

NAVATRA

Monthly Magazine on Current Events

Vol. - 4 >>> Issue - 10 >>> April, 2021

**51st Dadasaheb
Phalke Award
2019**

**Global
Gender
Gap
Report
2021**



Prime Minister's visit to Bangladesh

Preface

Dear readers, we have started edristi English edition as well since August, 2015. We are hopeful that it will help us to connect to the broader audience and amplify our personal bonding with each other.

While presenting Day-to-day current affairs, we are very cautious on choosing the right topics to make sure only those get the place which are useful for competitive exams perspective, not to increase unnecessary burden on the readers by putting useless materials. Secondly, we have also provided the reference links to ensure its credibility which is our foremost priority. You can always refer the links to validate its authenticity.

We will try to present the current affairs topics as quickly as possible but its authenticity is given higher priority over its turnaround time. Therefore it could happen that we publish the incident one or two days later in the website.

Our plan will be to publish our monthly PDF on very first day of every month with making appropriate modifications of day-to-day events. In general, the events happened till 29th day will be given place in the PDFs. The necessity of this is to ensure the contents factual authenticity.

Reader's satisfaction is our utmost priority so requesting you to provide your valuable feedback to us. We will warmly welcome your appreciation/criticism given to us. It will surely show us the right direction to improve the content quality. Hopefully the current affairs PDF (from 1st March to 31st March) will benefit our beloved readers.

Current affairs data will be useless if it couldn't originate any competitive exam questions. E-Dristi has been very successful in that direction. Almost all the questions from UPPCS and other examinations have been asked from our materials. You can verify that by matching the question papers and e-Dristi contents from yourselves.

National

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh

Question: Which of the following statements regarding Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit of Bangladesh are correct?

- i) On 26th March, 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Bangladesh on his 2-day visit at the invitation of Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina.**
- ii) Visit coincided with celebration of 50 years of Bangladesh Liberation and the establishment of diplomatic ties between the India and Bangladesh.**
- iii) December 6, on which India formally recognized Bangladesh, will be celebrated as Maîtri Diwas.**

a) only I b) i and ii c) i,ii,iii d) None of the above

Ans: c

Context

- On 26th March, 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Bangladesh on his 2-day visit at the invitation of Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina.



Facts

- PM Modi's first foreign visit after the COVID-19 pandemic to Bangladesh is a reiteration of his government's focus on the neighbourhood.
- **Following MoU's were signed during the visit of PM Modi between two neighboring countries:-**
- MoU on Disaster Management, strengthen and Mitigation.
- MoU on Bangladesh National Cadet Corps (**BNCC**) and National Cadet Corps of India(**INCC**)
- MoU on the establishment of a framework of Cooperation in the Area of Trade Remedial measures between Bangladesh and India.
- Tripartite MoU on Establishment of Sport Facilities at Rajshahi College field and surrounding areas.

- Tripartite MoU on supply of ICT equipment, courseware and reference books and training for Bangladesh-Bharat Digital services and Employment and Training (BDSET) Centre.

Other Projects

- Modi handed over a symbolic key to Hasina for 109 ambulances gifted by India, and also donated 1.2 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines as a grant.
- Virtual Inauguration of three border “haats” or markets and the extended development of Rabindra Bhawan at Shilaidaha Kuthibari, a country house in Kushtia where Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore spent a part of his life.
- Foundation stone for the development of infrastructure at the Rooppur nuclear power plant being jointly built by Russia and India was also laid virtually.
- December 6, on which India formally recognized Bangladesh, will be celebrated as Maîtri Diwas.

Reference: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/pm-modi-wraps-up-bangladesh-visit-calls-for-greater-bilateral-cooperation-101616868159163.html>

Dadasaheb Phalke award 2019.

Question- Who has been honoured with ‘Dadasaheb Phalke award 2019’?

(a) Rajinikanth (b) Amir Khan (c) Akshay Kumar (d) Kangana Ranaut

Ans. (a)

Related facts-

- The prestigious 51st Dadasaheb Phalke Award will be honoured to superstar Rajinikanth, for the year 2019, Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar announced on 1 April 2021.
- “India every year gives Dada Saheb Phalke award to a film personality. This year this selection has been made by a jury comprising Asha Bhonsle, Mohanlal, Biswajit Chatterjee, Shankar Mahadevan and Subhash Ghai.
- The Dadasaheb Phalke Awards is India’s highest award in cinema and is presented annually at the National Films Awards ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals, an organisation set up by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- The very first recipient of this award was Devika Rani who received it in 1969 on the occasion of the 17th National Films Awards.



- Dadasaheb Phalke is known as the ‘Father of Indian Cinema’. He made India’s first full-length feature film Raja Harishchandra in 1913. Hence, to commemorate Dadasaheb Phalke, the Government of India has started the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 1969.

Reference- <https://www.jagranjosh.com/general-knowledge/list-of-dadasaheb-phalke-award-1484916081-1>.

Global Gender Gap Report 2021

Question-Which of the following organisation had released the ‘Global Gender Gap Index 2021’ recently-

(a) WEF (b) World Bank (c) IMF (d) UNDP

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-



- India has slipped 28 places to rank 140th among 156 countries in the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report 2021, becoming the third-worst performer in South Asia, after Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- In 2020, India had ranked 112th among 153 countries on the index.
- The report is annually published by the World Economic Forum (WEF).
- The index benchmarks the evolution of gender-based gaps among four key dimensions – Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment – and tracks progress towards closing these gaps over time.
- While India has declined on the political empowerment index as well by 13.5 percentage points, and a decline in the number of women ministers, from 23.1 per cent in 2019 to 9.1 per cent in 2021, it has still performed relatively well compared to other countries, ranking at 51 in women’s participation in politics. Bangladesh is “the only country where more women have held head-of-state positions than men in the past 50 years,” says the report.
- In the index of education attainment, India has been ranked at 114.
- But the two indices where India has fared the worst are “Health and Survival”, which includes the sex ratio, and economic participation of women.
- The report notes that the economic participation gender gap actually widened in India by 3 percent this year. The share of women in professional and technical roles declined further to 29.2 per cent. The share of women in senior and managerial positions also is at 14.6 per cent and only 8.9 per cent firms in the country have top female managers.
- But it is in the Health and Survival index that India has fared the worst, ranking at 155 — the only country to have fared worse is China. The report points to a skewed sex ratio as a major factor.

Reference- http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2021.pdf.

Launching of Tribal TB Initiative

Question : On which date was the Tribal TB initiative launched by the Ministry of Health ?

(a) 26 March 2021 (b) 24 March 2021 (c) 22 March 2021 (d) None of the above

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- On 26 March 2021, the Union Ministry of Health launched the Tribal TB initiative.
- A Guidance Note on Joint Action Plan for Tuberculosis (TB) Elimination, a Special Edition of Tribal Ministry's Publication 'ALEKH' on TB, and a document on Tribal Tuberculosis (TB) Initiative was also released at the event.



Background

- This initiative launched in the backdrop of fulfilment of the cherished goal of a "TB Mukh Bharat" envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- It is notable that India's vision is to end Tuberculosis(TB) by 2025.
- While SDG target to set off this at 2030.

Vulnerability of the tribal population to TB

- Over 104 million tribal population lives in India, across 705 tribes, accounting for 8.6 % of the country's population.
- 177 tribal districts were identified as high priority districts where physical remoteness, malnutrition, poor living conditions and lack of awareness contribute to the vulnerability of the tribal population to TB.
- Initially, the activities of the joint plan will be focusing on 161 districts across 18 identified States.

NIKSHAY Portal

- The linking of NIKSHAY Portal of MoHFW(Ministry of Health) and Swasthya Portal of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs will help boost data compilation on TB and pave way for efficient and convergent actions.

Government's partner in Tribal Tb initiative

- USAID, BMGF and Piramal Foundation are the partners for helping TB Care reach the last person in the remotest parts of the country.

Link:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1707909>

Kurnool Airport

Question : On which date Kurnool Airport inaugurated ?

(a) 25 March 2021 (b) 24 March 2021 (c) 22 March 2021 (d) 20 March 2021

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- Kurnool Airport was inaugurated on March 25, 2021.
- Kurnool is the 6th airport in Andhra Pradesh to become functional after Kadapa, Visakhapatnam, Tirupati, Rajahmundry & Vijayawada.
- The flight operations at Kurnool airport will commence on 28th March 2021 under the Regional Connectivity Scheme – Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN).



Kurnool

- Kurnool is the judicial capital of Andhra Pradesh and a historical hub of the country. The place is famous for its mighty caves and temples.
- The city of Kurnool lies on the banks of the Tungabhadra River and, Nallamalas mountain hill range runs parallel. Moreover, Famous tourist spots include Nallamala Forest, Ahobilam, Belum Caves, Mahanandi, Mantralayam, Orvakal, Sangameshwaram, Kethavaram and Kalva Bugga.
- This air connectivity will fulfill the aspirations of the people of Kurnool and provide impetus to the local economy and tourism.

Indian aviation industry

- The civil aviation industry in India has emerged as one of the fastest growing industries in the country during the last three years. India has become the third largest domestic aviation market in the world and is expected to overtake UK to become the third largest air passenger* market by 2024.
- India's passenger traffic stood at 341.05 million in FY20. It grew at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11.13% during FY16-FY20.
- Domestic passenger traffic stood at 274.50 million in FY20, growing at a CAGR of 12.91% over FY16.
- International passenger traffic stood at 66.54 million, growing at a CAGR of 5.01% during FY16-FY20.
- Key investments and developments in India's aviation industry include:
 - In October 2020, Zurich Airport International signed the concession agreement for the development of Jewar Airport on the outskirts of Delhi. The agreement has granted Zurich Airport International the licence to design, build and operate Noida International Airport (NIAL) for the next 40 years.
 - In October 2020, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) announced plan to upgrade runways at seven airports across the country by March 2022.
 - In January 2020, IndiGo became first Indian carrier to have an aircraft fleet size of 250 planes and became the first airline to operate 1,500 flights per day.

- In December 2019, AAI announced its plans to set up India's first three water aerodromes in Andaman & Nicobar.
- As of December 2019, France-based Safran Group planned an investment of US\$ 150 million in a new aircraft engine maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) unit in India to cater to its airline customers.
- In November 2019, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved the acquisition of shareholdings in Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) by Adani Properties Private Limited (APPL).
- AAI plans to invest Rs. 25,000 crore (US\$ 3.58 billion) in next the five years to augment facilities and infrastructure at airports.
- UK group to invest Rs. 950 crore (US\$ 135.9 million) in Turbo Aviation's new airline TruStar.

Link:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1707534>

Uttar Pradesh government launches Affordable Rental Housing Scheme (ARHS)

Question: Consider the following statement regarding Uttar Pradesh government's Affordable Rental Housing Scheme (ARHS)-

i)It is an affordable rental housing scheme for students, urban migrants and poor people living in cities.

ii)It was announced on 26th March 2021.

iii) It will be implemented under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban).

Which of the above statements are correct?

a) ii,iii b)iii,l c) i,ii,iii d) None

Ans: c

Context

- Uttar Pradesh government has announced on March 26, 2021 to start an affordable rental housing scheme for students, urban migrants and poor people living in cities.

Facts

- Under the scheme, students, urban migrants, poor labourers, those belonging to economically weaker section (EWS), low income groups including factory workers and people associated with hospitality will be the beneficiaries.
- Preference will be given to people belonging to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes, widows, working women and minorities, which will be subject to the provisions made by the state government.
- The ARHC scheme will be implemented under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) .



Implementation of Scheme

- ARHC scheme will be implemented in two models.
- First model will convert vacant houses funded by central or state government into an Affordable Rental Housing and Complexes through an agreement.
- Under the second model, public or private entities will build, operate and maintain the ARHC on their available vacant land.
- All projects under the scheme will be used for rental accommodation only for EWS/LIG category, urban migrants/poor for minimum 25 years.
- Use of complexes for any other purpose than rent to deserving candidates will invite penal action.

Reference: <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/up-govt-to-launch-affordable-rental-housing-scheme-for-students-urban-migrants-11616752189597.html>

Execution of planned actions in time bound manner in 132 cities

Question : An agreement has recently(March 2021) signed towards execution of planned actions in time bound manner in 132 cities under NCAP. What is the full form of NCAP ?

- (a) National Clean Air Programme (b) National Clean Air Panel
(c) Neat & Clean Air Programme (d) None of the above

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- An agreement has recently(March 2021) signed towards execution of planned actions in time bound manner in 132 cities under NCAP
- NCAP stands for — National Clean Air Programme.

Key Points

1. Union Environment Minister calls on State Governments and all concerned to work together for improving air quality in the country in mission mode.
2. The signing of MoUs under NCAP will add a new dimension for checking the pollution in the country
3. The National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) is a long-term, time-bound, national level strategy to tackle air pollution problem across the country in a comprehensive manner with targets to achieve 20% to 30% reduction in Particulate Matter concentrations by 2024 (with 2017 as base year).



Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1707867>

Kerala's TB eradication programme bags national honour

Question: Which State's tuberculosis eradication programme had won national honour for reducing the prevalence of the disease?

- (a) Odisha (b) Kerala (c) Sikkim (d) Tripura

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Kerala's tuberculosis eradication programme had won national honour .
- The state has been announced for its effective various systematic initiatives to reduce the prevalence of the disease.
- Kerala is the only state which had chosen for recognition in the state category.
- The southern state has significantly reduced the TB prevalence rate by 5 per cent in the last five years as part of achieving sustainable development goals.
- India aims to achieve End Tuberculosis by reducing the incidence of new TB cases by 80% by 2025, ahead of United Nations target in 2030.



Links:

<https://www.deccanherald.com/national/south/keralas-tb-eradication-programme-bags-award-965499.html>

Justice N.V. Ramana

Question: Who has been recommended as the next Chief Justice of India by the incumbent CJI SA Bobde?

- (a) Justice N.V. Ramana (b) Justice R.F. Nariman (c) Justice Uday Umesh Lalit
(d) Justice A.M. Khanwilkar

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Chief Justice of India (CJI) SA Bobde has officially recommended Justice NV Ramana's name as his successor after he retires on April 23,2021.
- Justice NV Ramana is the second most senior Judge of the Supreme Court.
- After the appointment, Justice NV Ramana will be the 48th Chief Justice of India and he will have a long tenure as CJI for over 16 months.
- Also,he will be the second person from Andhra Pradesh to be the Chief Justice of India (CJI).
- Before being elevated as a Judge of the Supreme Court, Justice NV Ramana has served as the Acting Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court and Chief Justice of Delhi High Court.
- As is the practice under the Memorandum of Procedure for Appointment of Chief Justice of India,Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had reportedly sent a letter to Justice Bobde, seeking his recommendation.
- The recommendation letter has to come around a month before the vacancy arises.



Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/supreme-court-chief-justice-of-india-sa-bobde-nv-ramana-7242676/>

India TB Report

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) As of India TB report, there were 18.05 tuberculosis notifications in 2020

(2) There was a fall of 24% Tb notifications from 2019

Of the above correct statement/s is/are:

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) & (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts

- On 24 March 2021, Health Ministry released the India TB report.
- According to the report, in 2020, there were 18.05 tuberculosis notifications, which was a fall of 24% from 2019 due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic.
- Between January and February 2020, there were rise of 6% cases reported than in 2019.
- As a result of the lockdown, notifications in the public sector fell by 38% and 44% in the private sector in April and May.
- Of the reported 24.04 lakh TB cases in 2019, treatment success was 82%, mortality rate was 4%.
- The approved budget toward the programme was decreased from ₹3,333 crores in 2019-20 to ₹3,110 crore in 2020-21.
- The report said 20,892 (42%) of patients were initiated on a shorter MDR-TB regimen at the time of diagnosis. This is a significant decline from 2019.

**Links:**

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tb-notifications-register-fall-due-to-pandemic-disruptions/article34153456.ece>

186th Assam Rifles Raising Day

Question: When is the Assam Rifles Raising Day celebrated?

(a) 24 March (b) 21 March (c) 25 March (d) 10 March

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 24 March 2021, Assam Rifles celebrated its 186th Raising Day.
- The Assam Rifles is the oldest paramilitary force of India, dating back to 1835 under the British Raj.
- The Assam Rifles came into being in 1835, as a militia called the 'Cachar Levy'. With approximately 750 men, this force was formed to primarily protect British Tea estates and their settlements against tribal raids.



- In 1870, existing elements were merged into three Assam Military Police Battalions, named as Lushai Hills, Lakhimpur and Naga Hills.
- In 1917, recognising their work during the World War I, fighting shoulder to shoulder with Rifle Regiments of the regular British Army, the name of the force was changed to 'Assam Rifles'.
- Till date the force has fought two World Wars, 1962 Sino-India War and played instrumental in insurgency operations.
- Since Independence, the force has won 120 Shaurya Chakras, 31 Kirti Chakras, five Vir Chakras and four Ashok Chakras, apart from 188 Sena Medals.

Links:

<https://www.assamrifles.gov.in/english/newwindow.html?2030>

Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak inaugurated in New Delhi

Question: In which city Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak was inaugurated on 23rd March 2021?

a) Patiala, Punjab b) New Delhi c) Chhandigarh d) Lucknow

Ans: b

Facts



- Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak was inaugurated in New Delhi by Education Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' on March 23, 2021.
- It was inaugurated in a Delhi University function.
- Education minister also paid homage to Bhagat Singh in the chamber located in basement of Viceregal Lodge of Delhi University. Bhagat Singh was imprisoned in this chamber.
- Programme was organised to pay homage and commemorate 90 years of martyrdom of our national icons of the Indian National Movement -Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru on 'Shaheed Diwas' on 23rd March.

Reference: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1707082>

Poshan Abhiyan for Senior Citizens

Question: Consider the following statements regarding Poshan Abhiyan for Senior Citizens-

i) The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is planning to launch a Poshan Abhiyan for the Elderly.

ii) It's objective is to provide nutrition support to the indigent elders, who are not staying in the Old Age Homes and are victims of severe malnutrition.

Which of the above statements are correct?

a) only I b) only ii c) both i and ii d) neither i nor ii

Ans: c

Context

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is planning to launch a Poshan Abhiyan for the Elderly.

Facts

- It's objective is to provide nutrition support to the indigent elders, who are not staying in the Old Age Homes and are victims of severe malnutrition.
- Nutrition will be provided by procuring locally available healthy food material and serving hot-cooked mid-day meals.



National Action Plan for Welfare of Senior Citizens (NAPSrC)

- It is an umbrella scheme which aims at creating an ecosystem where all Indians can age gracefully and live a life of dignity, with focus on concerted and synergised action on the existing and emerging needs of the senior citizens.
- Scheme includes providing financial security, healthcare and nutrition, shelter and welfare, protection of life and property, active and productive ageing and awareness generation for the benefit of elderly in India .

Poshan Abhiyan or National Nutrition Mission (NNM)

- The multi-ministerial initiative called NNM was launched in 2018 to tackle the malnutrition problem which is prevalent in India.
- It was launched to improve nutritional outcomes of children, adolescents, pregnant & lactating women. Key objective of the mission is “to reduce the level of under-nutrition”.
- The mission seeks to eliminate malnutrition by 2022. It specifically targets towards reducing stunting, under nutrition, anemia and low birth weight.

Reference: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1706914#:~:text=The%20Ministry%20of%20Social%20Justice,material%20and%20serving%20hot%2Dcooked>

Memorandum of Cooperation signed between India and Japan

Question: In which sector government of India has approved signing of Memorandum of Cooperation between India and Japan on March 23, 2021?

a) Agriculture b) Water sector c) Solar Energy d) Wind Energy

Ans: b

Context

- The Union Cabinet on March 23,2021 was informed of a Memorandum of Cooperation signed between India and Japan, aimed at achieving water security, improved irrigation facility and sustainability in water resources development.



Facts

- Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) signed between Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India and Water and Disaster Management Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan in the field of Water Resources.
- This MoC was signed for following reasons
- To develop a long-term cooperation in the field of water and delta management, and water technology.
- To increase the exchange of information, knowledge, technology and scientific allied experience, as well as implementation of joint projects between the two countries in the field of water management.

Reference: https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/cabinet-apprired-of-moc-signed-between-india-japan-in-water-sector-121032300945_1.html#:~:text=Cabinet%20apprired%20of%20MoC%20signed%20between%20India%2C%20Japan%20in%20water%20sector,-Press%20Trus

SAAMAR campaign

Question: Which state government has launched the Saamar campaign to fight malnutrition?

(a) Odisha (b) Chhattisgarh (c) Jharkhand (d) West Bengal

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Jharkhand government has launched SAAMAR campaign to tackle malnutrition in the state.
- SAAMAR stands for Strategic Action for Alleviation of Malnutrition and Anemia Reduction.
- The campaign has been launched with a 1000 days target, where annual surveys will be conducted to track the progress.
- The campaign aims to identify anemic women and malnourished children and converge various departments to effectively deal with the problem in a state where malnutrition has been a major problem.
- The campaign also tries to target Primarily Vulnerable Tribal Groups.
- The Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey conducted in the state during March 2017 to July 2017 states that, 36% of under five years of age are stunted—height for age, 29% are affected from Wasting—weight for height, and 45% are underweight—weight for age.



Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/jharkhand-saamar-campaign-explained-7235270/>

Sahi Disha campaign

Question: Consider the following statements:

- (1) United Nations Development Programme and the IKEA Foundation have launched Sahi Disha campaign.
(2) The campaign enables rural women with skill development to access job and livelihood opportunities

Of the above correct statement/s is/are:

- (a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) & (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts

- The UNDP has launched "Sahi Disha" campaign to celebrate women's livelihoods and entrepreneurship in rural India.
- The campaign focuses on hurdles in job seeking of rural women and make them able to earn job and livelihood by skill development.
- The campaign also stresses to develop entrepreneurial skill in women to make them self reliant.
- The Disha initiative is a five-year collaboration between UNDP and the IKEA Foundation.
- The initiative enables one million women access to job and livelihood opportunities across five states – Delhi NCR, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Telangana.
- The initiative also provided psycho-social support to mentor and empower women in starting their own enterprises and in challenging gender stereotypes at home and in the community.



Links:

<https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/undp-launches-sahi-disha-campaign-to-celebrate-womens-livelihoods-in-rural-india/2048918>

POWERGRID Launches Certified E-Tendering Portal "PRANIT"

Question- Which one of the following central PSU is released a E-Tendering portal "PRANIT" recently-

- (a) POERGRID (b) NTPC (c) BHEL (d) COAL INDIA

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

- Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a central PSU under Ministry of Power has established an e-Tendering Portal-PRANIT which will lead to less paperwork and ease of operation, making the tendering process more transparent.



- It has been certified by Standardisation, Testing and Quality Certification Directorate (STQC) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India.
- POWERGRID is now the only organization in India to have an e-Procurement solution on SAP Supplier Relationship Management (SRM), complying with all applicable requirements relating to security and transparency as stipulated by STQC.
- POWERGRID in pursuit of digitalisation has been undertaking a number of innovative enhancements within SAP SRM framework.

Reference- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseframePage.aspx?PRID=1706854>.

116th meeting of the India-Pakistan Permanent Indus Commission

Question- 116th meeting of the India-Pakistan Permanent Indus Commission is recently held in-

(a) New Delhi (b) Jaipur (c) Jammu and Kashmir (d) Punjab

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

- The Annual Meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) comprising of Indus Commissioners of India and Pakistan was held on March 23-24, 2021 in New Delhi.
- Under the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty, signed between India and Pakistan in 1960, the two Commissioners are required to meet at least once every year, alternately in India and Pakistan.
- Discussions continued on designs of two Indian projects, namely, Pakal Dul (1000 MW) and Lower Kalnai (48 MW). Indian side held that these projects are fully compliant with the provisions of the Treaty and provided technical data in support of its position.
- It is being viewed as part of the broader process of normalisation of bilateral ties between the two countries.



Reference-

https://www.mea.gov.in/pressreleases.htm?dtl/33717/116th_meeting_of_the_IndiaPakistan_Permanent_Indus_Commission.

First commercial passenger flight to Bareilly airport from Delhi

Question : Who flagged off first commercial passenger flight to Bareilly airport from Delhi ?

- (a) Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri
 (b) Civil Aviation Minister of Uttar Pradesh Nand Gopal Gupta
 (c) Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath
 (d) None of the above

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri flagged off first commercial passenger flight to Bareilly airport from Delhi.
- The first commercial passenger flight to Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh operated by an all-woman crew.
- It is notable that the Bareilly airport has been upgraded for commercial flight operations under the regional connectivity scheme – Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN) of the government of India.



Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airlines/-aviation/aviation-minister-flags-off-first-commercial-passenger-flight-to-bareilly-airport-from-delhi/articleshow/81392896.cms?from=mdr>

Gandhi Peace Prize 2020 and 2019

Question –The Gandhi Peace Prize for the year 2020 is awarded to-

- (a) Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (b) Dr. Manmohan Singh
- (c) Sheikh Hasina (d) UNHCR

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

- The father of the nation of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the late Sultan of Oman, Qaboos bin Said Al Said are to be awarded the Gandhi Peace Prize for 2020 and 2019 respectively.
- The Gandhi Peace Prize is an annual award instituted by government of India since 1995, on the 125th birth anniversary commemoration year of Mahatma Gandhi. The award is open to all people regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or sex.
- The jury for Gandhi Peace Prize is chaired by Prime Minister and comprises of two ex-officio members, namely the Chief Justice of India and leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha.
- The award carries an amount of Rs. 1 crore, a Citation in a scroll, a plaque as well as an exquisite traditional handicraft/handloom item.



Reference- <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/india-gandhi-peace-prize-2020-sheikh-mujibur-rahman-bangladesh-gratitude-1782451-2021-03-23>.

Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav

Question: Where did Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurate the pre-emptive activities of the ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’ on 12 March 2021 ?

- (a) Champaran (b) Sabarmati (c) Belgaum (d) Nagpur

Answer – (b)

Related facts

- On 12 March 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the pre-emptive activities of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' from Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad.
- The launch of the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' 75 weeks before 15 August 2022 will continue till 15 August, 2023.

About the Mahotsav

- Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav is a series of events to be organised by the Government of India to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of India's Independence. The Mahotsav will be celebrated as a Jan-Utsav in the spirit of Jan-Bhagidari throughout the length and breadth of the country.

Five pillars & other launchings of the occasion

- The Prime Minister reiterated five pillars i.e. Freedom Struggle, Ideas at 75, Achievements at 75, Actions at 75 and Resolves at 75 as guiding force for moving forward keeping dreams and duties as inspiration.
- The Prime Minister launched the website of India@75 on the occasion.
- He also launched the 'Atmanirbhar Incubator' programme of Ministry of Culture in partnership with Sabarmati Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust to preserve the skills and arts of artisans/crafts persons on the verge of extinction.
- A unique Charkha Campaign was also started by the Prime Minister to promote 'Vocal for Local'.
- A short film on 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' was screened on the occasion and Dandi Yatra Geet was also performed.
- The occasion was marked by colourful and inspiring cultural performances in the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat representing cultural variety and diversity from across the country.



Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1704365>

11th edition of India Chem-2021

Question – Where was '11th India Chem' organized between 17-19 March 2021?

(a) Ranchi (b) New Delhi (c) Bhubaneswar (d) Pune

Answer – (b)

Related facts

- The '11th India Chem, 2021' was held at Hotel Taj Palace New Delhi between 17-19 March.



- India Chem is one of the largest composite events of the chemical and petrochemical sector in the Asia-Pacific Region.
- Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals, in association with FICCI organized this event.
- During the India Chem-2021, events such as Global CEOs Round Table, Conclave on Global Chemical Industry: Special focus on Specialty Chemicals, Conclave on Global Petrochemical Industry in collaboration with GCC, Conclave on Global Agrochemical Industry, Capital Goods, Plant Machinery, Pumps & Valves and Processes Roundtable were organised.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1705093>

Jal Shakti Ministry & UN tie-up for Jal Jeevan Mission

Question: On March 22, 2021 Jal Shakti Ministry has signed a pact with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the government of Denmark to bring the tap water connections . For which Indian state this pact was signed?

a) UP b) MP c) Punjab d) Tamil Nadu

Ans: a

Context

- The Jal Shakti Ministry has entered a partnership with the United Nations Office for Project Services and the government of Denmark on March 22, 2021 to help bring tap water connections to 11 water-scarce districts in Uttar Pradesh's water-starved Bundelkhand and Vindhya regions under the Jal Jeevan mission.



जल शक्ति मंत्रालय
 MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI
 DoWR, RD & GR

Facts

- The project will have following components-
- Capacity building support, with the creation of village action plans,
- Community mobilisation and grassroots water quality monitoring methods being facilitated by UNOPS.

Jal Jeevan Mission

- Launched on August 15, 2019 with the following objectives:
- Providing Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) to every rural household.
- Prioritizing the provision of FHTCs in quality affected areas, villages of the drought prone and desert areas etc.
- Providing functional tap connection across Anganwadi centres, Schools, Health centres, GP buildings, wellness centres and community buildings.
- Monitoring the functionality of tap water connections.

- Promoting and ensuring voluntary ownership across the local community by contributing in cash, kind or labour.
- Assisting in ensuring the sustainability of water supply system like water supply infrastructure, water source and funds.

Reference: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/ministry-ties-up-with-un-for-jal-jeevan-mission-in-up/article34136389.ece>

Catch the Rain campaign

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Catch the Rain campaign on March 22 2021

(2) Catch the Rain is a campaign to manage rainwater efficiently through public participation

Of the above correct statement/s is/are:

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) & (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts

- On 22 March 2021, World Water Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain campaign.
- The campaign aims to increase awareness and adopt the action based measures to harvest the rain water by check dams, rain water harvesting structures.
- The campaign involves developing habits among peoples to better manage the rainwater through appropriate methods and minimize the pressure on ground water.
- Catch the Rain campaign will be undertaken across the rural and urban areas in country from March 22-November 30, during the pre-monsoon and monsoon period.
- Prime Minister stressed to spend the every penny of MGNREGA fund on rainwater conservation till the monsoon arrives.



Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1706580>

Mission Gramodaya

Question: Which state has launched the Mission Gramodaya?

(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Jharkhand (c) Bihar (d) Uttar Pradesh

Answer:(a)

Related facts:

- On 19 March 2021, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched the Mission Gramodaya in the Madhya Pradesh.

- Mission Gramodaya has been started for the overall development of rural areas.
- Apart from providing housing facilities, the mission aims to have every village concrete roads, gram panchayat building, Muktidham and sports grounds in every gram panchayat.
- Water will be supplied through taps in every house in every village.
- Self-help groups in Mission Gramodaya will be empowered financially. They will be given loans at 2 percent interest.



Links:

<http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=412263#:~:text=In%20Madhya%20Pradesh%2C%20Union%20Agriculture,infrastructure%20will%20also%20be%20expanded.>

Mera Ration mobile app

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution launched Mera Ration mobile app

(2) National Food Security Act(NFSA) was enacted by the Government of India in July 2013

Of the above correct statement/s is/are:

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) & (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On 12 March 2021, Sudhanshu Pandey, Secretary, Department of Food & Public Distribution launched Mera Ration mobile app.
- The app will benefit those ration card card holders who moved to new places for the livelihood.
- So far, 32 states/UTs have been covered under the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) system.
- The remaining 4 States /UT viz Assam, Chhattisgarh, Delhi and West Bengal will be soon integrated under the system.
- At present, the system covers nearly 69 Crore NFSA beneficiaries, about 86% NFSA population.



NFSA:

- National Food Security Act(NFSA) was enacted by the Government of India in July 2013.
- The NFSA Act gives legal entitlement to 67% of the population (75% in rural areas and 50% in urban areas) to receive highly subsidized foodgrains.

- Under the Act, foodgrain is allocated @ 5 kg per person per month for priority households category and @ 35 kg per family per month for AAY(Antyodaya Anna Yojana) families at a highly subsidized prices of Rs. 1/-, Rs. 2/- and Rs. 3/- per kg for nutri-cereals, wheat and rice respectively.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1704367>

Gram Ujala programme

Question: Where did Union Minister R K Singh launch the Gram Ujala programme?

- (a) Arrah, Bihar (b) Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh (c) Mayurbhanj, Odisha
(d) Kanker, Chhattisgarh

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 19 March 2021, R K Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Power Ministry launched the GRAM UJALA programme in Arrah, Bihar.
- Under the programme, LEDs (7 watt and 12-Watt LED bulbs with 3 years warranty) will be available for only Rs 10 each for each household, in exchange for working condition old incandescent lamps. Each household will get up to 5 LEDs.
- In the first phase of this programme, 15 million (1.5 crore) LED bulbs will be distributed across villages of Aarah (Bihar), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Vijaywada (Andhra Pradesh), Nagpur (Maharashtra), and village in western Gujarat.
- The programme will provide clean energy access and make a significant contribution towards mitigating climate change and achieving a sustainable future.
- 'Gram Ujala' programme will be financed entirely through utilizing carbon credits and will be the first such programme in India.
- The 'Gram Ujala' programme will have a significant impact on India's climate change action energy savings of 2025 million KWh/year and CO2 reductions of 1.65 million T CO2/year.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1706010>

Haryana passes bill to recover damages to public and private property during protests

Question : After UP , which other state has recently passed the bill to recover damages to property during protests?

- a) MP b) Haryana c) Himanchal Pradesh d) none of the above

Ans: b)

Facts

- On 18th March 2021, The Haryana Recovery of Damages to Property during Disturbance to Public Order Bill, 2021 was passed in the state Legislative Assembly.
- The law will allow recovery of damages to properties caused by persons during disturbances to public property by an assembly, lawful or unlawful, including riots and violent disorder.
- It also provides for forming of a 'claims tribunal' to determine the liability, assess the damages caused and to award compensation.
- Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly has passed similar bill on 22 August 2020.



Reference: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/haryana-bill-passed-in-assembly-to-recover-damages-to-property-during-protests-amid-opposition-walkout/videoshow/81586809.cms?from=mdr>

Government announces details of Vehicle Scrapping Policy.

Question- Which of the following ministry has announced the 'Vehicle Scrapping Policy'?

- (a) Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (b) Ministry of Finance
(c) Ministry of Home affairs (d) Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Ans. (a)

Related facts-

- Union minister for road transport and highways Nitin Gadkari on 18 March 2021 announced the details for the country's long-awaited vehicle scrapping policy in Parliament, explaining that the absence of a fitness certificate will mean an automatic cancellation of registration for commercial vehicles that turn 15, and that the registration of a private vehicle will be for 20 years, with renewal requiring proof of fitness.
- The policy, which also recommends the mandatory scrapping of all government vehicles over 15 years old, applies only to four-wheeled vehicles.
- India has 17 lakh medium and heavy commercial vehicles that are older than 15 years without any valid fitness certificate, 51 lakh light motor vehicles older than 20 years and 34 lakh light motor vehicles older than 15 years, according to the transport ministry. The average age of commercial vehicles is over 10 years and the private ones, 10-15 years.
- The purpose is to reduce pollution, create job opportunities, through the registered scrapping centres, and boost demand for new vehicles.
- "It is proposed that commercial vehicles be deregistered after 15 years in case of failure to get the fitness certificate. As a disincentive measure, increased fees for fitness certificate and fitness test may be applicable for commercial vehicles 15 year onwards from the date of initial registration.

- Gadkari said that the scrapping policy will lead to new investment of around Rs10,000 crore and create 35,000 jobs.
- “The scheme shall provide strong incentives to owners of old vehicles to scrap old and unfit vehicles through registered scrapping centres, which shall provide the owners with a scrapping certificate”.

Reference- <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/govt-to-provide-tax-incentives-against-vehicle-scrappage-gadkari-101616057294684.html>.

Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan appointed as Chairman of international body Stop TB Partnership Board.

Question- Who is appointed as the chairman of International body stop TB Partnership Board?

- (a) Dr. Harsh Vardhan (b) Ravi Shankar Prasad
(c) Amit Shah (d) Anil Chaudhary

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

- Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan has been appointed as the Chairman of the international body Stop TB Partnership Board.
- He was appointed in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the movement to eradicate Tuberculosis from India by 2025.
- Dr Harsh Vardhan will serve a three-year term, commencing from July this year.
- The Stop TB Partnership is a unique international body with the power to align actors all over the world in the fight against TB. It was established in year 2000.
- The Partnership’s vision is a TB-free world.
- Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by a bacterium called Mycobacterium tuberculosis. The bacteria usually attack the lungs.



Reference- <http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=412188>.

EU joins India-led Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure(CDRI)

Question: Which of the following statement are correct-

- i) CDRI was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2019 at the UN Climate Change Summit.
ii) CDRI is an international platform involving public and private sector, aiming to promote resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks while supporting sustainable development.

- a) only I b) onlyii c) both i and ii d)neither i nor ii

Ans: c

Context

- The 27-member European Union has joined India's Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

Facts

- The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) is a partnership of national governments, UN agencies and programmes, multilateral development banks and financing mechanisms, the private sector, and knowledge institutions that aims to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks in support of sustainable development.
- It was launched by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019.
- It is Headquartered at New Delhi, India .
- EU has joined it as it is an initiative fully aligned with the objectives of the European Green Deal and of the recently adopted EU Strategy on Adaptation.



Reference: <https://www.livemint.com/news/world/eu-joins-india-s-disaster-resilient-infrastructure-initiative-11616062901369.html>

Mukhyamantri Chiranjeevi Yojana

Question: which state government has announced a universal health scheme recently?

- a) Uttar Pradesh b) Madhya Pradesh c) Rajasthan d) Harayana

Ans: c

Context

- On 18th March 2021, CM of Rajasthan Ashok Gehlot has announced that Universal Health Scheme (UHS) announced in budget of state will be called Mukhyamantri Chiranjeevi Yojana.



Facts

- UHS will be launched on May 1 this year.
- Rs 3,500 crore will be allotted for the scheme in the upcoming financial year wherein cashless health services up to Rs 5 lakh will be provided to all families in the state.
- Registration for those who are not included in National Food Security Act (NFSA) or the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) beneficiary list, will start from April 1 2021.

Reference: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/rajasthan-universal-health-scheme-to-begin-may-1-cm-ashok-gehlot-7234934/>

KVIC launches RE-HAB pilot project in Kodagu, Karnataka.

Question- Which of the following has launched the research project RE-HAB?

(a) KVIC (b) MHA (c) MEA (d) MoF

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

- Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has launched research project RE-HAB (Reducing Elephant Human Attack by using Bees) in Kodagu district in Karnataka.
- KVIC President Vinay kumar Saxena inaugurated the RE-HAB pilot project at the College of Forestry in Ponnampet.
- The project aims at controlling the human-elephant conflict.
- Depending on the success of the project, it can be extended to West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Assam.



Reference-

<https://www.deccanherald.com/state/karnataka-districts/kvic-launches-re-hab-pilot-project-in-kodagu-962443.html>.

Commonwealth High Level Law Ministers Meeting

Question – In February 2021, a high-level meeting of Commonwealth Law Ministers on the legal aspects of Covid-19 was held under the chairmanship of which country's Law Minister ?

(a) India (b) Bangladesh (c) Sri Lanka (d) Maldives

Answer – (c)

Related facts

- In February 2021, a high-level meeting of Commonwealth Law Ministers on the legal aspects of Covid-19 was held under the chairmanship of Sri Lanka's Law Minister.
- Law Secretary Anoop Kumar Mendiratta represents India in this Meeting.
- Meeting was organised in virtual mode by Commonwealth Secretariat.



About the event

- The event provided an opportunity to the Law Ministers to share views and experiences on solutions to key legal challenges that have arisen as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Anoop Kumar Mendiratta's statement

- It is notable that District Courts and High Courts in India heard 76.38 lakh cases and the Supreme Court heard nearly 52,353 cases till 31.01.2021 through video conferencing only.
- The meeting was focused on ensuring equal access to justice for all, Upholding the rule of law in the fight against COVID-19 and legal barriers to equitable access to essential medicines.
- India undertaking the world's largest vaccination program and helping other countries under neighbourhood first policy by distributing indigenous vaccines, namely, Covishield and Covaxin.
- In the next fiscal, India proposes to increase its spending on healthcare from the current levels.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1699165#:~:text=The%20meeting%2C%20chaired%20by%20the,of%20the%20Covid%2D19%20pandemic.>

16th FICCI Higher Education Summit 2021

Question – What was the theme of the 16th FICCI Higher Education Summit 2021?

- (a) Continuing Education: Development and Innovation
- (b) Continuing Education: Innovation and Young Generation
- (c) New Education Policy: A New Direction of Education
- (d) Higher Education @ 2030: R.I.S.E. – Resilience. Innovation. Sustainability. Enterprise

Answer – (d)

Related facts

- In February 2021, the FICCI Higher Education Summit was held in virtual format.
- The theme of the summit was “Higher Education @ 2030: R.I.S.E. – Resilience. Innovation. Sustainability. Enterprise.’
- It was organized by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry(FICCI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Over the years, this Summit has evolved into a thought leadership forum and brings together key stakeholders including, policymakers, academicians, industry and students for deliberations and knowledge sharing at both national and international levels.
- The FICCI-EY report ‘Higher Education in India: Vision 2040’ was released in the inaugural session.



Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1700769>

Bara-lacha Pass

Question: Bara-lacha Pass is located in which mountain range?

(a) Karakoram Range (b) Ladakh Range (c) Pir Panjal Range (d) Zaskar Range

Answer: (d)

Context:

- Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has started work on reopening the crucial Baralacha Pass in Himachal Pradesh much before schedule to restore connectivity to Leh in Ladakh.
- The restoration work will provide an edge to troops over adversaries by early deployment to key positions.
- It will also help people of the region to get connected with rest of the country & transport their cash corps to markets across pass.

Facts:

- Bara-lacha Pass, at an altitude of 16,043 feet, is a high mountain pass in Zaskar range.
- It connects Lahaul district in Himachal Pradesh to Leh district in Ladakh.
- It is situated along the Leh–Manali Highway.
- Bara-lacha Pass acts as a water-divide between the Bhaga river and the Yunam river.
- The Bhaga river, a tributary of the Chenab river, originates from Surya taal lake, which is situated a few of kilometers from the pass towards Manali.



Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/bro-starts-work-to-open-baralachala-pass-before-schedule-1779574-2021-03-15>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bara-lacha_la

All Women Passport Seva Kendras

Question – On March 8, 2021, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muralitharan unveiled two Passport Seva Kendras where all employees are women as part of the Ministry’s flagship Passport Seva Program. In which state / union territory are these Passport Seva Kendras located ?

(a) New Delhi and Kerala (b) New Delhi and Tamil Nadu
(c) Uttar Pradesh and Bihar (d) Kerala and Andhra Pradesh

Answer – (a)

Related facts

- On March 8, 2021, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muralitharan unveiled two Passport Seva



Kendras where all employees are women as part of the Ministry's flagship Passport Seva Program.

- One center will be at RK Puram in New Delhi and another center at Tripunitura in Cochin, Kerala.

Passport Seva Program

- It is notable that the Passport Seva Program is one of the most successful programs of the government.
- Through this, passport related services are provided to the citizens of India and Indian citizens living outside the country.
- This program is in line with the vision of Digital India which aims to create a digital system for all stakeholders where citizens get passport related services at home.

Link:

https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/33597/Remarks_by_Shri_V_Muraleedharan_MOS_for_External_Affairs_and_Parliamentary_Affairs_on_transformation_of_Passport_Seva_Kendras_at_Bhikaji_Cama_Place_RK

Inauguration of Technology Centre, Extension Centre and Udyam Express of MSME

Question – On March 10, 2021, Union Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Nitin Gadkari virtually inaugurated two technology centers of MSME sector. Where are the two technology centers built?

- (a) Srinagar and Jaipur (b) Jaipur and Nagpur (c) Visakhapatnam and Bhopal
(d) Chennai and Bengaluru

Answer – (c)

Related facts

- Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Nitin Gadkari has recently Inaugurated Technology Centres, Extension Centres and Udyam Express of MSME.
- Date & Venue
- Nitin Gadkari virtually inaugurated two technology centres at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh and Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, three extension centres of big technological centres and seven mobile Udyam Express on March 10 2021.
- It is noteworthy that the Technology Center System Program has been launched to increase the competitiveness in the micro, small and medium enterprises sector across the country.
- Udyam Express of MSME
- Seven Mobile Enterprise Express has been launched to provide information about government schemes to youth in rural areas and to help micro, small and medium enterprises in remote areas.



Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1703731>

AI based translation software 'Amar Vasha'

Question – Which country's Supreme Court has launched the translation software 'Amar Vasha' based on Artificial Intelligence (Artificial Intelligence)?

(a) Bhutan (b) India (c) Bangladesh (d) Sri Lanka

Answer – (c)

Related facts

- The Bangladesh Supreme Court has recently (February 2021) launched the Artificial Intelligence (AI) based translation software 'Amar Vasha' through a virtual event.
- The software will translate orders and judgements of the Supreme Court from English to Bangla.
- Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, Law Minister Anisul Haq, Law Secretary Md. Golam Sarwar and High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh Vikram Doraiswami spoke during the virtual function.
- The Software has been developed with 'EkStep' foundation of India. It is based on their 'Anuvaad' translation software used in India to translate from English to Indian languages including Bangla.
- Anuvaad was deployed by the Supreme Court of India as SUVAS (Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software) from November 2019.
- High Commissioner of India Vikram Doraiswami said that India is honoured to partner in the development of such a unique translation software designed in India and shared on a gratis basis.
- According to a press release issued by the Indian High Commission in Dhaka, the High Commissioner further said that this collaboration was possible as Bangla was one of the recognised languages of India.
- The High Commissioner appreciated the recent efforts by the Supreme Court of Bangladesh in integration of technology for smooth dispensation of justice in Bangladesh such as setting up e-courts during the pandemic.

Link:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Bangladesh-Supreme-Court-launches-AI-based-translation-software-%E2%80%98Amar-Vasha%E2%80%99&id=410142>

Sixth Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog

Question : Sixth Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog has been Concluded in February 2021. Which of the following statement is correct about the NITI Aayog ?

- (a) NITI Aayog was Formed 25 January 2016
(b) NITI Aayog comes under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry
(c) The full form of NITI Aayog is National institute for Transforming India
(d) The NITI Aayog is a policy think tank of the Government of India

Ans. d

Related facts

- The NITI Aayog is a policy think tank of the Government of India. : Sixth Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog has been Concluded in February 2021.
- It was attended by 26 Chief Ministers, 3 Lieutenant Governors and 2 Administrators, apart from Union Ministers, who are Ex-Officio Members, and Special Invitees.
- Meeting was held under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi via video conferencing.
- The Sixth Governing Council Meeting was preceded by a detailed interaction with senior State officials on 6 February 2021, the feedback for which was duly incorporated while curating the agenda of the meeting.



The Agenda for the Sixth Council Meeting comprised the following items:

1. Making India a Manufacturing Powerhouse
 2. Reimagining Agriculture
 3. Improving Physical Infrastructure
 4. Accelerating Human Resources Development
 5. Improving Service Delivery at Grassroots Level
 6. Health and Nutrition
- About the Governing Council of NITI Aayog
 - The Governing Council of NITI Aayog comprises the Prime Minister of India, Chief Ministers of all the States and Union Territories with Legislature, Lt Governors of other UTs, Ex-Officio Members and Special Invitees.
 - It is the premier body tasked with evolving a shared vision of national development priorities, sectors and strategies with the active involvement of States in shaping the development narrative. Including today, a total of Six meetings have been held so far.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1699697>

City Innovation Exchange (CiX)

Question – When was the City Innovation Exchange launched by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs?

- (a) 25 February ,2021 (b) 20 February ,2021 (c) 23 February ,2021
(d) 18 February ,2021

Answer – (a)

Related facts

- On 25 February, 2021 City Innovation Exchange launched by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.



- It aims to encourage innovation in urban environments.
- This platform will make the search for solutions design and verification easier through a robust transparent and user-centric process.
- The Platform has more than 400 start-ups, 100 smart cities, more than 150 challenges statements and over 215 solutions at the time of launch.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1700855>

Election Program for Legislative Assemblies of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal & Puducherry

Question- On February 26, 2021, the Election Commission of India announced the schedule of general elections ,2021 for the assemblies of Assam, Kerala ,Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry. Consider the following statements related to this:

- (i) Assembly elections will be held from 27 March to 29 April 2021.
- (ii) West Bengal elections will be held in 8 phases.
- (iii) Elections will be held in three phases in Assam.
- (iv) The counting of votes will take place on 2 May 2021.

Which of the statements given above is / are correct?

- (a) (1) and (2) only
- (b) Only (2) and (3)
- (c) Only (2) (3) and (4)
- (d) All of the above

Answer – (d)

Related facts

- On February 26, 2021, the Election Commission of India announced the schedule of general elections ,2021 for the assemblies of Assam, Kerala ,Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry.
- The term of the Legislative Assemblies of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry is due to expire on the following dates.
- The term and the strength of the Assemblies is also indicated as below:

Name of State /UT Seats	Term of Assembly	No. of Assembly
Assam	01.06.2016 to 31.05.2021	126
Tamil Nadu	25.05.2016 to 24.05.2021	234
West Bengal	31.05.2016 to 30.05.2021	294
Kerala	02.06.2016 to 01.06.2021	140

Puducherry	09.06.2016 to 08.06.2021	30
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- Assembly elections will be held from 27 March to 29 April 2021.
- West Bengal elections will be held in 8 phases.
- Elections will be held in three phases in Assam.
- The counting of votes will take place on 2 May 2021.
- Tamil Nadu ,Kerala and Union Territory of Puducherry will go to polls in a single phase on 6 April 2021.

Link:

<https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/userfiles/ECI%20Press%20Note%20reg%205%20State%20Election%20%20dt.26.02.2021.pdf>

Madhya Pradesh Budget – 2021-22

Question – Consider the following statements related to the budget ,2021-22 presented in the Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly on March 2, 2021-

(i) Finance Minister Jagdish Deora presented the budget for the year 2021-22 in the Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly.

(ii) It has a provision of a total appropriation amount of Rs. 2,41,375 crore for the financial year 2021-22.

(iii) The fiscal deficit in the year 2021-22 is estimated at Rs 50,938 crore, which is 4.5 percent of the state’s gross domestic product.

(iv) In this budget, crop of farmers can be easily procured. For this purpose, a new scheme, Mukhyamantri Fasal Uparjan Sahayta Yojana, is proposed to be implemented.

Which of the statements given above is / are correct?

- (a) Only (i) and (iii) (b) Only (i), (ii) and (iv) (c) Only (ii) and (iv)
 (d) All of the above

Answer – (d)

Related facts

- On March 2, 2021, Madhya Pradesh Finance Minister Jagdish Deora presented the budget for the year 2021-22 in the Legislative Assembly.
- The budget for the year 2021-22 was presented digitally.
- In this budget, various schemes have been prepared in mission mode keeping in view the ‘Self-reliant Madhya Pradesh’.
- Key points of the budget 2021-22
- Total appropriation amount for the year 2021-22 is Rs. 241375 crore. 1726971 crore is proposed under revenue expenditure and Rs. 44152 crore under capital expenditure.
- The fiscal deficit in the year 2021-22 is estimated at Rs 50,938 crore, which is 4.5 percent of the state’s gross domestic product.



- In this budget, crop of farmers can be easily procured. For this purpose, a new scheme, Mukhyamantri Fasal Uparjan Sahayta Yojana, is proposed to be implemented.
- 44,152 crores has been increased for infrastructure development compared to last financial year, agriculture has increased by 18,577 crores.
- MP's provision in central taxes is a provision of Rs 52,247 crore, while last year, Rs 46,025 crore was received under this head.
- Interest payment in the year 2021-22 is 12.72 percent of the total revenue receipts.
- State's total outstanding liabilities are 28.52% of state gross domestic product estimated.
- The State Cancer Institute in Jabalpur and Tertiary Cancer Care in Gwalior will start functioning soon.
- Mukhyamantri Tirthdarshan Yojana will be re-operated.
- Action is being taken to develop the world's largest floating solar power plant of 600 MW at Omkareshwar.
- In principle approval has been given to Madhya Pradesh to host the Khelo India Youth Games of 2022.
- There are 18 sports academies in MP.

Link:

<https://finance.mp.gov.in>

Justice Indu Malhotra

Question: who was the first women judge who was directly elevated to SC Judgeship from the bar?

- a) Justice Indu Malhotra b) Justice Sujatha Manohar c) Justice Ruma Pal
d) Justice Gyan Sudha Misra

Ans: a)

Facts

- Justice Indu Malhotra was first woman Judge to be elevated directly from the Bar and the seventh woman Judge to be appointed at the Supreme Court.
- She was appointed as a Supreme Court Judge on April 27, 2018.
- Justice Malhotra also holds the distinction of being the second woman to ever be designated a Senior advocate by supreme court.
- She has retired on march 13,2021.



Reference: <https://www.livelaw.in/top-stories/important-judgments-of-justice-indu-malhotra-171108>

AICTE: Mathematics & Physics not mandatory for Engineering Aspirants

Question: As per the new approval process handbook of All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) for academic year 2021-22 which of the subjects are not mandatory for taking admission in some engineering degree courses like Textile Engineering, Agriculture or Biotechnology?

a) Physics b) Maths c) Chemistry d) all of the above

Ans: d

Context

- All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has released the approval process handbook for academic year 2021-22.

Facts

- All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has said that Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics (PCM) are no longer compulsory for students aspiring to pursue an engineering degree in certain courses.
- Students may no longer have to study these subjects compulsorily in class 12th for seeking admission at the undergraduate level for streams such as Textile Engineering, Agriculture or Biotechnology.
- Those who does not opt for these subjects will have to make up through bridge courses in college.
- The rule is all set to be implemented from the academic year 2021-22.
- As per the rule, the students who are seeking admission to certain engineering courses like Textile engineering etc will have to pass 10+2 by taking any of the three subjects out of Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, Electronics & IT, Computer science, Technical Vocational Subject, Information practices, Biotechnology, Agriculture, Engineering and Business studies.
- The new rule also mandates that, the unreserved category students will have to score 45% marks and the reserved category should score 40% marks in order to pass the class 12th level.



Reference: <https://indianexpress.com/article/trending/trending-in-india/aicte-says-maths-physics-not-compulsory-for-engineering-admissions-memes-7226676/>

Centre's panel for air quality management in NCR dissolved

Question: Commission for Air Quality Management which was set up for NCR region has ceased to exist as the ordinance by which it was established was not reintroduced in parliament? Commission replaced which body after its inception?

- a) National Green Tribunal b) Environment Protection Agency
c) Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA)
d) None of the above

Ans: c)

Context

- The central government's Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and its Adjoining Areas has been shut down within five months of its constitution on March 13 , 2021.
- It was set up by the Centre government in the month of October 2020.

Facts

- The statutory Commission for Air Quality Management was set after the President signed the "Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region (NCR) and Adjoining Areas Ordinance, 2020".
- It was constituted to monitor the Air Quality in NCR and the Adjoining Areas.
- Areas where it was in force included Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh in the adjoining areas of the NCR and Delhi.
- The ordinance was passed in a bid to consolidate all the monitoring bodies and to bring a uniform platform in order to carry the air quality management in a comprehensive and efficient manner in the Delhi NCR area.
- This ordinance also dissolved the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA).
- It was a 20-member commission headed by MM Kuttu, former secretary to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to ensure strict compliance.
- The commission had the power to lay down parameters of air quality, parameters of discharge of environmental pollutants, inspect premises violating the law, ordering closure of non-abiding industries/plants, etc.
- It also had the power to restrict any industry, operations or processes or class of industries that could have implications on air quality in the region.
- Now the panel stands dissolved because the ordinance which was passed to set up the panel has lapsed as it was not reintroduced in the Lok Sabha by the government.



Reference: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/centres-panel-for-air-quality-management-in-ncr-shuts-down-within-5-months-of-formation-224745>

Jharkhand reserves 75% Private Job for Locals

Question : After Harayana , Jharkhand cabinet has approved the reservation of 75% of private jobs for the residents of Jharkhand in state of Jharkhand. What is the threshold of maximum salary for this reservation to apply in the private jobs in the state?



a) 50000 b) 30000 c) 10000 d) 15000

Ans: b)

Context

- The Jharkhand Cabinet on 12th March has approved an employment policy ensuring 75 per cent of the private sector jobs for the residents of State of Jharkhand days after Haryana notified its policy of 75 per cent reservation in private sector industries for the domiciles of the state.

Facts

- Reservation will be provided for private sector jobs for up to a salary of Rs 30,000 for local candidates only.
- Decision for this is likely to be announced during the ongoing Budget Session of Jharkhand.
- Giving priority to the local youths in private jobs was a part of the manifesto of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) in 2019 Assembly Election.
- However the definition of 'Jharkhandi' is vague and had led to the resignation of former Chief Minister Babulal Marandi in the year 2002. This may create an impediment in the implementation of this policy.
- The decision apparently was taken looking at the large number of migrant youths coming back to their homes during the lockdown.

Reference: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2021/mar/13/jharkhand-all-set-to-reserve-75-jobs-for-locals-in-private-sector-2276090.html>

US becomes India's second biggest oil supplier.

Question- Which of the following countries is/are India's second biggest oil supplier?

(a) United States (b) Saudi Arabia (c) Qatar (d) UAE

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

- The United States overtook Saudi Arabia as India's second biggest oil supplier last month (February), as refiners boosted cheaper US crude purchases to record levels and to offset supply cuts from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies (OPEC+).
- Iraq continued to be the top oil seller to India despite a 23 per cent decline in purchases to a five-month low of 867,500 bpd.
- Saudi Arabia, which has consistently been one of India's top two supplier, slipped to No.4 for the first time since at least January 2006. The import of India from Saudi Arabia decreased by 42 per cent from January 2021.
- India is the third biggest oil importer and consumer in the world.



Reference- <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/u-s-becomes-indias-second-biggest-oil-supplier-saudi-plunges-to-no-4/articleshow/81506917.cms?from=mdr>.

NCRB celebrates 35th Inception Day

Question: Which report does National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) publish annually featuring the crime incidents across the country?

- (a) Crime In India (b) Crime: Statistics and Status (c) Crime Outlook
(d) Crime Report Card

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 12 March 2021, National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) celebrated its 35th Inception Day.
- On this occasion Nityanand Rai, Union Minister of State for Home launched Crime Multi Agency Centre (Cri-MAC) for sharing of information on heinous crime and other issues related to inter-state coordination.
- He also launched National Cybercrime Training Centre (NCTC) for professional quality eLearning services on cyber crime investigation on large scale to police officers, judges, prosecutors and other stakeholders.



NCRB:

- It was set-up in 1986 to function as a repository of information on crime and criminals so as to assist the investigators in linking crime to the perpetrators.
- It was set up based on the recommendation of the Task force and National Police Commission by merging the Directorate of Coordination and Police Computer (DCPC), Statistical Branch of BPR&D, Inter State Criminals Data Branch and Central Finger Print Bureau of CBI.
- NCRB annually publishes Crime In India report. The report contains comprehensive information on cases registered, their disposal and persons arrested, their disposal.
- The data for the report is collected by State Crime Records Bureaux (SCRbX) from the District Crime Records Bureaux (DCRBx) and sent to NCRB at the end of every calendar year under the reference.
- The first edition of 'Crime in India' was published in the year 1953.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1606189>

Kalanamak Rice Festival

Question: Which state has organized the Kalanamak Rice Festival in March 2021?

- (a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Manipur (d) Maharashtra

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Uttar Pradesh government is organizing the 'Kalanamak Rice Festival' in Siddharthnagar district.
- The festival is being organized from 13-15 March 2021.
- The event is being organised to promote, market and branding of selected products as One District One Product (ODOP) under 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' and 'Local for Vocal' campaign.
- At the Festival, various dishes prepared by the Kalanamak rice will be displayed at various stalls. These include dishes like kheer, pulao, cumin rice, lentils, vegetable, rice-chickpeas, poha, khichdi, fara, idli etc.
- Kala Namak Rice has been recognized with a geographical indication (GI) tag. It is the One District One Product (ODOP) of Siddharthnagar.
- It is also grown in some Eastern UP districts.
- The districts like Gorakhpur, Deoria, Kushinagar, Maharajganj, Santakbirnagar, Basti, Bahraich, Balrampur, Gonda and Shravasti are also known for good agriculture of Kala Namak Rice.



Links:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/art-culture/after-strawberry-and-jaggery-festival-kalanamak-rice-festival-to-be-held-in-up-101615611087732.html>

27th Hunar Haat

Question:In which city is the 27th Hunar Haat being organized from 12th to 21st March, 2021?

(a) Bhopal (b) Jaipur (c) Ahmedabad (d) Patna

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The 27th Hunar Haat is being organized at Lal Parade Ground, Bhopal from 12th to 21st March 2021.
- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan formally inaugurated the event on 13th March 2021.
- Theme for the 24th Hunar Haat is "Vocal for Local".
- Hunar Haat provides a huge platform to the artisans/craftsmen of India to showcase their expertise and explore the opportunities of employment under "Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development (USTAAD)".
- Union Ministry of Minority Affairs organizes the Hunar Haat.



Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1704168>

US becomes India's second biggest oil supplier.

Question- Which of the following countries is/are India's second biggest oil supplier?

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Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

- The United States overtook Saudi Arabia as India's second biggest oil supplier last month (February), as refiners boosted cheaper US crude purchases to record levels and to offset supply cuts from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies (OPEC+).
- Iraq continued to be the top oil seller to India despite a 23 per cent decline in purchases to a five-month low of 867,500 bpd.
- Saudi Arabia, which has consistently been one of India's top two suppliers, slipped to No.4 for the first time since at least January 2006. The import of India from Saudi Arabia decreased by 42 per cent from January 2021.
- India is the third biggest oil importer and consumer in the world.



Reference- <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/u-s-becomes-indias-second-biggest-oil-supplier-saudi-plunges-to-no-4/articleshow/81506917.cms?from=mdr>.

4Th Global Ayurveda Festival.

Question- 'Global Ayurveda Festival 2021' is held in-

(a) Kerala

(b) Tamil Naidu (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Andhra Pradesh

Ans. (a)

Related facts-

- Global Ayurveda Festival – Kerala (GAF) is a biennial get together of the Ayurveda fraternity in the State of Kerala, where Ayurveda has retained its traditional sanctity.
- The virgin form of Ayurveda in Kerala has been augmented with immense regional innovations and improvements to take the shape and form that we see today, popular as Kerala Ayurveda.
- The GAF has established itself as a vibrant platform with a mandate to galvanize the Ayurveda sector to aspire, plan and achieve greater heights, both nationally and internationally.
- GAF is the largest ever gathering of practitioners, researchers, producers and service providers of Ayurveda from across the globe.
- The Fourth Global Ayurveda Festival is planned for 12th to 19th March 2021.



- The eight-day festival includes international seminar, a global exhibition and business meet and will feature lectures by 35 internationally renowned scientists and over 150 Indian scientists.

Reference- <https://gaf.co.in/2021/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/GAF-2021-brochure.pdf>.

A report on ‘Mobilising Electric Vehicle Financing in India’ by NITI Aayog.

Question- ‘Mobilising Electric Vehicle Financing in India’ report is recently released by-

- (a) NITI Aayog (b) Ministry of Road transport and Highways
(c) Ministry of Home affairs (d) World Bank

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

- ‘Mobilising Electric Vehicle Financing in India’ was recently released by NITI Aayog and Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) India.
- It highlights the role of finance in India’s transition to electric vehicles (EVs).
- It has also analysed that the transition will require a capital investment of USD 266 billion in EVs, charging infrastructure, and batteries over the next decade.
- Consumers currently face several challenges, such as high interest rates, high insurance rates, and low loan-to-value ratios.
- 10 solutions have been identified to address these challenges.
- Financial institutions such as banks and NBFCs, and the industry and government will be able to adopt solutions.

Reference- https://niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2021-01/RMI-EVreport-VF_28_1_21.pdf.

‘Vikas Asha’ loan scheme for women entrepreneurs

Question : Which bank has launched the ‘Vikas Asha’ loan scheme for women entrepreneurs ?

- (a) Karnataka Gramin Bank (b) Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank
(c) Kerala Gramin Bank (d) Tamil Nadu Grama Bank

Ans.(b)

Related facts

- Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank has recently(March 2021) launched the ‘Vikas Asha’ loan scheme for women entrepreneurs.

About the scheme

- ‘Vikas Asha’ is exclusively for women to meet business-related needs, including purchasing machinery/equipment/vehicle, and working capital requirements under micro and small enterprises, including retail trade.

Loan amount

- The bank will extend loan up to a maximum of ₹10 lakh with a repayment period of 84 months.

Link:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/money-and-banking/kvqb-launches-loan-scheme-for-women-entrepreneurs/article34025401.ece>

G P Samanta appointed as the new Chief Statistician of India.

Question-On 10th March 2021, Who is appointed as the new Chief Statistician of India by the central government?

- (a) G P Samanta (b) Ajay Kumar (c) Utpal Kumar singh (d) Vijay Sampla

Ans. (a)

Related facts-

- On 10th March 2021, The Central government appointed Dr. G P Samanta as the new Chief Statistician of India.
- Samanta, as part of the new deputation, would also hold the post of Secretary in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- Samanta was till now an adviser in the RBI’s Department of Statistics and Information Management.
- His tenure would initially be of 2 years.
- Samanta will replace 1986-batch IAS officer Dr Kshatrapati Shivaji who was holding additional charge of the post since September 2020.
- The RBI had felicitated Samanta with the prestigious Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis award in August 2010.



Reference- <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/govt-appoints-gp-samanta-as-new-chief-statistician/articleshow/81429687.cms>.

Delhi aims to host 2048 Olympics

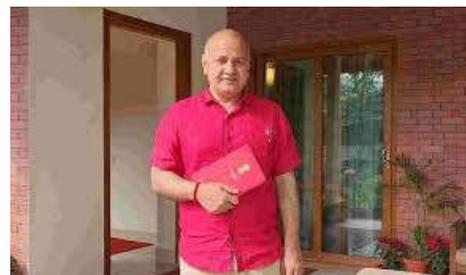
Question: Which Indian state has announced that it will bid for the 2048 Olympics?

- (a) Maharashtra (b) Odisha (c) Delhi (d) Gujarat

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The Delhi government has announced its aim to host the 2048 Olympic Games.
- The announcement was made while presenting the city’s budget for 2021-22 by Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister of Government of Delhi.
- A vision has been provided for the same in the Delhi Budget presented in the state assembly.
- Delhi had hosted the first Asian Games in 1951, and later the 1982 edition. In 2010, the



national capital had hosted the Commonwealth Games.

- 2048 Olympic Games will be the 39th edition of sports competition. The Olympic Games began in Athens, Greece, in 1896.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/sports/sport-others/delhi-will-bid-for-2048-olympic-games-manish-sisodia-7221095/>

APEDA organizes first ever virtual trade fair

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority launched its first virtual trade fair on March 10 2021

(2) APEDA is a statutory body established under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act 1985

Of the above correct statement/s is/are:

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) & (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- In a first of its kind initiative for boosting export potential of India's agricultural and processed food products during COVID19 pandemic, APEDA launched its first Virtual Trade Fair (VTF) on 10th March 2021.
- The fair will conclude on March 12, 2021.
- Theme of the fair is 'India Rice and Agro Commodity'.
- The key products which would be displayed through VTF include – basmati rice, non-basmati rice, millets, wheat, maize, groundnut and coarse grains.
- The fair will showcase a wide range of food products presented by the exporters to promote the export potential of various agricultural commodities.
- 266 Indian and international buyers from various countries have registered for the virtual fair.



APEDA:

- Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is a statutory body established under the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act 1985.
- It is the apex organization engaged in the work related to the development of export of agricultural and processed food products from India.
- It functions under the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1704072>

Launching of Business Kisht Suraksha to protect MFIs from natural calamities

Question : Business Kisht Suraksha aims to limit the impacts on the balance sheet of financial institutions, due to non-payment of EMLs by borrowers. Which insurance company has launched this product ?

- (a) HDFC ERGO General Insurance (b) Bharti AXA General Insurance
(c) Edelweiss General Insurance (d) IFFCO Tokio General Insurance

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- HDFC ERGO General Insurance has recently(March 2021) launched a new product named 'Business Kisht Suraksha'.
- It aims to limit the impacts on the balance sheet of financial institutions, due to non-payment of EMLs by borrowers.
- Hence 'Business Kisht Suraksha' will protect MFIs or financial institution from 'non-payment of EMLs' due to natural calamities.



Link:

<https://www.livemint.com/insurance/news/hdfc-ergo-s-new-business-kisht-suraksha-to-protect-mfis-from-natural-calamities-11614849522693.html>

National Science Day

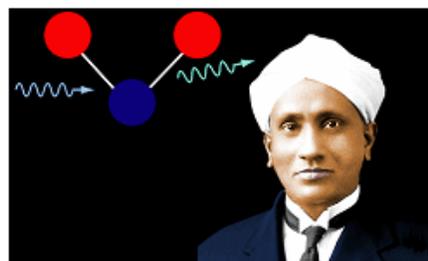
Question – 'National Science Day' is observed on –

- (a) 28 February (b) 8 March (c) 22 April (d) 28 January

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

- The 'National Science Day' is celebrated every year on February 28 to commemorate the discovery of Raman Effect by Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman.
- On this day in 1928, he discovered a phenomenon of scattering of photons which was later known as 'Raman Effect' after his name.
- He went to received a Noble Prize for this discovery in the year 1930.
- The theme for 'National Science Day 2021' is 'Future of STI: Impact on Education Skills and Work'.



What is Raman Effect?

- The Raman Effect is also known as Raman scattering. In this, the wavelength of the light scatters when the light is deflected on a particular object.

Reference- <https://ncsm.gov.in/28th-february-national-science-day-in-india/>.

INS Karanj commissioned in Indian Navy

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) INS Karanj is the third stealth Scorpene class Submarine under Project P-75

(2) Project 75 is a programme by the Indian Navy that entails building six Scorpene Class attack submarines

Of the above correct statement/s is/are:

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) & (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On 10 March 2021, Indian Navy has commissioned the third stealth Scorpene class Submarine INS Karanj at the Naval Dockyard Mumbai.
- The submarine has been designed by French company and built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), in Mumbai under Project P-75.
- INS Karanj would form part of the Western Naval Command's Submarine fleet.
- Karanj is fitted with a permanent magnet synchronous motor, making it one of the quietest submarines in the world and hence it is being termed as the silent killer.
- The old INS Karanj, commissioned on September 4, 1969 at Riga in the erstwhile USSR, also took active part in the 1971 conflict under the Command of then commanding officer VS Shekhawat.



Project 75:

- Project 75 is a programme by the Indian Navy that entails building six Scorpene Class attack submarines.
- Scorpene is a conventional powered (diesel-electric) submarine which will also feature Advanced Air-Independent Propulsion systems to enable them to stay submerged for longer duration and substantially increase their operational range.
- The six scorpene class submarines under the project are INS Kalvari, INS Khanderi, INS Karanj, INS Vela, INS Vagir and INS Vagsheer.
- INS Kalvari and INS Khanderi have been commissioned in the Indian Navy in 2017 and 2019, respectively.

Links:

<https://indiannavy.nic.in/content/ins-karanj-third-kalvari-class-submarine-commissioned-naval-dockyard-mumbai>

PM Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi

Question: Consider following statement regarding PM Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi-

- i) This is a non-lapsable reserve fund for the Health in the Public Account.**
- ii) It is made for utilization of share of Health from the proceeds of Health and Education Cess levied under Finance Act, 2007.**
- iii) Revenue in the fund will be used for the flagship schemes of the Union Health Ministry.**

Which of the above are correct

- a) I b)ii c)iii d) all of the above

Ans: d)

Context

- On March 10, 2021 Union Cabinet has approved the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi (PMSSN) fund.



Facts

- It is a non-lapsable reserve fund for the Health in the Public Account.
- It is made for utilization of share of Health from the proceeds of Health and Education Cess levied under Finance Act, 2007.
- Revenue in the fund will be used for the flagship schemes of the Health Ministry including the National Health Mission, Ayushman Bharat – Health and Wellness Centres, Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana and for the emergency & disaster preparedness and responses in cases of health emergencies.
- Revenues will also be used for any future programme and scheme that targets to achieve progress towards Sustainable Development Goals and the targets set out in the National Health Policy 2017.

Importance of fund

- Fund will enhance the access to universal and affordable health care through availability of earmarked resources, while ensuring that the amount does not lapse at the end of financial year.

The administration and maintenance of the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi is entrusted to the Health Ministry and in any financial year, the expenditure on such schemes would be initially incurred from the PMSSN and thereafter from Gross Budgetary Support.

Reference: <http://newsonair.com/News?title=Cabinet-approves-%26%2339%3BPM-Swasthya-Suraksha-Nidhi%26%2339%3B-as-single-non-lapsable-reserve-fund&id=411558#:~:text=8%3A38PM-.Cabinet%20approves%20'PM%20Swasthya%20Suraksha%20Nidhi'%20as,single%20non%2Dlapsable%20reserve>

Amrit Mahotsav

Question: To celebrate 75 year of Independence, Government of India will be organizing grand festivals Called Amrit Mahotsav across 75 locations in India starting from Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat. What is the date of start of this celebration?

a)15 August , 2021 b)26 November , 2021 c) 12 March , 2021 d) None of the above

Ans: c)

Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has requested MPs and all public representatives to take part in 'Amrit Mahotsav' to mark India's 75 years of Independence.



Facts about Amrit Mahotsav

- It is grand festival to commemorate the 75th year of Independence (15 August , 2021) of India from Britishers.
- The Amrit Mahotsav will start from March 12, 2021 .It will start at the Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat.
- It will be held at 75 locations across the country for 75 weeks .

Reference: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/amrit-mahotsav-grand-festival-across-75-locations-for-75-weeks-modi-govt-chalks-out-plans-223328>

India to levy import tax on solar modules, solar cells

Question: What percentage of import tax will be placed on solar modules by government of India from April 2022?

a) 40% b) 25% c) 15% d) 10%

Ans: a)

Facts

- India will levy 40% customs duty on solar modules from April 2022.
- It will also impose import duty of 25% on solar cells from April 2022.
- It will be done to cut imports and expand local manufacturing.
- India has its commitment under Paris Climate Agreement to own 40% of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil fuels by 2030.
- India is targeting 175 gigawatts of renewable capacity by 2022 and 450 gigawatts by 2030 to fulfill its Paris Deal commitment.



Reference: <https://www.reuters.com/article/india-solar-imports/india-to-levy-import-tax-on-solar-modules-solar-cells-from-april-2022-govt-document-idUSD8N2GR02M>

India's first forest healing centre inaugurated

Question: Where has been India's first forest healing centre inaugurated?

(a) Ranikhet (b) Shimla (c) Gulmarg (d) Tawang



Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 7 March 2021, India's first forest healing centre was inaugurated at Kalika near Ranikhet, Uttarakhand.
- The forest healing centre has been developed by the Research Wing of the Uttarakhand Forest Department. It is spread over an area of around 13 acres.
- The Centre will revitalize the human health and well being by providing platforms to the meditation and exercises in a prosperous forest ambience.
- The healing centre is inspired by the Japanese technique of forest bathing (shinrin – yoku).
- Uttarakhand is home of biodiversity rich Corbett National Park, Gangotri National Park, Govind PashuVihar National Park, Nanda Devi National Park, Rajaji National Park, Valley of Flowers National Park.

Links:

<https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/indias-first-forest-healing-centre-inaugurated-in-uttrakands-ranikhet20210307170045/>

Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary

Question: Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary which has been in news for death of hundreds of Olive Ridley turtles is located in which Indian state?

(a) Gujarat (b) West Bengal (c) Odisha (d) Tamil Nadu

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On 6 March 2021, a three-member panel constituted by the Orissa High Court made a field trip to the Gahirmatha marine sanctuary to assess the measures taken for the conservation of endangered Olive Ridley turtles.
- A survey report revealed the death of as many as 800 turtles due to negligence of the States Forest and Fisheries department.
- Olive Ridley turtles are best known for their unique mass nesting called Arribada, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.
- These are the most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world.
- Gahirmatha located in Orissa's Kendrapara District of Odisha is the biggest breeding home of the sea turtles that come from the Pacific Ocean.
- Olive Ridley turtles are scheduled as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List, Appendix 1 in CITES, and Schedule 1 in Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.



Links:

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/wildlife-biodiversity/dte-impact-orissa-high-court-panel-visits-gahirmatha-to-study-olive-ridley-conservation-75809>

New Uttarakhand CM

Question: On 10th March 2021, who has been appointed as new Chief Minister of Uttarakhand?

- a) Tirath Singh Rawat
- b) Trivendra Singh Rawat
- c) Ramesh Pokhriyal
- d) None of the above

Ans: a

Context

- Trivendra Singh Rawat on March 8, 2021 resigned as the chief minister of Uttarakhand, a year before the hill state is scheduled to go to polls.



Facts

- On 10th march 2021, a day after Trivendra Singh Rawat resigned as CM of Uttarakhand, BJP's legislature party announced that Tirath Singh Rawat will be the new chief minister of Uttarakhand.
- Tirath Singh Rawat is current BJP MP from Garhwal district of Uttarakhand.
- Tirath Singh was a former member of the Uttarakhand Legislative Assembly from Chaubttakhal constituency from 2012 to 2017.
- He is the party's National Secretary and former party chief of BJP Uttarakhand.

Reference: <https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/uttarakhand-bjp-leadership-crisis-live-news-updates-trivendra-singh-rawat-resigns-as-cm/2209287/>

Integrated Rail Madad Helpline number

Question: Which integrated Rail Madad Helpline number has been announced by Indian Railways for all types of grievances and queries?

- (a) 182
- (b) 139
- (c) 138
- (d) 1072

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Indian Railways has announced integrated Rail Madad Helpline number “139” for all type of queries/complaints/assistance during travel.
- This will overcome the inconvenience over multiple helpline numbers for grievances and enquiry.
- The Helpline 139 will be available in twelve languages.
- Passengers can opt for IVRS (Interactive Voice Response System), or directly connect to call-centre executive by pressing * (asterisk).
- The service will be easy access to all mobile users.
- Ministry of Railways has also launched Social Media campaign #OneRailOneHelpline139 to inform and educate the passengers.



Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1703201>

India – Sweden Virtual Summit

Question: With which Nordic country India has held the virtual summit on March 5 2021?

(a) Sweden (b) Denmark (c) Finland (d) Norway

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 5th March 2021, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden Stefan Löfven held a Virtual Summit.
- The summit discussed bilateral issues and other regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest.



Key takeaways:

- The two countries expressed satisfaction at the implementation of the Joint Action Plan and Joint Innovation Partnership
- These were agreed during Indian Prime Minister's visit to Sweden for India-Nordic Summit in 2018. First India-Nordic Summit was held in April, 2018 including the five Nordic countries – Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland and Denmark.
- PM Narendra Modi welcomed the Sweden's decision to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- Both countries agreed to expand the Leadership Group on Industry Transition (LeadIT) membership.
- LeadIT was launched during the UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019 in New York.
- It gathers countries and companies to progress on low-carbon pathways, furthering to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Links:

<https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/33594/India++Sweden+Virtual+Summit>

First Strategic and Counter-Terrorism Dialogue between India and Nigeria

Question: With which country India has held the First Strategic and Counter-Terrorism Dialogue in March 2021?

(a) Nigeria (b) Chad (c) Cameroon (d) Benin

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- India and Nigeria has held the First Strategic and Counter-Terrorism Dialogue on March 4-5, 2021 in New Delhi.
- The dialogue held in-depth discussions on the threats and challenges faced by



democratic societies from terrorism, extremism, and radicalization.

- The two sides identified specific areas of cooperation to enhance their fight against all forms of terrorism.
- Nigeria is a country in West Africa having political boundaries with Niger in the north, Chad in the northeast, Cameroon in the east, and Benin in the west.
- Its southern coast is on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean.
- Abuja is the capital city of Nigeria.
- Nigeria is Africa's biggest oil exporter and has the largest natural gas reserves on the continent.

Links:

<https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/33593/India++Nigeria+Strategic+and+CounterTerrorism+Dialogue>
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nigeria/overview>

National Committee to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence

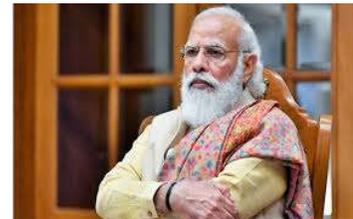
Question: Who will head the National Committee to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence?

(a) Narendra Modi (b) Amit Shah (c) Raj Nath Singh (d) Ram Nath Kovind

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 5 March 2021, the Government has constituted a National Committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence.
- The Committee consists of 259 dignitaries and eminent citizens from all walks of life.
- The Committee will provide policy direction and guidelines for formulation of programs for the commemoration.
- The celebration will be observed at national and international level in the form of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- The celebrations are proposed to be launched 75 weeks prior to 15th August 2022 i.e. on 12 March, 2021, which marks 91st anniversary of the historic Salt Satyagraha led by Mahatma Gandhi.
- A National Implementation Committee under the chairmanship of Home Minister Amit Shah had earlier been constituted to guide the policies and programs.



Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1702781>

Simlipal forest fire

Question: Simlipal forest reserve area that has witnessed week long fire is situated in which Indian state?

(a) Odisha (b) Karnataka (c) West Bengal
(d) Assam



Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar has ordered officers to take immediate action on the forest fires raging in Simlipal Tiger Reserve.
- A forest fire started in Simlipal in February and has been raging for nearly a week now.
- The forest area witness's frequent fires during the dry weather conditions, generally, with the onset of summers and towards the end of autumn.
- The last incident of a major forest fire was reported in 2015.

Simlipal Biosphere Reserve:

- Similipal derived from 'Simul' (silk cotton) tree, is a national park and a tiger reserve situated in the northern part of Odisha's Mayurbhanj district.
- Similipal and the adjoining areas, comprising 5,569 sq km, was declared a biosphere reserve by the Government of India on June 22, 1994, and lies in the eastern end of the eastern ghat.
- Similipal is the 7th largest national park in India.
- The area is also part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves since 2009.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/simplipal-forest-fire-explained-7213375/>

Ease of Living Index (EoLI) 2020

Question: Which city has been adjudged the top performer in million plus population category as of Ease of Living Index (EoLI) 2020?

(a) Bengaluru (b) Pune (c) Ahmedabad (d) Chennai

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 4th March 2021, Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Housing and Urban Affairs(GOI) released final rankings of Ease of Living Index (EoLI) 2020 and the Municipal Performance Index (MPI) 2020.

Rankings Ease of Living Index (EoLI) 2020:

- Bengaluru emerged as the top performer in the Million plus population category.
- It was followed by Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Surat, Navi Mumbai, oimbatore, Vadodara, Indore, and Greater Mumbai.
- In the Less than Million category, Shimla was ranked the highest.
- 111 cities had participated in the assessment.



Rankings Municipal Performance Index (MPI) 2020:

- In the million plus population category, Indore has emerged as the highest ranked municipality.
- Surat and Bhopal were ranked 2nd and 3rd respectively.
- In the Less than Million category, New Delhi Municipal Council has emerged as the leader, followed by Tirupati and Gandhinagar.
- The MPI assessed sectoral performance of 111 municipalities (with Delhi being assessed separately for NDMC, and the three Municipal Corporations).

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1702417>

Maitri Setu

Question: 'Maitri Setu' is constructed between which two countries?

a) India , Bangladesh b) India , Nepal c) Nepal , Bangladesh d) India , Bhutan

Ans: a)

Context

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will inaugurate 'Maitri Setu' between India and Bangladesh on 9th March 2021 at 12 noon via video conferencing.

Facts

- The bridge 'Maitri Setu' has been built over Feni river which flows between Indian boundary in Tripura State and Bangladesh.
- The name 'Maitri Setu' symbolizes growing bilateral relations and friendly ties between India and Bangladesh.
- It is 1.9 Km long bridge which joins Sabroom, Tripura in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh.

Significance of the bridge

- It will open a new chapter for trade and people to people movement between India and Bangladesh.
- With this inauguration, Tripura is set to become the 'Gateway of North East' with access to Chittagong Port of Bangladesh, which is just 80 Kms from Sabroom.
- It will reduce the strategic problem of accessing North East region from mainland India in case chicken's nook gets compromised.

Reference: https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/news_updates/pm-to-inaugurate-maitri-setu-between-india-and-bangladesh-on-9th-march/#:~:text=Prime%20Minister%20Shri%20Narendra%20Modi,in%20Tripura%20during%20the%20event.

Delhi Cabinet approves constitution of Delhi Board of School Education

Question: Which UT has announced on March 6, 2021 to create its own board of education?

a) Delhi b) Puducherry c) Chandigarh d) none of these

Ans: a)

Context

- The Chief Minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal, has announced that the Delhi Cabinet has given approval to constitute the Delhi Board of School Education on March 6, 2021.



Facts

- The Delhi Board of School Education will comprise of a governing body which will be headed by Education minister of Delhi government.
- It will also comprise of an executive body which will be headed by a chief executive officer.
- The new board has been constituted with the aim of imparting such education that will prepare a patriotic and self-dependent student who will serve the society and Nation in the selfless manner.

Reference: <https://www.ndtv.com/education/cabinet-approves-constitution-of-delhi-board-of-school-education-arvind-kejriwal>

Red rice export to U.S.A.

Question: Which Indian state has recently exported Red Rice to USA?

a) Assam b) UP c) Punjab d) Haryana

Ans: a)

Context

- The first consignment of 'red rice' was flagged off on March 4, 2021, to the United States of America from Assam.



Facts

- Red rice is rich in iron and the variety is grown in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam, without using any form of chemical fertilizer.
- The exported rice variety is known as 'Bao-dhaan',
- It is an integral part of the Assamese food.
- The ceremony of the flagging-off of the export consignments was carried out by APEDA Chairman Dr. M. Angamuthu in Haryana. The APEDA is involved in promoting rice exports with the help of several stakeholders along the value chain. The government had also set up a "Rice Export Promotion Forum (REPF)" under the parent head of APEDA.

Odisha's first survey of backward classes

Question : Which state government has decided to conduct first of its kind survey of on the social and educational conditions of the people from backward classes?

a) UP b) MP c) Odisha d) Kerala

Ans: c)

Context

- Odisha government had accepted a proposal by the Odisha State Commission for Backward Classes (OSCBC) February 26 to undertake the survey.



Facts

- Survey will be conducted on the social and educational conditions of the people belonging to backward classes. Their occupation, education standard and other parameters will be covered.
- It is scheduled to be conducted between May 1 and May 20.
- Earlier the state government had reached out to the Centre and demanded to conduct a socio-economic caste survey along with the general census in 2021. However, this proposal was turned down by the central government.
- Odisha's decision is significant at a time when there is demand for a caste-based census, and considering that a commission headed by former Delhi Chief Justice G Rohini is working on the sub-categorisation of the OBCs, without such data.
- State of Odisha, has around 209 communities which are identified as the socially and educationally backward classes (SEBCs). They account for 54% of the Population in Odisha.

Reference: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/first-odisha-survey-of-backward-classes-set-to-begin-on-may-1-7211738/>

'Catch the Rain' campaign

Question : Which organization has launched a campaign with tagline "Catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls"?

a) NITI Aayog b) Jal Shakti Ministry c) National Water Mission
d) None of the above

Ans: c)

Context

- The National Water Mission's (NWM) campaign called "Catch the Rain" will be launched in states.

Facts

- National Water Mission's (NWM) campaign "Catch The Rain" with the tagline "Catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls" is to inspire the states and stakeholders to create appropriate Rain Water Harvesting Structures (RWHS) suitable to the climatic conditions and sub-soil strata before monsoon.
- It will be launched before the arrival of monsoon.
- Under the campaign with the active participation of people various drives will be taken up to make check dams, water harvesting pits, rooftop RWHS etc; removal of encroachments and de-silting of tanks to increase their storage capacity; removal of obstructions in the channels which bring water to them from the catchment areas etc.
- States have been requested to open "Rain Centers" in each district– in Collectorate/Municipalities or GP offices for conducting these activities.
- The centre will act as a technical guidance centre in all the district and raise awareness as to how to catch the rain, when it falls, where it falls.

