



# CURRENT AFFAIRS MARCH 2021

**Copyright © by Classic IAS Academy**

All rights are reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of Classic IAS Academy.

## Table of Contents

Page | 2

1. Light House Projects (Lhps) across Six States
2. Central Consumer Protection Authority
3. ACROSS
4. Sri Mannathu Padmanabhan Ji
5. 40th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica
6. S301 report of U.S. On Equalisation Levy
7. Trade policy review of India at the WTO
8. SWADES
9. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yajana (PMFBY)
10. Parliamentary consultative committee
11. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 3.0)
12. PRARAMBH Startup India International Summit
13. Skoch challenger award
14. Svamitva Scheme
15. e-GRAMSWARAJ
16. Prabhass portal
17. SWASTHVAYU
18. CAWACH
19. Van Dhan Scheme
20. Protection Of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001
21. Stand-Up India scheme
22. Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre
23. INS Karanj
24. Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities
25. Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children Scheme
26. Maitri Setu
27. World Heritage Sites
28. SFURTI
29. HERATH
30. Production linked incentive scheme
31. Dustlik
32. Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana
33. APEDA
34. Deep Ocean Mission
35. Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana
36. Schemes for Agro-Forestry
37. Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan
38. Azotobacter and Azospirillum
39. Jhum (shifting) Cultivation
40. Global Gender Gap Report-2021
41. India readies Saudi oil import cut as stand-off
42. Top 10 Biggest Thermal Power Plants In India
43. Event Horizon Telescope
44. Clean Development Mechanism
45. Shirui Kashong Peak
46. La Perouse
47. Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects (GGP)
48. NITI Aayog Investment in Healthcare Sector Report

49. Top 5 Current Affairs Questions on DSIR-PRISM Scheme
50. Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process
51. International Ranger Awards
52. Tribal TB Initiative and Tribal Population in India
53. Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant
54. Echo and Bifrost
55. PM visit to Bangladesh
56. Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act
57. New Assessment by IUCN on African elephants
58. UK, US call for alternative to China's BRI
59. World Development Report 2021
60. Global Wind Report-2021
61. Supreme Court refuses to Stay Sale of Fresh Electoral Bonds
62. Norway to construct World's First Ship Tunnel
63. Indo-Korean Bilateral Friendship Park inaugurated in Delhi Cantt
64. New Zealand passes Miscarriages Bereavement Leave Law
65. Second Tranche of Commercial Coal Mining
66. US co-sponsors EU-led Resolution over Myanmar Human Rights
67. RBI RTGS could be Expanded Beyond India
68. India TB Report 2021-Highlights
69. International Intellectual Property Index
70. Double Mutant' virus
71. INS Vajra Commissioned to Indian Coast Guard
72. Taiwan to Ration Water for 1 Million Households
73. India justifies designs of the two Hydro Projects in J-K
74. Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak
75. Saudi Arabia proposes UN-sponsored ceasefire in Yemen
77. National Biopharma Mission
78. Power Grid sets up e-Tendering Portal-PRANIT
79. ISRO Demonstrates Free Space Quantum Communication
80. Flexible fuel vehicles (FFVs)
81. Jal Shakti Ministry & UN tie-up for Jal Jeevan Mission
82. Gandhi Peace Prize 2020
83. Volcano Bonds
84. Ken-Betwa First River Linking project
85. Freedom Pineapple Movement
86. 'Catch the Rain' campaign
87. India to conduct Radar Surveys of Himalayan Glaciers

# Current Affairs March-2021

Page | 4

## **1. Light House Projects (Lhps) across Six States:**

- Recently, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Light House projects (LHPs) under Global Housing Technology Challenge (GHTC) at six sites across six States.
- He said the houses are called light house projects in technical language but these 6 projects are really like lighthouses showing a new direction to the housing sector in the country.
- Government also announced the winners under Affordable Sustainable Housing Accelerators - India (ASHA-India) and gave away annual awards for excellence in implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U) Mission.
- Government also released a certification course on innovative construction technologies named NAVARITIH (New, Affordable, Validated, Research Innovation Technologies for Indian Housing).

## **2. Central Consumer Protection Authority:**

- The authority is being constituted under **Section 10(1)** of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. The Act replaced the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, and seeks to widen its scope in addressing consumer concerns.
- The **CCPA** will also have an Investigation Wing that will be headed by a Director General.
- District Collectors too, will have the power to investigate complaints of violations of consumer rights, unfair trade practices, and false or misleading advertisements.
- Under Section 20 of The Consumer Protection Act, the proposed authority will have powers to:
  1. recall goods or withdrawal of services that are "dangerous, hazardous or unsafe;
  2. pass an order for refund the prices of goods or services so recalled to purchasers of such goods or services and
  3. discontinuation of practices which are unfair and prejudicial to consumer's interest

### **Penalties:**

- For manufacture, selling, storage, distribution, or import of adulterated products, the penalties are:
  - If injury is not caused to a consumer, fine up to Rs 1 lakh with imprisonment up to six months;
  - If injury is caused, fine up to Rs 3 lakh with imprisonment up to one year;
  - If grievous hurt is caused, fine up to Rs 5 lakh with imprisonment up to 7 years;
  - In case of death, fine of Rs 10 lakh or more with a minimum imprisonment of 7 years, extendable to imprisonment for life.

### **False or misleading advertisements:**

Classic IAS Academy | UG 33-34 Ansal Chamber-1Bhikaji Cama Place | New Delhi 110066  
011-45069494 | helpdesk@classiciasacademy.com | www.classiciasacademy.com

- Section 21 of the new Act defines the powers given to the CCPA to crack down on false or misleading advertisements.
- The CCPA may order investigation that any advertisement is false or misleading and is harmful to the interest of any consumer, or is in contravention of consumer rights.
- If dissatisfied, the CCPA may issue directions to the trader, manufacturer, endorser, advertiser, or publisher to discontinue such an advertisement, or modify it in a manner specified by the authority, within a given time.

#### **Penalties:**

- The authority may also impose a penalty up to Rs 10 lakh, with imprisonment up to two years, on the manufacturer or endorser of false and misleading advertisements.
- The penalty may go up to Rs 50 lakh, with imprisonment up to five years, for every subsequent offence committed by the same manufacturer or endorser.
- CCPA may ban the endorser of a false or misleading advertisement from making endorsement of any products or services in the future, for a period that may extend to one year.
- The ban may extend up to three years in every subsequent violation of the Act.

#### **Other powers of the CCPA:**

- While conducting an investigation after preliminary inquiry, officers of the CCPA's Investigation Wing will have the powers to enter any premise and search for any document or article, and to seize these.
- For search and seizure, the CCPA will have similar powers given under the provisions of The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.
- The CCPA can file complaints of violation of consumer rights or unfair trade practices before the District, State, and the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission.
- It will issue safety notices to alert consumers against dangerous or hazardous or unsafe goods or services.

### **3. ACROSS:**

- India launched **Flash Flood Guidance Services**, the first of its kind for South Asian countries namely India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Many significant developments to enhance India's meteorological observational network were made by IMD. These are listed below:
  - Meteorological observatory of Leh was upgraded to a full-fledged Meteorological Centre.
  - Seventeen high wind speed recorders were installed at Visakhapatnam, Machilipatnam, Chennai, Goa, Cuddalore, Bhubaneswar, Kakinada, Puri, Ongole, Digha, Kavali, Haldia, Pamban, Gopalpur, Kanyakumari, Veraval, and Bhuj.
  - A countrywide network of 25 Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) stations for Earth and atmospheric studies was setup.
  - The phase six of Winter Fog Experiment (WIFEX) is being conducted at IGI Airport, New Delhi and Hissar from November 2020 to March 2021.
  - Established 102 new District Agro-Meteorological Field Units in 2020. This is in addition to 130 Agromet Field Units.

- Launched the mobile application 'Mausam' on July 27, 2020, by the Hon'ble Minister of Earth Sciences.
- Worked towards establishing an Atmospheric Research Test Bed (ART): MoES acquired 100 acres of land from Madhya Pradesh State Government for establishing an ART at Silkheda village in Sehore District of Madhya Pradesh.
- Started receiving and utilising many new observations in its global and regional atmospheric data assimilation system during this period at National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), Noida.

#### **O-SMART:**

- To disseminated advisories of Potential Fishing Zone continuously. The advisories were issued in smart-map and multilingual texts every day, subject to availability of satellite data, fishing-ban, and adverse sea-state.
- Launched Small Vessel Advisory and Forecast Services System (SVAS) to provide ocean state information to small fishing vessels that ply the coastal waters of India.
- Achieved certificate of recognition and certificate of appreciation for 'tsunami ready' by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)-UNESCO. It was conferred to Venkatraipur and Noliasahi village communities in Odisha. The certification is a first-of-its-kind in the Indian Ocean region.
- Launched Digital Ocean, an innovative web-application project to manage ocean data.

#### **Seismology and Geoscience Research (SAGE):**

- It located 1,527 earthquakes in and around India from January to November 2020, of which 65 events were of magnitude  $\geq 5.0$ , 277 events were micro, and remaining events were small.
- The seismic microzonation work of four cities, namely, Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Coimbatore, and Mangalore, started in 2018 and is now in an advanced completion stage.
- Participated in the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP)-378 expedition in the far southern Pacific Ocean from January 03 to February 06, 2020. The expedition aimed to investigate the record of Cenozoic climate and oceanography through a drilling transect.
- Established Isotope Geochemistry Facility (IGF) at the National Centre for Earth System Science (NCESS), Kerala.

#### **4. Sri Mannathu Padmanabhan Ji:**

- **Mannathu Padmanabhan** (2 January 1878 – 25 February 1970) was an Indian social reformer and freedom fighter from the south-western state of **Kerala**. He is recognised as the founder of the Nair Service Society (NSS).
- He was honoured with the title Bharata Kesari by the President of India. He also received Padma Bhushan in 1966.
- He fought for social equality, the first phase being the **Vaikom Satyagraha**, demanding the public roads near the temple at Vaikom be opened to low caste Hindus.
- He took part in the Vaikom(1924) and Guruvayoor(1931) temple-entry Satyagrahas; the anti-untouchability agitations.
- According to the prevalent caste system in Kerala and the rest of India, low-caste Hindus were not allowed to enter the temples.

### **Vaikom Satyagraha:**

- In the Kakinada meet of the Congress Party in 1923, T K Madhavan presented a report citing the discrimination that the depressed castes' people were facing in Kerala.
- It was after this session that movements against untouchability needed to be promoted.
- In Kerala, a committee was formed comprising people of different castes to fight untouchability.
- The committee chaired by K Kelappan, comprised of T K Madhavan, Velayudha Menon, K Neelakantan Namboothiri and T R Krishnaswami Iyer.
- Other prominent figures included Kurur Neelakanthan Namboodiri and Mannathu Padmanabhan.
- In February 1924, they decided to launch a 'Kerala Paryatanam' in order to get temple entry and also the right to use public roads for every Hindu irrespective of caste or creed.
- Vaikom is situated on the western side of Kottayam district in the Indian state of Kerala.
- It shares its border with Vembanad Lake.
- Its importance in Indian history is due to the Vaikom Satyagraha against untouchability, in which Mahatma Gandhi and Periyar Ramasamy participated.

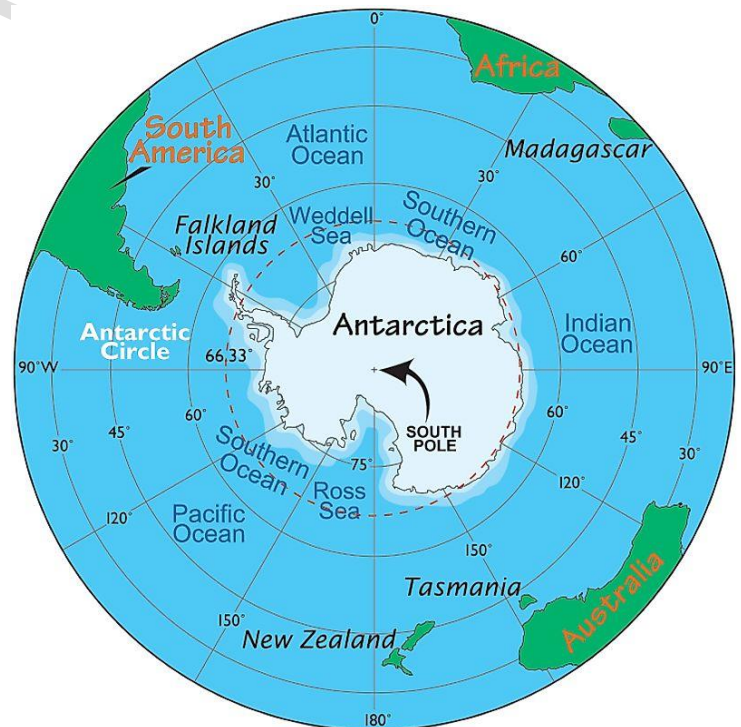
### **Significance of the Vaikom Satyagraha:**

- It became a first struggle for human rights in India
- It became a laboratory for testing important methods such as Satyagrahas.
- Instilled rationality among the masses.

### **5. 40th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica:**

- India launched the 40th scientific expedition to **Antarctica**. This Indian expedition marks four decades of country's scientific endeavour to the southern white continent.
- The chartered ice-class vessel MV Vasiliy Golovnin will make this journey and will reach Antarctica in 30 days. After leaving behind a team of 40 members, it would return to India in April 2021.
- On return, it will also bring back the winter team of the preceding trip.
- The Indian Antarctic expeditions began in 1981.

After a humble beginning, the Indian Antarctic programme has now credited



to have built three permanent research base stations in Antarctica-named Dakshin Gangotri, Maitri, and Bharati.

- 4As of today, India has two operational research stations in Antarctica named Maitri and Bharati. The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), Goa, manages the entire Indian Antarctic program.

#### **6. S301 report of U.S. On Equalisation Levy:**

- The U.S. administration had announced initiation of investigation under **section 301** of the U.S. Trade Act, 1974 against the taxation on digital services adopted or under consideration by countries, including the Equalisation Levy applied by India.
- With respect to India, the focus of the investigation was on the 2% Equalisation Levy (EL) levied by India on e-commerce supply of services.
- The EL levied at 2% is applicable on non-resident e-commerce operator, not having a permanent establishment in India. The threshold for this levy is Rs. 2 crores, which is very moderate and applies equally to all e-commerce operators across the globe having business in India. The levy does not discriminate against any U.S. companies, as it applies equally to all non-resident e-commerce operators, irrespective of their country of residence.
- There is no retrospective element as the levy was enacted before the 1st day of April, 2020 which is the effective date of the levy.

#### **7. Trade policy review of India at the WTO:**

- The second and final Session of India's seventh Trade Policy Review (TPR) was concluded, at the World Trade Organization in Geneva.
- The TPR is an important mechanism under the WTO's monitoring function in which member countries' trade and related policies are examined by the WTO with an aim to contribute towards improved adherence to WTO rules, while providing constructive feedback to the Member under review.
- The Commerce Secretary mentioned that the ongoing pandemic has again brought to the fore, the importance of food and livelihood security and urged the Membership for a permanent solution to Public Stock Holding (PSH) for food security.





**164 States and Customs Territories**



**98% of the world trade**



**package of agreements** that is a set of international rules in the field of trade and protection of intellectual property rights, and on which basis the business of the whole world proceeds



**platform for multilateral negotiations** and the development of international trade rules, including the reduction of trade barriers



**dispute settlement system**, the most effective among all international organizations



**source of information** that ensures transparency in the application of trade policy measures by all Members

#### **8. SWADES: Skill Mapping Exercise for Returning Citizens:**

- Recently, the Government has launched an initiative 'SWADES - Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support'.
- The initiative, undertaken as part of the Vande Bharat Mission, aims at empowering the returning citizens with relevant employment opportunities.
- Vande Bharat Mission is an evacuation exercise to bring back Indian citizens stranded abroad amidst the coronavirus-induced travel restrictions.
- It is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Ministry of External Affairs.
- The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) is supporting the implementation of the project.
- It aims to create a database of qualified citizens based on their skill sets and experience to tap into and fulfil demand of Indian and foreign companies.
- The collected information will be shared with the companies for suitable placement opportunities in the country.
- The returning citizens are required to fill up an online SWADES Skills Card.
- It will facilitate a strategic framework to provide the returning citizens with suitable employment opportunities through discussions with key stakeholders including State Governments, Industry Associations and Employers.
- The Prime Minister assured the diaspora of all the support from their motherland. He mentioned Vande Bharat Mission in which more than 45 lakh Indians were rescued during Corona times.
- He also talked about Global Pravasi Rishta portal for better connectivity and communication with the Pravasi Bhartiya.

