

Weekly Current Affairs PDF January 02 to January 08, 2022

Current Affairs PDF- January 08, 2022

INTERNATIONAL

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.

NATIONAL

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.

APPOINTMENT & RESIGNATIONS

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.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

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.

BOOKS & AUTHOR

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 ECONOMIC

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.

Current Affairs PDF- January 07, 2022

INTERNATIONAL

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.

NATIONAL

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.

APPOINTMEN & RESIGNATION

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.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

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 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.

BANKING AND ECONOMIC

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.

Current Affairs PDF- January 06, 2022

INTERNATIONAL

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.

NATIONAL

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.
- Ujjwala 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.

APPOINTMEN & RESIGNATION

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.

OBITURY

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.

IMPORTANT DAYS

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".

BANKING AND ECONOMIC

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.

Current Affairs PDF- January 05, 2022

INTERNATIONAL

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).

NATIONAL

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.

APPOINTMEN & RESIGNATION

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.

BANKING AND ECONOMIC

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.

Current Affairs PDF- January 04, 2022

INTERNATIONAL

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.

NATIONAL

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.

OBITURY

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).

IMPORTANT DAYS

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.

BANKING AND ECONOMIC

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.
- In addition, the committee recommends standardization of data definitions; data identification logic (usage of uniform codes for identifying and storing data – raw data and derived data) and data validation techniques (single source of truth, validation).

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.

Current Affairs PDF- January 03, 2022

INTERNATIONAL

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.

NATIONAL

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."

Appointment & Resignation

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.

OBITURY

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.

IMPORTANT DAYS

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.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

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.

BANKING AND ECONOMIC

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. In the 19th tranche of sale, the State Bank of India (SBI), has been authorised to issue and encash electoral bonds through its 29 specialised branches. There is no limit on the number of bonds an individual or company can purchase. An electoral bond will be valid for 15 days.
- 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.

Current Affairs PDF- January 02, 2022

INTERNATIONAL

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

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 provide tap 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.

APPOINTMEN & RESIGNATION

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.

IMPORTANT DAYS

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.