National Water Mission

- It was launched in 2011 for the purpose of minimizing wastage of water, conserving water, increasing efficiency of water use and managing water resources in such way that it provides for equitable and sustainable water availability for every strata of society.
- It is programme of Ministry of Jal Shakti .

Reference: <http://nwm.gov.in/?q=catchtherain>

Sugamya Bharat App

Question: Consider the following statement regarding Sugamya Bharat App-

- i) The Sugamya Bharat App was developed by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) under the parent head of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.**
- ii) It was launched by the Union Minister for Social justice and Empowerment, Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot on March 2, 2021.**

Which of the above two statement are correct?

- a) only I b) only ii c) Both i and ii d) none of the above

Ans: c)

Context

- The Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thaawarchand Gehlot on March 2, 2021, virtually launched a crowd sourcing mobile application 'Sugamya Bharat App' and a handbook 'Access-The Photo Digest' to enhance accessibility.
- Mobile App can be downloaded after the department will launch it officially from Play Store by the Android users. However, the iOS version of the App will be made available by March 15, 2021.

Facts

- The handbook and Sugamya Bharat app have been developed by the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities department under the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry.
- The Sugamya Bharat App will enable people with disabilities as well as the elderly in registering accessibility-related problems in modes of transport, in buildings, or in any infrastructure by uploading the pictures on it.
- Mobile application is for sensitizing and enhancing accessibility in the 3 pillars of the Accessible India Campaign i.e. ICT ecosystem, transportation sector, and built environment. It will also be able to address the problems regarding Coronavirus faced by the differently-abled.



Reference: <https://www.jagranjosh.com/current-affairs/union-minister-thaawarchand-gehlot-launches-sugamya-bharat-app-to-enhance-accessibility-for-differently-abled-1614756598-1>

Sansad TV

Question: Parliament of India has recently merged two channels to form “Sansad TV” to show the live telecast of parliamentary procedure. This channel was formed by merging which two channels?

- a) DD News, DD Bharti b) DD News, DD INDIA c) RSTV , LSTV
d) none of the above

Ans: c)

Facts

- The Parliament of India has approved the merger of two of the TV channels namely, Lok Sabha TV and Rajya Sabha TV into an integrated channel “Sansad TV”.
- This new platform will continue to live telecast the house proceedings, pack news and the current affairs programme in Hindi as well as in English languages.
- The proposal for the merger of two entities was put forward in 2019 by an expert committee headed by Prasar Bharati CEO Surya Prakash.
- The former textiles secretary, Ravi Kapoor, has been appointed as the CEO of the Sansad Tv on a contract basis for a period of one year.
- As per the information available right now , though the channels are being integrated into single entity, it will function on two platforms during the parliament sessions — one to telecast live proceedings of Lok Sabha and the other of Rajya Sabha.
- During the inter-session period, the channel will be on one single platform having enriched bilingual contents (Hindi and English).
- It is done to reduce the financial burden as well as improve the functional efficiency.



Reference: <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/lok-sabha-rajya-sabha-tv-merged-to-create-sansad-tv-ex-ias-officer-ravi-capoor-appointed-ceo-2382335>

Haryana approves Bill to Reserve 75 Per Cent Private Jobs for Locals

Question : Which state government has approved a reservation bill for providing 75% reservation in state in private sectors jobs to domiciles of state?

a) Haryana b) Delhi c) UP d) MP

Ans: a

Context

- Haryana Governor Satyadev Narayan Arya has approved a bill that would provide 75 per cent reservation in the private sector jobs for the people of the state.



Facts

- The Haryana State Employment Of Local Candidates Bill, 2020, which was passed by the state assembly last year, will provide a quota for local people in private sector jobs that offer a monthly salary of less than ₹ 50,000.
- The bill provides for the private sector companies to compulsorily reserve 75% of the jobs for the people with a salary up to 50,000 in the state.
- Bill also has a clause that says that companies can hire people from outside if they do not find any suitable candidates locally. However, for this purpose, they need to inform this to the government.
- As per the bill, the companies are required to register the details of the employees who are getting Rs. 50,000 of salary per month. If the companies failed to do so within three months, they will attract penalties.

Reference: <https://www.ndtv.com/jobs/haryana-governor-approves-bill-to-reserve-75-pc-jobs-in-private-sector-for-locals-2382452>

NHAI constructed 25.54 km road in record 18 hours

Question: What length of single lane road was constructed by National Highways Authority of India in 18 hours to create a world record?

(a) 25.54 km (b) 27.54km (c) 32.08km (d) 45.32km

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) has constructed a single lane 25.54 km road in 18 hours.
- The road is part of the 110 km stretch between Vijaypur and Solapur on the NH-52.
- About 500 workers had put their efforts in the record achievement.



- This record will soon enter 'Limca Book of Records'.

About NHAI:

- Formation-1988
- Role- development, maintenance and management of National Highways
- Headquarters-New Delhi
- Chairman- Sukhbir Singh Sandhu

Links:

<https://nhai.gov.in/#/>

MP approved Penal Law (Madhya Pradesh Amendment) Bill, 2021

Question: Which state has recently amended a law to provide for life imprisonment for food adulteration?

a) UP b)MP c) Harayana d)Odisha

Ans: b)

Context

- On February 26, 2021, Madhya Pradesh Cabinet has approved the "Penal Law (Madhya Pradesh Amendment) Bill, 2021". This bill was approved in order to give life imprisonment to food adulterers in states.



Facts

- Food Adulteration is a legal term which is used when a food product fails to meet any of the legal standards as prescribed by the authorities. Food Adulteration can be done by addition of another substance to the food item so as to increase the quantity of food item in either the raw form or prepared form. This results in the loss of actual quality of the food products.
- Who regulates the Food Standards?-The legal standards of the food is regulated by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. This ministry is responsible for providing safe food to citizens. The ministry had laid down "The Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954" that provides pure and wholesome foods to citizens. This act was amended in the year 1986.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is an autonomous body established under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India. The FSSAI has been established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, which is a consolidating statute related to food safety and regulation in India. FSSAI is responsible for protecting and promoting public health through the regulation and supervision of food safety.

Reference: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/mp-cabinet-approves-law-to-give-life-imprisonment-to-food-adulterators/articleshow/81242210.cms?from=mdr>

CERAWeek global energy and environment leadership award

Question: who has won CERAWeek global energy and environment leadership award?

- a) Ministry of environment b) PM Narendra Modi
- c) President Shri Ram Nath Kovind
- d) None of the above

Ans: b)

Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will receive the CERAWeek global energy and environment leadership award during an annual international energy conference next week.



Facts

- He will receive the award in recognition of the PM's commitment to sustainability in the energy and the environment during an annual international energy conference organised by IHS Markit.
- PM Modi will also deliver the keynote address at the CERAWeek Conference-2021, which will be held virtually from March 1 to 5.
- Prominent speakers at the conference include US special presidential envoy for climate John Kerry, Co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and founder of Breakthrough Energy Bill Gates and president and CEO, Saudi Aramco, Amin Nasser.
- Conference will be organised virtually by IHS Markit which is an American-British information provider based in London formed in 2016 with the merger of IHS Inc. and Markit Ltd.

Reference: <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/pm-modi-to-receive-global-energy-and-environment-leadership-award-next-week-11614387288386.html>

Bhabhatron-II

Question: President of Madagascar Andry Rajoelina has recently inaugurated , advanced digital cobalt therapy machine 'Bhabhatron-II' used in cancer treatment. This machine was gifted by India .Who has developed this machine?

- a) IIT- Delhi b) CSIR c) Bhabha Atomic Research Centre d) IISC

Ans: c)

Context

- The advanced digital cobalt therapy machine 'Bhabhatron-II' was inaugurated at the Joseph Ravoahangy Andrianavalona Hospital (HJRA)



in Antananarivo, capital of Madagascar by President Andry Rajoelina.

Facts

- During the visit of President Ram Nath Kovind to Madagascar in March 2018, it was announced that the Bhabhatron machine would be donated to Madagascar, which is one of the few countries to have received the Bhabhatron-II radio therapy machine from India.
- This Underlines the India's cooperation in the health sector and growing ties between the two Indian Ocean neighbours.
- Bhabhatron-II is radio therapy machine which will be used in cancer treatment.
- It is developed by India's Bhabha Atomic Research Centre.

Refrence: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/madagascar-president-inaugurates-advanced-digital-cobalt-therapy-machine-bhabhatron-ii-donated-by-india/article33953975.ece>

UP receives award for fastest implementation of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana

Question: Which state has been awarded for the fastest implementation of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana?

(a) Gujarat (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Bihar (d) Karnataka

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 24 February 2021, Uttar Pradesh has been awarded for fastest implementation of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana for the year 2020-21.
- More than 27110 crores has been transferred in the accounts of the farmers of state under PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana.
- PM Kisan is a Central Sector scheme with income support of Rs 6,000/- per year to farmers.
- The sum will be credited in three equal installments to small and marginal farmer families having combined land holding/ownership of upto 2 hectares.
- The scheme has become operational from 1 December 2018.



Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=UP-receives-award-for-fastest-implementation-of-PM-Kisan-Samman-Nidhi-Yojana&id=410509#:~:text=Union%20Minister%20for%20Agriculture%20and,off%20in%20year%202020%2D21.>

India becomes first country to identify the need for action for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease

Question: Which is the first country to identify the need for action for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease?

(a) USA (b) China (c) India (d) Sweden

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On 22 February 2021, Union Minister of Health & family Welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan launched the operational guidelines for the integration of NAFLD (Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease) with NPCDCS (National Programme for Prevention & Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke).
- With this move, India has become the first country in the world to identify the need for action for NAFLD.
- Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is an umbrella term for a range of liver conditions affecting people who drink little to no alcohol.
- The persons suffering NAFLD can develop nonalcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) that can advance to cirrhosis and liver failure.
- Since there is no specific cure available, government has planned to move from Diagnostic Cure to Preventive Health.
- Government with its unique initiatives such as Eat Right India and Fit India Movement will promote the health and lifestyle changes to manage the NAFLD.



Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1699904#:~:text=The%20Health%20Minister%20also%20took,need%20for%20action%20for%20NAFLD.>

International

Global Wind Report 2021

Question: Which organization has released Global Wind Report 2021 recently?

a) United Nations Environment Programme b) World Bank
c) Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) d) None of the above

Ans: c

Context

- Global Wind Report 2021 was published by the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) on March 25, 2021.

Facts

- This is GWEC's 16th annual flagship report ahead of the crucial COP26 conference in November 2021.



- Report highlights wind power's role on the road to net zero emissions.
- Report highlights that 2020 was the best year in history for the global wind industry with 93 GW of new capacity installed – a 53 per cent year-on-year increase.
- However this growth is not sufficient to ensure the world achieves net zero by 2050.
- The world needs to be installing wind power three times faster over the next decade in order to stay on a net zero pathways and avoid the worst impacts of climate change.
- As per the report there is now 743 GW of wind power capacity worldwide, helping to avoid over 1.1 billion tonnes of CO2 globally – equivalent to the annual carbon emissions of South America.

Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC)

- The Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) was established in 2005 to provide a credible and representative forum for the entire wind energy sector at an international level. GWEC's mission is to ensure that wind power is established as one of the world's leading energy sources, providing substantial environmental and economic benefits.

Reference: <https://gwec.net/global-wind-report-2021/>

World's First Ship Tunnel

Question: Which country will build the World's First Ship Tunnel to provide safe passage to ships across sea?

(a) Denmark (b) Singapore (c) Russia (d) Norway

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Norway will build the world's first ship tunnel, designed to help vessels navigate the treacherous Stadhavet Sea.
- The tunnel dubbed as "Stad Ship Tunnel" would be built under the mountainous Stadhavet peninsula in northwestern Norway.
- The 1.7 km tunnel will be able to handle ships of up to 16,000 tonnes.
- The tunnel will be 49 metres (161 ft) high and 36 metres (118 ft) wide.
- The estimated cost of sea tunnel construction is at least 2.8 billion Norwegian kroner (\$330 million).
- The construction would begin in 2022 and would take three to four years to complete.



Links:

<https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/norway-ship-tunnel/index.html>

International Intellectual Property Index 2021

Question: What is the position of India in the recently released Intellectual Property (IP) Index?

a) 40 b)53 c)42 d) None of the above

Ans: a

Context



- Recently U.S. Chamber of Commerce has released ninth annual International IP Index.
- It measures the progress in the area of intellectual property rights across in major economies of the world as intellectual property (IP) takes center stage in combatting the global pandemic.

Facts

- The Index is released annually by Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC) which is an affiliate of US Chamber of Commerce.
- It evaluates Intellectual Property rights across 53 global economies on the basis of patent, commercialisation of IP assets, copyright policies and ratification of international treaties.
- USA topped the index followed by United Kingdom and Germany.
- India was ranked 40th in 2020. It has scored 38.4 out of 100 on 50 intellectual property-related indicators.
- Overall score of India has increased from 36.04 per cent in seventh edition to 38.46 per cent in eighth edition.
- Among BRICS countries, India registered the second-highest growth in nine editions with an overall improvement of over 13 per cent.

Reference: <https://www.theglobalipcenter.com/report/ipindex2021/>

India has world's fourth strongest military

Question: Which country has strongest military force in the world as of the list released by defence website Military Direct?

(a) United States (b) China (c) Russia (d) India

Answer: (b)

Related facts:



- According to a study released by defence website Military Direct, China has the strongest military force in the world.
- China has scored 82 out of 100 points in the index.
- United States of America has been ranked second with 74 points.
- Russia with score of 69 has been ranked third strongest military force.
- India with score of 61 is the fourth strongest military force in the world followed by France at fifth position.

Methodology:

- The study said “ultimate military strength index” was calculated after taking into consideration various factors including budgets, number of inactive and active military personnel, total air, sea, land and nuclear resources, average salaries, and weight of equipment.

Links:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/india-has-world-s-fourth-strongest-military-says-military-direct-s-study-101616304773460.html>

SIXTH INDIA-BRAZIL-SOUTH AFRICA (IBSA) WOMEN’S FORUM MEETING

Question – On March 16, 2021, the Sixth India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women’s Forum meeting was concluded through video conference. It was organized by which country?

(a) Brazil (b) India (c) South Africa (d) None of the above

Answer – (b)

Related facts

- On March 16, 2021, the Sixth India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women’s Forum meeting was concluded through video conference.
- Meeting was organized by India.
- Under this meeting Ministers reaffirmed their commitment towards addressing gender gap and women centric issues through mutual cooperation.



Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1705296>

First female president of Tanzania

Question: Who has sworn in as the first female president of Tanzania?

(a) Samia Suluhu Hassan (b) Salma Kikwete (c) Janeth Magufuli (d) Siti Mwinyi

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Samia Suluhu Hassan was sworn in as the sixth President of Tanzania.
- She became the first female leader of the East African country.
- The 61-year-old Hassan assumed the presidency after the death of previous President John Magufuli.
- She will finish Magufuli’s second five-year term, set to run until 2025.
- Prior to taking charge as President, Hassan was the Vice-President of Tanzania, also being the first female vice-president of the country, since November 2015.

Links:

<https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20210319-samia-suluhu-hassan-sworn-in-as-tanzania-s-first-female-president>

2021 parliamentary elections-Denmark

Question: Which leader's party has won the most seats in 2021 Denmark parliamentary elections?

(a) Mark Rutte (b) Geert Wilders (c) Sybrand Buma (d) Alexander Pechtold

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Netherlands Prime Minister, Mark Rutte People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) has won the 2021 parliamentary elections with most seats.
- He will swear in as the Prime Minister for the fourth straight term.
- Earlier on 15 January 2021, Rutte and his entire Cabinet offered their resignation in response to a scandal relating to child welfare fraud; however, Rutte remained in office till the conclusion of the 2021 election.
- Rutte has been one of Europe's longest serving leaders after ten years in office, serving since October 2010.
- Amsterdam is the capital city of Netherland and the currency recognized is 'Euro'.



Links:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56436297>

Digital Green Certificate

Question-Which of the following commission has proposed to create a 'digital Green certificate'?

(a) European Commission (b) The United States (c) African Union (d) UAE

Ans. (a)

Related facts-

- The European Commission is proposing to create a Digital Green Certificate to facilitate safe free movement inside the EU during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Digital Green Certificate will be a proof that a person has been vaccinated against COVID-19, received a negative test result or recovered from COVID-19.
- It will be available, free of charge, in digital or paper format. It will include a QR code to ensure security and authenticity of the certificate.



- The certificate can be issued by authorities, including hospitals, testing centres and health authorities.



Reference- https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_1181.

World Happiness Report 2021

Question: What is the position of India in the World Happiness Report 2021 released on 19 march 2021, ahead of International Day of Happiness on March 20,2021?

a) 141 b)131 c)139 d)144

Ans: c)

Context

- United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network has released World Happiness Report 2021 on 19 march 2021, ahead of International Day of Happiness on March 20,2021.

Facts

- The World Happiness Report is a publication of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, powered by data from the Gallup World Poll.
- This year World Happiness Report 2021 focuses on the effects of COVID-19 and how people all over the world have fared.
- Finland was again titled as the World’s happiest country because the overall rankings remained similar to the index of 2020 followed by Iceland and Denmark at 2nd and 3rd place respectively.
- India is placed at 139th position out of 149 countries.



- India was ranked at 144th position out of 156 countries in the “world happiness report, 2020”.
- Afghanistan was titled as the ‘Least Happy’ country and was placed at last position at 149 place.

Reference: <https://worldhappiness.report/blog/in-a-lamentable-year-finland-again-is-the-happiest-country-in-the-world/>

Sinatra Doctrine

Question- The term ‘Sinatra Doctrine’ is recently seen in news. What its mean-

- It’s a policy of EU to stop China’s aggressive policy
- It’s a policy of the UN to stop China’s aggressive policy
- It’s a policy of Indian government to stop china’s aggressive policy
- It’s a policy of Quad nations

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

- China’s increasing aggressiveness to undermine European unity through a ‘divide and rule’ policy continues, the Central and Eastern Europe(CEE) member countries have responded by accepting their own way to deal with the increasing threat of Beijing’s influence, known as the ‘Sinatra Doctrine’.
- The doctrine would be based on two pillars: continuing cooperation with China in regards to address global challenges such as climate change, combating COVID-19 and regional conflicts, while also strengthening the European Union’s (EU) strategic sovereignty by protecting technological sectors of its economy.
- This ‘Sinatra Doctrine’ is being seen by scholars as a threat and a blowback to China’s growing influence in the CEE.



Reference- https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/eu-adopts-sinatra-doctrine-to-counter-china-s-growing-influence-in-europe121031800076_1.html.

Italy joins International Solar Alliance

Question- Which of the following country became the 121st member of International Solar Alliance?

- Italy
- Germany
- Spain
- Turkey

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

- On March 17, 2021, Italy signed a framework agreement of the International Solar Alliance with India.
- The Framework Agreement was signed by the Ambassador of Italy Vincenzo De Luca.



- ISA is an alliance of over 121 nations that have been initiated by India. Most of the member countries are the sunshine ones which lie either entirely or partly between the Tropic of Capricorn and Tropic of Cancer.
- It was jointly launched by the French President and Prime Minister Modi during the United Nations Climate Change Conference, 2015 or COP21, in Paris, France.
- The ISA is headquartered in Gurugram, Haryana.

Reference- <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/upgrading-partnership-with-india-italy-joins-international-solar-alliance/articleshow/81554498.cms>.

India's arms imports down by 33%, says SIPRI report.

Question- Which of the following is the 2nd largest arms importer in 2016-20?

(a) India (b) Saudi Arabia (c) Australia (d) China

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

About SIPRI-

- SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms conflict, and disarmament. Established in 1966, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public. Based in Stockholm, SIPRI is regularly ranked among the most respected think tanks worldwide.
- According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report released on 15th March 2021, the five largest arms exporters in 2016-20 were the U.S, Russia, France, Germany and China, while the top importers were Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and China.
- India's arms imports fell 33 % between 2011-15 and 2016-20 said the report.
- India's top three arms suppliers during 2016-20 were Russia (accounting for 49% of India's imports), France (18%) and Israel (13%), the report said.
- According to SIPRI, India accounted for 0.2% of the share of global arms exports during 2016-20, making the country the world's 24th largest exporter of major arms.
- Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Mauritius were the top recipients of Indian military hardware, according to the report.



Reference- <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2021/international-arms-transfers-level-after-years-sharp-growth-middle-eastern-arms-imports-grow-most>.

Air quality in the world

Question- '2020 World Air Quality report' is recently released by-



(a) IQAir (b) WHO (c) WEF (d) Air quality index

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

- The report is prepared by Swiss organisation, IQAir, in the form of the 'World Air Quality Report, 2020', which has released globally.
- Twenty-two of the world's 30 most polluted cities are in India, with Delhi being ranked as the most polluted capital city globally, the report said.
- It said that despite the improvement, Delhi ranked as the 10th most polluted city and the top polluted capital city in the world.
- The report, however, shows that Delhi's air quality improved by approximately 15% from 2019 to 2020.
- As per the report, the top most polluted city is Xinjiang in China followed by nine Indian cities.
- Ghaziabad is the second most polluted city in the world followed by Bulandshahar, Bsrakh Jalalpur, Noida, Greater Noida, Kanpur, Lucknow and Bhiwari.
- The global cities ranking report is based on PM2.5 data from 106 countries, which is measured by ground-based monitoring stations, most of which is operated by government agencies.
- Major sources of India's air pollution include transportation, biomass burning for cooking, electricity generation, industry, construction, waste burning and episodic agricultural burning.
- The transportation sector is one of the major contributors to India's leading PM2.5 emission sources across cities," the report said.

Reference- <https://www.iqair.com/world-air-quality-report>.

Maju Varghese

Question – Recently which Indian-American has been appointed by US President Joe Biden as his deputy assistant and director of the White House Military Office?

(a) Jagdish Gulati (b) Richard Verma (c) Maju Varghese (d) Shreyash Jain

Answer – (c)

Related facts

- Recently Maju Varghese, an Indian-American has been appointed by US President Joe Biden as his deputy assistant and director of the White House Military Office.
- He had served as a key member of the Biden campaign and the inaugural committee.
- By profession he is a lawyer.
- White House Military Office(WHMO)
- WHMO is a a department within the White House Office that provides military support for White House functions, including food service,



presidential transportation, medical support, emergency medical services and hospitality services.

- The WHMO Director oversees all military operations aboard Air Force One on Presidential missions worldwide.
- Past role
- He previously served in the White House under president Barack Obama in various roles, including as the assistant to the president for management and administration and deputy director of advance.
- He has also worked as the chief operating officer at The Hub Project and as a senior advisor at the law firm Dentons.
- As special assistant to the President and deputy director of advance from June 2014 to July 2015, he served as the head of the US delegation for pre-advance visits around the world composed of White House staff, National Security staff, the White House Military Office and the United States Secret Service.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/nri/migrate/indian-american-appointed-deputy-assistant-to-president-biden-and-whmo-director/articleshow/81292254.cms?from=mdr>

MoU on international lunar research station

Question : Write the name of the countries involved in MoU on international lunar research station ?

a) India-America (b) India-Israel (c) China-Russia (d) China-Canada

Answer – (c)

Related facts

- China and Russia has recently(March 2021) entered MoU on international lunar research station.
- However, this research center can be used by any country in the world.
- The center will be able to act as an alternative to the International Space Station.
- This research center will be a complex of research and experimental facilities, which will be built on the lunar surface or lunar orbit.
- For research on the latest joint projects in space, the two countries will work on the principle of co-consultation, shared benefit and joint building.



Link:

<https://spacenews.com/china-russia-enter-mou-on-international-lunar-research-station/>
<https://www.npr.org/2021/03/10/975579975/china-russia-announce-plan-to-build-moon-research-station>

India Telecom 2021 : An Exclusive International Business Expo

Question : When was Bharat Telecom 2021 (a special international trade expo) organized?

(a) 3-4 March ,2021 (b) 1-2 March ,2021 (c) 2–4 March ,2021 (d) 1-3 March ,2021

Answer – (a)

Related facts

- TEPC (Telecom Equipment Export Promotion Council) has organized India Telecom 2021' – an Exclusive International Business Expo being held virtually on March 3 & 4, 2021 under Market Access Initiative Scheme (MAI) of Department of Commerce, Government of India and with support of Department of Telecommunications & Ministry of External Affairs.
- The event is being attended by potential buyers from countries across the globe. More than 1,000 delegates, out of which more than 200 are foreign delegates from more than 45 countries, are attending India Telecom 2021.
- More than 40 Indian telecom companies are showcasing their state of the art products and capabilities at the exhibition which is organized by TEPC as a part of this event.



Background

- The Government has been striving to fulfil Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of Digital India, which will bridge the digital divide in the country by uniting urban India with rural Bharat, foster financial inclusion by making critical services available to everyone remotely, and provide connectivity to the last mile.
- Indian manufacturers have already made significant strides in exports of IT and telecom products to several countries. Indian IT and telecom products are of world-class quality and are globally competitive in technology and price.
- The government has announced the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes for various sectors, including telecom sector, to become a part of the global supply chain.
- This event is of great significance to Indian exporters and has a very high impact. India is a fast-growing telecom market fueled by data growth.
- This local demand is a driver of domestic telecom companies to create innovative, high-quality products and solutions that can serve the needs of both India and emerging markets across the globe.

About TEPC:

- TEPC has been set up by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry and Ministry of Communications, Government of India to promote and develop of Export of Telecom Equipment and Services.
- The council undertakes several activities aimed at exports promotion such as Commissioning of Studies to find potential markets, holding of National/International Seminars and facilitating participation of exporters in various overseas exhibitions.

- The council also disseminates trade related data to its members. The council makes various recommendations to the Government for making necessary changes in various policies and procedures for promotion of Exports and Services.

Link:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1702318>

Quad leaders agree to send vaccines across Asia by end-2022

Question: Consider the following statement regarding Quad virtual Summit-
 i) The “Quad” group comprises of four nations namely United States, India, Australia and Japan.

ii) Leaders of Quad grouping nation met for the first time virtually on 12th march, 2021.

iii) Quad grouping have agreed to pool finance, manufacture and distribute the capacity in order to send 1 billion coronavirus vaccines across Asia and in the Indo-Pacific region to assist them by the year 2022.

Which of the following are correct?

a) I b) ii c)iii d) all of the above

Ans: d

Context



- For the first time, the leaders of the four ‘Quad’ countries – India, Japan, United States and Australia have met through a virtual platform marking most significant upgrade to the ‘Quad’ format, which began first in 2007 as a tentative grouping of officials from four countries.

Facts

- The foreign secretary of India has stated on March 12, 2020 that the Leaders of the United States, India, Australia and Japan have agreed to pool financing, manufacturing and distribution capacity in order to send 1 billion coronavirus vaccines across Asia and in the Indo-Pacific region to assist them by the year 2022.
- Quad grouping nation wants to expand global vaccinations and counter China’s growing vaccination diplomacy in Southeast Asia and around the world.
- India will use its manufacturing capacity to make US vaccines, with financing coming from the US International Development Finance Corporation and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation. Australia will finance training and provide last-mile logistical support for the distribution of vaccines.
- These vaccines will mostly go to the Pacific Islands, Southeast Asia and countries in the Indian Ocean.

Reference: <https://www.businesstoday.in/current/world/quad-leaders-agree-to-send-1-billion-vaccines-across-asia-by-end-2022/story/433713.html>

Italy’s new Prime Minister.

Question- Who is appointed as the new Prime Minister of Italy?

(a) Mario Draghi (b) Paolo Gentiloni (c) Giuseppe Conte (d) Arnaldo Forlani

Ans. (a)

Related facts-

- The former Chief of European Central Bank Mario Draghi on February 13, 2021, was formally sworn in as the new Prime Minister of Italy, against the backdrop of the deadly pandemic and crippling economic recession.
- Mario Draghi becomes Italy's 30th prime minister since the birth of the republic in 1946 and, having won the backing of almost every large Italian party, will lead a mixed government of made up of a number of technocrats in central roles as well as politicians.
- Draghi has the support of a rainbow coalition ranging from leftists to Matteo Salvini's far-right League.
- It includes the populist Five Star Movement (M5S), the centre-left Democratic Party (PD) and Italia Viva — who made-up the previous government and then fell out over the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- He succeeded Giuseppe Conte (The Former PM of Italy).



Refernce- <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/europe/mario-draghi-to-be-sworn-in-as-italian-pm/articleshow/80892657.cms>.

Democracy Report 2021. Autocratization Turns Viral.

Question-The fifth annual 'Democracy Report 2021' is released by-

(a) V-Dem institute (b) The Economic Intelligence (c) WEF (d) Freedom House

Ans. (a)

Related facts-

- The fifth annual Democracy report by Sweden's V-Dem Institute, titled 'Autocratization Turns Viral' is released on 12th March 2021.
- The V-Dem Institute, an independent research institute based at the University of Gothenburg, has published data-heavy worldwide democracy reports since 2017.
- V-Dem (Varieties of Democracy) claims to produce the largest dataset on democracy with almost 30 million data points for 202 countries from 1789 to 2020.



Regarding India-

- India’s position has been downgraded from “the world’s largest democracy” to an “electoral autocracy”.
- The reason behind the downgrading is ‘muzzling’ of media, and overuse of defamation and sedition laws.
- India is now as autocratic as is Pakistan in ‘Censorship’ and worse than both its neighbors Bangladesh and Nepal.
- India has move from the top 50% of the 180 countries to the bottom 50%.
- With India—home to 1.37 billion people—becoming an electoral autocracy, now 68 percent of the World’s population lives in electoral and closed autocracies, as per the report.
- India’s level of liberal democracy registered at 0.34 by the end of 2020 after a steep decline since its high at 0.57 in 2013. That represents a 23-percentage point drop on the 0 to 1 LDI scale, making it one of the most dramatic shifts among all countries in the world over the past 10 years, alongside autocratizing countries like Brazil, Hungary, and Turkey.
- Meanwhile, 14 per cent of the world population continues to live in liberal democracies but the number has declined from 41 countries in 2010 to 32 in 2020.
- On the other hand, electoral democracies now account for 60 nations and remaining 19 percent of the population.

TABLE 1: TOP-10 MAIN AUTOCRATIZING COUNTRIES (LIBERAL DEMOCRACY INDEX (LDI), 2010–2020



	CHANGE	LDI 2010	LDI 2020	REGIME TYPE 2010	REGIME TYPE 2020
1 Poland	-0.34	0.83	0.49	Liberal Democracy	Electoral Democracy
2 Hungary	-0.32	0.68	0.37	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
3 Turkey	-0.29	0.40	0.11	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
4 Brazil	-0.28	0.79	0.51	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Democracy
5 Serbia	-0.27	0.51	0.24	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
6 Benin	-0.26	0.55	0.29	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
7 India	-0.23	0.57	0.34	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
8 Mauritius	-0.23	0.73	0.50	Liberal Democracy	Electoral Democracy
9 Bolivia	-0.18	0.41	0.231	Electoral Democracy	Electoral Autocracy
10 Thailand	-0.17	0.34	0.17	Electoral Autocracy	Closed Autocracy

Reference- https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/c9/3f/c93f8e74-a3fd-4bac-adfd-ee2cfbc0a375/dr_2021.pdf.

Food Waste Index 2021

Question- The “Food Waste Index 2021” is recently published by-

- (a) UNEP (b) FAO (c) WTO (d) IMF

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-



- The “Food Waste Index Report 2021” is released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and partner organisation WRAP on 4th March 2021.
- The index was prepared by using data from 54 countries and then extrapolated to the remaining countries.
- The report has revealed that 17 per cent of all food available at consumer levels was wasted in 2019. That year, some 690 million people had to go hungry.
- The food waste amounted to a whopping 931 million tonnes of food sold to households (61%), retailers (13%) and restaurants (26%).
- The document noted that on an average, 74 kilograms of food was wasted per capita at the household level.
- Developed countries like Austria and South Africa produce very low amounts of waste at 39 kg / capita / year and 40 kg / capita / year respectively.
- On the other hand, countries like Nigeria and Rwanda are producing waste at 189 kg / capita / year and 164 kg / capita / year respectively.
- For India, the waste in kg / capita / year was 50.
- Food loss and waste causes about \$940 billion per year in economic losses. Reductions can save money for farmers, companies, and households.
- SDG target 12.3 aims at halving per-capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reducing food losses along production and supply chains.

Reference-

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/35280/FoodWaste.pdf>

Disinvestment in IRCON International

Question : Recently Government has decided to sell _ stake in IRCON to raise about Rs 662 crore. Fill in the blank space with appropriate option given below.

(a) 16% (b) 19% (c) 11% (d) 20%

Ans.(a)

Related facts



- Recently Government has decided to sell 16% stake in IRCON International to raise about Rs 662 crore.
- Secretary, DIPAM has announced that offer for sale in IRCON International opens tomorrow (3 March 2021) for Non Retail Investors. Day 2 for Retail Investors.
- Government would divest 10% equity with an additional 6% as Green Shoe option.
- The floor price was set at Rs 88 per share in the offer for sale.

DIPAM

- Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) deals with all matters relating to management of Central Government investments in equity including disinvestment of equity in Central Public Sector Undertakings.
- The Four major areas of its work relates to Strategic Disinvestment, Minority Stake Sales, Asset Monetisation and Capital Restructuring.

IRCON International

- IRCON International Limited, formerly Indian Railway Construction Limited(IRCON), is an engineering and construction organisation, specialized in transport infrastructure.
- IRCON International is one of the 5 listed railway companies.
- Apart from this, the remaining four companies are RITES Ltd, Rail Vikas Nigam, IRCTC and IRFC.
- The government holds 89.18 per cent stake in IRCON.

Green Shoe option

- Under a green shoe option, the issuing company has the option to allocate additional equity shares up to a specified amount.

Link:

<https://twitter.com/SecyDIPAM/status/1366741918034636801>

2021 Index of Economic Freedom

Question- Consider the following statements related to the “Economic Freedom Index 2021” released by the American think tank “ the Heritage foundation”.

- (a) In Asia-Pacific, India ranked 26th among the 40 countries.
(b) India ranked 121st in the index under the category of ‘mostly un- free.’
(c) Singapore tops the index.

Which of the given statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only 2 (b) Only 1 and 2 (c) All are correct (d) Only 3

Ans. (c)

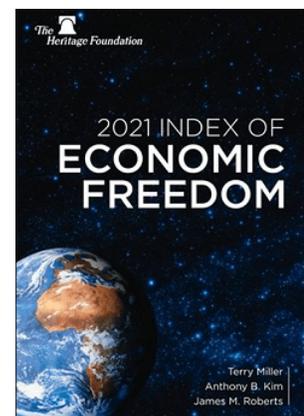
Related facts-

About-

- The Index of Economic Freedom is an annual index and ranking created in 1995 by conservative think- tank ‘The Heritage Foundation’ and ‘The wall Street Journal’ to measure the degree of economic freedom in the world’s nations.
- On 4 March 2021 The Heritage Foundation released The Index of Economic Freedom 2021.
- The index was prepared by covering 178 countries.
- Singapore tops the index and followed by New Zealand, Australia, Switzerland and Ireland.
- The countries are classified into following categories-
- Free- (80 -100), five countries are in this category.

Mostly free-(70-79.9), 33 countries are in this category.

Moderately Free-(60-69.9), 56 countries are in this category.



Mostly Un-free-(50-59.9), 63 countries are in this category.
Repressed-(0-49.9), 18 countries are in this category.

- India ranked 121st in the index with a score of 56.5 points under the category of 'mostly un-free'. Last year India was ranked 120th.
- In Asia-Pacific, India ranked 26th among the 40 countries. China is number 107th scoring 58.4 points.
- Least Economic freedom countries are- North Korea (178th), Venezuela (177th) and Cuba (176th).

Reference- https://www.heritage.org/index/excel/2021/index2021_data.xls.

Freedom in the World Report- 2021

Ques- “Freedom in the World 2021: Democracy under siege “ report is recently released by-

(a) World bank (b) WEF (c) UNDP (d) Freedom house

Ans. (d)

Related facts-

- Freedom House, the oldest American organization released its new report on democracy Freedom in the World 2021: Democracy under siege on March 2021.
- India dropped from Free to Partly Free status in Freedom in the World 2021. India had a score of 67 out of 100 in this year report. Last year, India scored 71 out of 100.
- According to report India's status declined from Free to Partly Free due to a multiyear pattern in which the Hindu nationalist government and its allies presided over rising violence and discriminatory policies affecting the Muslim population and pursued a crackdown on expressions of dissent by the media, academics, civil society groups, and protesters.
- Although many of organizations of India as well as mainstream media condemn this report's fake agenda.
- With India's decline to Partly Free, less than 20 percent of the world's population now lives in a Free country, the smallest proportion since 1995.
- The most free countries in the world, with a score of 100, are Finland, Norway and Sweden, while the least free countries are Syria, Eritrea and South Sudan.
- In 1973, Freedom House launched an entirely new initiative, a report that assess the level of freedom in each country in the world, with a numerical score and ranking as Free, Partly Free, or Not Free. The report is known as Freedom in the World.

**FREEDOM IN
THE WORLD 2021**

Democracy under Siege



Reference- https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/FIW2021_World_02252021_FINAL-web-upload.pdf
<https://freedomhouse.org>.

Switzerland Banned “face Coverings”.

Question- Which of the following country has banned “face covering” in the public recently-

(a) France (b) Switzerland (c) Germany (d) Spain

Ans- (b)

Related facts-



- Switzerland has narrowly voted in favour of banning “face coverings” in public, including the burka or niqab worn by Muslim women.
- The proposal gained support of 51.21% of voters and the majority of the country’s 26 cantons, according to official provisional results published by the federal government.
- The proposal was put forward by the right-wing Swiss People’s Party (SVP) which campaigned with slogans such as “Stop extremism”.
- According to research by the University of Lucerne (in German), almost no-one in Switzerland wears a burka and only around 30 women wear the niqab. About 5% of Switzerland’s population of 8.6 million people are Muslim, most originating from Turkey, Bosnia and Kosovo.
- The result of the vote has been criticized as “anti-Muslim” by Amnesty International. “Swiss voters have once again approved an initiative that discriminates against one religious community in particular, needlessly fueling division and fear,” the group said in a statement.
- Bans, partials bans and local bans of face coverings are already in place in several European countries, including France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark. France was the first to ban burqas and niqabs in public spaces in 2011. The European Court of Human Rights upheld the ban in 2014. In 2018, the United Nations Human Rights Committee said the ban violates the human rights of Muslim women and risks “confining them to their homes.”

References- <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56314173>.

Japan’s First ever Minister for Loneliness

Question- Which Asian country has recently appointed a Minister of Loneliness ?

(a) Thailand (b) Japan (c) Indonesia (d) China

Ans. (b)

Key Points-

- In a bid to tackle the rise in suicide rates for the first time in 11 years due to the corona virus crisis, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has appointed Tetsushi Sakamoto as its first-ever Minister for Loneliness.
- On February 19, Japanese government created an isolation/ loneliness countermeasures office in its cabinet to counter issues like suicide and child poverty.



- Japan has recorded more than 426,000 Covid-19 cases and 7,577 deaths, according to data from John Hopkins University.
- The United Kingdom was the first country which had appointed a Minister of Loneliness in 2018.

Link:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/japan-appoints-loneliness-minister-to-tackle-suicides/articleshow/81184435.cms>.

El Salvador declared malaria free by WHO.

Question- Which country becomes the first central American country to be declared malaria free by World Health Organization?

(a) Costa rica (b) El Salvador (c) Mexico (d) Nicaragua

Ans-(b)

Related facts-

- El Salvador became the first country in Central America and third in all of Americas to be awarded a certification of malaria elimination by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Certification of malaria elimination is granted by WHO when a country has proven, beyond reasonable doubt, that the chain of indigenous transmission has been interrupted nationwide for at least the previous three consecutive years.
- El Salvador is the third country to have achieved malaria-free status in recent years in the WHO region of Americas following Argentina in 2019 and Paraguay in 2018.



Reference-

<https://www.who.int/news/item/25-02-2021-el-salvador-certified->

United States offers temporary legal residency to Venezuelans

Question: Which country has offered temporary legal residency to the peoples of Venezuela?

(a) United States of America (b) United Kingdom (c) Brazil (d) Colombia

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The United States has offered temporary legal residency to the peoples of Venezuela who have fled their country due to economic collapse.
- Also, the US will review the sanctions intended to isolate the South American nation.



- These two measures mark a shift from US policy towards Venezuela under former President Donald Trump.
- President Joe Biden's administration would grant temporary protected status to Venezuelans already in the United States.
- This will allow an estimated 3,20,000 people to legally live and work in the country for 18 months.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=United-States-offers-temporary-legal-residency-to-Venezuelans&id=411449>

International year of millets

Question: Which year has been declared International Year of Millets by the United Nations?

(a) 2023 (b) 2022 (c) 2021 (d) 2024

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The United Nations has unanimously declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets.
- The proposal was put forward by India and supported by over 70 nations.

Millet:

- Millets are group of small grained cereal food crops grown in Kharif season in India.
- Millets are highly nutritious, non-glutinous and non acid forming foods. Millets have many nutraceutical and health promoting properties especially the high fibre content.
- It is grown on onset of monsoon and is harvested in September – October.
- It is an important staple in a large number of countries in the semi-arid tropics, where low precipitation and poor soils limit the cultivation of other major food crops
- They are grown with low chemical inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides.
- Millet represents less than 2 percent of world cereal utilization.



Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=UN-General-Assembly-adopts-India%26%2339%3Bs-resolution-to-declare-2023-as-International-Year-of-Millets&id=411138#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20has%20unanimously,to%20the%20UN%20Ambassador%20T.S.>

Question: Consider the following statements:

- (1) Freedom in the World 2021 Report has classified India a partly free nation.
- (2) Germany based human rights watchdog Freedom House has published the Freedom in the World 2021 Report.

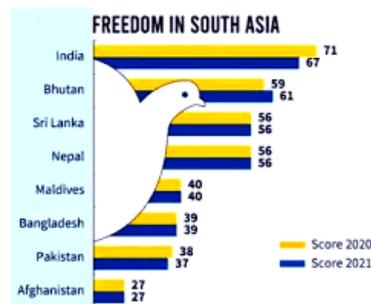
Of the above correct statement/s is/are:

- (a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) & (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- USA based human rights watchdog Freedom House has published the Freedom in the World 2021 Report.
- It is tracking the course of democracy since 1941.
- The report assesses countries on the basis of two parameters Political rights and Civil liberties.



Key highlights:

- The report has classified India as 'partly free'.
- The report calculates India's score to 67, a drop from 71/100 from last year,
- The reasons for downgrading are crack down on critics, attacks on press freedom, elevating narrow Hindu nationalist interests, Internet Freedom, crackdown on protesters opposing citizenship law.
- Among India's neighbors, China is classified as 'not free' while Pakistan is 'partly free'.
- The most free countries in the world are Finland, Norway and Sweden having score of 100.
- Tibet and Syria are the least free nations with a score of 1.

Links:

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2021/democracy-under-siege>

Return of China as India's top trading partner

Question : What was the total amount of bilateral trade between India and China in the year 2020 ?

- (a) 77.7 billion dollar (b) 67.7 billion dollar (c) 57.7 billion dollar (d) 47.7 billion dollar

Ans.(a)

- According to recent figures(February, 2021), there was bilateral trade of 77.7 billion dollars between India and China in the year 2020.
- It was at 85.5 billion dollar in the year 2019.
- According to provisional figures from the Ministry of Commerce, China has once again become India's top trade partner in the year 2020, amid tensions at the border.



- Although that was lower than the previous year's 85.5 billion dollar total, it was enough to make China the largest commercial partner displacing the U.S. — bilateral trade with whom came in at 75.9 billion dollar amid muted demand for goods in the middle of a pandemic.
- Import
- Total imports from China at \$58.7 billion were more than India's combined purchases from the U.S. and the U.A.E, which are its second- and third-largest trade partners, respectively.
- Export
- India has been able to increase its exports with China by only 11 percent over the previous year and India's exports to China have reached 19 billion dollar.

Link:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/china-back-as-india-s-top-trade-partner-despite-govt-s-atmanirbhar-push-121022300154_1.html

Pakistan remains in FATF Grey List

Question: Consider the following statements:

- (1) Pakistan has been retained in the Grey List by Financial Action Task Force.
- (2) Financial Action task Force is a global watchdog to tackle money laundering and terror financing.

