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August 1

The need for a distinction between blasphemy and hate speech

- The legality of Section 295(A) was affirmed by a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court. The court said that the punishment under Section 295(A) deals with aggravated form of blasphemy which is committed with the malicious aim of offending any religious sensibilities.
- Insulting a religion may be disputed but should not be legally outlawed. The reason for this is because hate speech laws are predicated on the critical distinction between criticising religion and encouraging prejudice towards individuals because of their faith.
- Blasphemy laws which prohibit religious criticism in general are incompatible with the principles of a democratic society.

Hybrids vs Electric vehicles battle to hot up in India's car market

- A hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) uses an ICE (a petrol/diesel engine) and one or more electric motors to run. It is powered by the electric motor alone, which uses energy stored in batteries, by the ICE, or both
- The efficiency of HEVs will be determined by their ability to recover as much energy as possible while braking, with a higher degree of energy recovery lowering fuel consumption. A regenerative braking system (RBS) while enhancing fuel economy also helps in energy optimisation resulting in minimum energy wastage.
- The HEVs can be categorised into micro, mild and full hybrid vehicles, based on the degree of hybridisation. The hybrid variants of the Maruti Suzuki's Grand Vitara and the Toyota's Urban Cruiser Hyryder can be classified as full and mild hybrids.

India and Oman to carry out 13-day military exercise in Rajasthan

- The fourth edition of India-Oman joint military exercise 'AL NAJAH-IV' between contingents of Indian Army and the Royal Army of Oman is scheduled to take place at the Foreign Training Node of Mahajan Field Firing Ranges from August 1 to 13.
- A 60-member team from the Royal Army of Oman has arrived at the site. The Indian Army will be represented by troops from the 18 Mechanised Infantry Battalion.
- The previous edition of the exercise was organised in Muscat in March 2019.

Orunodoi scheme to aid Assam's Tricolour plans

- The Assam government has been transferring ₹ 1,000 as monetary benefit to the bank accounts of economically weak women on the 10th of every month under the Orunodoi scheme.
- The extra amount would enable each beneficiary to either buy a larger National Flag priced at ₹ 18 or two smaller ones of ₹ 9 each.

India, Vietnam to hold 3rd edition of bilateral army exercise

- The exercise is a sequel to a previously conducted bilateral exercise in Vietnam in 2019 and a major milestone in strengthening the bilateral relations between India and Vietnam.
- India and Vietnam share a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and defence cooperation is a key pillar of this partnership. Vietnam is an important partner in India's Act East policy and the Indo-Pacific vision.
- The theme of Ex VINBAX - 2022 is the employment and deployment of an Engineer Company and a Medical Team as part of the United Nations Contingent for Peace Keeping Operations.

Chabahar Day conference begins in Mumbai

- Dignitaries from Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan were present on the occasion.
- In May 2016, India and Iran signed a bilateral agreement in which India would refurbish one of the berths at Shahid Beheshti port, and reconstruct a 600 meter long container handling facility at the port.
- In October 2017, India's first shipment of wheat to Afghanistan was sent through the Chabahar Port.
- Chabahar Port is a seaport in Chabahar located in southeastern Iran, on the Gulf of Oman.
- It serves as Iran's only oceanic port, and consists of two separate ports named Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti, each of which has five berths.
- The Chabahar port is a key pillar of India's Indo-Pacific vision to connect with Eurasia with Indian Ocean Region. The port will also be part of the International North South Transport Corridor network connecting India.
- Iran has given special incentives to increase trade cooperation activities between India and Iran through Chabahar port.

'President's Colours' presented to Tamil Nadu police

- Vice President Venkaiah Naidu presented the President's colour to the Tamil Nadu Police.
- The President's Colour is the highest honour given to the military, paramilitary and police forces of States and Union Territories.

- The State of Tamil Nadu ranks second in the list of more women in the police force and the State was the first to create a women commando force.
- Tamil Nadu is the only State to have a police unit to investigate smuggling of idols and statues.

August 2

Monkeypox task force set up as first death in India confirmed

- The team will be headed by V.K. Paul, member (Health), NITI Aayog. India has reported six confirmed cases of monkeypox so far — four in Kerala and two in Delhi.
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 18,000 cases have been reported from 78 countries.
- Monkeypox is a zoonotic disease caused by the monkeypox virus, which belongs to the same family of viruses that causes smallpox.
- The disease is endemic in regions like West and Central Africa, but lately, cases have been reported from non-endemic countries too, according to WHO.

The Rajya Sabha passed the Indian Antarctic Bill.

- The Indian Antarctic Bill, 2022 seeks to allow the application of Indian laws to the country's research stations in Antarctica.
- It also aims to provide national measures to protect the Antarctic environment and associated ecosystems.
- The Bill will also give effect to the Antarctic Treaty, the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources and the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty.

The Rajya Sabha passed the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill.

- The first Bill will amend the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005.
- The amendment seeks to prevent financing of prohibited activities related to nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.
- The Bill also proposes to empower the Central government to freeze, seize or attach funds or financial assets or economic resources for preventing financing of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) and to prohibit making available funds or resources for such activities.

Bill for Gati Shakti University introduced in Lok Sabha

- The Bill seeks to expand the scope of the university from beyond just the Railways to cover the entire transport sector and support growth and modernisation in the field.
- The new university, once the Bill clears both Houses of Parliament, will be funded and administered by the Ministry of Railways.
- The Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2022 seeks to amend the Central Universities Act, 2009, inter alia, to provide for the establishment of Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya as a body corporate under the said Act.
- The establishment of the Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya would address the need for talent in the strategically important and expanding transportation sector and meet the demand for trained talent to fuel the growth and expansion of the sector.

AlphaFold reveals the structure of the protein universe

- AlphaFold is an AI-based protein structure prediction tool. It used processes based on “training, learning, retraining and relearning” to predict the structures of the entire 214 million unique protein sequences deposited in the Universal Protein Resource (UniProt) database.
- The Indian community of structural biology needs to take advantage of the AlphaFold database and learn how to use the structures to design better vaccines and drugs.

African Swine Fever: Culling of pigs underway in Kerala's Kannur

- African swine fever virus (ASFV) is a large, double-stranded DNA virus in the Asfarviridae family.
- It is the causative agent of African swine fever (ASF).
- The virus causes a hemorrhagic fever with high mortality rates in domestic pigs; some isolates can cause death of animals as quickly as a week after infection.
- It persistently infects its natural hosts, warthogs, bushpigs, and soft ticks of the genus Ornithodoros, which likely act as a vector, with no disease signs.
- It does not cause disease in humans. ASFV is endemic to sub-Saharan Africa and exists in the wild through a cycle of infection between ticks and wild pigs, bushpigs, and warthogs.
- The disease was first described after European settlers brought pigs into areas endemic with ASFV, and as such, is an example of an emerging infectious disease.
- ASFV replicates in the cytoplasm of infected cells.
- It is the only virus with a double-stranded DNA genome known to be transmitted by arthropods.

Nearly 1200 cattle perish to lumpy skin disease in Rajasthan

- Lumpy skin disease (LSD) is an infectious disease in cattle caused by a virus of the family Poxviridae, also known as Neethling virus.
- The disease is characterized by fever, enlarged superficial lymph nodes and multiple nodules (measuring 2–5 centimetres (1–2 in) in diameter) on the skin and mucous membranes (including those of the respiratory and gastrointestinal tracts).
- Infected cattle also may develop edematous swelling in their limbs and exhibit lameness.
- The virus has important economic implications since affected animals tend to have permanent damage to their skin, lowering the commercial value of their hide.
- Additionally, the disease often results in chronic debility, reduced milk production, poor growth, infertility, abortion, and sometimes death.

