) as the 102nd member by signing the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement, the India-led global green energy initiative. The Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Gaston Browne signed the framework agreement in the presence of Indian High Commissioner Dr K. J. Srinivasa to catalyze global energy transition through a solar-led approach.

- ISA was jointly launched by India and France in 2015 during the 21st session of the United Nations Climate Change COP-21 in Paris, France to promote solar energy.

JC Chaudhry achieves the first Guinness World Record on Numerology, first of 2022

- India's one of the top numerologists, JC Chaudhry has achieved the first-ever Guinness World Record in Numerology and the first world record of 2022 by educating about ancient science to around 6000 participants, enthusiasts of numerology joined from the United States, the United Kingdom, Middle East, and India. The Guinness World Record London office has opened a new category, "Numerology" for this achievement.
- The initiative was organised by CNPL (Chaudhry Nummero Pvt Ltd) and the Indian Institute of Numerology to create awareness regarding numerology, which is prevalent across ancient cultures like Greece, Egypt, China, Chaldea and India.

Google buys Israeli security startup Siemplify for \$500 million

- Alphabet Inc-owned, Google has acquired Israeli cybersecurity startup Siemplify, in a deal worth \$500 million. This acquisition will expand the U.S. tech giant's security offerings in the country amid rising cyber-attacks. Siemplify will be integrated into Google Cloud's Chronicle operation. As a part of Google Cloud's security team, Siemplify will help companies better manage their threat response.
- This purchase marks the fourth acquisition of an Israeli company by Google and its first in the cybersecurity industry outside the US.
- Siemplify was founded in 2015 by Amos Stern (CEO), Alon Cohen (CTO) and Garry Fatakhov (COO). It has offices in Tel Aviv and headquarters in New York.
- Siemplify specializes in end-to-end security services for enterprises, typically referred to as security orchestration, automation and response (SOAR) services.

Apple becomes first company to hit \$3 trillion market value

- The stock market value of Apple Inc. hit \$3 trillion and became the world's first company to do so. The market cap of Apple hit \$182.86 per share, which made it the world's first company to touch the \$3 trillion mark. However shortly after hitting the mark, the share value dipped below it and did not rise again until the market closed. The iPhone maker passed \$2 trillion in 2020 and over \$1 trillion in 2018.
- The world's most valuable company reached the milestone as investors bet that consumers will continue to shell out top dollar for iPhones, MacBooks and services such as Apple TV and Apple Music. In China, the world's largest smartphone market, Apple continued to lead for the second straight month, beating rivals such as Vivo and Xiaomi, recent data from CounterPoint Research showed.

Ex-UK PM Tony Blair now 'Sir Tony', joins top royal order

- Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, the Duchess of Cornwall, and Baroness Amos are to be appointed as members of the Order of the Garter, England's oldest and most senior order of chivalry. The former prime minister now will be known as 'Sir Tony'. The appointments are the personal choice of the Queen, who has up to 24 "knight and lady

companions". The ceremonial order, founded in 1348, is a recognition of significant public service and made without prime ministerial advice.

- Under Sir Tony's leadership, the UK joined the US-led invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan – an official inquiry into the 2003 Iraq war was strongly critical of his government and UK military chiefs. He famously referred to Diana, Princess of Wales, as the "people's princess" after her death.

IHU Variant of C-19 Detected in France

- Scientists and experts in France have reportedly identified a new variant of C-19 termed 'IHU'. The new variant is said to be a more mutated strain than Omicron. The B.1.640.2 or IHU variant was first identified by the academics at institute IHU Mediterranee Infection and contains 46 mutations, which is more than Omicron. Nearly 12 cases of this new variant have been reported near Marseilles and has been linked to the African country Cameroon. But, the Omicron strain is still dominating in most parts of the world.
- This new variant can be a major threat, however, the cases have not been reported so far in countries other than France and is not labelled as 'variant under investigation' by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

France takes over EU presidency as national election looms

- France has assumed the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union with effect from January 01, 2022. The country will continue to hold the EU presidency for the next six months till June 30, 2022. This is the 13th time that France has taken over the rotating presidency. The motto of France as EU President is "recovery, strength, belonging."
- France will work to place the continent's digitization and climate protection at the forefront. The presidency of the EU rotates every six months among the member states of the 27-nation bloc. Upon the completion of six months presidency, France will be replaced by the Czech Republic.

Shanghai opens longest metro line in the world, 831km network length

- Shanghai has opened two new metro lines, upholding its rank as the city with the largest Metro network in the world. With the new lines, the total length of Shanghai's metro network has extended to 831 km, continuing to be the longest in the world. China's Shanghai opened two new metro lines – Line 14 and Phase One of Line 18.
- The opening of the two new lines will bring the total number of fully automatic metro lines in Shanghai to five, with an operating length of 167 km, ranking first in the world for the first time. The city will now enjoy 20 metro lines with 508 stations, 83 of which are transfer ones.

Australia to rename islands to Honor Queen Elizabeth on platinum jubilee

- Australia will rename Aspen Island in Canberra's Lake Burley Griffin as part of June 2022 national and community events to celebrate 70th anniversary of the accession of Queen Elizabeth II to the British throne, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said on Saturday.

- "Seventy years of service is a truly immense achievement, and we are proud to join with other Commonwealth nations to celebrate this milestone... Aspen Island in Canberra's Lake Burley Griffin, the home of the National Carillon, will be renamed Queen Elizabeth II.
- According to Morrison, celebrations will include opening of new Queen Elizabeth Water Gardens, the lighting of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Beacon in Canberra, the release of commemorative stamps and coins, as well as illuminating monuments all around Australia.

Chinese Ministry Launches Five-Year Plan to Become Global Robotics Hub

- China has announced a five-year roadmap to achieve its goal of becoming a global robotics innovation hub by the year 2025. China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology revealed operating income from the country's robotics industry is expected to grow by around 20% per year between 2021 and 2025. From 2016 to 2020, the sector expanded at an average growth rate of 15%. Last year, operating income surpassed 100 billion yuan (\$15.69 billion) for the first time.
- To achieve its goal by 2025 of becoming a worldwide robotics innovation centre, China has proposed a strategy concentrating on improvements to essential components such as servo motors and control panels. As per the 2021 World Robot Report, South Korea, Singapore, and Japan were the top three most automated countries in Asia-Pacific.

NATIONAL NEWS

Meta partners FICCI to support 5 lakh women-led SMBs in India

- Social media giant Meta has partnered with industry body the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) to support five lakh women-led small businesses across India. Meta will undertake this initiative under its #SheMeansBusiness programme, in partnership with FICCI's 'Empowering the Greater 50%' initiative. The initiative will create a supportive ecosystem for women and inspire them to become contributors to the overall development of the country.
- Grow your Business Hub: To provide the necessary information, tools and resources to MSMEs;
- Commerce Partners Programme: To help businesses go digital and D2C using technology;
- Facebook Business Coach: To train women through an educational chatbot tool on WhatsApp.

Gurugram gets India's biggest Electric Vehicle charging station

- India's largest electric vehicle (EV) charging station with a capacity of 100 charging points for 4 wheelers, was opened at Delhi-Jaipur National Highway in Gurugram. Previously, India's largest EV charging station was situated in Navi Mumbai with 16 AC & 4 DC charging ports for EVs. The new EV charging station has been developed by tech-piloting company Alekrifly Private Limited.
- This EV charging station will not only boost the electric vehicles industry in the region but will also act as a benchmark for large EV charging stations across the nation in future. The electric vehicle charging station of this size and magnitude is rare and will be instrumental for the industry to experience actual Ease of Doing Business in smooth 'Certification Compliance' and 'Safety Standards'.

Kerala Gets India's 1st Graphene Innovation Centre

- India's first innovation centre for graphene will be set up in Kerala by the Digital University Kerala (DUK), along with the Centre for Materials for Electronics Technology (C-MET) in Thrissur, for Rs 86.41 crore. This will be the first graphene Research and Development (R&D) incubation centre in the country. Tata Steel Limited is set to be the industrial partner of the centre.
- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India, has given approval for the project. The project, which will be implemented with the support of the Kerala government, is expected to accelerate the state's growth in the knowledge industry sector.

Parliament launches Digital Sansad App to make live proceedings accessible to citizens

- Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has launched the official mobile application of the Parliament named 'Digital Sansad App' on January 27, 2022, to allow citizens to access live proceedings of the House, including the Union Budget 2022 live. The app will make the Parliament and Parliamentary proceedings accessible not only to the members but also to the public of the country.
- Through the Digital Sansad App, citizens can check what their members of Parliament are doing, what debates they are participating in and what they are saying. Using the app, parliamentarians can also digitally log their attendance.
- The app contains information on budget speeches since 1947 as well as House discussions from the 12th Lok Sabha to 17th Lok Sabha. It will also contain a live telecast of Sansad proceedings. 2022 Budget session can also be watched live on this App.

It's official! Air India now formally handed over to Tata Group

- The government of India officially handed over India's flag carrier, Air India to the Tata Group on January 27, 2022, almost 69 years after acquiring the conglomerate. The total value of the deal is Rs 18,000 crore (US\$2.4 billion). The strategic disinvestment transaction of Air India includes the transfer of a 100 per cent stake of GoI in Air India to Tata Sons, along with management control.
- The transaction covers three entities namely, Air India, Air India Express and Air India SATS (AI SATS). Under the deal, the Tata group will also be handed over Air India Express and a 50 per cent stake in ground handling arm AI SATS.

India pays its UN regular budget assessment in full with payment of US \$29.9 million

- India has paid USD 29.9 million in UN regular budget assessments for the year 2022. As of January 21, 2022, 24 Member States have paid their regular budget assessments in full. India is currently a non-permanent member of the 15-nation Security Council and its two-year term will end on December 31, 2022.
- "#India proud to pay again in full! India joins the 2022 Honour Roll of 24 Member States out of 193 that have paid their @UN RegularBudget Assessments in full," India's Permanent Mission to the UN tweeted.

Kerala gets its first ever scientific bird atlas

- Kerala Bird Atlas (KBA), the first-of-its-kind State-level bird atlas in India, has created solid baseline data about the distribution and abundance of bird species across all major habitats, giving an impetus to futuristic studies. It is being conducted as a citizen science-driven exercise with the participation of over 1,000 volunteers of the birdwatching community KBA has been prepared based on systematic surveys held twice over 60 days a year.
- Conducted as a citizen science-driven exercise with the participation of over 1000 volunteers of the bird watching community, KBA was prepared based on systematic surveys held twice over 60 days a year during the wet (July to September) and dry (January to March) seasons between 2015 and 2020.

IT Ministry releases five-year roadmap for electronics sector in India

- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has released a 5-year roadmap and Vision Document 2.0 for the electronics sector. The Vision Document 2.0 titled “\$300 bn Sustainable Electronics Manufacturing & Exports by 2026” has been prepared by MeitY in association with the India Cellular & Electronics Association (ICEA). It is the second volume of a two-part Vision Document. Vision Document 2.0 provides a year-wise break-up and production projections for the various products. This will help India to transform into a US\$300 billion electronics manufacturing powerhouse by 2026, from the current US\$75 billion.
- This roadmap is the second volume of a two-part Vision Document – the first of which was released in November last year. The first part of the document titled “Increasing India’s Electronics Exports and Share in GVCs” was released in November 2021.

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.

26th January 2022: India's 73rd Republic Day

- India is celebrating the 73rd Republic Day on 26 January 2022. The celebrations this year are special as India is in the 75th year of Independence – being celebrated as 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'. Republic Day marks the date on which the Constitution of India came into effect on 26 January 1950. It replaced the Government of India Act (1935) as the governing document of India.
- According to the Ministry of Defence, for the first time, an Indian Air Force (IAF) will show grand flypast by 75 aircraft or helicopters. A drone show by 1,000 indigenously developed drones has been planned for the 'Beating the Retreat' ceremony, along with projection mapping will be shown for the first time. In another first, 480 dancers will perform during the cultural programme at the parade have been selected through a nationwide Vande Bharatam dance competition.

Himachal Pradesh and Haryana govts sign MoU for construction of Adi Badri Dam

- Governments of Himachal Pradesh and Haryana have signed an MoU at Panchkula, for the construction of Adi Badri Dam that would come upon 77 acres in Himachal Pradesh near the Adi Badri area of Yamuna Nagar district of Haryana. The proposed dam aims for the rejuvenation of the Saraswati river with an estimated cost of Rs 215.35 crore.
- The Dam would get 224-hectare metre water from Himachal Pradesh's Somb River that falls in the Yamuna near Adi Badri in Yamuna Nagar district. The executing agency for the construction of Adi Badri Dam would be Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Limited. Adi Badri, also Sri Sarasvati Udgam Tirath, is located in the foothills of the Sivalik Hills in the Bhabar area. It is situated in the northern part of Haryana's Yamunanagar district.

Suriya's Jai Bhim, Mohanlal's Marakkar Arabikadalinte Simham shortlisted for the 94th Academy Awards

- Indian Movie's Jai Bhim and Marakkar: Arabikadalinte Simham have been officially shortlisted for the Oscars 2022. Jai Bhim is the fourth Indian film to get nominated for Oscars after Mother India, Salaam Bombay, and Lagaan. Marakkar Arabikadalinte Simham has been also nominated for the Global Community Oscar Awards 2021. The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences has released the list of 276 films eligible for the awards this year.
- Not just Jai Bhim and Marakkar, directors Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh's Writing with Fire, a film about a newspaper run by Dalit women, has been shortlisted in the Best Documentary Feature category at the Oscars 2022. The voting for the nominations will begin on January 27 and conclude on February 1. The nominations will be announced on February 8. The 94th Academy Awards will be held on March 27.

India selects Saab's AT4 as its new single-shot weapon

- Swedish defence company 'Saab' had been selected by the Indian Armed Force through a competitive programme for the supply of single-shot anti-armour weapon AT4. AT4 will be used by the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force. The order includes the AT4CS AST, which can be fired from confined spaces such as from inside buildings, bunkers and other urban environments. Carl-Gustaf system of Saab is being already used by the Indian Armed Forces.
- AT4 will be operated by a single soldier and its single-shot system has proven efficacy against structures landing craft helicopters armoured vehicles and personnel. Its 84 mm calibre warhead offers enhanced power and performance to the Indian armed forces.
- The weapon can be fired with a range of projectiles, such as high-explosive anti-tank rounds, anti-structure tandem-warheads, and high explosive rounds. It can penetrate more than 17.5 inches (44 centimetres) of armour.
- The AT4 is equipped with an optical night sight for missions in low-light environments and has a minimum arming distance of 10 meters (32.8 feet), making it more accurate when hitting closer targets.

PM Narendra Modi unveils the hologram statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at India Gate

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has unveiled a hologram statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at India Gate on Parakram Divas. The size of the hologram statue is 28 feet in height and 6 feet in width. A grand statue, which will be made of granite, will replace the hologram statue once it is completed. The statue is being installed on the 125th birth anniversary as a tribute to the immense contribution of Netaji in the country's freedom struggle and would be a symbol of the country's indebtedness to him.
- The prime minister also conferred the 'Subhas Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar' for the years 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 in the investiture ceremony. A total of seven awards were presented during the ceremony. Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management (in the Institutional category) and Professor Vinod Sharma (in the Individual category) have been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for their excellent work in Disaster Management for the year 2022.

NITI Aayog, Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) and RMI India release 'Banking on Electric Vehicles in India' report

- NITI Aayog has released a report titled 'Banking on Electric Vehicles in India' on January 22, 2022, which outlines the need and importance of the inclusion of Electric Vehicles in RBI priority-sector lending guidelines. The report has been developed by NITI Aayog in collaboration with US-based non-profit organisations Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), and RMI India.
- The report has indicated electric two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and commercial four-wheelers as early segments to prioritise under Priority Sector Lending. The suggestion has also been made to recognise Electric Vehicles as an infrastructure sub-sector by the Finance Ministry and the incorporation of electric vehicles as a separate reporting category under RBI.

Amit Shah launches District Good Governance Index in 20 districts of J-K

- The Union Minister of Home and Cooperation Amit Shah has virtually released India's First "District Good Governance Index" for 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir. The top 5 districts in the District Good Governance Index are (1) Jammu, (2) Doda, (3) Samba, (4) Pulwama and (5) Srinagar.
- This index has been prepared by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in collaboration with the Government of Jammu & Kashmir. The District Good Governance Index (DGGI) is a framework document comprising of performance under ten governance sectors having 58 indicators with 116 data points.

Farming going hi-tech: Govt to fund drone use in agriculture

- Union Agriculture Ministry has amended the guidelines of Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM) to provide 40-100 per cent subsidy until March 2023 in purchasing drones for farm mechanization. After the amendment, a grant for the purchase of drones up to 100 per cent of the cost of agriculture drones or Rs 10 lakhs, whichever is less, can be given.
- Farm Machinery Training and Testing Institutes, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) institutes, Krishi Vigyan Kendras and State Agriculture Universities- 100% subsidy- Rs 10 lakh maximum.
- Agriculture graduates establishing Custom Hiring Centers (CHCs)= 50 per cent subsidy up to Rs 5 lakh.

PM Modi to unveil 216-foot 'Statue of Equality' in Hyderabad on February 5

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate a 216-foot statue of Ramanujacharya in a sitting position in Hyderabad on February 5, 2022, to celebrate the 1,000th birth anniversary of the saint. Ramanujacharya was an 11th-century saint and a revolutionary social reformer. The statue will be called as the 'Statue of Equality'. It is located in a 45-acre complex at Shamshabad on the outskirts of Hyderabad in Telangana.
- The project is built at a cost of Rs. 1,000-crore, which was funded entirely by donations from devotees globally.
- President Ram Nath Kovind will unveil the inner chamber of the statue of Ramanujacharya on February 13, 2022.

PM's address at the launch of 'Azadi Ke Amrit Mahotsav se Swarnim Bharat Ke Ore' programme

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated 'Azadi Ke Amrit Mahotsav se Swarnim Bharat Ki Ore' programme via video conferencing. The national-level program includes seven yearlong initiatives dedicated to the celebration of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav by the Brahma Kumaris. More than 30 campaigns and over 15000 programs and events will be conducted under these initiatives by the Brahma Kumaris. Brahma Kumaris is organising the event on the occasion of the 53rd Ascension Anniversary of Pitashree Prajapita Brahma, Founding Father of Brahma Kumaris.

Jammu and Kashmir has declared Jerri settlement in Reasi district as the first 'milk village'

- In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the administration has declared Jerri settlement in Reasi district as the first 'Milk Village' of the Union Territory and sanctioned 57 more dairy farms under the Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS) for the hamlet. The village, which houses 73 individual dairy units with 370 cows, will give the local farmers financial security.
- After being declared as 'Milk Village', a total of 57 units have been sanctioned under the IDDS for the village. Under the IDDS, dairy units of five animals are provided with a 50 per cent subsidy. The scheme also has a provision for milking machine, bulk milk cooling unit at 50 per cent subsidy (maximum Rs 5 lakh), paneer making machine, khoya making, Dahi making, cream separator, ice cream making machine, butter and ghee making machine (max subsidy Rs 3.5 lakh), milk van (maximum subsidy Rs 2 lakh), milk ATM subsidy of Rs 5 lakh.

Amar Jawan Jyoti merged with Eternal Flame at National War Memorial in New Delhi

- The government of India has merged the flame of the Amar Jawan Jyoti at Delhi's India Gate with the flame at the adjoining National War Memorial on January 21, 2022, ahead of Republic Day. The ceremony was led by the Integrated Defence Staff chief, Air Marshal Balabhadra Radha Krishna.
- The decision to merge the two flames was taken keeping in mind that flame at Amar Jawan Jyoti payed homage to the martyrs of 1971 but none of their names are present there, while names of all Indian martyrs from all the wars, including 1971 and wars before and after it are housed at the National War Memorial. So housing the flame at the same place along with the names will serve as a true tribute to martyrs. This will also do away with upkeeping two flames for the same purpose. This means that after 50 years of continuous lightning, the flame at Amar Jawan Jyoti will no longer be present there.

New Species of Rainfrog Discovered in Panama Named After Greta Thunberg

- A new species of rainfrog, discovered in the Panama jungle, has been named after Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg. The species has been named as *Pristimantis gretathunbergae*, or popularly known as the Greta Thunberg Rainfrog. The frog was originally discovered in 2012 and was thought to be part of the already categorised *Pristimantis* family. However, recent DNA analysis confirmed that the frog is a new species, according to the scientific journal *Zookeys*.
- The new specimen of the tropical amphibian was discovered by an international team of biologists led by doctors Abel Batista, from Panama, and Konrad Mebert (Switzerland) in Cerro Chucantí, a private reserve located in the province of Darién. It was named after Greta Thunberg when conservation nonprofit The Rainforest Trust held an auction that allowed the winner to name new species. The frog was discovered at a reserve established by the conservation organization AdoptaBosque with support from Rainforest Trust.

India Successfully Test-Fires New BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile Off Odisha Coast

- BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, with increased indigenous content and improved performance, was successfully test-fired from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.
- The launch was conducted by Brahmos Aerospace in close coordination with Defence Research and Development Organisation. This flight test was monitored by all the sensors of the range instrumentation including telemetry, radar and electro-optical tracking systems deployed across the eastern coast and the down range ships.
- Brahmos was successfully test-fired from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha on January 20, 2022.
- The flight test is a major milestone in the way forward for BrahMos programme.
- The highly maneuverable missile cruised at supersonic speed for its maximum range and all mission objectives were met.

Odisha teams up with WFP to improve food security, farmers' resilience

- The United Nations World Food Programme and the Odisha Government joined hands to improve the food security of small and marginal farmers in India by strengthening their resilience to climate change.
- In a participatory pilot initiative, climate advisories will be tailored to enable smallholder farmers to adapt to the impact of climate change. Smallholder farmers, who constitute 90 percent of farming communities in Odisha, will be able to select the right farming and livelihood options to improve their food security and incomes.

India-Japan maritime exercise in Bay of Bengal

- A Maritime Partnership Exercise was held between the Indian Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) in the Bay of Bengal in a non-contact mode amid C-19. The Indian side was represented by Indian Naval Ships (INS) Shivalik and INS Kadmat while JMSDF Ships Uruga and Hirado participated from the Japanese side. Strengthening bilateral relations, promoting defence cooperation, enhancing mutual understanding and interoperability, and sharing best practices between IN and JMSDF.