Of the above correct statement/s is/are:

- (a) Only 1 (b) Only 2 (c) Both 1&2 (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On 25 February 2021, Global money laundering watchdog the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) decided to keep Pakistan on its terrorism financing “grey list”.
- This continuance has been carried for lagging behind the three key actions out of the 27 suggested by FATF.
- FATF will verify and decide about the status of Pakistan again in next plenary meeting in June 2021.
- Pakistan was put in Grey list in a plenary meeting of FATF held in 2018.
- Pakistan was provided with 27 point-action plans to curb the intense money laundering and terror funding prevalent.

About FATF:

- The Financial Action task Force (FATF) is a global watchdog .It was established by G7 countries in 1989 to curb the money laundering.
- However it included tackling terror financing its objective after the 9/11 attacks.
- It maintains two list-Black and Grey.
- Till now,only two countries Iran and North Korea have been blacklisted.
- Currently, total 39 countries are members of FATF.



- India became the member of FATF in 2010.

Links:

<https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/world-news-pak-remains-on-fatfs-grey-list-amid-deficiency-in-checking-terror-financing/375430>

Bangladesh has become the first Country to Ban Painkiller toxic to Vultures

Question: Recently Bangladesh cabinet approved a proposal to stop the production of which vulture toxic drug in the country?

a) Hydrocodone b) Tramadol c) Ketoprofen d) Fentanyl

Answer: (c)

Related Facts:

- On 08 February 2021; Bangladesh cabinet approved a proposal to stop the production of Ketoprofen drug in the country.
- It is in an effort to save the critically endangered vultures in this country.
- With this decision Bangladesh has become the first country to ban painkiller ketoprofen.
- This painkiller is widely used to treat cattle. But this painkiller is toxic to vultures.
- It should be known that Earlier, diclofenac was also banned some 10 years ago.
- It is being considered as a historic step to save the remaining population of threatened vultures globally.
- Experts are of the view that similar steps need to be taken by India, Pakistan, Nepal and Cambodia to save the vulture population.
- Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction (SAVE) report states that ketoprofen is widely used as a main anti-inflammatory drug in Bangladesh.
- Ornithologists made it absolutely clear that non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as diclofenac and ketoprofen are a major threat to vultures in South Asia.
- **Efforts of other countries:-**
- The government of India banned the use of diclofenac for veterinary purposes in the year 2006.
- Although other toxic drugs still in use in the country but India also came forward to do something seriously for the preservation of this important scavenger bird.
- In the Arabian Peninsula Oman became the first country in December 2020, where veterinary use of diclofenac was banned.
- This was also seen as serious step for the preservation of endangered species such as vultures.



Links:-

<https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/vulture-protection-cabinet-approves-ban-ketoprofen-2041741>

Ghana gets COVID-19 vaccine doses via the COVAX Facility

Question: Which is the first country to receive COVID-19 vaccine doses via the COVAX Facility?

(a) Ghana (b) Chile (c) Andorra (d) Gambia

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 24 January 2021, Ghana became the first country outside India to receive COVID-19 vaccine doses shipped via the COVAX Facility.
- The country received 600,000 doses of the AstraZeneca/ Oxford vaccine, from the Serum Institute of India (SII) from Pune, India to Accra, its capital.



COVAX Facility:

- Covax is an initiative to enable global equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines.
- This will bridge the gap between poor and rich country by facilitating vaccine access to 92 low and medium-income nations.
- COVAX is one of three pillars of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, which was launched in April 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO), the European Commission and France in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The ACT Accelerator is a framework for collaboration to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to Covid-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines. It is built on three main pillars: Vaccines (COVAX), Therapeutics, Diagnostics.
- It is co-led by Gavi, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), working in partnership with developed and developing country vaccine manufacturers.
- The initial aim is to have 2 billion doses available by the end of 2021.

Links:

<https://www.who.int/news/item/24-02-2021-covid-19-vaccine-doses-shipped-by-the-covax-facility-head-to-ghana-marking-beginning-of-global-rollout#:~:text=Today%2C%20Ghana%20became%20the%20first,and%20supply%20operation%20in%20history.>

Economics

India's Forex Reserves Surpasses Russia

Question: What is India's rank in terms of World's largest foreign exchange reserve country?

(a) Fourth (b) Fifth (c) Third (d) Sixth

Answer: (a)

Related facts:



- In March 2021, India surpassed Russia, becoming the world's fourth-largest foreign exchange reserve country.
- The foreign currency holdings of India stood at \$580.3 billion as of March 5, as per the data by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- Russia had a foreign exchange reserve of \$580.1 billion.
- Overall, China has the largest reserves, Japan being second and Switzerland on third, as on the International Monetary Fund table.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-fx-reserves-surpass-russia-s-to-become-world-s-4th-biggest-121031400470_1.html

ESAF Small Finance Bank

Question: Which Indian finance bank had been awarded 'Great place to work' certification by the Great place to Work Institute in March 2021?

- (a) Power Finance Corporation Limited
- (b) Bajaj Finance Limited
- (c) HDB Finance Services
- (d) ESAF Small Finance Bank

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- ESAF Small Finance Bank had been awarded 'Great place to work' certification by the Great place to Work Institute.
- The certification has been made after an employee survey conducted by the third-party global authority on recognising high-trust and performance culture at workplaces.
- This recognition reflects the bank's commitment and credibility amongst its employees.



Links:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/money-and-banking/award-for-esaf-small-finance-bank/article34141972.ece>

Fitch Ratings: India's growth forecast

Question : In March 2021, Fitch Ratings upgraded India's growth forecast for the next financial year 2021-22 to what percent ?

- (a) 12.8 % (b) 11.0 % (c) 13.8 % (d) 6.5 %

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- In March 2021, Fitch Ratings upgraded India's growth forecast for the next financial year 2021-22 to 12.8 %.
- It was earlier estimated at 11%.



- The agency has revised its estimates in view of the rapid economic activity in India and the Corona Vaccination Campaign.
- During the financial year 2022-23, India's economic growth is expected to be 5.8 percent.
- In this, the agency has made a negative revision of 0.50 per cent from the December 2020 estimate.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/fitch-revises-india-gdp-growth-to-12-8-for-fy22/articleshow/81674028.cms>

Gram Ujala scheme Launched in Varanasi

Question: Consider the following statements regarding Gram Ujala scheme –
i) It is launched by Power and new and renewable energy minister, Raj Kumar Singh, on March 24, 2021 in Varanasi.

ii) It is a scheme of Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL) which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) .

iii) Its aim is to provide world's cheapest LED bulbs across rural areas.

Which of the following are correct?

a) i, ii b) ii,iii c) iii,l d) i, ii,iii

Ans: d

Context

- The Union Minister of State (I/C) for Power & New and Renewable Energy, RK Singh has launched the GRAM UJALA programme in Varanasi of Uttar Pradesh on 24th March 2021.

Facts

- Under the scheme Convergence Energy Services Limited, CESL, a wholly owned subsidiary of Energy Efficiency Services Limited -EESL, will distribute high quality LED bulbs, at an affordable cost in rural areas.
- Under the scheme One crore 50 lakh LED bulbs will be distributed in phase 1 resulting in energy savings of 2025 million KWh/year and CO2 reductions of 1.65 million T CO2/year.
- Gram Ujala scheme offers world's cheapest LED bulbs across rural areas at rupees 10.
- Under the scheme 7 watt and 12 watt LED bulb will be given to rural households against the submission of working incandescent bulbs.
- It will be implemented only in village of 5 districts where consumers can exchange upto 5 bulbs.
- Scheme has already crossed 6,150 distribution mark in Arrah, Bihar within 2 days of launch of scheme.



Reference: <https://www.aninews.in/news/national/varanasi-gram-ujala-scheme-launched-to-provide-led-bulbs-at-rs-10-each20210324230303/>

Fitch Ratings revises India's growth estimate

Question: What is projected growth estimate of India for the fiscal year of 2021-22 as declared by Fitch Ratings agency?

a) 10% b) 11% c) 12.8% d) none of the above

Ans: c

Context

- American credit rating agency, Fitch, has published its 'Global Economic Outlook (GEO)' report .

Facts

- As per the report Fitch Ratings has revised India's GDP growth estimate to 12.8 % for the fiscal year beginning April 1(2021-22) from its previous estimate of 11%.
- This recovery is on the back of a stronger carryover effect, a looser fiscal stance, and better virus containment in the country.
- The ratings agency, in its latest Global Economic Outlook GEO, anticipates the level of the country's GDP to remain well below its pre-pandemic forecast trajectory. Fitch also expects GDP growth to ease to 5.8% in Fiscal Year 2023.
- The ratings agency also notes that it no longer expects the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to cut its policy rate, owing to a brighter short-term growth outlook and a more limited decline in inflation than it had forecast.



Reference: <http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=412682>

E-Tendering Portal "PRANIT"

Question : Which Public Sector Unit(PSU) in India has launched its E-Tendering Portal "PRANIT", recently?

a) Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) b) Coal India Limited
c) Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID)
d) None of the above

Ans: c

Facts

- Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), has launched an e-Tendering Portal-PRANIT .
- This portal will lead to less paperwork and ease of operation, making the tendering process more transparent.



- It has been certified by Standardisation, Testing and Quality Certification Directorate (STQC), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India.
- POWERGRID is a central PSU under Ministry of Power.
- It has become the only PSU in the country to have an e-procurement solution on SAP Supplier Relationship Management (SRM) business solution, complying with all applicable requirements relating to security and transparency as stipulated by STQC.

Reference: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1706854#:~:text=POWERGRID%20Launches%20Certified%20E%2DTendering%20Portal%20%E2%80%9CPRANIT%E2%80%9D&text=With%20this%2C%20POWERGRID%20is%20now,transparency%20as%20stipulated%20by%20STQC.>

“Annual Export Ranking Index” of different districts

Question: As per the government an “Annual Export Ranking Index” of different districts will be made to promote exports from India. Which agency is tasked with preparing this index?

- Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)
- Export Promotion Councils of India
- Directorate General of Corporate Affairs (DGCOA)
- None of the above

Ans: a

Facts

- The central government has said that it is currently working on ‘developing districts as export hubs’ to decentralise export promotion activity of India.
- Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) will be assisting the states and union territories in order to prepare the “Annual Export Ranking Index” of different districts.
- The index will represent each district on the export competitiveness.
- Objective is to create an institutional framework in every state, going down to every district and use that framework to assess every district in terms of ongoing export activities, in terms of capacities for enhancing those activities, and making time bound action plans to take those initiatives forward.
- This will help in boosting domestic production and make districts active stakeholders in driving export growth of local products and services by enabling MSMEs, farmers and small industries to get benefit of export opportunities in the overseas markets and shift focus on district-led export growth for self-sufficiency and self-reliance.



Reference: https://www.business-standard.com/article/beyond-business/states-to-rank-districts-on-export-competitiveness-says-commerce-ministry-121032201081_1.html

National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development Bill, 2021

Question: Which of the following facts are correct-

- a) The National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development Bill, 2021 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on March 22, 2021.
- b) The above bill seeks to establish the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development.
- c) Its objective is to support the development of long-term non-recourse infrastructure financing in India.
- d) All of the above

Ans: d

Facts

- The National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development Bill, 2021 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on March 22, 2021.
- As per the bill government seeks to establish the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development as the principal development financial institution (DFIs) for infrastructure financing.
- Its objective is to support the development of long-term non-recourse infrastructure financing in India including development of the bonds and derivatives markets necessary for infrastructure financing and to carry on the business of financing infrastructure.
- Unlike banks, DFIs do not accept deposits from people. They source funds from the market, government, as well as multi-lateral institutions, and are often supported through government guarantees.



About National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NBFID)

- NBFID: NBFID will be set up as a corporate body with authorised share capital of one lakh crore rupees. Shares of NBFID may be held by: (i) central government, (ii) multilateral institutions, (iii) sovereign wealth funds, (iv) pension funds, (v) insurers, (vi) financial institutions, (vii) banks, and (viii) any other institution prescribed by the central government. Initially, the central government will own 100% shares of the institution which may subsequently be reduced up to 26%.
- NBFID will have both financial as well as developmental objectives. Financial objectives will be to directly or indirectly lend, invest, or attract investments for infrastructure projects located entirely or partly in India. Central government will prescribe the sectors to be covered under the infrastructure domain. Developmental objectives include facilitating the development of the market for bonds, loans, and derivatives for infrastructure financing.

Reference: <http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=412491>

RBI sets up Panel to Evaluate Bank Applications

Question: RBI has set up a 5 member committee “standing external advisory committee (SEAC)” on March 23, 2021 to screen applications for new banks. Who is appointed as



chairman of this committee?

a) Shyamala Gopinath b) Revathy Iyer c) B Mahapatra d) none of the above

Ans: a)

Context

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has set up a “standing external advisory committee (SEAC)” on March 23, 2021 to evaluate the applications for the universal banks and small finance banks (SFBs).

Facts

- Committee will be headed by former RBI Deputy Governor Shyamala Gopinath.
- The other members of the panel of SEAC include RBI Central Board Director Revathy Iyer, National Payments Corporation of India Chairman B Mahapatra, former Canara Bank Chairman T N Manoharan and former Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority Chairman Hemant Contractor.

Reference: <https://indianexpress.com/article/business/banking-and-finance/rbi-sets-up-5-member-panel-to-screen-new-bank-licences-7240437/>

Flexible fuel vehicles (FFVs)

Question: Consider following statement regarding Flexible fuel vehicles (FFVs)-

- i) Flexible Fuel Vehicles (FFVs) are the modified version of the vehicles which can run both on the gasoline and the doped petrol with varying levels of ethanol blends.**
- ii) Government has asked vehicle manufacturers to make only Passenger vehicle in FFV category.**
- iii) These vehicles are currently being used in Brazil successfully.**

Which of the above are correct?

a) i and ii b) iii, ii c) i and iii d) All of the above

Ans : c

Context

- Auto companies in India may soon be asked by government to manufacture the passenger and commercial vehicles that run on the multiple fuel configurations.

Facts

Flexible-fuel vehicle (FFV)

- A flexible-fuel vehicle (FFV) or dual-fuel vehicle or a flex-fuel vehicle is an alternative fuel vehicle with an internal combustion engine designed to run on more than one type of fuel, usually gasoline blended with either ethanol or methanol fuel, and both fuels are stored in the same common tank. Modern flex-fuel engines are capable of burning any proportion of the resulting blend in the combustion chamber of Engine.



- They are different from bi-fuel vehicles, where two fuels are stored in separate tanks and the engine runs on one fuel at a time, for example, compressed natural gas (CNG), liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), or hydrogen.
- The use of flexible fuel vehicles (FFVs) is being actively looked by government to increase the use of bio fuels in running the vehicles.
- These are currently being used in Brazil quite successfully.

Advantage for India

- In India, the FFVs will present a different advantage because the vehicles will allow the vehicles to use the different blends of ethanol mixed petrol which are available across the country as opposed to the current regulation. The current regulation allows to mix up to 10 percent ethanol in petrol. But due to shortage in supply & other transportation challenges, 10 percent blended petrol is available only across 15 states. The FFVs would be allowing the vehicles to use all the blends and would run on unblended fuel as well.

Reference: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/auto/news/govt-explores-introduction-of-flex-fuel-vehicles-in-india/articleshow/81644987.cms>

RBI report : Highest FPI inflow in equities since FY13

Question : RBI has recently(March 2021) released a report regarding Foreign portfolio investors inflows. Which one of the following statement is correct regarding this report ?

- (a) FPI inflows upto March 10 stood at 36 billion dollar
- (b) It is highest since FY15
- (c) Net foreign direct investment inflows jumped to USD 84 billion, till end January
- (d) None of the above

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- Foreign portfolio investors' investment in Indian stocks has reached a record high of 36 billion dollar in the current financial year till March 10, the highest since FY13.
- A latest RBI report revealed this.
- Net foreign direct investment inflows jumped to USD 44 billion, till end January, up from USD 36.3 billion a year ago, driven by the massive inflows in November and December, with the last month of the year getting a record USD 6.3 billion.
- But the inflows moderated in January due to lower inflows into equities.
- The report further notes that the quality of FPI inflows improved during the period as category-I foreign investors, comprising central banks, sovereign wealth funds, pension funds, regulated entities and multilateral organisations, increased their stake to a high 95 per cent of total equity assets at end-February compared with 87 per cent at end-December 2019.



- According to depositories data, FPIs were net buyers of equities so far in March at Rs 8,642 crore.
- FPIs poured in Rs 14,202 crore into equities but pulled out Rs 5,560 crore from debt segment between March 1 and 19, leaving net investment to Rs 8,642 crore.
- Prior to this, overseas investors had invested Rs 23,663 crore in February and Rs 14,649 crore in January, on a net basis.

Link:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/markets/at-36-bn-fpi-inflows-into-equities-at-record-high-since-fy13-rbi-report-121032100564_1.html

Namma Chennai Smart Card

Question – Which bank has recently launched ‘Namma Chennai Smart Card’ in partnership with Greater Chennai Corporation and Chennai Smart City Limited?

(a) HDFC Bank (b) ICICI Bank (c) Axis Bank (d) Union Bank of India

Answer – (b)

Related facts



- ICICI bank has recently launched ‘Namma Chennai Smart Card’ in partnership with Greater Chennai Corporation and Chennai Smart City Limited.

Characteristics

- ‘Namma Chennai Smart Card’ is a Common Payment Card System (CPCS).
- This card is used to provide citizens a one-stop solution for making various kind of payments within the city and beyond.
- It is a Rupay powered co-branded, contactless prepaid card, will facilitate various digital payments like tax and utility bill payments at the GCC centres.
- Additionally, the prepaid card facilitates retail payments within Chennai as well as in retail stores and e-commerce websites across the country.

Significance

- This new initiative will make Chennai a part of the list of international cities that offer a Common Payment Card platform to its residents for making seamless payments for an array of services within the city.

Link:

<https://www.icicibank.com>

Business-to-consumer e-commerce index ,2020

Question – Which position did India get in the Business-to-Consumer (B2C) E-Commerce Index ,2020 released by UNCTAD?

(a) 80th (b) 85th (c) 71st (d) 65th

Answer – (c) Related facts

- In February 2021, the Business-to-Consumer (B2C) E-Commerce Index ,2020 was released by UNCTAD.
- 152 countries are included in this index.
- This index provides rankings to countries for showing online purchases.
- Switzerland has topped the index.
- After this, the Netherlands has been ranked second, Denmark third, Singapore fourth and United Kingdom fifth.
- While Niger is ranked lowest (152nd) in this index.
- This was followed by ,Chad, Burundi, Comoros ,Democratic Republic of the Congo, ranked 151st, 150th ,149th and 148th respectively.
- India is ranked 71 in this index.
- Whereas in the year 2019, India was ranked 75.

Link:

<https://unctad.org>

Moody's Analytics : Indian economy will grow at 12% in 2021

Question : According to Moody's Analytics, how much India's GDP growth estimated in 2021 ?

(a) 12% (b) 11% (c) 10% (d) 13%

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- Moody's Analytics is a subsidiary of Moody's Corporation, which was established in 2007 to focus on non-rating activities separate from Moody's Investors Service.
- According to Moody's Analytics, After contracting by 7.1 per cent in 2020, India's gross domestic product (GDP) is likely to grow 12 per cent in 2021.
- Hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent nationwide lockdown to control the spread of infections, Indian economy contracted by 24.4 per cent in first quarter of 2020 and 7.3 per cent in second quarter of the year.
- However, GDP growth returned to positive territory in third quarter, rising by 0.4 per cent.
- A stronger than expected December quarter GDP growth of 0.4 per cent has turned India's near-term prospects more favourable.
- This forecast is equivalent to real GDP, in level terms, growing by 4.4 per cent above pre-COVID-19 levels (as of March 2020) by the end of 2021, or equivalently, by 5.7 per cent above the GDP level in December 2020 by the end of 2021.



Link:

<https://www.businesstoday.in/current/economy-politics/moodys-analytics-sees-indias-gdp-growth-at-12-in-2021/story/434313.html>

Union Government appointed NABSanrakshan Trustee Pvt Ltd (NTPL) as a trustee for Credit Guarantee Fund

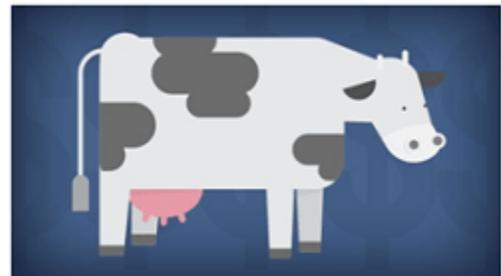
Question: Recently the Union Government has appointed NABSanrakshan Trustee Pvt Ltd (NTPL) as a trustee for how much amount of Credit Guarantee Fund?

a) Rs 650 crore b) Rs 800 crore c) Rs 850 crore d) Rs 750 crore

Answer: (d)

Related Facts:-

- On 19 March 2021; NABSanrakshan Trustee Pvt Ltd (NTPL) has been appointed by the government as a trustee for Rs 750 crore Credit Guarantee Fund.
- This Credit Guarantee Fund has been created under Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF).
- It should be known that NABSanrakshan Trustee Pvt Ltd (NTPL) is wholly owned subsidiary of National Bank for agriculture and Rural Development.
- The government has set up AHIDF with a corpus of Rs 15,000 crore as part of the Aatmanirbhar package.
- This fund was created by the government to promote investment by the private players and MSMEs in dairy, meat processing and animal feed plants.
- The Credit Guarantee Fund will provide credit guarantees to eligible entities assisted under AHIDF.
- The fund shall be operationalised under a trust – Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Animal Husbandry and Dairying (CGFTAHD).



Link:-

<https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/nabard-arm-appointed-as-trustee-for-credit-guarantee-fund/2049886>

Paytm UPI handle's IPO

Question : Sebi has recently approved Paytm UPI handle for IPO applications. What is an IPO ?

(a) Initial Public Offering (b) Initial Procurement Offering (c) Initial Public Option (d) None of the above

Ans.(a)

Related facts



- Sebi has recently(March 2021) approved Paytm UPI handle for IPO applications.
- This move will enable fast and seamless payment mandate for IPO applications.
- Partnership
- PPBL(Paytm Payments Bank) has also entered into a partnership with Paytm Money to enable payment mandates for IPO applications.
- Targets of Paytm & performance of the country's stock exchanges
- It is notable that Paytm Money wants to bring 10 million Indians to equity markets by the financial year 2022.
- Paytm's stockbroking platform aims to open over 3.5 lakh Demat accounts by year-end and expects 60 per cent of users to be from small cities.
- From the financial year 2021, the country's stock exchanges witnessed around 24 IPOs(Initial Public Offerings) and raised proceeds worth Rs 48,493 crore from the capital markets.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/ipos/fpos/sebi-approves-paytm-upi-handle-for-ipo-applications/articleshow/81515291.cms>

India's foreign-exchange reserves

Question : India has reached which place in the list of countries with the highest foreign exchange reserves?

(a) Fourth (b) Fifth (c) Sixth (d) Seventh

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- Recently(March 21), beating Russia, India has become the fourth largest country in the world in terms of foreign exchange reserves.
- In fact, the RBI has continued to deposit dollars to protect the economy from any kind of damage.
- Reserves for India and Russia have mostly flattened out this year after months of rapid increase.
- India pulled ahead as Russian holdings declined at a faster rate in recent weeks.
- India's foreign currency holdings fell by 4.3 billion dollar to 580.3 billion dollar as of March 5, edging out Russia's \$580.1 billion pile.
- Other country's foreign exchange reserve
- Top three countries regarding forex are — China>Japan>Switzerland.
- It is notable that India's reserves, enough to cover roughly 18 months of imports, have been bolstered by a rare current-account surplus, rising inflows into the local stock market and foreign direct investment.
- The RBI bought a net \$88 billion in the spot forex market last year, central bank data show.



Link:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-fx-reserves-surpass-russia-s-to-become-world-s-4th-biggest-121031400470_1.html

India's economy to record stronger recovery in 2021: UNCTAD

Question: By what percentage India's Economy is projected to grow in 2021 as per the update to Trade and Development Report 2020 by UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)?

a) 7% b) 10% c) 5% d) None of the above

Ans: c

Context

- UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has released 'Out of the frying pan...Into the fire?' report which is an update to its Trade and Development Report 2020 on 18 March 2021.



Facts

- As per the report India's economy is estimated to contract by 6.9 per cent in 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic.
- Report also forecast a "stronger recovery" in 2021 for Indian economy and growth by 5 per cent in 2021.
- As per the report global economy is set to grow by 4.7 per cent this year, faster than the 4.3 per cent predicted in September 2020.

Reference: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2021/mar/18/indias-economy-projected-to-record-stronger-recovery-in-2021-unctad-2278368.html>

Insurance Amendment Bill, 2021

Question: On March 18 , 2021 Rajya Sabha passed the Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021 to amend the Insurance Act, 1938 . What is the new limit of FDI in Insurance sector which is set by this act?

a) 49% b) 74% c) 100% d) 27%

Ans: b

Context

- The Rajya Sabha on 18th March 2021 has passed the Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021. The Bill seeks to amend the Insurance Act, 1938 which will increase the limit of foreign investment allowed in Indian insurance companies.



Facts

- The Bill proposes to increase the foreign direct investment limit from existing 49 percent to 74 percent in Insurance sector.
- It also has a provision for removal of restrictions on ownership and control of the insurance companies.
- As per the bill, majority of directors on the board and key management persons will have to be resident Indians. Thus, this provision will make them accountable to the Indian law.
- Bill also specifies that at least half of directors have to be the independent directors which also ensure the accountability.
- FDI limit of 74 per cent is not a compulsion for every insurance company. It is only set as an upper limit.
- Hike in foreign investment will help meet growing capital requirements of insurance companies as they are facing liquidity pressure.

Reference: <http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=412244>

Eleventh India-EU Macroeconomic Dialogue

Question – On February 19, 2021, the 11th India-EU Macroeconomic Dialogue held through a video conference. Who led the Indian delegation in this ?

(a) Dr. Rajiv Kumar (b) Piyush Goyal (c) Nirmala Sitharaman (d) Tarun Bajaj

Answer – (d)

Related facts

- On February 19, 2021, the 11th India-EU Macroeconomic Dialogue held through a video conference.
- Tarun Bajaj led the Indian delegation in this dialogue.
- He is currently hold the position of Secretary, Economic Affairs.
- Significantly, India-EU relations have developed into a multilateral partnership.
- The European Union is one of the largest trading partners of India.
- The European Union is one of the largest investors in India ,which is an important investment source for technology and innovation.
- The dialogue concluded with the hope that both sides would be able to build stronger and deeper relations by entering into various bilateral cooperation arrangements which are of mutual interest to both sides.



Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1699460>

BofA Securities Report

Question – According to a report released by BofA Securities in March 2021, how much US dollar has been lost to the world since 1990 due to lack of gender diversity and inclusion?

(a) 70 trillion dollars (b) 110 trillion dollars (c) 95 trillion dollars (d) None of the above

Answer – (a) Related facts

- According to a report released by BofA Securities in March 2021, the world has been lost 70 trillion dollars since 1990 due to lack of gender diversity and inclusion.
- According to the report, it will take 257 years to reduce the gender gap at the current rate and not doing this has cost the world a whopping USD 70 trillion since 1990.
- The report also notes that full gender equality globally can increase the world GDP by up to USD 28 trillion by 2025 and the loss of human capital wealth due to gender inequality alone is estimated at USD 160.2 trillion.
- The report said that the pandemic has deepened the gender inequality crisis due to which approximately 96 million people are estimated to be involved in extreme poverty in 2021, of which 47 million will be women.
- According to this, more than 19% of the jobs of women are at risk.
- As much as 90 per cent of children with disabilities in emerging markets countries do not attend school, says the report.
- The LGBTQ+ community is equivalent to the fourth largest economy in the world at USD 3.9 trillion.



Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/gender-inequality-has-cost-world-70-tln-since-1990-report/articleshow/81352405.cms>

CEO Survey: India fifth most attractive growth economy

Question : Global accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers(PwC) recently(March 2021) released its 24th Annual Global CEO Survey. In the Global Survey of Chief Executive Officers of Companies, which place has India been ranked in terms of growth prospects during the next 12 months ?
(a) Fifth (b) Fourth (c) Sixth (d) Third

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- Global accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers(PwC) recently(March 2021) released its 24th Annual Global CEO Survey.
- It is notable that CEO(Chief Executive Officers) survey included 5,050 CEOs from 100 countries including India.
- In the Global Survey of Chief Executive Officers of Companies, India has been ranked fifth in terms of growth prospects



during the next 12 months.

- Top four countries in the survey are — USA>China>Germany>Britain(UK).

Link:

<https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/ceo-agenda/ceosurvey/2021.html>

GST invoicing rules

Question : From which date e-invoice has been made mandatory for B2B transactions for companies with a turnover of more than Rs 50 crore under GST law?

(a) April 1, 2021 (b) July 1, 2021 (c) October 1, 2021 (d) January 1, 2022

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- CBIC has recently(March 2021) issued a notification related to GST invoicing.
- According to this e-invoice has been made mandatory for B2B transactions for companies with a turnover of more than Rs 50 crore from April 1.
- E-invoice for B2B transactions was made mandatory from October 1, 2020 for companies with a turnover of more than Rs 500 crore under the GST Act.
- Whereas it has been implemented from January 1, 2021 for units with a turnover of more than Rs 100 crore.
- Under the e-invoice, the taxpayers have to collect the bill through their internal system and inform it to the online invoice registration portal (IRP).



Link:

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/e-invoice-mandatory-for-businesses-with-over-rs-50-crore-turnover-from-april-1/2209417/>

OECD Economic Outlook, Interim Report March 2021

Question : How much has the OECD raised India's economic growth forecast for 2021-22 ?

(a) 12.6 percent (b) 11.6 percent (c) 10.6 percent (d) 9.6 percent

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- OECD Interim Economic Outlook Forecasts released in March, 2021.
- OECD has raised India's economic growth forecast to 12.6% for 2021-22.
- That would enable India to retain its earlier tag of the fastest growing large economy in the world.
- Other key facts are given below —
- OECD has raised India's economic growth forecast to 5.4% for 2022-23.
- That year, India would share its fastest-growing large economy tag with Indonesia, according to the OECD.



- Global GDP growth
- Global economic prospects have improved markedly in recent months, helped by the gradual deployment of effective vaccines, announcements of additional fiscal support in some countries,
- and signs that economies are coping better with measures to suppress the virus.
- Global GDP growth is projected to be 5.6 per cent in 2021-22 and 4% in 2022-23, with global output rising above the pre-pandemic level by mid-2021. Despite the improved global outlook, output and incomes in many countries will remain below the level expected prior to the pandemic at the end of 2022.
- Economic activity moved above pre-pandemic levels in China, India and Turkey, helped by strong fiscal and quasi-fiscal measures and a recovery in manufacturing and construction.
- China's GDP growth
- OECD has decreased China's economic growth forecast marginally to 7.8% for 2021-22.
- While the growth forecast for 2022–23 has been retained at 4.9%.

Link:

<https://www.oecd.org/economic-outlook/march-2021/>

Bharat e Market portal

Question : A 'purely Indian' E-Market portal called 'Bharat e Market' will be launched by which organization?

- Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)
- Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)
- Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT)
- None of the above

Ans: c)

Context

- On 10 March 2021, Traders' body Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) launched a vendor onboarding mobile app for its upcoming e-commerce portal 'Bharat e Market'.

Facts

- This app for Bharat e Market will enable businesses and service providers to register on the portal and create their own "e-dukaan".
- CAIT has said that its app is 'purely Indian'.
- The traders' body aims to onboard 7 lakh traders on the portal by December this year and 1 crore traders by December 2023.
- CAIT has accused foreign e-commerce companies, of violating the country's FDI policy norms — a charge denied by the firms.



Rajya Sabha passes Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2021

Question: Rajya Sabha has passed Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2021 to amend which bill?

- a) Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. b) Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1986
c) Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 2003. d) none of the above

Ans: a)

Context

- The Parliament gave its nod to the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2021 with Rajya Sabha passing it on 10th March 2021.



Facts

- The legislation seeks to amend the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.
- The Lok Sabha has already passed the bill last month.
- The legislation comprises of the provisions of dealing with the domestic and international arbitration.
- It also defines the law to conduct conciliation proceedings. It replaces the Ordinance comprising of the same provisions that was promulgated on November 4, 2020.

Need for the Bill

- India wants to become an excellent hub for the arbitration and the government wants India to become a big hub for domestic and international arbitration.
- For that to happen it is important that freedom must be given to the domestic and international arbitrators to make the process easier as per the available rules in the country.

About Bill

- It specifies that the all stakeholders will get an opportunity to seek an unconditional stay on enforcement of arbitral awards if the court is satisfied that relevant arbitration agreement or contract or making of award was induced by fraud or corruption.
- Schedule seven of the principal act (Act of 1996) specifies some qualifications, experience, and accreditation norms for the arbitrators. The arbitrator must be:
- An advocate under the Advocates Act, 1961 along with the 10 years of experience
- An officer of Indian Legal Service.

- The bill of 2021 removes the Schedule seven for arbitrators and mention that these qualifications, experience, and norms will only be specified under regulations by the regulators.

Reference: <http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=411612>

Disinvestment process in BPCL : Sale of entire stake of BPCL in Numaligarh Refinery

Question : Privatisation-bound BPCL has recently decided to sale its entire stake in Numaligarh Refinery. How much stake have BPCL in Numaligarh Refinery ?

(a) 61.65 percent (b) 56.65 percent (c) 71.65 percent (d) 66.65 percent

Ans.(a)

- Privatisation-bound BPCL has recently(March 2021) decided to sale its entire stake in Numaligarh Refinery.



Share holding pattern in Numaligarh Refinery

- It is notable that BPCL has 61.65 percent stake in Numaligarh Refinery. Which costs Rs 9,876 crore.
- OIL currently holds 26 per cent equity in NRL while Government of Assam has around 12.35 per cent.

Purpose of Withdrawal

- BPCL wants to pay shareholders from Rs 9,876 crore Numaligarh Refinery stake sale

Investors

- Above mentioned stake would be purchased by a consortium of state-owned Oil India, consultancy firm Engineers India Ltd (EIL) and Government of Assam for Rs 9,875.96 crore.
- BPCL will seek approval of the shareholders at a meeting on March 25 and plans to sign the sale pact within two days of that and conclude the transaction before month-end.
- In keeping with the Assam Peace Accord, the government had decided to keep NRL in the public sector.
- To ensure this, it was decided that BPCL will sell its entire 61.65 per cent stake to state-owned firms.

Outcome

- Post NRL sale, BPCL would be left with three refineries at Mumbai, Kochi (Kerala) and Bina (Madhya Pradesh), which together make up for 14 per cent of India's oil refining capacity.

Disinvestment of BPCL

- It is notable that BPCL is a privatisation-bound PSU. The government has already indicated that it expects to complete BPCL privatisation by the first half of the fiscal year beginning April 1 (2021-22).
- The sale of NRL is the first step towards the disinvestment of BPCL.
- NRL operates a 3 million tonnes per annum oil refinery in Assam.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/bpcl-to-pay-shareholders-from-rs-9876-crore-numaligarh-refinery-stake-sale/articleshow/81294468.cms?from=mdr>

IDBI Bank removed from PCA framework

Question: which entity is owner of IDBI bank?

a) Reliance b) Government of India c) LIC d) None of the above

Ans : c)

Context

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has removed IDBI Bank from the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework on 10th march 2021.



Facts

- Central bank had put the IDBI Bank under the PCA framework in May 2017 because of the bank's high non-performing assets(NPA). Bank had breached the thresholds for capital adequacy, leverage ratio, asset quality and return on assets.
- The net NPAs were more than 13% in the month of March 2017.
- By the end of December 31, 2020, it was noted that the bank was reporting a net profit of ₹378 crores in that quarter and hence was not in breach of PCA parameters on regulatory capital, leverage ratio and net NPA.

Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) Framework

- It is a framework under which the banks with weak financial metrics are kept under regulation by the central bank. The framework was introduced in 2002 by the RBI.

Reference: <https://www.freepressjournal.in/business/rbi-takes-lic-owned-idbi-bank-out-of-pca-framework>

“Connecting to Thrive: Challenges and Opportunities of Transport Integration in Eastern South Asia” Report

Question : Which organization has released “Connecting to Thrive: Challenges and Opportunities of Transport Integration in Eastern South Asia”, Report recently?

a) UN b) World Bank c) Asia Development Bank d) SBI

Ans: b)

Facts

- On March 9th, 2021, World Bank has released a report titled “Connecting to Thrive: Challenges and Opportunities of Transport Integration in Eastern South Asia”.
- Report investigates the extent to which the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA) supports the cross-border operation of road transport services and identifies the gaps in the agreement that need to be addressed to improve its effectiveness.
- Report suggests that Seamless transport connectivity between India and Bangladesh has the potential to increase national income by as much as 17 percent in Bangladesh and 8 percent in India.



Reference: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/34916>

‘Mobilising Electric Vehicle Financing in India’ report

Question: Which of the following organizations has released ‘Mobilising Electric Vehicle Financing in India’ on 9th March 2021?

a) NITI Aayog b) Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) India c) Global NCAP
d) None of the above

Ans: both a) and b)

Context

- On 9th March 2021, NITI Aayog and Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) India released a new report ‘Mobilising Electric Vehicle Financing in India’.

Facts

- The Report highlights the role of finance in the India’s transition to electric vehicles (EVs).
- It also analyses that the transition will require a cumulative capital investment of USD 266 billion (Rs 19.7 lakh crore) in EVs, charging infrastructure, and batteries over the next decade.
- The report also suggest that the market size for the financing of EVs in India by 2030 will be of USD 50 billion (Rs 3.7 lakh crore) which is roughly about 80% of the current size of India’s retail vehicle finance industry, worth USD 60 billion (Rs 4.5 lakh crore) today.

- India's EV ecosystem has thus far focused on overcoming adoption hurdles associated with technology cost, infrastructure availability, and consumer behaviour.
- Financing is the next critical barrier that needs to be addressed to accelerate India's electric mobility transition.
- End-users currently face several challenges, such as high interest rates, high insurance rates, and low loan-to-value ratios.
- The report further states that investment in India's transition to electric mobility has the potential to create significant economic, social, and environmental benefits for the country.

Reference: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1703449>

Chairman of panel of external auditors of UN

Question: Who has been appointed as Chairman of panel of external auditors of UN?

- a) Shaktikanta Das b) G.C.Murmu c) Dr.Ajay Bhusan Prasad Pandey
d) None of the above

Ans: b)

Facts

- Comptroller and Auditor General of India, Girish Chandra Murmu, has been appointed chairman of the Panel of External Auditors of the United Nations.
- He has been appointed on the post for the second time in a row for 2021.



Panel of external auditors of UN

- The UN General Assembly in 1959 established the Panel of External Auditors, comprising individual external auditors of the United Nations system, who are also heads of supreme audit institutions of their countries.
- The accounts and management operations of the UN and its specialised agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency are required to be audited and reported on periodically by independent external auditors.
- Currently, the panel of auditors consists of countries including India, Germany, Chile, China, the United Kingdom, France, Philippines, Switzerland, Italy, Ghana, Indonesia, Canada and Russia.

Reference: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2021/mar/10/cag-girish-murmu-is-chief-of-un-panel-of-external-auditors-again-2274588.html>

FDI inflow in India, April-December 2020

Question: What amount of FDI inflow was attracted by India between April-December 2020?

- (a) US\$ 50.04 billion (b) US\$ 67.54 billion (c) US\$ 72.64 billion (d) US\$ 80.75 billion



Answer: (b)**Related facts:**

- India has attracted total FDI inflow of US\$ 67.54 billion during April to December 2020.
- It is the highest ever for the first ninth months of a financial year and 22% higher as compared to the first ninth months of 2019-20 (US\$ 55.14 billion).
- FDI equity inflow grew by 40% in the first 9 months of F.Y. 2020-21 (US\$ 51.47 billion) compared to the year ago period (US\$ 36.77 billion).
- FDI inflow increased by 37% in 3rd Quarter of 2020-21 (US\$ 26.16 billion) compared to 3rd quarter of 2019-20 (US\$ 19.09 billion).
- FDI inflow showed positive growth of 24% in the month of December, 2020 (US\$ 9.22 billion) compared to December, 2019 (US\$ 7.46 billion)

FDI:

- A foreign direct investment (FDI) is an investment made by a firm or individual in one country into business interests located in another country.
- FDI takes place when an investor establishes foreign business operations or acquires foreign business assets, including establishing ownership or controlling interest in a foreign company.
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is a major driver of economic growth and an important source of non-debt finance for the economic development of India.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1702438>

CSIR Floriculture Mission

Question: Which of the following agencies are involved in CSIR Floriculture Mission?

- a) Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR),
- b) Directorate of Floriculture, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA),
- c) Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC),
- d) Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. (TRIFED)
- e) all of the above

Ans: e)**Context**

- CSIR Floriculture Mission has been approved for implementation in 21 States and Union Territories of India.

Facts

- Floriculture, or flower farming, is a discipline of horticulture concerned with the cultivation of flowering and ornamental plants for gardens and for floristry, comprising the



floral industry. The development, via plant breeding, of new varieties is a major occupation of floriculturists.

- Under the CSIR Floriculture mission, the available knowledge base in the CSIR Institutes will be utilized in order to help Indian farmers and industry to reposition themselves so as to meet import requirements.

Reference: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1702516>

India-Fiji: Union Cabinet Approves pact

Question: Recently The Union Cabinet Chaired by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has approved an agreement between India and Fiji .In which sector this agreement has been approved?

a) Tourism b) Finance c) Agriculture d) Transport

Ans: c)

Facts

- The agriculture pact was signed between Ministry of Agriculture of India and Agriculture Ministry of the Republic of Fiji.
- This agreement between the countries will come into force from the date of its signing.
- It will continue for five years.



Reference: <https://www.jagranjosh.com/current-affairs/union-cabinet-approves-pact-between-india-fiji-for-co-operation-in-agriculture-sector-1614772276-1>

Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation

Question : How much amount of assistance has been approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs to the ‘Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation’?

(a) 500 crores rupees (b) Rs 300 crores (c) 100 crores rupees (d) 200 crores rupees

Answer – (c)

Related facts

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi recently(February 2021) accorded approval to the proposal of the Department of Fertilizers for Grant-in-aid of Rs.100 crore to Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizers Corporation Limited(BVFCL), Namrup(Assam) to sustain operations of it’s urea manufacturing units.
- BVFCL
- BVFCL, Namrup is a Public Sector Undertaking formed as per Companies Act, under the administrative control of the Department of Fertilizers (DoF), Government of India.
- At present, the Company is operating its two vintage plants viz. Namrup-II and Namrup-III in the premises of BVFCL in Namrup, Assam.
- Grant



- The grant in aid of Rs. 100 crore to BVFCL will restore the urea production capacity of 3.90 Lac MT per annum and ensure timely availability of Urea to Tea Industry & Farming Sector in the entire North Eastern region specially Assam. It will also continue the existing employment of about 580 employees on permanent basis and another 1500 persons on ad-hoc basis.
- Further, 28000 people get benefits indirectly by this establishment. This will also strengthen the 'ATMA NIRBHAR BHARAT' campaign of the Government of India.

Link:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1696734>

Acquisition of 5% stake in Indian Gas Exchange

Which of the following has acquired IEX's 5% stake in Indian Gas Exchange ?

(a)GAIL (b)IOC (c)ONGC (d)HPCL

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- The Indian Energy Exchange on Tuesday(09 February 2021) said state-owned GAIL (India) Ltd has acquired five per cent stake of the IEX in its arm Indian Gas Exchange.
- It is notable that GAIL is the third strategic investor in IGX.
- Other two investors are Adani Total Gas and Torrent Gas.
- Last month these two had acquired five per cent stake each in the IGX.
- IEX(Indian Energy Exchange)
- It is India's premiere electricity exchange has further divested 5 per cent equity stake in the IGX to GAIL (India) Ltd, India's leading natural gas company



Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/stocks/news/gail-acquires-iexs-5-stake-in-indian-gas-exchange/articleshow/80769305.cms?from=mdr>

SBI Mutual Fund's first international fund

Question : SBI Mutual Fund has recently launched its first international fund. Which one of the following fact is correct regarding the asset allocation of the scheme ?