### 9. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yajana (PMFBY):

- 5 years ago, on 13th January 2016, the Government of India took a historic step towards strengthening risk coverage of crops for farmers of India and approved the flagship crop insurance scheme - the **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)**.
- The scheme was conceived as a milestone initiative to provide a comprehensive risk solution at the lowest uniform premium across the country for farmers. The Government of India is committed towards protecting the interests of the farmers.
- Premium cost over and above the farmer share is equally subsidized by States and GoI. However, GoI shares 90% of the premium subsidy for North Eastern States to promote the uptake in the region.
- The average sum insured per hectare has increased from ₹15,100 during the pre-PMFBY Schemes to ₹40,700 under PMFBY.
- As an end to end risk mitigation mechanism for farmers, the scheme extends coverage for the entire cropping cycle from pre-sowing to post-harvest including coverage for losses arising out of prevented sowing and mid-season adversities.
- Integration of land records with the PMFBY portal, Crop Insurance mobile-app for easy enrollment of farmers and usage of technology such as satellite imagery, remote-sensing technology, drones, artificial intelligence and machine learning to assess crop losses are some of the key features of the scheme.

### 10. Parliamentary consultative committee:

- The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs constitutes Consultative Committees of Members of both the Houses of Parliament, which are attached to various Ministries, and arranges meetings thereof. The Minister/Minister of State in-charge of the Ministry concerned acts as the chairman of the Consultative Committee of that Ministry.
- The main purpose of these Committees is to provide a forum for informal discussions between the Government and Members of Parliament on policies and programmes of the Government and the manner of their implementation. Meetings of these Committees are held both during the session and inter-session period of Parliament.
- Consultative Committees attached to various Ministries were constituted. Besides this, 16 Informal Consultative Committees of the sixteen Railway Zones have also been constituted. Unlike the Consultative Committees attached to the Ministries, meetings, of these Informal Consultative Committees are to be arranged during Session periods only.

### 11. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 3.0):

- The third phase of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 3.0) was launched in 600 districts across all states of India. Spearheaded by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), this phase will focus on new-age and COVID-related skills.

- Skill India Mission PMKVY 3.0 envisages training of eight lakh candidates over a scheme period of 2020-2021 with an outlay of Rs. 948.90 crore.
- The 729 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKKs), empaneled non-PMKK training centres and more than 200 ITIs under Skill India will be rolling out PMKVY 3.0 training to build a robust pool of skilled professionals. On the basis of the learning gained from PMKVY 1.0 and PMKVY 2.0, the Ministry has improved the newer version of the scheme to match the current policy doctrine and energize the skilling ecosystem affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- "Skill India Mission" launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri. Narendra Modi on 15th of July 2015.

## **12. PRARAMBH: Startup India International Summit:**

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi interacted with startups and addressed 'Prarambh: Startup India International Summit' today via video conferencing. Ministers from BIMSTEC countries and Union Ministers Shri Prakash Javadekar, Shri Piyush Goyal and Shri Som Parkash were present on the occasion.
- 44 per cent recognized startups have women directors and number of women working in these start up is very high. Similarly, 45 per cent startups are in tier 2 and tier 3 cities, working as the brand ambassadors of the local products.
- Every state is supporting and incubating startups as per local possibilities and 80 percent of districts of the country are now part of the Startup India mission. Youth from all types of background are able to realize their potential in this ecosystem.
- In 2014 only 4 Indian startups were in the 'unicorn club' now, more than 30 startups have crossed the 1 billion mark.
- Prime Minister stressed, that Asian countries who have will for collaboration should take responsibility and come together. This responsibility, naturally falls on BIMSTECF countries as we work for one fifth of humanity.

## **13. Skoch challenger award:**

- SKOCH Challenger Award was conferred to Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) under "Transparency in Governance" category for IT-led initiatives and transformational reforms leading to outcome-based performance improvement, better transparency and strengthening of the e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across the country.
- The SKOCH Challenger Award for best performance in the area of Transparency in Governance was given virtually during the 70th SKOCH Summit (SKOCH Public Policy Forum).
- Decentralization of powers to the Panchayats is seen as a means of empowering people and involving them in the democratic process. Over the last 27 years since the 73rd Constitutional amendment gave constitutional status to the Panchayats, the PRIs have come a long way.
- Panchayats have significantly contributed to women empowerment, as about 45 % of the elected representatives of Panchayats are women. In addition to

the constitutional provision of not less the one third reservation for women, 21 States have made provision for 50% reservation for women.

- Ministry has also launched a geospatial planning application called Gram Manchitra in Oct 2019 as a decision support system for GPDP.

#### 14. Svamitva Scheme:

- The launch and implementation of SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas) Scheme has been one of the milestone and major steps ahead towards ensuring socio-economic empowerment of the rural masses with overriding objective of making the rural inhabitant self-reliant.
- SVAMITVA Scheme aims to provide an integrated property validation solution for rural India, engaging the latest drone surveying technology, for demarcating the inhabitant land in rural areas.
- Under the SVAMITVA Scheme, the first ever exercise undertaken to carry out property survey of all villages to provide Record of Rights to millions of rural property owners of inhabited area by issuing property card to them for their immovable residential property.

#### 15. e-GRAMSWARAJ:

- In order to strengthen e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), e-GramSwaraj application has been developed with amalgamating the functionalities of currently available applications in the Panchayat Enterprise Suit (PES) under e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP).
- The application subsumes the electronic fund management system (e-FMS) applications comprising of PlanPlus, ActionSoft, PRIASoft and National Asset Directory (NAD) along with the Area Profiler Application with Local Government Directory (LGD) acting as the underlying Panchayat directory.
- e-GramSwaraj application provides single window with the complete profile of the Gram Panchayat, including Sarpanch and Panchayat Secretary details, demographic details of Panchayat, details of Panchayat Finances, asset details, activities taken up through Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), Mission Antyodaya survey reports etc.
- The application aims to bring in more transparency, thus strengthening the e-Governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) across the country through decentralized planning, process reporting and work-based accounting. Furthermore, the application provides a platform for effective monitoring.
- MoPR has conceptualized and developed an application called "AuditOnline" for online audit of Panchayat accounts in order to strengthening the transparency and accountability at grassroots level.
- **ServicePlus** – a versatile and secure solution for service delivery – makes all Government services accessible to the common man in his/her locality, through common service delivery outlets, and ensure efficiency, transparency, and reliability of such services at affordable costs to realize the basic needs of the common man.
- **Gram Manchitra** is a Spatial Planning Application for facilitating and supporting Gram Panchayat users to perform planning at Gram Panchayat

level with the use of geo spatial technology. 'Real time' monitoring of development work implementation status and progress of execution of various schemes can be easily tracked.

#### **16. Prabhass portal:**

- The virtual platform, a portal, is named PRABHASS which means a ray of light, and is an acronym for "Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark - Integrating Indian Diaspora with the Mother Land".
- PRABHASS is being developed with collaborative effort of all major scientific ministries / departments and the Ministry of External Affairs of India with the following Vision and Objectives:
- The vision of the portal is to serve as National Digital Platform to effectively collaborate with Global Indian S&T Community for collectively promoting inclusive growth in India, strengthening Indian innovation ecosystem and contributing towards nation building.

#### **17. SWASTHVAYU:**

- CSIR-NAL developed a low-cost indigenised, non-Invasive bi-level positive airway pressure ventilator device named as "SwasthVayu".
- Developed in 36 days, it is a cost-effective device, easy to use in Makeshift hospitals, wards, dispensary and has three modes of operation, continuous, timed and spontaneous.
- It has successfully passed stringent electrical safety, performance, calibration, bio-compatibility tests at NABL accredited laboratory and certified. It has undergone clinical trials at many hospitals, and CSIR-NAL is providing 1200 ventilators to the Delhi Government.

#### **18. CAWACH:**

- The collective strength and power of NIDHI, its incubator network and its startups was tested successfully during the COVID-19 pandemic through the "Centre for Augmenting WAR with COVID-19 Health Crisis (CAWACH)" program by supporting various solutions to resolve the crisis.
- The efforts of CAWACH to scout, evaluate and support the innovations and startups that address COVID-19 challenges led to a slew of technologies, diagnostics & drugs, disinfectants & sanitizers, ventilators & medical equipment, PPEs and informatics as solutions to contain, treat and manage the pandemic.

#### **19. Van Dhan Scheme:**

- The Van Dhan Scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED. It was launched on 14th April, 2018 and seeks to improve tribal incomes through value addition of tribal products.
- Minor Forest Produce (MFP) is a major source of livelihood for tribals living in forest areas. The importance of MFPs for this section of the society can be gauged from the fact that around 100 million forest dwellers depend on MFPs for food, shelter, medicines and cash income.
- Tribals derive 20-40% of their annual income from MFP on which they spend major portion of their time. This activity has strong linkage to women's

financial empowerment as most of the MFPs are collected and used/sold by women. MFP sector has the potential to create about 10 million workdays annually in the country.

- At unit level, aggregation of produce would be done by SHGs having about 30 members each forming Van Dhan Vikas 'Samuh'. A typical Van Dhan Vikas Samuh would have the following facilities:
- Provision for required building/ infrastructure support to be established in one of the beneficiary's house/ part of house or Government/ gram panchayat building
- Equipment/ Tool Kit comprising of equipment such as small cutting and sieving tools, decorticator, dryer, packaging tool etc. based on MFPs available in the area
- Fully equipped training facilities for a batch of 30 trainees with provision for raw material for training purpose and supply of trainee kits (comprising of bag, scribbling pad, pen, brochures, training manual, booklet etc)
- Provisioning of working capital for the SHGs through tie up with financial institutions, banks, NSTFDC etc
- A cluster of ten such SHGs within the same village shall form a Van Dhan Vikas Kendra. Subject to successful operations of the samuhs in a Kendra, common infrastructure facilities (pucca Kendra) may be provided to the Kendra in the next phase in terms of building, warehouse, etc. for use of the samuh members
- An illustrative list of major MFPs which may be covered under the initiative are tamarind, mahua flower, mahua seed, hill broom, chironjee, honey, sal seed, sal leaves, bamboo split, myrobalan, mango (amchur), aonla (churan/candy), seed lac, tez patta, cardamom, black pepper, turmeric, dry ginger, cinnamon, coffee, tea, sea buckthorn tea, etc. Apart from these, any other MFP with potential for value addition may be included.

## **20. Protection Of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001:**

- The Govt. of India enacted "The Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPV&FR) Act, 2001" adopting sui generis system. Indian legislation is not only in conformity with International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), 1978, but also have sufficient provisions to protect the interests of public sector breeding institutions and the farmers.

### **Rights under the Act:**

- **Breeders' Rights:** Breeders will have exclusive rights to produce, sell, market, distribute, import or export the protected variety. Breeder can appoint agent/ licensee and may exercise for civil remedy in case of infringement of rights.
- **Researchers' Rights:** Researcher can use any of the registered variety under the Act for conducting experiment or research. This includes the use of a variety as an initial source of variety for the purpose of developing another variety but repeated use needs prior permission of the registered breeder.
- **Farmers' Rights-**A farmer who has evolved or developed a new variety is entitled for registration and protection in like manner as a breeder of a variety;
- Farmers variety can also be registered as an extant variety;

- A farmer can save, use, sow, re-sow, exchange, share or sell his farm produce including seed of a variety protected under the PPV&FR Act, 2001 in the same manner as he was entitled before the coming into force of this Act provided farmer shall not be entitled to sell branded seed of a variety protected under the PPV&FR Act, 2001;
- Farmers are eligible for recognition and rewards for the conservation of Plant Genetic Resources of land races and wild relatives of economic plants;
- There is also a provision for compensation to the farmers for non-performance of variety under Section 39 (2) of the Act, 2001 and
- Farmer shall not be liable to pay any fee in any proceeding before the Authority or Registrar or the Tribunal or the High Court under the Act.

#### **Implementation of the Act:**

- To implement the provisions of the Act the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare established the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2005.
- **General Functions of the Authority:**
- Registration of new plant varieties, essentially derived varieties (EDV), extant varieties;
- Developing DUS (Distinctiveness, Uniformity and Stability) test guidelines for new plant species;
- Developing characterization and documentation of varieties registered;
- Compulsory cataloging facilities for all variety of plants;
- Documentation, indexing and cataloguing of farmers' varieties;
- Recognizing and rewarding farmers, community of farmers, particularly tribal and rural community engaged in conservation and improvement;
- Preservation of plant genetic resources of economic plants and their wild relatives;
- Maintenance of the National Register of Plant Varieties and
- Maintenance of National Gene Bank.

#### **21. Stand-Up India scheme:**

- The Stand-up India scheme aims at promoting entrepreneurship among women and scheduled castes and tribes. The scheme is anchored by Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance, Government of India.
- Stand-Up India Scheme facilitates bank loans between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 Crore to at least one Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch for setting up a greenfield enterprise.
- This enterprise may be in manufacturing, services or the trading sector. In case of non-individual enterprises at least 51% of the shareholding and controlling stake should be held by either an SC/ST or woman entrepreneur.
- Eligibility of loans for SC/ST and/or woman entrepreneurs, above 18 years of age.
- Loans under the scheme is available for only green field project. Green field signifies, in this context, the first time venture of the beneficiary in the manufacturing or services or trading sector.

- In case of non-individual enterprises, 51% of the shareholding and controlling stake should be held by either SC/ST and/or Women Entrepreneur.
- Borrower should not be in default to any bank/financial institution.

## **22. Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre:**

- Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)" is an initiative of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to combat cyber crime in the country, in a coordinated and effective manner. Overview about the Scheme are as following:
  1. To act as a nodal point in the fight against cybercrime
  2. Identify the research problems/needs of Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) and take up R&D activities in developing new technologies and forensic tools in collaboration with academia / research institutes within India and abroad
  3. To prevent misuse of cyber space for furthering the cause of extremist and terrorist groups
  4. Suggest amendments, if required, in cyber laws to keep pace with fast changing technologies and International cooperation
  5. To coordinate all activities related to implementation of Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLAT) with other countries related to cybercrimes in consultation with the concerned nodal authority in MHA

### **Components of the Scheme:**

#### **National Cybercrime Threat Analytics Unit (TAU)**

- National Cybercrime Threat Analytics Unit (TAU), shall provide a platform for law enforcement personnel, persons from private sector, academia and research organizations to work collaboratively in order to analyse all pieces of puzzles of cybercrimes.
- Threat Analytics Unit shall also produce cybercrime threat intelligence reports and organize periodic interaction on specific cybercrime centric discussions.
- Create multi-stakeholder environment for bringing together law enforcement specialists and industry experts.

#### **National Cybercrime Reporting:**

- This works in tandem with already established investigation units at state and central levels as well as experts from different spheres to create expert investigation teams.
- Will have the capability to respond in real time to rapidly changing cybercrime threat.
- Will able to collaborate with partners to investigate cyber and cyber-enabled crime.
- Platform for Joint Cybercrime Investigation Team
- Its objective is to drive intelligence-led, coordinated action against key cybercrime threats and targets.
- This will facilitate the joint identification, prioritization, preparation and initiation of multi-jurisdictional against cybercrimes.