MoS for education Subhas Sarkar launches Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar 2021-22

- Minister of State for Education, Subhas Sarkar has launched the Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar (SVP) 2021 – 2022 virtually. The Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar recognises, inspires and awards schools that have undertaken exemplary work in the field of water, sanitation and hygiene while also providing a benchmark and a roadmap for schools to make further improvements in future. The Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar was first distributed by the Department of School Education and Literacy, in 2016-17 to create self-motivation and awareness about sanitation.
- All categories of schools, that is, government, government-aided and private schools in both rural and urban areas can participate in the Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar 2021-22.

UPI AUTOPAY has introduced for the telecom industry with JIO

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and Reliance Jio have announced that UPI AUTOPAY has now been introduced for the telecom industry with Jio. Jio's integration with UPI AUTOPAY has made it the first player in the telecom industry to go live with the unique e-mandate feature that was launched by NPCI.
- Using the UPI AutoPay launched by NPCI, customers can now enable recurring e-mandate using any UPI application for recurring payments such as mobile bills, electricity bills, EMI payments, entertainment/OTT subscriptions, insurance, mutual funds among others.

Centre launches stamp to mark 1 year of Covid vaccination

- The government of India has released a commemorative postal stamp on the Covid-19 vaccination on Sunday to mark the first anniversary of the country's national immunization programme against the virus. The commemorative stamp design features a healthcare worker inoculating a senior citizen with COVID-19 vaccine, along with an image of 'COVAXIN' vial. This stamp signifies the remarkable work done by our frontline healthcare workers and scientific community across the country in protecting the people against the COVID pandemic.

Kerala's Kumbalangi to Become India's First Sanitary Napkin-free Village

- Kerala's Kumbalangi is set to become the country's first sanitary napkin-free panchayat. This move is a part of the 'Avalkayi' initiative, which is being implemented in the Ernakulam parliamentary constituency, in association with the "Thingal Scheme" of HLL Management Academy's and Indian Oil Corporation. Under this initiative, menstrual cups will be distributed to women aged 18 and above in Kumbalangi village. 5000 menstrual cups will be distributed under it.
- In the same event, Governor will also declare Kumbalangi village as a model village. The model village project is implemented as a part of 'Pradhan Mantri Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (PM-SAGY)'. A new tourist information centre will also be set up in the village.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh launches AI driven start-up by IIT alumni for water purification

- Union Minister of State (I/C) Science & Technology Dr Jitendra Singh has launched Artificial Intelligence (AI) driven Start-Up by Indian Institute Technology (IIT) alumni for water purification through innovative technology with financial support from Technology Development Board (TDB). The facility aims to provide clean drinking water at a price much lesser than the market price.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also signed between TDB, a statutory body of the Department of S&T and Swajal Water Private Limited. The Gurugram based company's patented system, 'Clairvoyant' uses artificial intelligence to optimise purification systems and predict future breakdowns. The company is focused on innovative technologies to make reliable clean drinking water accessible to communities at affordable price, for their project on IoT enabled point of use Solar Water Purification Unit for slums, villages and High Utility Areas.

Defence Ministry sets up online portal to resolve pension-related grievances: Rajnath Singh

- The Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh has set up an online Raksha Pension Shikayat Nivaran Portal to resolve pension-related grievances of ex-servicemen (ESM) and their dependents. The portal will allow them to lodge grievances directly with the Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (DESW), he stated on the occasion of Armed Forces Veterans Day.
- The minister also announced that the DESW has allotted Rs 320 crore to Armed Forces Flag Day Fund (AFFDF) to clear all backlog of pending applications for welfare schemes, especially education and marriage grants for widows or dependent children of ESM. The Minister also stated that the Directorate General of Resettlement has issued 22,278 job letters—including 7,898 job letters to freshly retired/first-time entrants—to civil life ESMs in the government sector/PSUs/banks and private sector during the year April 2021-December 2021.

World's Largest Khadi National Flag To Be Displayed At 1971 War Site

- The world's largest national flag, made of Khadi fabric was put to display to celebrate the "Army Day" on January 15, 2022. It was displayed at Longewala, along the India – Pakistan Border in Jaisalmer. Longewala was the centre stage of the historic battle of 1971 between India and Pakistan. It will be the fifth public display of the Khadi flag. 70 khadi artisans prepared this flag in 49 days. Its making has created about 3500 man-hours of additional work for Khadi artisans and allied workers.
- The Monumental National Flag is 225 feet long and 150 feet wide. It is approximately 1400 kgs in weight.
- 4500 meters of hand-woven, hand-spun, Khadi cotton bunting has been used to make the flag. It covers an area of 33, 750 square feet. The Ashok Chakra in the flag has a diameter of 30 feet.

January 16 to be celebrated as National Startup Day: PM Modi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has declared to mark 16th January as 'National Start-up Day'. The announcement was made by PM Modi on January 15, 2022, via video conferencing during a week-long event "Celebrating Innovation Ecosystem" as a part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. The Prime Minister interacted with more than 150 startups across different sectors, during the event.
- The startups, categorised under six groups, gave presentations to the Prime Minister on six themes — 'growing from roots, 'nudging the DNA', 'from local to global, 'technology of future', 'building champions in manufacturing' and 'sustainable development.
- The Prime Minister was of the view Indian startups can easily make it to the global stage and reach other countries and told the young entrepreneurs: "Don't just keep your dreams local, make them global. Remember this mantra — let's Innovate for India, innovate from India".

India grants financial assistance of over USD 900 million to Sri Lanka to overcome forex crisis

- India has announced financial assistance of USD 900 million loans to Sri Lanka to help the island nation in building up its depleted foreign reserves and for food imports. It must be noted that Sri Lanka is currently facing a shortage of almost all essential commodities due

to a shortage of dollars to pay for the imports. India is extending its support through the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Gopal Baglay met Cabraal and expressed India's strong support to Sri Lanka in the wake of RBI extending over USD 900 million facilities.

- These comprise deferment of Asian Clearing Union settlement of over USD 509 million and currency swap of USD 400 million. Sri Lanka is currently experiencing a shortage of almost all essentials due to a shortage of dollars to pay for the imports. Additionally, power cuts are imposed at peak hours as the state power entity is unable to obtain fuel to run turbines. The state fuel entity has stopped oil supplies as the electricity board has large unpaid bills. The only refinery was shut as it was unable to pay dollars for crude imports.

Meenakshi Lekhi launches 'North East on Wheels Expedition' to promote Culture of Northeastern States

- Minister of State for Culture, Meenakshi Lekhi has launched the 'North East on Wheels Expedition' in New Delhi to promote the Culture of Northeastern States. The Bike Expedition is scheduled between 8th to 16th April this year to mark the celebrations of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- 75 Bikers participating in this expedition will be selected from all over the country and will cover about 9000 km in the North East Region in 6 groups. The expedition will also promote the Dekho Apna Desh initiative of the Ministry of Tourism. The Riders will also carry the message of the importance of Road Safety.

20th Dhaka International Film Festival Inaugurated

- The 20th Dhaka International Film Festival begins at Dhaka, Bangladesh. The festival will showcase 225 films from 70 countries under 10 categories will be screened across various venues in Dhaka between 15-23 January. The film festival is being organized in a hybrid mode with many films being streamed online during the festival. The DIFF will also organise the 8th edition of the 'Women in Cinema' international conference, as well as the 4th edition of the 'West meets East' screenplay lab during the festival.
- The Indian entries to the 20th DIFF include films like Koozhangal directed by P S Vinodraj, Avijatrik directed by Subhrajit Mitra, Mayar Jonjal directed by Indranil Roychowdhury, and Aandaal directed by Shareef Easa among the 35 entries.
- The Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF) is organised by the Rainbow film Society established in 1977. The DIFF was started in 1992. The festival will have ten sections including the Asian Competition Section, Retrospective, Tribute, Bangladesh panorama, Wide Angle, Cinema of the World, Children's Film, Spiritual film, Women Filmmakers section and short and independent films.

India's Forest, Tree Cover Rose By 2,261 Sq Km In Last 2 Years: Environment Minister Releases Report

- Union Environment Minister, Bhupender Yadav has launched the 17th edition of the biennial 'India State of Forest Report (ISFR)' 2021. ISFR is released by the Forest Survey of India (FSI), every two years since 1987 to assess the country's forest resources. India's forest and tree cover rose by 2,261 square kilometres in ISFR 2021 as compared to the assessment

of 2019. This includes an increase of 1,540 square kilometres in forest cover and a 721 sq km increase in tree cover.

- The forest and tree cover in India is now 8,09,537 sq km. Total forest cover is 7,13,789 sq km, (21.71 per cent of the geographical area) and tree cover is 95,748 sq km (2.91 per cent of the geographical area).
- The total forest and tree cover in the country is now spread across 80.9 million hectares or 24.62% of the geographical area of the country.
- The top five states in terms of increase in forest cover are Andhra Pradesh (647 sq km), Telangana (632 sq km), Odisha (537 sq km), Karnataka (155 sq km) and Jharkhand (110 sq km).

Kachai Lemon Festival begins in Manipur

- The 18th edition of the two days long Kachai Lemon Festival began in Manipur at the Local Ground of Kachai Village in Ukhrul district. The Kachai Lemon Festival is organised annually to promote this unique kind of lemon fruit and to encourage lemon farmers. This year, altogether 260 stalls are put up at the festival showcasing the rich reape of lemon this year. This year the festival is being organised under the theme 'Organic Kachai Lemon for Safe Environment and Rural Transformation'. A training program for lemon farmers will be held tomorrow as part of the festival.
- Kachai Lemon of Manipur has been accorded Geographical Indication (GI) registration tag and widely grown in the Kachai Village of Ukhrul district. Unlike the other lemon varieties grown in other parts of the world, Kachai Lemon is considered to be unique as it is a rich source of ascorbic acid and famous for its juice content.

India's oldest sloth bear Gulabo dies at Bhopal's Van Vihar national park

- India's oldest female sloth bear, whose name was Gulabo, has passed away at the Van Vihar National Park and Zoo, located in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Gulabo was the oldest sloth bear of the country. She died at the age of 40. She was rescued from a street performer (Madaari) in May 2006, when she was 25 years. Gulabo was one of the star attractions in the park. The Van Vihar National Park, located on the banks of Bhopal's Upper Lake, also runs a rescue and breeding centre for sloth bears.

Kochi to become the first city with water metro project with launch of electric boats

- Kochi, Kerala has become India's first city to have a Water Metro Project after the launch of its first boat in December 2021, namely 'Muziris,' among the 23 battery-powered electric boats being manufactured by Cochin Shipyard Limited. This launch is a part of the Rs 747-crore project which is operated by Kochi Water Metro Ltd (KWML). The boats will be called Water Metros.
- With a total outlay of Rs 819 crore, the project's major part is financed under Indo-German Financial Cooperation through a long-term loan agreement of 85 million Euros (Rs 579 crore) with the German funding agency, KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau).

9th edition of North East Festival concludes in Guwahati

- The 9th edition of the North East Festival concluded in Guwahati, Assam. The main purpose of this festival is to promote and highlight the commercial and tourism potential of the North East region. The festival was organised in the format of a carnival with live music and dance performances, engaging the visitors throughout the day in the open area while serious discussions on business, economic, socio-political issues of the region engrossed the intellectuals in the conference halls.
- The festival aimed at integrated marketing of the entire North-East to attract tourists and investments. The closing day was graced by Assam's Agriculture Minister Atul Bora, who interacted with entrepreneurs participating from across the North-East region.

Odisha tops medal chart in national skill competition

- India Skills 2021 national competition concluded with more than 200 participants who were felicitated by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. As many as 270 winners of the Competition felicitated with 61 gold, 77 silver, 53 bronze and 79 medallions of excellence. More than five hundred competitors from across the country participated in the competition to showcase their talent from 54 industrial sectors. These sectors include car paint, patisserie and confectionery, welding, additive manufacturing, cyber security, floristry, among others.
- Odisha finished first out of 26 states and union territories of this year in the 'IndiaSkills 2021' contest with 51 medals. Odisha won 10 gold, 18 silver, 9 bronze, and 14 medallions.
- With 30 medals, Maharashtra remained in second place, while Kerala took third place with 25 medals.

India's first heli-hub to be set up in Gurugram with many aviation facilities

- Haryana Deputy CM Dushyant Chautala announced that Gurugram will get India's 1st heli-hub with all aviation facilities. The heli-hub will be the first of its kind in India to have all facilities at one place for helicopters. The heli-hub is proposed to be built in Gurugram & would be near the metro facility along with easy connectivity to industrial areas (Noida & Bhiwadi).
- The Haryana government has proposed to set up the first heli-hub of the country in Gurugram designed to have many aviation facilities like heliport, hangars, repairs, and any other related services.

Kevadia railway station in Gujarat renamed as Ekta Nagar railway station

- The Ministry of Railways has approved the renaming of the Kevadiya railway station in the Narmada district of Gujarat, as Ekta Nagar railway station. The Statue of Unity's Kevadiya railway station falls under the Vadodara division. The station code of Ekta Nagar railway station will be EKNR. The numerical code of the station will be 08224620.
- Last year, the Ministry of Railways had said tourists visiting the world's tallest statue in Gujarat "Statue of Unity" will be able to experience the rich cultural history of the state at the Kevadiya railway station itself. Under the public-private partnership (PPP) initiative, the Vadodara Division of Western Railways had awarded first of its kind contract in the Indian

Railways network for the development of an Art Gallery with a Souvenir shop at Gujarat's Kevadiya Railway station.

Jan Dhan Accounts Deposits Cross ₹ 1.5 lakh Crore By December 2021

- According to the finance ministry, the deposits in bank accounts opened under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) scheme have crossed Rs 1.5 lakh crore mark. The total balance in accounts under the Jan Dhan scheme was recorded at Rs 1,50,939.36 crore as of December-end 2021. The data revealed that over 44.23 crore accounts have been opened under the scheme.
- Of this, 34.9 crore accounts were opened with the public sector banks, 8.05 crore with regional rural banks, and the remaining 1.28 crore with private sector banks. RuPay Debit Cards were issued to 31.28 crores PMJDY beneficiaries under this scheme.

Chennai International Airport ranks 8th in the World for 'On-Time Performance' for the year 2021

- The Chennai International Airport is one of the top 10 large international airports in the world that ensures 'on-time' departures. In a review conducted by Cirium, an organisation that specialises in offering aviation data to travel, finance, aerospace, and aviation industries, the airport has been ranked 8th for 'on-time performance' for the year 2021. According to the latest traffic figures of Chennai Airport, it has done recovery of 80 % in domestic traffic. It is the sixth busiest airport in India.
- Besides that, Chennai airport is the only Indian airport to figure in the top 10 positions of the list. The first three positions have been bagged by United State's Miami Airport, Fukuoka Airport, and Haneda Airport in Japan.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated in Chandigarh

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated Kalpana Chawla Centre for Research in Space Science and Technology (KCCRSST) at Chandigarh University. The Union Minister also launched Chandigarh University's Defence Scholarship Scheme, worth Rs 10 Crore, for the wards of Defence Personnel of the three services. Kalpana Chawla was the first woman of Indian origin to go to space.
- Established with the objective of training students in space science and satellite development and to meet future challenges in the area of space research, this state-of-the-art space centre would be the Ground Control Station (GCS) for the Chandigarh University's Student Satellite (CUSAT), an in-house developed nano-satellite being designed by the students of Chandigarh University, and a Geo Spatial Centre for research, besides other important projects.

Uttar Pradesh government declares 4 villages near Nepal border as revenue villages

- The Uttar Pradesh government declared four villages located near the Nepal border in the district as revenue villages. District Magistrate of Bahraich, Dinesh Chandra Singh said the decision was taken before the announcement of the general elections to the UP Legislative Assembly. These four villages are Bhavanipur, Tedhia, Dhakia and Bichhia located in Mihinpurwa tehsil of the district. All these villages are Vantangiya villages.

- The Vantangiya' community comprises people brought from Myanmar during the colonial rule to plant trees. A revenue village is a small administrative region with defined borders. One revenue village may contain many hamlets. A village administrative officer is the head officer of a revenue village.

Vikrant India's 1st indigenous aircraft carrier, begin sea trials

- The Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) 1, which will be called INS Vikrant once it enters service with the Indian Navy, began another set of sea trials on Sunday to carry out complex manoeuvres in high seas ahead of its planned induction in August.
- The 40,000-tonne aircraft carrier, the largest and most complex warship to be built in India, successfully completed a five-day maiden sea voyage in August and underwent 10-day sea trials in October.

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated India's first unique 'Rock' museum

- Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh has inaugurated India's first Open Rock Museum in Hyderabad, Telangana. Museum displays around 35 different types of rocks from different parts of India with ages ranging from 3.3 billion years to around 55 million years of the Earth's history.
- The Open Rock Museum, set up with the aim of educating and enlightening the masses about several lesser-known facts, displays around 35 different types of rocks from different parts of India. These rocks also represent the deepest part of the earth, up to 175 km from the surface of the earth. The rocks have been sourced from Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir and others.

KVIC launches 'Mobile Honey Processing Van' to support farmers and beekeepers

- Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) Chairman, Vinai Kumar Saxena has launched the country's first Mobile Honey Processing Van at Village Sirora in Ghaziabad. The Mobile Van has been designed in-house by KVIC at its Multi-disciplinary Training Centre, Panjokehra, at a cost of Rs 15 lakh. This mobile honey processing unit can process up to 300 KG of honey in 8 hours. The van is also equipped with a testing laboratory, that would instantly examine the quality of honey.
- The Mobile Honey Processing Van comes as a major development under KVIC's Honey Mission which aims at training beekeepers, distributing Bee Boxes to farmers and helping rural, educated as well as unemployed youth to earn extra income through beekeeping activities.
- In line with the Prime Minister's dream of "Sweet Kranti" (Sweet Revolution) through honey production, the KVIC has come up with this unique innovation to enable beekeepers and farmers to get a fair prices for their honey production.

DPIIT to organize Startup India Innovation Week from 10th January

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry have decided to organise a week-long virtual innovation celebration called 'Startup India Innovation Week' to showcase the spread and depth of entrepreneurship across India. The virtual event will be organised from January 10 to

January 16, 2022. The event also aims to commemorate the 75th year of India's independence 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.

- 'Startup India Innovation Week' will have sessions ranging from topics such as enhancing market access opportunities, discussions with industry leaders, best practices by states, capacity building of enablers, reverse pitching by incubators, technology exhibitions, corporate connect and more. "The programme is expected to bring together top policymakers, industry, academia, investors, startups, and all ecosystem enablers from across the globe,".

Made-in-India test kit to detect Omicron gets ICMR nod

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has approved a testing kit for detecting the Omicron variant of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus. The covid kit developed by Tata is called 'OmiSure' and will be an enhancement for the detection of the Omicron variant. The kit is manufactured by Tata Medical and Diagnostics. The tests have been performed as per the manufacturer's instructions. Responsibility for batch-to-batch consistency lies with the manufacturer.
- The Tata Medical and Diagnostics has developed a kit 'OmiSure' that can detect the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV2 in nasopharyngeal/oropharyngeal specimens during the RT-PCR tests. The test kit is compatible with all standard Real-Time PCR Machines. The test run time of this kit is 85 minutes. The result turnaround time, including sample collection and RNA extraction, is 130 minutes.

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh addressed 24th National Conference on e-Governance in Hyderabad

- Union Minister of Science and Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh has inaugurated the 24th National Conference on e-Governance in Hyderabad, Telangana. The theme of the two-day Conference is 'India's Techade: Digital Governance in a Post Pandemic World'. The conference has been organised by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) and the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), in association with the State Government of Telangana.
- The conference would provide considerable momentum to the e-governance initiatives across the country, providing opportunities for civil servants and industry captains to showcase their successful interventions in e-governance in improving end to end service delivery. Delegates from 28 states and 9 Union Territories along with academia, research institutions, IT industry would be participating in the conference through virtual mode.

EC hikes expenditure limits for candidates ahead of Assembly polls

- The Election Commission of India has increased the existing election expenditure limit for candidates in Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies, due to the rise in inflation. The new limits will be applicable in all upcoming elections in the country. The previous major revision in the election expenditure limit was done in 2014. It was further increased by 10% in 2020. EC had formed a Committee to study the cost factors and other related issues, and make suitable recommendations.

- The ceiling on parliamentary poll expenditure has been raised from 70 lakh to 95 lakh rupees in bigger states and 54 lakh to 75 lakhs in smaller states.
- The bigger states include Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Karnataka.

Gujarat launched second edition of the student start-up and innovation policy

- Gujarat Chief Minister, Bhupendra Patel has been launched “Student Start-ups and Innovation Policy 2.0 (SSIP-2.0)” for the next five years. The policy contains provisions for the establishment of active innovation and incubation centres in all universities in the state. The policy aims to cover 50 lakh students across 1,000 higher education institutes and 10,000 schools of innovation and entrepreneurship. The policy also aims to give assistance to 10,000 proof of concepts and prototypes developed by the students and to 1,000 proof of concepts developed by school children.

India joins Quad partners, Japan and South Korea for Sea Dragon exercise

- India and its partners in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad along with Canada and South Korea are participating in the multinational exercise Sea Dragon 2022 at Guam in the Western Pacific. The six nations that are participating in the exercise are the United States, Australia, Canada, India, Japan and South Korea.
- The exercise, primarily focused on anti-submarine warfare (ASW) training, will involve more than 270 hours of in-flight training and activities ranging from tracking simulated targets to tracking a US Navy submarine. Each event will be graded and the country scoring the highest points will receive the Dragon Belt award.
- Sea Dragon 22 focuses on anti-submarine warfare (ASW) training and excellence, which includes everything from tracking simulated targets to tracking a genuine US Navy submarine. Pilots and flight officers from all around the world develop strategies and discuss tactics in training sessions that take into account their individual countries’ skills and equipment.