1. The scheme will invest 55% to 60% of its net assets generally in Amundi Funds
2. These Amundi Funds are US Pioneer Fund
3. These Amundi Funds include ETFs

Answer with the help of codes given below —

(a)Only 1 (b) Only 1. & 2 (c)Only 2. & 3 (d) None of the above

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<http://www.edristi.in/>

Ans.(c)
Related facts

- SBI Mutual Fund has recently(February 2021) launched its first international fund.
- The name of the fund is — “SBI International Access – US Equity FOF”.
- The scheme will invest 95%-100% of its net assets generally in Amundi Funds – US Pioneer Fund (including ETFs) which invest predominantly in the US markets.
- SBI International Access – US Equity FoF is an open-ended fund of funds scheme investing in mutual fund scheme/ETFs(Exchange Traded Funds) that invest in US markets, which are domiciled overseas.

Link:

<https://www.sbimf.com/campaign/us-equity-fund/>

Report on Currency and Finance (RCF) for the year 2020-21

Question : RBI released ‘Currency and Finance’ report on February 26, 2021. According to this, India’s inflation target band appropriate for next _ years. Choose the correct option for blank space —

- (a) Five
- (b) Six
- (c) Four
- (d) Three

Ans.(a)

Related facts



- RBI released ‘Currency and Finance’ report(RCF) on February 26, 2021.
- According to this, India’s inflation target band appropriate for next five years.

Report

- First published in 1937, the RCF adopted a theme-based approach from 1998-99.
- After a hiatus between 2014 and 2019, the Report has been revived with this release.
- The theme of the Report is “Reviewing the Monetary Policy Framework” which assumes topical relevance in the context of the review of the inflation target by March 2021 against the backdrop of structural changes in the macroeconomic and financial landscape that have prompted several central banks to undertake policy framework reviews.
- The period of study in this report is from October 2016 to March 2020 commencing with the formal operationalisation of the flexible inflation targeting (FIT) framework in India but excluding the period of the COVID-19 pandemic in view of data distortions.

Highlights

- In the international experience, inflation targeting emerging market economies (EMEs) have generally lowered their inflation targets and narrowed tolerance bands.
- During the period under review, headline CPI inflation averaged 3.9 per cent in India with a decline in inflation volatility, attesting to the success of FIT in terms of its primary mandate.
- Trend inflation to which actual inflation converges after a shock provides an appropriate benchmark for the inflation target; trend inflation has fallen from above 9 per cent before FIT to a range of 3.8 – 4.3 per cent during FIT, indicating that 4 per cent is the appropriate level of the inflation target for India.
- Threshold inflation above which growth is unambiguously impaired ranges between 5 and 6 per cent in India, indicating that an inflation rate of 6 per cent is the appropriate upper tolerance limit for the inflation target. On the other hand, a lower bound above 2 per cent can lead to actual inflation frequently dipping below the tolerance band while a lower bound below 2 per cent will hamper growth, indicating that an inflation rate of 2 per cent is the appropriate lower tolerance bound.
- The current numerical framework for defining price stability, i.e., an inflation target of 4 per cent with a +/-2 per cent tolerance band, is appropriate for the next five years.
- The institutional architecture of FIT in India, including the size of the monetary policy committee (MPC) and its composition, the decision making process, communication practices and accountability mechanisms is in line with international best practices, while the definition of the time horizon of failure, processes of onboarding of MPC members, some aspects of forward guidance and timings relating to release of minutes, shut periods and release of transcripts warrant a review.
- During the FIT period, monetary transmission has been full and reasonably swift across the money market but less than complete in the bond markets; while there has been an improvement in transmission to lending and deposit rates of banks, external benchmarks across all categories of loans and deposits could improve transmission further.
- In the conduct of monetary policy in an open economy setting, foreign exchange reserves and associated liquidity management are key; hence, there is a need to enhance the RBI's sterilisation capacity to deal with surges in capital flows.
- The primary focus of FIT on price stability augurs well for further liberalisation of the capital account and eventual internationalisation of the Indian rupee.

Link:

https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/BS_PressReleaseDisplay.aspx?prid=51187

Mercantile Marine Domain Awareness Centre

Question: On march 2 , 2021 PM Modi launched 'Sagar-Manthan'. What is the role of Sagar-Manthan?

- Port System Awareness
- Disaster Management in coastal areas
- Mercantile Marine Domain Awareness Centre
- Coastal Natural Resource monitoring centre



Ans: c)

Context

- On March 2, 2021 during Maritime India Summit 2021 , PM Modi launched ,The Sagar-Manthan: Mercantile Marine Domain Awareness Centre.

Facts

- It is an information system for enhancing maritime safety, search and rescue capabilities, security and marine environment protection.
- It will provide real time help to the seafarers and fishermen as and when they need it.

About Sagar-Manthan: MMDAC

- The Vessel Tracking System have the capability of tracking the Indian vessels on the global level.
- It can also be used to track foreign vessels within 1,000-km of the coastline of India. Vessel will be operated by DG Shipping. It can provide help in the emergency cases.
- The system also comprises of the elements of security. In order to develop the security elements, the DG Shipping collaborated with the Indian Navy. India will also be sharing this system with the countries like Sri Lanka and Maldives.

Reference: <https://www.narendramodi.in/prime-minister-narendra-modi-modi-inaugurates-maritime-india-summit-2021-554251>

Government amends Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017

Question: On March 2, 2021, The Union Government has amended the “Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017”. Consider the following statements about it-

- i) Insurance brokers have been brought under the supervision of the Ombudsman mechanism.**
- ii) Policyholders can now make complaints electronically to Ombudsman.**

Which of the above two statements are correct?

- a) only I b) only ii c) both i and ii d) none

Ans: c

Context

- The Union Government has amended the “Insurance Ombudsman Rules, 2017” on March 2, 2021.

Facts

- The amended rules have enlarged the scope of complaints to Ombudsmen from only disputes earlier to deficiencies in service on



the part of insurers, agents, brokers and other intermediaries.

- Further, insurance brokers have been brought within the ambit of the Ombudsman mechanism, by empowering the Ombudsmen to pass awards against insurance brokers as well.
- Under the amendment, timeliness and cost-effectiveness of the entire mechanism has been substantially strengthened. Policyholders will now be able to lodge complaints electronically to the Ombudsman.
- A new Complaints management system will be created to enable policyholders to track the status of their complaints online.
- The rules also provide that, ombudsman can use video-conferencing to hear the cases.
- In case there is vacancy in office of any particular Ombudsman, then to enable access to relief under the Ombudsman mechanism additional charge will be given to another Ombudsman.
- As per the amendment, selection committee will now comprise of an individual having a track record of promoting the consumer rights or is advancing cause of consumer protection in insurance sector.
- Under the amendments; the Executive Council of Insurers, who manages the ombudsman mechanism, have been renamed as Council for Insurance Ombudsman.

Reference: <http://ddnews.gov.in/business/government-amends-insurance-ombudsman-rules-better-resolution-policyholders%E2%80%99-complaints#:~:text=Government%20on%202nd%20March%202021,cost%2Deffective%20and%20impartial%20manner.>

Fino Payments Bank

Question : Fino Payments Bank now become a scheduled bank, regarding this RBI has notified the inclusion of Fino Payments Bank in the Schedule of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. This inclusion done in which schedule of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 ?

(a)Second Schedule (b)Third Schedule (c)Fourth Schedule (d)Fifth Schedule

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- Fino Payments Bank now become a scheduled bank, regarding this RBI has recently(February 2021)notified the inclusion of Fino Payments Bank in the Second Schedule of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.
- Scheduled Banks
- All banks which are included in the Second Schedule to the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 are Scheduled Banks.
- These banks comprise Scheduled Commercial Banks and Scheduled Co-operative Banks.
- Significance of being a scheduled bank



1. Becomes eligible for debts/loans at the bank rate from the RBI
2. Automatically acquires the membership of clearing house
3. Rediscount of first class exchange bills from the RBI

Category of scheduled commercial banks

Scheduled Commercial Banks in India are categorised into five different groups according to their ownership and / or nature of operation. These bank groups are:

State Bank of India and its Associates

Nationalised Banks

Regional Rural Banks

Foreign Banks

Other Indian Scheduled Commercial Banks (in the private sector)

Link:

<https://bfsi.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/banking/fino-payments-bank-is-now-a-scheduled-bank/81183569>

Indian economy : Moody's growth forecast

Question : Global rating agency Moody's has recently raised India growth forecast(FY 22) upto —

(a) 13.7 % (b) 14.7 % (c) 15.7 % (d) 16.7 %

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- Global rating agency Moody's has recently(February 2021) raised India growth forecast(FY 22) to 13.7%.
- It was earlier estimated at 10.8%.
- Reason for rising growth rate are —



1. Rollout of Covid-19 vaccines
 2. Growing confidence of the normalisation of economic activity
- For the current fiscal(FY21), Moody's has revised up its prediction of a contraction in real GDP to 7% from 10.6%.

Fiscal and other forecast

India's fiscal deficit for FY21 and FY22 should be lower than projected(9.5% of GDP and 6.8%, respectively), supported by stronger revenue generation in the fourth quarter of this fiscal and higher nominal GDP growth in the next.

Its debt level is expected to touch as high as 90% of nominal GDP in FY21, against 72% a year before.

Link:

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/fy22-outlook-moodys-raises-india-growth-forecast-to-13-7/2202002/>

India's GDP Q3 Estimates 2020-21

Question: What was India's GDP growth at Constant (2011-12) Prices in Quarter 3 for 2020-21 fiscal?

(a) -2.5 percent (b) 0.4percent (c) 1.3 percent (d) -1.2 percent

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 26th February 2021, the National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation released the Second Advance Estimates of National Income, 2020-21 as well as Quarterly Estimates of GDP for the quarter October-December (Q3), 2020-21.
- GDP at Constant (2011-12) Prices in Q3 of 2020-21 is estimated at ₹ 36.22 lakh crore, as against ₹ 36.08 lakh crore in Q3 of 2019-20, showing a growth of 0.4 percent.
- Earlier two quarters have seen contraction revised as 7.3 per cent in July-September (Q2) and a sharp 24.4 per cent in April-June quarter (Q1).
- In the Second Advance Estimates of National Income-2020-21, the growth in GDP is estimated at (-)8.0 percent while it was (-)7.7 percent in first advanced estimate.
- The GVA at Basic Prices for the year 2020-21 is estimated at -6.5 per cent.
- GDP Third Quarter Highlights:
 - In the third quarter, the manufacturing sector, which had a contraction of 1.5 per cent in Q2, rose by 1.6 per cent.
 - Apart from this, the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector grew 3.9 per cent in Q3. Agriculture has been the only sector to register a growth in all the three quarters.
 - Among the other industries, contraction was seen in trade, hotels, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting at 7.7 per cent in Q3, better from a contraction of 15.3 per cent in Q2.
 - The construction sector showed a growth of 6.2 per cent, much better from a contraction of 7.2 per cent in Q2.



Links:

http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/press_release/PRESS%20NOTE%20SAE%202021-02-06.pdf

CBDT Chairman Pramod Chandra Mody gets further extension for three months

Question : Pramod Chandra Mody has been granted extension as chairman of which office?

a) CBDT chairman b) NITI aayog chairman c) CBIC d) None of the above

Ans: a

Facts

- The re-appointment of Pramod Chandra Mody as Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)



has been extended for a further period of three months with effect from March 1, 2021, to May 31, 2021.

- Mody is a 1982-batch Indian Revenue Service officer, was appointed as the CBDT chief in February 2019.

Reference: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/cbdt-chairman-pramod-chandra-mody-gets-further-extension-for-three-months/articleshow/81265568.cms?from=mdr>

Scientific

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Ship Vajra commissioned

Question: Which Indian Coast Guard Ship was commissioned on March 24, 2021?

(a) ICGS Vajra (b) ICGS Chakra (c) ICGS Vrisha (d) ICGS Shakti

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 24 March 2021, Chief of Defence General Bipin Rawat Staff commissioned Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Ship Vajra.
- India Coast Guard DG K Natarajan and IG S Paramesh COMCG (East) were also present on the occasion.
- The vessel is indigenously designed and built by Larsen and Toubro Shipbuilding Ltd in Chennai.
- It is the sixth in series of seven Offshore Patrol Vessels.
- The vessel will help strengthen coastal security through its high-tech features and highly sophisticated navigation and communication systems.



Links:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/icgs-vajra-commissioned-to-the-indian-coast-guard/article34152810.ece>

Chittoor's new plant species

Question – Recently a new plant species named ‘Crotalaria lamelliformis’ has been discovered in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. In which international magazine was this discovery published?

(a) Discovery of Species (b) Phytotaxa (c) Andhra Times (d) The Hindu

Answer – (b)

Related facts

- Recently (March 2021) a new plant species named ‘Crotalaria lamelliformis’ has been discovered in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh.
- This discovery was published in the ‘Phytotaxa’, an International magazine.

Researchers

- During their field study, botanists P. Sivaramakrishna and P. Yugandhar from Sri Venkateswara University and Lalji Singh, Scientist-E from the Botanical Survey of India, Andaman and Nicobar regional centre, came across the species growing in the pasture lands in Sadasivakona.
- After a critical investigation from July 2018 to November 2020, they found it to be a new species.

Characteristics

- Named as 'Crotalaria lamelliformis', the ascending herb is unique for its distinct features such as adpressed white hairs beneath the lower surface of leaves, inflorescence short-terminal racemes, 6-8 bright yellow flowers, unequal calyx lobes, anterior two sepals fused and standard petal sub-orbicular with short claw surrounded by white cottony hairs.
- The discovery of Crotalaria lamelliformis is an addition to the existing 116 species from India.
- Diversity of Crotalaria species is mostly confined to the peninsular India region



Link:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/new-plant-species-found-in-chittoor/article34086725.ece>

Russia launches Satellites of 18 Countries

Question: Recently using the Soyuz-2.1a carrier rocket, Russia launched how many satellites in a single rocket?

a) 20 b) 45 c) 34 d) 38

Answer:(d)

Related Facts:-

- On 22 March 2021 Russia launched 38 satellites of 18 different countries.
- At 0607 GMT on March 22 2021; a Russian Soyuz rocket blasted off from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan carrying 38 foreign satellites.
- It was the Soyuz-2.1a carrier rocket with the Fregat upper stage and 38 spacecraft from 18 countries.
- The rocket will place in orbit 38 satellites from more than a dozen countries, including South Korea, Japan, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Italy and Brazil.
- Among them is the Challenge-1, the first satellite made completely in Tunisia, which was created by the Telnet telecommunications group.
- It should be noted that since the fall of the Soviet Union, the Russian space sector has lagged behind international competitors.
- In the past Russian space agencies were plagued by corruption scandals and technological stagnation.

Links:-

<https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/soyuz-rocket-launch-russia-launches-38-satellites-for-18-countries-2396301>

Government is keen interest to Develop and Strengthen its own Mobile App Store

Question: According to the India App Market Statistics report 2021 what percentage of apps on Android are from Indian Apps developers?

a) 10% b) 5% c) 7% d) 15%

Answer: (b)

Related Facts:

- On 18 March 2021; Minister for Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad informed about the government's keen interest to develop and strengthen its own mobile app store.
- He gave information regarding this plan in an answer to a question in the Parliament on 18 -3 – 2021.
- He stated that the Union government is keen to strengthen and develop an India's first indigenously developed Appstore, Mobile Seva Appstore.
- He said that around 5% apps on Android are from Indian Apps developers by citing India App Market Statistics report 2021.
- It should be known that Mobile Seva Appstore services Hosts more than 965 live apps from various domains and categories of public.
- Mr. Prasad said, although the government encourages private players to host apps, it is equally keen to develop and encourage its own mobile App Store.
- Department/Developers can host mobile application on on Mobile Seva AppStore (<https://apps.mgov.gov.in>) related to Government and other public services.
- Users can download applications from Mobile Seva AppStore for accessing various government/public services anytime from anywhere.
- The response has been good and the government wishes to strengthen it further, he added.
- In the country now it has seriously been felt that in the absence of country's own digital application store, dependence on Google and Apple for digital services is creating problems in digital ecosystem.
- The ministry now would consider having either a single or separate digital store for Government and private apps, for self-reliance.
- Prasad informed that India is the largest user of mobile apps, and mentioned that Digital India programme coupled with encouragement being given to Indian innovators to create apps has become a big movement.
- The government also noted that there has to be a proper Indian App Store for hosting apps free of cost in the initial stages.
- Accordingly, the 'Mobile Seva App Store' was started which besides hosting Government apps is also encouraging private apps to come on board.

**Links:-**

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/govt-keen-to-develop-strengthen-own-mobile-app-store-ravi-shankar-prasad-121031800791_1.html

Indian Army to get 4,960 Anti-Tank Guided Missiles

Question: Recently, with which of the following company, Ministry of Defense (MoD) has sealed a deal) to acquire 4,960 anti-tank guided missiles for Indian Army?

- a) Bharat Dynamics Ltd b) DRDO c) Gun Carriage Factory Jabalpur
d) None of these

Answer: (a)

Related Facts:-

- On 19 March 2021; The Defence Ministry sealed a deal with state-run Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL) to acquire ATGMs for Indian Army.
- Through this deal Indian Army in near future will get 4,960 anti-tank guided missiles (MILAN-2T anti-tank guided missiles) at a cost of ₹ 1,188 crore .
- These Missiles are being produced by BDL under license from French defence major MBDA Missile Systems.
- The missiles, having a range of 1,850 metres, can be fired from ground as well as vehicle-based launchers.
- According to the Ministry of Defense Induction of these ATGMs is planned to be completed in three years.
- It should be noted that in the last few months, the MoD has finalized a range of procurement projects for the three forces.
- Gol is determined to enhance overall combat capabilities of the three forces as earliest as possible.
- These missiles can be fired from ground as well as vehicle-based launchers and can be deployed in anti-tank role for both offensive and defensive tasks.



Links:-

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/defence-ministry-seals-deal-with-bdl-to-acquire-4690-anti-tank-guided-missiles/article34107796.ece>

Space Technology Incubation Centres (S-TIC) inaugurated at 3 NITs by ISRO

Question: In which institutions ISRO has opened its Space Technology Incubation Centres (S-TIC) recently?

- a) Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology, Nagpur
b) Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology, Bhopal
c) National Institute of Technology, Rourkela d) all of the above

Ans: d)

Context



- Three Space Technology Incubation Centres (S-TIC) were inaugurated at the National Institute of Technology (NIT) at Nagpur, Bhopal and Rourkela by the Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) K Sivan.

Facts

- The S-TIC concept is conceived with one selected major academic institute taking the lead role in a particular region and providing opportunities for final year graduate, postgraduate and research scholars as “future budding entrepreneurs” in the space sector.
- Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology, Nagpur will operate for the Western region, Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology, Bhopal will operate for Central region, and National Institute of Technology, Rourkela will operate for Eastern region.
- S-TICs have already been functioning, at the National Institute of Technology, Agartala (for the North-Eastern region), Dr B R Ambedkar National Institute of Technology, Jalandhar (for Northern region) and National Institute of Technology, Tiruchirappalli (for Southern region).
- Projects of practical relevance linked to the ongoing or future missions of ISRO will be made available to the students atSTIC.

Reference: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/space-technology-incubation-centres-opened-at-nit-nagpur-bhopal-rourkela-227530>

Indigenous Checkout system Delivered to Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

Question: Recently Data Patterns Pvt Ltd delivered indigenous Checkout System to ISRO for it's which of the following mission?

a) Gaganyaan mission b) Mangalyaan-2 c) Chandrayaan-3 d) None of these

Answer: (a)

Related Facts:

- On 17 March 2021; Data patterns India Pvt Ltd delivered checkout system to Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for its Gaganyaan mission, at Chennai.
- The checkout system is utilised to carry out health checks of all cable harness assemblies used in the Gaganyaan Crew Module.
- It is the first major indigenous checkout system developed by the Chennai based Data Patterns Pvt Ltd.
- The checkout system is utilised to carry out health checks of all cable harness assemblies used in the Gaganyaan Crew Module.
- The health checks includes all the electrical parameters that are vital to the safety of the crew module.



- These parameters are high voltage insulation, continuity, isolation, current carrying capacity and other electrical parameters.
- Data Patterns, till now has three decades of association with DoS (ISRO), and has supplied the 14,000 points countdown checkout system for the second launch pad.
- This Chennai based company has also upgraded the launch vehicle tracking radars and supplied the X-Band and C-Band weather radars.
- Almost all the electronics of the launch vehicle are checked out using Data Patterns' indigenous test system solutions.
- It also regularly builds avionics packages for both launch vehicles and satellites, says a company release.

Links:-

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/data-patterns-1st-indigenous-check-out-system-for-isros-gaganyaan-programme/article34101201.ece>

Indian Naval Landing Craft Utility (LCU) L58

Question: At which of the following place, recently Indian Naval Landing Craft Utility (LCU) L58 has been commissioned in Indian Navy?

a) Kolkata b) Port Blair c) Chennai d) Mumbai

Answer: (b)

Related Facts:

- On March 18, 2021; Indian Naval Landing Craft Utility (LCU) L58 was commissioned into the Indian Navy at Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- This is the 8th and last ship of the Landing Craft Utility (LCU) Mark IV Class.
- L58 9 (amphibious ship) has been indigenously designed and built by garden reach shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) Kolkata.
- The ship was commissioned into service in a ceremony at Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar.
- The ceremony was attended by Commander-in-Chief, Andaman and Nicobar Command (CINCAN) Lieutenant General Manoj Pandey as the Chief Guest.
- Commander Krishan K Yadav has been named the first Commanding Officer of the ship.
- He read out the commissioning warrant. The crew members include five officers and 50 sailors.
- The Indian Naval Landing Craft Utility is an amphibious ship that can carry upto 160 troops, in addition to its crew.
- The ship measures 63 meters in length and has a displacement of 900 tons.
- It is fitted with two MTA 4,000 series engines, which are capable of propelling the ship to a speed of up to 15 knots (28 kmph).
- It will be used for the purpose of transporting and deploying Main Battle Tanks, armoured vehicles, troops and equipments from ship to shore.



Links:-

<https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/indian-naval-landing-craft-utility-158-commissioned-at-port-blair20210318230342/>

VL-SRSAM Missile System

Question : Defence Research & Development Organisation(DRDO) conducted two successful launches of VL-SRSAM. What is the full form of VL-SRSAM ?

- (a) Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile
- (b) Vertical Launch Supersonic Range Surface to Air Missile
- (c) Vertical Latitude Short Range Surface to Air Missile
- (d) None of the above

Ans.(a)

- On 22 February 2021, the Defense Research and Development Organization made two successful launches of the Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile from Chandipur Integrated Test Range, Odisha.
- Indigenously designed and developed by DRDO for Indian Navy, VL-SRSAM is meant for neutralizing various aerial threats at close ranges including sea-skimming targets.
- The current launches were carried out for demonstration of vertical launch capability as part of its maiden launch campaign. On both occasions, the missiles intercepted the simulated targets with pinpoint accuracy. The missiles were tested for minimum and maximum range. VL-SRSAM with Weapon Control System (WCS) were deployed during the trials.
- The launches were monitored by senior scientists from various DRDO labs involved in the design and development of the system such as DRDL, RCI, Hyderabad and R&D Engineers, Pune.
- During the test launches, flight path and vehicle performance parameters were monitored using flight data, captured by various Range instruments such as Radar, EOTS and Telemetry systems deployed by ITR, Chandipur.
- The present trials have proved the effectiveness of the weapon system and few more trials will be conducted shortly before deployment on Indian Naval ships. Once deployed, the VL-SRSAM system will prove to be a force multiplier for the Indian Navy.



Link:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1700039>

ISRO Sounding Rocket RH-560 Launched to Study Neutral Winds and Plasma Dynamics.

Question- On 13 March 2021, The ISRO launched the RH-560, to study-

- (a) Attitudinal variations in the neutral winds and plasma dynamics.
- (b) Atmospheric pressure
- (c) Asteroids
- (d) Minerals on the Moon.

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched the sounding rocket (RH-560) to study altitudinal variations in the neutral winds and plasma dynamics carried out on 13 March 2021 at Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota Range (SHAR).
- As per ISRO, sounding rockets are one or two-stage solid propellant rockets used for probing the upper atmospheric regions and for space research.
- ISRO has developed a series of sounding rockets called Rohini series, important among them being RH-200, RH-300 and RH-560, number in the name indicating the diameter of the rocket in mm, according to the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency.
- They also serve as easily affordable platforms to test or prove prototypes of new components or subsystems intended for use in launch vehicles and satellites.



Reference- <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/science/newspace-india-to-invest-rs-10000-crore-to-buy-run-satellites/articleshow/81477401.cms>.

Google India launches the ‘Women Will Web’ platform on Women’s Day.

Question- Which technology company has launched ‘Women Will web’ platform in India?

(a) Google India (b) Amazon (c) Flipkart (d) Microsoft

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

- Google India hosted a grand #Women Will event on the occasion of International Women’s Day on 8th March.
- On this occasion, the Google For India event announced the ‘Women Will web’ platform which will guide women entrepreneurs to start earning effectively and grow their businesses.
- What is Women Will Web platform?
- Launched in 2015, the Google For India event has been helping Indian society to grow in multiple ways possible including the Internet Saathi program with TATA Trust.
- The Women Will web platform will be a free online tutorial platform with all the information from starting a business to making it successful.
- Through this Google will support one million rural women entrepreneurs in India to help them pursue their ambitions and improve their livelihoods.

Reference- <https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/sme/msme-tech-google-sundai-pichai-launches-web-platform-for-women-entrepreneurs-to-support-women-led-msmes-in-village>.

France launches first military exercises in space

Question: Which country has launched the first military exercises in space to defend its satellites from an attack?

(a) France (b) China (c) India (d) Japan

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- France has launched its first military exercise in space.
- The exercise will evaluate country's ability to defend its satellites and other defense equipment from an attack.
- The exercises are first for the French army and even a first in Europe.
- The exercise, codenamed "AsterX" in memory of the first French satellite from 1965, will be based on 18 simulated events in an operations room.
- During the drill, the French military will monitor a potentially dangerous space object as well as a threat to its own satellite from another foreign power possessing a considerable space force.
- The new US Space Force and German space agencies are taking part in the French exercises from 8-12 March 2021.
- The French Space Forces Command, Commandement de l'Espace (CdE) was created in 2019 and is set to have 500 personnel by 2025.
- The exercises are part of France's strategy to become the world's third-largest space power.



Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=France-launches-first-military-exercises-in-space&id=411532>

DUSTLIK II

Question: DUSTLIK is a joint military exercise between India and which country?

(a) United Arab Emirates (b) Uzbekistan (c) Bangladesh (d) Israel

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 10 March 2021, India – Uzbekistan joint military exercise "DUSTLIK II" commenced in Foreign Training Node Chaubatia, Ranikhet (Uttarakhand).
- The exercise will continue till 19 March 2021.
- This is the Second Edition of annual



bilateral joint exercise of both armies, first held at Uzbekistan in Nov 2019.

- The exercise involves expertise and skills sharing in the field of counter terrorist operations in mountainous/rural/urban scenario under UN mandate.
- The exercise will culminate into a 36 hours joint validation exercise scheduled from 17 to 18 March 21. The validation exercise will be a test bed for the soldiers of both armies as they would be undergoing the challenges of actual operations in such scenarios.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1703755>

Electric- Bike company Pi-Beam Launched PiMo

Question: Who founded the Pi-Beam company, the maker of recently launched electric- bike PiMo?

a) IIT Madras Alum b) IIT Mumbai Alum c) IIT Hyderabad Alum d) None of these

Answer: (a)

Related Facts:

- An IIT Madras-Incubated start-up Pi-Beam has recently launched PiMo, a sustainable utility e-bike.
- Pi-Beam has been founded by an IIT Madras Alum Visakh Sasikumar.
- Pi Beam's new Electric Two-Wheeler can charge faster than a smartphone.
- 90% of its components, including the batteries and controllers, are manufactured in India.
- Riding PiMo does not require a license or registration.
- PiMo has been priced at Rs. 30, 000, which is economical and eliminates fuel costs.
- It offers Battery Swapping and a drained battery can be exchanged for a fully charged one at designated locations.
- PiMo is one of the few EVs in the local market that is almost completely made in India.
- PiMo can be considered as an electric bicycle and entry-level electric scooter.
- It allows speeds lower than that of a motorbike as it can only reach top speed of 25 kmph.
- PiMo provides a higher travel range than an electric bicycle at 50 kms on a single charge.
- It features dual suspension at the rear and larger and ergonomically designed seats.
- It comes with a swing arm mechanism and dual shock absorbers.
- The start-up has already gained over 100 initial customers within weeks of opening preorders for PiMo.
- Pi Beam aims to sell 10,000 vehicles by the end of the financial year 2021-22.



Links:-

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/iit-madras-home-grown-e-bike/article33849603.ece>

Exercise Desert Flag-VI

Question: Which country is hosting the Exercise Desert Flag 2021?

(a) United Arab Emirates (b) Saudi Arabia (c) Bahrain (d) United States of America

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Indian Air Force (IAF) is participating for the first time in Exercise Desert Flag hosted by United Arab Emirates Air Force.
- The IAF is participating with six Su-30 MKI, two C-17 Globemasters and one IL-78 tanker aircraft.
- The exercise is taking place at Al-Dhafra air base, UAE from 3rd – 27th March 2021.
- Exercise Desert Flag provides operational exposure to the participating forces while training them to undertake simulated air combat operations in a controlled environment.
- The air forces of the UAE, India, United States of America, France, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Bahrain are taking part in the 2021 multinational exercise.



Links:

<http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=410987>

Five Sew Species of Shrub Frogs

Question: Recently, from where, has the Five Sew Species of Shrub Frogs discovered?

a) Arunachal Pradesh b) Meghalaya c) Western Ghats d) Gujarat

Answer: (c)

Related Facts:

- Five new species of shrub frogs have been discovered from the Western Ghats by researchers from India and the US.
- Western Ghats are one of the globally recognised biodiversity hotspots.
- The frogs belong to the Old World tree frog family Rhacophoridae.
- Researchers from University of Delhi, Kerala Forest Research Institute and University of Minnesota participated in this discovery.
- It has been published in the current issue of the International journal PeerJ, reported PTI.
- The discovery is part of a long comprehensive study on the Shrub frogs (genus Raorchestes) of the Western Ghats, carried out over a period of nearly 10 years.
- The new species were identified and found to be distinct based on multiple criteria.



- These include the frogs' external morphology, DNA, calling pattern, behaviour, and other natural history observations.
- The findings are published in a scientific article titled "An integrative approach to infer systematic relationships and define species groups in the shrub frog (genus *Raorchestes*), with description of five new species from the Western Ghats, India".
- The authors are Sonali Garg, Robin Suyesh, Sandeep Das, Mark A Bee, and Prof S D Biju. The study was carried out under the leadership of Delhi University Professor Biju.
- About New Species of frogs
- As per the report, one of new species called *Raorchestes Drutaahu* (Fast-calling Shrub Frog) was discovered from Kadalar in Idukki district and Siruvani in Palakkad district of Kerala.
- Another one named *Raorchestes kakkayamensis* (Kakkayam Shrub Frog) was found only in the vicinity of Kakkayam dam in the southern state.
- The third species *Raorchestes keirasabinae* (Keira's Shrub Frog) was found in Agasthyamalai and Anamalai hills in the southern Western Ghats.
- It is a unique tree frog inhabiting the highest canopy layers.
- The four species *Raorchestes sanjappai* (Sanjappa's Shrub Frog), a beautiful green shrub frog, was discovered from the Wayanad region of northern Kerala.
- The species is named after Dr M Sanjappa, a renowned Indian Botanist and former Director of the Botanical Survey of India, reported PTI.
- The fifth species *Raorchestes vellikkannan* (Silver-eyed Shrub Frog) was discovered in the Siruvani hills and adjoining regions of the Silent Valley National Park.
- The name is derived from Malayalam word velli (meaning silver) and kannu (meaning eye), referring to its distinct silver eye colour.

Links:-

<https://www.indiatoday.in/science/story/researchers-find-five-new-species-of-shrub-frogs-in-western-ghats-1775366-2021-03-04>

The world's rarest and oldest fossil discovered in India

Question: Recently from which of the following place of India researchers have found the oldest fossil of animal Dickinsonia?

a) Bhimbetka b) Surat c) Indore d) Jabalpur

Answer :(a)

Related Facts:

- In a new study, the world's rarest and oldest fossil has been discovered at Bhimbetka.
- Researchers are describing it as the first fossil of Dickinsonia in India, which is the oldest, about 57 million years old animal on Earth.
- The relation of UNESCO Protected Area Bhimbetka is seen from the Palaeolithic period to the Mesolithic period.



- The world famous Bhimbetka caves located in Raisen district, about 45 km from Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh, are known for their stone paintings by Adi-Humans.
- Led by Gregory J Retallack, a scientist at the University of Oregon, USA The fossils of Dickinsonia have been discovered in a joint study by researchers from the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and the Geological Survey of India,.
- Dickinsonia is known as one of the major link between early, normal organisms and the beginning of life in the Cambrian period, about 54.1 million years ago.
- The Dickinsonia fossil suggests that the length of this animal must have been more than four feet.
- While the fossil found in Bhimbetka cave in Madhya Pradesh is 17 inches long.
- In India, the Dickinsonia fossil has been found in Bhimbetka's 'Auditorium Cave'. This fossil is preserved in the Maihar sandstone of the Bhandar group,
- Researchers have found a leafy shape on the rock, like rock painting, at a height of 11 feet from the ground during a visit to Bhimbetka.
- In this research, researchers have studied the history of the oldest living organisms of the earth, which are related to the Ediacaran period.
- This period is believed to be 64.5 million to 541 million years ago in the history of Earth, when Dickinsonia and many other multicellular organisms existed.
- The cave of Bhimbetka was discovered 64 years ago by VS Wakankar. Since then, thousands of researchers have visited this archaeological site.
- The period name is derived from the Ediacara hills of southern Australia. Earlier Dickinsonia fossils have been found in Russia and Australia.
- In the study, the age of fossil rocks has been determined using isotopes. Zircon dating of the youngest Maihar sandstone in Madhya Pradesh has been estimated to be 54.8 million years old.
- Studies of the rocks of Bhimbetka and its surroundings reveal that many of their features are similar to those of the Australian rocks.
- The study has been published in the research journal Gondwana Research.

Links:-

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/fossils-of-dickinsonia-found-at-bhimbetka/article33837185.ece>

Warfare Exercise Ex Desert Flag

Question – Indian Air Force is taking part in the exercise ‘Desert Flag-VI’ hosted by which country between 3 to 27 March 2021?

(a) Saudi Arabia (b) United Arab Emirates (c) Russia (d) Qatar

Answer – (b)

Related facts

- Indian Air Force is taking part in the exercise ‘Desert Flag-VI’ hosted by United Arab Emirates between 3 to 27 March 2021.
- About exercise
- Ex Desert Flag is an annual multi-national large force employment warfare exercise hosted by the



United Arab Emirates Air Force.

- The Indian Air Force is participating for the first time in Exercise Desert Flag-VI along with air forces of United Arab Emirates, United States of America, France, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Bahrain.
- The exercise is scheduled from 03 Mar 21 to 27 Mar 21 at Al-Dhafra airbase, UAE.
- India's weapons
- The IAF is participating with six Su-30 MKI, two C-17 and one IL-78 tanker aircraft. C-17 Globemaster will provide support for induction/ de-induction of the IAF contingent.
- Su-30 MKI aircraft will undertake long range ferry, routing direct from India to the exercise area with aerial refueling support from IL-78 tanker aircraft.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1701975>

ICG C-453 Interceptor Boat

Question – Recently, a surveillance boat has been assigned to the Indian Coast Guard. Which company has built this vessel ?

(a) Reliance (b) Mazagaon Postyard (c) Larsen and Toubro (d) DRDO

Answer – (c)

Related facts

- Indian Coast Guard Ship C-453, the 17th of the 18 Interceptor Boat (IBs) project indigenously constructed by Larsen & Toubro Ltd, has recently (February 2021) been commissioned at Chennai.
- About the vessel/boat
- This is the 27.8-metre-long Interceptor Boat with a displacement of 105 tonnes and Max Speed of 45 knots (85 kmph) is capable of undertaking multifarious tasks including Surveillance, Interdiction, close coast patrol, Search and Rescue, in addition to rendering assistance to boats and craft in distress at sea.
- It is equipped with advanced navigation and communication systems.
- Future fleet of the coast guard
- Forty Ships are at various stages of construction at different Shipyards in India and 16 Advanced Light Helicopters MK III are being accepted by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Bengaluru, which will provide the added teeth to the surveillance capabilities of the Coast Guard.



Link:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/l-t-built-interceptor-boat-the-17th-in-series-commissioned-at-chennai-121021900913_1.html

Renewable energy : IEEFA report

Question- With regard to the report related to renewable energy released by IEEFA in February ,2021, consider the following statements-

1. This report presents details related to investment in renewable energy and grid projects in India.
2. According to this report, India will need to produce 250 GW of renewable energy by 2030.
3. India will need an investment of 800 billion US dollars for energy production.
4. Since 2014, US \$ 42 billion has been invested in the field of renewable energy in India.

Considering the above statements, select the correct statement-

- (a) 1 and 4 (b) 2 and 4 (c) 3 and 4 (d) 1,2 and 3

Answer – (a)

Related facts

- The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis is a U.S. non-profit corporation. It examines issues related to energy markets, trends, and policies.
- It has recently (February 2021) released a report related to India's renewable energy.
- It has recently (February 2021) released a report related to renewable energy in India.
- Highlights
- This report presents details related to investment in renewable energy and grid projects in India.
- A huge global capital pool is mobilising to invest in renewable energy and grid projects in India, according to a new IEEFA report, with pull factors including solar power tariffs hitting record lows, plunging solar module costs, record low interest rates, and the security of government-backed, 25-year power purchase agreements (PPAs).
- Domestic and global institutions across the financial, corporate, energy, utility and government sectors are primed to deploy a wall of capital that India needs to fund its ambitious renewable energy targets
- According to the report, India has received more than 42 billion dollar in investment since 2014, the report highlights that it will require a further 500 billion dollar in order to reach 450 gigawatts (GW) of capacity by 2030.
- This includes the capital cost of adding more than 300GW of new renewables infrastructure, firming low-cost but intermittent renewable power generation, and expanding and modernising grid transmission and distribution.
- The report says India will need \$1.4 trillion in additional funding for low emissions technologies in order to be on a sustainable path over the next 20 years – 70% higher than in a scenario based on current policy.
- Energy security — The ongoing solar energy deflation – now around Rs.2/kWh, below the marginal fuel cost of coal-fired power plants – gives India the economic incentive to accelerate its energy transition and be a world leader in helping to solve the climate crisis, plus address chronic air pollution and water stress.



- Report estimates that striving for 450 gigawatts of renewable energy by 2030 would require deploying \$500 billion of investment over the coming decade – \$300 billion for wind and solar infrastructure, \$50 billion on grid firming investments such as gas peakers, hydro and batteries, and \$150 billion on expanding and modernising transmission and distribution.

Link:

<https://ieefa.org/ieefa-global-capital-mobilising-for-indias-500bn-renewable-energy-infrastructure-opportunity/>

Manufacturing of electronic devices in India

Question : Which e-commerce company announced to start manufacturing electronics products in India on 16 February 2021?

(a) Amazon India (b) Flipkart (c) Snapdeal (d) Mantra

Answer – (a)

- Amazon India announced to start manufacturing electronics products in India on 16 February 2021.
- Initially Amazon India will start manufacturing the Amazon Fire TV Stick.
- It is notable that India is an attractive investment destination and is poised to become a major player in the global supply chain in the electronics and IT products industry.
- The government’s decision to launch a Production- Linked Incentive Scheme has received tremendous response globally.
- Amazon India will set up a manufacturing line in Chennai, as it will enhance domestic production capacities, and create jobs as well.



Link:

<http://www.newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=409988>

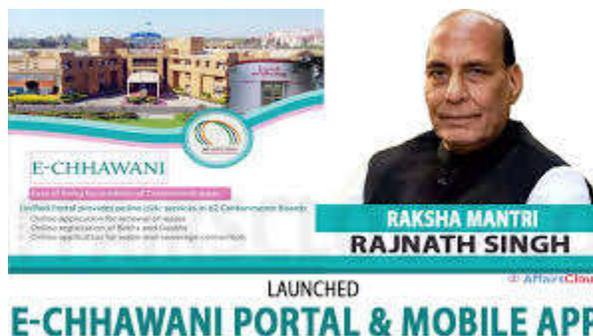
E-Chhawani portal & mobile app

Question- Which Ministry launched e-Chhawani portal and mobile app on 16 February 2021?

(a) Ministry of Home Affairs (b) Ministry of Defense (c) Ministry of Electronics and IT (d) Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

Answer – (b)

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched E-Chhawani portal and mobile app in New Delhi on February 16, 2021.
- The portal (<https://echhawani.gov.in/>) has been created to provide online



civic services to over 20 lakh residents of 62 Cantonment Boards across the country.

- Through the portal, the residents of cantonment areas will be able to avail basic services like renewal of leases, application for birth & death certificates, water & sewerage connections, trade licences, mobile toilet locators and payment of different types of taxes and fees, with just a click of a button.
- Developer
- The portal, jointly developed by eGov Foundation, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Directorate General Defence Estates (DGDE) and National Informatics Centre (NIC), provides a platform to the residents to avail these services from the comfort of their home.
- Background
- The government is striving to make the system citizen-friendly and provide services that facilitate 'ease of living' and 'ease of doing' for the people. Initiatives like 'Minimum Government – Maximum Governance', Digital India and E-Governance were launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to promote good governance and ease of living for the people.
- The launch of the E-Chhawani portal is a big step in that direction.

Link:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1698398#:~:text=Raksha%20Mantri%20Shri%20Rajnath%20Singh,Cantonment%20Boards%20across%20the%20country.>

Discovery of 18 new asteroids by Indian Students

Question: Near Earth Objects (NEOs) or rocky objects are orbiting between the orbits of which of the following planets?

a) Venus and Earth b) Mars and Jupiter c) Venus and Mercury d) None of these

Answer: (b)

Related Facts:-

- As part of a global science programme 18 new asteroids discovered by Indian students.
- The International Astronomical Union (IAU), an organisation which assigns official names and designations to celestial bodies, has recently confirmed the discovery.
- The International Asteroid Discovery Project was conducted by STEM and Space.
- STEM and Space is an organisation working towards the learning of astronomy and space science in India.
- STEM works along with the International Astronomical Search Collaboration (IASC) as part of a NASA citizen science project.
- Over the last two years, 150 students from all around India participated in this two month long campaign to find asteroids.
- Mila Mitra, Co-founder and Academic Head of STEM and Space informed that it was the largest asteroid discovery project in India.



- In the project, the students from India and across the globe analysed the high quality astronomical data provided by IASC.
- IASC is an online scientific program for kids to discover Asteroids and Near Earth Objects (NEO).
- NEOs are rocky objects in an orbit between Mars and Jupiter.
- These rocky objects pose a challenge to Earth, when they are ejected out of their orbit and pose a threat of impact
- According to Mitra and her team, NASA has initiated programs like IASC to track such asteroids regularly.
- The programme is also open to citizen scientists and students to enable the discovery and tracking of more asteroids.
- She explained that in the project the students use advanced software analysis.
- These students spend nearly two-three hours each day to look for asteroids and report their findings.
- Of the 372 preliminary asteroids flagged by the students, 18 were finally declared to be provisional or confirmed discoveries of asteroids, Mitra noted.