#### **National Cybercrime Forensic Laboratory (NCFL) Ecosystem:**

- Forensic analysis and investigation of cybercrime as a result of new digital technology and techniques.
- NCFL and associated Central Forensic Science Laboratory to be well-equipped and well-staffed in order to engage in analysis and investigation activities to



keep-up with new technical developments, using which a completely new kind of cybercrime might have been committed.

- National Cybercrime Training Centre (NCTC)
- National Cybercrime Training Centre (NCTC) will be setup to focus on standardization of course curriculum focused on cybercrimes, impact containment and investigations, imparting practical cybercrime detection, containment and reporting trainings on simulated cyber environments.
- Development of Massive Open Online Course to be delivered on a cloud based training platform.
- National Cybercrime Training Centre to also focus on establishing Cyber Range for advanced simulation and training on cyber-attack and investigation of such cybercrimes.

### **23. INS Karanj:**

- Indian Navy's third stealth Scorpene class Submarine INS Karanj has been commissioned at the Naval Dockyard Mumbai through a formal commissioning ceremony.
- Six Scorpene Class submarines are being built in India by the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) Mumbai, under collaboration with M/s Naval Group, France.
- INS Karanj would form part of the Western Naval Command's Submarine fleet and would be another potent part of the Command's arsenal.
- This year is being celebrated as the 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' which marks 50 years of 1971 Indo – Pak war.

### **24. Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities:**

- The term 'De-notified Tribes' stands for all those communities which were once notified under the Criminal Tribes Acts, enforced by the British Raj between 1871 and 1947. These Acts were repealed by the Indian Government in 1952, and these communities were "De-Notified".
- The customs of Nomadic communities have a long tradition of continuity and many of their practices claim on ancient heritage.
- The social and cultural characteristics of nomadic communities are closely related with their economic activities. Most of the communities follow a traditional system of moving in groups of five to twenty with a senior member who is responsible for settling disputes, leading each group.
- The nomadic way of life revolves around socio-economic necessity, ranging from making tools and utensils, supplying basic goods (salt, wool), providing medicines and herbs, to entertaining people.
- It has been estimated that South Asia has the world's largest nomadic population. In India, roughly 10 per cent of the population is Denotified and Nomadic.
- While the number of Denotified Tribes is about 150, the population of Nomadic Tribes consists of about 500 different communities. While the Denotified Tribes have almost settled in various States of the country, the Nomadic Communities continue to be largely nomadic in pursuit of their traditional professions.

- The Government in July 2014 had constituted National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT) for a period of three years to prepare a State-wise list of castes belonging to Denotified and Nomadic Tribes and to suggest appropriate measures in respect of Denotified and Nomadic Tribes that may be undertaken by the Central Government or the State Government.
- The Renke Commission (2008) was earlier commissioned to identify and list the DNT communities.

## 25. Cyber Crime Prevention Against Women and Children Scheme:

- The "Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC)" Scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India in order to check ever growing menace of cybercrime particularly against women and children.
- CyberDost has been selected as the brand name for use in all the communication and awareness material across different communication platforms.
- Cyber criminals often create fake social media profile to befriend potential victims & obtain their confidential or personal data. Be careful of online friend requests you accept. Never trust online friends unless you know & can trust them in real life.

## 26. Maitri Setu:

- Recently, the Prime Minister inaugurated Bharat Bangla Maitri Bridge in Tripura's South district.
- The bridge 'Maitri Setu' has been built over **Feni River** which flows between Indian boundary in **Tripura** State and **Bangladesh**.
- The 1.9 Km long bridge joins Sabroom in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh. It is poised to herald 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.



## 27. World Heritage Sites:

- At present, India has 42 sites listed under Tentative List which is a pre-requisite condition for inscription as World Heritage Site. 'Dholavira: A Harappan City' has been submitted for nomination of World Heritage Site in 2019-2020. Nomination dossiers of 'Santiniketan, India' and 'Sacred Ensemble of Hoysalas' have been submitted to UNESCO for the year 2021-22 cycle.
- At present, India has 38 World Heritage Properties. All the sites under the Ministry are conserved as per ASI's Conservation Policy and are in good shape.

### WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN INDIA (38)

#### Cultural sites:

- Under Protection of Archaeological Survey of India (22)
- Agra Fort (1983) Uttar Pradesh
- Ajanta Caves (1983) Maharashtra
- Ellora Caves (1983) Maharashtra
- Taj Mahal (1983) Uttar Pradesh
- Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram (1984) Tamil Nadu
- Sun Temple, Konark (1984) Odisha
- Churches and Convents of Goa (1986) Goa
- Fatehpur Sikri (1986) Uttar Pradesh
- Group of Monuments at Hampi (1986) Karnataka
- Khajuraho, Group of Temples (1986) Madhya Pradesh
- Elephanta Caves (1987) Maharashtra
- Great Living Chola Temples at Thanjavur, Gangaikondacholapuram and Darasuram (1987 & 2004) Tamil Nadu
- Group of Monuments at Pattadakal (1987) Karnataka
- Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi (1989) Madhya Pradesh
- Humayun's Tomb, Delhi (1993) Delhi

- QutbMinar and its Monuments, Delhi (1993) Delhi
- Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka (2003) Madhya Pradesh
- Champaner-Pavagarh Archaeological Park (2004) Gujarat
- Red Fort Complex, Delhi (2007) Delhi
- Hill Forts of Rajasthan
- Kumbhalgarh, Jaisalmer and Ranthambhore, Amber and Gagron Forts) (2013) (Amber and Gagron Forts are under protection of Rajasthan State Archaeology and Museums) Rajasthan
- Rani-ki-Vav (The Queen's Stepwell) at Patan (2014) Gujarat
- Archaeological Site of NalandaMahavihara(Nalanda University) at Nalanda (2016) Bihar

#### **Under Protection of Ministry of Railways (2)**

- Mountain Railways of India Darjeeling,(1999), Nilgiri (2005), Kalka-Shimla (2008) West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh
- ChhatrapatiShivaji Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus) (2004) Maharashtra

#### **Under Protection of Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee (1)**

- Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya, (2002) Bihar

#### **Under Protection of Rajasthan State Archaeology and Museums (1)**

- The JantarMantar, Jaipur (2010)Rajasthan

#### **Under Protection of Chandigarh Administration (1)**

- The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement (2016) Chandigarh

#### **Under Protection of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (1)**

- Historic City of Ahmedabad (2017) Gujarat

#### **Under Protection of Bombay Municipal Corporation (1)**

- Victorian and Art Deco Ensemble of Mumbai (2018) Govt of Maharashtra

#### **Under Protection of Jaipur Municipal Corporation (1)**

- Jaipur City, Rajasthan (2019) Govt of Rajasthan

#### **NATURAL SITES: (7)**

##### Under Protection of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Changes

1. Kaziranga National Park (1985) Assam
2. Keoladeo National Park (1985) Rajasthan
3. Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (1985) Assam
4. Sunderbans National Park (1987) West Bengal
5. Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks (1988, 2005) Uttarakhand
6. Western Ghats (2012) Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu
7. Great Himalayan National Park (2014) Himachal Pradesh

#### **MIXED SITE: (1)**

##### Under Protection of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Changes

- Khangchendzonga National Park (2016) Sikkim

#### **28. SFURTI:**

- SFURTI is Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries. Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Govt. of India has launched this scheme in the year 2005 with the view to promote Cluster development.
- Objectives of Scheme are:
  1. To organize the traditional industries and artisans into clusters to make them competitive and provide support for their long term sustainability and economy of scale;
  2. To enhance marketability of products of such clusters by providing support for new products, design intervention and improved packaging and also the improvement of marketing infrastructure;
  3. To build up innovated and traditional skills, improved technologies, advanced processes, market intelligence and new models of public - private partnerships, so as to gradually replicate similar models of cluster - based regenerated traditional industries
  4. To tap the E-Commerce as a major marketing channel given the outreach and the growing market penetration of E-Commerce, there is a need to devise a quick strategy to make its presence felt in the E - Retail space.

**The target sectors and potential beneficiaries will include:**

- Artisans, workers, machinery makers, raw material providers, entrepreneurs, institutional and private business development service (BDS) providers.
- Artisan guilds, cooperatives, consortiums, networks of enterprises, self-help groups (SHGs), enterprise associations, etc.
- Implementing agencies, field functionaries of Government institutions/organisations and policy makers, directly engaged in traditional industries.

**29. HERATH:**

- Herath, itself is a phonetic derivation of Har-ratri, or the night of Hara (Shiva), and the festival marks an important socio-religious event in the life of Kashmiri Pandits.
- Shivratri, literally the night of Shiva, is one of the most important occasions of the Hindu calendar, typically falling each year on the fourteenth day/night of the dark half of the month of the Phalguna (February–March).
- However, the festival, considered by Kashmiri Pandits to be the most auspicious of their festivals celebrate the festival a day earlier than the rest of their compatriots around the country, that is, on the 13th day of the Hindu month.

**30. Production linked incentive scheme:**

- Keeping in view India's vision of becoming 'Atmanirbhar' and to enhance India's Manufacturing Capabilities and Exports, an outlay of INR 1.97 lakh crore has been announced in Union Budget 2021-22 for PLI schemes for 13 key sectors for a period of 5 years starting from fiscal year (FY) 2021- 22.
- These **13 sectors** includes already existing 3 sectors named (i) Mobile Manufacturing and Specified Electronic Components, (ii) Critical Key Starting materials/Drug Intermediaries & Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients, and (iii) Manufacturing of Medical Devices and 10 new key sectors which have been approved by the Union Cabinet recently in November 2020.

**These 10 key sectors are:** (i)Automobiles and Auto Components, (ii) Pharmaceuticals Drugs, (iii) Specialty Steel, (iv) Telecom & Networking Products, (v) Electronic/Technology Products, (vi) White Goods (ACs and LEDs), (vii) Food Products, (viii) Textile Products: MMF segment and technical textiles, (ix) High efficiency solar PV modules, and (x) Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery.

**31. Dustlik:**

- The India – Uzbekistan joint military exercise “DUSTLIK II” commenced today in Foreign Training Node Chaubatia, Ranikhet (Uttarakhand).
- 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.

Classic IAS Academy

Sl. No.	Country	Exercise	Year (s)
1.	ADMM Plus Countries	ADMM Plus Exercise	2019-20
2.	Australia	AUSINDEX	2019-20
		KAKADU	2018-19
		Black Carillon (Multi-lateral)	2019-20
3.	Bangladesh	IN-BN CORPAT (Annual)	2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21
		IN-BN BILAT (Annual)	2019-20, 2020-21
		IN-BN SF Exercise (Annual)	2019-20
4.	Brazil & South Africa	IBSAMAR	2018-19
5.	France	VARUNA	2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21
6.	Indonesia	IND-INDO CORPAT (Bi-annual) (Coordinated Patrol)	2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21
		IND-INDO BILAT	2018-19, 2019-20
7.	IONS	IONS Working Group Exercise (Multilateral)	2019-20
8.	Japan	JIMEX	2018-19, 2020-21
		EOD J2A (Multilateral)	2019-20
9.	Malaysia	IN-RMN BILAT	2019-20
10.	Maldives	Ex EKATHA	2018-19, 2019-20

11.	Myanmar	IMCOR	2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21
		IN-MN BILAT	2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21
12.	Oman	<del>Naseem</del> -al-Bahr	2019-20
13.	Qatar	<del>Za'ir</del> Al Bahr	2019-20
14.	Russia	INDRA NAVY	2018-19, 2020-21
15.	Singapore	SIMBEX	2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21
16.	Singapore & Thailand	India, Singapore, Thailand Trilateral Exercise (SITMEX)	2019-20, 2020-21
17.	Sri Lanka	SLINEX	2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21
		IN-SLN SF Exercise	2019-20
18.	Thailand	INDO-THAI CORPAT	2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21
19.	UAE	IN-UAEN BILAT	2018-19
20.	UK	KONKAN	2018-19, 2019-20

Classic



21.	USA	SPITTING COBRA (IN-USN EOD Exercise)	2019-20
		SANGAM(IN-USN SF Exercise)	2019-20
		IMX	2019-20
		CUTLASS Express (Multilateral)	2019-20
		RIMPAC (Multilateral)	2018-19
22.	USA & Japan	MALABAR	2018-19, 2019-20
23.	USA, Japan & Australia	MALABAR	2020-21
24.	Vietnam	IN-VPN BILAT	2018-19, 2019-20
25.	Friendly Foreign Countries	MILAN (Multilateral)	2018-19
26.	Western Pacific Naval Symposium	WPNS Exercise (Multilateral)	2018-19

### 32. Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana:

- The PMRPY Scheme aims to incentivise employers for employment generation by the Government paying the full employers' EPS contribution of 12% for the new employees, for the first three years of their employment and is proposed to be made applicable for unemployed persons that are semi-skilled and unskilled.
- The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- This Scheme has a dual benefit, where, on the one hand, the employer is incentivised for increasing the employment base of workers in the establishment, and on the other hand, a large number of workers will find jobs in such establishments.

### 33. APEDA:

- The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) established under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India is mandated with the responsibility of export promotion and development of the following scheduled products:

1. Meat and Meat Products.

2. Poultry and Poultry Products.
3. Dairy Products.
4. Confectionery, Biscuits and Bakery Products.
5. Honey, Jaggery and Sugar Products.
6. Cocoa and its products, chocolates of all kinds.
7. Alcoholic and Non-Alcoholic Beverages.
8. Cereal and Cereal Products.
9. Groundnuts, Peanuts and Walnuts.
10. Pickles, Papads and Chutneys.
11. Guar Gum.
12. Floriculture and Floriculture Products
13. Herbal and Medicinal Plants

#### **34. Deep Ocean Mission:**

- The Deep Ocean Mission is proposed as multi-ministerial multi-disciplinary programme with emphasis on development of deep sea technology, exploration of deep sea mineral resources and biodiversity, acquisition of a research vessel for exploration, deep sea observations, and capacity building. Ministry of Earth Sciences is the nodal agency for implementing the programme.
- The major objectives proposed under Deep Ocean Mission are as follows:
  1. Development of technologies for deep sea mining, underwater vehicles and underwater robotics;
  2. Development of ocean climate change advisory services;
  3. Technological innovations for exploration and conservation of deepsea biodiversity;
  4. Deep ocean survey and exploration;
  5. Proof of concept studies on energy and freshwater from the ocean; and
  6. Establishing advanced marine station for ocean biology

#### **35. Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana:**

- "Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana" is an elaborated component of Soil Health Management (SHM) of major project National Mission of Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA). Under PKVY Organic farming is promoted through adoption of organic village by cluster approach and PGS certification.

##### **The Scheme envisages:**

- Promotion of commercial organic production through certified organic farming.
- The produce will be pesticide residue free and will contribute to improve the health of consumer.
- It will raise farmer's income and create potential market for traders.
- It will motivate the farmers for natural resource mobilization for input production.

##### **Programme implementation:**

- Groups of farmers would be motivated to take up organic farming under Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY).

- Fifty or more farmers will form a cluster having 50 acre land to take up the organic farming under the scheme. In this way during three years 10,000 clusters will be formed covering 5.0 lakh acre area under organic farming.
- There will be no liability on the farmers for expenditure on certification.
- Every farmer will be provided Rs. 20,000 per acre in three years for seed to harvesting of crops and to transport produce to the market.
- Organic farming will be promoted by using traditional resources and the organic products will be linked with the market.
- It will increase domestic production and certification of organic produce by involving farmers.

### **36. Schemes for Agro-Forestry:**

- Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (Har Medh Par Ped) Scheme was launched in 2016-17 to encourage tree plantation on farm land along with crops/ cropping system to help the farmers get additional income and make their farming systems more climate resilient and adaptive.
- Funding pattern is 60:40 between Centre and State Govt. for all States excepting NE & Hilly states, where it is 90:10.
- In case of promotion of horticulture and orchards, the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), a Centrally Sponsored Scheme is being implemented.