PM Modi to inaugurate National Youth Festival on January 12

- Puducherry has been handpicked by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to host the 25th National Youth Festival. The 25th National Youth Festival is going to be held in Puducherry from 12th to 16th January 2022. The festival has been organised as part of the Azadi ki Amrit Mahotsav marking the 75th year of Independence, said Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports and Information and Broadcasting Anurag Thakur.
- The festival is likely to draw around 7000 youths in the age group of 18 to 22 from across the country. Around 500 youths from Puducherry will take part in the event.
- The government of India holds National Youth Festival, as a part of National Youth Week celebrations. It is organised with the aim of propagating the concept of national integration, brotherhood, the spirit of communal harmony, courage and adventure amongst the youth.
- This aim is achieved by organizing gatherings of youth and encouraging them to take part in different activities.

Akshaya Patra Foundation to help enhance effectiveness of mid-day meal scheme

- United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP) in India, has partnered with The Akshaya Patra Foundation (TAPF), a not-for-profit organization, to enhance the effectiveness of the Pradhan Mantri – Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) scheme (earlier known as National Programme for Mid-Day Meal in Schools). The partnership aims to enhance food safety and hygiene projects, capacity building of cooks-cum-helpers and nutritional quality of school meals.
- Under this collaboration, WFP and TAPF will share knowledge through workshops and policy and strategy dialogues with the government to enhance the quality of the school meal programme. Since its inception in 1961, school meals have been part of WFP's mission. WFP has six decades of experience supporting school feeding and working with more than 100 countries to set up sustainable national school feeding programmes.

UJALA completes 7 years of energy-efficient and affordable LED distribution

- The flagship UJALA programme of the Ministry of Power has successfully completed seven years of distributing and selling LED lights on January 05, 2022. Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) scheme was launched by Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi on January 05, 2015.
- UJALA initiative is the world's largest zero-subsidy domestic lighting programme with more than 36.78 crore LEDs distributed across the country.
- As on 5th January 2022, 47,778 million (48 billion) kilowatt-hour (kWh) per annum energy has been saved. The demand of 9,565 Megawatt (MW) has been avoided, along with 386 crore tonnes of reduction in CO2 emissions.

Ganjam declared child-marriage-free, becomes Odisha's first district to earn the distinction

- Odisha's Ganjam has declared itself a child marriage free district, the first in the State. The district administration has been able to stop as many as 450 child marriages and video-record 48,383 marriages in two years — 2020 and 2021. After verification, the Ganjam administration declared it a child marriage free district. Sarpanchs and task force committee members had sent recommendations that no child marriage had taken place in their respective areas.
- Ganjam had started a programme Nirbhaya Kadhi (Fearless bud). All heads of educational institutes were directed to inform the administration if any girl aged between 12 and 18 remained absent from school for five days. As many as one lakh teenagers have undergone counselling in the past two years. The administration also made the production of Aadhaar cards mandatory for any marriages to take place.

Ayush Minister Sarbananda Sonowal lays foundation stone for Heartfulness International Yoga academy

- Union Ayush Minister, Sarbananda Sonowal has laid the foundation stone of the Heartfulness International Yoga Academy in Hyderabad, Telangana. He also launched 75 crores suryanamaskar initiative as part of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav". The academy tries to reach all levels of society through training programmes and these will be overseen by an international team.

- This the academy has therapeutic Yoga rooms for consultation, one to one training spaces or small group classes; pre-natal Yoga rooms; a lecture hall with 200 sitting capacity; a full-fledged recording studio with editing suites for pre-recorded wellness programs; a recording Yoga hall fully equipped for Live online Yoga Classes; a Yoga library with books from every Yoga Institutions and access to Yoga research articles.

Himachal becomes, first smoke-free state of the country

- Himachal Pradesh became the first LPG enables, also, smoke-free state. This milestone was achieved due to the Ujjwala Scheme and Grahini Suvidha Yojana by Centre. The Ujjwala scheme was introduced by the government to get rid of the smoke. The Grahini Suvidha Scheme was introduced to assist the women of rural areas.
- Ujjwalla Yojna was started by the Centre government with the view to free the women of the country from indoor pollution. Along with this, the Himachal government also started the Grihini Suvidha Yojana to benefit as many women as possible, under the scheme.
- Under the Ujjwala yojana with an expenditure of Rs. 21.81 crore 1.36 lakh free domestic connections were given in Himachal, while under the Grihini Suvidha Yojana of the Himachal government, 3.23 lakh housewives were provided free gas cylinders at a cost of Rs. 120 crore.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched NEAT 3.0

- Union Minister of Education, Dharmendra Pradhan has launched National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT 3.0), and regional language textbooks prescribed by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). NEAT 3.0 aims to provide the best-developed ed-tech solutions and courses to students on a single platform. It will be beneficial especially among the economically disadvantaged students. It is a Public-Private Partnership model between the Government (through its implementing agency AICTE) and the Education Technology companies.
- 58 global and Indian ed-tech startup companies have come together for this solution and are offering 100 courses and e-resources to enhance learning outcomes, developing employable skills as well as overcome learning loss. The collaboration of global ed-tech companies and Indian start-ups by way of NEAT will help to build on the digital education bedrock of India.

Telangana stood first in the country in the list of highest number of ODF Plus villages

- Telangana stood first in the country in the list of the highest number of open defecation free (ODF Plus) villages under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase-II programme till December 31, 2021. As many as 13,737 out of 14,200 villages in the State are on the ODF Plus list, which is 96.74%. This was followed by Tamil Nadu with 4,432 villages (35.39%) and Karnataka with 1,511 villages (5.59%). Gujarat took the 17th position with only 83 villages (0.45%).
- The State government has enacted a new Telangana Panchayat Raj Act to ensure the holistic development of villages. A secretary has been posted in every panchayat for smooth execution of welfare programmes, close monitoring, digital reporting and to ensure the prevalence of good governance in villages. Multi-purpose workers have been appointed

to maintain proper sanitation in villages. There are 12,769 dedicated compost sheds in all gram panchayats. Tankers have also been provided to water the plants for greenery in villages.

Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Major Dhyan Chand Sports University in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone of Major Dhyan Chand Sports University in Meerut. The University will be established at Salawa and Kaili villages of Sardhana town in Meerut at an estimated cost of about 700 Crore rupees. The University will have the capacity of training 1080 sportspersons including 540 female and 540 male sportspersons.
- The Sports University will be equipped with modern and state-of-the-art sports infrastructure including synthetic Hockey ground, Football ground, Basketball, Volleyball, Handball, Kabaddi ground, Lawn tennis court, Gymnasium hall, Synthetic running stadium, Swimming pool, Multipurpose hall, and a Cycling Velodrome.
- It will also house facilities for Shooting, Squash, Gymnastics, Weightlifting, Archery, Canoeing, and Kayaking, among other facilities with the capacity of training.

Nirmala Sitharaman chairs 46th GST council meet ahead of Union Budget 2022

- The GST Council's 46th meeting was held in New Delhi under the chairmanship of Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman. The GST Council has recommended deferring the decision to change the rates in textiles recommended in the 45th GST Council meeting. Consequently, the existing GST rates of 5 % instead of 12% in textile sector would continue.
- This convention attains special significance as it comes days ahead of Sitharaman presenting the much-anticipated Union Budget 2022-23 on February 1, for which she has been holding a series of pre-budget consultations with stakeholders.

First electric boat built for Kochi Water Metro Project handed over to KMRL

- In Kerala, the first battery-powered electric boat built for the Kochi Water Metro Project was handed over to the Kochi Metro Rail Limited. The fully air-conditioned boat is among the 23 boats being built by the Cochin Shipyard for the 747-crore rupee Kochi Water Metro project. Kochi Water Metro system will have 78 ferries, linking 38 terminals spread over 76 route kilometres.
- The battery-powered water metro boat can carry 100 passengers. KMRL said it was for the first time in the world a centrally controlled integrated water transport system with a large fleet is powered by the battery.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched 100-day reading campaign 'Padhe Bharat'

- Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has launched a 100-day reading campaign 'Padhe Bharat'. The launch of the 100 Days Reading Campaign is in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 which lays emphasis on the promotion of joyful reading culture for children by ensuring the availability of age-appropriate reading books for children in local/mother tongue/regional/tribal language.

- The Minister while launching the campaign has underlined the importance of reading that children need to develop to ensure continuous and lifelong learning. He also reinforced that the habit of reading, if inculcated at an early age, helps in brain development and enhances imagination and provide a conducive learning environment for children.

Naveen Patnaik launched Digital Life Certificate system for pensioners 2022

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has launched an online service for the verification of identity and submission of life certificates for pensioners of the state government. The chief minister virtually launched the new initiative while attending the orientation programme for newly recruited 153 officers of Odisha Civil Services.
- Identification and life certificates can now be submitted by the pensioners using an artificial intelligence-based video-verification process.
- It will be of immense help to the pensioners as they can submit their identification and life certificates digitally, without visiting any government office simply by using their mobile phones.

Telangana Governor inaugurates Numaish 2022 in Hyderabad

- Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan on Saturday inaugurated the 81st All India Industrial Exhibition 'Numaish 2022' organized by the Exhibition Society in Hyderabad.
- Telangana Home Minister Mahmood Ali was invited as the chief guest at the event.
- Addressing the event, Soundararajan said, "As a doctor, I am very happy because a COVID-19 vaccination campaign is also conducted here. I really appreciate the efforts taken for the safety of the people of Telangana."

Centre approves 9544 Cr grant to Jharkhand under Jal Jeevan Mission

- 315 water supply schemes of Rs. 9,544 Crore approved under Jal Jeevan Mission for Jharkhand. These schemes will providetap water supply to about 8 lakh rural households in 4,424 villages of the State.
- On 15th August 2019, at the time of launch of Jal Jeevan Mission, only 3.45 lakh (5.83%) rural homes in Jharkhand had tap water supply. In 28 months, despite C-19 pandemic and lockdown disruptions, the State has provided tap water connection to 6.73 lakh (11.38%) households. As on date, out of 59.23 lakh rural household in the State, 10.18 lakh (17.20%) are getting tap water supply in their homes.

UP's Jhansi Railway Station Gets A New Name, Called Veerangana Laxmibai Station

- Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh has announced that the government of UP has renamed the Jhansi Railway Station, in Jhansi, UP as "Veerangana Laxmibai Railway Station" after Rani Laxmibai. The announcement was made by UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. A notification to this effect has been issued by the UP government and the Railways has started preparations to implement the change. Earlier the Mughalsarai Railway station was renamed as Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya junction and the Faizabad Railway station as Ayodhya Cantt.

Sikkim Governor renamed Jawaharlal Nehru Road as 'Narendra Modi Marg'

- Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad, has named a new road Narendra Modi Marg. The Governor viewed the road under Kabi Lungchok from Kyongsala, 4th mile. This is an alternative to Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg. The National Monument at National Highway 310 was built by Border Roads Organization. It will be easier for Indian tourists to reach Nathula Border. The stretch, constructed by Border Roads Organisation, has reduced the distance between Gangtok and Tsomgo lake by 15 km.

India votes in favour of UNSC resolution to renew mandate of counter-terrorism committee executive directorate

- India will chair the Counter-Terrorism Committee of UNSC in January 2022 after 10 years. The Counter-Terrorism Committee was established by Security Council resolution 1373 adopted unanimously on 28 September 2001 in the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks in the US. The Committee was tasked with monitoring the implementation of resolution 1373 which requested countries to implement a number of measures aimed at enhancing their legal and institutional ability to counter terrorist activities at home and around the world.
- This includes taking steps to criminalize the financing of terrorism, freezing any funds related to persons involved in acts of terrorism, denying all forms of financial support for terrorist groups, suppressing the provision of safe haven, sustenance or support for terrorists and sharing information with other governments on any groups practising or planning terrorist acts.

Jawaharlal Nehru Road renamed as 'Narendra Modi Marg' by Sikkim Guv

- Governor of Sikkim, Ganga Prasad, has named a new road Narendra Modi Marg. The Governor viewed the road under Kabi Lungchok from Kyongsala, 4th mile. This is an alternative to Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg. The National Monument at National Highway 310 was built by Border Roads Organization. It will be easier for Indian tourists to reach Nathula Border. The stretch, constructed by Border Roads Organisation, has reduced the distance between Gangtok and Tsomgo lake by 15 km.

SPORTS

Women's Asia Cup Hockey: India beat China 2-0 to win Bronze medal

- India defeated China, 2-0 to win the bronze medal at the 2022 Women's Hockey Asia Cup tournament. The 2022 Women's Hockey Asia Cup was the 10th edition of the quadrennial Women's Hockey Asia Cup. The tournament was held from January 21 to 28, 2022 at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Muscat, Oman. Japan defeated South Korea 4-2 in the final to win their third title at the Women's Hockey Asia Cup tournament.

Rafael Nadal Beats Daniil Medvedev In Australian Open Final

- Rafael Nadal (Spain) has defeated Daniil Medvedev (Russia) 2-6,6-7,6-4,6-4,7-5 to win the Men's Singles title at the Australian Open 2022. This is his 21st Major title, becoming the first male player to do so. In women's tennis, Margaret Court (Australian) has 24 singles majors, an all-time record. In women's, World Number 1 Ashleigh Barty of Australia

defeated Danielle Collins of the US, 6-3 7-6, to win women's singles final title at the Australian Open 2022.

The winners of Australian Open Tennis Title 2022:

Events	Winners
Men's Singles	Rafael Nadal
Women's Singles	Ashleigh Barty
Men's Doubles	Thanasi Kokkinakis and Nick Kyrgios
Women's Doubles	Barbora Krejčíková and Kateřina Siniaková
Mixed Doubles	Kristina Mladenovic and Ivan Dodig

RPSG Group's IPL team to be called Lucknow Super Giants

- Lucknow's IPL franchise, which is owned by Sanjiv Goenka (RPSG Group), has been renamed Lucknow Super Giants ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2022 mega auction. Lucknow team roped in KL Rahul as their captain and also roped in Australia all-rounder Marcus Stoinis and leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi. The official IPL team of Lucknow crowdsourced its name from fans and a consumer engagement campaign was launched on social media on 3rd Jan 2022.
- Last year, the franchise was purchased by the Sanjiv Goenka-owned of the RPSG group for an amount of Rs 7090 Crores. The other new team to enter the competition is from Ahmedabad who were bought by the Irelia Company Pte Ltd. (CVC Capital Partners) for Rs 5635 Crores.

Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra gets Param Vishisht Seva Medal

- Olympian Neeraj Chopra will be honoured with Param Vishisht Seva Medal on the eve of Republic Day by President Ram Nath Kovind. He is the first track and field athlete to win a gold medal for India at the Olympics. Neeraj is a Subedar in the Indian Army. He had enrolled in 4 Rajputana Rifles as a direct entry to Naib Subedar in 2016. He was chosen for training at the Mission Olympics Wing and Army Sports Institute in Pune.
- Chopra was conferred with the Arjuna Award in 2018 and Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM) in 2020 for his excellence in sports.
- The Haryana state will also showcase the life-size replica of Tokyo Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra in the form of a tableau during the 2022 Republic Day parade.

17th edition of ICC Awards 2021 announced

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced the winners of the 17th edition of ICC Awards for the year 2021 to recognise and honour the best international cricket players of the previous 12 months, between January 01, 2021, and December 31, 2021. Notably, these awards honour players for their performances for their respective national side in a year. The apex international cricket governing body has named the winners in the different categories such as: Emerging Cricketer of the Year, T20I Cricketer of the Year and Associate Cricketer of the Year for both men's and women's cricket.

Ladakh team wins 9th IHA national women's ice hockey championship

- The women's team from Ladakh has lifted the 9th National Women's Ice Hockey Championship in Himachal Pradesh. The championship was organised by the Ice Hockey Association of India at Kaza area in the Lahaul-Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh. A total of six teams participated in the championship from Delhi, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Telangana and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police.

Babar Azam named captain of ICC Men's T20 Team of Year 2021

- Pakistani skipper Babar Azam has been named as the captain of the ICC Men's T20I team of the year for 2021. The ICC Team of the Year recognises the 11 best players in men's cricket who have impressed one and all with their performances in a calendar year, either with the bat, ball or their all-round performance. No Indian male player has found a place in the team of 11.
- However, in ICC Women's T20I Team of the Year for 2021, Smriti Mandhana is the only Indian women player named in the 11 member team. Smriti has made in the list for third time in the T20I team of the year after 2018 (opener) and 2019 (number three). England's Nat Sciver has been made the captain of ICC Women's T20I Team of the Year for 2021.

Sania Mirza: India tennis star to retire after 2022 season

- Sania Mirza, the most successful woman in Indian tennis history, has decided that she is bidding adieu to the sports at the end of 2022.
- The 35-year-old had already bowed out of singles competitions in 2013. Sania has six Grand Slam titles in women's doubles and mixed doubles to her name. Her last headline-grabbing win came with Chinese partner Shuai Zhang in women's doubles at the Ostrava Open on September 26, 2021.

AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022 will be host by India

- India is all set to host AFC Women's football Asian Cup India 2022 from 20th January 2022 in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, and Pune. The tournament will witness 12 teams competing for the trophy. AFC Women's Asian Cup India will also be the final stage of Asian qualification for the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand. Five teams will qualify for the main event directly while two of them will progress to the inter-confederation play-offs.
- Japan are the defending champions of the Women's Asian Cup, having won it in 2018. Hosts India has been placed in Group A alongside China, Chinese Taipei, and Iran. Meanwhile, Australia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia have been placed in Group B. Defending champions Japan find themselves in Group C along with South Korea, Vietnam, and Myanmar.

Himachal Pradesh: Women's ninth ice hockey nationals start at Kaza rink

- In Himachal Pradesh, the 9th women National Ice Hockey Championship-2022 was inaugurated at Ice Skating Rink, Kaza in Lahaul Spiti district. For the first time in the state, Ice Hockey competition & development camp is being organized at the national level.

Teams from Himachal Pradesh, Telengana, Ladakh, ITBP Ladakh, Chandigarh & Delhi are participating in this mega event.

- The state Chief Minister, Jai Ram Thakur inaugurated the Championship. This is the first time that National Level Ice Hockey Competition and Development Camp was being held in the State. In 2019, the first Basic Ice Hockey ten days Coaching Camp was organized at Kaza by State Youth Services and Sports Department, in collaboration with the Ladakh Women Ice Hockey Foundation. The State Government has already announced the High-Altitude Sports Center at Kaza with an estimated cost of Rs. 16 crore.

Savita Punia named captain of Indian women hockey team for Asia Cup in Muscat

- Goalkeeper Savita Punia will lead India at the upcoming women's Asia Cup in Muscat as Hockey India named a strong 18-member squad for the event, including 16 players that featured at the Tokyo Olympics. Since regular skipper Rani Rampal is recovering from an injury in Bengaluru, Savita will lead the side in the tournament, which is scheduled to be held between January 21-28.
- Indian women are the defending champions. Seven other teams competing at the Women's Hockey Asia Cup 2022 are China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Thailand.

Russian Aslan Karatsev won third ATP Title in Sydney Tennis Classic

- In tennis, Aslan Karatsev defeated Andy Murray by 6-3, 6-3, to win men's single title at the Sydney Tennis Classic final, to claim his third ATP Tour title. The women's single title was claimed by Spanish world number nine Paula Badosa, who defeated Barbora Krejickova 6-3 4-6 7-6(4), to capture her third career title.

Tasnim Mir becomes first Indian to claim world no. 1 status in u-19 girls singles

- Tasnim Mir became the first Indian to grab World no 1 in Under-19 (U-19) Girls Singles category with 10,810 points in the latest Badminton World Federation (BWF) Junior rankings. She is followed by Mariia Golubeva from Russia and Lucia Rodriguez from Spain. In 2021, she won 3 Junior International Tournaments held in Bulgaria, France and Belgium, which helped her climb up for No.1 position. The World No.1 position in Boy's Singles is shared by Lakshya Sen, Siril Verma and Aditya Joshi.

Former West Indies Cricket Captain Clive Lloyd Receives Knighthood

- Former West Indies Captain Clive Lloyd received Knighthood from Prince William, the Duke of Cambridge at Windsor Castle, for his services towards the game of cricket. On the same day, England's world cup-winning captain Eoin Morgan was awarded with CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire) by Prince William for his services towards the game of cricket. The CBE is the highest-ranking Order of the British Empire award, followed by OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire) and then MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire).
- A knighthood is a title that is given to a man by a British king or queen for his achievements or his service to his country. A man who has been given a knighthood can put 'Sir' in front of his name instead of 'Mr'.

India Open: Lakshya Sen stuns world champion Loh Kean Yew to win maiden Super 500 title

- Indian badminton player Lakshya Sen has defeated World Champion Loh Kean Yew of Singapore, in the men's singles final of India Open 2022 to secure his maiden Super 500 title. The 20-year-old Sen gained victory over Yew in straight games 24-22, 21-17. The 2022 India Open (badminton), officially Yonex-Sunrise India Open 2022, was held at the K. D. Jadhav Indoor Hall in New Delhi, India, from 11 to 16 January 2022.

16th 'India Digital Summit' organised by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Piyush Goyal virtually addressed the 16th India Digital Summit, 2022. The two-day virtual event was organised on January 11 and 12, 2022 by the Internet And Mobile Association of India (IAMAI). The theme of the summit was "Supercharging Startups".
- India Digital Summit is the oldest event of the digital industry in India. During the event, the Minister unveiled 'LEAP' as the way forward to further strengthen our Startups ecosystem. LEAP stands for "Leverage, Encourage, Access & Promote".

Virat Kohli quits as India's Test captaincy after seven years

- Virat Kohli has stepped down as the Test captain of the Indian national cricket team after seven years. He first led the national side in Test cricket in 2014 against Australia. He guided the team to an unprecedented back-to-back Test series wins Down Under. Kohli also thanked former head coach Ravi Shastri and former captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni in his statement.
- In 2021, India also finished as the runners-up in the inaugural ICC World Test Championship. Kohli had recently stepped down as India's T20I captain and was subsequently removed as the ODI captain ahead of the South Africa tour. India also became a top-ranked Test side in the world.