Links:-

<https://indianexpress.com/article/technology/science/school-students-india-discover-18-new-asteroids-stem-and-space-7209658/>

New Species of Alpine Plant Discovered

Question: Recently scientists discovered new species of Alpine Plant from which of the following state In India?

a) Karnataka b) Maharashtra c) Arunachal Pradesh d) Meghalaya

Answer: (c)

Related Facts:-

- A group of scientists of three institutes have discovered a new species of alpine plant.
- Named as *Cremanthodium indicum* this new species of Alpine has been searched from the Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The details of the related studies were published in *Biodiversitas: Journal of Biological Diversity*.
- The new species of plant belongs to the family of Himalayan sunflower.
- This species of plant generally flowers from July to August.
- It is endemic to the Penga-Teng Tso Lake of Tawang district.
- As per the IUCN Guideline, this alpine plant species has been listed as critically endangered.
- These plants are adapted to harsh alpine climatic of environmental conditions.
- It can withstand the conditions such as dryness, low temperatures, wind, drought, ultraviolet radiation, poor nutritional soil and a short growing season.



Links:-

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/new-alpine-plant-species-discovered-in-arunachal-pradesh/article33920366.ece>

Sports

Tennis

Qatar ExxonMobil Open 2021

Question: Who has won Men's Singles title at the ExxonMobil Open 2021 held in Doha, Qatar on March 13 2021?

- (a) Roberto Bautista Agut (b) Nikoloz Basilashvili (c) Dominic Thiem
(d) Roger Federer

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Men's tennis tournament Qatar ExxonMobil Open 2021 was held in Doha, Qatar from 8-13 March 2021.



Results:

Men's Singles

- Winner- Nikoloz Basilashvili (Georgia)
- Runner-up- Roberto Bautista Agut (Spain)

Men's Doubles

- Winner – Aslan Karatsev and Andrey Rublev (both Russia)
- Runner-up- Marcus Daniell (New Zealand) and Philipp Oswald (Austria)

Links:

<https://www.atptour.com/en/scores/archive/doha/451/2021/results?matchType=doubles>

Argentina Open 2021

Question: Who has won the Men's Singles title at the Argentina Open 2021 tennis tournament?

- (a) Francisco Cerundolo (b) Diego Schwartzman (c) Albert Ramos-Vinolas
(d) Sumit Nagal

Answer: (b)

Related facts:



- The 2021 Argentina Open is a men's tennis tournament held in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 1-7 March 2021.

Results:

Men's Singles

- Winner – Diego Schwartzman (Argentina)
- Runner-up- Francisco Cerundolo (Argentina)

Men's Doubles

- Winner – Tomislav Brkic (Bosnia) and Nikola Ćaćić (Serbia)
- Runner-up- Ariel Behar(Uruguay) and Gonzalo Escobar (Ecuador)

Links:

<https://www.atptour.com/en/scores/archive/buenos-aires/506/2021/results?matchType=singles>

Cricket

UAE players banned from International Cricket

Question: Which two United Arab Emirates players have been banned from all cricket for eight years under the ICC Anti-Corruption Code?

- (a) Mohammad Naveed and Shaiman Anwar Butt
 (b) Mohammad Naveed and Chirag Suri (c) Shaiman Anwar Butt and CP Rizwan
 (d) Ahmed Raza and Rohan Mustafa

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 16 March 2021, International Cricket Council Anti-Corruption Tribunal has banned United Arab Emirates (UAE) players Mohammad Naveed and Shaiman Anwar Butt from all cricket for eight years.
- They have been found guilty of breaching the ICC Anti-Corruption Code.
- The bans are backdated to 16 October 2019, when they were provisionally suspended for attempting to corrupt matches of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Qualifier 2019 in the UAE.
- Mohammad Naveed is the former UAE captain and Shaiman Anwar Butt is the opener.



Links:

<https://www.icc-cricket.com/media-releases/2069768>

Road Safety World Series 2020-21

Question: Which cricket team has won the Road Safety World Series 2020-21?

(a) Sri Lanka Legends (b) India Legends (c) Australia Legends (d) England Legends

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 21 March 2021, in cricket, India Legends defeated the Sri Lanka Legends to win the 2020-21 Road Safety World Series.
- In the finals, India Legends scored 181/4 which in return Sri Lanka Legends managed to score 167/7.
- A total of 6 teams from England, South Africa, West Indies, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka & India has participated in the series.
- Yusuf Pathan was adjudged Player of the match in final whereas Tillakaratne Dilshan of Sri Lanka Legends was conferred Player of the Series.



Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/sports/road-safety-world-series-2021-full-schedule-match-time-live-streaming-121022600574_1.html#:~:text=Australia%20Legends%20has%20pulled%20out,Road%20Safety%20World%20Series%20T20

India-England Test Series 2021

Question: Who has been conferred Player of the Series in the India-England 4 matches test series held in India in 2021?

(a) Ravichandran Ashwin (b) Rishabh Pant (c) Rohit Sharma (d) James Anderson

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- India won the 4 matches test series by 3-1 against England.
- The test series was held between 5th February & 8th March 2021 at Chennai and Ahmedabad.
- The tournament marked India's 13th Test series win over home soil.
- Indian wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant, who scored 101 runs in the fourth and final match of the series, was adjudged 'Player of the Match'.
- Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who took 32 wickets and scored 189 runs in this series, was conferred 'Player of the Series'.
- Ashwin became the 4th Indian bowler and 16th player to take 400 Test wickets in the third match against England.
- After series win, India reached the final of the World Test Championship for the first time.
- India will take on New Zealand in the final of the World Test Championship scheduled to be held from 18 to 22 June in Southampton, England.



Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/sports/cricket/story/team-india-set-new-record-with-13th-successive-test-series-win-on-home-soil-1776426-2021-03-06#:~:text=Virat%20Kohli's%20Indian%20team%20on,Test%20Championship%20against%20New%20Zealand.>

Virat Kohli

Question: Who became the first-ever batsman to score 3,000 runs in T-20 International?

(a) Ben Stokes (b) Martin Guptill (c) Virat Kohli (d) Steve Smith

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- India skipper Virat Kohli has become the first-ever batsman to score 3,000 runs in T-20 International.
- He achieved the feat during the second T20-International against England at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on March 14 2020.
- He now has 3,001 runs from 87 T20I matches.
- New Zealand's Martin Guptill is second leading run-getter in T20I cricket while India's Rohit Sharma is third in the list.

**Links:**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cricket/virat-kohli-creates-history-becomes-first-batsman-to-score-3000-t20i-runs-101615738290496.html>

2020–21 Vijay Hazare Trophy

Question: Which team has won the 2020–21 Vijay Hazare Trophy?

(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Gujarat (c) Karnataka (d) Mumbai

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On 14 March 2021, Mumbai won the 2020-21 Vijay Hazare Trophy at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, New Delhi.
- Mumbai beat Uttar Pradesh by six wickets in the final.
- This is the fourth Vijay Hazare Trophy title of Mumbai.
- Aditya Tare of Mumbai was given Player of the Match award for his unbeaten 118 runs in the final.
- Prithvi Shaw and Karan Sharma were the captain of Mumbai and Uttar Pradesh respectively.
- The Vijay Hazare Trophy is named after the legendary Indian cricketer Vijay Hazare.



- Tamil Nadu is the most successful team having won the trophy 5 times.

Links:

https://www.espn.com/cricket/story/_/id/1250891/uttar-pradesh-vs-mumbai-final-1250993/match-report

Mithali Raj becomes the first Indian women to score 10,000 international runs in all formats.

Question- Who becomes the first Indian women cricketer to score 10,000 runs in all formats?

(a) Smriti Mandhana (b) Poonam Yadav (c) Mithali Raj (d) Jhulan Goswami

Ans-(c)

Related Facts-

- Mithali Raj became the first Indian woman to score 10,000 runs in international cricket across all formats.
- Mithali Raj also becomes the second woman cricketer at the international level to complete 10000 runs.
- Mithali Raj leads the One Day International (ODI) team of India has joined the Charlotte Edwards of England in elite club.
- Mithali reached the milestone in the ongoing third One-day International (ODI) against South Africa in Lucknow on 12th march 2021.
- Mithali achieved the feat with a boundary off Anne Bosch in the 28th over of India's innings during the ongoing third ODI against South Africa.
- Mithali has scored 6974 runs in ODIs while in the T20Is, she has 2,364 runs to her name and 663 runs in the test matches.



Reference- <https://indianexpress.com/article/sports/cricket/mithali-raj-becomes-1st-indian-woman-cricketer-to-score-10000-international-runs-7225008/>.

ICC Player of the Month-February 2021

Question: Who has won the ICC Men's Player of the Month award for his outstanding performance in February 2021?

(a) Rohit Sharma (b) Rishabh Pant (c) Ravichandran Ashwin (d) Joe Root

Answer :(c)

Related facts:

- On 9 March 2021, Indian spinner Ravichandran Ashwin was named as the Men's Player of the Month (February) by the International Cricket Council (ICC).
- The award has been conferred for his impressive bowling performance and a



century in the India-England Test Series, 2021.

- He took 24 wickets in three Tests, two five-wicket hauls with best figure of 6/61.
- Ashwin became the 4th Indian bowler and 16th player to take 400 Test wickets in the third match against England.
- Also, England's Tammy Beaumont was named as Women's Player of the Month for February.

ICC Men's Player of the Month:

- International Cricket Council Player of the Month Award recognizes and celebrates the best performances from both male and female cricketers across all forms of international cricket throughout the year.
- The award was announced in January 2021.

Links:

<https://www.icc-cricket.com/news/2061310>

Hockey

11th Sub-junior National Women's Hockey Championship

Question: Which team has won the 11th Sub-junior National Women's Hockey Championship?

(a) Jharkhand (b) Haryana (c) Bengal (d) Delhi

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 18 March 2021, Haryana won the 11th national sub-junior women's hockey championship by defeating hosts Jharkhand.
- Haryana defeated Jharkhand by 4-3.
- The final was played at the Simdega Astroturf Hockey Stadium.
- Uttar Pradesh finished third playing against Odisha.

Links:

<https://www.hockeyindia.org/tournament/11th-hockey-india-sub-junior-women-national-championship-2021-2035>

Football

Indian Super League.

Question- Which team has won the Indian Super League (ISL) 2021?

(a) Mumbai City FC (b) FC Goa (c) ATK Mohun Bagan (d) Hyderabad FC

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

- Mumbai City FC won the champions of ISL 2020-21 as they sealed their maiden trophy after beating ATK Mohun Bagan 2-1 in the final at the Fatorda Stadium in Margao in Goa on March 13, 2021.
- Krishna was adjudged the Hero of the League while Igor Angulo won the Golden Boot.
- Amrinder won the Golden Glove award.
- Alberto Noguera won the DHL Winning Pass of the Season while Lalengmawia of the NorthEast United was adjudged the Emerging Player of the League.



About- Indian Super League

- The 'Hero Indian Super League' (ISL) is India's unrivalled football championship which kicked off on October 12, 2014.
- The league is co-promoted by Reliance, Star India and supported by the All India Football Federation (AIFF).
- The seventh edition of Indian Super League (ISL 2020-21) was held in Goa.

Reference-

<https://www.indiatoday.in/sports/football/story/isl-2020-21-live-stream-atk-mohun-bagan-vs-mumbai-city-fc-tv-channel-1773936-2021-02-28>.

Badminton

All England Badminton Championships 2021

Question: Who has won Women's singles title at the All England Badminton Championships 2021?

- (a) Pornpawee Chochuwong (b) Akane Yamaguchi (c) Nozomi Okuhara
(d) P V Sindhu

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The 2021 All England Badminton Championships 2021 was held on 17-21 March 2021 in Birmingham.

Winners:

- Men's Singles- Lee Zii Jia(Malaysia)
- Women's Singles- Nozomi Okuhara(Japan)
- Men's Doubles- Hiroyuki Endo/ Yuta Watanabe(both Japan)
- Women's Doubles- Mayu Matsumoto/ Wakana Nagahara(both Japan)
- Mixed Doubles-Yuta Watanabe /Arisa Higashino (both Japan)



Links:

<https://bwfworldtour.bwfbadminton.com/tournament/3982/yonex-all-england-open-badminton-championships-2021/results/draw/ws>

BWF Swiss Open Super 300

Question: Indian shuttler PV Sindhu secured Silver medal in the women's singles of BWF Swiss Open Super 300. She lost to which badminton player?

(a) Tai Tzu Ying (b) Carolina Marin (c) Nozomi Okuhara (d) An Se Young

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- India's ace shuttler PV Sindhu has won a silver medal in the final of the women's singles event held at Basel, Switzerland.
- The World No. 7 Sindhu lost to World No. 3 and reigning Olympic champion Carolina Marin.

**Winners:**

- Men's Singles : Viktor Axelsen (Denmark)
- Women's Singles: Carolina Marin (Spain)
- Men's Doubles: Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen (Denmark)
- Women's Doubles :Pearly Tan and Thinaah Muralitharan(Malaysia)
- Mixed Doubles: Thom Gicquel-Delphine Delrue (France)

Links:

<https://bwf.tournamentsoftware.com/sport/winners.aspx?id=5BDDD6E1-4494-4C9D-BA9C-A74ADD0F36AC>

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=PV-Sindhu-settles-for-silver-medal-in-BWF-Swiss-Open-Super-300&id=411213>

Golf

THE PLAYERS Championship

Question: Who has won the golf event THE PLAYERS Championship on March 14 2021?

(a) Brian Harman (b) Lee Westwood (c) Talor Gooch (d) Justin Thomas

Answer – (d)

Related facts:

- The Players Championship 2021 was played between March 11 & 14 in Florida, United States.
- American golfer Justin Thomas has won the championship.



- British golfer Lee Westwood finished second in the championship.

Links:

<https://www.pgatour.com/daily-wrapup/2021/03/14/justin-thomas-rallies-to-win-the-players-championship.html>

Athletics

S Dhanalakshmi

Question: Who has won the women's 100m sprint final in the Federation Cup Senior National Athletics Championships 2021?

(a) Dutee Chand (b) S Dhanalakshmi (c) Tintu Luka (d) Hima Das

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Sprinter S Dhanalakshmi beat national record holder Dutee Chand to win women's 100m sprint final in the 24th National Federation Cup Senior National Athletics Championships 2021 in Patiala.
- The 22-year-old Dhanalakshmi of Tamil Nadu clocked 11.39 seconds to become the fastest woman of the championships.
- Odisha-based Dutee clocked 11.58 seconds to be placed in second place.
- Another Tamil Nadu runner Archana Suseendran was third in 11.76 seconds. Hima Das was disqualified after a false start.



Links:

<https://indianathletics.in/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/DETAILED-RESULTS-FED-CUP-SR.-2021.pdf>

Bhavani Devi

Question: Who became the first-ever Indian fencer to qualify for the Olympics?

(a) Bhavani Devi (b) Kabita Devi (c) Riya Bakshi (d) Ena Arora

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Bhavani Devi became the first-ever Indian fencer to qualify for the Olympics.
- The sabre fencer secured an Olympic spot due to events in the ongoing Fencing World Cup.
- Hosts Hungary lost in the quarterfinals of the team event, allowing Korea to progress to the semis. Therefore, Bhavani



Devi qualifies through the Adjusted Official Ranking (AOR) Method.

- Currently, she is ranked 45th in the world. In 2017, she won India's 1st international gold medal in fencing.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/sports/sport-others/bhavani-devi-first-indian-fencer-qualify-olympics-7228055/>

New National Record in Men's 3000m Steeplechase

Question: Which Indian athlete has set a new national record in the men's 3000m steeplechase event?

(a) Lalita Babar (b) Sudha Singh (c) Naveen Kumar (d) Avinash Sable

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The Indian athlete Avinash Sable set a new national record in the men's 3000m steeplechase event with timing of 8:20.20.
- He clicked the record time in the ongoing Federation Cup Senior National Athletics Championships in Patiala.
- Achieving the feat, he broke his own record of 8:21.37 set in 2019, after finishing 13th in the final of the World Athletics Championships in Doha.
- The 26-year old army man from the arid Beed district of Maharashtra broke the national record for the fifth time in his career.
- Sable has already secured a berth in the Tokyo Olympics 2020 in men's 3000m steeplechase during the 2019 World Athletics Championships.



Links:

<https://www.aninews.in/news/sports/others/federation-cup-avinash-sable-sets-new-national-record-in-mens-3000m-steeplechase20210317185648/>

2nd edition of Khelo India Winter Games

Question: Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Khelo India Winter Games at Gulmarg on 26 February 2021. What edition this game is of?

(a) Second (b) First (c) Third (d) Fifth

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the second edition of Khelo India Winter Games started on February 26 2021.
- The 2nd Khelo India Winter Games was organized in Jammu and Kashmir's Gulmarg till 2 March 2021.



- The event was organised by the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in collaboration with the J&K Sports Council and the Winter Games Association of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The games witnessed participation of more than 1000 athletes from 27 states and Union Territories.
- The sports activities included snow shoe race, ice-skating, ice-hockey, skiing, Nordic ski, snowboarding, ski mountaineering, ice stock.

Medals Tally:

- Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir topped the medals tally.
- J&K won 11 gold, 18 silver and 5 bronze medals.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=410601>

Brisbane,Australia named as preferred bidder to host 2032 Olympic Games

Question: Which amongst the following has been named as the preferred bidder to host the 2032 Olympic Games?

(a) Budapest,Hungary (b) Toronto,Canada (c) Vienna,Austria (d) Brisbane, Australia

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has named Brisbane, Australia as the preferred bidder to host the 2032 Olympic Games.
- The IOC will begin targeted dialogue with the Brisbane 2032 Committee and the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) over their potential to host Olympic Games 2032 in Brisbane.
- Brisbane would be the third Australian city to host the Olympics after Melbourne in 1956 and Sydney in 2000.
- Earlier in 2018, the state of Queensland had hosted the 2018 Commonwealth Games.
- The delayed 2020 Olympics will be held in Tokyo, Japan in the summer, with Paris in France staging the 2024 Games and Los Angeles in the United States hosting the 2028 Olympics.



Links:

<https://www.olympic.org/news/brisbane-and-aoc-invited-to-targeted-dialogue-for-the-olympic-games-2032>

Sports Miscellaneous

India's Singhraj wins gold in Para Shooting World Cup 2021

Question: Which Indian para-athlete has won gold medal in 10m air pistol men SH1 event at the 2021 Para Shooting World Cup at Al Ain, United Arab Emirates?

(a) Avani Lekhara (b) Singhraj (c) Varun Singh Bhati (d) Guru Sharan Singh

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 21 March 2021, Indian para-athlete Singhraj won the gold medal in the 2021 Para Shooting World Cup at Al Ain in the UAE.
- He got the top honour by defeating Uzbekistan's Server Ibragimov in the P1 – Men's 10m Air Pistol SH1 final.
- Turkey's former Paralympic champion Muharrem Korhan Yamaç took the bronze medal.



Links:

<http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=412472>

Sports Personality

MC Mary Kom

Question: Which Indian boxing veteran has been appointed Chairperson of the International Boxing Association's (AIBA) champions and veterans committee?

(a) Vijender Singh (b) Shiv Thapa (c) MC Mary Kom (d) Sarita Devi

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- India's boxing veteran, six-time world champion M C Mary Kom has been appointed chairperson of the International Boxing Association's (AIBA) champions and veterans committee.
- The committee was formed in December 2020. It consists of most respected worldwide boxing veterans and champions who have achieved significant results and who are ready to share their experience.
- Mary Kom has won six gold, silver and bronze medals at eight AIBA World Boxing Championships from 2001 to 2019.
- She competed at the London Olympic Games 2012 and won a bronze medal there.
- She became the first Indian female athlete to win a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games (2018) and the Asian Games (in 2014).



Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/sports/sport-others/mary-kom-picked-as-chairperson-of-aibas-champions-and-veterans-committee-7212496/>

Shreyas Iyer

Question: Which Indian cricketer has signed up recently with English county Lancashire for the 2021 Royal London Cup?

(a) Shreyas Iyer (b) Shubhman Gill (c) Devdutt Padikkal (d) T Natarajan

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- English county Lancashire has announced the overseas signing of India batsman Shreyas Iyer for the 2021 Royal London Cup.
- With this he becomes 6th Indian to sign for Lancashire.
- He has played in 21 ODIs and 29 T20 Internationals for India.
- Early signatories to the English county include India wicketkeeper-batsman Farokh Engineer, Murali Kartik, Dinesh Mongia, VVS Laxman, and Sourav Ganguly.

**Links:**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cricket/lancashire-sign-shreyas-iyer-for-royal-london-cup-2021-101616414930518.html>

Cristiano Ronaldo

Question: Which football player has become the World's top goal scorer leaving behind Brazilian soccer great Pele?

(a) Lionel Messi (b) Cristiano Ronaldo (c) Joseph Bican (d) Romario

Answer-(b)

Related facts:

- On March 14, 2021, Portugal's soccer player Cristiano Ronaldo became the World's top goalscorer after hitting a hat-trick for Juventus in a 3-1 win over Cagliari in the Italian League Serie A.
- With this, Ronaldo broke the record of the great Brazilian footballer Pele having officially scored 767 goals.
- Now, Cristiano Ronaldo has total 770 career goals for club and country.

**Links:**

<https://www.espn.in/football/juventus/story/4338473/pele-congratulates-ronaldo-for-breaking-his-goals-record>

Mithali Raj becomes the first Indian women to score 10,000 international runs in all formats.

Question- Who becomes the first Indian women cricketer to score 10,000 runs in all formats?

(a) Smriti Mandhana (b) Poonam Yadav (c) Mithali Raj (d) Jhulan Goswami

Ans-(c)

Related Facts-

- Mithali Raj became the first Indian woman to score 10,000 runs in international cricket across all formats.
- Mithali Raj also becomes the second woman cricketer at the international level to complete 10000 runs.
- Mithali Raj leads the One Day International (ODI) team of India has joined the Charlotte Edwards of England in elite club.
- Mithali reached the milestone in the ongoing third One-day International (ODI) against South Africa in Lucknow on 12th march 2021.
- Mithali achieved the feat with a boundary off Anne Bosch in the 28th over of India's innings during the ongoing third ODI against South Africa.
- Mithali has scored 6974 runs in ODIs while in the T20Is, she has 2,364 runs to her name and 663 runs in the test matches.



Reference- <https://indianexpress.com/article/sports/cricket/mithali-raj-becomes-1st-indian-woman-cricketer-to-score-10000-international-runs-7225008/>.

Short Notes

Personalities

Atish Chandra

Question: Who has been appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director of Food Corporation of India?

(a) Atish Chandra (b) Sanjiv Kumar (c) Gudey Srinivas (d) Vivek Aggarwal

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Atish Chandra has been appointed as Chairman and Managing Director, Food Corporation of India in the rank and pay of Additional Secretary.
- He is a 1994 batch IAS officer of Bihar cadre.
- He is currently serving as Joint Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare.



Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/uidai-fci-get-new-heads-in-govt-reshuffle/article34165359.ece>

Hashmatullah Shahidi

Question: Who became the first Afghanistan player to score a Test cricket double century?

- (a) Hashmatullah Shahidi (b) Usman Ghani
(c) Asghar Afghan (d) Mohammad Nabi

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Afghanistan's Hashmatullah Shahidi became the first batsman from the country to register a double hundred in Test cricket.
- His maiden test double century came in the second Test played between 10-14 March 2021 against Zimbabwe in Abu Dhabi.
- He made 200 not out off 443 balls with 21 fours and one six.
- Shahidi made his Test debut in Afghanistan's first-ever Test, against India in Bengaluru in 2018.

**Links:**

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/sports/cricket/news/afghanistan-vs-zimbabwe-2nd-test-hashmatullah-shahidi-becomes-first-afghan-player-to-smash-test-double-hundred/articleshow/81452073.cms>

Saurabh Garg

Question: Who has been appointed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)?

- (a) Saurabh Garg (b) Ajay Bhushan Pandey (c) Rajeev Bhusan (d) Anil Soni

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Saurabh Garg has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).
- He is a 1991 batch IAS officer.
- Prior to the appointment, Saurabh Garg was serving in his cadre state Odisha.



About UIDAI:

- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) is a statutory authority established under the provisions of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act,

2016 on 12 July 2016 by the Government of India, under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

- UIDAI was created with the objective to issue Unique Identification numbers (UID), named as “Aadhaar”, to all residents of India.
- The UID had to be (a) robust enough to eliminate duplicate and fake identities, and (b) verifiable and authenticable in an easy, cost-effective way.
- The first UID number was issued on 29 September 2010 to a resident of Nandurbar, Maharashtra.

Links:

<https://government.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/digital-india/saurabh-garg-appointed-uidai-ceo-sanjeev-kumar-to-be-aai-chief/81701306>

Sanjeev Kumar

Question: Who has been appointed the Chairman of the Airports Authority of India (AAI)?

(a) Sanjeev kumar (b) Rajeev Kumar (c) Rajnish Kumar (d) Deepka Mishra

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Sanjeev Kumar was appointed as Chairman of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) under the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- He is a 1993-batch IAS officer of Maharashtra cadre.
- The Airports Authority of India or AAI is a statutory body came into being on 1st April 1995.
- AAI is entrusted with the responsibility of creating, upgrading, maintaining and managing civil aviation infrastructure both on the ground and air space in the country.



Links:

<https://www.businesstoday.in/current/economy-politics/saurabh-garg-appointed-uidai-chief-sanjeev-kumar-to-be-aai-head/story/434949.html#:~:text=The%201993%20batch%20IAS%20officer,secretary%2C%20Ministry%20of%20Civil%20Aviation.>

Asha Bhosle

Question: Which Indian singer was announced for the Maharashtra Bhushan Award for the year 2020?

(a) Lata Mangeshkar (b) Asha Bhosle (c) Shreya Ghosal (d) Usha Uthup

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Legendary singer Asha Bhosle will be honoured with the prestigious Maharashtra Bhushan Award for the year 2020.
- She was selected by a committee chaired by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.
- Ms Bhosle sister Lata Mangeshkar had won the award for 1997.
- In his past recognitions, Ms Bhosle had been conferred the Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2000.



Maharashtra Bhushan Award:

- Maharashtra Bhushan Award was instituted in 1996 by the State government to recognise distinguished work and achievements of eminent persons from the State, representing different walks of life.
- The award carries a cash prize of ₹10 lakh and a citation.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/entertainment/asha-bhosle-to-be-honoured-with-maharashtra-bhushan/article34165808.ece>

Dr. Vivek Murthy

Question: Which Indian-American has been appointed the surgeon general of United States President Joe Biden?

(a) Vivek Murthy (b) Gautam Raghavan (c) Mala Adiga (d) Vedant Patel

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Indian-American physician Dr. Vivek Murthy has been appointed the surgeon general of United States President Joe Biden.
- The 43-year-old Dr Vivek Murthy, would occupy the position of America's Surgeon General for the second time.
- Murthy will be the 21st surgeon general of the US. He had also earlier served under the Barack Obama administration from 2014 to 2017 and was fired by the former US President Donald Trump.
- Dr Vivek Murthy was born in Huddersfield, Yorkshire to immigrants from Karnataka. When he was a three-year-old, the family relocated to Miami.



Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/indian-american-physician-vivek-murthy-senate-biden-surgeon-general-1782917-2021-03-24>

New Director General of NSG

Question: Who took over as the new Director General of National Security Guard (NSG) on March 18, 2021?

(a) Anoop Kumar Singh (b) Dinesh Pathak (c) M A Ganapathy (d) Sudeep Lakhtakia

Answer:(c)

Related facts:

- On 18 March 2021, M.A. Ganapathy took over as the new Director General of National Security Guard (NSG).
- He is a 1986 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Uttarakhand cadre.
- He was serving as Director General, Bureau of Civil Aviation and Security (BCAS).



About NSG:

- National Security Guard (NSG) is Federal Contingency World Class Zero Error Force to deal with anti-terrorist activities. It is an elite unit under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
- It was founded on 22 September 1986 under the National Security Guard Act, 1986.
- It is headquartered in Manesar, Gurugram.

Links:

https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/elections/assembly-elections/west-bengal/m-a-ganapathy-appointed-nsg-chief-kuldiep-singh-to-head-crpf/articleshow/81537251.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

Arindam Bagchi

Question: Who took charge as the new spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)?

(a) Anurag Srivastava (b) Arindam Bagchi (c) Aurag Kapoor (d) Rishi Bhardwaj

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Arindam Bagchi has assumed charge as the new spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- He is a 1995 batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer.
- He replaced Anurag Srivastava at this post.
- Prior to this, Bagchi was serving as the joint secretary (north) at the MEA headquarters.



Links:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/arindam-bagchi-succeeds-anurag-srivastava-as-mea-spokesperson-101616259919859.html>

Question: Who has been appointed next director and chief executive of the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER)?

(a) Gita Gopinath (b) Anshula Kant (c) Deepak Mishra (d) Rajat Kathuria

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Deepak Mishra has been appointed as the next director and chief executive of the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER).
- He will replace Rajat Kathuria who has been heading the ICRIER since 1st September 2012.
- Deepak Mishra is currently working as the Practice Manager in the World Bank's Macroeconomics, Trade, and Investment Global Practice.
- Deepak Mishra has led various key positions including co-director of the World Development Report 2016 (Digital Dividends), country economist for Ethiopia, Pakistan, Sudan, and Vietnam.



Links:

<https://www.livemint.com/companies/people/world-bank-economist-deepak-mishra-appointed-as-icrier-chief-executive-11615791294573.html>

First Indian chairperson of Advisory Committee at Human Rights Council

Question – Who among the following has been appointed as the first Indian Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council?

(a) Ajai Mathur (b) Indramani Pandey (c) Ajai Malhotra (d) Rahul Bhatnagar

Answer – (c)

Related facts

- Ajai Malhotra has recently been appointed as the first Indian Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council.
- He has previously served as ambassador to Russia (2011 to 2013), Kuwait (2009 to 2011), Ambassador and DEputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York (from 2005 to 2009) and Romania (with concurrent accreditation to Moldova and Albania) from 2003 to 2005.



Link:

<https://www.aninews.in/news/world/europe/ajai-malhotra-becomes-first-indian-chairperson-of-advisory-committee-at-human-rights-council20210215235727/>

New director general of NSG

Question – Who took over as the new Director General of National Security Guard on March 18, 2021?

(a) Anoop Kumar Singh (b) Dinesh Pathak (c) M A Ganapathy (d) Sudeep Lakhtakia

Answer – (c)

Related facts

- M A Ganapathy took over as the new Director General of National Security Guard on March 18, 2021.
- His term will be till 29 February 2024.
- Prior to this, he was working as Director General in the Civil Aviation Security Bureau (BCAS).
- Significantly, the NSG was established in 1986 as a federal contingency force to deal with terrorist and kidnapping incidents.
- It is headquartered in Manesar, Gurugram.



Link:

https://nsg.gov.in/sites/default/files/pre_eng_dg.pdf

New Director General CRPF

Question: Who has been appointed the new Director General of CRPF?

(a) B.B. Mishra (b) Sujit Pandey (c) Kuldiep Singh (d) S.S. Deswal

Answer- (c)

Related facts

- Kuldiep Singh was appointed the new Director General of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).
- He has been appointed DG, CRPF up to September 30, 2022.
- He is a 1986 batch IPS officer of the West Bengal cadre.
- He is presently the Special DG, CRPF.
- He will replace A P Maheshwari.



Links:

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/ma-ganapathy-appointed-nsg-chief-kuldiep-singh-to-head-crpf-11615913486684.html> **New Director General CRPF**

Dr Harsh Vardhan

Question: Who has been appointed as the Chairman of the international body Stop TB Partnership Board?

(a) Abhinav Gupta (b) Dr Harsh Vardhan (c) Agam Mittal (d) Arun Kumar Gupta

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 18 March 2021, Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, has been appointed the Chairman of the international body Stop TB Partnership Board.
- He was appointed in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the movement to eradicate Tuberculosis from India by 2025.
- He will serve a three-year term, commencing from July this year.



Stop TB Partnership:

- The Stop TB Partnership is a unique international body with the power to align actors all over the world in the fight against TB.
- The partnership was established in the year 2000.
- The Partnership's vision is a TB-free world.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1705468>

Lou Ottens

Question: Recently a Dutch inventor Lou Ottens has died, which of the following item was invented by him?

a) Colour Television b) Audio Cassette Tapes c) Washing Machine d) Pen drive

Answer: (b)

Related Facts:

- On 07 March, 2021 Lou Ottens, the Dutch inventor of audio cassette tapes, has died at the age of 94.
- Lou Ottens, who engineered the concept of magnetic tape players and compact discs (CDs), passed away at his home on Sunday in Duizel, the Netherlands.
- Ottens was Born on June 21, 1926, from early childhood days he showed keen interest in engineering and even built a radio as a teenager.
- Radio made by him was used by his family used to receive Radio Oranje during Germany's wartime occupation of the Netherlands.
- The device that he made was equipped with a directional antenna which he termed as Germanenfilter because it was resistant to the jammers used by the Nazi regime.
- After the war, Ottens obtained an engineering degree and joined Philips in 1952. Five years after joining Philips, Ottens became the head of the company's product development department at its audio plant in Hasselt, Belgium.
- In 1960, Ottens with his team developed the first portable tape recorder and two years later, he invented CDs.



Links:-

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/11/lou-ottens-inventor-of-the-cassette->

Sushil Kumar

Question: Who has been re-elected the President of School Games Federation of India(SGFI)?

(a) Deepak Kumar (b) Sushil Kumar (c) Sakshi Malik (d) Gautam Gambhir

Answer: (b)

Related facts

- Two-time Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar has been re-elected as the president of the School Games Federation of India (SGFI).
- Also, Vijay Santan will serve as the secretary.
- SGFI elections were conducted as per the 2011 National Sports Development Code of India.
- According to the sports ministry's directive, SGFI left out those candidates who had been charged with some kind of misconduct.
- The SGFI elections were held in December last year at Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu. However the government canceled the elections on the grounds of violation of the provisions of the National Sports Code.
- The Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs then had issued a directive for re-election as per the National Sports Code, 2011 guidelines.



Links:

<https://theguardian.com/sushil-kumar-re-elected-as-school-games-federation-of-india-president/>

Hamed Bakayoko

Question: Which country incumbent Prime Minister Hamed Bakayoko passed away on 10 March 2021?

(a) Ivory Coast (b) Liberia (c) Benin (d) Guinea

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The incumbent Prime Minister of Ivory Coast, Hamed Bakayoko, has passed away on March 10 2021.
- He was suffering from cancer.
- He took charge as country's Prime minister in July 2020 following the sudden death of his predecessor, Amadou Gon Coulibaly.
- President of Ivory Coast, Alassane Ouattara, has named Patrick Achi as interim prime minister in place of Bakayoko.
- Patrick Achi was serving as the chief of defence staff of the country.



Links:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/10/ivory-coast-prime-minister-hamed-bakayoko-dies-at-56>

Sama Lukonde Kyenge

Question : Democratic Republic of Congo President Felix Tshisekedi has recently appointed __ as Prime Minister. Fill the blank space with appropriate option given below ---

(a) Clement Mouamba (b) Bernard K (c) C D Ganao (d) Sama Lukonde Kyenge

Ans.(d)

Related facts

- Democratic Republic of Congo President Felix Tshisekedi has recently appointed Sama Lukonde Kyenge as Prime Minister.
- The appointment on Monday(15 February 2021) of Sama Lukonde Kyenge, the director general of Gecamines and ally of the president, should help Tshisekedi install a more loyal cabinet to push through his agenda.
- 43-year-old Lukonde was the general director of the state's mining company in Congo.
- Lukonde has been a sports minister once.
- Currently Lukonde is a member of the Democratic Republic Party of Congo.



Link:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/15/drc-president-tshisekedi-appoints-sama-lukonde-kyenge-as-new-pm>

Pronita Gupta

Question: In February 2021, Pronita Gupta of Indian origin has been named special assistant to the President of which country for labor and workers in the domestic policy council?

(a) Britain (b) United States of America
(c) New Zealand (d) Canada

Answer – (b)

Related facts

- In February ,2021, Pronita Gupta of Indian origin has been named Special Assistant to US President Joe Biden for Labor and Workers in the Domestic Policy Council.
- Prior to this she was the Director of the Job Quality Team at the Center for Law and Special Policy.
- She has also previously been the Deputy Director of the Women's Bureau in the Department of Labor from April 2014 to January 2017 in the second term of former US President Barack Obama.



Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/nri/migrate/indian-american-expert-named-special-assistant-to-president-biden-for-labour-and-workers/articleshow/80967096.cms?from=mdr>

DR AJAY MATHUR

Question – In February 2021, who was elected as the new Director General of the International Solar Alliance?

- (a) Upendra Tripathi (b) Nripendra Mishra
(c) Raghavendra Prasad (d) Dr. Ajay Mathur

Answer – (d)

Related facts

- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) has recently (February 2021) announced Dr Ajay Mathur as its new Director General following his election at the first special Assembly of ISA members.
- The ceremony was hosted by India as the organization's President.
- Incoming Director General Dr. Mathur brings a wealth of leadership expertise across all key areas of energy transition, from policy, research, and technology commercialization to financing, international cooperation and institutional development.
- Currently, also Director General of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), a key driver of the energy transition to renewables and reduction in urban air pollution for the past five years, Dr. Mathur has held leadership appointments at the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, the World Bank, and the Green Climate Fund.
- In 2020, he received an Icon SWM-CE Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to environmental protection.



Link:

<https://isolaralliance.org/uploads/docs/9e1d37de908be8140c9baa0a22310f.pdf>

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Institute of Medical Sciences and Research

Question : Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Institute of Medical Sciences and Research is a super specialty hospital prepared by the _ in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Fill the blank space with appropriate option given below —

- (a) IIT Kharagpur (b) IIT Guwahati (c) IIT Bhubaneswar (d) None of the above

Ans.(a)

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee Institute of Medical Sciences and Research through a video conference during the 66th convocation ceremony of IIT Kharagpur.
- PM addressed 66th Convocation of IIT Kharagpur on February 23, 2021.
- Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Institute of Medical Sciences and Research is a super specialty hospital prepared by the IIT Kharagpur in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.



Link:

<https://www.tv9hindi.com/india/pm-narendra-modi-inaugurate-syama-prasad-mukherjee-institute-iit-kharagpur-554481.html>

Manpreet Vohra

Question: Who has been appointed the next High Commissioner of India to Australia on March 1 2021?

- (a) Sohail Mahmood (b) Taranjit Singh Sandhu
(c) Gaitri I. Kumar (d) Manpreet Vohra

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On 1st March 2021, Manpreet Vohra has been appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to Australia.
- He is a 1988 batch Indian Foreign Service officer.
- Prior to this he was serving as Ambassador of India to Mexico.



Links:

<https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/33575/Shri+Manpreet+Vohra+has+been+appointed+as+the+next+High+Commissioner+of+India+to+Australia>

Yusuf Pathan

Question: Indian all-rounder Yusuf Pathan has announced his retirement from all formats of cricket. He represented which team in the domestic cricket?

- (a) Baroda (b) Hyderabad (c) Vidarbha (d) Saurashtra

Answer: (a)

- Former India all-rounder Yusuf Pathan has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.
- In a career span of nearly 20 years, he played 57 ODIs and 22 T20Is between 2007 and 2012.



- He was part of the 2007 ICC T20 World Cup as well as the 2011 ICC ODI World Cup winning Indian team.
- In franchise cricket, he is the first player to win three IPL trophies – he was part of the three IPL winning teams i.e. Rajasthan Royals-2008, Kolkata Knight Riders 2012 and 2014.
- In Domestic cricket, Pathan played for Baroda in throughout his career.

Links:

<https://www.icc-cricket.com/news/2044548>

Ligia Noronha

Question: Which Indian economist has been appointed as the Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme?

(a) Ligia Noronha (b) T. S. Tirumurti (c) Ovais Sarmad (d) Samar Sen

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Indian economist Ligia Noronha has been appointed Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- The appointment was announced by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on 25 February 2021.
- Ligia Noronha is an economist with over 30 years of international professional experience in promoting environmental sustainability.
- She was appointed in April 2014 as Director of the UN Environment Programme (UN Environment), Division of Technology, Industry and Economics – now known as the Economy Division.
- Noronha has served on the National Security Advisory Board of the Government of India focusing on the linkages between the environment, climate and security and on several expert committees of the Government of India and Goa.



Links:

<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/statements/ligia-noronha-appointed-assistant-secretary-general-and-head-unep-new>

Places

El Salvador

Question: Which country has been recently declared malaria-free by the World Health Organization?

(a) Burkina Faso (b) Ghana (c) Tanzania (d) El Salvador

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The World Health Organization has declared El Salvador a malaria-free country.
- It is the first country in Central America to be certified malaria-free.
- A country is certified malaria-free by WHO if there has been no indigenous transmission of the disease nationwide for the previous three consecutive years.
- El Salvador hasn't had a malaria outbreak since 1996 and has reported no indigenous cases since 2017.
- In 1990, the country had 9,000 cases per year, a figure that declined to 26 by 2010.



Links:

<https://www.who.int/news/item/25-02-2021-el-salvador-certified-as-malaria-free-by-who#:~:text=El%20Salvador%20is%20a%20member,to%20eliminate%20malaria%20by%202020.>

Sangay volcano

Question – On March 11, 2021, the Sangay volcano exploded. In which country is this volcano located ?

(a) Italy (b) Indonesia (c) Japan (d) Ecuador

Answer – (d)

Related facts

- The Sangay volcano, located in Ecuador, exploded on March 11, 2021.
- This volcano is one of the most active volcanoes in the world along with Ecuador.
- The Sangay volcano's previous moderate eruptions had little impact on Ecuador's population, as the volcano is located in a jungle in the Morona Santiago province.
- Sangay National Park is located in the eastern part of the Andes Mountains in the central part of Ecuador. It is a World Heritage Site.
- The Sangay volcano has recorded activity over the past few weeks, and ash spurted from the volcano has damaged crops and cattle in several areas.



Link:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/world/ecuadors-sangay-volcano-erupts-ash-8-kilometers-7225406/>

India's largest hockey stadium

Question- Where is India's largest hockey stadium being built?

(a) Patiala (b) New Delhi (c) Bhubaneswar (d) Rourkela

Answer – (d)

Related facts

- In February 2021, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laid the foundation stone of India's largest hockey stadium in Rourkela.
- This new stadium will be located in the campus of Biju Patnaik University of Technology.
- The stadium, with a capacity of twenty thousand spectators, is named after freedom fighter Birsa Munda and will feature the 2023 Men's Hockey World Cup matches.



Link:

<https://navbharattimes.indiatimes.com/sports/other-sports/odisha-chief-minister-lays-foundation-of-countrys-largest-hockey-stadium-in-rourkela/articleshow/80988667.cms>

Awards & Honors

Vyas Samman 2020

Question: Who has been conferred the prestigious Vyas Samman 2020?

- (a) Sharad Pagare (b) Arundhati Subramaniam (c) Mohankrishna Bohara
(d) Mamta Kalia

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Hindi writer Prof. Sharad Pagare will be conferred with the prestigious Vyas Samman – 2020.
- He has been awarded for his novel 'Patliputru Ki Samragi.'
- The Vyas Samman, started in 1991, is given by K K Birla Foundation for an outstanding literary work in Hindi authored by an Indian citizen published during the last 10 years.
- It carries an award of four lakh rupees along with a citation and plaque.



Links:

<http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=412704#:~:text=Well%20known%20Hindi%20writer%20Prof,during%20the%20last%2010%20years.>

SJA British Sports Journalism Award 2020 : Michael Holding awarded 'Best pundit'

Question : West Indies great Michael Holding, who came out in support of the _ movement, has been named the 'Best Pundit' at the SJA British Sports Journalism Award 2020.

Fill the blank space with appropriate option given below.

- (a) Black Lives Matter (b) Me too (c) International non-violence

(d) None of the above

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- Michael Holding has recently(March 2021) been named the 'Best Pundit' at the SJA British Sports Journalism Award 2020.
- Michael Holding is a former West Indian cricketer.
- Background for selection for award
- Holding had delivered a powerful message against racism during last year's England-West Indies series, saying that blacks have been dehumanised and their accomplishments wiped off from a history "written by people who do the harm."
- Thoughts of the Best Pundit
- Asked if he thinks that 2020 will play a vital role in bringing about change in social and racial equality, Holding said: "I believe so and I hope so. If you just look at the protests on the road and look at the faces of the people that were on the road."



Link:

<https://sportstar.thehindu.com/cricket/michael-holding-best-pundit-sja-british-sports-journalism-award-2020-winner/article34080838.ece>

Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Puraskar, 2020

Question- On March 12, 2021, Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Puraskar, 2020 was announced by Sahitya Akademi. In this, who was awarded this award for Hindi language ?