### **37. Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan:**

- The new Umbrella Scheme includes the mechanism of ensuring remunerative prices to the farmers and is comprised of Price Support Scheme (PSS)
- In Price Support Scheme (PSS), physical procurement of pulses, oilseeds and Copra will be done by Central Nodal Agencies with proactive role of State governments.
- Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS)- Under Price Deficiency Payment Scheme this scheme (PDPS), it is proposed to cover all oilseeds for which MSP is notified.
- Pilot of Private Procurement & Stockist Scheme (PPPS)- It has also been decided that participation of private sector in procurement operation needs to be piloted so that on the basis of learnings the ambit of private participation in procurement operations may be increased.

### **38. Azotobacter and Azospirillum:**

- Azotobacter and Azospirillum are two bacterial genera that are important as nitrogen fixers in the soil. They are mainly soil free-living bacteria that associate plant roots.
- They enhance plant growth and development after inoculation. Azotobacter spp are heterotrophic and aerobic, oval or spherical bacteria while Azospirillum are microaerophilic and non-fermentative rod-shaped bacteria.
- Azotobacter converts atmospheric nitrogen into ammonia in the soil. Since they are able to fix nitrogen, they are used as biofertilizers. Moreover, Azotobacter is used as food additives and some biopolymers.
- Since Azospirillum can fix nitrogen, it is one of the most widely used free-living nitrogen-fixing microorganisms as inoculants, especially for rice. Under

submerged conditions in paddy fields, Azospirillum enhance rice plant growth and yield.

### 39. Jhum (shifting) Cultivation:

- Jhum (Shifting) cultivation is a primitive practice of cultivation in States of North Eastern Hill Region of India and people involved in such cultivation are called Jhumia.
- The practice involves clearing vegetative/forest cover on land/slopes of hills, drying and burning it before onset of monsoon and cropping on it thereafter.
- After harvest, this land is left fallow and vegetative regeneration is allowed on it till the plot becomes reusable for same purpose in a cycle.
- Meanwhile, the process is repeated in a new plot designated for Jhum cultivation during next year. Initially, when Jhum cycle was long and ranged from 20 to 30 years, the process worked well.
- However, with increase in human population and increasing pressure on land, Jhum cycle reduced progressively (5-6 years) causing problem of land degradation and threat to ecology of the region at large.
- A recent **NITI Aayog** publication on shifting cultivation which is particularly practised in the northeastern States, has recommended that the Ministry of Agriculture should take up a "mission on shifting cultivation" to ensure inter-ministerial convergence.
- The publication notes that between 2000 and 2010, the land under shifting cultivation dropped by 70 %. The report quotes data of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education published in Statistical Year Book-2014 by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, which points out that from 35,142 sq km in 2000, the area under jhum cultivation dropped to 10,306 sq km in 2010.

### 40. Global Gender Gap Report-2021:

- World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021 published the Global Gender Gap Index 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. This year, the Global Gender Gap index benchmarks 156 countries, India attained 140th rank.

### Global Trends and Outcomes:

- On its current trajectory, it will now take 135.6 years to close the gender gap worldwide.
- In 81 countries, there has never been a woman head of state, as of 15th January 2021. At the current rate of progress, the World Economic Forum estimates that it will take 145.5 years to attain gender parity in politics.
- Gender gaps in Educational Attainment and Health and Survival are nearly closed. In Educational Attainment, 95% of this gender gap has been closed globally, with 37 countries already at parity. However, the 'last mile' of progress is proceeding slowly.
- Early projections from ILO suggest 5% of all employed women lost their jobs, compared with 3.9% of employed men due to COVID-19 crisis

- Gender gaps are more likely in sectors that require disruptive technical skills. For example, in Cloud Computing, women make up 14% of the workforce; in Engineering, 20%; and in Data and AI, 32%.
- There are significant disparities across and within various geographies. **Western Europe** remains the region that has progressed the most towards gender parity (77.6%) and is further progressing this year. North America is the second-most advanced (76.4%), also improving this year, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (72.1%) and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (71.2%). A few decimal points below is the East Asia and the Pacific region (68.9%), one of the most-improved regions, just ahead of Sub-Saharan Africa (67.2%) and surpassing South Asia (62.7%). The Middle East and North Africa region remains the area with the largest gap (60.9%).
- At the current relative pace, gender gaps can potentially be closed in 52.1 years in Western Europe, 61.5 years in North America, and 68.9 years in Latin America and the Caribbean. In all other regions it will take over 100 years to close the gender gap: 121.7 years in Sub-Saharan Africa, 134.7 years in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 165.1 years in East Asia and the Pacific, 142.4 years in Middle East and North Africa, and 195.4 years in South Asia.

#### **41. India readies Saudi oil import cut as stand-off:**

- State-owned refiners are planning to cut oil imports from Saudi Arabia by about a quarter in May, in an escalating stand-off with Riyadh following OPEC's decision to ignore calls from New Delhi to help the global economy with higher supply.
- Two sources familiar with the discussions said the move was part of the government's drive to cut dependence on crude from the Middle East.
- Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum, Hindustan Petroleum, and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd are preparing to lift about 10.8 million barrels in May, the sources said on condition of anonymity.
- State refiners, which control about 60% of 5 million barrels per day (bpd) refining capacity, together import an average 14.7-14.8 million barrels of Saudi oil in a month, the sources said.
- India, the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer, imports more than 80% of its oil needs and relies heavily on the Middle East..
- Saudi Arabia has cut April oil supplies for some Asian refiners but has maintained average monthly volumes for Indian refiners. The Kingdom has, however, rejected demand from Indian companies for extra supplies.
- The Middle East's share of India's overall imports has already plunged to a 22-month low in February.
- In February, the United States emerged as the second biggest supplier to India after Iraq, while 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.

#### **42. Top 10 Biggest Thermal Power Plants In India:**

- More than 65% of India's electricity generation capacity comes from thermal power plants, with 85% of the country's thermal power generation being coal-based..
- Vindhyachal Thermal Power Station, Madhya Pradesh- The Vindhyachal Thermal Power Station in the Singrauli district of Madhya Pradesh, with an installed capacity of 4,760MW, is currently the biggest thermal power plant in India. It is a coal-based power plant owned and operated by NTPC.
- Mundra Thermal Power Station, Gujarat- The 4,620MW Mundra Thermal Power Station located in the Kutch district of Gujarat is currently the second biggest operating thermal power plant in India. It is a coal-fired power plant owned and operated by Adani Power.
- Mundra Ultra Mega Power Plant, Gujarat- The 4,000MW Mundra Ultra Mega Power Plant (UMPP), also located in the Kutch district of Gujarat, ranks as the third-largest thermal power plant in India. It is a coal-fired power plant owned and operated by Coastal Gujarat Power Limited (CGPL), a subsidiary of Tata Power.
- Sasan Ultra Mega Power Plant, Madhya Pradesh- The Sasan Ultra Mega power plant, located in the Sasan village of the Singrauli district, Madhya Pradesh, has an installed capacity of 3,960MW. Owned and operated by Reliance Power, it is one of India's biggest power plants integrated with a coal mine.
- Tiroda Thermal Power Plant, Maharashtra- The Tiroda thermal power plant is a 3,300MW coal-based power generation plant in Maharashtra, India. Owned and operated by Adani Power Maharashtra, the power plant consists of five 660MW units.
- Talcher Super Thermal Power Station, Odisha- The Talcher Super Thermal Power Station or NTPC Talcher Kaniha, located in the Angul district of Odisha, is a 3,000MW coal-fired power plant owned and operated by NTPC.
- Rihand Thermal Power Station, Uttar Pradesh- Rihand Thermal Power Station is located at Rihandnagar, Sonbhadra district, Uttar Pradesh. Owned and operated by NTPC, the coal-fired power plant has an installed capacity of 3,000MW.
- Sipat Thermal Power Plant, Chhattisgarh- The 2,980MW Sipat Super Thermal Power Plant in Sipat, Bilaspur district, Chhattisgarh, ranks as the eighth-largest thermal power station in India. It is a coal-based power plant owned and operated by NTPC.
- Chandrapur Super Thermal Power Station, Maharashtra- The Chandrapur Super Thermal Power Station is a 2,920MW power plant in Chandrapur, Maharashtra, India. It is the biggest power plant operated by the Maharashtra State Power Generation Company.
- NTPC Dadri, Uttar Pradesh -NTPC Dadri or National Capital Power Station (NCPS) owned and operated by NTPC is located in the Gautam Budh Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh, about 48km from the Indian capital New Delhi. The power station, with an installed capacity of 2637MW (1820MW- coal based and 817MW gas based), ranks as the sixth largest thermal plant in India.

**Other important facts:**

- The World largest floating solar power plant of India is to be set up at Ramagundam in Telangana.

- The solar power plant is being set up at the Ramagundam Thermal Power Plant reservoir.
- The solar power plant is to be set up in 450 acres of the reservoir.
- The largest solar power plant in the world is being set up by India on Omkar Eshwar Dam on Narmada river in Madhya Pradesh.
- The first floating solar power plant in India was installed in Kolkata in 2014. Currently, the largest floating solar power plant of India is located in Banasura Sagar reservoir in Wayanad, Kerala.

#### **43. Event Horizon Telescope:**

- The Event Horizon Telescope (EHT) is a large telescope array consisting of a global network of radio telescopes.
- The EHT project combines data from several very-long-baseline interferometry (VLBI) stations around Earth, which form a combined array with an angular resolution sufficient to observe objects the size of a supermassive black hole's event horizon.
- The project's observational targets include the two black holes with the largest angular diameter as observed from Earth: the black hole at the center of the supergiant elliptical galaxy Messier 87 (M87), and Sagittarius A\* (Sgr A\*) at the center of the Milky Way.
- The Event Horizon Telescope project is an international collaboration launched in 2009. The collaboration now comprises over 300 members, 60 institutions, working over 20 countries and regions.
- The first image of a black hole, at the center of galaxy Messier 87, was published by the EHT Collaboration on April 10, 2019, in a series of six scientific publications.

#### **44. Clean Development Mechanism:**

- The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) is one of the Flexible Mechanisms defined in the Kyoto Protocol that provides for emissions reduction projects which generate Certified Emission Reduction units (CERs) which may be traded in emissions trading schemes. The market crashed in 2012 when the value of credits collapsed and thousands of projects were left with unclaimed credits. The struggle about what to do with the old credits sank the 2019 COP 25 in Madrid.
- The CDM, defined in Article 12 of the Protocol, was intended to meet two objectives:- (1) to assist parties not included in Annex I in achieving sustainable development and in contributing to the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which is to prevent dangerous climate change; and (2) to assist parties included in Annex I in achieving compliance with their quantified emission limitation and reduction commitments (greenhouse gas (GHG) emission caps).
- "Annex I" parties are the countries listed in Annex I of the treaty, the industrialized countries. Non-Annex I parties are developing countries.
- The CDM addresses the second objective by allowing the Annex I countries to meet part of their emission reduction commitments under the Kyoto Protocol by buying Certified Emission Reduction units from CDM emission reduction projects in developing countries.

- The CDM allows industrialized countries to buy CERs and to invest in emission reductions where it is cheapest globally.

#### **45. Shirui Kashong Peak:**

- Shirui Kashong Peak is one of the tourist attraction located in Ukhrul district of Manipur.
- It is 2,835 m above sea level. The peak has two major attractions- Shirui lilies and the rivers flowing across Ukhrul.
- Shirui Lily Festival was declared state festival in 2017.
- Shirui is divided in two villages- Shirui ato and Shirui aze. Shirui ato has 100 households with the total of 472 people and Shirui aze has 184 households with the total of 793 people.

#### **46. La Perouse:**

- India will be joining a **French naval exercise** in the Bay of Bengal this month. It is the first French naval exercise that Indian Navy will be a part of. The exercise is named as La Perouse.
- Japan, Australia, and the United States of America (USA) will also participate in the exercise. As per the French Embassy, two French Navy ships, the Surcouf and the Tonnerre made a port call in Kochi from March 30 to April 1. They will next sail to Bay of Bengal to participate in the exercise.

#### **47. Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects (GGP):**

- The Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects (GGP) is a financial assistance scheme of Japan. GGP is provided by Japan for development projects designed to meet the diverse basic human needs of the people in over 100 countries including India.
- The organization must be International, National or Local NGO/Medical Institution/Educational Institution/Community-Based Organization (CBO). The organisation must also be registered under Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976. Along with this, the organisation must be registered under the relevant registration acts including national and state acts.

#### **48. NITI Aayog Investment in Healthcare Sector Report:**

- NITI Aayog has released a report titled 'Investment Opportunities in India's Healthcare Sector'. The report highlights investment opportunities in different segments of the healthcare sector of India, including health insurance, telemedicine, medical devices and equipment, hospitals, home healthcare, and medical value travel.
- As per the report, since 2016 India's healthcare industry has been growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of around 22%.
- 7 key investment opportunities are Health insurance, medical tourism, medical devices, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, hospitals and infrastructure, home healthcare as well as telemedicine and other technology-related health services.
- NITI Aayog was formed on January 1, 2015.

#### **49. Top 5 Current Affairs Questions on DSIR-PRISM Scheme:**



- An Alignment and Awareness Event for Publicity of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research – Promoting Innovations in Individuals, Startups and MSMEs (DSIR-PRISM) scheme was virtually inaugurated in IIT Delhi.
- DSIR-PRISM has been instrumental in providing support to individual innovators enabling inclusive development of India. PRISM extends its support to any citizen of the country through direct benefit transfer in the core technology areas like Water, Affordable Healthcare, Green Technology, Sewage Management, Industrially Utilizable Smart Materials, Clean Energy, Waste to Wealth aligned with our National objectives.

#### **50. Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process:**

- Recently, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar reached Tajikistan's capital to attend the 9th Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) ministerial conference on Afghanistan. This conference is a part of the Istanbul Process. The conference was held in Dushanbe (Tajikistan).

#### **The Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process (HoA-IP):**

- It was founded in November, 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey.
- It provides a platform for sincere and results-oriented regional cooperation by placing Afghanistan at its center, in recognition of the fact that a secure and stable Afghanistan is vital to the prosperity of the Heart of Asia region.
- This platform was established to address the shared challenges and interests of Afghanistan and its neighbors and regional partners.
- The Heart of Asia comprises 15 participating countries, 17 supporting countries, and 12 supporting regional and international organizations.
- India is a participating country.
- Since its inception the process has become a cardinal element in regional cooperation and has created a platform for Afghanistan's near and extended neighbors, international supporters and organizations to engage in constructive dialogue and to address the existing and emerging regional challenges through regional cooperation with Afghanistan at its core.

#### **Intra-Afghan Negotiations (IAN):**

- It refers to the talks between the Afghan government and Taliban insurgents with the goal of bringing an end to nearly two decades of a conflict that has laid waste to the country and killed tens of thousands of combatants and civilians.
- The participants of intra-Afghan negotiations will discuss the date and modalities of a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire, including agreement over the future political roadmap of Afghanistan.
- The negotiations will cover a variety of issues, including the rights of women, free speech, and changes to the country's constitution.
- The talks would also lay out the fate of tens of thousands of Taliban fighters as well as the heavily armed militias belonging to Afghanistan's warlords who have amassed wealth and power since the Taliban were ousted from power in 2001.

#### **Regional Connectivity Initiatives:**

- During the conference, the Afghanistan President appreciated the number of regional connectivity initiatives including the Chabahar port project, as well as the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline.