AISCD will host the first World Deaf T20 Cricket Championship in Kerala from January 10 to 20, 2023

- The All India Sports Council of the Deaf has got approval from the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD) to host the first World Deaf T20 Cricket Championship in Kerala from January 10-20, 2023. This championship was planned to be conducted in 2020-21 but due to the sudden outbreak of coronavirus, it was postponed first to 2022 & now fixed for 2023. A minimum of eight countries are expected to take part in the championship and this kind of international event is being held in India with the approval of the ICSD for the first time."
- AISCD is the only Centre-recognised national sports federation for the deaf, while the ICSD is the only international federation recognized as governing body of the deaf sports movement and Deaflympics sanctioned by the International Olympic Committee.

New Zealand's Ajaz Patel wins ICC Player of the Month Award for December 2021

- India-born New Zealand cricketer Ajaz Patel has won the ICC Player of the Month award for December following his stupendous 10-wicket haul against Virat Kohli and Co. in the second

Test in Mumbai. The left-arm spinner was nominated for the award alongside India opener Mayank Agarwal and Australian pacer Mitchell Starc but beat them to it on the back of his incredibly rare feat.

- Ajaz picked up 14 wickets in the Mumbai Test match in early December against India, including all 10 in the first innings, to become only the third player in Test history, after Jim Laker and Anil Kumble, to achieve the remarkable milestone.

Tata group to replace Vivo as IPL title sponsor

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has informed that Tata group has replaced Chinese mobile phone manufacturer Vivo as the title sponsor of the Indian Premier League (IPL) for the 2022 and 2023 seasons. The multinational conglomerate will pay Rs. 300 crore per year as the title sponsor of IPL for the next two seasons. This is about 60% of what Vivo would have paid.

14-yr-old Bharath Subramaniyam becomes India's 73rd chess Grandmaster

- Tamil Nadu's Bharath Subramaniyam became India's 73rd chess Grandmaster. He secured the third and final Grandmaster norm at an event at Cattolica in Italy. He scored 6.5 points from nine rounds along with four others and finish seventh in the event. He secured his third GM norm here as well as touched the requisite 2,500 (Elo) mark.
- Fellow Indian player M R Lalith Babu became the winner in the tournament, with seven points. He won the title on the basis of a better tie-break score as he tied with three others including Anton Korobov from Ukraine. In order to become a GM, a player has to secure three GM norms as well as cross the live rating of 2,500 Elo points.

Five golfers including Aditi Ashok among 10 more athletes added to TOPS

- Mission Olympic Cell under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has added ten athletes to the list of athletes who would be provided support under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS). Total 10 new entrants, five athletes have been included in the Core group while five have been added to the Development group. Now, the total number of athletes under TOPS has increased to 301, which includes 107 in the Core group while 294 in the Development group.
- TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme) is a flagship program of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports which was launched in September 2014 and revamped in April 2018.
- The scheme aims to provide all requisite support and assistance to probable athletes identified for the Olympic Games/Paralympic Games and other major international tournaments so that they can win medals.

17-year old Nodirbek Abdusattorov is the new Rapid World Champion

- Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzbekistan), won the World Rapid Chess Championship 2021 by defeating Ian Nepomniachtchi (Russia) in a tiebreaker and dethroning Magnus Carlsen, the current World Number 1. 2020 FIDE Championship was won by Magnus Carlsen.
- Nodirbek won the title along with a prize of \$60,000, where he lost only one match against the Ukrainian Anton Korobov, and tied in five others. The Uzbeki Grand Master (GM), received the Mard Uglon ("Brave Son") Presidential medal.

Monfils Fends Off Khachanov To Clinch Adelaide Title

- French tennis player Gael Monfils beat Russia's Karen Khachanov in the men's singles event of the 2022 Adelaide International 1 to claim the 11th ATP title of his career. In the women's category, World number one Australian star Ashleigh Barty beat Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan to win her second Adelaide International title. 2022 Adelaide International 1 was a combined ATP Tour 250 and WTA 500 tournament.

LLC Appointed Cricketer Jhulan Goswami as Ambassador

- Legends League Cricket (LLC) has appointed Jhulan Goswami as an ambassador to its All Women Match Official Team to promote Women's Empowerment initiatives of the LLC and to increase participation of women in cricket. The LLC set up an All Women Match Official Team for the League. This is the first of its all-women official teams that would officiate an entire men's league.
- Legends League Cricket (LLC) is the professional cricket league for retired cricketers. The inaugural session of LLC will be organized from January 20 2022 at Oman Cricket Stadium in Muscat, Oman. Legends League Cricket (LLC) 2022 teams: Indian Maharaja, Aisan Lions, World Giants.

Bharath Subramaniam becomes India's 73rd chess GM

- Fourteen-year old Bharath Subramaniam on Sunday became India's 73rd chess Grandmaster, securing the third and final GM norm at an event in Italy.
- The Chennai-based player scored 6.5 points from nine rounds along with four others to finish seventh overall in the event held at Cattolica.
- He obtained his third GM norm here and also touched the requisite 2,500 (Elo) mark.
- Fellow Indian player M R Lalith Babu emerged winner in the tournament with seven points, winning the title on the basis of a better tie-break score after he tied with three others including top-seed Anton Korobov (Ukraine).
- Bharath finished with six wins and one draw while losing two games - against Korobov and Lalith Babu.

Winter Olympics-bound Arif Khan included in TOPS, granted Rs 17.46 lakh for training

- Sports Ministry's Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) of India has approved the inclusion of Alpine Skiing athlete Md Arif Khan in the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) Core group, until the Winter Olympics, scheduled this February in Beijing, China. The feat earned Khan the unique distinction of becoming the first Indian to win direct quota spots in two different Winter Olympics events, besides being the first athlete from the country to seal a berth at the Winter Olympic games 2022.
- Khan will take part in the Winter Olympics in the Slalom and Giant Slalom events. He has also been approved an amount of Rs 17.46 Lakh under TOPS towards training in Europe and procurement of equipment, ahead of the grand event in China. Khan's current training base is in Austria, where he is accompanied by his coach and physio.

South African Wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock announces retirement from Test cricket

- South Africa's wicketkeeper-batter Quinton de Kock has announced his retirement from Test cricket with immediate effect late. His announcement came just hours after South Africa's 113-run defeat to India in the first Test of the three-match series.
- De Kock cited his intentions to spend more time with his growing family for the timing. In a statement, the 29-year-old de Kock said he made his decision in order to have more time to spend with his family. De Kock and his wife Sasha are expecting their first child in the coming days.

New Zealand's senior batter Ross Taylor announces retirement from international cricket

- Veteran New Zealand batter, Ross Taylor has announced retirement from international cricket at the end of the ongoing domestic season. Taylor hence will play his final appearance in the second Test against Bangladesh, where will equal Daniel Vettori's record of 112 tests for New Zealand. He will be part of the one-day international series in Australia. He is the first cricketer to play more than 100 matches for New Zealand in all 3 formats.

Indian bowler Jasprit Bumrah 100 Test Wickets

- Jasprit Bumrah has achieved the milestone of picking 100 wickets away from home in 22 Test matches. Van der Dussen became Bumrah's 100th Test victim in overseas conditions. The 28-year-old now has 105 wickets, out of which 101 have come away from home. Bumrah, who made his Test debut in South Africa in 2018, has played 25 Tests, 23 of which have come on the road.

Indian bowler Mohammed Shami becomes 11th Indian bowler to take 200 wickets in Test cricket

- Mohammed Shami became just the 11th Indian bowler to claim 200 wickets in Test cricket in just 55 test matches. During this process, he became the only 5th Indian pacer to bag 200 wickets in the purest format of the game. Also, Shami is the third fastest Indian pacer to reach this milestone as Kapil Dev and Javagal Srinath bagged 200 Test wickets in 50 and 54 Tests respectively.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Omicron Testing Kit, 'Om', by CDRI To Be Launched in February

- CSIR-Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI) has developed an indigenous RT-PCR diagnostic kit, 'Om', for the testing of the Omicron variant of coronavirus. It is the first kit made by any government institution, and the third to be made indigenously, for specific testing of Omicron. Currently, two more such kits developed by private players are available in the market. The kit will give test results in around two hours.
- Om enables quick and cost-effective detection of omicron variants over genome sequencing for a large population. It was made within two months and will cost around Rs 150.
- Further, it will give the test results in around two hours. According to the scientists, it can also be aligned for the detection of other emerging variants of Covid infection and other respiratory infections.

- Once the kit gets approval from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), it will be launched by mid-February. The kit has been referred to the ICMR-National Institute of Virology (NIV) and is yet to be validated.

ISRO Successfully Tests Vikas Engine Of India's Gaganyaan Human Space Mission

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully test-fired the Vikas engine that would power India's first human-carry rocket (Gaganyaan human space mission). This qualification test of the Vikas Engine for the Gaganyaan human space mission was conducted by ISRO at Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu. More such tests on Vikas Engine will be conducted in the future by ISRO.
- The test was carried out to verify the robustness of the engine by operating beyond its nominal operating conditions (fuel-oxidiser ratio and chamber pressure). The performance of the engine met the test objectives and the engine parameters were closely matching with the predictions during the entire duration of the test.

Jahnavi Dangeti: 'India's First' who completed the prestigious NASA programme

- Jahnavi Dangeti, a young girl from Andhra Pradesh, has just completed NASA's International Air and Space Program (iasp nasa) at the Kennedy Space Centre in Alabama, US, making her the first Indian to accomplish this feat. She is part of a carefully shortlisted group of 20 students from around the world. She has been a campus ambassador for numerous organisations, including Star (Space Technology and Aeronautical Rocketry), an Indian private aerospace company. She is a member of the International Organization of Aspiring Astronauts (IOAA). She participated in many events and workshops of Nasa, Isro and other space agencies.

Isro successfully conducts cryo engine test for Gaganyaan rocket

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully conducted the qualification test of Cryogenic Engine for Gaganyaan programme for a duration of 720 seconds at ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC), Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu. According to the space agency, the performance of the engine met the test objectives and the engine parameters were closely matching with the predictions during the entire duration of the test.
- This successful long-duration test is a major milestone for the Human Space Programme – Gaganyaan. It ensures the reliability and robustness of the cryogenic engine for induction into the human-rated launch vehicle for Gaganyaan. Further, this engine will undergo four more tests for a cumulative duration of 1810 seconds. Subsequently, one more engine will undergo two short-duration tests & one long-duration test to complete the cryogenic engine qualification for Gaganyaan Programme.

OBITUARY

Renowned Marathi writer, social activist Dr Anil Awachat passes away at 78

- Renowned Marathi author and social activist Anil Awachat has passed away. Awachat was the founder of a de-addiction center called Muktangan Rehabilitation Center in Pune in 1986. He was known for his several Marathi books like "Manasa", Swatahavishayi, "Gard", "Karyarat", "Karyamagna" and "Kutuhalapoti".

- In the early 1970s, he edited a popular Marathi journal called Sadhana which featured his trenchant writings on social issues, notably in his reportage of the 1972 drought that ravaged Maharashtra. His many books include 'Kondmara' (1985) on Dalit atrocities and 'Dharmik' (1989), a penetrating expose on the cult of false godmen in Maharashtra.

Milena Salvini, ambassador of Kathakali in France, passes away at 84

- Noted Kathakali dancer Milena Salvini of France has passed away. Italian-born Salvini was a regular visitor to India, especially Kerala where she learnt Kathakali, and ran 'Centre Mandapa', a school for Indian dance forms, in Paris. The Government of India conferred the Padma Shri award on Salvini in 2019 for her contribution in the field of performing arts.

Archaeologist R Nagaswamy passes away at 91

- Noted Indian historian, archaeologist and epigraphist from Tamil Nadu, Ramachandran Nagaswamy, has passed away. He was 91. He first director of the Tamil Nadu government's Department of Archaeology. Nagaswamy was known for his work on temple inscriptions and art history of Tamil Nadu.
- In 2018, Nagaswamy was conferred with the Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian award. He has authored more than 100 books and his latest book was 'Senthamizh Naadum Pandbum', published in January 2022.

Former India Footballer Subhas Bhowmick Dies At 72

- Former India footballer Subhas Bhowmick has passed away at the age of 72 years due to prolonged illness. He was born in West Bengal. He was part of the Indian Football team that won a bronze medal at the 1970 Asian Games (held in Bangkok). He also scored a hat-trick against the Philippines in the Merdeka Cup in 1971. He has also served as the coach for football teams like Mohun Bagan and East Bengal.

World's oldest man dies at 112 in Spain

- Guinness World Records holder for the oldest person living (male), Saturnino de la Fuente García (Spain) has passed away at the age of 112 years and 341 days.
- Guinness World Records holder for the oldest person living (male), Saturnino de la Fuente García (Spain) has passed away at the age of 112 years and 341 days. Saturnino claimed the record as the oldest person living (male) in September 2021 when he was exactly 112 years and 211 days. He was born on February 11, 1909, in the Puente Castro neighbourhood of León in Spain.

Legendary cartoonist and illustrator Narayan Debnath passes away

- Legendary Bengali comics artist, writer and illustrator, Narayan Debnath, has passed away after a prolonged illness. He was 97. The celebrated cartoonist was the creator of popular Bengali comic strips like Handa Bhonda (1962), Bantul the Great (1965) and Nonte Phonte (1969). He holds the record of longest-running comics by an individual artiste for the Handa Bhonda comics series which completed its continuous 60 years of running. In 2021, Debnath was awarded Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in India.

M.K. Prasad, noted ecologist and 'Save Silent Valley' campaigner, passes away

- Noted environmentalist & 'Save Silent Valley' campaigner Prof M K Prasad passed away recently. He was a prominent figure in the historic grassroots level movement to save the evergreen tropical rain forests in Kerala's Silent Valley from destruction. He had also led the popular science movement, 'Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishath'. Prof. Prasad, who had served as Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Calicut University, was in the forefront of environment protection activities in the State.

Shaoli Mitra, eminent theatre personality, actress dies at 73

- Renowned Bengali theatre personality Saoli Mitra has passed away. She had acted in Ritwik Ghatak's avant garde film Jukti Takko aar Gappo in 1974. She also wrote, directed and acted in the hugely popular Katha Amritsamman (Words that are like Nectar) another adaptation of the Mahabharata.
- Mitra, who was the recipient of Sangeet Natak Akademi in 2003, Padma Shri in 2009, and Banga Bibhusan in 2012 would be remembered by her fans and critics alike for her solo performance as Draupadi in Naathvati Anaathbat (Five husbands, yet an orphan), which she also wrote and directed, and as Sita on Sitakatha.

Former Mali President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita dies aged 76

- The former President of Mali, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, who was ousted in a military coup, has passed away. Mr Keita had ruled Mali for seven years, since September 2013, till he was overthrown in a military coup in August 2020. He had also served as prime minister of the country from 1994 to 2000. He had promised to restore Mali's honour as a model for democracy in West Africa as he campaigned as a unifying figure in his fractured country, pledging "zero tolerance" for corruption.

Padma Shri awardee, eminent social activist Shanti Devi dies in Odisha

- Odisha's social worker and Padma Shri awardee Shanti Devi, who was remembered as the voice of the poor, has passed away. She was 88. She was also called Lugdi Devi. She was known for her dedication towards the underprivileged community and restoring peace in the Maoist-affected areas in Odisha. She has received the prestigious Padma Shri award from President Ram Nath Kovind on November 9, 2021.

Kathak maestro Pandit Birju Maharaj passes away at 83

- Legendary Kathak dancer, Pandit Birju Maharaj has passed away at the age of 83. A recipient of the country's second-highest civilian award, Padma Vibhushan, he was fondly called Pandit-ji or Maharaj-ji by his disciples and legions of followers and was one of India's best-known artistes.
- Birju Maharaj was a descendant of the Maharaj family of Kathak dancers, which includes his two uncles, Shambhu Maharaj and Lachhu Maharaj, and his father and guru, Acchan Maharaj. Birju Maharaj was also a singer par excellence, having command over Thumri, Dadra, Bhajan and Ghazal.

29-year-old Olympic & World Medallist Deon Lendore Passes Away In Car Crash In Texas

- Olympic athlete Deon Lendore, who participated in the 400 meters race at the 2020 Olympics, passed away at the age of 29 years due to a fatal car accident in Texas, United States (US). He was born on 28 October 1992 in Trinidad and Tobago (the Caribbean Islands, South America), was an expert of 400 meters championships. He participated in the London Olympics in 2012 and won a Bronze medal in 4×400 meter relay. He also participated in the Tokyo Olympic 2021 and in 2016 Rio Olympics.

Revolutionary Kannada writer and activist Champa passes away at 83

- Prominent Kannada writer Chandrashekhara Patil, popularly known as “Champa”, passed away at the age of 82. He was a Kannada language activist, a poet and a playwright and also served as President of the Kannada Sahitya Parishat (KSP) and Chairman of the Kannada Development Authority.

David Sassoli European Parliament President, dies aged 65

- European Parliament President, David Sassoli has passed away due to health issues. He had served as the President of the European Parliament from July 2019 until his death in January 2022. He was first elected as a member of the European Parliament (MEP) in 2009.
- Later in July 2014, Sassoli was elected Vice-President of the European Parliament. In the 2019 European Parliament election in Italy, he was elected as new president with 128,533 votes. European Parliament is one of the seven branches of the EU. Its headquarter is at Strasbourg, France.

Oscar, Emmy, Grammy-winning lyricist Marilyn Bergman dies at 93

- Marilyn Bergman, the Oscar, Emmy and Grammy-winning American lyricist and songwriter has passed away. Bergman collaborated with her husband, Alan Bergman for song-writing. The renowned music-writing duo wrote the music and lyrics for numerous celebrated television shows, films, and stage musicals. The pair were nominated for Oscars 16 times and won three times.

Sidney Poitier, first black man to win Oscar for best actor, dies at 94

- Bahamian-American actor Sidney Poitier, who won an Academy Award for Best Actor in 1964, has died at the age of 94. In 1963, Poitier had made a film in Arizona, Lilies of the Field. The performance led to a huge milestone making him the first black winner of a lead-acting Oscar. He was awarded the US Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009 by President Obama for his work.
- Sidney Poitier started his career as an actor in theatre in the 1940s before his breakthrough film role in the 1950 release No Way Out. Over a five-decade career in films, he worked both as an actor and director. His last appearance on screen was in the 1997 film Jackal.

Shillong Chamber Choir founder Neil Nongkynrih dies at 52

- Founder of Shillong Chamber Choir (SCC) and renowned Indian concert pianist Neil Nongkynrih passed away. In 2010, SCC performed for former US President Barack Obama & Michelle Obama during their visit to India. SCC's version of 'Vande Maataram' was played

during the live telecast program Indian space rocket Chandrayaan – 2's landing on the moon. In 2015, he was awarded the Padma Shri – India's fourth-highest civilian honour.

Padmashri Sindhutai Sapkal passed away at the age of 73

- Social worker Sindhutai Sapkal, who was called as 'Mother of Orphans' passed away at the age of 73 years. She was also referred to just as 'Sindhutai' or 'Mai'. She was awarded the Padma Shri in 2021 in the Social Work category. Apart from this, she had received more than 750 awards and honours in her lifetime. She adopted close to 2,000 orphans and is grandmother to even more. She was from Maharashtra. A biopic on her life titled "Mee Sindhutai Sapkal" was released in the year 2010.

Veteran Vice Admiral S H Sarma passed away at the age of 100

- The Indian Navy's 1971 Indo-Pak war veteran Vice Admiral S.H. Sarma has passed away, at the age of 100. He was the Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet during the 1971 war. India had defeated Pakistan in the 1971 war leading to the creation of Bangladesh. Vice Admiral Sarma had celebrated his 100th birthday on December 1 last year. He also took part in the Azadi ka Amrut Mahotsav celebration in Delhi recently.
- Sarma was the Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet during the 1971 war. India had defeated Pakistan in the 1971 war leading to the creation of Bangladesh.

Hindi film producer Vijay Galani passed away

- Bollywood film producer Vijay Galani has passed away. He was suffering from blood cancer and was in London for seeking treatment. He is known for producing films like Salman Khan's Suryavanshi (1992), Govinda and Manisha Koirala's Achanak (1998), Akshay Kumar's Ajnabee (2001), Paresh Rawal and Mallika Sherawat's Bachke Rehna Re Baba (2005), Salman Khan's Veer (2010). His last production venture was Vidyut Jammwal and Shruti Haasan's The Power (2021).

World-renowned Kenyan conservationist Richard Leakey dies at 77

- World-renowned paleoanthropologist Richard Leakey, who unearthed evidence that helped prove humankind evolved in Africa, died on Sunday at the age of 77, Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta confirmed in a statement.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

V Anantha Nageswaran named new chief economic advisor

- The Government of India has appointed Dr V Anantha Nageswaran as the new Chief Economic Adviser. The announcement came days ahead of the presentation of the 2022 Union Budget on February 1 and the tabling of the 2021-22 Economic Survey on January 31. This post was lying vacant since December 17, 2021, when KV Subramanian left the office. He is a former member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC).
- Dr Nageswaran, who is a noted writer, author, teacher, and economic consultant, has taught at several business schools and institutes of management across India and abroad. Before his appointment as the Chief Economic Adviser, he was the Dean of the IFMR Graduate

School of Business and a visiting professor of Economics at the Krea University in Andhra Pradesh.

Neeraj Chopra endorses GoodDot as its brand ambassador

- Plant-based meat company GoodDot has roped in Neeraj Chopra as its brand ambassador. With this association, the company wants to create awareness about the new category of plant-based meats. It also wants to send out a message that small changes in lifestyle and food choices can go a long way in making the world a better place.
- The company provides alternatives to mutton, chicken and eggs and is a Direct-to-consumer (D2C) player so far and sells also through online marketplaces like Amazon, Flipkart, etc. It also sells in countries like Canada, Singapore, Nepal, Dubai, South Africa, Mauritius, and Oman.

Govt. appoints new chairperson to PMLA Adjudicating Authority

- Vinodanand Jha has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) Adjudicating Authority, for a period of 5 years. Jha is a 1983-batch retired IRS officer, who was serving as the Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax in Pune before this.
- The PMLA Adjudicating Authority is a three-member body whose mandated is to adjudicate the cases of attachment of assets orders issued under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and order for its continuity and further confiscation or release, considering the merits of the investigation.