August 3

India win historic gold in Lawn Bowls (Women's Fours)

- Bowls, also known as lawn bowls or lawn bowling, is a sport in which the objective is to roll biased balls so that they stop close to a smaller ball called a "jack" or "kitty".
- It is played on a bowling green, which may be flat (for "flat-green bowls") or convex or uneven (for "crown green bowls").

Sri Pingali Venkayya

- Sri Pingali Venkayya will always be remembered for his immense contribution to design of National Flag, says Andhra Pradesh Governor.
- Pingali Venkayya (1876 – 1963) was an Indian freedom fighter.
- He was a staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi and the designer of the flag on which the Indian national flag was based.
- He designed the National Flag and presented it to Mahatma Gandhi during the latter's visit to Vijayawada city on 1 April 1921.

Khulna-Mongla Port rail link to begin operations in December

- The Mongla-Khulna railway line is funded by the government of India Line of Credit (LOC).

- The Khulna-Mongla railway project is part of the first Line of Credit extended by India to Bangladesh in 2010.
- The project is scheduled to be over by the end of this year.
- According to the IRCON International Ltd, a total 31 bridges and 108 culverts have been built for the train link. The Rupsha bridge was completed on 25 June this year.

Ayman al-Zawahiri: Al-Qaeda leader killed in US drone strike

- The killing of Zawahiri is considered the biggest blow to the militant group since its founder Osama bin Laden was killed in 2011.
- Zawahiri, an Egyptian who had a 25 million dollar bounty on his head, helped coordinate the 9/11 attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people in the US in 2001. One of the US officials said the CIA carried out a drone strike in the Afghan capital Kabul on Sunday.
- US President Joe Biden addressed the nation from the White House on the operation. The drone attack is the first known US strike inside Afghanistan since US troops and diplomats left the country in August 2021.
- In a statement, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed that a strike took place and strongly condemned it, calling it a violation of international principles.

Reservation in Local Jobs

- The Supreme Court quashed the Jharkhand government's 2016 decision to grant 100% reservation to local people of 13 Scheduled Areas in public jobs and upheld a High Court decision that had termed the government decision "discriminatory and impermissible".
- The top court said "the citizens have equal rights, and the total exclusion of others by creating an opportunity for one class is unconstitutional and ultra vires Articles 14, 16(2), 16(3) and 35(ai) of the Constitution of India."

Lok Sabha passes Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill

- The Bill amends the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. The Act regulates the protection of wild animals, birds and plants.
- The Bill seeks to increase the species protected under the law, and implement the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- Currently, the Act has six schedules for specially protected plants (one), specially protected animals (four), and vermin species (one). The Bill reduces the total number of schedules to four.

- The Bills empowers the central government to regulate or prohibit the import, trade, possession or proliferation of invasive alien species.

Medium of instructions shall be in child's mother tongue

- Section 29(f) of Chapter V under Right to Education Act, 2009 clearly states that, "medium of instructions shall, as far as practicable, be in child's mother tongue."
- Education is in the concurrent list of the Constitution and majority of the schools are under the domain of the States/UTs.
- As envisaged in para 4.11 of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, is to be the mother tongue/regional language.
- The NIPUN Bharat Mission of the Government of India through its Mission Implementation Guidelines suggests that teaching learning process and development of teaching learning material should be done in mother tongue.
- Similarly, Vidya Pravesh- a three-month play-based school preparation programme for Grade-I and NISHTHA FLN (Foundational literacy and Numeracy) have also re-emphasised the same.

Maldives president Ibrahim Mohamed Solih meets PM Modi in New Delhi

- Pouring of first concrete of the Greater Male Connectivity Project- an USD 500 Mn India funded project- marking the commencement of permanent works
- Review of the progress on the construction of 4,000 social housing units in Hulhumale being funded under Exim Bank of India Buyer's credit finance of USD 227 Mn
- Overview of India Maldives development cooperation including Addu roads and reclamation, water and sanitation in 34 islands and Friday Mosque restoration projects
- MoU on Capacity Building & Training of Members of Local Councils & Women Development Committee of Maldives between NIRDPR, India and Local Government Authority, Maldives
- MoU on Collaboration in potential fishing zone forecast capacity building and data sharing and marine scientific research between INCOIS, India and Ministry of Fisheries, Maldives
- MoU for Cooperation in the area of Cyber Security between CERT-India and NCIT, Maldives
- MoU for cooperation in the field of disaster management between NDMA, India and NDMA, Maldives
- Agreement between EXIM Bank, India and Ministry of Finance, Maldives for USD 41 Mn Buyer's Credit Financing of Police Infrastructure in Maldives

- Extension of USD 100 Mn new Line of Credit to finance infrastructure projects in Maldives
- Approval for award of EPC contract for the USD 128 Mn Hanimadhoo Airport Development project under Line of Credit
- Approval of DPR and commencement of tendering process of the USD 324 Mn Gulhifahlu Port development project under Line of Credit
- Approval of Feasibility Report and financial closure for the USD 30 Mn Cancer Hospital project under Line of Credit
- USD 119 Mn Buyer's Credit financing by Exim Bank of India for additional 2,000 social housing units in Hulhumale

IAF to participate in multilateral exercise 'Pitch Black' in Australia

- Continuing the series of military exercises with countries in the Indo-Pacific, the Indian Air Force (IAF) will join 16 other nations, including Quad partners, later this month for Exercise Pitch Black, the biennial exercise hosted by the Australian Air Force.
- About 100 aircraft and 2,500 military personnel from 17 nations will arrive in the Northern Territory in two weeks to commence Exercise Pitch Black 2022.
- The 2020 edition of the exercise was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

August 4

Centre increases Fair and Remunerative Price on sugarcane

- The amount is for sugarcane with a basic sugar recovery rate of 10.25%. The Centre has also announced a premium of ₹ 3.05 per quintal for each 0.1% increase in recovery of sugar over and above 10.25% and reduction in FRP by ₹ 3.05 per quintal for every 0.1% decrease in recovery.
- The FRP for last season was ₹ 290 per quintal with a basic recovery rate of 10%.
- While the Centre claimed the increase will protect the interest of sugarcane farmers, the farmers' organisations said the FRP is too low when compared to the increase in input cost and the increase of 0.25% in recovery rate is a blow to them.
- The Centre has also decided that there shall not be any deduction in case of sugar mills where recovery is below 9.5%.

Union Cabinet approves India's climate pledges

- The Union Cabinet approved an update to India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

- Modi had laid out five commitments, or Panchamrit, as the government references it, namely:
 - India will increase its non-fossil energy capacity to 500 GW (gigawatt) by 2030;
 - will meet 50% of its energy requirements from “renewable energy” by 2030;
 - will reduce the total projected carbon emissions by one billion tonnes from now till 2030;
 - will reduce the carbon intensity of its economy by more than 45%; and
 - will achieve the target of “net zero” by the year 2070, when there will be no net carbon dioxide emitted from energy sources.
- A press statement, following the Cabinet approval, only mentions two of these promises, namely that
 - India is committed to reduce emissions intensity of its GDP by 45% by 2030, from the 2005 level and
 - achieving 50% cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030.