### India's Stand:

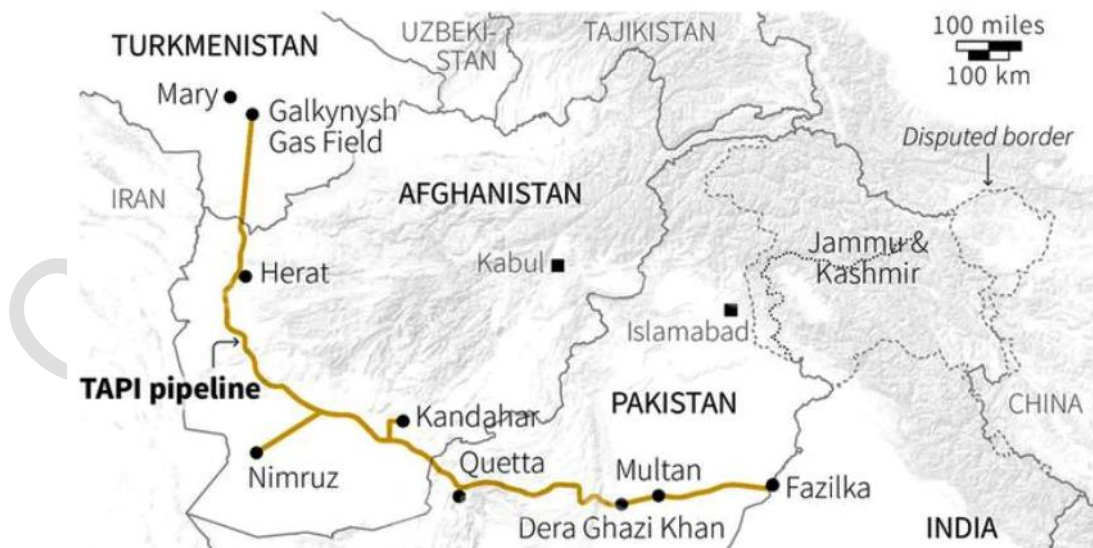
- India believes any peace process must be Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled, has to respect the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Afghanistan and preserve the progress made in the establishment of a democratic Islamic Republic in Afghanistan.
- The interests of minorities, women and vulnerable sections of society must be preserved and the issue of violence across the country and its neighbourhood has to be effectively addressed.

### TAPI Pipeline:

- TAPI Pipeline, also called Peace pipeline, is a 1,814km natural gas pipeline that originates from Turkmenistan and passes through Afghanistan and Pakistan to reach India.
- It aims to monetise Turkmenistan's gas reserves and supply them to neighbouring countries to promote the use of natural gas and improve energy security.
- The project is being developed by TAPI Pipeline Company (TPCL), a consortium established by four individual state-owned gas companies Turkmengaz (Turkmenistan), Afghan Gas (Afghanistan), Interstate Gas Service (Pakistan), and Gas Authority of India and Indian Oil (India).
- The four countries signed an Inter Government Agreement (IGA) and Gas Pipeline Framework Agreements (GPFA) in December 2010 for the development of the pipeline.

## Trans-Afghanistan pipeline

Route of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) natural gas pipeline



### 51. International Ranger Awards:

- Recently, the winners of the first ever International Ranger Awards have been announced. The award has been provided by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) to 10 professionals across the globe.
- The award was instituted in the year 2020 through collaboration between the IUCN WCPA, the International Ranger Federation, Global Wildlife Conservation, and Conservation Allies.
- The award aims to recognize the remarkable work of rangers in protected and conserved areas around the world. The nominations for the awards were open from 17 November 2020 to 31 December 2020.
- Range officer Mahinder Giri has become the only ranger from Asia to win the prestigious International Ranger Award. He has been deployed at Motichur range of Rajaji Tiger Reserve (RTR) for the past few years.

### 52. Tribal TB Initiative and Tribal Population in India:

- Under the TB Mukht Bharat Initiative by 2025, Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the "Tribal TB Initiative" on March 26, 2021. The Ministry also published a guidance note on Joint Action Plan for the elimination of Tuberculosis (TB), a Special Edition of Tribal Ministry's Publication 'ALEKH' on TB, and a document on Tribal Tuberculosis (TB) Initiative.
- **Some Features and Facts about the Tribal population and initiative:**
- In India, almost 104 million tribal population lives, across 705 tribes, accounting for 8.6 % of the country's population.
- The poor living standards like physical remoteness, malnutrition, and lack of hygiene lead to the tribal population getting vulnerable to TB. 177 tribal districts were identified as High-priority districts that are vulnerable.
- The Joint plan will primarily focus on 161 districts initially across 18 states which will include deploying improved vulnerability mapping techniques and organization of sensitization and capacity-building workshops for volunteers.
- There would also be periodic TB active case finding drives and provision of TB Preventive Therapy (IPT) to the identified vulnerable population and develop long-term mechanisms for vulnerability reduction.
- Linkage of the NIKSHAY Portal of MoHFW and Swasthya Portal of the M/o Tribal Affairs will boost data compilation on Tuberculosis and pave way for efficient and convergent actions.
- The union territories of Lakshadweep and the district of Badgam in Jammu & Kashmir have been declared TB Free on World TB Day 2021.
- On State TB Index, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh were the top three best-performing states for tuberculosis control under the category of states with a 50 lakh population.
- Tripura and Nagaland were best-performing in the category of states having less than 50 lakh population.
- Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu were selected as the best performing Union Territories.

### 53. Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant:

- Recently, India made a deal with Bangladesh where Indian companies will develop the transmission lines of Bangladesh Rooppur Nuclear power plant. Some facts about Rooppur Nuclear power plant.
- It is an under-construction 2.4 GWe nuclear power plant in Bangladesh.
- It is being constructed at Rooppur (Rupppur) in the Pabna District of Bangladesh, on the bank of Padma River.
- There are two units of plants which are expected to be completed in 2022 and 2024 respectively. Each will produce 1200MW of electricity.
- It has significance as it will be the Bangladesh's first nuclear power plant.
- The Rooppur project is the first initiative under the Indo-Russian deal to undertake atomic energy projects in third countries.
- A tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in March 2018, was signed at Moscow, Russia between Russia, Bangladesh and India for the Rooppur Nuclear Power Project.
- It is to be built by the Russian Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corporation.
- In June 2018, Infrastructure major, Hindustan Construction Company Ltd. (HCC) was given contract for Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.
- The Russian side is making the project on "turnkey" basis which says, the contractor will be liable for any problems that arise in the plant.
- It will be for the first time when any Indian company will be involved in any nuclear project out of the country. Since India is not a Nuclear Supplier group (NSG) member, it cannot participate directly in construction of Atomic power reactors.

#### **54. Echo and Bifrost:**

- Facebook has planned to put two undersea Internet cables to connect Southeast Asia to North America, to increase data capacity and improve the internet authenticity.
- The Two Cables are named as "Echo" and "Bifrost". The cables will connect Singapore, Indonesia and North America.
- Echo is being installed in partnership with Google and Indonesian telecommunications' company XL Axiata. It is scheduled to be completed by 2023.
- Bifrost is being built in partnership with Indonesia's Telin and Singapore's Keppel, and is planned to be completed by 2024.
- Facebook is partnered with companies like Google and some regional telecommunication companies.
- The costs for the project have not yet been disclosed, but Facebook mentioned it required as they put it "a very material investment" for the company in Southeast Asia.
- Facebook said, the cables will be the first ones to directly link North America to some of the main parts of Indonesia, one of the company's top five markets in the world.
- A survey by the Indonesian Internet Providers Association last year showed that while 73 percent of Indonesians use the internet, the majority access the web through mobile data, and 10% or less of the population use fixed-line broadband.

### 55. PM visit to Bangladesh:

- 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. The Visit included the commemoration of three very significant events. First was Mujib Borsho, second is the birth anniversary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the third is the celebration of 50 years of Bangladesh Liberation and the establishment of diplomatic ties between the India and Bangladesh.
- Apart from these, there were five MoUs signed by PM Modi related to connectivity, commerce, IT and sports to build the bilateral ties between the two nations.
- 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 Issues discussed:

- Rohingyas' Issue: Safe and sustainable facilitation of displaced people from Rakhine.
- Teesta River: Requested for early finalization of draft for water sharing of the Teesta & Feni River.
- BBIN Project: Facilitation of Bangladesh exports to Nepal and Bhutan via India.
- Nuclear Power Plant: Transmission line of Bangladesh's Ruppur Nuclear power plant to be developed by Indian companies.
- Maitri Diwas: December 6, on which India formally recognized Bangladesh, will be celebrated as Maïtri Diwas.
- PM Modi gifted 109 Ambulances to PM Hasina along with a representational box to her as a symbol of gift of 1.2million Vaccine doses for COVID as promised earlier. PM Hasina gifted Golden and Silver coin released on the occasion of birth centenary of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence.

### 56. Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021 gets Presidential Assent:

- On March 28th 2021, the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021, which gives primacy to the Lieutenant Governor over the elected Government, got assent from President Ramnath Kovind.

### What is the Act all about?

- The Act has amended sections (21, 24, 33 and 44) of previous act of 1991. In summary, it says that the 'Government' in NCT of Delhi means the Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Delhi.

- The Bill says that the opinion of LG should be obtained before making any executive decision based on decisions taken by the Cabinet or any minister. The Act also empowers the LG with discretionary powers in matters where the Legislative Assembly make laws.
- It prohibits the Assembly and its committees from making rules to commence matters concerning everyday administration or to have inquiries in relation to administrative decisions.

#### **Present Delhi administration:**

- The Existing Act of 1991 allows the Legislative Assembly to make laws in every matter except the Public order, Police and Land.
- Under Article 239AA of the Constitution given by the 69th Amendment Act, 1991, Delhi is a Union territory with a legislative assembly.
- Changes after the President Assent
- Earlier, elected government was not sending the files of any executive decisions to L-G before implementation. It has been keeping the L-G alongside in administrative developments, but it was not always before implementing or executing any decision.
- After the assent, the elected government is bound to take the L-G's advice before taking any decision.

#### **Why state government is unhappy?**

- The continuous tussle between the centre and elected government was mostly regarding the decision making policy and the L-G's powers. In 2018, the Supreme Court judgment gave the Delhi Government an upper hand in policy decisions.
- The Elected government sources always said that due to the SC's judgments, the Delhi government is able to clear policies easily. As per the state government, the amendment will substantially take away the government's autonomy and the desire of full statehood to Delhi.

#### **57. New Assessment by IUCN on African elephants:**

- The Red List by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) recently showed that, African elephants living in forests and savannas are increasingly threatened with extinction. Following which, conservationists have called for an urgent end to poaching.
- New assessments by IUCN underscore the persistent pressures that two species of elephants in Africa faces due to poaching for ivory and human encroachment. The survey also highlights that, savanna elephant was "endangered" while the smaller, lighter forest elephant was "critically endangered" as highest category before they got extinct from wild.
- Earlier, IUCN had treated both the species of elephants as "Vulnerable". But later it separated them on the basis of genetic evidences which highlighted the difference between both the species.

#### **Population of Savanna Elephants:**

- Data from IUCN cited that populations of savanna elephants from Africa are found in a variety of habitats which had decreased by around 60% over last 50 years. Number of forest elephants found in Central Africa had also fallen by 86% in 31 years.

- Presently, number of both the species of elephant's accounts for 415,000. However, populations of some forest elephants were rebounding because of successful conservation measures like, measures taken by Gabon and Republic of Congo. As per IUCN, in Kavango–Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area of South Africa, numbers of savanna elephants were also stable or growing.

#### **African elephant:**

- It is a genus with two living elephant species that is, African bush elephant and smaller African forest elephant. Both the species are social herbivores having grey skin but they have different size and colour of their tusks. They are considered at heavy risk of extinction in the IUCN Red List.
- Bush elephant is considered endangered while forest elephant is considered critically endangered. Species are threatened by habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, and poaching for the illegal ivory trade.

#### **58. UK, US call for alternative to China's BRI:**

- President of United States, Joe Biden and British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson have asked the democratic countries to provide an alternative to China's infrastructure strategy called Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- Both the leaders held the discussions over phone. They discussed the issues including COVID-19 and global health security, China, Iran, climate change, and preservation of political stability in Northern Ireland.
- United States and its Quad partners namely Australia, India, and Japan had committed in initial days of March, 2021 to launch another initiative between democratic states to provide up to one billion vaccines across South East Asia and Pacific to cover the vaccine shortages. Trump administration in 2019, had also launched an infrastructure scheme called "Blue Dot Network" to vet projects and boost private-sector led infrastructure development in Indo Pacific region. However, this scheme is not set up to directly finance the projects on its own.

#### **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):**

- It is a global infrastructure development strategy by Chinese government. Adopted in 2013, with the objective of investing across 70 countries and international organizations. BRI is a centrepiece of Chinese Communist Party general secretary and Xi Jinping's foreign policy.
- This initiative was originally announced by Xi Jinping as "Silk Road Economic Belt" in September 2013 during official visit to Kazakhstan.
- Belt refers to the proposed overland routes for road and rail transportation passing through landlocked Central Asia along the historical trade routes of Western Regions. While, road refers to the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" or the Indo-Pacific sea routes passing through Southeast Asia, South Asia, Middle East and Africa. This infrastructure project include ports, railroads, roads, skyscrapers, airports, dams and railroad tunnels.

#### **59. World Development Report 2021:**

- World Development Report: Data for Better Lives was released on March 24, 2021. It examines tremendous potential and risks of changing data landscape for people living in lower income countries.

### **Recommendations of report:**

- World Development Report: Data for Better Lives provides five recommendations over development:
- New Social Contract for Data: Global South experts recommends that different stakeholders like civil society and academia, are key to help in improving transparency and contribute towards development.
- Increase Data use to Realize Value: The experts also flagged gaps in understanding data and its governance in developing contexts. So, they recommend that efforts should be made to improve data literacy and expand access for all specially, the vulnerable groups.
- Equitable access: The experts raised concerns on how public and private systems for data do not capture poor people or vulnerable groups. So, it recommends, marginalized people need a better representation across data systems.
- Protect people from data misuse: Experts further recommends on issues related to governance arrangements and systems using which data flow so as to ensure that they are safe, ethical and secure.
- Integrated national data systems: Experts further highlight difficulties for countries which are suffering from poverty, fragility and poor governance in designing high-quality data systems. So, they recommend for increased investments in physical and human capital to have integrated national data systems.
- The report further proposes several ways in which data can be used more effectively so as to improve development outcomes through program design, better public policies and service delivery to improved market efficiency and private sector growth led job creation.

### **World Development Report:**

- It is a flagship publication from World Bank published since 1978. The report is considered as an invaluable guide for economic, social, and environmental state of world.

### **60. Global Wind Report-2021:**

- Global Wind Report 2021 was published by the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) on March 25, 2021.
- Though, 2020 was a record year for global wind power industry, but this report warns that there is a need to install new wind power capacity three times faster by next decade in order to achieve global climate targets & limit global warming to below 2°C above the pre-industrial levels. In the year 2020, 93 GW of new capacity were installed. It is a 53% year-on-year increase. But this is not sufficient to ensure that world will achieve net zero emission target by 2050.

### **Key Findings of report:**

- As per the report, total global wind power capacity is up to 743GW now. This is helping the globe to avoid over 1.1 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually. It is equal to annual carbon emissions of South America.
- Report warns that, world needs to install a minimum of 280 GW of new wind energy per year in a bid to avoid worst impacts of climate change. Thus, industry & policymakers need to act fast to accelerate deployment.



- It underlines that, Governments across the globe must work with 'climate emergency' approach to eliminate red tape and planning delays. Government must expand grid infrastructure to scale-up wind power at the required pace.
- Wind power is a cornerstone to achieve net zero emission target and power a green recovery because it is cost-competitive and a resilient power source which is having most decarbonisation potential per MW.
- According to the report, technology innovations and economies of scale has quadrupled the global wind power market in size in past decade. Growth in 2020 was driven by installations on large scale in China and US which are the two largest wind power markets of world. Both the countries have over half of total wind power capacity and they accounted for 75% of new installations in 2020.

#### **Climate Emergency approach:**

- GWEC has called the policymakers to take 'climate emergency' approach to eliminate red tape and reform administrative structures to speed up and streamline licensing and permits for projects.
- It has also asked to increase investments in grid, ports and other infrastructure which are required to ramp up installations.