Internet Panel On Languages Ropes In Vijay Shekhar Sharma As Ambassador

- Vijay Shekhar Sharma named as ambassador of Internet panel on languages UASG Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma has been roped in as the Ambassador of Universal Acceptance Steering Group (UASG), a community-based team of industry leaders supported by global internet body ICANN. UASG works on developing and recommending standards for languages script that are not currently used to access the internet. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) aims to help ensure a stable, secure, and unified global Internet. Its headquarter is based at California, United States.

Dileep Sanghani elected as IFFCO Chairman

- The board of directors of the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) has unanimously elected Dileep Sanghani as the 17th Chairman of the Cooperative.
- The board of directors of the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) has unanimously elected Dileep Sanghani as the 17th Chairman of the Cooperative. He succeeds Balvinder Singh Nakai, who passed away earlier on October 11, 2021. Prior to this, Sanghani was serving as vice-chairman of IFFCO since 2019.
- Sanghani is a senior co-operator from Gujarat and the chairman of the Gujarat State Cooperative Marketing Federation Ltd. (GUJCOMASOL), a position he has held since 2017. He held various portfolios in the Gujarat government, including agriculture, cooperation, animal husbandry, fisheries, cow-breeding, prison, excise, law and justice, legislative and parliamentary affairs.

Chanchal Kumar appointed as MD of NHIDCL

- Chanchal Kumar has been appointed as the Managing Director, National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL), under the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH). He is appointed in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary. He is a 1992 batch IAS officer of Bihar cadre, presently Principal Secretary of Bihar's Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has also approved the extension in the central deputation tenure of Ashutosh Jindal, Additional Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat for 1 year beyond 16th February 2022 to 16th February 2023.

Vikram Dev Dutt appointed new CMD of Air India

- Senior bureaucrat Vikram Dev Dutt has been appointed as the chairman and managing director (CMD) of Air India Ltd. Dutt is a 1993-batch IAS officer of AGMUT (Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territory) cadre. He has been appointed as the Air India chief in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary, an order issued by the Personnel Ministry. Prior to this, he was the Principal Secretary (Tourism) in Delhi government.
- The Centre had in October last year accepted Tata Son's bid of Rs 18,000 crore to acquire 100 per cent of the debt-laden state-run carrier. The takeover has not been completed yet. Talace Pvt Ltd, a unit of the holding company of the salt-to-software conglomerate, had made the winning bid of Rs 2,700 crore cash and Rs 15,300 crore debt takeover.

AEPC's new Chairman Narendra Goenka takes over

- Narendra Kumar Goenka has been appointed as the new chairman of the Apparel Export Promotion Council, AEPC. Former chairman Padma Dr A Sakthivel handed over the charge to him. Mr. Goenka has been associated with the Council for more than two decades. He was the Vice Chairman of the apex body of Indian apparel exporters before taking charge as Chairman of AEPC.
- AEPC is the official body of apparel exporters in India, under the aegis of the Ministry of Textiles, that provides invaluable assistance to Indian exporters as well as importers/international buyers.

Adani Power appoints Shersingh Khyalia as CEO with immediate effect

- The Board of Directors of Adani Power Limited (APL), a subsidiary of Adani Group, approved the appointment of Shersingh B Khyalia as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Adani Powers with effect from 11th January 2022. He is a Chartered Accountant, who has served as the Managing Director in Gujarat Power Corporation. Earlier, Khyalia has worked as Managing Director in Gujarat Power Corporation, where he got experience of the Renewable Power Sector especially the development of Ultra Mega Renewable Parks.

Kurukshetra University's Prof Emeritus Tanwar Made ICHR Chairman

- Professor emeritus, Kurukshetra University, Raghuveendra Tanwar has been appointed as chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR). Tanwar appointment is for a period of three years from the day he assumes the office of the Chairman of the Council or

until further order. Tanwar, who joined Kurukshetra University as a lecturer in August 1977, has an outstanding academic record, with two gold medals in MA History.

- The primary aim and objective of the Indian Council of Historical Research is to promote and give directions to historical research and to encourage and foster objective and scientific writing of history. Enhancing the academic standard of the output of ICHR activities has been the foremost objective in its agenda.

RBI approves one-year term for Ittira Davis as CEO of Ujjivan SFB

- Reserve Bank of India has approved the appointment of Ittira Davis as managing director & chief executive officer of (MD & CEO) of Ujjivan Small Finance Bank for one tenure. He will take charge of the extended tenure from January 14, 2022. The post had been lying vacant since three-month following the sudden exit of incumbent Nitin Chugh.
- Prior to Ujjivan, Davis was the Managing Director with the Europe Arab Bank, London. He has also held leadership positions with Arab Bank plc, Bahrain and Citibank, India. He has over 40 years of work experience in India, Middle East and Europe.

RenewBuy ropes in Rajkummar Rao as its brand ambassador

- RenewBuy, an online insurance platform, has appointed Rajkummar Rao as the brand ambassador for its 1st 360-degree consumer advertising campaign that highlights consumers' insurance needs. The campaign was designed and conceptualised by Havas Worldwide India. "Smart Tech, Right Advice" is the theme of the campaign. This program aims to increase the spread of insurance policies digitally for consumers from any part of the country.

Eminent rocket scientist S Somanath appointed ISRO chief

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has announced the appointment of the eminent rocket scientist Dr S Somanath as its new chairman and Space Secretary. He will succeed Kailasavadivoo Sivan who completes his extended tenure. The post of the ISRO chairman, the Space Secretary and the Space Commission chief is usually held by one person only.
- Mr Somanath is an expert in a host of disciplines including launch vehicle design and has specialised in launch vehicle systems engineering, structural design, structural dynamics, integration designs and procedures, mechanism design, and pyrotechnics. He is currently the Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) in Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram. He was a team leader for the Integration of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) during the early phases of his career.

Alikhan Smailov named Kazakhstan's Prime Minister

- The parliament of Kazakhstan has unanimously approved the appointment of Alikhan Smailov as the new Prime Minister of the country. His name was nominated by Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev on January 11, 2022. Prior to this, the 49-year-old Smailov served as the country's finance minister from 2018 to 2020. He became the first deputy prime minister in the Cabinet in 2019.

Saini's term as IBBI chief extended

- The Government of India has extended the tenure of Navrang Saini as interim Chairperson of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) for three more months till March 05, 2022. Mr. Saini, who is a Whole Time Member of IBBI, was assigned additional charge of Chairperson in addition to his existing duties in October 2021 for three months till January 13, 2022. The post of full-time Chairperson has been lying vacant after M.S. Sahoo retired upon completing a five-year tenure on September 30, 2021.

Ex-RBI Governor Urjit Patel appointed Vice President of AIIB

- Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Urjit Patel has been appointed as a vice-president of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), a Beijing based multilateral development bank.
- He will succeed outgoing Vice President D J Pandian, who is in charge of sovereign and non-sovereign lending of the AIIB in South Asia, the Pacific Islands and South-East Asia.

OPEC elects Kuwait's Haitham al-Ghais as new secretary general

- Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has appointed Kuwaiti oil executive Haitham Al Ghais as its new secretary-general, as demand for oil continues to improve amid a mild recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. Al Ghais, a veteran of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and Kuwait's Opec governor from 2017 to June 2021, will take the group's reins in August, replacing Mohammad Barkindo.
- The move comes as the oil exporters' group and its allies prepare to decide on a future course for oil production. Opec+ is expected to stick to the plan and increase production by 400,000 barrels per day in February.

Centre Re-Appoints Vijay Paul Sharma as Chairman of CACP

- The Centre has re-appointed Vijay Paul Sharma as the chairman of the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) after he relinquished the post in May last year following completion of the five-year tenure. The role of the CACP chairman will be crucial in the proposed committee on the minimum support price (MSP) and other reforms. Sharma, a professor at the Centre for Management in Agriculture at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, was appointed CACP Chairman for the first time in June 2016.
- The Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, established in 1965, is an apex advisory body under the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. It's an expert body that recommends the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) by taking into consideration various factors.

Bank Of Baroda Ropes In Cricketer Shafali Verma As Brand Endorser

- State-owned Bank of Baroda has signed cricketer Shafali Verma as its brand endorser. The Bank continuously supports the youth of the country through its various banking and non-banking initiatives and this announcement reflects the bank's ethos of adding value to its customer experience by choosing youth-icons like Shafali to inspire them."

- In 2019, at the age of 15, Shafali became the youngest cricketer to play in a Women's Twenty20 International match for India. Previously in 2021, Shafali Verma became the 1st Women Cricketer to Hit 3 Sixes in Test Match.

India's TS Tirumurti assumes new chair of UN Counter-Terrorism Committee

- India's Permanent Representative to the UN, T S Tirumurti has been appointed as the Chair of the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee for 2022. India has assumed the chairmanship of the United Nations Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (UNSC-CTC) for one year, beginning from January 01, 2022.
- Being the Chair of Counter-Terrorism Committee 2022, India will work to further enhance the role of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in strengthening the multilateral response to counter-terrorism, and ensure that global response to the threat of terrorism remains unambiguous, undivided and effective. India is currently a non-permanent member of the 15-nation UNSC. Its two-year term will end on December 31, 2022.

Former US diplomat Atul Keshap appointed head of US-India Business Council

- Indian-origin American diplomat Atul Keshap has been appointed as the President of the U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) by the US Chambers of Commerce. His term is effective from January 05, 2022. The US Chambers of Commerce is the parent body of USIBC. Atul Keshap replaces Nisha Desai Biswal.
- Prior to this, Keshap served in Delhi as United States Chargé d'Affaires to India, leading the US Embassy team. The USIBC represents top global companies operating across the United States, India, and the Indo-Pacific.

RBI appoints Ajay Kumar Choudhary and Deepak Kumar as new Executive Directors

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed Deepak Kumar and Ajay Kumar Choudhary as new executive directors (ED) with effect from 03 January. Prior to being promoted as ED, Deepak Kumar was heading the department of information technology of RBI, while Ajay Choudhary was Chief General Manager-in-Charge, Department of Supervision.
- Kumar has over a span of three decades working in RBI's central office departments covering policy making and project management functions in the areas of information technology, cyber security, payment systems, currency management, human resource management, banking supervision, foreign exchange management.
- Meanwhile, Choudhary has, over a span of three decades, served in supervision, regulation, currency management, payments and settlements, and other areas in the Reserve Bank, in its Central Office as well as Regional Offices. He will look after the fintech department, risk monitoring department and inspection department.

Sudan's Hamdok resigns as prime minister amid political deadlock

- Prime Minister of Sudan, Abdalla Hamdok has announced his resignation on January 02, 2022. The decision follows a military coup that caused political deadlock and widespread pro-democracy protests in the country. The 66-year-old Hamdok served as the 15th Prime Minister of Sudan from 2019 to 2022.

- Mr Hamdok called for a dialogue to agree on a “national charter” and to “draw a roadmap” to complete the transition. The October coup had upended Sudan’s plans to move to democracy after a popular uprising forced the military’s overthrow of longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir and his Islamist government in April 2019.

Alka Mittal becomes first woman to head ONGC as CMD

- Director HR in ONGC, Alka Mittal has been given the additional charge as the new interim chairman and managing director (CMD) of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), the largest oil and gas producer in India. She is the first woman to head the top post at the Maharatna company. She replaces Subhash Kumar who superannuated on December 31. He was also serving as an interim head.
- Alka Mittal has been appointed for a period of six months with effect from January 1, 2022, or till the appointment of a regular incumbent to the post, or until further order, whichever is the earliest.

Indian-origin Ashok Elluswamy was first employee to be hired for Tesla's Autopilot team: Elon Musk

- Tesla founder and CEO Elon Musk, who has been using social media to recruit people, has disclosed that Indian-origin Ashok Elluswamy was the first employee to be hired for his electric vehicle company’s Autopilot team. Before joining Tesla, Mr Elluswamy was associated with Volkswagen Electronic Research Lab and WABCO Vehicle Control System.
- Ashok Elluswamy holds a bachelor’s degree in Electronics and Communication Engineering from the College of Engineering Guindy, Chennai and a Master’s degree in Robotics System Development from Carnegie Mellon University.

Vinod Kannan takes over as Vistara CEO

- Vistara on Saturday said that Vinod Kannan took over as the chief executive officer (CEO) of the airline. Kannan replaced Leslie Thng who was the CEO from July 16, 2017 to December 31, 2021.
- It added that Deepak Rajawat has been elevated to take up the role of Vistara’s chief commercial officer from Saturday. “Kannan started his stint with Vistara as the Chief Strategy Officer in June 2019 and took over as Chief Commercial Officer in January 2020 with responsibility for developing, executing, and sustaining
- Vistara’s corporate strategy and ensuring the airline’s commercial success,” it mentioned.

Baldev Prakash named as MD & CEO of J&K Bank

- Baldev Prakash has been appointed as the Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer (MD & CEO) of Jammu & Kashmir Bank for three years. His appointment will be effective from the date of taking charge or April 10, 2022, whichever is earlier. Apart from him, R K Chhibber has been appointed as an additional director on the board of the bank.
- Prakash has over 30 years of experience in banking. He had joined SBI as a probationary officer in 1991 and was the Chief General Manager (Digital and Transaction Banking Marketing Department) at SBI, Mumbai. The appointment is effective from the date of taking charge or April 10, 2022, whichever is earlier.

VK tripathi appointed as chairman and CEO of Railway board

- The Indian Railways has appointed VK Tripathi as chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Railway Board. He is currently working as the general manager of North-Eastern Railway, Gorakhpur.
- Tripathi's appointment has been approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) and he is currently General Manager, North-Eastern Railway. He will replace Suneet Sharma, a 1982 batch IRSME officer.
- A career railway officer, Tripathi did his B.Tech (Electrical Engineering) from Roorkee and joined the railways through the Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers (IRSEE) batch of 1983.
- His first posting was as an assistant electrical engineer for the Northern Railway.

Asheesh Pandey joins Bank of Maharashtra as executive director

- Shri Asheesh Pandey joined as Executive Director, Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) today on 31st December, 2021. Prior to joining BoM, Shri Asheesh Pandey was Chief General Manager & Chief Operations Officer (COO) at Union Bank of India (UBI). Shri Asheesh Pandey has a progressive professional career spanning more than 24 years and over these years have handled a diversified portfolio ranging from Credit, Credit Monitoring, Treasury & Merchant Banking, Foreign Transactions & Joint Ventures, Marketing & Customer Relationships and Banking Operations.
- Shri Asheesh Pandey is a Mechanical Engineer (Hons) with Post Graduation in Management (Hons) with specialisation in Finance & Marketing.

Online travel company EaseMyTrip has appointed actors Vijay Raaz and Varun Sharma as its brand ambassadors

- Bollywood actors Vijay Raaz & Varun Sharma have been named as brand ambassadors for EaseMyTrip.com (Easy Trip Planners Ltd), an online travel company based in India. EaseMyTrip founded by Nishant Pitti and Rikant Pitti in 2008 was started as the Business-to-Business (B2B) portal and entered into the business-to-consumer (B2C) segment in 2011.
- Raaz and Sharma will be coming together as a duo for the first time for any brand campaign. The actors with their mass appeal and strong connection with the audience will complement the brand's image. The company added that the actors are admired by fans for their genuine and down-to-earth personalities and their ability to make their acts memorable. They are also known for their impeccable comic timing and both actors have created a niche in the market.

ITBP DG Arora to hold additional charge of Sashastra Seema Bal

- ITBP director general Sanjay Arora will hold the additional charge of another border guarding force Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) as the latter's chief Kumar Rajesh Chandra is set to retire on December 31. Arora, a 1988-batch officer of Tamil Nadu cadre, was appointed the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) DG in August and he took charge of the India-China LAC guarding force on September 1. The SSB is primarily tasked to guard unfenced Indian borders with Nepal and Bhutan.

Anupam Ray to be India's new permanent representative at UN Conference on Disarmament

- Senior diplomat Anupam Ray has been appointed as India's next permanent representative to the UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Ray, a 1994-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, is currently serving as a joint secretary in the MEA's headquarters in Delhi. Ray will succeed Pankaj Sharma. Sharma, a 1991-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, has been appointed as India's next ambassador to Mexico.

IMPORTANT DAYS

World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day 2022: 30th January

- World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day (World NTD Day) is observed on January 30 every year to raise awareness about neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) as a critical public health challenge so that we can progress towards their elimination. 2022 theme is 'Achieving health equity to end the neglect of poverty-related diseases'. The 2022 slogan is "From neglect to care".
- The first World NTD Day was held on 30 January 2020. The proposal to recognise the day was made by the United Arab Emirates (UAE). 74th World Health Assembly endorsed a decision recognizing 30 January as World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day ('World NTD Day'). World NTD Day commemorates the simultaneous launch of the first NTD road map and the London Declaration on NTDs on 30 January 2012. For countries where neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) are prevalent and for the global community of partners, this is a new dawn.

World Leprosy Day 30 January 2022

- World Leprosy Day is observed globally on the last Sunday of January every year. In 2022, the World Leprosy Day falls on January 30, 2022. The day is celebrated to raise global awareness of this deadly ancient disease and call attention to the fact that it can be prevented, treated and cured. In India, World Leprosy Day is celebrated every year on 30 January, the anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's death.
- This year theme of World Leprosy Day 2022 is "United for Dignity".
- The day was initiated in 1954 by French philanthropist and writer, Raoul Follereau, as a tribute to the life of Mahatma Gandhi who had compassion for people afflicted with leprosy.

PESB names Pushp Kumar Joshi for HPCL's CMD post

- Pushp Kumar Joshi has been named to be the new chairman and managing director of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), the nation's third-largest oil refining and fuel marketing company. Joshi, who is currently Director – Human Resources at HPCL has been on the board of HPCL for almost a decade now. He will replace Mukesh Kumar Surana, who superannuates on April 30 this year.
- The recommendation will now go to the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) headed by the Prime Minister (PM) of India. ACC will decide on his selection after getting reports from anti-corruption agencies such as CVC (Central Vigilance Commission) and CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation).

Martyrs' Day: 30 January 2022

- Martyr's Day or Shaheed Diwas is observed every year on January 30 in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi, who was assassinated at Gandhi Smriti in the Birla House by Nathuram Godse in 1948. This year nation observed 74th Martyrs' Day or Shaheed Diwas. The day is observed to remember the sacrifices made by freedom fighters in the struggle for India's independence and to pay our respects to them. Notably, Martyrs' Day is also observed in India on March 23 to pay respect to Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru and Sukhdev Thapar, who was hanged death on this day in 1931.'
- The President, the Vice President, the Prime Minister, and the Defense Minister on 30 January get together at the Rajghat to the Samadhi of the Mahatma Gandhi to pay honour by putting a garland of flowers to the statue of the Bapu. An honourable salute is also given by the armed forces personnel and inter-services contingent to pay respect to the martyrs.

Data Privacy Day: 28 January 2022

- Data Privacy Day is celebrated on January 28, every year across the world. The objective of the day is to sensitize individuals and disseminate privacy practices and principles. It encourages everyone to own their privacy responsibilities to create a culture of privacy. Observance of the day is "an international effort of creating awareness on the importance of respecting privacy, enabling trust and safeguarding data".
- The theme for this year is 'Privacy Matters'. It instils a sense of accountability that Privacy is integral to every individual's life. Data privacy has been one of the hot topics of discussion in a digitally connected world. The issue has become pertinent at the time of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic when more and more people are forced to spend time in the online world.

International Customs Day 2022: 26th January

- The International Customs Day (ICD) is observed on 26 January every year. The day is celebrated to recognise the role of customs officials and agencies and focus on the working conditions and challenges that customs officers face in their jobs. This year, the theme chosen by WCO for ICD is 'Scaling up Customs Digital Transformation by Embracing a Data Culture and Building a Data Ecosystem'.
- The International Customs Day's objective is to boost leadership, guidance, and support to customs administrations as WCO strongly opines that while borders divide, it is the 'customs' that establish a connection between countries.

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.

National Voters Day 2022: 25th January

- India observes “National Voters’ Day” every year on January 25 to encourage more young voters to take part in the political process. Election Commission of India is celebrating 12th National Voters Day on 25th January 2022. The theme for this year’s NVD, ‘Making Elections Inclusive, Accessible and Participative’, envisages focus on ECI’s commitment to facilitate the active participation of voters during the elections and to make the complete process hassle-free and a memorable experience for all categories of voters.
- Since 2011, National Voters’ Day has been celebrated on January 25 every year, all across the country to mark the foundation day of the Election Commission of India, i.e. 25th January 1950. The main purpose of the NVD celebration is to encourage, facilitate and maximise enrolment, especially for the new voters. Dedicated to the voters of the country, the day is utilized to spread awareness among voters and for promoting informed participation in the electoral process.

National Tourism Day 2022: 25th January

- The Indian government established January 25 as the National Tourism Day to raise awareness about the importance of tourism for the country’s economy. The day is observed to cultivate awareness among the global community on the importance of tourism and its social, political, financial and cultural worth. The ministry of tourism is the nodal agency in India to form national policies for the promotion and development of tourism. It also coordinates with central, state agencies and the public sector.
- Tourism and travel are often used interchangeably. However, travel is the movement of an individual or a group of people from one place to another due to work, health, education or meeting with the family. Tourism, on the other hand, identifies with a person or group’s movement for recreational purposes.

Tripura State People's Liberation Council celebrated 44th Kokborok Day

- Kokborok Day, also known as the Tripuri Language Day is annually celebrated across the Indian State of Tripura on 19th January with an aim to develop the Kokborok Language. The day commemorates the initial recognition of Kokborok as the official language in 1979. 19th January 2022 marks the observance of the 44th Kokborok Day. The Kokborok language, the official language of Tripura, is also known as Tripuri or Tiprakok. In 1979, Kokborok, along with Bengali and English, was declared an official language of the state of Tripura, India by the state government.

19 January 2022: NDRF’s 17th Raising Day

- National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) celebrates its Raising Day every year on January 19, since it came into existence on January 19, 2006. In 2022, the NDRF is observing its 17th Raising Day. There are 12 NDRF battalions located in different parts of the country and comprises as many as 13,000 NDRF personnel who work to build a safer country.