India to host UNSC meet on counterterrorism in October

- The meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), which India is chairing for 2022 as a member of the UNSC, will focus particularly on challenges such as terrorism financing, cyberthreats and the use of drones.
- New Delhi is expected to highlight cross-border threats from Pakistan and Afghanistan at the meeting, which will come two months before India completes its tenure as an elected member of the UNSC (2021-22).
- In addition, India has been pushing for the UN members to adopt a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (first proposed in 1996), which is likely to be raised during the meeting.
- While terror financing is now recognised and dealt with through mechanisms such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), it was necessary to build templates and “codes of conduct” for newer threats, including financing through cryptocurrency and the use of drones for terror attacks.

Supreme Court calls for a panel to look into freebies issue

- The court suggested setting up a specialised body composed of persons who can “dispassionately” examine the problem.
- The observations from a Bench led by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana came even as the Centre said these freebies were paving the way for an “economic disaster” besides “distorting the informed decision of voters”.

- The Centre, represented by Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, said it “substantially and in principle” supported doing away with the practice of promising freebies to voters.
- The court directed the parties to make “suggestions for the composition of a body”.
- It proposed that this body could examine ways to resolve the issue of freebies and file a report before the Centre or the Election Commission of India (ECI). The court said once the parties come up with suggestions on the composition of such a body in a week, it would pass orders.

GST E-Invoice Must for Businesses With Rs 10 Crore Turnover from October

- Businesses with annual turnover of Rs 10 crore or more will have to generate e-invoices for business-to-business (B2B) transactions from October 1 this year. The existing threshold for this is Rs 20 crore.
- Pursuant to the GST Council’s decision to introduce e-invoicing in a phased manner, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) on August 1 notified lowering the e-invoice threshold to Rs 10 crore.
- The GST Council approved the standard of e-invoice in its 37th meeting held on September 20, 2019. E-invoicing for B2B transactions was made mandatory for companies with turnover of over Rs 500 crore from October 1, 2020, which was then extended to those with turnover of over Rs 100 crore effective January 1, 2021.

Experiencing poor rainfall in June and July, almost three-fourth of Kerala is experiencing heavy showers in August, with several areas on the brink of flooding.

- Kerala is presently under the influence of at least three rainfall triggering weather conditions.
- There are strong Westerly winds flowing-in from the Arabian Sea, and bringing moisture over Kerala.
- Another major cause for an increase in rainfall is the presence of an east-west shear zone located 10 degrees north over the southern peninsula.
- This vertical zone — that can prevail either in the lower, middle or upper atmospheric levels — allows active winds of high speeds to interact. This zone also allows monsoon winds to remain active, thus causing intense rainfall over the area under its influence.
- The IMD further stated that the presence of a north-south trough running between Chhattisgarh and Comorin areas, which is located closer to south Kerala is causing widespread rainfall.

Chinese ‘spy ship’ heading for a Sri Lankan port

- The vessel's visit to the Lankan port comes at a time when the country is battling a severe economic crisis, and India is learnt to have already lodged a verbal protest against the ship's visit.
- The 'Yuan Wang 5', a Chinese research and survey vessel, is en route to Hambantota, a strategically important deep-sea port developed mostly using loans from Beijing.
- 'Yuan Wang'-class ships are used to track satellite, rocket and intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launches.
- China has around seven of these tracking ships that are capable of operating throughout the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian oceans. The ships supplement Beijing's land-based tracking stations.

Haryana's Cheerag Scheme for EWS Students

- Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar's government recently launched the "Chief Minister Equal Education Relief, Assistance and Grant (Cheerag)" scheme.
- It was introduced in place of a similar scheme launched by Bhupinder Singh Hooda's government in 2007 under Rule 134 A of the Haryana School Education Rules, 2003.
- Under the Cheerag scheme, government school students whose parents have an annual verified income of less than Rs 1.8 lakh can enroll in private schools from Class II to XII.
- The government will reimburse Rs 700 per student from Classes II to V, Rs 900 per student from Classes VI to VIII, and Rs 1,100 per student from Classes IX to XII.

August 5

ICMR starts new initiative in northeast

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has inaugurated the Foodborne Pathogen Survey Network (ICMR-FoodNet) in Northeast India.
- It is the beginning of a unique public health initiative in the region, the Council said.
- The integrated task force coordinates project-based activity campaigns, monitors food-borne enteric disease outbreaks, and conducts intensified systematic laboratory-based surveillance in four north-eastern States, in collaboration with research and medical institutions and food sectors.

Chhattisgarh Assembly passes resolution against Hasdeo coal mining

- Underneath the Hasdeo Aranya is a coalfield that comprises of 22 coal blocks. In 2010, the Centre categorised Hasdeo Aranya to be a “no-go” zone for mining.
- However, only a year later, the MoEF granted clearance for the mining. At present, of the 22 blocks, seven blocks have been allotted to different companies.
- The resolution isn't expected to change the status quo. While the Congress says the onus is on the Centre to stop mining, the BJP has been asking the State government to withdraw the clearances it has issued to mine developers and operators.

Navy's All-women Aircrew Creates History by Carrying Out Surveillance Mission Over North Arabian Sea

- Indian Navy's women officers have created history after they completed the first-ever all-women independent maritime reconnaissance and surveillance mission in the North Arabian Sea onboard a Dornier 228 aircraft.
- The mission was carried out by five officers of the Indian Navy Air Squadron (INAS) 314 based at Naval Air Enclave at Gujarat's Porbandar.
- The aircraft was captained by the Mission Commander, Lt Cdr Aanchal Sharma, who had pilots, Lt Shivangi and Lt Apurva Gite, and Tactical and Sensor Officers, Lt Pooja Panda and SLt Pooja Shekhawat in her team.
- The INAS 314 is a frontline Naval Air Squadron based at Porbandar, Gujarat. This “first-of-its-kind military flying mission” is expected to pave the way for women officers in the aviation cadre to assume greater responsibility and aspire for more challenging roles.

ISRO to launch its smallest rocket to unfurl Tricolour in Space

- The launch will take place from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.
- ISRO chairman S Somanath has called the new satellite a “game changer” that will drive India's dreams of breaking into the lucrative and booming small satellite launch market.
- On August 15, 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made an announcement that the Tricolour will be unfurled in space during India's 75th year of Independence.
- To mark country's celebrations of 'Azaadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the SSLV will have a co-passenger satellite called 'AzaadiSAT' comprising 75 payloads built by 750 young girl students from 75 rural government schools across India.
- This project was specially conceptualised for the 75th Independence Day year celebrations to encourage scientific temper and create opportunities for young girls to choose space research as their career.

DRDO successfully test fires indigenously developed laser-guided ATGMs

- The missiles hit with precision and successfully destroyed the targets at two different ranges. Telemetry systems have recorded the satisfactory flight performance of the missiles.
- The all-indigenous Laser Guided ATGM employs a tandem High Explosive Anti-Tank HEAT warhead to defeat Explosive Reactive Armour ERA protected armoured vehicles.
- The ATGM has been developed with multi-platform launch capability and is currently undergoing technical evaluation trials from 120 mm rifled gun of MBT Arjun.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has complimented DRDO and Indian Army for successful performance of the Laser Guided ATGMs.

PM Modi inaugurates and lays foundation stone of various projects of Shrimad Rajchandra Mission

- Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister said, the initiatives by the Shrimad Rajchandra Mission in the field of rural healthcare have strengthened the Vision of a 'Healthy India'.
- The modern healthcare facilities started by the Mission will benefit the rural, poor, and tribal people of South Gujarat.
- On the occasion, Mr Modi also recalled the spiritual association of Mahatma Gandhi with Rajchandra Ji.
- Shrimad Rajchandra (1867 – 1901) was a Jain poet, mystic, philosopher, scholar and reformer. He wrote much philosophical poetry including Atma Siddhi. He is best known for his teachings on Jainism and his spiritual guidance to Mahatma Gandhi.