#### **61. Supreme Court refuses to Stay Sale of Fresh Electoral Bonds:**

- Supreme Court, while refusing the stay, underlines that these bonds were allowed to be released in 2018 and 2019 without any interruption. There exists no justification to stay these bonds as sufficient safeguards are there. Apex Court also highlighted that; electoral bonds not only benefit the ruling party.
- Supreme Court Bench; comprising of Chief Justice of India, SA Bobde, Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian; was hearing the plea filed by NGO Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) which was asking to stay the electoral bonds ahead of assembly polls. NGO claimed that any further sale of electoral bonds ahead of upcoming assembly polls in Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry will increase illegal and illicit funding for political parties through shell companies.

#### **Arguments made by ADR:**

- Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for ADR, argued against electoral bonds. He argued that, electoral bonds had turned into a tool to receive bribes in the name of donations for ruling party. He also cited that misgivings of Reserve Bank of India about these bonds. RBI termed these bonds as the type of weapon or medium for financial scams. He further added that; electoral bonds were proof of real approach to black money as against its official stance.

#### **Electoral Bond:**

- Proposal to issue Electoral Bond was announced in 2017-28. It is a financial instrument similar to promissory note which is used to make donations to political parties and is issued by Scheduled Commercial banks after authorisation from Central Government.
- It is issued only against cheque and digital payments which is redeemable in designated account of a registered political party within the prescribed time limit.

## **62. Norway to construct World's First Ship Tunnel:**

- World's first ship tunnel is set to be constructed in Norway. Construction on the project will start in 2022 and it will be completed by 2025-2026.
- Norway has planned to construct Ship tunnel underneath the mountains in Stadhavet peninsula of Norway. The tunnel will be 37 meters high, 1,700 metres long and 26.5 metres wide.
- A total of \$315 million would be spent in constructing ship tunnel. Tunnel will burrow through narrowest point of Stadhavet peninsula. Conventional blasting will be employed to build tunnel. It will also use underground drilling rigs and pallet rigs. Tunnel was included in the National Transport Plan for the first time in 2013. Norwegian Ministry of Transport and Communications approved for **preparations to start in March 2021.**

### **Significance of the tunnel:**

- The Ship Tunnel Project has been designed to help in navigation of ships through rough and treacherous Stadhavet Sea in north western Norway. Currently, ships have to wait for few days so that harsh weather conditions and rough tides conditions in Stadhavet Sea is improved before transiting the area.

### **Stad or Stadlandet Peninsula:**

- This peninsula lies in Stad Municipality in north western part of Nordfjord district in Norway. It is considered as the dividing point between Norwegian Sea and the North Sea. It is a 500-metre-high mountain plateau comprising of a 645-metre-tall Tarvaldsegga peak. It plunges into sea in a 497-metre-tall cliff at Kjerringa.



### 63. Indo-Korean Bilateral Friendship Park inaugurated in Delhi Cantt:

- Indian Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh and South Korean Defence Minister, Suh Wook have inaugurated “Indo-Korean Bilateral Friendship Park” in Delhi Cantt on March 26, 2021. Friendship Park has been built to commemorate contribution of Indian peacekeepers in the Korean War from 1950 to 1953.

### India-South Korea Relations:

- India-South Korea relations have strengthened in recent years with the convergence of Act East Policy (AEP) of India and New Southern Policy (NSP) of South Korea. Bilateral ties have grown multi-dimensional in the fields of Maritime security, nuclear disarmament, regional economic cooperation, counterterrorism and energy cooperation.
- India had played a crucial role in the Korean wars during 1950 to 1953. In the year 1947, India’s first foreign secretary, K P S Menon, served as Chairman of United Nations (UN) Commission which was set up to look after elections in South Korea. During the Korean War, warring sides accepted UN resolution which was sponsored by India to call a ceasefire.

### Diplomatic ties:

- The official bilateral and diplomatic ties between both the countries was started in 1962 at the consular level. In 1973, the relation was upgraded to Ambassador-level.
- India and South Korea can cooperate on fighting global issues/challenges: climate change, freedom of navigation, internet governance, and outer

space. Both the nation has also the potential to develop synergies on Sustainable development goals (SDGs), connectivity norms and trade agreements.

- Economic partnership between both the countries is struck at \$22 billion. Defence partnership has also receded from all-round promise to sale and purchase of weapon systems. Integration of Indians with local South Korean population is also a big challenge.
- Indians have witnessed racial prejudice or discrimination. Indians are unable to distinguish between cultural and social characteristics of South Koreans from cultural and social characteristics of Japanese or Chinese. Though, Indian Culture Centre (ICC) was established in Seoul to promote people-to-people contacts. But it has to reach an exponentially wider audience yet.

#### **64. New Zealand passes Miscarriages Bereavement Leave Law:**

- Parliament of New Zealand passed the 'Miscarriage bereavement leave law'. This legislation provides mothers and their partners a "right to paid leave" after a miscarriage or stillbirth. New Zealand has become the second country, following India, across the world to pass such legislation.
- The bereavement leave law was passed unanimously in parliament on March 24, 2021. It provides the employees three days leave after a pregnancy ends with a stillbirth. They do not require to tap into sick leave now. Bill will provide women and their partners time to come to terms with their loss. Leave provisions apply to mothers, their partners and the parents who are planning to have a child through adoption or surrogacy.
- This legislation was passed by considering the fact that, one in four New Zealand women have had a miscarriage. Further, the country has been a pioneer on issues related to woman's rights. It was the first country to give "voting rights to women". It also passed a law in 2020 to decriminalise abortion. Government of New Zealand under Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern is regarded as a global champion for women.

#### **Maternity Leave Law in India:**

- Maternity leave in India is a paid leave in case of absence from work. Thus, this provision allows women employees the benefit to take care of their newborn besides retaining their jobs. Maternity leave Benefit Act 1961 was the first maternity leave law. It provided women employees a paid leave of 12 weeks post-delivery.
- The act was applicable to establishments with ten plus employees. provisions of this act were applicable to women employees on a permanent basis, contract or engaged with agencies. However, this act was revised as Maternity leave (Amendment) Bill 2017.
- Maternity leave Act is applicable to establishments such as corporates, mines, factories, shops & establishment act, plantations, and government establishments. To be eligible under this Act, women employee should have completed working for 80 days in current establishment in last 12 months. Paid leave is based on average daily wage during the period of absence. It has extended 12 weeks' leave to 26 weeks which can be bifurcated as post and pre-delivery leaves.

### **65. Second Tranche of Commercial Coal Mining:**

- Central government has launched second tranche of commercial coal auction on March 25, 2021 following the award given to 19 mines out of 38 in first tranche of auction in November 2020.
- A comprehensive list of mines will be uploaded along with key technical data. Following this, bidders will submit their preferences for mines to be included in next round of auction. This will be a continuous process and will result in expediting auction setup. It will also help bidders to plan better and will enhance transparency across the system.

#### **Second round of Auction:**

- In this round, 67 coal blocks will be offered. Out of 67, six are coking coal and rest are non-coking which are used in thermal power plants.
- Coal blocks are spread across Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Andhra Pradesh. 37 mines have been fully explored and they could be brought to production immediately while 30 are partially explored.

#### **Commercial Coal Mining:**

- Commercial coal mining will help in bringing new investments and boost socio-economic development. It will also create huge employment opportunities in coal-bearing states.
- Coal mining sector was opened for private companies in 2020 following which they started entering the arena of commercial mining and sale of coal. Coal sector was opened for Private companies, 47 years after coal mining was nationalised in India. Government had also amended the 'Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015' to open coal auction for non-mining, MSMEs and foreign companies.

#### **Non-end user:**

- Hindalco, Essel Mining of Aditya Birla Group, Adani Enterprises, Vedanta Ltd, Jindal Steel & Power Ltd, and several new & non-mining companies like Aurobindo Realty, JMS Mining Yazdani International, Boulder Stone Mart etc have won the bid. About 65 per cent bidders were from 'non-end user' category where "bidder is not a direct user of coal".

### **66. US co-sponsors EU-led Resolution over Myanmar Human Rights:**

- Council of the European Union on March 22, 2021 imposed sanctions on 11 individuals who were responsible for military coup in Myanmar and subsequent military & police repression against peaceful demonstrators.
- The UNHRC also urge military to restore democratically elected government in country and release those who were unjustly detained. UNHCR also urged military to refrain from violence against people of Burma. UNHCR Resolution also renewed mandate of Special Rapporteur and continued its support towards Independent Investigative Mechanism in Myanmar.

#### **United States' Stand on Military Coup:**

- US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, announced new sanctions against Bureau of Special Operations commander, Lt Gen Aung Soe; chief of police of Myanmar Than Hlaing; and two army units implicated in human rights abuses across ethnic areas. US along with United Kingdom, Norway and Albania

supported language which condemned military's actions and expanded monitoring & reporting.

- Myanmar's military had declared the 'state of emergency' for a year by overthrowing the democratically elected government in Myanmar on February 1, 2021, before newly-elected parliament was about to convene. Military also house arrest the State Counsellor of Myanmar Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint and other top officials who were accused of election fraud.

#### **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC):**

- UNHCR is a United Nations body which promote and protect human rights across the world. It comprises of 47 members elected for a three-year term on a regional group basis. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The body investigates allegations of breaches of human rights across the United Nations member states. It also look after thematic human rights issues like freedom of association and assembly, freedom of belief & religion, freedom of expression, LGBT rights, women's rights and rights of racial & ethnic minorities.

#### **67. RBI: RTGS could be Expanded Beyond India:**

- According to RBI Governor, Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) has multi-currency capabilities. So, there is scope to explore if it can be expanded beyond India. He also underlined the huge role which technology and innovation played in serving consumers better and faster. According to him, during the covid-19 pandemic, RBI processed 274 crore digital transactions in order to provide direct benefit transfer to people. To boost the digital payments, RBI also allowed transfer of funds through Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS).

#### **Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS):**

- Real Time Gross Settlement systems are specialist funds transfer systems in which transfer of money or securities is done from one bank to another bank in "real-time" and on a "gross" basis. It is the fastest possible money transfer system among the banking channel.
- Real-Time Settlement means a payment transaction is not subjected to 'waiting period'. In such system, transactions are settled as and when they are processed. While, the "Gross settlement" means transaction is settled on one-to-one basis.
- RTGS System is used for high-value transactions. Banks are also free to use balances maintained under cash reserve ratio (CRR) and intra-day liquidity (IDL) to be supplied by central bank, to meet any eventuality arising out of this payment system.
- RBI also fixed IDL limit for banks to three times their net owned fund. This system is monitored by RBI which has stopped levying any charges on transactions made through RTGS from July 2019.

#### **68. India TB Report 2021- Highlights:**

- India TB Report 2021 was published recently. According to it, India reported a 24% year-on-year fall in registration of tuberculosis cases in 2020.

- Amid the covid-19 pandemic-led disruptions and lockdowns, an estimated 18.05 lakh TB cases were registered in India. Report also found that, between January and February 2020, registrations of TB increased by 6% on year. Later, National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme had closed gap on missing TB cases. Thus, by December 11% more cases were reported as compared to April. Report further highlights, 24.04 lakh cases were reported in 2019, among which treatment success rate was 82% while mortality rate was 4%. According to report, 4% of patients were lost in follow ups while treatment failure & regimen change accounts for about 3%.

### **Tuberculosis Cases in India:**

- Tuberculosis is one of India's most critical health challenges. It typically has devastating health, social and financial consequences for patients as well as communities on a large scale. India has the largest caseload, 2.64 million tuberculosis patients, across the world. It accounts for 30% of the world's TB cases. Government of India has aimed to have TB-free India by 2025, five years ahead of global target date, 2030. With this aim, India is trying to detect cases early and prevent emergence of new cases by extending TB care.

### **Government of India is undertaking the following schemes to tackle the challenge of TB:**

- Nikshay Ecosystem:** It is a National TB information system which acts as one-stop solution to manage the information of patients and monitor program activity & performance across the country.
- Nikshay Poshan Yojana (NPY):** NYP scheme was launched with the aim of providing financial support to TB patients for their nutrition.
- TB Harega Desh Jeetega Campaign:** This campaign was launched in September 2019 with highest level of commitment to eliminate TB.
- Saksham Project:** This project was launched by Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) to provide psychosocial counselling to Drug resistant-TB patients.

### **69. International Intellectual Property Index:**

- The annual edition of 'International Intellectual Property (IP)' was released on March 23, 2021. India was ranked 40 among 53 global economies in the ninth IP index.
- The Index is released annually by 'US Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC)'. 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.
- As per index, overall global IP environment had improved in 2020. Positive score was increased in 32 economies of the 53 economies.
- 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.

### **India's Performance:**

- India performance in the index has improved over past few years. Country has made several positive efforts which increased the score because of stronger enforcement efforts and precedent-setting court cases of copyright and trademark infringement.
- Rights-holders in India still face substantive challenge with respect to patenting environment in which policy framework of India continues to deny patent eligibility to various innovations.

### **Intellectual property (IP):**

- It is a category of property which includes intangible creations of human intellect. Well-known types of IP are patents, copyrights, trademarks and trade secrets. Modern concept of intellectual property developed in England during 17th and 18th centuries. Intellectual property became a commonplace in world's legal systems in 20th century.
- Intellectual property law is enforced to encourage creation of a variety of intellectual goods. Statute of Monopolies (1624) is regarded as origin of patent law and British Statute of Anne (1710) is regarded as origin of copyright.

### **70. Double Mutant' virus:**

- Health Ministry has confirmed that, "double mutant" coronavirus variant which comes with the combination of mutations has been found in India. Scientists are checking if this has increased the infectivity or is making COVID-19 more severe.
- Genome sequencing of virus sample by Indian SARS-CoV-2 Consortium on Genomics (INSACOG), a consortium of 10 labs in India, reveals the presence of two mutations, E484Q and L452R, in some 200 virus samples from Maharashtra, Delhi, Punjab and Gujarat.
- Two mutations have been identified individually in other variants of SARS-CoV-2 in several parts of the world. They have been associated with reduction in vaccine efficacy and infectivity. Combined effect and biological implication of the variant is yet to be understood.

### **Vaccine Efficacy on Double Mutant Variant:**

- India has not yet conducted studies on efficacy of vaccine is influenced by variants. However, international studies have shown reduced efficacy of vaccines like Pfizer, Moderna and Novavax on some variants of SARS-CoV-2.
- Three global Variants of Concerns; U.K. variant (B.1.1.7), South African variant (B.1.351) and Brazilian (P.1) lineage; have been identified across the globe. These variants of concerns have been identified in 10,787 samples from international passengers. 771 cases of these variants have been identified in 18 States of India. Now, the new 'double variant' has been submitted to be categorised under formal lineage. Double Variant will have its own name.

### **Variants under investigation:**

- N440K mutation, a variant under investigation, is associated with immune escape and it has been found in 123 samples so far. This mutation was earlier found in 33% of samples from Andhra Pradesh. This has also been reported from 16 other countries like Denmark, Singapore, U.K., Japan and Australia.