- The NDRF has earned a good name and fame nationally and internationally with its selfless service and unmatched professionalism in disaster management. NDRF has saved more than One lakh lives in its 3100 operations and rescued/evacuated over 6.7 lakh people during disasters. NDRF is an Indian specialized force under the National Disaster Management Authority, constituted under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, to carry out the special responses in situations of threatening disaster.

Indian Army Day 2022 : 15th January

- The Army Day in India is celebrated on 15 January every year, to salute the valiant soldiers who sacrificed their lives to protect the country and its citizens. This year marks the 74th Indian Army Day. The day is marked to commemorate the day when General (later Field Marshal) KM Cariappa took over the command of the Army from General Sir FRR Bucher, the last British Commander-in-Chief in 1949 and became the first Commander-in-Chief of Indian Army post Independence.
- The Indian Army is one of the most powerful militaries of the world, competing with superpowers like the US, Russia and China. The motto of the Indian Army is 'service before self' and its mission is to ensure national security and national unity, defend the nation from external aggression and internal threats, and maintain peace and security within its borders. Salute to the brave soldiers, who risk and sacrifice their lives to protect us. Even the Prime Minister of India Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1965 had given the slogan like "Jai Jawan Jai Kisan".

Armed Forces Veterans Day 2022: 14th January

- In India, the Armed Forces Veterans Day is observed each year on 14 January since 2017. The day aims to acknowledge and honour the selfless devotion and sacrifice of our veterans in the service of the nation. 2022 marks the 6th Armed Forces Veterans Day. It is observed as a mark of respect and recognition of the services rendered by Field Marshal KM Cariappa OBE, the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Armed Forces who retired on 14 January 1953.
- Armed Forces Veterans Day is observed to reiterate the resolve of services for the well being of veterans and assure them that their valuable suggestions are always welcome. Last year, Admiral Karambir Singh released the 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' song dedicated to our brave and courageous soldiers of the 1971 war. At various events, stalls are set up at the venue for the benefit of ex-servicemen, which includes health and medical check-up camp, job placement and resettlement stall. In addition, there are informative lectures on pensions and welfare-related subjects. Various government departments commemorate the day in their own unique way.

National Youth Day 2022: 12th January

- In India, the National Youth Day is celebrated on 12 January annually to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. The main aim behind this is to make sure that the students across the country can be encouraged to learn about the life, the ideas and philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and apply them in their lives.

- In 2022, we are observing the 159th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekanand (12 January 1863). The theme for National Youth Day 2022 is The Theme of 2022 is "It's all in the mind."

National Human Trafficking Awareness 11th January 2022

- This year National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is observed on January 11, 2022, which is on Tuesday. The day aims at raising awareness of the plight of human trafficking victims, and promoting and protecting their rights. Though the entire month of January has already been recognized as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, this day is specifically dedicated to awareness and prevention of illegal practice.
- In 2007, the United States Senate ratified the resolution establishing January 11th as National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. In 2010, President Obama dedicated the entire month of January to awareness and prevention of human trafficking. Today, there are over 50 established organizations that globally combat this illegal practice, and more awareness has been raised than ever before.

World Hindi Day 2022: 10th January

- World Hindi Day is celebrated on January 10 since 2006 to promote the language at the global stage. The day marks the anniversary of the first World Hindi Conference which was inaugurated on January 10, 1975, by the then prime minister Indira Gandhi. However, the celebration of first World Hindi Day was commenced on 10 January 2006 by former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.
- The language got its name from the Persian term 'Hind' which means 'the land of Indus'. The language is spoken in India, Trinidad, Nepal, Guyana, Mauritius and other countries.

December 26 to be observed as 'Veer Baal Diwas'

- Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi has declared that starting from the year 2022, December 26 will be observed as 'Veer Baal Diwas' every year. The day will be commemorated as a tribute to the courage of the 4 Sahibzades (the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji), who attained martyrdom in the 17th century. The announcement was made by PM Modi on January 09, 2022, on the occasion of the Parkash Purab of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, or the birth anniversary of the 10th guru of Sikhs and the founder of the Khalsa community.
- 26 December marks the day on which Sahibzada Zorawar Singh Ji and Sahibzada Fateh Singh Ji (younger pair of Sahibzade) attained martyrdom after being sealed alive in a wall, at the tender age of 6 and 9 years. Sahibzada Ajit Singh Ji and Sahibzada Jujhar Singh Ji (older pair of Sahibzade) attained martyrdom on December 21, 1705, fighting the enemy in battle at Chamkaur Sahib at the young age of 18 and 14 years.

Pravasi Bhartiya Divas observed on 09th January 2022

- The Non-Resident Indian Day or also known as the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas is celebrated every year on 9th January every year. The aim of the event is to strengthen the engagement of the overseas Indian community with the Government of India and reconnect them with their roots. On 9 January 1915, Mahatma Gandhi came to India from

South Africa and became the greatest Pravasi who led India's Freedom Struggle and made India free from British or colonial rule. As a Non-Resident Indian or Pravasi, he is presented as a symbol of a change and development that could bring into India.

World Day of War Orphans 2022: 6 January

- World Day of War Orphans is marked on 6 January to create awareness about the plight of children who have lost their parents due to conflict. In any conflict, children are one of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups present. Children who have been injured in a gunfight or separated from their families require particular care in order to heal the mental wounds of war, begin school, and restart normal life.
- World Day of War Orphans was started by the French organisation SOS Enfants en Detresses, which aimed to help children affected by conflict. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), an orphan is defined as a "child under 18 years of age who has lost one or both parents to any cause of death".

World Braille Day 2022: 4th January

- World Braille Day is observed globally on 4th January since 2019. The day aims to recognize the right of access to braille by blind people and raise awareness of the importance of braille as a means of communication in the full realization of the human rights for blind and partially sighted people. The day is marked remembering the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, the inventor of Braille – for people with visual disabilities. Louis Braille was born on 4th January 1809 in the town of Coupvray in northern France.
- Braille is a tactile representation of alphabetic and numerical symbols using six dots to represent each letter and number, and even musical, mathematical and scientific symbols. Braille (named after its inventor in 19th century France, Louis Braille) is used by blind and partially sighted people to read the same books and periodicals as those printed in a visual font.

DRDO Foundation Day on 1st January 2022

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has observed the 64th Foundation Day of its establishment on January 01, 2022. DRDO was established in 1958 with just 10 laboratories to enhance the research work in the Defence sector. At that time, it was tasked with designing and developing cutting edge defence technologies for the Indian Armed Forces.
- As of now, DRDO is working in multiple cutting edge military technology areas, which include aeronautics, armaments, combat vehicles, electronics, instrumentation, engineering systems, missiles, materials, naval systems, advanced computing, simulation, cyber, life sciences and other technologies for defence.

DRDO celebrates its 64th foundation day on 1st January 2022

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is celebrating its 64th foundation day today. It was on this day in 1958 when DRDO was formed to make India strong and self-reliant in terms of science and technology and especially in military technologies.

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh today wished to all Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO scientists and personnel on their 64th Raising Day. In a tweet, Mr Singh said, they are working tirelessly towards strengthening India's defence capabilities and making the country self-reliant in defence sector. He hoped that the DRDO scientists and personnel will keep serving the nation with the same zeal.
- In the span of 63 years the organization has transformed the landscape of defence research and development in the country. Talking exclusively to All India Radio, the Chairman of DRDO Dr G. Satheesh Reddy said that the last year was the year of major breakthroughs and accomplishments even under the difficult situation posed due to C-19.

SUMMITS AND MOU'S

PM Modi Hosts First India-Central Asia Summit

- Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi has hosted the first India-Central Asia Summit, through the virtual platform. It was the first of its kind engagement between India and the Central Asian countries at the level of leaders. The central Asian region has five recognized countries. The Summit was attended by the Presidents of these five Central Asian countries.
- These are the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan), Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan. The first India-Central Asia Summit coincided with the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Central Asian countries. During the summit, the Leaders agreed to hold the Summit every 2 years (biennial). The summit is symbolic of the importance attached by the leaders of both sides to a comprehensive and enduring India-Central Asia partnership.

TerraPay, NPCI International partner to enable real-time

- TerraPay has signed MoU with NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) to allow Indian customers with an active UPI ID to receive real-time, international payments into their bank accounts via TerraPay's secure payments technology. It will enable a seamless and convenient cross-border remittances experience. NIPL is an international arm of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).
- This association with NIPL will allow Indians with an active UPI ID to receive real-time, international payments into their bank accounts via TerraPay's adaptive and secure payments technology. The intended collaboration will now further empower UPI users to leverage TerraPay's agile interoperable payments infrastructure to receive payments on a fully regulated, secure, scalable, and efficient channel.

Google to invest \$1 bn in Bharti Airtel, to buy 1.28% stake for \$700 mn

- Bharti Airtel and Google have announced a long-term partnership agreement, to accelerate the growth of India's digital ecosystem. Under the deal, Google will invest USD 1 billion in Airtel. From the total investment, Google will invest USD 700 million to acquire a 1.28 per cent stake in Bharti Airtel Ltd. The remaining USD 300 million will go toward multi-year commercial agreements with Airtel, including devices built together by the two tech giants.
- The USD 1 billion funding is part of Google's USD 10 billion 'Google for India Digitization Fund', launched in 2020. This is Google second investment in an Indian telecom service

provider (after Reliance Jio). Discussion between the two companies had been going on since the first half of 2021 and culminated in an announcement.

Jio Estonia partners with University of Oulu on 6G research

- Jio Platforms (JPL) has signed a pact with the University of Oulu, Finland, to accelerate research and standardization in 6G technology. JPL and the University of Oulu will collaborate in Research and Development (R&D) of aerial and space communication, holographic beamforming, 3D-connected intelligence in cybersecurity, microelectronics, and photonics.
- The collaboration will develop competency with 6G enabled products in the defence, automotive, white goods, industrial machinery, consumer goods, efficient manufacturing, novel personal smart device environments, and experiences such as urban computing and autonomous traffic settings.

IIMK LIVE, Indian Bank ink Landmark MoU

- Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode's (IIMK) Business incubator Laboratory for Innovation Venturing and Entrepreneurship (LIVE) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Bank to financially support early-stage startups. Under the MoU, a startup funding scheme, 'IndSpring Board' has been launched. Under this scheme loans up to Rs, 50 Crore will be disbursed to the startups.
- The startups can use the loan amount to meet their operational expenditure and capital expenditure which includes working capital, purchase of fixed assets and other expenses.
- The loan amount disbursed to startups under the IndSpring Board scheme from IIMK LIVE and Indian Bank can be used to meet a startup operational expenditure and capital expenditure which includes working capital, purchase of fixed assets and other expenses.
- Startups selected under this scheme would have to be committed towards working on innovation, development or improvement of products or processes or services, or present a scalable business model with a high potential of employment generation or wealth creation.

Indifi, GPay join hands to offer instant digital credit to SMEs

- Small businesses-focused online lending platform Indifi Technologies has collaborated with Google Pay to provide instant loans to eligible medium, small and micro enterprises (MSMEs) merchants through the Google Pay platform. The borrowing process is entirely digital and eligible merchants on the Google Pay for the Business app can click on loan offerings from Indifi and submit an application online. The loans will be in the range of Rs 2.5 to Rs 3 lakh.
- With a 35 per cent share of monthly UPI volumes, Google Pay has been growing its financial services play over the past year like other payments leaders in India. It already provides loans and short-term credit to individuals and small merchants in tie-ups with IIFL Loans, CASHe, and ZestMoney, among others.

19th Meeting of National Tiger Conservation Authority held

- The 19th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) was held under the chairmanship of the union minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change Bhupender

Yadav. Currently, there are 51 Tiger Reserves in India and more than 35 rivers originate from those areas which are crucial for water security.

- The environment minister launched an action plan for the reintroduction, protection and conservation of 7 major big cats in India including the cheetah, which has become extinct in independent India.
- Under the action plan, 50 of these big cats will be introduced in the next 5 years in various parks.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve in TN wins TX2 Award for doubling tiger population

- Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (Erode district, Tamil Nadu) has been given the prestigious TX2 award after its tiger numbers doubled to 80 since 2010. Apart from the STR, the Bardia National Park in Nepal has won this year's TX2 award for doubling the population of wild tigers. Sathyamangalam wildlife sanctuary was declared a tiger reserve in 2013 and the reserve that spread across 1,411.60 sq km is an important link between the Nilgiris and Eastern Ghats landscape. The Nilgiri biosphere landscape that this reserve is part of is currently the home to the largest tiger population in the world. It is connected to other well-established tiger habitats like Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Bandipur Tiger Reserve and BR Hills Tiger Reserve.
- The award acknowledges the efforts by the State governments and the local communities which have played one of the most important roles to turn a relatively new tiger reserve into one of the source populations of tigers in India. The awards are presented by the Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA|TS), Fauna and Flora International (FFI), Global Tiger Forum (GTF), IUCN's Integrated Tiger Habitat Conservation Programme (ITHCP), Panthera, UNDP, The Lion's Share, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and WWF.

Kashmir police bags lion's share of gallantry medals this Republic Day

- Jammu and Kashmir Police has bagged 115 Police Medals for Gallantry (PMG), out of a total of 189 awarded this year. They more than doubled their last year's tally of 52 PMGs. J&K Police won awards for conducting several counter-insurgency operations in 2019-20. Police personnel from Jammu and Kashmir have been awarded 115 Police Medals for Gallantry, the highest number from any police force this year, followed by CRPF with 30, Chhattisgarh Police with 10, Odisha Police with nine, and Maharashtra Police with seven.

Assam government to confer 'Asom Baibhav Award' to Ratan Tata

- The government of Assam has conferred its highest civilian award 'Assam Baibhav' on Industrialist Ratan Tata. Assam governor Jagdish Mukhi conferred the award to the former chairman of Tata Sons. The Assam government conferred 'Asom Baibhav' to Ratan Tata for his contribution to setting up cancer treatment facilities in the state.
- Assam Saurav award was conferred on Professor Dipak Chand Jain, Lovlina Borgohain, Professor Kamalendu Deb Krori, Dr Lakshmanan S, and Neel Pawan Baruah.
- Assam Gaurav award was conferred on Manoj Kumar Basumatary, Munindra Nath Ngatey, Dharanidhar Boro, Hemoprabha Chutia, Dr Basanta Hazarika, Kaushik Baruah, Khorsing

Terang, Akash Jyoti Gogoi, Namita Kalita, Dr Asif Iqbal, Kalpana Boro, Bobby Hazarika, and Bormita Momin.

Padma Awards 2022 announced

- The Union ministry of home affairs announced the Padma awards on the eve of the country's 73rd Republic Day. The Awards are given in three categories: Padma Vibhushan (for exceptional and distinguished service), Padma Bhushan (distinguished service of higher-order) and Padma Shri (distinguished service). The award seeks to recognize achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved.
- These awards are conferred by the President of India at ceremonial functions which are held at Rashtrapati Bhawan usually around March/ April every year. This year the President has approved conferment of 128 Padma Awards including 2 duo cases (in a duo case, the Award is counted as one) as per list below. The list comprises 4 Padma Vibhushan, 17 Padma Bhushan and 107 Padma Shri Awards. 34 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 10 persons from the category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI and 13 Posthumous awardees. In Duo case, the Award is counted as one.

Padma Vibhushan(4)

S. No.	Name	Field	State / Country
1	Ms. Prabha Atre	Art	Maharashtra
2	Shri Radheyshyam Khemka (Posthumous)	Literature and Education	U.P.
3	General Bipin Rawat (Posthumous)	Civil Service	Uttarakhand
4	Shri Kalyan Singh (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Uttar Pradesh

Padma Bhushan (17)

S. No	Name	Field	State / Country
1	Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad	Public Affairs	Jammu and Kashmir
2	Shri Victor Banerjee	Art	West Bengal

3	Ms. Gurmeet Bawa (Posthumous)	Art	Punjab
4	Shri Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee	Public Affairs	West Bengal
5	Shri Natarajan Chandrasekaran	Trade and Industry	Maharashtra
6	Shri Krishna Ella and Smt. Suchitra Ella* (Duo)	Trade and Industry	Telangana
7	Ms. Madhur Jaffery	Others-Culinary	USA
8	Shri Devendra Jhajharia	Sports	Rajasthan
9	Shri Rashid Khan	Art	Uttar Pradesh
10	Shri Rajiv Mehrishi	Civil Service	Rajasthan
11	Shri Satya Narayana Nadella	Trade and Industry	USA

12	Shri Sundararajan Pichai	Trade and Industry	USA
13	Shri Cyrus Poonawalla	Trade and Industry	Maharashtra
14	Shri Sanjaya Rajaram (Posthumous)	Sci and Engg	Mexico
15	Ms. Pratibha Ray	Literature and Education	Odisha
16	Swami Sachidanand	Literature and Education	Gujarat
17	Shri Vashishth Tripathi	Literature and Education	Uttar Pradesh

Padma Shri (107)

S. No	Name	Field	State / Country
1	Shri Prahlad Rai Agarwala	Trade and Industry	West Bengal
2	Prof. Najma Akhtar	Literature and Education	Delhi
3	Shri Sumit Antil	Sports	Haryana

4	Shri T Senka Ao	Literature and Education	Nagaland
5	Ms. Kamalini Asthana and Ms. Nalini Asthana* (Duo)	Art	Uttar Pradesh
6	Shri Subbanna Ayyappan	Science and Engineering	Karnataka
7	Shri J K Bajaj	Literature and Education	Delhi
8	Shri Sirpi Balasubramaniam	Literature and Education	Tamil Nadu
9	Srimad Baba Balia	Social Work	Odisha
10	Ms. Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay	Science and Engineering	West Bengal
11	Ms. Madhuri Barthwal	Art	Uttarakhand
12	Shri Akhone Asgar Ali Basharat	Literature and Education	Ladakh
13	Dr. Himmatrao Bawaskar	Medicine	Maharashtra

14	Shri Harmohinder Singh Bedi	Literature and Education	Punjab
15	Shri Pramod Bhagat	Sports	Odisha
16	Shri S Ballesh Bhajantri	Art	Tamil Nadu
17	Shri Khandu Wangchuk Bhutia	Art	Sikkim
18	Shri Maria Christopher Byrski	Literature and Education	Poland
19	Acharya Chandanaji	Social Work	Bihar
20	Ms. Sulochana Chavan	Art	Maharashtra
21	Shri Neeraj Chopra	Sports	Haryana
22	Ms. Shakuntala Choudhary	Social Work	Assam
23	Shri Sankaranarayana Menon Chundayil	Sports	Kerala
24	Shri S Damodaran	Social Work	Tamil Nadu
25	Shri Faisal Ali Dar	Sports	J&K

26	Shri Jagjit Singh Dardi	Trade and Industry	Chandigarh
27	Dr. Prokar Dasgupta	Medicine	U.K.
28	Shri Aditya Prasad Dash	Science and Engineering	Odisha
29	Dr. Lata Desa	Medicine	Gujarat
30	Shri Malji bhai Desai	Public Affairs	Gujarat
31	Ms. Basanti Devi	Social Work	Uttarakhand
32	Ms. Lourembam Bino Devi	Art	Manipur
33	Ms. Muktamani Devi	Trade and Industry	Manipur
34	Ms. Shyamamani Devi	Art	Odisha
35	Shri Khalil Dhantejvi (Posthumous)	Lit. and Education	Gujarat
36	Shri Savaji Bhai Dholakia	Social Work	Gujarat
37	Shri Arjun Singh Dhurve	Art	Madhya Pradesh
38	Dr. Vijaykumar Vinayak Dongre	Medicine	Maharashtra
39	Shri Chandraprakash Dwivedi	Art	Rajasthan
40	Shri Dhaneswar Engti	Lit. and Education	Assam

41	Shri Om Prakash Gandhi	Social Work	Haryana
42	Shri Narasimha Rao Garikapati	Lit. and Education	Andhra Pradesh
43	Shri Girdhari Ram Ghonju (Posthumous)	Lit. and Education	Jharkhand
44	Shri Shaibal Gupta (Posthumous)	Lit. and Education	Bihar
45	Shri Narasingha Prasad Guru	Lit. and Education	Odisha
46	Shri Gosaveedu Shaik Hassan (Posthumous)	Art	Andhra Pradesh
47	Shri Ryuko Hira	Trade and Industry	Japan
48	Ms. Sosamma Iype	Animal Husbandry	Kerala
49	Shri Avadh Kishore Jadia	Lit. and Education	Madhya Pradesh
50	Ms. Sowcar Janaki	Art	Tamil Nadu
51	Ms. Tara Jauhar	Lit and Education	Delhi
52	Ms. Vandana Kataria	Sports	Uttarakhand
53	Shri H R Keshavamurthy	Art	Karnataka
54	Shri Rutger Kortenhorst	Lit and Education	Ireland
55	Shri P Narayana Kurup	Lit and Education	Kerala

56	Ms. Avani Lekhara	Sports	Rajasthan
57	Shri Moti Lal Madan	Sci and Engineering	Haryana
58	Shri Shivnath Mishra	Art	Uttar Pradesh
59	Dr. Narendra Prasad Misra (Posthumous)	Medicine	Madhya Pradesh
60	Shri Darshanam Mogilaiah	Art	Telangana
61	Shri Guruprasad Mohapatra (Posthumous)	Civil Service	Delhi
62	Shri Thavil Kongampattu A V Murugaian	Art	Puducherry
63	Ms. R Muthukannammal	Art	Tamil Nadu
64	Shri Abdul Khader Nadakattin	Grassroots Innovation	Karnataka
65	Shri Amai Mahalinga Naik	Agriculture	Karnataka
66	Shri Tsering Namgyal	Art	Ladakh
67	Shri A K C Natarajan	Art	Tamil Nadu
68	Shri V L Nghaka	Lit. and Education	Mizoram
69	Shri Sonu Nigam	Art	Maharashtra

70	Shri Ram Sahay Panday	Art	Madhya Pradesh
71	Shri Chirapat Prapandavidya	Lit and Education	Thailand
72	Ms. K V Rabiya	Social Work	Kerala
73	Shri Anil Kumar Rajvanshi	Sci and Engineering	Maharashtra
74	Shri Sheesh Ram	Art	Uttar Pradesh
75	Shri Ramachandraiah	Art	Telangana
76	Dr. Sunkara Venkata Adinarayana Rao	Medicine	Andhra Pradesh
77	Ms. Gamit Ramilaben Raysingbhai	Social Work	Gujarat
78	Ms. Padmaja Reddy	Art	Telangana
79	Guru Tulku Rinpoche	Spiritualism	Arunachal Pradesh
80	Shri Brahmanand Sankhwalkar	Sports	Goa
81	Shri Vidyanand Sarek	Lit and Education	Himachal Pradesh
82	Shri Kali Pada Saren	Lit. and Education	West Bengal
83	Dr. Veeraswamy Seshiah	Medicine	Tamil Nadu
84	Ms. Prabhaben Shah	Social Work	Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu

85	Shri Dilip Shahani	Lit and Education	Delhi
86	Shri Ram Dayal Sharma	Art	Rajasthan
87	Shri Vishwamurti Shastri	Lit. and Education	J&K
88	Ms. Tatiana Lvovna Shaumyan	Lit. and Education	Russia
89	Shri Siddhalingaiah (Posthumous)	Lit. and Education	Karnataka
90	Shri Kaajee Singh	Art	West Bengal
91	Shri Konsam Ibomcha Singh	Art	Manipur
92	Shri Prem Singh	Social Work	Punjab
93	Shri Seth Pal Singh	Agriculture	Uttar Pradesh
94	Ms. Vidya Vindu Singh	Lit. and Education	Uttar Pradesh
95	Baba Iqbal Singh Ji	Social Work	Punjab
96	Dr. Bhimsen Singhal	Medicine	Maharashtra
97	Shri Sivananda	Yoga	Uttar Pradesh
98	Shri Ajay Kumar Sonkar	Sci and Engineering	Uttar Pradesh
99	Ms. Ajita Srivastava	Art	Uttar Pradesh

100	Sadguru Brahmeshanand Acharya Swami	Spiritualism	Goa
101	Dr. Balaji Tambe (Posthumous)	Medicine	Maharashtra
102	Shri Raghuvendra Tanwar	Lit and Education	Haryana
103	Dr. Kamlakar Tripathi	Medicine	Uttar Pradesh
104	Ms. Lalita Vakil	Art	Himachal Pradesh
105	Ms. Durga Bai Vyam	Art	Madhya Pradesh
106	Shri Jyankumar Maganlal Vyas	Sci and Engineering	Gujarat
107	Ms. Badaplin War	Lit and Education	Meghalaya

India's Koozhangal wins best film award at 20th Dhaka International Film Festival

- P S Vinodraj directed film Koozhangal from India won the best film award in the Asian Film Competition section at the 20th Dhaka International Film Festival. Information and Broadcasting Minister of Bangladesh Hasan Mahmud gave away the awards as Chief Guest during the concluding session organised at the National Museum auditorium in Dhaka.
- The best actor award was given to Jayasurya for Ranjith Sankar-directed film Sunny.
- The Best Script Writer Award went to Indranil Roychowdhury and Sugata Sinha for Indranil Roychowdhury-directed India-Bangladesh film Mayar Jonjal.