Govt withdraws data protection Bill to bring revamped, refreshed regulation

- The government has withdrawn the Personal Data Protection Bill from Parliament as it considers a “comprehensive legal framework” to regulate the online space, including bringing separate laws on data privacy, the overall Internet ecosystem, cybersecurity, telecom regulations, and harnessing non-personal data to boost innovation in the country.
- The government has taken this step after nearly four years of the Bill being in the works. It had gone through multiple iterations, including a review by a Joint Committee of Parliament (JCP), and faced major pushback from a range of stakeholders including big tech companies such as Facebook and Google, and privacy and civil society activists.
- The tech companies had, in particular, questioned a proposed provision in the Bill called data localisation, under which it would have been mandatory for

companies to store a copy of certain sensitive personal data within India, and the export of undefined “critical” personal data from the country would be prohibited.

- The activists had criticised, in particular, a provision that allowed the central government and its agencies blanket exemptions from adhering to any and all provisions of the Bill.
- The delays in the Bill had been criticised by several stakeholders, who had pointed out that it was a matter of grave concern that India, one of the world’s largest Internet markets, did not have a basic framework to protect people’s privacy.

Global Supply Chains in a Post-Pandemic World

- As part of a global ‘China-plus-one’ strategy adopted post the Covid-19 pandemic that caused massive supply-chain disruptions, a group of western nations are cooperating to develop alternatives to China to ensure key industrial supplies.
- A new US-led partnership initiative of 11 nations aims to bolster critical mineral supply chains. India is not part of this arrangement — called the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) — but New Delhi is working through diplomatic channels to fetch an entry.
- The US and 10 partners — Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea (South Korea), Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the European Commission — have come together to form the MSP. The new grouping is aimed at catalysing investment from governments and the private sector to develop strategic opportunities.
- The new grouping could focus on the supply chains of minerals such as Cobalt, Nickel, Lithium, and also the 17 ‘rare earth’ minerals.
- The 17 rare earth elements (REE) include the 15 Lanthanides (atomic numbers 57 — which is Lanthanum — to 71 in the periodic table) plus Scandium (atomic number 21) and Yttrium (39). REEs are classified as light RE elements (LREE) and heavy RE elements (HREE).

August 6

Energy Conservation Amendment Bill in Lok Sabha

- Carbon markets allow the trade of carbon credits with the overall objective of bringing down emissions. These markets create incentives to reduce emissions or improve energy efficiency.

- For example, an industrial unit which outperforms the emission standards stands to gain credits. Another unit which is struggling to attain the prescribed standards can buy these credits and show compliance to these standards. The unit that did better on the standards earns money by selling credits, while the buying unit is able to fulfill its operating obligations.
- Under the Kyoto Protocol, the predecessor to the Paris Agreement, carbon markets have worked at the international level as well.
- Domestic or regional carbon markets are already functioning in several places, most notably in Europe, where an emission trading scheme (ETS) works on similar principles.
- A similar scheme for incentivising energy efficiency has been running in India for over a decade now. This BEE scheme, called PAT, (or perform, achieve and trade) allows units to earn efficiency certificates if they outperform the prescribed efficiency standards. The laggards can buy these certificates to continue operating.

'Badhe Chalo' Movement under Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav begins

- It is designed to involve the youth of the country encouraging them to come forward and imbibe the true spirit of our democracy and celebrate 75 years of India's independence with youthful fervour.
- Through this mass movement or 'Jan Bhagidari' initiative, the Ministry of Culture also intends to amplify and support the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' movement.
- This movement has been initiated by the Honourable Prime Minister and Home Minister and it calls upon every Indian to hoist a Tiranga in their homes between August 13th- 15th, 2022.
- To connect and to bring the youth and people together from across the country on one platform, Badhe Chalo will feature Flash Dances, where dancers will perform on a specially created 'Youth Anthem'.
- Badhe Chalo is being held across 10 cities every day from 5th August to 11th August, 2022. These events will culminate with a Grand Finale on 12th August, 2022 at Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi.

University Grants Commission has asked all Universities and Colleges to observe August 14 as Partition Horrors Remembrance Day.

- They have been asked to organize programmes and seminars to commemorate the sufferings and sacrifices of millions of Indians during the partition in 1947.
- Prime Minister Modi had last year announced that August 14 will be observed as Partition Horrors Remembrance Day in memory of the struggles and sacrifices of people, saying the pain of partition can never be forgotten.
- Mr Modi had said that millions of our sisters and brothers were displaced and many lost their lives due to mindless hate and violence.

Energy Conservation Amendment Bill in Lok Sabha

- The Bill seeks to amend the Energy Conservation Act, 2001. The Act promotes energy efficiency and conservation. It provides for the regulation of energy consumption by equipment, appliances, buildings, and industries.
- Obligation to use non-fossil sources of energy: The Act empowers the central government to specify energy consumption standards. The Bill adds that the government may require the designated consumers to meet a minimum share of energy consumption from non-fossil sources.
- Carbon trading: The Bill empowers the central government to specify a carbon credit trading scheme. Carbon credit implies a tradeable permit to produce a specified amount of carbon emissions.
- Energy conservation code for buildings: The Bill provides for an 'energy conservation and sustainable building code'. This new code will provide norms for energy efficiency and conservation, use of renewable energy, and other requirements for green buildings.
- Applicability to residential buildings: Under the Bill, the new energy conservation and sustainable building code will also apply to the office and residential buildings meeting the above criteria. The Bill also empowers the state governments to lower the load thresholds.
- Standards for vehicles and vessels: Under the Act, the energy consumption standards may be specified for equipment and appliances which consume, generate, transmit, or supply energy. The Bill expands the scope to include vehicles (as defined under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988), and vessels (includes ships and boats).

RBI raises rates, vows nimble policy

- The MPC also said it would remain focused on "withdrawal of accommodation" to ensure that inflation remains within the target, while supporting growth.
- The RBI retained its inflation and GDP growth projections for the current fiscal year ending in March 2023 at 6.7% and 7.2%, respectively.
- Consequently, the standing deposit facility (SDF) rate stands adjusted to 5.15%; and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 5.65%.
- The policy response to the unfolding economic situation would be 'calibrated, measured and nimble'.
- On the external sector, Mr. Das said the Current Account Deficit (CAD) would remain within manageable limits and the RBI had the ability to finance the CAD.

Kansas Voters Deliver Stunning Win for Abortion Rights

- The 'Value Them Both Amendment' states there "is no Kansas constitutional right to abortion or to require the government funding of abortion."
- The Kansas Supreme Court ruled in 2019 that abortion was guaranteed by the state constitution.
- Voting 'yes' on the ballot for the amendment would have meant there would be no constitutional right to abortion in the state while voting against would leave the state constitution unchanged, and people in Kansas would continue to have a right to an abortion.
- This was the first time the American public electorally responded to the landmark decision of the Supreme Court in June when it overturned the nationwide constitutional right to abortion, leaving abortion laws entirely up to the states.

Taiwan's porcupine strategy to counter China in case of a war

- The "porcupine doctrine", which was proposed in 2008 by US Naval War College research professor William S Murray, is a strategy of asymmetric warfare focused on fortifying a weak state's defences to exploit the enemy's weaknesses rather than taking on its strengths.
- It is about building defences that would ensure that Taiwan "could be attacked and damaged but not defeated, at least without unacceptably high costs and risks", Murray wrote in the Naval War College Review.

live-fire exercises, recently conducted by China?