### 71. INS Vajra Commissioned to Indian Coast Guard:

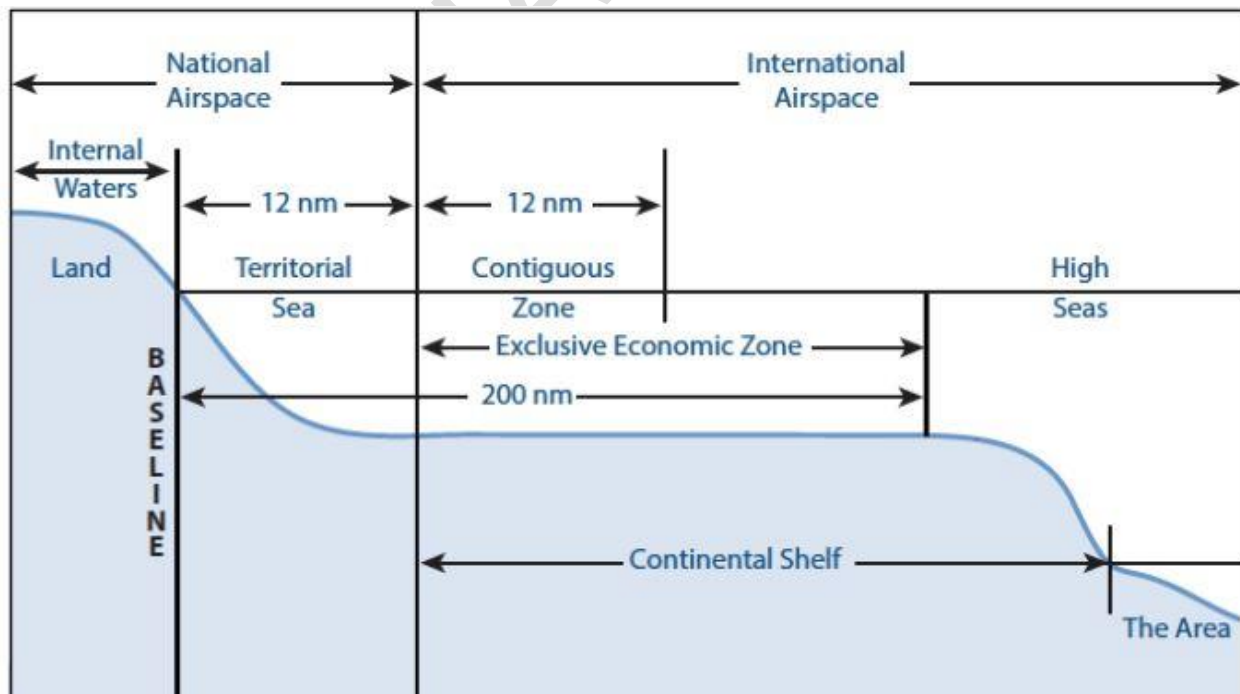
- Indian Coast Guard Ship Vajra was commissioned to the Indian Coast Guard by Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat, at Kattupalli in Chennai.
- INS Vajra was sixth in series of seven Offshore Patrol Vessel and was constructed by M/s Larsen & Toubro Ltd at Kattupalli. It is a 98-meter ship and is fitted with state-of-the-art Navigation & Communication Equipment, machinery and Sensors. It has been designed to carry one twin-engine helicopter and four high speed boats. It also carries two Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats for swift Boarding Operations. Vajra will be commanded by Deputy Inspector General Alex Thomas and is based at Tuticorin under the Operational and Administrative Control of Coast Guard District (Tuticorin).

#### Significance of INS Vajra:

- INS Vajra can be used in Search & Rescue operations, Law Enforcement and Maritime Patrol. The ship is also capable of carrying Pollution Response Equipment for oil spill response at Sea. It will be deployed to conduct surveillance in exclusive economic zones of Indian Coastal region.

#### Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ):

- EEZ is prescribed by United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982. It is an area of sea in which sovereign state enjoys special or 'sovereign' rights of exploring & using marine resources and producing energy from water & wind.
- EEZ stretches from baseline to 200 nautical miles (nmi) from the coast of the state.
- It is also called as maritime continental margin. It does not include territorial sea or continental shelf beyond 200 nmi.



#### United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS):

Classic IAS Academy | UG 33-34 Ansal Chamber-1Bhikaji Cama Place | New Delhi 110066  
 011-45069494 | [helpdesk@classiciasacademy.com](mailto:helpdesk@classiciasacademy.com) | [www.classiciasacademy.com](http://www.classiciasacademy.com)

- It is an international agreement signed during third United Nations Conference on Law of the Sea during 1973 and 1982. The Convention defines rights and responsibilities of nations regarding the use of world's oceans, environment, establishing guidelines for businesses and management of marine natural resources. It came into effect in 1994. 167 countries and European Union have joined this Convention, as of 2016.

## **72. Taiwan to Ration Water for 1 Million Households:**

- According to Economy Minister of Taiwan, Wang Mei-hua, Taiwan will ration water from April, 2021 for more than one million households residing in centre of the island.
- Taiwan is a sub-tropical country and is experiencing its worst drought in half a century because the rain-soaking typhoons failed to make landfall in the country in 2020.
- Shortage of water is most severe across the swathe of western Taiwan, where most of the people live. Thus, from April, water supplies in parts of Taichung and Miaoli would be cut for two days in a week and government will send out water tankers to supply residents when required. Government also adds that; Hsinchu province, which is home to companies such as Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co Ltd (TSMC), will not be affected by this drought. Reservoirs of Hsinchu are low but supplies are being topped up by carrying water from Taipei city and by desalination.

### **Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company Limited (TSMC):**

- TSMC is a multinational semiconductor contract manufacturing and design company. It is the largest companies in Taiwan and most valuable semiconductor company across the world. It is also the largest dedicated independent semiconductor foundry in the world.
- TSMC is headquartered in Hsinchu Science Park in Hsinchu, Taiwan. It is majorly owned by foreign investors.

### **Hsinchu City:**

- **Hsinchu** is 7th largest city in **Taiwan** by population. It is a windy coastal city which borders Taiwan Strait in west, Hsinchu County in north & east and Miaoli County in south. This city was founded by Han settlers in 1711. In the year 1878, it was renamed to Hsinchu.

## **73. India justifies designs of the two Hydro Projects in J-K:**

- The annual Permanent Indus Commission meeting was recently held after a gap of over two years. Before the meeting, Pakistan had raised objections to the designs of Pakal Dul and Lower Kalnai hydropower plants which are under construction in Jammu and Kashmir. In response, India has justified its stand.
- Pakistan had also sought more information regarding the projects in Ladakh which were sanctioned after abrogation of Article 370. In the meeting, both the sides also discussed other issues under Indus Waters Treaty. Indian side was led by PK Saxena, India's Indus Commissioner while the delegation from Pakistan was led by Indus Commissioner Syed Muhammad Meher Ali Shah.
- The meeting was significant because this is the first important engagement between both the countries after Indian and Pakistani militaries had

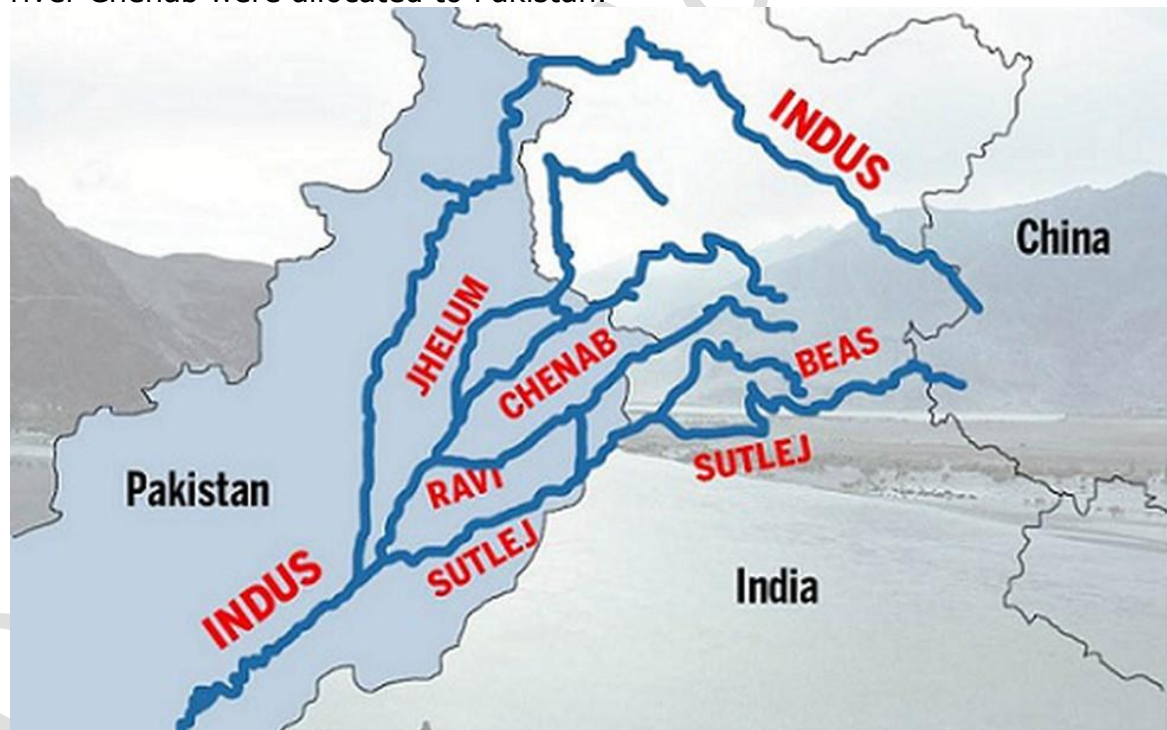
announced to strictly observe a ceasefire along Line of Control and other sectors.

#### **Pakal Dul Dam:**

- This is an under-construction concrete-face rock-fill dam. It is being constructed on Marusadar River which is a tributary of Chenab River. The dam is located in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir. It is being constructed with the objective of generating 1000 MW of hydroelectric power. The dam will divert water towards south, into power station of the reservoir of DULHasti Dam on Chenab river, through 10 km long headrace tunnel.
- The project was awarded to consortium of domestic and foreign countries in February 2014. The consortium includes JP Prakash Associate, AFCONS and Bharat Heavy Electricals. Construction of the dam is opposed by Pakistan which is of the view that it violates Indus Water Treaty.

#### **Chenab River:**

- The river flows in India and Pakistan. It is one of the 5 major rivers in Punjab region. The river originates from upper Himalayas in Lahaul and Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh and flows in Jammu, Punjab & Pakistan, before joining the Indus River near Uch Sharif. Under the Indus Water Treaty, waters of river Chenab were allocated to Pakistan.



#### **74. Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak:**

- Recently, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Smarak was inaugurated in New Delhi by the Education Minister, Government of India.
- Bhagat Singh was an Indian socialist revolutionary and folk hero of India's Independence movement following his two acts of dramatic violence against the British and his execution at age 23. Bhagat Singh and his associate

Shivaram Rajguru had shot a British police officer, John Saunders in December 1928. Following this, Bhagat Singh (aged 23) was convicted and hanged on March 23, 1931.

- Bhagat Singh was a Sandhu Jat. He was born in 1907 in Punjab Province of British India. On his birth, his father Kishan Singh and two uncle, Ajit Singh & Swaran Singh, were released from jail. His father and uncles were members of Ghadar Party which was led by Kartar Singh Sarabha and Har Dayal.
- Shivaram Hari Rajguru was an Indian revolutionary from Maharashtra. He was known for his involvement in assassination of a British Raj police officer. He was hanged on March 23, 1931 by British government along with Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev Thapar.
- Sukhdev Thapar, the Indian revolutionary was a senior member of Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. He participated in several actions with Bhagat Singh and Shivaram Rajguru. Sukhdev was hanged on March 23, 1931 at the age of 23 along with Bhagat Singh and Rajguru in the assassination case.

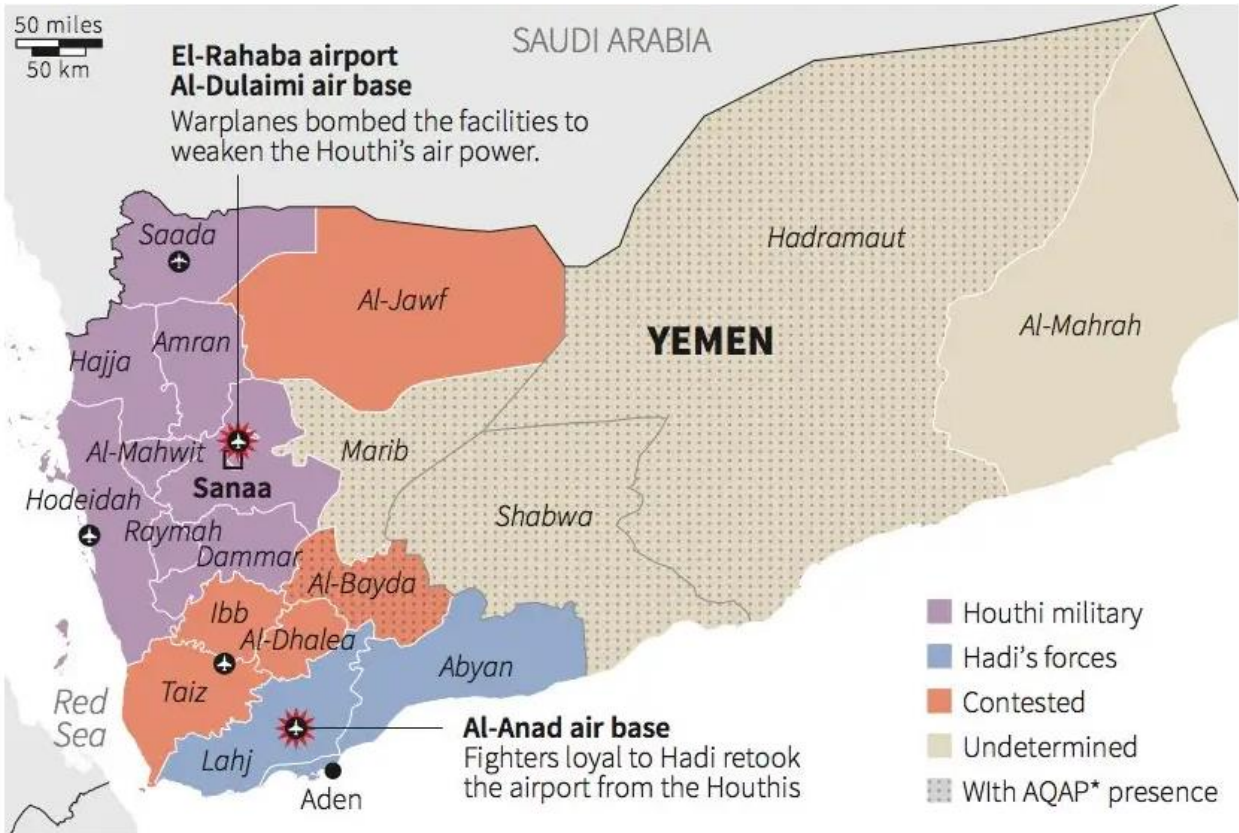
#### **75. Saudi Arabia proposes UN-sponsored ceasefire in Yemen:**

- Saudi Arabia government has proposed UN-sponsored ceasefire in Yemen and is awaiting a response from the rebel Houthi movement. This peace initiative by Saudi Arabia is in line with previous proposals like consultation efforts to end crisis.
- Deputy Defence Minister of Saudi Arabia, Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, also highlighted that Saudi Arabia will keep supporting the government of Yemen in country's fight against Houthi rebels. The government of Saudi Arabia seeks to bring about peace in Yemen. The country hopes that Houthi rebels will accept the ceasefire proposal to negotiate peace consultations between Yemeni parties in a bid to reach out to a comprehensive and sustainable political settlement.

#### **How Saudi Arabia will help Yemen?**

- Under the peace initiative, Saudi Arabia has planned to resume operation of the international airport in Sana'a, capital of Yemen. The country will help in partial removal of the blockade from Yemeni port of Al Hudaydah. It will also help in funnelling the proceeds from using the port in Yemen to joint account of southern & northern authorities in central bank.
- Countries like United States of Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, and Qatar have extended their support towards new peace initiative by Saudi Arabia. But the Houthi rebels in Yemen are of the view that, Saudi Arabia's proposal has nothing new. Houthi rebels have urged Saudi government to take back its military activity in Yemen.
- Yemen is going through an internal conflict between movement by Houthi rebels and government forces for 6 years. Following the request of President, Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi, Saudi Arabia led coalition has been conducting air campaign in Yemen against the Houthi rebels since 2015. But Houthi rebels have maintained their control over significant areas in northern part of Yemen.

- India has welcomed the peace initiative by Saudi Arabia to promote peace in Yemen. India has also extended its support towards all forms of efforts & political solution to end the crisis in Yemen.