(a) Prakrita Gupta (b) Ajit 'Bar' (c) Balswarup Rahi (d) Siyaram Jha

Answer – (c)

Related facts

- On March 12, 2021, Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Puraskar, 2020 was announced by Sahitya Akademi.
- Balswarup Rahi was awarded this award for Hindi language.
- Under this award, an engraved copperplate and an amount of 50000 rupees are awarded.
- Balaswarop Rahi's work 'Sampoorna Bal Kavitaen' has been selected for this award for Hindi language.

Link:

http://sahitya-akademi.gov.in/pdf/Pressrelease_BSP-2020.pdf

67th National Film Awards

Question – The 67th National Film Awards, 2019 was announced on 22 March 2021. Consider the following statements related to this:

(i) Announcement of the award of Best Actor for Dhanush and Manoj Bajpayee jointly.

(ii) The announcement of the award of the most film-friendly state to Madhya Pradesh.

(iii) Announcement of the best actress award to Kangana Ranaut.

Which of the statements given above is / are correct?

(a) (i) and (ii) only (b) Only (i) and (iii) (c) Only (ii) and (iii) (d) All of the above

Answer – (b)

Related facts

The 67th National Film Awards, 2019 was announced on 22 March 2021.

Key points

1. Sikkim wins award for Most Film Friendly State
2. An Engineered Dream wins Best Film in Non-Feature Film category, Marakkar-Arabikkadalinte-Simham bags Best Feature Film award
3. Maharshi wins Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment; Anandi Gopal takes the award for Best Film on Social Issues
4. B Praak wins Best Male Playback Singer for 'Teri Mitti' from the movie Kesari; Oththa Seruppu Size-7 bags Special Jury Award
5. Dhanush and Manoj Bajpayee share the award for Best Actor
6. Kangana Ranaut wins Best Actress award for Manikarnika-The Queen of Jhansi and Panga



Link:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1706663>

Pritzker Architecture Prize 2021

Question: Who has been named for the Pritzker Architecture Prize 2021?

(a) Anne Lacaton (b) Jean-Philippe Vassal (c) Both (a) & (b) (d) Yvonne Farrell

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- French architects and educators Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal were selected as the laureates of the Pritzker Architecture Prize 2021.
- Pritzker Architecture Prize is the highest honour in the field of architecture.
- Anne Lacaton became the first French female architect to win the prize and the 6th woman to receive the prize since it was established in 1979.
- The Prize was established by the Pritzker family of Chicago through their Hyatt Foundation in 1979.



Links:

<https://www.pritzkerprize.com/>

Sahitya Akademi Awards

Question- Consider the following statements with respect to 'Sahitya Akademi award 2020'.

(1)Sahitya Akademi was established in 1954 by Government of India.

(2)It is the second highest literary award after Jnanpith award.

(3) Anamika won the Sahitya Akademi Award 2020 for her collection of poems 'Tokri Mein Digant: Their Gatha:2014.'

Which of the above given statements is/are correct?

(a) Only 1 and 2 (b) Only 2 And 3 (c) All of the above (d) Only 1 and 3

Ans. (c)

Related facts-

About- The Sahitya Akademi was formally established by the Government of India on 12 March 1954.

- It is the central institution for literary dialogue, publication and promotion in the country and the only institution that undertakes literary activities in 24 Indian languages, including English.
- The Sahitya Akademi award is the second-highest literary honour by the Government of India, after the Jnanpith award.
- Awardees of Sahitya Akademi award 2020-
 - Anamilka won the Sahitya Akademi Award 2020 for her collection of poems 'Tokri Mein Digant–Theri Gatha: 2014 in Hindi language category.
 - Tamil writer Iyayam, who calls himself a writer of the Dravidian movement and captures the stark realities of the caste system and the lives of Mahadalits, won the Sahitya Akademi Award for 2020 for his novel ' Sellaatha Panam.'
 - Arundhathi Subramaniam won the award for her poetry collection 'when God is a Traveller' in English.
 - M Veerappa Moily also received the award for his epic poem 'Sri Bahubali Ahimsadigvijayam in Kannada.
 - Harish Meenakshi (Gujarati), RS Bhaskar (Konkani), Irungbam Deven (Manipuri), Rupchand Hansda (Santali), and Nikhileswar (Telugu).
 - Nanda Khare (Marathi), Maheshchandra Sharma Gautam (Sanskrit), and Sri Hussain-ul-Haque(Urdu).



Reference- <http://sahitya-akademi.gov.in/pdf/sahityaakademiawards2020.pdf>.

King Bhumbol World Soil Day – 2020 Award

Question: Which institution has been conferred the prestigious King Bhumbol World Soil Day – 2020 Award of Food and Agriculture Organization?

- (a) Indian Council of Agricultural Research (b) Indian Agriculture Research Institute
(c) Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research (d) Forest Research Institute

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 10 March 2021, Suchitra Durai, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Thailand received the prestigious “King Bhumibol World Soil Day – 2020 Award” of FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) on the behalf of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.
- The international recognition was announced by the FAO, Rome on the eve of World Soil Day – 2020 in view of the ICAR’s excellent contributions in “Soil Health Awareness” on the theme “Stop soil erosion, save our future” during the last year.
- King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award was launched in 2018.
- The award acknowledges individuals or institutions that raise public awareness of soils by organizing successful and influential World Soil Day celebrations.
- The award, sponsored by the Kingdom of Thailand, is named after King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand for his lifelong commitment to raising awareness of the importance of sustainable soil management and rehabilitation for food security, poverty alleviation and more.
- Among former winners, Practical Action in Bangladesh won the award in 2018 and the Costa Rican Soil Science Society (AACS) in 2019.



Links:

<http://www.fao.org/global-soil-partnership/resources/highlights/detail/en/c/1334384/>

2021 Film Archive Award

Question: Which Indian actor will be conferred with the 2021 Film Archive Award?

(a) Amitabh Bachchan (b) Shah Rukh Khan (c) Dilip Kumar (d) Anupam Kher

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Bollywood veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan will be conferred with the 2021 Film Archive Award by the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF).
- He will be the first Indian cinema personality to be bestowed with the FIAF Award for his dedication and contribution to the preservation of the world’s film heritage.
- Amitabh Bachchan was nominated for the award by the FIAF affiliate Film Heritage Foundation which is a not-for-profit organisation founded by Shivendra Singh Dungarpur a filmmaker & archivist. This foundation is dedicated to preserve, restore, document, exhibit and study the film heritage of India.
- The FIAF is a worldwide organisation, comprising film archives and museums from across the world.



- Hollywood filmmakers and previous recipients of the FIAF Award — Martin Scorsese and Christopher Nolan — will present the award to Bachchan during a virtual showcase scheduled to take place on March 19.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/entertainment/bollywood/martin-scorsese-and-christopher-nolan-to-felicitate-amitabh-bachchan-with-fiaf-award-7222030/>

BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award -2020

Question: Who has won the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award (ISWOTY) for 2020?

(a) Mary Kom (b) P V Sindhu (c) Anju Bobby George (d) Koneru Humpy

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Chess player Koneru Humpy from Andhra Pradesh has won the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award (ISWOTY) for 2020.
- The award was presented on the basis of public vote.
- Humpy has won the World Rapid Championship 2019 title in December 2019.
- In 2020, she won the Cairns Cup, an elite-level tournament for the top female players.
- Humpy became the youngest grandmaster in 2002 at the age of 15. She has received the Arjuna Award in 2003 and the Padma Shri in 2007.
- Former long jumper Anju Bobby George has been conferred the Lifetime Achievement award for her contribution to Indian sport. She remains the only athlete to win a World Championship athletics medal for her country.
- Manu Bhaker received the Emerging Player of the Year award. This category is added to the BBC ISWOTY awards for the first time.
- Manu Bhaker became the youngest Indian(19 year) to clinch the women's 10m air pistol gold at the Shooting World Cup in 2018.
- The BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year initiative was launched in 2019 to celebrate female achievements in sport and highlight the issues and challenges faced by women and girls in India.



Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Chess-player-Koneru-Humpy-from-Andhra-Pradesh-wins-BBC-ISWOTY-for-2020&id=411495>

Bihari Puraskar 2020

Question: Who has been conferred the 30th Bihari Puraskar for year 2020?

(a) Vijay Varma (b) Mohan Krishna Bohara (c) Manisha Kulshrestha

(d) Bhagwati Lal Vyas

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 4th March 2021, 30th Bihari Puraskar for year 2020 was announced in New Delhi.
- Mohankrishna Bohara for his Hindi book of Criticism, titled Taslima: Sangharsh aur Sahitya has been named the winner of award.
- The book was published in 2016.
- Bihari Puraskar carries prize money of Rs 2,50,000, a Citation and a Plaque.
- It is one of the three literary awards instituted by the K.K. Birla Foundation in 1991. Others are Saraswati Samman and Vyas Samman.



Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Bihari-Puraskar-2020-to-be-awarded-to-Mohankrishna-Bohara&id=411099>

Planning & Project

MoRTH : New scheme for tourist vehicle operators

Question – Which ministry has announced a new scheme for tourist vehicle operators in March 2021?

- (a) Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (b) Ministry of Tourism
(c) Ministry of External Affairs (d) Ministry of Urban Development

Answer – (a)

Related facts

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has recently (March 2021) announced a new scheme, under which any tourist vehicle operator may apply for an “All India Tourist Authorization/Permit” through online mode.
- It will be issued, after relevant documents are submitted and fees deposited, within 30 days of submission of such applications.
- The new set of rules, to be known as, “All India Tourist Vehicles Authorization and Permit Rules, 2021” has been published vide GSR 166(E) dated 10 March 2021.
- The new rules will be applicable from 01 April 2021. All existing permits shall continue to be in force during their validity.
- The rules come even as the Ministry is in the pursuit of providing seamless movement to tourist passenger vehicles, after the success of goods carriage vehicles under National Permit Regime.



- Moreover, the scheme allows flexibility in the form of authorization/permit being granted, for a period of three months or its multiples thereof, not exceeding three years at a time.
- The step comes in the context of travel and tourism industry in our country increasing manifold in last fifteen years.
- The growth has been contributed by both domestic and international tourists, and there is a trend of high expectation and consumer experience.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1704677>

Hari Har Scheme

Question – In March 2021, ‘Hari Hara Yojana’ has been launched to provide protection and shelter to abandoned children (children whose parents have no information about it) in which state ?

(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Uttarakhand (c) Haryana (d) Himachal Pradesh

Answer – (c)

Related facts

- In March 2021, ‘Hari Hara Yojana’ has been launched to provide protection and shelter to abandoned children (children whose parents have no information about it) in Haryana.
- Haryana Chief Minister, Sh Manohar Lal touched by the life story of an abandoned child decided that the state will be the guardian of the abandoned children.
- The abandoned child will be given shelter at state run destitute home till 18 years of age and thereafter the state will provide financial aid to him/her for further education.
- The destitute children who have completed schooling will be eligible for Grade C & D government jobs on basis of ex-gratia till 25 years of age.
- If the child completes graduation then he will be provided reservation in Group A & B government jobs under EWS category.

Link:

<https://prharyana.gov.in/en/haryana-government-has-taken-steps-to-ensure-that-the-state-is-anemia-and-malnutrition-free>

India’s first Government Run Animal Ambulance Network

Question: Which state has decided to set up “India’s first government-run ambulance network” for animals?

a) Harayana b) Tamil Nadu c) Maharashtra d) Andhra Pradesh

Ans: d)

Context

- State government of Andhra Pradesh has decided to set up “India’s first government-run ambulance network” for animals.

Facts

- It will be set up by Animal Husbandry Department and will have one Mobile Ambulance Veterinary Clinic at every assembly constituency.
- A total of 175 mobile ambulances (veterinary) clinics will be placed at Assembly Constituency Level on the lines of 108 Services for providing Veterinary services at the doorstep.
- One of the major facilities these ambulances will provide is the ‘Hydraulic Lift’ facility to lift animals and shift them to the nearest Government Veterinary Facility in case of emergency.
- This service will have a 24/7 toll-free call centre.



Reference: <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/andhra-to-launch-india-s-first-govt-run-ambulance-network-for-animals-11616458032408.html>

Defence Ministry deal to acquire 4,690 anti-tank guided missiles

Question: The Defence Ministry on 19 March 2021, sealed a deal with state-run Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL) to acquire 4,960 MILAN-2T anti-tank guided missiles. Which company is manufacturer of this missile system?

- a) Bharat Dynamics Ltd b) MBDA Missile Systems, France
c) Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, Israel d) None of the above

Ans: b

Context

- On 19 March 2021, Defence Ministry signed a deal with state-run Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL) to acquire 4,960 anti-tank guided missiles at a cost of ₹1,188 crore for the Indian Army.
- **Facts**
- MILAN-2T anti-tank guided missiles which will be acquired from BDL, is built by BDL under license from French defence major MBDA Missile Systems.
- These missiles can be fired from ground as well as vehicle-based launchers and can be deployed in anti-tank role for both offensive and defensive tasks.



Reference: <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/defence-ministry-seals-deal-to-acquire-4-690-india-made-milan-2t-anti-tank-missiles-for-army-2394950>

Mobile Integrated Network Terminal (MINT) systems for Indian Army

Question: Consider the following statement regarding Mobile Integrated Network Terminal (MINT) systems-

- i) Indian Army will acquire Mobile Integrated Network Terminal (MINT) systems.**
- ii) It will enhance the operational communication capability of the Indian Army**
- iii) It will be acquired under Make II Category of DAP 2020 in accordance with AtmaNirbhar Bharat initiative.**

Which of the above are correct-

- a) only i b) ii and iii c) i , ii and iii d) only ii**

Ans: c

Context

- Indian Army is in the process of procuring Mobile Integrated Network Terminal (MINT) systems under Make II Category of DAP 2020.



Facts

- MINT is a lightweight, portable, state of art integrated communication solution with satellite backhaul and wireless access system to support voice, video and data.
- This system will enhance the operational communication capability of the field army in consonance to the self-reliance vision of “Aatmanirbhar Bharat” for Defence production.

Make II category of funding

- Projects under ‘Make-II’ category will involve prototype development of equipment/ system/ platform or their upgrades or their sub-systems/ sub-assembly/assemblies/ components, primarily for import substitution/innovative solutions, for which no Government funding will be provided for prototype development purposes.

Reference: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1704393>

HDFC Bank SmartUp Unnati Programme

Question : HDFC Bank SmartUp Unnati Programme is a mentorship programme that gives a platform to women entrepreneurs, to interact with and get advice from _.

Fill the blank space with appropriate option given below —

- (a) Top women leaders of HDFC Bank**
- (b) Executives of employment exchanges**
- (c) Top motivational leaders of India**
- (d) None of the above**

Ans.(a)

- On March 8, 2021 HDFC Bank launched SmartUp Unnati programme for women entrepreneurs.

Objective

- It is notable that eight March is recognized as International Women day.
- The objective of the programme is to drum up the bank's support of women's empowerment with HDFC Bank Unnati – an initiative that aims to recognise and felicitate women from all walks of life.
- The platform is aimed at helping aspiring women entrepreneurs to overcome business challenges and explore new opportunities for growth.



About the programme

- It is a mentorship programme that gives a platform to women entrepreneurs, to interact with and get advice from top women leaders of HDFC Bank.
- This programme is available only to exist customers.
- 'SmartUp Unnati' will initially target more than 3,000 women entrepreneurs associated with the HDFC bank's SmartUp programme.
- It is notable that HDFC Bank had launched an online mentoring platform for banking start-ups in 2018 under its SmartUp Program.

Link:

<https://v1.hdfcbank.com/htdocs/common/2021/mar/womens-day/index.html>

Arjuna Sahayak Project

Question : What is the purpose of Arjuna Sahayak Project?

- a) Hydro energy generation b) Irrigation c) Irrigation and drinking water
d) none of the above

Ans: c

Context

- While addressing a gathering after inspecting the Lahchura Dam under the Arjun Sahayak Project in Mahoba district CM of UP , Shri Yogi Adityanath has said that "Arjuna Sahayak Irrigation Project" will be completed and launched in one or two months in the state of Uttar Pradesh. The project will be inaugurated by the Prime Minister.



Facts

- The launching of the project was announced by the Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath, on March 11, 2021.

About Arjun Sahayak Project

- It is an irrigation project which envisages use of surplus water of river Dhasan during monsoon to fill existing Arjun, Chandrawal and Kabrai Dam, through feeder channel from Lahchura Dam.
- The project will provide irrigation facilities to 1.5 lakh farmers across 168 villages of Banda, Mahoba and Hamirpur in Uttar Pradesh. The irrigation facility will be provided to the area of 15,000 hectares under this project.
- After this project is completed, around four lakh people will get pure drinking water.

Reference: <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/lucknow/arjuna-sahayak-irrigation-project-to-change-farmers-lives-yogi-adityanath-7223128/>

Maitri Setu

Question: ‘Maitri Setu’ is constructed between which two countries?

a) India , Bangladesh b) India , Nepal c) Nepal , Bangladesh d) India , Bhutan

Ans: a)

Context

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will inaugurate ‘Maitri Setu’ between India and Bangladesh on 9th March 2021 at 12 noon via video conferencing.

Facts

- The bridge ‘Maitri Setu’ has been built over Feni river which flows between Indian boundary in Tripura State and Bangladesh.
- The name ‘Maitri Setu’ symbolizes growing bilateral relations and friendly ties between India and Bangladesh.
- It is 1.9 Km long bridge which joins Sabroom, Tripura in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh.

Significance of the bridge

- It will open a new chapter for trade and people to people movement between India and Bangladesh.
- With this inauguration, Tripura is set to become the ‘Gateway of North East’ with access to Chittagong Port of Bangladesh, which is just 80 Kms from Sabroom.
- It will reduce the strategic problem of accessing North East region from mainland India in case chicken’s nook gets compromised.



Reference: https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/news_updates/pm-to-inaugurate-maitri-setu-between-india-and-bangladesh-on-9th-

Mission to Map Genomes in the Indian Ocean Launched

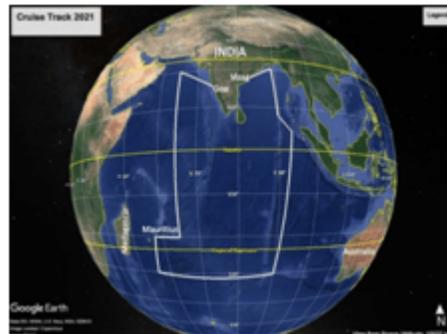
Question: which of the following organisation set to launch the cruise mission to map genomes in the Indian Ocean?

- a) Tata Institute of Fundamental Research b) CSIR-NIO c) IISc
d) None of these

Answer: (b)

Related Facts:-

- Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Institute of Oceanography (CSIR-NIO) set to launch scientific cruise mission in the Indian Ocean.
- This will be a 90 day mission to sample water, sediments, planktons and various organisms in search of genomes and micro-nutrients.
- It has been expected from this cruise scientific mission that it may help strengthening country's research into commercial biotechnology.
- Research undertaken through this mission will be used in applications including anticancer treatments as well as help understand the climate change patterns.
- This expedition will begin in the second week of March 2021 from Visakhapatnam with 30 scientists onboard.
- The expedition will cover 9000 nautical miles culminating the trip at Goa in mid May-2021.
- During the whole trip cruise will go through the waters between Australia and Maldives.
- The mission has the objective to identify and characterise the genes and proteins in the ocean to understand the cellular level operations of the organisms in the ocean.



Links:-

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/first-project-to-map-genomes-in-indian-ocean/articleshow/81302675.cms>

New passenger train service to start between Dhaka and New Jalpaiguri

Question: Bangladesh railway has announced New passenger train service to start between Dhaka and New Jalpaiguri. It will be flagged off on 26 march 2021 for what reason?

- a) Occasion of the birth centenary celebration of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib
b) To commemorate 50 years of Liberation of Bangladesh
c) Both a and b d) none of the above

Ans: c)

Context

- According to an official release by the Bangladesh Rail Ministry issued on 2nd March 2021, the direct train between Dhaka and New Jalpaiguri will run through the Chilahati-Haldibari cross border rail route.

Facts

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina are expected to flag off the new passenger train on the occasion of the birth centenary celebration of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib and 50 years of Liberation of Bangladesh on March 26.
- The Haldibari-Chilahati train route was opened in December last year for the operation of the goods train after a gap of 55 years during the virtual summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The passenger train will also run on the same route.
- Currently there are two passenger trains running between Bangladesh and India. The Matiree express runs between Dhaka and Kolkata and Bandhan express links Khulna with Kolkata.



Reference: <http://www.ddinews.gov.in/international/new-passenger-train-service-start-between-dhaka-and-new-jalpaiguri-bangladesh-railways>

Treaty & Agreements

India's First Indo-Korean Friendship Park

Question : On which date India's First Indo-Korean Friendship Park was inaugurated ?

(a) 25 March 2021 (b) 24 March 2021 (c) 20 March 2021 (d) None of the above

Ans.(d)

- India's First Indo-Korean Friendship Park was jointly inaugurated by Mr Suh Wook, Hon'ble Minister of National Defence, Republic of Korea and Shri Rajnath Singh, Hon'ble Raksha Mantri, at Delhi Cantonment on 26 Mar 2021.



Significance

- The park's significance is not only because of it being a symbol of strong India-South Korea friendly relations, but also as a monument to India's contributions as part of 21 countries which participated in Korean war 1950-53, under the aegis of the United Nations.
- The park has been developed in joint consultation with Ministry of Defence, Government of India, Indian Army, Delhi Cantonment Board, Emabssy of Korea and Korean War Veterans Association of India.

Characteristics

- Spread across a green area of six acres, the park includes an entrance gate beautifully made in Korean style signifying the graceful culture, a jogging track, well landscaped garden and an amphitheatre.
- The park has an imposing handshake artifact standing tall at the entrance bearing flags of India and South Korea .
- The park also has a larger than life statue of General KS Thimayya, a celebrated soldier who led the Indian contingent as Chairman of Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC) in Korea headed by India.
- The commission, through Custodian Force of India (CFI), was responsible for gathering unrepatriated prisoners of war into camps which was also India's first commitment to a UN assignment after independence.
- The five pillars raised in the backdrop of General Thimayya's statue are embossed with details of operations carried out by 60 Parachute Field Ambulance during the Korean war where they had treated about 1,95,000 cases, and performed about 2,300 field surgeries.
- One pillar also encompasses Nobel Laureate Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's narration of Korea as "The Lamp of the East" which was published in Korean daily "Dong-A-Ilbo" in 1929.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1707844>

Science & Tech : Nokia and Google Cloud partnership

Question : On 15th of March 2021, there has been a partnership by telecom equipment manufacturer Nokia to develop a cloud based 5G radio solution. Which of the following is another party of this agreement ?

(a) Google cloud (b) Hcl tech (c) Infosys (d) None of the above

Answer – (a)

Related facts

- On 15th of March 2021, there has been a partnership by telecom equipment manufacturer Nokia to develop a cloud based 5G radio solution.
- Google cloud is another party of this agreement.
- The two companies will develop 5G solutions combining Nokia's Radio Access Network (RAN), Open RAN, and Cloud RAN, with Google's edge computing platform.
- Building on recent partnership announced in February, new collaboration between Nokia and Google Cloud will deliver additional 5G monetization opportunities for CSPs.

Link:

<https://www.nokia.com/about-us/news/releases/2021/03/15/nokia-and-google-cloud-partner-to-develop-new-cloud-based-5g-radio-solutions/>

India-Finland Virtual Summit

Question – When was the India-Finland Virtual Summit ,2021 organized?

(a) 17 March ,2021 (b) 13 March 2021 (c) 16 March ,2021 (d) 14 March ,2021

Answer – (c)

Related facts

- India-Finland Virtual Summit ,2021 was organized on March 16, 2021.
- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finland Prime Minister Sana Marin participated in this virtual Summit.

- Both leaders discussed the entire gamut of bilateral issues as well as other regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest.
- Both leaders noted that the close relations between India and Finland were based on shared values of democracy, rule of law, equality, freedom of speech, and respect for human rights.
- They reaffirmed their strong commitment to work for multilateralism, a rules-based international order, sustainable development and combating climate change.
- The two leaders reviewed the ongoing bilateral engagements and expressed their desire to further expand and diversify the relationship across sectors such as trade and investment, innovation, education, emerging technologies including Artificial Intelligence, 5G/6G, and quantum computing.
- Clean and green technologies of Finland
- Prime Minister Modi appreciated Finland's leading role in clean and green technologies, and noted the potential for Finnish companies to partner India's drive towards sustainable development.
- In this context, he suggested enhanced cooperation in the areas like renewable and bio-energy, sustainability, edu-tech, pharma and digitization.
- Covid 19 related discussions & forthcoming meetings
- The two leaders also discussed the Covid-19 situation including their respective vaccination drives, and emphasized the importance of global efforts for urgent and affordable access to vaccines across all nations.
- The two leaders looked forward to their forthcoming meetings during the India-EU Leaders' Meeting in Porto and the India-Nordic Summit.



Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1705231>

Signing Ceremony of Letter of Exchange between Ministry of Ayush & WHO SEARO

Question : A letter of exchange has recently been signed between Ministry of Ayush & WHO SEARO. What is the reason of letter of exchange?

- (a) For deputation of AYUSH specialist for WHO's regional traditional medicine program.
- (b) To share knowledge regarding AYUSH medicine
- (c) For dissemination of AYUSH systems in India
- (d) None of the above

Answer – (a)

Related facts



- A letter of exchange has recently (February 2021) been signed between Ministry of Ayush & WHO SEARO.
- WHO SEARO stands for — World Health Organization South East Regional Office.

- This letter of exchange is related to the field of Traditional Medicine.
- It aims to deputation of AYUSH specialist for WHO's regional traditional medicine program.
- The initiative has been taken to support the WHO SEAR implementing the regional traditional medicine action plan, with particular emphasis on the safe and effective use of traditional medicine service including Ayurveda and other Indian traditional systems of medicine and its appropriate integration into national health care systems.
- Efforts will also be made to strengthen capacities of SEAR countries in the area of traditional medicine.
- As a major outcome of this partnership, Ministry of AYUSH and WHO would be working to identify various challenges faced by the member states of SEAR (region) in regulating, integrating and further promoting of Traditional systems of Medicine in the respective countries.
- Further, Ministry of AYUSH and WHO will assist Member States to develop appropriate policy/regulation framework, exchange of information/activities performed for integration of TM in public health and dissemination of information about TM to the community.

Link:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1698177>

Agreement between Coal India and CRIS

Question : Which of the following fact regarding agreement between Coal India and CRIS are correct ?

- (a) Agreement aims to monitor freight movement
- (b) Agreement aims to monitor passenger movement
- (c) Agreement aims to negotiate the disputes of Railways subsidiaries
- (d) None of the above

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- Coal India has recently(February 2021) signed an agreement with Railways' CRIS.
- Agreement aims to monitor freight movement.
- CRIS – stands for Centre for Railway Information Systems.
- It is an arm of Ministry of Railways, for freight monitoring and data sharing.
- About the agreement(MoU)
- Under this agreement CIL will get access to the Freight Operations Information System (FOIS) of Indian Railways, to help the coal miner monitor movement of coal rakes and coal despatch activity.
- The first of its kind data sharing offers CIL a bouquet of benefits that helps it in rationalizing the entire coal supply matrix through rail mode.
- It provides precise details of loading, weightment and unloading details along with turnaround time of rakes.



Link:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/coal-india-signs-mou-with-railways-cris-to-monitor-freight-movement-121022200551_1.html

24th India-USA Executive Steering Group (ESG) Meeting

Question – Where did the 24th India-USA Executive Steering Group meeting held between 22 – 24 February 2021?

(a) New York (b) New Delhi (c) Washington .C. (d) Mumbai

Answer – (b)

- The 24th edition of the India-USA Executive Steering Group (ESG) meeting was held at New Delhi from 22 to 24 Feb 2021.
- The meeting was attended by a 12 member delegation from the US Army in person and virtually by 40 officers from different locations from the USA.
- Major General Daniel McDaniel, Deputy Commanding General, US Army Pacific (USARPAC) was the Head of delegation from the US side. Indian Army delegation comprised of 37 officers.
- The forum is an Army to Army engagement that meets every year alternately in India and USA to discuss Army to Army cooperation.
- A number of contemporary issues of mutual interests were discussed with an aim to enhance the engagements in diverse fields. For the first time the meeting was held both in person and through virtual mode owing to restrictions of COVID-19.
- Relevant issues of defence cooperation and common subjects of Interest were discussed between both sides during the meet.



Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1700779>

Tata group – BigBasket deal

Question – Recently, the Tata group has decided to buy what percentage stake in the online grocery store company Big Basket?

(a) 75 percent (b) 50 percent (c) 80 percent (d) 68 percent

Answer – (d)

Related facts

- Recently(March 2021), the Tata group has decided to buy 68 percent stake in the online grocery store company Big Basket.
- The estimated cost of this deal is rs 9,300-9,500 crore.
- It will be the one of the largest M&A deals in the startup ecosystem.
- Other competitors of the tata group in this deal are Alibaba, Abraaj Group and IFC.
- All the parties are awaiting approval from the Competition Commission of India (CCI).
- About BigBasket
- BigBasket primarily delivers grocery goods found in convenience stores, home essentials and food supplies to its customers.
- BigBasket was founded in December 2011 and has its headquarters in Bangalore, India.

Link:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/tatas-to-buy-68-in-bigbasket-for-rs-9-500-cr-deal-likely-in-4-5-weeks-121021601243_1.html

Partnership for launching of 'RuPay SoftPoS' solution

Question : Which authorities come together to launch 'RuPay SoftPoS' solution ?

- (a) NPCI & SBI Payments (b) BBPS(Bharat Bill Payment System) & BoB
(c) Welspun Investments and Commercials & PNB (d) None of the above

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- NPCI has recently(March 2021) tied-up with SBI Payments to launch 'RuPay SoftPoS' solution.
- RuPay SoftPoS aims at digitally enabling the merchants to turn their smartphones into a PoS machine.
- This innovative and convenient solution will create a low cost, easy to use, acceptance infrastructure for the merchants.
- The RuPay SoftPos will empower customers to make seamless 'Tap and Go' payments using the merchant's NFC enabled smart phones.

Link:

<https://www.npci.org.in/PDF/npci/press-releases/2021/NPCI-Press-Release-NPCI-partners-with-SBI-to-launch-RuPay-SoftPoS-Solution.pdf>

Partnership for setting up joint venture company EMITS

Question : Which companies join hand for setting up joint venture company EMITS to provide solar, battery storage and EV solutions to the Indonesia ?

- (a) Fourth Partner Energy and First Source Ltd
(b) Fourth Partner Energy and Indika Energy
(c) Indika Energy and 3I Infotech
(d) None of the above

Ans.(b)

Related facts

- Fourth Partner Energy, India's leading solar solution firm, has recently(March 2021) announced a partnership with Indika Energy to provide solar, battery storage and EV solutions to Indonesia.
- Both companies join hands for setting up joint venture company EMITS.
- EMITS stands for — Empat Mitra Indika Tenaga Surya.
- EMITS will accelerate Indonesia's renewable energy transition.
- It will offer integrated solar, storage and EV charging solutions to Indonesia's businesses.

Ownership structure

- Indika Energy will hold 51 per cent and Fourth Partner Energy 49 per cent stake in EMITS.
- This partnership was facilitated by TPG's impact investment arm, The Rise Fund – which is the majority shareholder in Fourth Partner Energy.
- With over USD 5 billion in assets under management, The Rise Fund is the largest private markets social impact fund in the world.



Other Indian projects of Fourth Partner Energy

- Fourth Partner Energy has also set up a 50:50 JV with leading commercial EV fleet operator Lithium Urban Technologies in India to set up solar-powered EV charging infrastructure across the country.
- Charging Hubs across Pune and Gurugram have already been commissioned, while hubs across Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Chennai and Jaipur are in the pipeline.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/fourth-partner-energy-ties-up-with-indonesias-indika-energy/articleshow/81350517.cms?from=mdr>

SIDBI and NSE joins hands to test feasibility of debt capital platform for MSMEs

Question : NSE & SIDBI has recently signed MoU to test feasibility of debt capital platform for —

(a) MSMEs (b) Heavy Industries (c) Agro commodities (d) None of the above

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- SIDBI and NSE has recently(March 2021) joined hands for co-operation in various ongoing MSME related initiatives and Exploration of the feasibility of a debt capital market platform for MSMEs.
- Background
- Keeping in view the very large and diversified MSME sector in the country, there is a continuous need for various institutions to co-ordinate and co-operate with each other for the benefit of the MSME sector.
- Both the institutions run several programs for MSMEs, and the co-operation will help increase the impact and reach of these programs.
- Expert committee on MSMEs, headed by Shri U. K. Sinha has made several recommendations for the MSME sector including a need to develop additional instruments for debt and equity which will help crystallize new sources of funding for MSMEs and in this regard, SIDBI will look forward to jointly work with NSE to explore feasibility of a debt platform for unmet needs of the sector.



Link:

<https://www.sidbi.in/files/pressrelease/BL-Press-Release- SIDBI-and-NSE-joins-hands-for-co-operation-in-various-ongoing-MSME-related-initiatives.pdf>

Conference

Launch of 'MICE Roadshow – Meet in India'

Question: Where was 'MICE Roadshow – Meet in India' Brand and Roadmap for Promotion of India as MICE Destination launched on 25th March 2021?

a) Madhya Pradesh b) Uttar Pradesh c) Delhi d) None of the above

Ans: a

Context

- "MICE Roadshow- Meet in India" Brand and Roadmap for Promotion of India as MICE Destination were launched by Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh on March 25, 2021.

- **Facts**

- This was a joint event of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India in association with Madhya Pradesh Tourism and India Convention Promotion Bureau.

- **MICE Destination in India**

- India is aiming to become a MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) destination for world economy which will be revenues to India.
- 'Chhatrasal Convention Centre at Khajuraho developed under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism was also launched on this occasion.
- On this occasion, the Ministry of Tourism plans to launch its campaign "Meet in India" from Khajuraho, which is one of the identified iconic tourist destinations of the country. Recognizing India's huge potential as a MICE destination, 'Meet in India' will be the distinct sub-brand under 'Incredible India' to promote the country as a MICE destination.
- This entire initiative is part of government's Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

Reference: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1707436>

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Reference: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1707436>

7th annual summit of NATHEALTH

Question: Consider following statement regarding 7th annual summit of NATHEALTH-

i) Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare addressed the 7th annual summit of NATHEALTH virtually on 26th March 2021.

ii) Focus of this summit was 'Indian Health system expansion in post-COVID era'.

Which of the above statements are correct?

a) I b)ii c) both i and ii d) none of the above

Ans: c

Context

- Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare ,Dr Harsh Vardhan, addressed the 7th annual summit of NATHEALTH focusing on 'Indian Health system expansion in post-COVID era' through a video conference today.

▪ **Facts**

- Government has launched the “National Health Policy” in 2017.
- The primary vision of policy-framework is to attain highest possible level of health and well-being for all irrespective of all age groups.
- **Health in Union Budget 2021-22**



- Health has been identified in Budget 2021-22 as one of the six main pillars to drive growth.
- Health was allocated an enormous financial allocation of Rs 2,23,846 crore in 2021-22 which is a 137% increase over the previous year. It is in line with increasing health expenditure as a percentage of GDP to 2.5 % by 2025.
- **Pradhan Mantri Atma Nirbhar Swasthya Yojana**
- This scheme was launched with the aim of strengthening health systems to meet challenges of covid-19 pandemic and future pandemics.
- It also seeks to strengthen the expanding & building robust IT enabled surveillance systems in order to track and contain spread of diseases.

Reference: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1707848>

1st Meeting of “BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues”

Question: Consider the following statements about 1st Meeting of “BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues”(BRICS CGETI 2021)

i) It was held under India’s Chairship from 9-11 March 2021.

ii) The theme of BRICS this year is -“BRICS@15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus”.

Which of the above are correct

a) I b)ii c)i and ii d) none

Ans: c

Facts

- India, under its Chairship in 2021, presented the calendar of events for BRICS CGETI 2021, which included the priority areas for deliverables, schedule and scope of the MSME roundtable conference workshop on Services Statistics, and the BRICS Trade Fair.



The deliverables proposed are as follows:

- Action plan on the basis of document “Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership 2025” which was adopted during Russian Presidency in 2020.
- BRICS Cooperation on Multilateral Trading system such as cooperation for Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Waiver proposal at World Trade Organisation (WTO).
- Framework for Consumer Protection in the E-Commerce
- Non-Tariff Measures Resolution Mechanism
- Sanitary and Phytosanitary Working Mechanism
- Co-operation framework for protection of Genetic Resources & Traditional Knowledge
- BRICS Framework on the Co-operation in Professional Services.

BRICS 2021 –13th BRICS Summit

- BRICS 2021 or the 13th BRICS Summit will be held under the chair ship of India under the theme ‘BRICS @ 15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation and Consensus.’

Reference: <http://ddnews.gov.in/business/first-meeting-brics-contact-group-economic-and-trade-issues-held#:~:text=The%20BRICS%20Contact%20Group%20on,%2C%20Consolidation%2C%20and%20Consensus%E2%80%9D.>

Mandu Festival

Question- With which state is the Mandu Festival related?

(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Rajasthan (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) None of these

Answer – (c)

Related facts

- The Mandu Festival was held from 13 to 15 February 2021 in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh.
- The Mandu Festival will showcase live concerts, adventure sports, cycling expeditions and much more. We urge you to travel and discover Mandu in a new way
- Local art, craft and cuisine will be there. Please bring your family and friends to the Mandu Festival for an experience like never before.
- KHOJNE ME KHO JAO
- Above mentioned quote is the theme of the Mandu festival.
- Mandu
- Mandu or Mandavgad is an ancient city in the present-day Mandav area of the Dhar district. It is located in the Malwa region of western Madhya Pradesh.



Link:

<https://www.mandufestival.com/>

SARAS Aajeevika Mela

Question: Which of the following statement are correct?

- SARAS Aajeevika Mela is an initiative under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY – NRLM).
- The objective of the initiative is to bring the rural women SHGs – Self Help

Groups under one platform.

a) only I b) only ii c) i and ii both d) none

Ans: c

Context

- Recently, the Union Minister for Rural Development inaugurated Saras Aajeevika Mela 2021 at Noida Haat.
- Facts
- SARAS Aajeevika Mela is an initiative under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY – NRLM).
- It is a programme to transform rural India in general and the lives of rural women in particular.
- The objective of the initiative is to bring the rural women SHGs – Self Help Groups under one platform. This is to help them show – case their skills, sell their products and build linkages with buyers.
- Through the initiative the women will get exposure to understand the demand of urban customers.
- During the Mela, workshops on product packaging and design, communication skills, social media publicity and Business to Business marketing will be organised to educate the rural self-help groups and craftsmen.
- The Mela is being organized by the CAPART – Council for Advancement of People's action and rural Technology, the marketing arm of the ministry of rural development.



Reference: <http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=410714>

G20 Central Bank Governors' Meet

Question: On 26th February 2021, G20 Central Bank Governors' Meet was organised virtually? It was organised under whose presidentship?

a) USA b) India c) Italy d) Germany

Ans: c)

Context

- The Finance Minister of India, Nirmala Sitharaman, attended the G20 Central Bank Governors' meeting on February 26, 2021.
- Facts
- This was the first event organised by G20 under leadership of Italy. It was held virtually.
- The Ministers and Governors acknowledged that health and economic conditions remain difficult despite the launch of vaccination campaigns and signs of strengthening economic activity.
- Granting equitable access to safe vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics for all countries is a top priority for all the Ministers and Governors.
- During the meeting, the finance minister of India highlighted India's policy response with respect to COVID-19 pandemic and the world's largest inoculation drive with their G-20 counterparts.
- She further stated that, India's domestic policies is based broadly on the supporting citizens using the measures like direct transfer, credit guarantees, economic stimulus packages, food guarantees and accelerating structural reforms.



- She also spoke regarding the vaccination drive in India. It is the world's largest and ambitious vaccination drive. She also mentioned that India has extended its vaccine support to several countries.
- Issues like financial sector issues, global economic outlook, financial inclusion and sustainable finance, implications of climate change on global growth and financial stability were also discussed.
- **G20 Grouping**
- It is an international forum for governments and central bank governors coming from the 19 countries and European Union (EU). The grouping was founded in the year 1999. It was established with the aim of discussing the policy regarding the promotion of the international financial stability. The grouping has also extended its agenda since 2008 from heads of government or state to the foreign ministers, finance ministers and think tanks.

Reference: <https://www.g20.org/en/first-meeting-g20-finance-ministers-and-central-bank-governors.html#:~:text=First%20meeting%20of%20the%20G20%20Finance%20Ministers%20and%20Central%20Bank%20Governors,-February%2026th%2C%202021&text=The%20G20%20Finance%20Ministers%20a>

National Conference on Opportunities and Challenges for Bamboo in India

Question: Which of the following has jointly organised, National Conference on Opportunities and Challenges for Bamboo in India?

i) NITI Aayog ii) Invest India iii) National Bamboo Mission iv) all of the above

Ans: iv)

Facts

- The National Bamboo Mission anchored at the Department of Agriculture Cooperation & Farmers Welfare organized a two day conference 'National Consultation on Opportunities and Challenges for Bamboo in India' through the virtual platform on 25th and 26th of February 2021.
- NITI Aayog and Invest India also joined hands with the National Bamboo Mission to conduct the event.
- Objective of the event was to discuss bamboo ecosystem for promoting the holistic growth of the sector across the entire value chain.
- Discussion involved experts and stakeholders from various fields to further accelerate the efforts of the National Bamboo Mission to pin point solutions to issues facing the sector.
- Some important ideas/challenges
- Adoption of agro-forestry models by the farmers, especially to tide over the initial 3-4 years of gestation of bamboo plantation; Intercropping with ginger, pulses, lemon grass, etc were suggested.
- Use of good credible planting material and improved agronomic practices to increase yields.
- Plantations on culturable wastelands should be encouraged on a large scale to provide feed stock to industry.
- Integrated primary processing units for the complete utilization of bamboo i.e. a zero waste policy would lead to optimum use of bamboo in the country.



- Use of waterways and transport subsidy options to solve problems of transportation specially in north east region. Steps need to be taken to encourage startups, entrepreneurship in the bamboo sector.
- The GeM portal will create a dedicated window for registration of bamboo products to add visibility of bamboo products in the electronic market space for Government procurement.

Reference: <http://ddnews.gov.in/national/national-bamboo-mission-organizes-national-conference-opportunities-and-challenges-bamboo#:~:text=The%20National%20Bamboo%20Mission%20anchored,and%2026th%20of%20February%202021.>

Year, Day & Week

Earth Hour 2021

Question: Earth Hour, a global light-off initiative is observed between-

- (a) 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm (b) 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm
 (c) 9:30 pm to 10:30 pm
 (d) 10:30 pm to 11:30 pm

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Earth Hour 2021 will be observed globally on March 27 between 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm local time.
- Earth Hour is an annual global celebration in which people switch off their lights for one hour to show they care about the future of our planet.
- Every year the Earth Hour is observed on the last Saturday of March month.
- The day is organized as a movement by the World Wide Fund for Nature's (WWF).
- The idea is to refrain from the use of non-essential lighting to save energy in a symbolic call for environmental protection.
- Earth Hour has become a catalyst for positive environmental impact, driving major legislative changes by harnessing the power of the people and collective action.
- It began in Sydney, Australia in 2007; the number of countries taking part in Earth Hour has grown to over 180 countries and territories.



Links:

<https://www.earthhour.org/take-part>

World Poetry Day

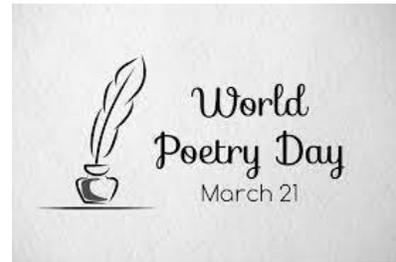
Question- When is the World Poetry Day observed?