- Live-fire exercises are exercises primarily used by military personnel, in which live ammunition is used to create training conditions that are as close to real combat scenarios as possible.
- Live-fire exercises are also used by law enforcement and firefighters as a form of field training, to train them to act calmly in real-life emergency situations in the future.
- During live-fire training, soldiers are placed in simulated combat situations and are given the opportunity to use their weapons and equipment (like ships, aircraft, tanks and drones).
- Such exercises are invaluable in maintaining combat readiness of troops, the cohesiveness of units, and instilling confidence in their ability to use their weapons and equipment correctly.

August 7

Indian Virtual Herbarium, Country's Largest Database of Flora

- In the Mann Ki Baat episode on July 31, PM Modi spoke about the novel initiative, and said that the herbarium was an interesting collection of plants and preserved parts of plants.
- Developed by scientists of the Botanical Survey of India (BSI), the herbarium was inaugurated by Union Minister of Environment Forest and Climate Change Bhupendra Yadav in Kolkata on July 1. Since then, the portal ivh.bsi.gov.in has had nearly two lakh hits from 55 countries.
- Each record in the digital herbarium includes an image of the preserved plant specimen, scientific name, collection locality, and collection date, collector name, and barcode number.
- The digital herbarium includes features to extract the data State-wise, and users can search plants of their own States, which will help them identify regional plants and in building regional checklists.

The ongoing violence in Gaza between Israel and Palestine

- The Gaza Strip or simply Gaza, is a Palestinian enclave on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It borders Egypt on the southwest for 11 kilometers (6.8 mi) and Israel on the east and north along a 51 km (32 mi) border.
- The Gaza Strip and the West Bank are claimed by the de jure sovereign State of Palestine.
- The territories of Gaza and the West Bank are separated from each other by Israeli territory.
- Both fell under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority, but the Strip has, since the Battle of Gaza in June 2007, been governed by Hamas, a militant, Palestinian, fundamentalist Islamic organization, which came to power in the last-held elections in 2006.
- It has been placed under an Israeli and US-led international economic and political boycott from that time onwards.

The Peninsular Rock Agama (*Psammophilus dorsalis*) which is a type of garden lizard has a strong presence in southern India.

- Habitat loss and other such features of urbanisation have affected the presence of the animal in urban centres.
- A study carried out by researchers from Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, undertook to characterise urbanisation in the region and also to understand where the rock agama reside in and around Bengaluru specifically.

- The study, published in Frontiers in Conservation Science, examined several environmental factors that could affect the presence of the lizard and revealed that they are found mainly in rocky places and warm spots. Thus, the inference is that conservation efforts must point towards retaining rocky patches even while reviving landscapes by planting trees.

8th National handloom day is being observed on August 7, 2022.

- The day has special significance in the history of the freedom struggle in the country. On the same day in 1905 Swadeshi Aandolan was started.
- Announcing the date to celebrate National handloom day in 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that all families in the country must keep at least one product of khadi and one of handloom.

ISRO launches India`s maiden SSLV-D1EOS-02 mission

- This is for the first time that the Indian space agency will demonstrate its capabilities in launching SSLV to inject smaller satellites in low earth orbit.
- It will carry the Earth Observation Satellite and another small satellite developed by the student team of Space Kidz India and named as AzaadiSAT.
- The girl students from Government schools across the country had participated in making this eight kg Cubesat to mark the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence. It carries 75 different payloads with earth observation applications.
- SSLV developed by ISRO has solid fuel in the first three stages and a fourth stage that carries liquid propulsion-based Velocity trimming module. It offers on demand quick launch feasibility and requires minimal launch infrastructure as compared to PSLV and GSLV launch vehicles of ISRO.
- The launch marks the beginning of a journey that, in a few years' time, is expected to see the SSLV becoming the most frequently used launch vehicle by ISRO, replacing the PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle) which has done over 50 flights till now.

CAT achieved 91% disposal rate in 5 years

- The Central Administrative Tribunal had been established under Article 323 - A of the Constitution for adjudication of disputes and complaints with respect to recruitment and conditions of service of persons appointed to public services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or other authorities under the control of the Government.
- There are 17 Benches and 21 Circuit Benches in the CAT all over India.
- In addition to the Ministries and Departments of Central Government, the Government of India has notified 214 organizations under section 14 (2) of the

Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985 to bring them within the jurisdiction of the Central Administrative Tribunal, from time to time.

- In addition the Central Administrative Tribunal, Principal Bench is dealing with the matters of Govt. of National Capital Territory of Delhi.

A controversy has broke out over the imposition of 18 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) on garba passes this year.

- 'Navratri' is a Gujarati word meaning the festival of nine nights.
- While celebrated nationwide, the festivities stand out in Gujarat due to the rich garba dances, done to pay respect to and worship Goddess Amba.
- The festival involves worshipping a lamp placed in perforated earthen pots, which is symbolic of the power of the Mother Goddess and denotes her 'garbha' or womb that brings new life.
- With many organisers opening bookings for the upcoming Navratri festival, to be held from September 26 to October 5, a controversy has broken out over the imposition of 18 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) on garba passes this year.
- Exemption from the GST only applies to organisers charging less than Rs 500 per pass.

August 8

Sebi constitutes an expert group of FPIs to boost overseas flows

- The FPI Advisory Committee (FAC) will be chaired by former Chief Economic Adviser KV Subramanian and consists of 14 other members representing foreign banks, stock exchanges depositories and RBI.
- The FAC has been tasked with advising on issues related to investments and operations of FPIs in the financial markets, including measures to facilitate ease of doing business by FPIs in India.
- The committee will review investment avenues available for FPIs and to advise on the feasibility of new investment avenues. It will also suggest measures required to encourage FPI participation in the bond market.

Shri Piyush Goyal unveils digital version of ODOP gift catalogue

- On the occasion, Mr Goyal highlighted the ways in which the ODOP gift catalogue is a step towards realizing the potential of all districts in the country and will give global recognition to the country's diverse indigenous products.

- He urged all the line ministries, Industry Association, and Export Promotion Councils to utilize products from the catalogue for encouragement to designs and branding.
- The Minister said that utilizing products from the catalogue will promote a brand image for local products in the international market.
- The ODOF gift catalogue includes a wide range of products like Fragrances and Oils, Indian Spirits, Home Decor products, Fabrics, and Silks and Shawls.

PARVAZ possesses tremendous potential for uplifting the economic conditions of the farmers across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

- The scheme was launched by the Government with an aim to create market linkage support for the shipment of Agriculture and Horticulture perishables being harvested in Jammu and Kashmir through Air Cargo.
- Under the scheme, 25 per cent subsidy on freight charges is given for carrying perishable fruits harvested in Jammu and Kashmir for shipment through Air Cargo. The subsidy is provided to farmers through DBT mode.
- Jammu & Kashmir Horticultural Produce Marketing and Processing Corporation (JKHPMC), the implementing agency of the scheme is regularly creating awareness among the farmers about the significance of this scheme so that ample number of them can take benefit from it.