### 76. Poshan Abhiyan for the Elderly:

- Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment aims to launch 'Poshan Abhiyan' for the Elderly to provide them 'nutrition support'.
- Under the mission, supports will be provided to indigent elders who are not staying in Old Age Homes and are victims of malnutrition. Mission will focus on procuring healthy food material which are available locally to serve hot-cooked mid-day meals. Scheme will be implemented by "Gram Panchayats and Urban Municipalities". 'Senior Citizens Welfare Fund' will be utilized to fund & implement the mission.

### National Action Plan for Senior Citizens:

- Government of India has been implementing several schemes and programmes under an Umbrella Scheme for Senior Citizens called "National Action Plan for Senior Citizens". This scheme provides for financial security, shelter & welfare, healthcare & Nutrition, protection of life & property, awareness generation and active & productive ageing.

### **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”. It was launched for children to enhance their nutritional status. The mission seeks to eliminate malnutrition by 2022. It specifically targets towards reducing stunting, undernutrition, anaemia and low birth weight.

#### **National Council on nutrition:**

- This council has been set up under Poshan Abhiyan. Vice chairman of NITI Aayog is the chairperson of the council. It offers policy directions in a bid to address ‘nutritional challenges’ and review its programmes.

#### **77. National Biopharma Mission:**

- Department of Biotechnology (DBT) has initiated cabinet approved National Biopharma Mission with the objective of strengthening emerging biotechnology enterprise across India. Mission is entitled as “Industry-Academia Collaborative Mission for Accelerating Discovery Research to Early Development for Biopharmaceuticals – Innovate in India (I3) Empowering biotech entrepreneurs & accelerating inclusive innovation”.
- **National Biopharma Mission** was launched to support small and medium enterprises in order for them to overcome the risks associated with early stages of development of products.
- It promotes entrepreneurship by supporting enhanced industry-academia inter-linkages.
- It also provides mentoring & training for academia, innovators and entrepreneurs. The mission further promotes domestic manufacturing by shared national facilities like GLP Analytical facilities, cell line repositories and setting clinical trial network.

#### **Objectives of the mission:**

1. To develop products from leads which are at advanced stages of product development lifecycle.
2. To strengthen and establish shared infrastructure facilities to validate & manufacture the products.
3. To develop human capital by providing specific training in order to address ‘critical skills gaps’ in researchers and nascent biotech companies.
4. To create & enhance technology transfer and intellectual property management capacities across public and private sector.

#### **Targets of the Mission:**

1. To develop 5 biopharma products like biotherapeutics, Vaccines, medical devices and diagnostics.
2. To establish the shared infrastructure and facilities like GLP Validation and Reference Lab.
3. Med-Tech validation facility.
4. Translational & interdisciplinary research, process development and development of cell lines.
5. To set up and establish technology transfer offices in public and private sector.
6. To impart technical and non-technical skill development.

#### **Innovate in India (I3):**

- I3 is an industry- academia collaborative mission by Department of Biotechnology (DBT) which was launched in collaboration with World Bank to

accelerate discovery research. It will be implemented by Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC).

- This mission was launched with the aim of enabling and nurturing an ecosystem to preparing technological and product development capabilities of India in biopharmaceutical to make it globally competitive. It also seeks to transform the health standards of India's population by developing affordable product.

#### **78. Power Grid sets up e-Tendering Portal-PRANIT:**

- The central PSU named Power Grid Corporation of India has established an e-Tendering Portal called PRANIT. This portal will help in maintaining the less paperwork, ease of operation and making the tendering process more transparent.
- The portal has been certified by the Standardisation, Testing and Quality Certification Directorate (STQC) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- The POWERGRID is the only organization in India which have an e Procurement solution on the SAP Supplier Relationship Management which also comply with all the applicable requirements related to the security and transparency.

#### **Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID):**

- It is an Indian central public sector unit and a Maharatna company. The company is owned by Ministry of Power.
- It is headquartered in Gurugram, India. The company is engaged mainly in the Transmission of Power. The company transmits around 50 percent of the total power generated across India through its transmission network.
- The former subsidiary company of the POWERGRID called "Power System Operation Corporation Limited (POSOCO)" is engaged in the power management for the National Grid and all state transmission utilities. The company also operates the telecom business called POWERTEL. The current chairman and managing director of the company is Shri Kandikuppa Sreekant.

#### **Power System Operation Corporation Limited (POSOCO):**

- It is a wholly owned Government of India enterprise working under the Ministry of Power. The organisation is responsible for ensuring the integrated operation of Grid in a reliable, secure and efficient manner.
- It comprises of 5 Regional Load Despatch Centres (RLDCs) and a National Load Despatch Centre (NLDC).

#### **79. ISRO Demonstrates Free Space Quantum Communication:**

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has announced on March 22, 2021 that it has successfully demonstrated its free-space Quantum Communication for a distance of 300 metres for the first time in India. It was demonstrated at the Space Applications Centre (SAC) in Ahmedabad in between the two line-of-sight buildings within its campus.
- Several numbers of the key technologies were indigenously developed to achieve this major feat. This space quantum communication includes the use of indigenously developed NAVIC receiver for the time synchronisation in

between the transmitter and receiver modules. It also includes a gimbal mechanism system instead of the bulky large-aperture telescopes for the optical alignment of the system.

- ISRO's demonstration of the Free Space Quantum Communication includes the live video conferencing using the quantum-key-encrypted signals. It is a major milestone to achieve the unconditionally secured satellite data communication using the quantum technologies.

#### **Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) technology:**

- The Quantum Key Distribution technology uses the Quantum Communication technology which ensures the unconditional data security using the principles of the quantum mechanics on the basis of Laws of Physics.
- This technology cannot be used with the conventional encryption systems. The conventional cryptosystems are used for the data-encryption rely on complexity of the mathematical algorithms.
- Quantum Cryptography is the future-proof because no future advancements in computational power can break the quantum-cryptosystem.

#### **Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) or NAVIC:**

- NAVIC is an autonomous regional satellite navigation system which provides the accurate real-time positioning and timing services. The satellite covers India and the region extending up to 1,500 km across it.
- The extended service area of the satellite lies in between primary service area and the rectangle area which is enclosed by 30th parallel south to 50th parallel north and 30th meridian east to 130th meridian east.
- This system currently comprises of the constellation of seven satellites with two additional stand-by satellites on ground.

#### **80. Flexible fuel vehicles (FFVs):**

- The government of India may soon ask the auto companies in India to manufacture the passenger and commercial vehicles that run on the multiple fuel configuration with the aim of reducing the use of polluting fossil fuels and cutting down the harmful emissions.
- In the line, the government is actively looking up after the use of "Flexible Fuel Vehicles" which will ensure the increased use of the bio-fuels to run the vehicles. 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.
- These vehicles are currently being used in Brazil successfully. FFVs gives people the option to switch the fuel based in the price and convenience. Majority of the vehicles sold in Brazil are FFVs.

#### **Flexible-fuel vehicle (FFV):**

- It is also called as the "dual-fuel vehicle" or a flex-fuel vehicle. FFV is an alternative fuel vehicle which comprises of the internal combustion engine which run on more than one fuel. It usually run on the gasoline blended with either ethanol or methanol fuel.
- Both of the fuels are stored in same common tank. The engines of the vehicle are capable of burning any proportion of the resulting blend in its combustion chamber. The fuel injection and spark timing are automatically adjusted in accordance with the actual blend detected by the fuel composition sensor.



- The FFV is different from the bi-fuel vehicles. In the bi-fuel vehicle, two fuels are stored in the separate tanks and engine runs on one fuel at a time.

#### **Advantages of FFVs in 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.

#### **81. Jal Shakti Ministry & UN tie-up for Jal Jeevan Mission:**

- The Jal Shakti Ministry has signed a pact with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the government of Denmark on March 22, 2021 in order to bring the tap water connections to the 11 water-scarce districts of the Bundelkhand and Vindhya regions in Uttar Pradesh under the Jal Jeevan mission.
- The project will comprise of the supports like capacity building, creation of village action plans, grassroot water quality monitoring methods and community mobilisation. All these supports will be facilitated by UNOPS. The project has set a million-dollar budget for the year 2021. However, the project will be scaled up in the year 2022.

#### **Jal Jeevan Mission:**

- This mission was launched on August 15, 2019. It is envisioned to provide safe and adequate drinking water by individual household tap connections. It seeks to provide the tap water connections to all the rural households across India by 2024.
- The programme also implements the source sustainability measures like recharge & reuse through the grey water management, rain water harvesting and water conservation as mandatory elements. The mission is based on the community approach of water. The key component of the mission also includes extensive Information, Education and communication.

#### **Objectives of the Mission:**

- 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.

#### **82. Gandhi Peace Prize 2020:**

- According to the Ministry of the culture, government of India has conferred the Gandhi Peace Prize on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for 2020. The peace prize for the year 2019 was conferred on the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said of Oman.
- The peace prize was conferred ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to Dhaka on March 26, 2021. He will be attending the celebrations of the golden jubilee of the independence and birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

#### **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman:**

- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the first President and also became Prime Minister of Bangladesh, later. He is called as "Father of the Nation" or "Mujib". He was assassinated on August 15, 1975.
- Winner of the Gandhi Peace Prize 2019, Sultan Qaboos, was the longest-reigning leader of the modern Arab world. He died in the month of January 2020. The peace prize was given this year for the last two years that is 2019 and 2020. In the year 2018, it was announced for the last four years.

#### **Gandhi Peace Prize:**

- This is an International Gandhi Peace Prize which has been named after Mahatma Gandhi. The award is presented by the Government of India. It is presented as a tribute to the Gandhian Ideals.
- This award was launched in the year 1995 on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of Mohandas Gandhi. This annual award is given to the individuals and institutions for their contributions in the political, social and economic transformation through non-violence and other Gandhian ideals.
- It comprises of rupees one crore in cash, a plaque and a citation. The award is open to all the persons regardless of their race, nationality, gender or creed.

#### **83. Volcano Bonds:**

- The **Danish Red Cross** announced that it has launched first of its kind catastrophe bond for the volcano-related disasters in collaboration with the several financial firms.
- This bond which will enable the disaster relief agency to get the financial aid quickly to those who are suffering because of the eruption of 10 volcanoes namely Chile, Ecuador, Cameroon, Colombia, Mexico, Guatemala and Indonesia. The project's partners aim to raise \$3 million with the launch of this bond. This money will be transferred to the Denmark's branch of the Red Cross. The Initial investors in the bond are Plenum investments and Schroder Investment Management. The firm specializes in the insurance-linked securities.
- The pay-out of the bond is based on the quantitative model which predict about where the funds will be needed on the basis of the height of the ash cloud after the volcanic eruption and prevailing winds.
- The project has been in the making since the year November 2018 when it was started around a table in Zurich.

#### **Catastrophe Bonds:**

- The catastrophe bonds insure against the damage from natural disasters such as earthquakes and storms. Some of the bonds also include the volcanic

eruptions in baskets of the covered perils. These bonds offer a high yield to the investors who are going through the risk of losing some or all of their investment during the disaster.

- These pandemic bonds, which were sold in the year 2017, started being criticised when they failed to pay out during the Ebola outbreak in 2019 and in the initial phases of coronavirus pandemic in 2020. These bonds also went into losses amid the Covid-19 crisis.

#### **84. Ken-Betwa: First River Linking project:**

- The River interlinking project aims to divert the surplus water from Ken river in Madhya Pradesh to Betwa river in Uttar Pradesh. This is being done with the objective of irrigating the drought-prone Bundelkhand region across the districts of Jhansi, Lalitpur, Banda & Mahoba districts in UP and Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur & Panna districts in MP. This project is one among the 30 rivers interlinking projects across the country.
- India receives 80% of the water through annual rains while the surface water flow happens for a period of 4 month from June to September. Thus, there exists the spatial & time variance & demand-supply gaps in the availability of natural water and the demand for irrigation, industrial water & drinking water. This gap can be balanced by interlinking the rivers wherein the rivers will be joined by the network of canals & reservoirs.

#### **Advantages of interlinking:**

- River linking will help in curbing the recurring droughts and reducing the excessive dependence on groundwater in the Bundelkhand region. It will thus help in reducing the rate of suicides among farmers by ensuring them a stable livelihood. It will produce 75 MW of electricity along with provide drinking water to 13 lakh people in the two states.
- The construction of Daudhan dam will submerge 10% of the critical tiger habitat of Panna Tiger Reserve. This in turn would affect the tiger conservation efforts. The height of the dam will have effect on the nesting sites of the vultures.

#### **85. Freedom Pineapple Movement:**

- The Foreign Minister of Taiwan, Joseph Wu, recently launched a "Freedom Pineapple" campaign on Twitter in order to condemn the politically-driven ban on the import of pineapples from Taiwan by China. The Taiwanese pineapples have also become a political symbol in the region following the ban.
- Freedom pineapples is a political and social response against the Chinese ban on import of pineapples from Taiwan. The Chinese government has banned the import of Pineapples from Taiwan just before the season for pineapple was started in the year 2021. The government has banned the import stating that the imports done in the previous instances had been contaminated with pests. However, this was denied by experts, producers, and the government of Taiwan. The movement's name is inspired from a "Play on Freedom Fries" which is named as the "Freedom pineapples".
- After facing the ban, the Taiwanese government had asked its citizens and other diplomatic allies to increase their consumption of "Freedom

Pineapples". The government has also promised to provide financial assistance to any farmers who will undergo losses because of the ban.

- The President of Taiwan, Tsai Ing-wen, has also launched a social media campaign named "Eat Taiwan's pineapples until you burst,".
- This campaign was launched to encourage its citizens to increase their consumption of local pineapples. The Restaurants in Taiwan also incorporated pineapple into their dishes.
- The Taiwanese farmers have started diverting the non-pineapple exports from China to other markets because of they are concerned that their product could be banned next.



### 86. 'Catch the Rain' campaign:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is all set to launch the "Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain campaign" in the virtual mode. The campaign is being launched on the occasion of World Water Day on March 22, 2021. The campaign will be implemented under the theme- 'Catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls'.
- On the occasion, the Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh & Uttar Pradesh will sign a historic Memorandum of Agreement to implement the "Ken Betwa Link Project" in the presence of Prime Minister. This will be the first project of "National Perspective Plan" for interlinking of the rivers.

### **Jal Shakti Abhiyan:**

- This campaign will be implemented across the rural and urban areas in the country. It will run till November 30, 2021. The campaign will be launched as a Jan Andolan in order to undertake water conservation at the grass-root level with people's participation.
- It seeks to nudge all stakeholders so as to create "rainwater harvesting structures" which are suitable to the climatic conditions in order to store the

rainwater properly. As the part of campaign, the Gram Sabhas will also take "Jal Shapath" for water conservation.

### **87. India to conduct Radar Surveys of Himalayan Glaciers:**

- India has planned to conduct the airborne radar surveys in order to estimate the thickness of Himalayan glaciers. Under the plan, the pilot study will be conducted in the Lahaul – Spiti basin of the Himachal Pradesh. This proposal was initiated by the "National Centre for Polar & Ocean Research (NCPOR)" under the Ministry of Earth Sciences".
- After this pilot project is done, similar studies will also be conducted in the Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra sub-basins. This development is significant because of the importance of glaciers in the river systems of India and 500 million lives which the river sustains downstream in Indo-Gangetic plains. They are also significant from with respect to the energy security standpoint. The development is also strategically imperative.
- This development has come in India because India is one of the most vulnerable country for extreme weather events. It has been ranked at the 20th position on Climate Risk Index (CRI). India also witnessed a human tragedy after several people lost their lives in February 2021 glacier bursts near the Raini village in Uttarakhand.

### **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR):**

- It is formerly known as "National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR)". It is an Indian research and development institution which is located in the Vasco da Gama in Goa. The centre is an autonomous Institution under the Department of Ocean Development (DOD) of Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India.
- The centre is responsible to administer the Indian Antarctic Programme. It also maintains the Antarctic research stations namely the Bharati & Maitri of India. It was established on May 25, 1998. Dr. Prem Chand Pandey was the founding director of NCPOR.

**Copyright © by Classic IAS Academy**

All rights are reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of Classic IAS Academy.