29 Children Conferred Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar-2022

- Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP) for the year 2022 has been conferred to 29 children. These winners include 15 Boys and 14 Girls, belonging to 21 States and UTs. The PMRBP award is given by the Government of India to children with exceptional abilities and outstanding accomplishments in 6 categories. The award carries a cash prize of Rs.1,00,000/-.

Former Prime Minister Of Japan Shinzo Abe Honoured With Netaji Award 2022

- Former Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was conferred with the Netaji Award 2022 by Netaji Research Bureau. Consul General of Japan in Kolkata Nakamura Yutaka received the

honour on behalf of Mr. Abe at a function at the Elgin Road residence of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his 125th birth anniversary.

- Satoshi Suzuki, the Japanese Ambassador to India, addressed the program remotely from New Delhi. Abe is a tremendous admirer of Netaji, according to Sugata Bose, the famed liberation fighter's grand-nephew and Director of the Netaji Research Bureau. Moreover, in January 2021, India bestowed the Padma Vibhushan on former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the country's second-highest civilian honour.

Prajakta Koli becomes UNDP India's First Youth Climate Champion

- Prajakta Koli has become India's first UN Development Programme (UNDP) Youth Climate Champion. She is a content creator on various online platforms like youtube, Instagram, etc. She has been conferred the title for her contribution towards mental health, women's rights and girl child education through various global social campaigns.
- With this title, Prajakta will now have the responsibility to interact with the young generation to raise awareness around climate crisis, global warming and biodiversity loss and their impacts. She is also the global ambassador for YouTube's 'Creators For Change' initiative.

Sushmita Sen wins International Association of Working Women Award for Aarya 2

- Bollywood actress Sushmita Sen has been conferred with the International Association of Working Women Award at the Washington DC South Asian Film Festival (DCSAFF) 2021. The former Miss Universe has been felicitated for outstanding performance by a female actor in a TV series for her show 'Aarya 2'.
- The Aarya 2 series is created by Ram Madhvani and had released on December 10, 2021, on Disney+Hotstar. The DC South Asian Film Festival (DCSAFF) 2021 is organised virtually from January 16 to January 30, to showcase the best in alternative cinema from India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet, and Sri Lanka.

Pfizer chief Albert Bourla wins \$1 million Genesis Prize for development of COVID-19 vaccine

- The global pharmaceutical giant Pfizer Inc.'s Chairman and Chief Executive, Albert Bourla, has been awarded with the prestigious Genesis Prize 2022.
- The global pharmaceutical giant Pfizer Inc.'s Chairman and Chief Executive, Albert Bourla, has been awarded with the prestigious Genesis Prize 2022 on January 19, 2022. He has been awarded for his efforts in leading the development of a COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine). The award comes with a cash prize of \$1 million.
- The annual prize is awarded to Jewish people who have achieved significant professional success, in recognition of their accomplishments, contributions to humanity, and commitment to Jewish values and/or to the State of Israel. It is widely referred to as the "Jewish Nobel Prize".

Axis Bank and CRMNEXT win IBSi's Innovation Awards 2021 for the Best CRM System Implementation

- Axis Bank & CRMNEXT Solution won the IBS Intelligence (IBSi) Global FinTech Innovation Awards 2021 for the "Best CRM (Customer Relationship Management) System

Implementation". It is one of the most prominent awards for global bankers and IT (Information Technology) consultants across the world.

- The Axis Bank implemented CRMNEXT for sales and service modernisation and it also enables smarter lead processing, automated routing, complete tracking, and visibility. It identified and honoured technology players and banks for their excellence in banking technology implementations and innovations using emerging technologies.

Mrs World 2022: Mrs America Shaylyn Ford Takes The Crown; UAE & Jordan Runner Ups

- 37 Years old Shaylyn Ford was crowned as the winner of Mrs World 2022. She was crowned by the outgoing queen Kate Schneider from Ireland. Mrs Jordan Jaclyn Stapp & Mrs UAE Debanjali Kamstra were the runner up. Shaylyn Ford represented America in the pageant and battled out 57 other contestants from across the globe to claim the title. This is the 8th time an American representative won the title of Mrs. World.
- Shaylyn Ford hails from Granville, Ohio, USA. She won the annual Mrs American pageant on November 19, 2021. She is a professional makeup artist, who has worked in every setting, from movie sets to make-a-wish projects. She has been married to her pastor husband for the past seven years and has three children. She also serves as a charitable director and does a lot of volunteer work to bring services to special needs families.

India's Navdeep Kaur wins Best National Costume award for her Kundalini Chakra dress at Mrs World 2022

- India's Navdeep Kaur has won the award for the Best National Costume at the prestigious Mrs World 2022 pageant in Nevada, Las Vegas. She is the winner of Mrs India World 2021, was representing the country at Mrs World 2022. Navdeep hails from a small town near Odisha's Steel City, Rourkela.
- The "avant garde" outfit was inspired by Kundalini Chakra, which "symbolises the movement of energy in chakras of the body from the base to the spine up through the crown". Cobra embellishments on the shoulder were added to represent the "mystical serpent native to India", while the golden colour was chosen as it represents novelty, power and glory.

Kerala Arts & Crafts Village wins international award

- Kerala Arts and Crafts Village Organization (KACV) from Kovalam, Kerala was awarded the 'International Craft Award for 2021' for the best craft village in the world by the World Crafts Council International. It is the only award India received in the non-individual category. The KACV was established by the Uralungal Labour Contract Cooperative Society (UL CCS) for the State Tourism Department of Kerala. In 2021, the Village of the Year award was won by 'Kraf Komuniti Ku' in Malaysia.

ICMR award for Dr. Satish Adiga

- A professor in the clinical embryology department at Kasturba Medical College (KMC), under Manipal Academy of Higher education (MAHE), Dr Satish Adiga has been selected by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for its national award. He will receive Dr Subhas Mukherjee Award from ICMR in recognition for his outstanding contribution to the

field of in-vitro fertilization (IVF). He has contributed significantly to both clinical IVF and fertility research.

Golden Globe Awards 2022 announced

- The Golden Globe Awards 2022 ceremony was held to recognise excellence in film, both American and international, and American television. This was the 79th edition of the annual event, which honoured the best in American television, as well as film in 2021 as chosen by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association. Two of the films namely The Power of the Dog and the West Side Story, won the most number of awards with 3 each.

78th SKOCH Summit: FSL won the Silver SKOCH Award for Governance

- The Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) won SKOCH Award in the Silver category for its work towards combating Crime and Violence against Children. The award was given out at the 78 SKOCH Summit. The “State of Governance” was the theme of the summit.
- Deepa Verma, the Director of the Rohini-based lab, has accepted the award on behalf of the lab. FSL is a scientific department and a participant in the criminal justice system whose mission is to investigate incidents of crime and violence against children who have suffered physical, sexual, financial, or emotional harm.

Uttar Pradesh awarded first prize in 3rd National Water Awards

- Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has declared the winners of the third National Water Awards for the year 2020. Uttar Pradesh has been adjudged as the Best State in water conservation efforts in the National Water Awards 2020. It is followed by Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu respectively. The award comes with a citation, trophy and cash prize. Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh received the best district award in the northern zone followed by Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar in Punjab.
- The National Water Award was launched by the Jal Shakti Ministry in 2018 to recognise and motivate individuals and organizations doing exemplary work in the field of water resources management.

Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism awards: 2022

- The Indian Express Group has announced the Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards (RNG Awards) for journalists across the country, for their work done in 2019. RNG awards are one of the most prestigious awards in India in the field of journalism, held annually since 2006. The photo stories of our winners appeared in our print and digital editions between December 24, 2021, and January 4, 2022.
- The award is given to honour journalists across the country from print, broadcast and digital media who have maintained the highest standards of their profession and, despite immense challenges, produced work that sustains public trust in the media and impacts the lives of people. The award is named after Ramnath Goenka, the founder of “The Indian Express” and Indian Express Group in 1932.

Danish Siddiqui posthumously gets Mumbai Press Club's RedInk Award

- Photojournalist Danish Siddiqui, who died during an assignment in Afghanistan, has been posthumously awarded as the 'Journalist of the Year' for 2020 by the Mumbai Press Club. CJI N V Ramana presented the annual 'RedInk Awards for Excellence in Journalism'. He presented the prestigious award to Siddiqui "for his spectrum of investigative and impactful news photography". Danish Siddiqui's wife Frederike Siddiqui received the award.
- Senior journalist Prem Shankar Jha, 83, was bestowed with the lifetime achievement award "for his long and distinguished career of incisive and analytical writing". The Mumbai Press Club instituted The RedInk Awards a decade ago to recognise good investigative and feature writing and raise the bar of journalism in the country.

All India Co-ordinated Research Project (AICRP) on poultry breeding

- The All India Co-ordinated Research Project (AICRP) on poultry breeding, Mannuthy, under the Kerala Veterinary and Animal Science University (KVASU), bagged the national breed conservation award for 2021. The centre received the prestigious award from ICAR – The National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR) for the conservation and research activities on the Tellicherry breed, the only registered native chicken breed from the State.
- The centre started conservation of the Tellicherry breed in 2014. Through scientific selection and management, the breed began laying eggs as early as in five months and the annual egg production increased to 160-170 eggs.

RANKING

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.

Indian passport becomes 83rd most powerful globally in 2022, up from 90th rank

- India has improved its position by seven places to rank at 83rd place among 111 countries in the latest Henley Passport Index, released for Q1 of 2022. India ranked at 90th spot among 116 countries in Q4 of 2021 in October. The Indian passport has visa-free access to 60 destinations worldwide in Q1 2022, as compared to 58 destinations in Q4 of 2021. Oman and Armenia are the latest destinations where Indian passport holders can visit without obtaining a visa.
- Japan and Singapore have retained the joint top position in the Henley Global Mobility Report 2022 Q1. Their passport holders are allowed to travel visa-free to 192 countries. Afghanistan has the world's least powerful passports, with a visa-free score of 26.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Book “Fearless Governance” authored by Kiran Bedi

- The book titled ‘Fearless Governance’ authored by Dr Kiran Bedi has been released. She is the former Lt Governor of Puducherry and IPS (retd). This book is based on the ground realities of nearly five years of service of Dr Bedi as Lt. Governor of Puducherry and her vast experience of 40 years in the Indian Police Service.
- The author demonstrates the right practises of responsible governance. She brought about team spirit, collaboration, financial prudence, effective policing, bonding in services and decision making through fearless leadership. ‘Fearless Governance’ is a book to read, see, hear and feel for good governance and leadership.

Book ‘A Little Book of India: Celebrating 75 years of Independence’ authored by Ruskin Bond

- A new book titled “A Little Book of India: Celebrating 75 years of Independence” authored by Ruskin Bond was released, marking 75 years of India’s Independence. The book is the blend of “physical and spiritual” attributes of India and also highlights the last 75 years of India’s progress as a nation. It is published by Penguin Random House India (PRHI). It is a record of some of my memories and impressions of this unique land — of its rivers and forests, literature and culture, sights, sounds and colours — an amalgamation of the physical and spiritual.

Book “The \$10 Trillion Dream” authored by Subhash Garg

- The former finance secretary of India, Subhash Chandra Garg has announced his debut book named “The \$10 Trillion Dream”. The book is scheduled to hit stands towards the end of February 2022. The new book explores the critical policy issues that India faces today and suggests reforms for it to become a USD 10 trillion economy by the mid-2030s. It is published by Penguin Random House India (PRHI).
- Garg, a member of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) for over 36 years, has served in various key positions for both the Union government and the government of Rajasthan. He was designated finance secretary in March 2019.

Book ‘India’s Women Unsung Heroes’ launched by Meenakshi Lekhi

- Union Minister of State for Culture, Meenakshi Lekhi has released a pictorial comic book titled ‘India’s Women Unsung Heroes’, as a tribute to the forgotten women freedom fighters of the country. The book has been prepared by the Ministry of Culture in partnership with Amar Chitra Katha, an Indian publisher of Indian comics and graphic novels. India will be celebrating 75 years of independence this August 15. And so, the book celebrates the lives of 75 unsung women freedom fighters of India, including Chakali Iamma, Padmaja Naidu, Durgabhai Deshmukh, among others.
- The book is a fitting tribute to the forgotten heroes of our freedom struggle as it celebrates the lives of women who led the charge and lit the flame of rebellion throughout the country. It contains stories of queens who battled imperialism and dedicated their lives for Maa Bharati.

Book 'The Legend of Birsa Munda' authored by Tuhin A Sinha & Ankita Verma

- Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari has released a book titled 'The Legend of Birsa Munda', authored by Tuhin A Sinha and co-authored by Ankita Verma. The Book is the story of a lesser-known tribal hero, Birsa Munda, who courageously fought against the oppressive British Raj for the rights of his tribal community.
- According to the authors, "The book based on true events is a tribute to Birsa Munda who in a very short life mobilized the tribal community, rebelled against forced conversions, envisioned a fair and just society and died fighting for it. The Legend of Birsa Munda is the story of a subaltern tribal hero whose contribution to India's struggle for independence must never be forgotten."

Book "Bose: The Untold Story of An Inconvenient Nationalist" by Chandrachur Ghose

- A new biography titled "Bose: The Untold Story of An Inconvenient Nationalist" authored by Chandrachur Ghose will be released in February 2022. The book contains the thoughts and opinions of Subhas Chandra Bose about the development of independent India, communalism, geopolitics and political ideology. It also marked the untold and unknown stories of Netaji (Subhas Chandra Bose).
- The biography attempts to bring new perspectives on Netaji's thoughts on independent India's development, the problem of communalism, geopolitics, his political ideology, and how he negotiated with the political parties, revolutionary societies, and the government.
- The book throws light on Bose's intense political activities around the revolutionary groups in Bengal, Punjab, Maharashtra, and the United Provinces; his efforts to bridge the increasing communal divide and his influence among the splintered political landscape; his outlook on and relations with women; his plunge into the depths of spirituality; his penchant for covert operations; and his efforts to engineer a rebellion among the Indian armed forces.

Autobiography of Arundhati Bhattacharya released

- HarperCollins is set to publish "Indomitable: A Working Woman's Notes on Life, Work and Leadership" the autobiography of Arundhati Bhattacharya, retired Indian banker and former first-ever woman Chairperson of the State Bank of India. Indomitable features the story of Arundhati Bhattacharya's life as a banker and the difficulties she faced in the male-dominated sector. She is the chairperson and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of salesforce India, a cloud-based Software as a service (SaaS) company headquartered in San Francisco, California, United States of America.

Book "Mamata Beyond 2021" authored by Jayanta Ghosal

- HarperCollins Publishers India is set to publish a new book titled "Mamata: Beyond 2021", authored by political journalist Jayanta Ghosal and translated by Arunava Sinha. The announcement about the release of the book was made on 5th January 2022, the birthday of Mamata Banerjee, the Chief Minister (CM) of West Bengal and the leader of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) party. The book explores and examines why the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lost the 2021 West Bengal Election.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

SPMCIL sets up new bank note printing lines at Nashik and Dewas

- Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Limited (SPMCIL) has set up 'new banknote printing lines' at its Currency Note Press, Nashik and Bank Note Press, Dewas. In India, four printing presses for printing and supply of Banknotes. These are at Dewas in Madhya Pradesh, Nasik in Maharashtra (owned by SPMCIL), Mysore in Karnataka, and Salboni in West Bengal (owned by Bharatiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran Private Limited (BRBNMPL)).
- SPMCIL, a Government of India owned Miniratna company, is engaged in the manufacture/production of Currency and Bank Notes, Security Paper, Non-Judicial Stamp Papers, Postal Stamps, Passport, Visa, Cheques, Bond, Warrant, Special Certificates with security features, Security Inks, Circulation & Commemorative Coins, Medallions, Refining of Gold & Silver, and Assay of Precious Metals among others.

Paytm Money introduces India's first intelligent messenger for investments

- Paytm Money has introduced "India's first" intelligent messenger called 'Pops'. The company has launched 'Pops', with which users can receive specific information related to their stocks, analysis about their portfolio, market news, and important market movements in an easy to consume format, all in one place. The platform will also serve as a marketplace to offer sophisticated stock recommendations, news insights, and other services.
- Paytm Money is partnering with InvestorAi to offer stock recommendations based on signals generated using artificial intelligence. Now, with Pops on the Paytm Money app, these investors can monitor their portfolios regularly and learn from the market movements with alerts curated for them.

Tatas pick SBI, two other banks to finance Air India's old debt

- Tata Group has chosen State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda and HDFC Bank as preferred bankers for Air India. Recently Tata Group has taken over Air India from the government. Air India is the largest international carrier out of India with an 18.6% market share. Tata Sons have availed of a Rs 10,000-crore loan from SBI and a Rs 5,000-crore loan from BoB. The loan from HDFC Bank is not known yet. The loans are unrated, unsecured, and pegged at 4.25% [interest rate] annually.
- Tata Sons-promoted Talace has acquired Air India, offering Rs 18,000 crore that include Rs 15,300 crore for the carrier's existing debt and Rs 2,700 crore cash to be paid to the government. The new debt availed by the Tata Group will be used to refinance Air India's debt availed at over 10%.

Global gold demand rises 10% to 4021 tonnes in 2021: WGC

- According to the World Gold Council (WGC) report 'Gold Demand Trends 2021' has informed that the global gold demand rose 10 per cent in 2021 to 4,021.3 tonnes. The overall gold demand during 2020, which was impacted following Covid-19 related disruptions, stood at 3,658.8 tonnes.

- The demand for the yellow metal was mainly driven by Central bank buying during the fourth quarter of 2021, recovery in jewellery consumption, mainly in India and China. India's gold consumption surged to 797.3 tonnes in 2021, on the back of the recovery in consumer sentiments and pent-up demand post Covid-19-related disruptions and the bullish trend is set to continue this year as well.

Pencilton launches debit card with NCMC for teens in partnership with Transcorp

- A teen-focused Fintech startup based in India, Pencilton has recently launched PencilCard, a debit card that is compliant with National Common Mobility Card standards. It has been launched in partnership with Transcorp. The National Common Mobility Card was developed by India's Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in early 2019. It allows the user to pay for travel, toll duties, retail shopping and withdraw money.
- PencilCard works for both online and offline payments in addition to its utility as a metro and bus card. It can currently be used for travel on the airport line in Delhi and a KTC bus card in Pune. It will soon be accepted for metro travel in Pune, Chennai, and Mumbai. Also in the works is utilization on BEST buses in Mumbai.

City Union Bank launches debit card in fitness watch with GOQii

- City Union Bank in association with smart-tech-enabled preventive healthcare platform GOQii and powered by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has launched a wearable payment solution called CUB fitness watch debit card. Customers need to hold this wristwatch in front of the PoS device during payment like tapping the card on PoS. For payments above Rs 5,000, customers need to tap and enter their PIN. The introductory price of a smartwatch debit card is Rs 3,499, as compared to an actual cost of Rs 6,499).
- Customers can set limits for their payments using Net / Mobile Banking. Payments made using this Debit Card in a Fitness Watch are safe and secure, the bank said in a statement. For each transaction done using the watch, SMS will be sent to the registered mobile number. Customers can raise a request for the Fitness Watch Debit Card through Net banking/ Mobile banking. Usage of wristwatches can be managed by customers on their own through CUB All in One Mobile App.