Scindia Inaugurates First Flight Of Akasa Air From Mumbai To Ahmedabad

- Akasa Air is the 7th schedule airline with brand name of SNV Aviation having Corporate Headquarters at Mumbai with Boeing Max - 8 aircraft.
- Akasa Air plans to be a low-cost carrier with single fleet and all economy seats.
- Akasa Air is planning to expand its activities to 72 aircrafts in next five years which will significantly enhance the domestic aviation services in India.
- Akasa Air is the first major airline to take to the skies in seven years since Tata Sons- Singapore Airline joint venture Vistara started operations in 2015. Though there have been several new regional carriers, some have shut shop, and a few others have suspended flights due to cash crunch.
- The airline is founded by billionaire Rakesh Jhunjhunwala along with aviation veterans Vinay Dube, who was the CEO of Jet Airways until it closed down in April 2019, and Aditya Ghosh, who earlier helmed IndiGo.

ITU's Regional Standardization Forum for Asia and Oceania begins

- The theme of the Forum is “Regulatory and Policy aspects of Telecommunications/ICTs”.

- The Forum will be succeeded by four-day meeting of International Telecommunication Union-T Study Group 3 Regional Group Asia and Oceania (ITU-T SG3RG-AO) from 09th August 2022 to 12th August 2022.
- The Regional Standardization Forum is a platform for discussing standardization topics including inter alia India's experience in various sectors of technology like Sustainable Digital Transformation and the Role of ITU Standards, Harnessing Technologies for Digital and Financial Inclusion in Emerging Markets, evolving Data Value Chain and Digital Health.
- The Forum will be succeeded by ITU-T Study Group 3 Regional Group Asia and Oceania (ITU-T SG3RG-AO) from 09th August 2022 to 12th August 2022.

Satellites launched by SSLV in 'wrong orbit, not usable'

- SSLV-D1-EOS 02 launched from Sriharikota launch pad had placed the satellites into 356kmX76 kms elliptical orbit instead of 356 km circular orbit. Due to which the two satellites remained unstable and are no longer usable.
- The ISRO Chairman has said the launch vehicle took off majestically at the intended time from the launch pad in Sriharikota. Its propulsion stages, overall hardware, aerodynamic design and new generation electronics, the separation system used for the first time performed very well.
- However after reaching an altitude of 356 kms there was a failure of logic to identify sensor failure and go for the salvage motion. Hence the launch vehicle developed an anomaly.
- The ISRO Chairman has said that a team of experts will go deeper to find out the reason for this isolation. He emphasised that after a small correction and revalidation, SSLV-D2 will be launched very soon.

Collective effort and cooperative federalism helped India emerge from Covid pandemic: PM Modi

- The Governing Council discussed the agenda items which included crop diversification and achieving self-sufficiency in oilseeds, pulses and agri-commodities, implementation of the National Education Policy and urban governance.
- In his closing remarks, the Prime Minister said that each state should focus on promoting its 3Ts, Trade, Tourism, Technology, through every Indian Mission around the world.
- This was the first physical meeting of the Governing Council since the onset of the pandemic, with the 2021 meeting held via video conferencing.
- The meeting was attended by 23 Chief Ministers, 3 Lieutenant Governors and 2 Administrators and Union Ministers. The meeting was moderated by Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh.

August 9

The PESA Act, and the background of the AAP's election promise in Gujarat

- The PESA Act was enacted in 1996 “to provide for the extension of the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution relating to the Panchayats to the Scheduled Areas”.
- Under the PESA Act, Scheduled Areas are those referred to in Article 244(1), which says that the provisions of the Fifth Schedule shall apply to the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in states other than Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram. The Fifth Schedule provides for a range of special provisions for these areas.
- The PESA Act was enacted to ensure self-governance through Gram Sabhas (village assemblies) for people living in the Scheduled Areas.
- It recognises the right of tribal communities, who are residents of the Scheduled Areas, to govern themselves through their own systems of self-government, and also acknowledges their traditional rights over natural resources.

Krishna, Godavari levels on the rise

- The Central Water Commission (CWC), based on a forecast by the India Meteorological Department, has indicated that water flow in the Godavari at Kanthanapally, the point after the Indravathi joins the main river course, could be about 6.25 lakh cusecs.
- The Indravathi, which contributes most to the Godavari after the Pranahitha, is in spate in Chhattisgarh, with the river flowing above the warning level of 539.5 metres at Jagdalpur and is forecast to cross the danger level of 540.8 metres.
- Authorities of the Water Resources Department (WRD) lifted all the 70 gates of the Prakasam Barrage and released 70,000 cusecs of water into the sea. This is the second time this season that the gates have been lifted. Nearly 82,161 cusecs of flood waters is reaching the barrage from the upper catchment areas.
- With contribution from the Manjira, Kaddam, Peddavagu and Pranahitha, the water flow at Polavaram is forecast to be over 6.55 lakh cusecs.

House panel bats for equality in guardianship

- The said Act does not provide for joint guardianship nor does it recognise the mother as the guardian of the minor legitimate child unless the father is deceased or is found unfit.

- The Act gives preference to father over mother, it goes against the right to equality and right against discrimination envisaged under Articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution.
- The committee feels that there is an urgent need to amend the HMGA and accord equal treatment to both mother and father as natural guardians.
- Section 6 of the HMGA lays down that in the case of a Hindu minor boy and a Hindu minor unmarried girl, the father is the natural guardian and 'after' him the mother. Section 7 of the same Act provides that the natural guardianship of an adopted son, who is a minor, passes on adoption to the adopted father and 'after' him to the adoptive mother.

This new govt portal will find your lost or stolen mobile phone

- This will be done by using the device's International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number.
- The International Mobile Equipment Identity or IMEI is a unique number that is used to identify a device on a mobile network. It has 15 digits, and is like your phone's unique identity.
- When you use the internet or place a call through your cellular service provider, then this number is used to verify the identity of your device.
- If you have a dual SIM phone, then you will have two IMEI numbers, one for each slot.

Electricity Amendment Bill 2022 introduced in Lok Sabha, sent to standing committee on energy examination

- In this Bill, Section 42 of the Electricity Act will be amended to allow 'non-discriminatory open access' to the distribution network, allowing private companies to supply electricity provided they get a license.
- Section 14 of the Electricity Act has also been proposed to be amended, allowing private companies to use distribution networks built by public sector electricity companies, enabling competition and enhancing the efficiency of power supply across the country.
- Under the Bill, consumers will be able to choose from multiple electricity providers, essentially like how they choose currently between telecom providers like Airtel, Vodafone, etc..

The big push for renewable energy in India

- Solar photovoltaics (PV) has driven India's push towards the adoption of cleaner energy generation technologies. From less than 10 MW in 2010, India has added significant PV capacity over the past decade, achieving over 50 GW by 2022.

- By 2030, India is targeting about 500 GW of renewable energy deployment, out of which ~280 GW is expected from solar PV. This necessitates the deployment of nearly 30 GW of solar capacity every year until 2030.
- However, there are challenges that need to be overcome for the sustainability of the PV economy. Indian solar deployment or installation companies depend heavily on imports, as India currently does not have enough module and cell manufacturing capacity.

August 10

Recalling 'Quit India', when ordinary Indians took to the streets with a vow to 'Do or Die'

- Mahatma Gandhi, who had told the Raj to "Quit India" on the previous day (August 8) was already in jail along with the entire Congress leadership, so when August 9 dawned, the people were on their own — out on the street, driven by the Mahatma's call of "Do or Die".
- This truly people-led movement was eventually crushed violently by the British, but by then it was clear that nothing short of their final departure was acceptable to India's masses.
- Reasons: While factors leading to such a movement had been building up, matters came to a head with the failure of the Cripps Mission. The failure of the Cripps Mission made Gandhi realise that freedom would come only if Indians fought tooth and nail for it.
- On August 8, 1942, Gandhi addressed the people in the Gowalia Tank maidan in Bombay (Mumbai).
- "The mantra is: 'Do or Die'. We shall either free India or die trying; we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery," Gandhi said.
- Aruna Asaf Ali hoisted the Tricolour on the ground.
- The Quit India movement had been officially announced.