- (a) 23 March (b) 21 March (c) 24 March (d) 19 March

Answer- (b)

Related facts:

- On 21st March 2021, World Poetry Day was celebrated across the globe.
- The day promotes reading, writing, publishing and teaching of poetry throughout the world.
- The day was first adopted by UNESCO(United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) during its 30th General Conference in Paris in 1999.



Links:

<https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/worldpoetryday>

World Water Day

Question: When is the World Water Day observed?

(a) 20 March (b) 15 March (c) 10 March (d) 22 March

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- World Water Day is observed every year on March 22.
- The day focuses on the importance of freshwater and promotes taking action to tackle the global water crisis.
- The theme of World Water Day 2021 is “Valuing Water”.
- World Water Day is being celebrated since 1993. About 2.2 billion people are living without access to safe water.
- Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 targets availability of water and sanitation to all by 2030.
- In addition to it, the International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development (2018-2028) is being observed.



Links:

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/water-day>

World Meteorological Day

Question: When is the World Meteorological Day observed?

(a) 23 March (b) 20 March (c) 5 March (d) 15 March

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- World Meteorological Day is observed every year on 23rd March.
- The day commemorates establishment of the World Meteorological Organization on 23rd March 1950.
- The day also recognizes contribution of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services to the safety and well-being of society.



- The theme of 2021 World Meteorological Day is “The Ocean, Our Climate and Weather.”
- The day also marks the starting year of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030).

Links:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/world-meteorological-day-history-theme-and-significance-of-the-day-101616467536898.html#:~:text=The%20theme%20of%20World%20Meteorological,weather%20within%20the%20Earth%20System.%E2%80%9D>

World Down Syndrome Day

Question: When is the World Down Syndrome Day observed?

(a) 20 March (b) 15 March (c) 10 March (d) 21 March

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- World Down Syndrome Day is observed every year on March 21.
- The day awares peoples for the rights, inclusion and well being of people with Down syndrome.
- 2021 Theme of the World Down Syndrome Day is “We Decide.”
- The day was first observed in the United Nation in the year 2012.
- The date for WDS Day being the 21st day of the 3rd month, was selected to signify the uniqueness of the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome which causes Down syndrome.



Down Syndrome:

- Down Syndrome is a condition in which the child is born with an extra 21st chromosome.
- It is classified as a genetic disorder which further causes developmental disabilities. The child born with this condition is likely to suffer thyroid or heart-related problems.

Links:

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/down-syndrome-day>

Shaheed Diwas

Question: When is the Shaheed Diwas celebrated in India?

(a) 23 March (b) 21 March (c) 28 February (d) 15 January

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Shaheed Diwas 2021 was celebrated in India on March 23.
- The day, in particular, pays tribute to Bhagat Singh,



- SukhdevThapar, and Shivaram Rajguru who died on March 23 in 1931.
- They were hanged to death for assassinating John Saunders, a British police officer in 1928.
- They had mistook him for British police superintendent James Scott. It was Scott who had ordered lathi charge, which eventually led to the death of LalaLajpatRai.
- These three were among the countless who sacrificed their lives for the nations and died when they were very young.
- Shaheed Diwas 2021 was the 90th death anniversary of three courageous youngsters.

Links:

<https://www.timesnownews.com/the-buzz/article/shaheed-diwas-2021-history-significance-why-is-it-observed-on-january-30-and-march/735966>

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Question: When is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination observed?

(a) 20 March (b) 15 March (c) 10 March (d) 21 March

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed every year on March 21.
- The day aims to foster a global culture of tolerance, equality and anti-discrimination.
- 2021 theme of the day is “Youth standing up against racism”.



History:

- The day traces back to the date when police in Sharpeville, South Africa, opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration against apartheid “pass laws” in 1960.
- In 1979, the General Assembly adopted a programme of activities to be undertaken during the second half of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.
- On that occasion, the General Assembly decided that a week of solidarity with the peoples struggling against racism and racial discrimination, beginning on 21 March, would be organized annually in all States.

Links:

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/end-racism-day>

World Tuberculosis Day

- **Question- Consider the following statements regarding the 'World Tuberculosis Day'-**
1- The 'World Tuberculosis Day is celebrated on March 24 every year.
2- The theme of World TB Day 2021 is 'The Clock is Ticking.'
Which of the above given statement/statements is/are correct?
(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans.(c)

Related facts-

- World Tuberculosis Day is observed on March 24 every year to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of TB, and to step up efforts to end the global epidemic.
- This event commemorates the date in 1882 when Dr Robert Koch announced his discovery of Mycobacterium tuberculosis, the bacillus that causes tuberculosis (TB).
- The theme of World TB Day 2021-'The Clock is Ticking'-conveys the sense that the world is running out of time to act on the commitments to end TB made by global leaders.



Reference- <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-tb-day/world-tb-day-2021>.

International Day of Forests

Question: When is the International Day of Forests observed?

- (a) 20 March (b) 15 March (c) 10 March (d) 21 March

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- International Day of Forests is observed every year on March 21.
- The day aims to aware people about the role of forest in sustainable development and combating climate change.
- The theme of 2021 International Day of Forests is "Forest restoration: a path to recovery and well-being."
- The day was proclaimed by United Nations General Assembly in year 2012 to raise awareness about all types of forests.
- According to the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2019, total forest cover of the country is 21.67% of the geographical area.
- Total forest and tree cover of the India is 24.56% of the geographical area.



Links:

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/forests-and-trees-day>

World Sparrow Day

Question: When is the World Sparrow Day observed?

(a) 20 March (b) 15 March (c) 25 March (d) 10 March

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- World Sparrow Day is observed every year on March 20.
- The day raises awareness about the House Sparrow and other common birds to urban environments, and of threats to their populations.
- 2021 theme of the World Sparrow Day is “I Love Sparrows”.
- The day was initiated by the Nature Forever Society of India in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France) and numerous other national and international organisations across the world.
- In year 2010, world celebrated the first Sparrow Day.



Links:

<https://www.news18.com/news/lifestyle/world-sparrow-day-2021-know-the-history-theme-and-significance-of-the-day-3554306.html>

World Oral Health Day

Question: When is the World Oral Health Day observed?

(a) 20 March (b) 15 March (c) 25 March (d) 10 March

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- World Oral Health Day is observed every year on March 20.
- The day highlights benefits of good oral health, spreads awareness about oral diseases and promotes maintenance of oral hygiene.
- World Oral Health Day theme for the next three years, 2021-2023 is: Be Proud Of Your Mouth.
- The day is an initiative of FDI World Dental Federation. It is world’s leading organization representing the dental profession.



Links:

<https://www.worldoralhealthday.org/>

International Day of Happiness

Question: When is the International Day of Happiness observed?

(a) 20 March (b) 15 March (c) 25 March (d) 10 March

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- International Day of Happiness is observed every year on March 20.
- The day promotes happiness as a fundamental human right for all human beings across the globe.
- 2021 theme for the day is 'Keep Calm. Stay Wise. Be Kind'.
- The day is being celebrated since year 2013.
- United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the day on 12 July 2012.



Links:

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/happiness-day>

World Consumer Rights Day

Question – On March 15, 2021, ‘World Consumer Rights Day’ was celebrated all over the world. What was the main theme of this year?

- (a) Tackling Plastic Pollution (b) Making digital markets more equitable
(c) Sustainable consumer (d) Conscious consumer sustainable development

Answer – (a)

Related facts

- ‘World Consumer Rights Day’ was observed across the world on March 15, 2021.
- The main theme of this day in the year 2021 was ” Tackling Plastic Pollution “.
- It is notable that on March 15, 1962, US President John F. Kennedy first addressed the issue of consumer rights.
- This day was first celebrated on 15 March 1983.
- It is known that ‘National Consumer Day’ is observed every year in India on 24 December.
- In India, the Consumer Protection Act was enacted on the same day in 1986.



Link:

<https://www.consumersinternational.org/what-we-do/world-consumer-rights-day/tackling-plastic-pollution-2021/>

World Kidney Day

Question- The ‘World Kidney day’ is observed on-

- (a) 9th March (b) 11th March (c) 12th March (d) 13th March

Ans. (b)

Related Facts-

- This year the ‘World Kidney Day’ is observed on 11th march 2021.
- The World Kidney Day is observed on the 2nd Thursday of March each year.
- The theme for ‘World Kidney Day 2021’ is ‘Living Well with Kidney Disease.’

- World Kidney Day is a joint initiative of the International Society of Nephrology (ISN) and the International Federation of Kidney Foundations (IFKF).
- World Kidney Day aims to raise awareness of the importance of our kidneys to our overall health and to reduce the frequency and impact of kidney disease and its associated health problems worldwide.



Reference- <https://www.worldkidneyday.org/about/world-kidney-day/>.

National Science Day

Question – ‘National Science Day’ is observed on –

(a) 28 February (b) 8 March (c) 22 April (d) 28 January

Ans. (a)

Related Facts-

- The ‘National Science Day’ is celebrated every year on February 28 to commemorate the discovery of Raman Effect by Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman.
- On this day in 1928, he discovered a phenomenon of scattering of photons which was later known as ‘Raman Effect’ after his name.
- He went to received a Noble Prize for this discovery in the year 1930.
- The theme for ‘National Science Day 2021’ is ‘Future of STI: Impact on Education Skills and Work’.

What is Raman Effect?

- The Raman Effect is also known as Raman scattering. In this, the wavelength of the light scatters when the light is deflected on a particular object.

Reference- <https://ncsm.gov.in/28th-february-national-science-day-in-india/>.

International Women’s Day

Question: When is the International Women’s Day observed?

(a) 8 March (b) 10 March (c) 5 March (d) 1 March

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- International Women’s Day is observed every year on March 8.
- The day appreciates the womanhood and their importance in society by celebrating women’s social, economic, cultural and political achievements.
- 2020 theme for the International Day is “Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world”.
- History of Women’s Day:



- The first National Woman’s Day was observed in the United States on February 28.
- The day was designated in honor of the 1908 garment workers’ strike in New York, where women protested against working conditions.
- Later in Germany, women’s rights activist Clara Zetkin suggested International Women’s Day only in 1910 at an International Conference in Copenhagen.
- On March 8 in 1917, women in Soviet Russia gained the right the vote and declaring the day as national holiday for them.
- In 1977, United Nations General Assembly proclaimed March 8 as the International Women’s Day.

Links:

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/womens-day/background>

World Wildlife Day

Question: When is the World Wildlife day observed?

(a) 3 March (b) 5 March (c) 28 February (d) 24 February

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- World Wildlife Day is observed every year on March 3.
- The day raises awareness about conserving world’s wild flora (plants) and fauna (animals).
- The day was proposed by Thailand at the 16th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES (CoP16) held in Bangkok from 3 to 14 March 2013.
- Later on 20th December 2013, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed 3 March as UN World Wildlife Day.
- March 3 marks the day of signature of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1973.
- 2021 Theme of the day is “Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet”.



Links:

<https://www.wildlifeday.org/about>

Books

Book -Advantage India: The Story of Indian Tennis

Question:Who is the author of the book Advantage India: The Story of Indian Tennis?

(a) Mohammed Salim (b) Dilip Bose (c) Ramanathan Krishnan (d) Anindya Dutta

Answer-(d)

Related facts:

- Anindya Dutta, a banker turned author, has penned a book titled Advantage India: The Story of Indian Tennis.
- The book is published by Westland Publication.
- This book is an account of the journey of Indian tennis.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/sport/tennis/advantage-india/article33721222.ece>

Advantage India: The Story of Indian Tennis

Question – Who is the author of the book – Advantage India: The Story of Indian Tennis?

(a) Mohammad Salim (b) Dilip Bose (c) Ramanathan Krishnan (d) Anindya Dutta

Answer – (d)

Related facts

- The book 'Advantage India: The Story of Indian Tennis' has been published by Westland Publications.
- The author of this book is Anindya Dutta.
- This book describes the journey of Indian tennis.

Link:

<https://www.thehindu.com/sport/tennis/advantage-india/article33721222.ece>

Book-My Experiments with Silence

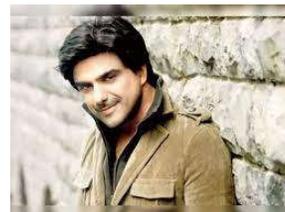
Question: Who is the author of the book My Experiments with Silence?

(a) Samir Soni (b) Anupam Kher (c) Shekhar Kapur (d) Raghav Juyal

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Actor Samir Soni has authored the book My Experiments with Silence.
- The book is a personal account of his dialogues with himself during his growing-up years in Delhi, his stint at Wall Street and his time in Bollywood.
- The book will be published by OM Books International.



Links:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/magazines/panache/actor-samir-sonis-debut-book-my-experiments-with-silence-to-share-his-darkest-most-intense-and-introspective-thoughts/articleshow/81668503.cms>

Miscellaneous

New framework for delivery default in commodity derivatives segment

Question : Markets regulator Sebi in March 2021 came out with a new penal structure for _ in the event of delivery default. What is the appropriate option for the blank space ?

- (a) Commodity derivatives segment (b) Cash segment (c) Both (a) & (b)
(d) None of the above

Ans. (a)

- Markets regulator Sebi in March 2021 came out with a new penal structure for commodity derivatives segment in the event of delivery default.
- Clearing corporation, having commodity derivatives segment, should have an appropriate deterrent mechanism in place against intentional or wilful delivery default and ensure adequate compensation to the non-defaulting counterparty.
- The regulator said it received representations from market participants in the commodity derivatives segment for standardisation of delivery default norms, among others.
- Consequently, Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) in consultation with clearing corporations came out with delivery default norms, which will be effective from the first trading day of May 2021.
- In agricultural and non agricultural commodities, Sebi said the penalty for delivery default by seller will now be 4 per cent and 3 per cent of the settlement price plus replacement cost, respectively.
- The provisions for levy of penalty on delivery default by the buyer will be put in place by the clearing corporations.
- With regard to futures contracts on agri-commodities, Sebi said penalty on seller in case of delivery default would be 4 per cent of settlement price along with replacement cost (difference between settlement price and average of three highest of the last spot prices of 5 succeeding days after the commodity pay-out date, if the average price so determined is higher than settlement price, else this component will be zero).
- In case of futures contracts on non-agri commodities, the penalty would be 3 per cent of settlement price along with replacement cost.
- In respect of norms for apportionment of penalty, Sebi said at least 1.75 per cent of settlement price will be deposited in the Settlement Guarantee Fund (SGF) of the clearing corporation, while up to 0.25 per cent of settlement price may be retained by such corporation towards administration expenses.
- It further said 1 per cent of settlement price in case of non-agri goods or 2 per cent of settlement price in case of agri goods plus replacement cost will go to a buyer who was entitled to receive the delivery.



Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/stocks/news/sebi-issues-new-framework-for-delivery-default-in-derivatives-segment/articleshow/81654213.cms>

Disinvestment process completed in TCL

Question : On March 22, 2021, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management announced the completion of the disinvestment process at TCL. What percentage of the government had a stake in Tata Communications Limited ?

(a) 26.12% (b) 45.20% (c) 20.80% (d) 30.00%

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- On March 22, 2021, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management announced the completion of the disinvestment process at TCL.
- It is notable that the government had a 26.12% stake in Tata Communications Limited.
- It has been sold at rs 8,846 crore.



Disinvestment process

- The government has divested its holding through two steps, by selling 16.12% in TCL, previously called VSNL, through an offer for sale at Rs 5,457 crore, followed by sale of 10% stake to strategic partner at offer for sale discovered price for Rs 3,389 crore.

VSNL (Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited)

- The public sector company VSNL was privatized in 2002.
- The company was renamed TCL(Tata Communications Ltd.) after this strategic disinvestment.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/government-exits-from-tata-communications-nets-rs-8846-crore/articleshow/81635351.cms>

Cashless treatment facility to ESI beneficiaries in 4 states

Question : On which date the convergence of ESI scheme with Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY started in 113 districts ?

(a) 10 March 2021 (b) 8 March 2021 (c) 6 March 2021 (d) 14 March 2021

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- The convergence of ESI scheme with Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY started in 113 districts started on March 10, 2021.
- MoS (IC) Labour & Employment and Chairman, ESIC(Santosh Kumar Gangwar) launched this convergence.
- The convergence will ensure that 1.35 crore ESI beneficiaries of 113 districts of four States – Chhatisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh & Maharashtra avail cashless medical services through empaneled hospitals of Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY without any need of referral.



- Similarly, the beneficiaries of PM-JAY can also avail cashless treatment at 15 underutilized ESIC hospitals/Medical Colleges in the states of Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan & U.P.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1703964>

LIC's Bachat Plus

Question : LIC OF INDIA has launched new plan- LIC's Bachat Plus in March 2021. Which of the following statement is correct regarding Indian insurance sector ?

- (a) Overall market size of the insurance sector is expected to US\$ 280 billion in 2020.
- (b) Overall market size of the insurance sector is expected to US\$ 380 billion in 2020.
- (c) Overall market size of the insurance sector is expected to US\$ 480 billion in 2020.
- (d) Overall market size of the insurance sector is expected to US\$ 180 billion in 2020.

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- LIC OF INDIA has launched new plan- LIC's Bachat Plus in March 2021.
- It is a Non-Linked, Participating, Individual, Savings Plan which offers combination of protection and savings.
- This plan provides financial support for the family of the deceased policyholder any time before maturity and lump sum amount at the time of maturity for the surviving policyholders. Proposer can choose to pay the premium either as Lumpsum (Single Premium) or for a Limited period of 5 years.
- It can be purchased Offline through agent /other intermediaries as well as Online.

Sum Assured & other information

- The Minimum Basic Sum Assured is Rs 1,00,000/- with no upper limit. The eligibility conditions for policy term, age at entry, maturity age etc will be as per premium payment and options chosen accordingly by the proposer.
- High Basic Sum Assured Rebate is offered for both modes of premium payment.
- This plan also takes care of liquidity needs through its loan facility.
- The flexible options offered under this new plan by LIC are an attractive feature suitable for people with varying needs from all segments of the society.

Indian Insurance sector at a glance

- In India, the overall market size of the insurance sector is expected to US\$ 280 billion in 2020.
- The insurance industry of India has 57 insurance companies 24 are in the life insurance business, while 33 are non-life insurers.
- Among the life insurers, Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) is the sole public sector company. There are six public sector insurers in the non-life insurance segment.
- Gross premium collected by life insurance companies in India increased from Rs. 2.56 trillion (US\$ 39.7 billion) in FY12 to Rs. 7.31 trillion (US\$ 94.7 billion) in FY20. During FY12-FY20, premium from new business of life insurance companies in India increased at a CAGR of 15% to reach Rs. 2.13 trillion (US\$ 37 billion) in FY20.

Link:

[https://licindia.in/getattachment/Bottom-Links/Press-Release-\(1\)/LIC-lanuches-Bachat-Plus-English.pdf.aspx](https://licindia.in/getattachment/Bottom-Links/Press-Release-(1)/LIC-lanuches-Bachat-Plus-English.pdf.aspx)

First ever consumer PC using plastic waste

Question : Which company has recently made first ever PCs with plastic waste found in ocean ?

(a) Microsoft (b) Qualcomm (c) HP (d) IBM

Ans.(c)

- HP has recently made first ever PCs with plastic waste found in ocean.
- **Aim**
- This move builds on the company's sustainability commitment.
- **Products containing ocean plastic waste**
- Newly launched Pavilion 13, Pavilion 14, and Pavilion 15 Laptops were manufactured using ocean-bound plastics.
- **Significance**
- HP estimates that the use of these plastics in devices will keep around 92,000 plastic bottles out of the oceans and landfills.
- The outer boxes and fibre cushions used to pack the products are also 100% recyclable material.



Link:

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/hp-makes-first-ever-pcs-with-plastic-waste-in-ocean/article33960798.ece>

Supercomputer Fugaku

Question : On 9th March 2021, Which of the following parties has been announced the completion and beginning of shared use of supercomputer Fugaku ?

(a) RIKEN, RIST & Fujitsu (b) RIBF, Hitachi & Seiko
(c) Jica research institute & Mitsubishi (d) None of the above

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- RIKEN, the Research Organization for Information Science and Technology (RIST), and Fujitsu today(09 March 2021) announced the completion and beginning of shared use of supercomputer Fugaku, which has been jointly developed since 2014 by RIKEN and Fujitsu.
- On the same day, RIKEN and RIST have started to offer the system for shared use, providing access for a wide range of researchers and users in academic and industrial fields.



About Fugaku

- Fugaku is Japan's supercomputer that has been developed as a core system for the innovative High-Performance Computing Infrastructure (HPCI) promoted by Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).
- In 2014, RIKEN and Fujitsu began joint development of Fugaku and completed delivery of all racks in May 2020. Since then, they have developed and optimized the user environment in preparation for the commencement of shared use.

Chronology of achievements

- In the meantime, Fugaku has claimed the world's top spot for two consecutive terms in June and November 2020 in four categories on the major high-performance computer rankings: the TOP500, HPCG, HPL-AI, as well as the Graph 500, and has been used on a trial basis under the "Program for Promoting Research on the Supercomputer Fugaku", "research projects aimed to combat COVID-19", etc. since April 2020.
- In these trials, two projects, "Study on Large-Scale Numerical Fluid Simulation" and "Largest Ever Meteorological Calculation" have already been selected as the ACM Gordon Bell Prize finalists.
- Use of Fugaku and future development
- Fugaku has won four supercomputer titles for the second consecutive period in the world's major high-performance computing rankings and is making full use of its outstanding potential to solve urgent social and scientific problems.
- With its outstanding computational power, Fugaku will play an important role in building Society 5.0, the Super Smart Society, through the following technologies.

Simulation

- Fugaku boasts up to 100 times the application performance of the K computer, allowing for simulations of "high resolution" "long duration" "large-scale" and "multiple case".
- It is expected to have various impacts ranging from solving familiar social problems to helping improve understanding of fundamental science.

Link:

<https://www.fujitsu.com/global/about/resources/news/press-releases/2021/0309-02.html>

First Quad Leaders' Virtual Summit

Question- When was the first virtual summit of Quad leaders held recently ?

(a) 14 March, 2021 (b) March 12, 2021 (c) 16 March, 2021 (d) 10 March, 2021

Answer – (b)

Related facts

- The first virtual summit of Quad leaders held on March 12, 2021.
- The Quad Group includes countries such as India, Japan, USA and Australia.
- Heads of States of the above countries participated in this conference.
- The summit provided an opportunity to exchange views on several contemporary challenges such as emerging and critical technologies, maritime security and climate change.
- During the summit, quad leaders agreed to cooperate to counter the Covid-19 epidemic and to provide safe, equal and cheap vaccines in the Indo-Pacific region.



Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1704244>

Testing of blockchain transaction on GOMX-4 constellation

Question : Which of the following authorities has recently(March 2021) tested blockchain transaction on GOMX-4 constellation ?

- (a) GomSpace and J.P. Morgan (b) SpaceX and BofA Securities
(c) Airbus and Credit Suisse (d) Boeing and Goldman Sachs

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- GomSpace and J.P. Morgan has recently(March 2021) tested blockchain transaction on GOMX-4 constellation.
- GomSpace and J.P. Morgan have successfully utilized the GOMX-4 satellites for an in-orbit demonstration (IOD) and tested tokenized value transfer in space.
- The IOD from GomSpace enabled J.P. Morgan to test the world's first bank-led tokenized value transfer in space, executed via smart contracts on a blockchain network established between satellites orbiting the earth.
- GomSpace and J.P. Morgan successfully executed a transaction between two low earth orbit (LEO) satellites, which validated the approach towards a decentralized network where communication with earth is not necessary.
- This breakthrough opens the door to a potential peer-to-peer DvP ('data versus payment') satellite marketplace in the long term, as private companies prepare to launch their own constellations.
- The project was made possible due to GomSpace's GOMX-4 satellites already in orbit and which are highly reconfigurable.
- This allows GomSpace to provide rapid in orbit demonstrations, such as this project, as a service to our customers exploring new uses of space technology and our nanosatellites.



Link:

<https://gomspace.com/news/gomspace-and-jp-morgan-test-blockchain-transa.aspx>

Annual survey on exports of computer software and information technology enabled services : Key findings

Question : According to a data recently released by RBI, how much India's software services export surged in FY20 ?

- (a) 9.1% (b) 7.2% (c) 11.2% (d) 6.4%

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- According to a data recently(March 2021) released by RBI, India's software services export surged 9.1% in FY20.
- Survey/RBI data
- For the 2019-20 round of the survey, 6078 software export companies were contacted, of



- which 1475 companies responded, which included most of the large companies.
- This survey titled – “annual survey on exports of computer software and information technology enabled services”.
- The responding companies accounted for around 82.7% of the total software services exports during the year.
- India’s export of software services stood at US\$ 128.6 billion during 2019-20, registering 9.1% growth over the previous year.
- Exports of computer services and ITES/BPO services contributed 66.6 per cent and 33.4%, respectively, of the total software services exports.
- Private limited companies accounted for more than half of the total export of software services.
- Destination
 - The USA was the major destination for software exports with 56.6% share. Europe had 27.6% share, nearly half of which was in the UK.
- Principal invoicing currency
 - The US dollar was the principal invoicing currency for software exports with 71.6% share.
 - Euro and pound sterling together accounted for another 16.7%. The off-site mode remained the preferred mode of delivery of the total export of software services.

Link:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-cm/india-s-software-services-exports-surge-9-1-in-fy20-says-rbi-121031700466_1.html

Government to conduct radar surveys of Himalayan glaciers

Question: At which of the following place The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research is located?

a) Goa b) Ahmedabad c) New Delhi d) Chennai

Answer: (a)

Related Facts:-

- On March 19, 2021; Union Environment Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan has informed in Lok Sabha that the government is planning to conduct airborne radar surveys of Himalayan glaciers.
- This kind of airborne radar surveys of Himalayan glaciers will be conducted to estimate their thickness.
- A pilot study will be conducted in the Lahaul-Spiti basin of Himachal Pradesh.
- He informed that after completing the first stage of survey, similar studies will be conducted in Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra sub-basins as well.
- It should be known that glaciers have significant role in India’s river systems.
- The glaciers help sustain around 500 million people living downstream in the Indo-Gangetic plains.
- The glaciers are also important from an energy security standpoint and have a strategic imperative.
- The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) Ministry of Earth Sciences had initiated a proposal regarding the airborne radar surveys of Himalayan glaciers.
- The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research is located in Vasco da Gama, Goa.
- They will estimate the thickness of Himalayan glaciers using innovative airborne radar surveys in collaboration with established Indian researchers in India and abroad.



- The Minister had stated that the Geological Survey of India had employed several techniques such as geophysical techniques and Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) to assess the depth of glaciers.
- Remote sensing-based methods are also used by ISRO and carried out Research and Development study to estimate the thickness of major Himalayan glaciers.

Importance of the Project:

- In the recent past in February 2021 it can't be forgotten when several people lost their lives due to a glacier burst near Raini village above the Rishiganga river in Uttarakhand.
- It was a major disaster and to avoid such disasters in-depth study of glaciers can give us valuable information about their nature.
- India was also ranked 20th on the Climate Risk Index (CRI) meaning that it is one of the most vulnerable countries for extreme weather events.

Links:-

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1706074>

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<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1706074>

UNCTAD : Trade & Development report update, March 2021

Question : UNCTAD's 'Trade & Development report update, March 2021' has stated India's growth forecast for the year 2021 at —

(a) 5.0 % (b) -6.9 % (c) 4.9 % (d) 6.8 %

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- UNCTAD's 'Trade & Development report update, March 2021' has stated India's growth forecast for the year 2021 at 5.0 %.
- The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is a permanent intergovernmental body established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1964.
- It stated that India's Covid-19 stimulus fell short of initial announcements, leading to a lower than expected economic performance in 2020.
- The relief measures adopted by India were not only much smaller in scale, but also centred on easing supply side constraints and providing liquidity support rather than aggregate demand support.
- UNCTAD estimates India's GDP to have contracted 6.9% in 2020.
- World growth scenario
- UNCTAD forecasts the world output growth in 2021 at 4.7 %.
- It is estimated at -3.9 percent at 2020.
- China's growth projection
- In the year 2021, the growth rate of China is forecasted to be 8.1 percent.
- Whereas for the year 2020 it is estimated at 2.3%, highest among major economies.



Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/unctad-sees-india-growth-at-5-in-2021/articleshow/81575631.cms>

Leading countries in terms of m-cap gain

Question : Which country's stocks has recently posted most gain by market capitalization ?

(a) Bangladesh (b) Bhutan (c) Srilanka (d) None of the above

Ans.(d)

Related facts

- Indian stocks has recently posted most gains by market capitalization.

- Indian stocks gained the most among the world's top 10 nations by market value this fiscal, underscoring the strength of the rally that remained unshaken by Covid-led turmoil and economic uncertainties.
- India's aggregate market capitalisation soared 88% in dollar terms this fiscal year.
- This is the sharpest increase in aggregate market capitalisation since FY11.
- Last fiscal year, India's market capitalisation plunged 31% as the lockdown wrecked investor sentiment.
- Despite the rise, India remained at the eighth position among countries with a market capitalisation of 2.8 trillion dollar.
- The US, with a market capitalisation of 45.83 trillion dollar, and China at 10.57 trillion dollar saw an aggregate market capitalisation expansion of 67% and 52%, respectively, from April 2020 so far.
- Canada (2.89 trillion dollar) saw a growth of 78%, while Saudi Arabia (2.53 trillion dollar) made the lowest gain of 28% among the top 10 markets.
- Sensex surged 78% so far this fiscal—the best performer among the top 10 nations.
- In comparison, the Dow Jones (US) gained 50%, the Shanghai Composite (China) rose 35%, and Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 22% so far since April 2020.
- The strong performance has lifted India's contribution to global market capitalization to 2.58% in March from 2.1% last April.
- This is marginally above its historical average of 2.4%.

Link:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/business/indian-stocks-post-most-gains-by-market-capitalisation-101615947841052.html>

Equine Herpes Virus (EHV-1)

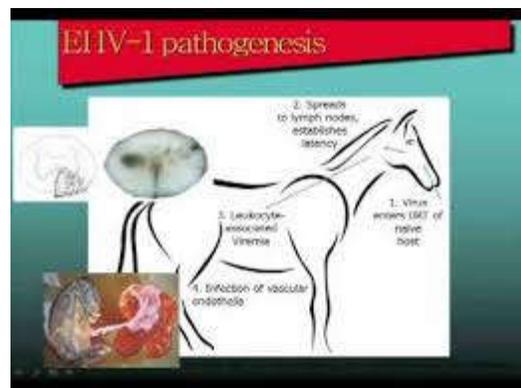
Question- Which fact is not correct in relation to Equine Herpes Virus-1 (EHV-1)?

- (a) Equine Herpes Virus-1(EHV-1) outbreak was detected in horses in Europe in March ,2021
- (b) Till now cases of two countries Spain and Belgium (EHV-1) have been confirmed.
- (c) Equine herpes virus is a common DNA virus that spreads from horses.
- (d) It is contagious and is spread by mutual contact in horses through nasal secretions by the respiratory tract.

Answer – (b)

Related facts

- Equine Herpes Virus-1(EHV-1) outbreak was detected in horses in Europe in March ,2021.
- Equine herpes virus is a common DNA virus that spreads from horses.
- It is contagious and is spread by mutual contact in horses through nasal secretions by the respiratory tract.
- There are now nine countries with confirmed cases: Spain, Germany, Belgium, France, Sweden, Italy, Switzerland, Britain and Qatar.



Link:

<https://www.horsetalk.co.nz/2021/03/11/ehv1-death-toll-11-cases-nine-countries/>

USAID and US DFC loan guarantee program to finance rooftop solar

Question : On March 18, 2021 the United States Agency for International Development(USAID) & US DFC announced a XYZ loan guarantee program to finance rooftop solar. What is the value of XYZ ?

(a) 41 million dollar (b) 61 million dollar (c) 81 million dollar (d) 91 million dollar

Ans. (a)

Related facts

- On March 18, 2021 the United States Agency for International Development & US DFC announced a 41 million dollar loan guarantee program(LGP) to finance rooftop solar.
- US DFC stands for — U.S. International Development Finance Corporation.
- LGP will help finance investments by Indian Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in renewable energy solutions, including rooftop solar installations.
- These loans will enable SMEs to access reliable power and cut costs.
- Investments in solar solutions, secured by these credit guarantees, will improve access to clean, steady, and affordable energy as well as further progress towards India’s clean energy transition and climate change mitigation.
- India’s commercial and industrial sectors pay high fees for their electricity, making rooftop solar a sustainable, cost-saving investment, but SMEs and residential consumers face obstacles in securing the financing needed to install and use rooftop panels.
- SMEs account for 48 percent of the total energy consumed in India’s industrial sector.
- Partnership
- USAID(United States Agency for International Development) and DFC(Development Finance Corporation) partnered with the New York-based Encourage Capital, an environmentally focused investment firm, and two Indian non-banking financial companies, cKers Financial and woman-owned Electronica Finance Limited (EFL), to address this challenge.
- Encourage Capital has invested 15 million dollar in EFL, which will use the USAID-DFC loan portfolio guarantee to stimulate the rooftop solar market—representing a \$9 billion market opportunity—for SMEs.
- USAID in rooftop solar market
- USAID will continue its support through providing technical assistance to address quality and safety concerns in the rooftop solar market.
- Significance of LGP
- Once these credit guarantees lower the financial hurdle for installing rooftop solar, India will realize numerous benefits resulting from the transition to this green technology.
- These guarantees have the potential to unlock lifesaving social benefits and robust economic growth.



Link:

<https://www.usaid.gov/india/press-releases/mar-18-2021-usaid-and-dfc-announce-41m-loan-guarantee-program-finance>

World’s first green hedging transaction

Question : Which of the following parties has executed World’s first green hedging transaction recently ?

(a) Deutsche Bank and Continuum Energy (b) HSBC Bank and Adani Energy
(c) JPMorgan Chase and Suzlon Energy (d) None of the above

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- Deutsche Bank and Continuum Energy Levanter Pte Ltd, today(16 March 2021) announced they have executed the world's first green hedging transaction with a second party opinion based on a specially designed green hedge framework.
- Deutsche Bank and Continuum has worked together to develop a green hedge framework to support the implementation of Continuum's green bond framework.
- External reviewer, Cicero Green, issued the Second Party Opinion on the green bond and the green hedge frameworks.
- This hedge structure has the potential to set new standards for increased transparency and risk management particularly for Emerging Markets hard currency green bond issuances.
- The FX hedge solution is for a 6 years tenor in US dollars/Indian Rupees on notional of US\$185 million, linked to Continuum's green bond US dollar primary issuance and based on their green bond framework.
- Sustainability is a core pillar in Deutsche Bank's transformation strategy and the bank is committed to supporting clients as they transition for the zero carbon economy.
- Last year in Asia Pacific Deutsche Bank structured Asia's first currency hedge linked to sustainability key performance indicators.
- This hedge structure was assessed and approved against Deutsche Bank's Sustainable Finance Framework.



Link:

<https://www.db.com/news/detail/20210316-deutsche-bank-executes-world-s-first-green-hedge-with-continuum>

Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report, 2021

Question : “Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report, 2021” published by UN ESCAP on March 16, 2021. According to the report, how much of the Asia-Pacific region can achieve the Sustainable Development Goals ?

(a) Less than 10 percent (b) 12 percent (c) 14 percent (d) 16 percent

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- “Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report, 2021” published by UN ESCAP on March 16, 2021.
- According to the report at the current pace, the region may achieve less than 10 percent of the SDG targets.
- It is notable that SDGs(Sustainable Development Goals) have 104 measurable targets.
- Out of these only 9 would be track by 2030.
- The APAC(Asia Pacific's) progress has been too slow on half of the goals in Asia-Pacific and many were stalled at levels well below the 2020 milestone.
- Different goals and relative progress
- The progress on environmental goals has been very disappointing, showed the report.



- Other goals where the region fell abysmally short of expectations were —
- Gender equality (Goal 5),
- Clean water and sanitation (Goal 6),
- Affordable and clean energy (Goal 7),
- Decent work and economic growth (Goal 8), and life on land (Goal 15).
- The dismal performance on goals for climate action (Goal 13) and life below water (Goal 14) is of special concern. In fact, the situation is now worse than it was in 2000.
- APAC is responsible for more than 50% of the global greenhouse gas emissions.
- SDG goals for sustainable cities and communities are untouchable since 2000.

Link:

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/governance/asia-pacific-may-achieve-just-10-targets-of-sustainable-development-goals-un-report-75977>

JLL HPI Index

Question : JLL (Jones Lang LaSalle), a commercial real estate and investment management company, recently released the Human Performance Indicator (HPI). According to this index, what is India’s situation in workplace satisfaction ?

(a) Highest rank (b) Middle rank (c) Lowest rank (d) Second highest rank

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- JLL (Jones Lang LaSalle), a commercial real estate and investment management company, recently released the Human Performance Indicator (HPI).
- HPI is a new formula that gives a comprehensive view of how different aspects of the workplace function.
- This includes spaces, technology and culture combine to elevate human performance.
- HPI results were based on a study of more than one thousand employees in five countries across the region.

Index

- The HPI Asia Pacific results are based on an online study covering Australia, China, India, Japan, and Singapore.
- India is leading with more than 80 percent of high performers practicing flexible working, including flexible hours and work-from-home, in comparison to other Asia Pacific countries.
- Compared to the other Asia Pacific countries surveyed, India ranked highest in workplace satisfaction, with a percentage of 98 per cent.
- This is followed by China at 97 per cent. Thus India and China belongs to High Performers countries.
- Key factors impacting workplace satisfaction in countries like India and China include access to a wider range of sophisticated workplaces and technologies.
- These countries have designed a strong change management program to motivate employees to make optimum use of the spaces and technologies available to boost Human Performance.
- The report noted that overall, technology workers(53 per cent) and young professionals aged 25 to 34(37 per cent) make up the majority of countries like India and China.
- The research found that only one-third of Asia Pacific workplaces have an environment that elevates employee performance.



Link:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/macro-economy/india-ranks-highest-in-workplace-satisfaction-jll-hpi-index/article34072473.ece>

THOMAS BACH

Question – In March 2021, Thomas Bach of Germany was re-elected the International Olympic Committee in the 137th session of the IOC. Which of the given options is not correct in relation to his election?

- (a) Out of total 94 valid votes in the election, 93 votes were in his favor and only 1 against him.
- (b) Bach is the first Olympic medallist to have risen to the position of IOC president.
- (c) His second term will be from August 9, 2021 to the year 2026.
- (d) Thomas Bach was elected the President of the IOC in 2013 for the first time.

Answer – (c)

Related facts

- In March 2021, Thomas Bach of Germany was re-elected the International Olympic Committee in the 137th session of the IOC.
- Out of total 94 valid votes in the election, 93 votes were in his favor and only 1 against him.
- His term will end on 8 August 2021, the last day of the Tokyo 2021 Olympics.
- It is notable that Thomas Bach was elected the President of the IOC in 2013 for the first time.
- Bach is the first Olympic medallist to have risen to the position of IOC president.

Link:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/sports/more-sports/others/ioc-to-reinstall-thomas-bach-as-olympic-chief-with-covid-hit-tokyo-games-looming/articleshow/81385057.cms>

Asia-Pacific Rural and Agri Credit Association (APRCA) and NABARD's 'Regional Policy Forum' meeting ,2021

Question – Who inaugurated the meeting of the Regional Policy Forum of Asia Pacific Rural and Agri Credit Association (APRCA) and NABARD on 4 March 2021?

- (a) Narendra Singh Tomar
- (b) Gajendra Singh Shekhawat
- (c) M. Venkaiah Naidu
- (d) Piyush Goyal

Answer – (a)

Related facts

- The meeting of the Regional Policy Forum of Asia Pacific Rural and Agri Credit Association (APRACA) and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) was held in virtual format on 4 March 2021.
- The Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated it.
- The theme of this meeting was “Development support for the promotion of agribusiness clusters and credit enhancement tools”.
- It is worth mentioning that Apraka is a federation of 24 countries, in which the central banks of these countries ,Regulatory Authority, ARDB ,Cooperative Banks Federation, Commercial Banks Government agencies related to agricultural finance etc are members.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1702431>

Expert Group to examine the feasibility of Special Purpose Acquisition Companies(SPACs)

Question : Which organisation has formed an expert group to examine the feasibility of Special Purpose Acquisition Companies(SPACs) ?

(a)RBI (b)SEBI (c)DIPAM (d)CCI

Ans.(b)

Related facts

SEBI has recently(March 2021) formed an expert group to examine the feasibility of Special Purpose Acquisition Companies(SPACs).

PMAC

The report in this context will be submitted shortly by the Expert Group constituted under Sebi's Primary Market Advisory Committee(PMAC).

Aim

Sebi wants to explore the potential of SPACs while at the same time building adequate checks and balances in regulatory framework to take care of the associated risks. SPACs are formed to raise capital in an initial public offering (IPO) with the purpose of using the proceeds to identify and merge with a target company.

About SPACs

SPACs are usually formed by private equity funds or financial institutions, with expertise in a particular industry or business sector, with investment for initial working capital and issue related expenses. Such companies have recently become popular in the US. There has been increasing demand that SPACs should be allowed in India as well.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/stocks/news/sebi-forms-expert-group-to-examine-feasibility-of-spacs/articleshow/81449254.cms>

Deepika Padukone joins WEF list of Young Global Leaders

Question: Which Bollywood actress has joined World Economic Forum list of Young Global Leaders?

(a) Vidya Balan (b) Dia Mirza (c) Deepika Padukone (d) Anushka Sharma

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Bollywood Actress Deepika Padukone has joined the list of the Young Global Leaders (YGLs) compiled by the World Economic Forum.
- WEF's list 2021 class of Young Global Leaders features world's most promising 112 tomorrow's leaders under the age of 40



- If the level of global warming reaches 2 ° C, the total area covered by the coral reef is estimated to be less than 1%.
- Every year nine lakh people die prematurely due to pollution.
- Inequality in economic growth has made 1.3 billion people poor.

Link:

<https://www.unep.org/resources/making-peace-nature>

Tree City of the World

Question – Which city of India has recently been recognized as the Tree City of the World?

(a) Ahmedabad (b) Hyderabad (c) Lucknow (d) Bangalore

Answer – (b)

Related facts

- Hyderabad has recently (February 2021) become the only city in India to be recognised as a 'Tree City of the World' by the Arbor Day Foundation and the FAO.
- Hyderabad is placed alongside 119 other cities from more than sixty countries.
- The United States, Canada and the United Kingdom are the countries with the maximum cities featured on the list, with 38, 15 and 11 cities, respectively.
- The above mentioned nations have been recognised for their commitment to growing and maintaining urban forests in building healthy, resilient and happy cities.
- The Tree Cities of the World programme is committed to inspiring cities and towns to care for and celebrate their urban tree canopy.

Link:

<https://treecitiesoftheworld.org/directory.cfm>

SEBI : Launching of pre-expiry margin to strengthen the risk management framework

Question : SEBI has recently announced to launching of pre-expiry margin to strengthen the risk management framework. From which date this decision will be effective ?

(a) April 1, 2021 (b) March 31, 2021 (c) July 1, 2021 (d) None of the above

Ans.(a)

Related facts

- SEBI has recently announced to launching of pre-expiry margin to strengthen the risk management framework.
- Date and purpose of implementation
- The latest decision — to be effective from April 1, 2021 — is aimed at encouraging significant reduction of open interest as the contract approaches the expiry date.
- Open interests are futures and option contracts that are not settled (sold or bought) by the investor.
- The pre-expiry margin will be applicable on certain commodities under the Alternate Risk Management Framework (ARMF).



- Background
- Against the backdrop of the unprecedented event of negative final settlement price in the crude oil futures markets last year, Sebi had prescribed an ARMF that would be applicable in case of near zero and/ or negative prices for any underlying commodities/futures.
- The matter of negative crude oil price event was deliberated upon by the Risk Management Review Committee (RMRC) of Sebi.
- In this regard, one of the suggestions of RMRC was that Indian Exchanges should consider introducing some mechanism to encourage significant reduction of open interest as the contract approaches the expiry date.

Link:

<https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/markets/sebi-to-introduce-pre-expiry-margins-to-curb-negative-price-scenarios-6563231.html>