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.

AIIB Invests in Data Center Development to Serve Emerging Asia

- Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), a multilateral development bank has committed USD 150 million to invest in the development of data centres that mostly serve emerging Asia. This project is being AIIB's 1st data centre project. India is a key founding member of AIIB. AIIB's investment of USD 100 million through a parallel fund structure and USD 50 million through co-investments mark the final close of KDCF II, a development fund making strategic investments in the fast-growing data center sector with a focus on the Asia Pacific.
- The project is aligned with AIIB's thematic priorities of Connectivity and Regional Cooperation, Green Infrastructure and Private Capital Mobilization. It will also support Alpha in developing climate finance monitoring indicators, incorporating the joint MDB methodology for tracking climate finance and an Environmental and Social Management System at the Fund level. This partnership benefits AIIB's geographical diversification given the diverse pipeline covering Southeast Asia and East Asia, among other regions across Asia Pacific.

Ujjivan Small Finance Bank launches Platina fixed deposit

- Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (SFB) has launched 'Platina Fixed Deposit', offering interest of 15 basis points (bps) higher than the regular term deposit rates provided by Ujjivan SFB. The Platina FD is a non-callable deposit, where partial & premature withdrawal is not applicable. While the interest amount can be received on monthly, quarterly or at the end of the maturity period.
- The general FD for 990 days tenure gives 6.75% interest for general citizens and 7.50% for senior citizens, while Platina FD offers 6.90% & 7.65% interest rates
- FD limit: the minimum amount is Rs 20 lakh and the maximum amount is Rs 2 crores, with tenure ranging from 1 year to 5 years.

Paytm and Fullerton India partnering to expand digital lending to MSMEs

- Fullerton India and One97 Communications Limited, which owns the brand Paytm, have announced a partnership to provide lending products to merchant partners and consumers. With the partnership, the two established institutions will leverage data-driven insights and wide reach to bring credit to new-to-credit users. They aim to co-create innovative

merchant loan products using customer payment behaviour and Fullerton's years of experience of understanding of this segment.

- The program will offer Paytm Postpaid (buy-now-pay-later) to millions of consumers on the Paytm platform while utilizing Fullerton's deep risk assessment capabilities and scale.
- Fullerton India and Paytm will further expand their product offerings to include instant personal loans, which are end-to-end digitally originated and disbursed using Paytm's technology and Fullerton's pan India presence.
- The two institutions would establish a wide network, specifically catering to MSMEs across small cities and towns and help them grow their business.

FDI flows to India slip 26% in 2021: UN report

- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows to India fell by 26 per cent in 2021, compared to 2020, as per the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Investment Trends Monitor published. In 2020, FDI to India was recorded at USD 64 billion. This was 27 per cent more compared to USD 51 billion in FDI in 2019.
- UNCTAD said that low FDI in India was mainly because large cross-border mergers & acquisitions (M&A) deals recorded in 2020 were not repeated. The global FDI flows increased by 77 per cent to an estimated USD 1.65 trillion in 2021, from USD 929 billion in 2020.

India Ratings projects economy to grow at 7.6% in FY23

- India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has projected the real gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of the Indian economy to grow at 7.6 per cent year-on-year in 2022-23 (FY23).
- India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has projected the real gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate of the Indian economy to grow at 7.6 per cent year-on-year in 2022-23 (FY23). Ind-Ra is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Fitch Group. The economic recovery was encouraging, he said, and restrictions put in place by many states to contain the current wave of Covid-19 were not as severe as the second wave. Nonetheless, there are risks to the ongoing recovery, the rating agency warned.
- It pointed to the latest FY22 GDP advance estimates, which show that private final consumption expenditure (PFCE) — the largest component of GDP (58.6 per cent) from the demand side and a proxy for consumption demand — is projected to grow only 6.9 per cent YoY in the current year, despite a low base and sales data of many consumer durables showing robust growth.

RBI: Digital payments up 39.6% in Sept 2021

- The RBI's Digital Payment Index, which shows the deepening of payments through digital modes in India, rose by 39.64 per cent to 304.06 in September 2021 against 217.74 in the year-ago month. The RBI-DPI Index continues to demonstrate significant growth in adoption and deepening of digital payments across the country. RBI has introduced Digital Payments Index in January 2021 with March 2018 as the base year to capture the extent of digitisation of payments across the country. This means that the DPI score for March 2018 is set at 100.

- RBI has started publishing the Digital Payments Index (DPI) on a semi-annual basis from March 2021 onwards with a lag of 4 months. This means that the DPI will be released by RBI for March and September every year in the months of July and January respectively.
- The RBI-DPI comprises five broad parameters that enable measurement of deepening and penetration of digital payments in the country over different time periods, viz. payment enablers (with 25 per cent weight), payment infrastructure—demand-side factors (10 per cent), payment infrastructure—supply-side factors (15 per cent), payment performance (45 per cent) and consumer centricity (5 per cent). These parameters have sub-parameters which, in turn, consist of various measurable indicators.

Microsoft to acquire Activision Blizzard to bring the joy and community of gaming to everyone

- Microsoft Corp. is set to acquire game making company, Activision Blizzard Inc., in an all-cash transaction for \$68.7 billion. (\$95.00 per share). This acquisition will boost the competitiveness of Microsoft in the mobile gaming business and virtual-reality technology, across mobile, PC, console and cloud and will provide building blocks for the metaverse.
- Activision Blizzard is famous as the maker of Candy Crush and Call of Duty, Xbox, among other leading video games. Upon the completion of the deal, Microsoft will become the world's third-largest gaming company by revenue, behind Tencent and Sony. This is the biggest deal ever by Microsoft and also the largest-ever deal in the history of the gaming industry.

SEBI Launched Saa᳚Thi Mobile App for Investor Education

- Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has launched Saa᳚thi, a mobile app on investor education.
- The new app aims to empower investors with accurate knowledge about the securities market. The app will cater largely to individual investors, who have recently entered the markets and carry out trading via their mobile phones. The app will be helpful in easily accessing all the relevant information like the basic concepts of Securities Market, KYC Process, trading and settlement, mutual funds, recent market developments, investor grievances redressal mechanism, etc. It is currently available in Hindi and English.

MobiKwik launches 'ClickPay' for faster bill payments in collaboration with Bharat BillPay

- MobiKwik, one of India's largest mobile wallets and Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) Fintech companies launched 'ClickPay' for its customers, in collaboration with NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd. (NBBL). This feature enables MobiKwik customers to pay recurring online bills (such as mobile, gas, water, electricity, DTH, insurance, and loan EMIs) with ease by eliminating the need to remember individual bill details and due dates.
- MobiKwik is focused on providing the Indian middle-class population a simple and RBI releases Annual Report of Ombudsman Schemes, 2020-21
- Reserve Bank of India has released the Annual Report of the Ombudsman Schemes for ClickPay is a two-step payment feature wherein the billers generate a unique payment link within the bill-pay message, allowing customers to make payments directly on the payment page. 2020-21, which has been prepared for the 9-month period (July 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021) in alignment with the change in the Financial Year of RBI from 'July – June' to 'April –

March' with effect from July 1, 2020. The Annual Report covers the activities under the Banking Ombudsman Scheme, 2006 (BOS), the Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies, 2018 (OSNBFC) and the Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions, 2019 (OSDT).

- The volume of complaints received under all the 3 Ombudsman Schemes increased by 22.27 percent on an annualized basis and stood at 3,03,107.
- The complaints received at BOS from July 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021, stood at 2,73,204
- The complaints received at OSNBFCs stood at 26,957 during July 1, 2020-March 31, 2021
- The number of complaints received at the OSDT rose to 2,946 during July 1, 2020-March 31, 2021.

Yes Mutual Fund rechristened as White Oak Capital Mutual Fund

- The name of YES Asset Management has been rechristened as WhiteOak Capital Asset Management and therefore the name of YES Mutual Fund has been changed to WhiteOak Capital Mutual Fund. The change in the names are effective from January 12, 2022. White Oak got the license to run a mutual fund. White Oak Capital group provides investment management and advisory services for equity assets of over Rs 42,000 crore.
- In November 2021, White Oak Capital Group, through its subsidiary, GPL Finance and Investments, acquired the mutual fund business, Yes Asset Management, of Yes Bank. The White Oak Capital group provides investment management and advisory services for Indian equity investors.
- secure payment platform to make daily life payments.

Paytm Payments Bank leads UPI beneficiary chart: SBI biggest remitter in December

- Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) became the largest and fastest-growing UPI beneficiary bank in India. It becomes the first beneficiary bank in the country to achieve the landmark of over 926 million UPI transactions in a single month. Beneficiary banks are the banks of the account holder who is receiving money. Paytm Payments Bank has also gained rapid traction as a remitter bank for UPI payments.
- While State Bank of India (SBI) topped the chart of being the biggest remitter in December 2021, according to data released by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). State Bank of India followed PPBL as the second-largest beneficiary with 664.89 million transactions.

Forex reserves down by USD 878 mn to USD 632.736 bn

- As per the weekly Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, the foreign exchange reserves of India declined by \$878 million to USD 632.736 billion in the week ended January 7, 2022. In the previous week ended December 31, India's reserves dropped by \$1.466 billion to \$633.614 billion. The decline was mainly due to a fall in gold reserves and foreign currency assets (FCA). In the reporting week, FCAs decreased by \$497 million to \$569.392 billion.
- Gold reserves declined by \$360 million to \$39.044 billion. The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) fell by \$16 million to \$19.098 billion. India's reserve position with the IMF dipped by \$5 million to \$5.202 billion.

HDFC Bank adjudged 'Best Private Bank in India' at the Global Private Banking Awards 2021

- HDFC Bank was named as the 'Best Private Bank' in India at the 'Global Private Banking Awards 2021' which was organised by Professional Wealth Management (PWM) in a virtual ceremony. PWM is a wealth management Magazine, published by the Financial Times Group. The award was given for contributing to accelerate key trends, including digitalisation, communication and investment in environmental, social and governance (ESG) strategies.

Centre to become Vodafone Idea's major shareholder with 35.8% stake

- The Central Government of India is set to become the largest shareholder in Vodafone Idea. The company's board approved the conversion of Rs 16,000 crores in interest into equity. India's third-largest network Vi or Vodafone Idea Limited (VIL) has approved the interest on the spectrum and Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) dues into government equity.
- VIL accepted a four-year moratorium as well as accepted the equity conversion, which means the Indian government will own almost 35.8% of VIL's stake followed by Vodafone Group which owns 28.5% and 17.8% by Aditya Birla Group.

UN forecasts India's GDP to grow 6.5% in FY22

- The GDP growth forecast of India in fiscal 2022 is estimated to grow at 6.5 per cent as per the United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2022 report. Earlier this was estimated at 8.4%. The WESP is a flagship report produced by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA). UN has projected the growth rate for fiscal 2023 (FY 2022-2023) at 5.9 per cent.

India retail inflation rises to 5.59% in December, hits 5-month high

- Retail inflation in December 2021 rose to a six-month high of 5.59 per cent from 4.91 per cent in November 2021, mainly due to a sharp rise in food prices as food inflation for the period under review also rose steeply to 4.05 per cent against 1.87 per cent in November 2021.
- According to data released by the ministry of statistics and programme implementation, prices of cereals, egg, milk products and prepared meals went up during December 2021. Apart from these items, prices of clothing and footwear, education, health as well as recreation activities and transportation too witnessed a rise in December 2021 compared to November 2021.

India's central bank is setting up a fintech department to keep up with crypto

- Reserve Bank of India has set up a separate internal department for fintech (Financial technology). The new department has been created with effect from January 04, 2022, by subsuming the FinTech Division of Department of Payment and Settlement Systems, Central Office (DPSS, CO).
- The department will not only promote innovation in the sector but also identify the challenges and opportunities associated with it and address them in a timely manner. Ajay Kumar Choudhary, who was recently promoted as the Executive Director of RBI was appointed as head of the department.

RBL Bank collaborates with Google to enhance customer experience

- RBL Bank and Google announced a strategic collaboration to fuel the Bank's customer experience strategy. Through this, the bank will expand its value proposition to serve its rapidly growing customer base through the digital platform, Abacus 2.0. It will enable better customer data management, and analytics, enabling effective cross-selling within the Bank's large customer base. RBL Bank currently has over 4 million urban retail asset and liability customers.
- This collaboration will enable better customer data management, and analytics, enabling effective cross-selling within the Bank's large customer base and subsequently reducing the cost of customer acquisition, significantly. Through Abacus 2.0, the Bank aims to provide a superior and holistic one-stop solution to its existing and new customers, to seamlessly deliver its different product offerings across channels.

RBI ups threshold for LCR maintenance by banks on funds received from non-financial small biz customers

- The Reserve Bank of India has increased the threshold limit for Banks to maintain the Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) on deposits and other 'extension of funds' received from non-financial small business customers from Rs 5 crore to Rs 7.5 crore. This is applicable on all Commercial Banks other than Regional Rural Banks, Local Area Banks, and Payments Banks. To better align RBI's guidelines with the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS) standard and enable banks to manage liquidity risk more effectively.
- LCR promotes the short-term resilience of banks to potential liquidity disruptions by ensuring that they have sufficient high-quality liquid assets (HQLAs) to survive an acute stress scenario lasting for 30 days.

Forex reserves down by USD 1.466 bn to USD 633.614 bn

- As per the latest Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, the foreign currency reserves of India declined by \$1.466 billion to \$633.614 billion, in the last week of 2021, which ended December 31, 2021. Gold reserves rose by USD 14 million to USD 39.405 billion. India's forex touched a lifetime high of USD 642.453 billion in the week ended September 03, 2021. Forex reserves include foreign currency assets (FCAs), gold reserves, SDRs and the country's reserve position with the IMF.

Real GDP to grow at around 9.5% in FY22: SBI Ecowrap

- The economic research team of the State Bank of India (SBI) released its Ecowrap report. In the report, SBI researchers have revised upwards the real GDP of India to around 9.5 per cent in 2021-22 (FY22) on a year-on-year (YoY). The report believes that though rising Covid infections could impact mobility, yet economic activity is not expected to get much affected.

Reliance to buy control of New York's Mandarin Oriental hotel for \$98 mn

- Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has announced the acquisition of a controlling stake of 73.37% in Mandarin Oriental New York, a premium luxury hotel in midtown Manhattan. RIL

through its wholly-owned arm Reliance Industrial Investments and Holdings Limited has acquired the entire share capital of Cayman Islands-based Columbus Centre Corporation (Cayman), for an equity value of approximately \$98.15 million (Rs 735 crore).

- Cayman is the parent company of Mandarin Oriental hotel. It had indirect ownership of a 73.37 per cent stake in the hotel. Reliance will also take over the hotel's debt in excess of \$115 million to take the entire deal value to around \$270. The transaction is anticipated to close by the end of March 2022.

SBI General Insurance launched #BahaneChhodoTaxBachao; a quirky Vox Pop campaign on Save Tax with Health Insurance

- State Bank of India General Insurance Company Ltd has launched a campaign titled '#BahaneChhodoTaxBachao' to increase awareness around the need to buy health insurance to save tax. It will also highlight the other benefits of opting for health insurance. The campaign aims to increase the awareness of how buying health insurance can help people save tax which is crucial and seasonal in the last quarter of the financial year for all Indians. The campaign will also underline the other benefits of opting for health insurance.
- The campaign is in a quirky Vox Pop format featuring anchor Rudraksh Singh aka Rudy is seen travelling across major cities like Mumbai, Bangalore, Delhi and Kolkata and asks the lamest excuse that people have to offer for not buying/opting for health insurance. The idea here is to find out 'India ka lamest excuse' for not opting for health insurance. Health insurance not just prevents a medical emergency but also benefit from saving tax under section 80D of the Income Tax Act, 1961.

Spread of Omicron to reduce GDP growth by 10 basis points in FY22: Ind-Ra

- The rating agency India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has downgraded the GDP of India for the current fiscal FY 2021-2022. Ind-Ra expects the GDP to clock a growth rate of 9.3% y-o-y in FY22. Earlier this estimate was 9.4%. Meanwhile, Brickworks Ratings has also revised India's GDP growth forecast for the current fiscal (FY22) to 8.5-9%. Earlier this was estimated at 10%. The rapid spread of the Omicron variant is the main driver to downgrade GDP growth projections.

RBI cancels Certificate of Authorisation of Muthoot Vehicle and Asset Finance, Eko India Financial Services

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the Certificate of Authorisation (CoA) of two Payment System Operators (PSOs): Muthoot Vehicle and Asset Finance Limited and Eko India Financial Services Private Limited, citing non-compliance with regulatory requirements under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007. Both Muthoot Vehicle and Asset Finance Limited and Eko India Financial Services Private Limited had the certificate of authorisation issued by the RBI for issuance and operation of prepaid payment instruments.
- The RBI further mentioned in its press release that the COA cancellation came into force on December 31, 2021. But RBI clarified in its notice that the customers or merchants who have a valid claim on these companies as PSOs can approach them for settlement of their claims within three years from the date of cancellation.

Reliance Retail acquires 26% in Dunzo for \$200 million

- Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Retail has invested \$200 million or around Rs 1,488 crore in Bengaluru-based quick commerce player Dunzo for a 25.8 per cent stake on a fully diluted basis. The move will help Reliance get a foothold in the country's growing quick delivery market. Dunzo raised a total of \$240 million in this latest round led by the Reliance Industries Ltd arm. The other existing investors were Lightbox, Lighthrock, 3L Capital and Alteria Capital, who participated in the round.
- The funding will be used to strengthen Dunzo's vision to excel in the quick commerce business, enabling instant delivery of essentials from a network of micro warehouses while also expanding its B2B business vertical to enable logistics for local merchants in Indian cities.

Airtel Payments Bank gets permission to function as scheduled bank from RBI

- Airtel Payments Bank has been categorised as a scheduled bank by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in the second schedule of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. With this, Airtel Payments Bank can now pitch for the government. Airtel Payments Bank is among the fastest-growing digital banks in the country, with a base of 115 million users. It offers a suite of digital solutions through the Airtel Thanks app and a retail network of over 500,000 neighbourhood banking points. The bank turned profitable in the quarter ended September 2021.

SBI, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank continue to remain systemically important banks: RBI

- Reserve Bank of India has retained State Bank of India, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs). These three banks have continued to be on the D-SIBs list published by RBI, since Sep 04, 2017. Domestic Systemically Important Banks are those banks which if fail would have a significant impact on the economy.
- The D-SIBs banks are classified into 5 buckets. Bucket 1, Bucket 2, Bucket 3, Bucket 4 and Bucket 5. With Bucket 5 being the most important followed by rest in decreasing order. State Bank of India is in Bucket 3, while ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank are in Bucket 1. The updated list is based on the data collected from banks as of March 31, 2021.

Tech Mahindra to acquire 100% stake in Allyis India and Green Investments LLC

- Tech Mahindra has approved a proposal for the acquisition of a 100 per cent stake in Allyis India and Green Investments, for a total consideration of up to USD 125 million. The acquisition will bolster Tech Mahindra's capabilities in Digital Experience Solutions, Learning & Development, Marketing, Instructional Design; Engineering: Cloud & Automation, BI & Analytics, Technical support services.
- Tech Mahindra will pay total consideration of up to \$125 million, including employment-related and performance-related earnouts, as per a regulatory update filed with the exchanges. Allyis India Pvt Ltd and Green Investments LLC offer technology consulting and managed services for organisations to help reduce costs, improve performance, and meet their objectives. Allyis India Pvt Ltd was incorporated in 2018 while Green Investments LLC was incorporated in 2013.

Capital markets regulator SEBI reconstituted its Primary Market Advisory Committee

- Capital markets regulator, Securities and Exchange Board of India has restructured its primary market advisory committee on data. The committee aims to measure pertaining to areas such as securities market data access and privacy. Sebi has appointed Professor at National Law University, Delhi and former chairperson, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India S Sahoo as Panel Head. Earlier this panel was headed by Madhabi Puri Buch, an ex-whole time member of Sebi.
- The scope of the work of the committee includes identifying segment-wise data perimeters, data needs and gaps, recommending data privacy and data access regulations applicable to market data. It is responsible for recommending appropriate policy for access to securities market data.

GST Collection at Rs 1.29 Lakh Crore in December, 13% Higher Than December 2020

- GST revenue collected in December 2021 was over Rs 1.29 lakh crore, 13 per cent higher than the same month in 2020. The gross GST revenue collected in the month of December 2021 is ₹ 1,29,780 crore, of which CGST is ₹ 22,578 crore, SGST is ₹ 28,658 crore, IGST is Rs 69,155 crore (including Rs 37,527 crores collected on import of goods) and cess is Rs 9,389 crore.
- Though the collection was lower than Rs 1.31 lakh crore mopped up in November, December is the sixth month in a row when revenue from goods sold and services rendered stood at over Rs 1 lakh crore. The average monthly gross GST collection for the third quarter (October-December) of the current year has been Rs 1.30 lakh crore against the average monthly collection of Rs 1.10 lakh crore and Rs 1.15 lakh crore in the first and second quarter, respectively.

Govt approves 19th tranche of electoral bonds for sale on January 1

- The government has approved the issuance of the 19th tranche of electoral bonds, which will be open for sale from January 1 to 10, 2022, ahead of assembly elections in five states Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Goa.
- Electoral bonds have been pitched as an alternative to cash donations made to political parties as part of efforts to bring transparency in political funding. However, Opposition parties have been raising concerns about alleged opaqueness in funding through such bonds.

SBI acquires 9.95% stake in India International Exchange (IFSC)

- State Bank of India will acquire up to 9.95 per cent stake in India International Clearing Corporation (IFSC) Ltd subject to a maximum investment of Rs 34.03 crore. The Clearing Corporation is a GIFT City (Gandhinagar, Gujarat) based Market Infrastructure Institution (MII). The Corporation is the first international clearing corporation to be set up at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) International Financial Services Centre (IFSC). The Clearing Corporation acts as a central counterparty providing clearing & settlement and risk management services to India International Exchange (IFSC) Ltd.