Vasculitis : The Rare Disease That Left Actor Ashton Kutcher Unable To See, Hear And Walk

- Vasculitis is simply an inflammation of blood vessels.
- Inflammation is the natural response of the body's immune system to any injury or infection, which in normal course can help the body fight invading germs.
- However, in vasculitis, the body's immune system turns on healthy blood vessels, causing them to swell up and narrow down. The trigger for vasculitis

may be an infection or a drug, although the precise reason is often uncertain or unknown.

- Vasculitis can be only a minor problem affecting the skin, or it can be a serious condition that impacts the heart, kidneys or other vital organs.
- There are around 20 different disorders that are classified as vasculitis. Angiitis and Arteritis are used as synonyms for vasculitis.

Over 4300 Dinosaur Footprints Dating Back 150 Million Years Discovered in China

- The largest number of dinosaur footprint fossils located in northern China, these cover an area of 9,000 square metres. According to news reports, the footprints show four different dinosaur species, one of which might be undiscovered.
- The footprints belong to herbivores and carnivores dinosaurs; while the former could reach lengths of nearly 15 metres, the latter was four to five metres. Scientists believe the area may have attracted dinosaurs due to the availability of water and trees at the time.
- Preserved footprints, also known as ichnites, are trace fossils that have survived millions of years. These are found in earthen materials that were soft enough to form the foot impression and hard enough to retain it.
- Over time, the material dried, hardened, and was covered with layers of sediment, helping the impression become fossilised. In numerous instances, soil erosion is now bringing them to the surface.

AGM-88 HARM, the new anti-radar missile supplied to Ukraine by the US

- The statement, kind of, confirms Russian allegations that an American anti-radar missile, AGM-88 HARM, which is part of NATO's inventory, has been used in the theatre of conflict.
- The acronym 'HARM' in the AGM-88 HARM air-to-surface missile stands for High-Speed Anti-Radiation Missile.
- It is a tactical weapon fired from fighter aircraft, and has the capability to detect and home into radiation emitted by hostile radar stations that have surface-to-air detection capabilities.
- The missile was originally developed by the Dallas-headquartered Texas Instruments, but is now produced by the major American defence contractor Raytheon Corporation.

10 more Indian wetlands sites get Ramsar tag

- The 10 new sites — six in Tamil Nadu and one each in Goa, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha — encompass an area of 1,51,842.41 hectares, bringing India's total wetland area to 1.2 million hectares.
- The sites are Koothankulam Bird Sanctuary, Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve, Vembannur Wetland Complex, Vellode Bird Sanctuary, Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary and Udhayamarthandapuram Bird Sanctuary, all in Tamil Nadu, Satkosia Gorge in Odisha, Nanda Lake in Goa, Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary in Karnataka, and Sirpur Wetland in Madhya Pradesh.
- Until 2012, India had 26 Ramsar sites, with the last decade witnessing a meteoric rise. On July 26, Mr. Yadav announced that India had added five Ramsar sites.
- Ramsar wetlands now comprise around 10% of the total wetland area in the country.
- Being designated one, however, doesn't necessarily invite extra international funds but that States —and the Centre — must ensure that these tracts of land are conserved and spared from man-made encroachment. Acquiring this label also helps with a locale's tourism potential and its international visibility.

Parliament adjourned sine die four days ahead of schedule

- The Monsoon Session of Parliament, which commenced on 18th of last month, was scheduled to end on the 12th of this month.
- Rajya Sabha conducted business for 38 hours while it lost 47 hours due to disruptions during the session. the Question Hour could not be taken up on seven days. Only five Bills were considered and passed. the House took up a short duration discussion on the rising prices of essential items in the country.
- In the Lok Sabha, six bills were introduced and seven bills were passed during the session. 16 sittings were held and the House conducted business for more than 44 hours. The House also held two short duration discussions on the price rise and steps to promote sports in the country.

Govt. offers the use of Indigenous 5G Test Bed free of cost for startups

- The decision has been taken with an objective to boost 5G ecosystem within India and to achieve the objectives of Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India initiatives.
- The facility is available at a very nominal rate to all other stakeholders.
- Department of Telecommunications has urged all 5G stakeholders including industry, academia, service providers, government bodies and equipment manufacturers to utilise the 5G testbed facilities and expertise to test and facilitate the speedy development and deployment of their products in the network.

- Keeping in view India's specific requirements and to take lead in 5G deployment, Department of Telecommunications has approved financial grant for the multi-institute collaborative project to set up 'Indigenous 5G Test Bed' in India in March, 2018 with total cost of 224 crore rupees.

Indo-US Joint Special Forces Exercise 'Vajra Prahar 2022 begins in Himachal Pradesh

- The Vajra Prahar series of joint exercise aims to share best practices and experiences in areas such as joint mission planning and operational tactics as also to improve inter-operability between the Special Forces of both the Nations.
- This annual exercise is hosted alternatively between India and the United States. The 12th edition was conducted at Joint Base Lewis Mcchord, Washington (USA) in October last year.

PM Modi to dedicate 2G ethanol plant in Panipat to nation

- It is part of a long series of steps taken by the government over the years to boost production and usage of biofuels in the country.
- It is in line with the Prime Minister's constant endeavour to transform the energy sector into being more affordable, accessible, efficient and sustainable.
- The 2G Ethanol Plant has been built at an estimated cost of over nine hundred crore rupees by the Indian Oil Corporation Limited. The project will turn a new chapter in India's waste-to-wealth endeavours by utilising about two lakh tonnes of rice straw (parali) annually to generate around three crore litres of Ethanol per annum.
- The project will also contribute to a reduction of Greenhouse Gases equivalent to about three lakh tonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalent emissions per annum.

August 11

Additional protocol to Universal Postal Union constitution ratified

- The approval enables the Department of Posts, Government of India to have the "Instrument of Ratification" signed by the Hon'ble President of India and have the same deposited with the Director General of the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union.
- This would fulfil the obligations arising from Article 25 and 30 of the UPU Constitution which provides for ratification of the amendments to the

Constitution adopted by a Congress as soon as possible by the member countries.

- The Universal Postal Union (UPU) established by the Treaty of Bern of 1874, is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) that coordinates postal policies among member nations, in addition to the worldwide postal system. The UPU's headquarters are located in Bern, Switzerland.

To boost spending, Centre releases ₹ 1.16 lakh crore to States

- Coming soon after the expiry of the assured Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation to States from this July, economists expect the move to give the States twice the monthly share of net proceeds of Union taxes and duties for August to bolster their cash flows and nudge them into planning and executing capital expenditure (capex) outlays.
- The development assumes significance as some Chief Ministers raised concerns about their dwindling resources and sought more funds from the Centre through extension of the GST compensation period and a higher share in the divisible pool of taxes, at NITI Aayog's Governing Council meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 7.
- As against a "normal monthly devolution" of ₹ 58,332.86 crore, the Finance Ministry said ₹ 1,16,665.75 crore had been released "in line with the commitment of the Government of India to strengthen the hands of States to accelerate their capital and developmental expenditure".

DGCA opens doors for transgender pilots

- An ongoing hormone therapy will also not be a ground for disqualification.
- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) issued guidelines for aeromedical evaluation of transgender persons for obtaining medical clearance for all categories of pilot's licence — private pilot's licence, student pilot licence and commercial pilot licence.
- These say that candidates who have completed their hormone therapy and gender affirmation surgery more than five years ago will be declared medically fit provided they clear screening for mental health in accordance with the World Professional Association for Transgender Health.
- If transgender applicants have completed the treatment within the past five years, they will have to undergo a psychological and psychiatric evaluation apart from providing a detailed report from their treating endocrinologist as well as a report from the surgeon, if there has been a surgery within the past year.

Election Commission to host virtual meet of Asian Regional Forum

- This Regional Forum meet is precursor to the "Global Summit for Democracy" to be hosted by the National Electoral Institute of Mexico in the coming month.
- As part of this 'Global Summit for Democracy', five Regional Forums namely Africa, America, Asia, Europe, and countries of the Arab States have been created. India is hosting the Asian Regional Forum meet of the EMBs.
- The meet will have participation from Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of Mexico, Mauritius, Philippines, Nepal, Uzbekistan, Maldives and Representatives from International IDEA, Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB) and International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).
- As part of this 'Global Summit for Democracy', five Regional Forums namely Africa, America, Asia, Europe, and countries of the Arab States have been created. India is hosting the Asian Regional Forum meet of the EMBs.

Centre decides to remove fare cap on air tickets from August 31st

- The cap on airfares was imposed by the Civil Aviation Ministry in May, 2020.
- Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said, the decision has been taken after a careful analysis of daily demand and prices of air turbine fuel. He said, stabilisation has set in and the government is certain that the sector is poised for growth in domestic traffic in the near future.

Cabinet approves India-Australia pact to promote co-production of films

- Such agreements are Umbrella Agreements under which private, government agencies enter into contracts to produce films together.
- The proposed agreement will boost ties with Australia, lead to exchange of art and culture, showcase the soft power of our country and lead to generation of employment.
- India has so far signed 15 Audio Visual Co-production Treaties with foreign countries. Australia has emerged as a preferred destination for shooting of Indian films. India is fast emerging as a major content hub for film makers looking for new projects. India has abundance of exotic locations, talent pool, relatively cheaper cost of production and post production, making India a favoured destination of foreign film makers.

Cabinet approves continuation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U)

- Financial assistance is being provided for the completion of already sanctioned over 122 lakh houses till 31st March 2022.
- The scheme is one of the major flagship programmes being implemented by Central Government to provide all-weather pucca houses to all eligible beneficiaries in the urban areas of the country through States, Union Territories, and Central Nodal Agencies.

- The continuation of the scheme based on the request of States and UTs upto 31st December 2024 will help in completion of already sanctioned houses under Beneficiary Led Construction, Affordable Housing in Partnership, and In-situ Slum Redevelopment verticals.
- Central Assistance approved since 2015 is two lakh three thousand crore rupees against 20 thousand crore rupees in 2004-2014.

August 12

Russia using 'Butterfly Mines' in Ukraine says UK report

- The PFM-1 and PFM-1S are two kinds of anti-personnel landmines that are commonly referred to as 'Butterfly mines' or 'Green Parrots'.
- These names are derived from the shape and colour of the mines. The main difference between the PFM-1 and PFM-1S mine is that the latter comes with a self destruction mechanism which gets activated within one to 40 hours.
- The 'Butterfly mine' has earned a reputation for being particularly attractive to children because it looks like a coloured toy.
- It is very sensitive to touch and just the act of picking it up can set it off. Because of the relatively lesser explosive packed in this small mine, it often injures and maims the handler rather than killing them.
- These mines are also difficult to detect because they are made of plastic and can evade metal detectors.

Microsoft becomes first big tech firm to join ONDC

- ONDC is an initiative aimed at promoting open networks for all aspects of exchange of goods and services over digital or electronic networks.
- ONDC is to be based on open-sourced methodology, using open specifications and open network protocols independent of any specific platform.
- It is being developed as a counter to the current duopoly in the Indian e-commerce market which is largely dictated by Amazon and Walmart-owned Flipkart.

New 'Langya' virus identified in China

- The newly discovered virus is a "phylogenetically distinct Henipavirus". Henipaviruses are classified as biosafety level 4 (BSL4) pathogens. They can cause severe illness in animals and humans, and as of now there are no licensed drugs or vaccines meant for humans.

- The types of Henipaviruses that had been identified prior to this included Hendra, Nipah, Cedar, Mojiang and the Ghanaian bat virus. Langya, meanwhile, is known to cause fever.
- Langya's genome organization is "identical to that of other Henipaviruses", and that it is closely related to the "Mojiang Henipavirus, which was discovered in southern China".

Centre approves Corbevax as 'booster dose' for adults vaccinated with Covaxin or Covishield

- Corbevax will be available as precaution dose after the completion of six months from the date of administration of the second dose of either Covaxin or Covishield vaccines for a population above 18 years.
- Corbevax is a protein subunit COVID-19 vaccine developed by Texas Children's Hospital Center for Vaccine Development and Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas and Dynavax technologies based in Emeryville, California.
- It is licensed to Indian biopharmaceutical firm Biological E. Limited (BioE) for development and production.

Dharmendra Pradhan & Anurag Thakur address Yuva Samvad India@2047

- Around 400 youth including National Youth Awardees and Youth delegates, who have been sent by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to various countries to represent India as a part of International Youth delegations will participate in the event.
- This event will provide an opportunity to the participating youth to express their views on various issues of National and International importance.

One Year of Rice Fortification Programme; 6.83 LMT distributed by States/UTs in Phase II

- Nearly 6.83 LMT have been distributed by the States/UTs under the phase which started from April 1, 2022. And under ICDS and PM POSHAN, nearly 7.36 LMT have been lifted by the States/UTs so far. Around 52% of the districts have lifted the foodgrains in the Phase II.
- The Hon'ble PM in his address on the 75th Independence Day (15th August, 2021), announced the supply of Fortified Rice in every scheme of Government of India throughout the country by 2024 in a phased manner.
- Phase-I covering ICDS and PM POSHAN had been implemented during 2021-22 and nearly 17.51 LMT had been distributed in the States/UTs.
- Pertinently, Phase-II includes Phase I above plus all Aspirational Districts and High Burden districts (total 291 districts) under Targeted Public Distribution

System and Other Welfare Schemes in all the States/UTs by March, 2023 with a total quantity of about 175 LMT of fortified rice has to be distributed.

National Intellectual Property Awareness Mission (NIPAM) achieves target of training 1 million students on Intellectual Property (IP) awareness

- NIPAM, a flagship program to impart IP awareness and basic training, was launched on 8 Dec 2021 as a part of "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" celebrations.
- The program is being implemented by Intellectual Property Office, the Office of Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks (CGPDTM), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- During the period 08 December 2021 to 31st July 2022, the following milestones achieved:
 - of participants (students/faculty) trained on IP = 10, 05, 272
 - Educational institutes covered = 3662
 - Geographical coverage = 28 states and 7 Union Territories

August 13

New Evidence That Giant Asteroid Impacts Created the Continents

- The paper, 'Giant impacts and the origin and evolution of continents', was published in Nature on August 10.
- By examining tiny crystals of the mineral zircon in rocks from the Pilbara Craton in Western Australia, which represents Earth's best-preserved remnant of ancient crust, experts found evidence of these giant meteorite impacts.
- These impacts were prevalent during the first billion years or so of the planet's history.

PM lauds the efforts of Elephant conservationists on World Elephant Day

- It was conceived in 2011 by Canadian filmmakers Patricia Sims and Michael Clark of Canazwest Pictures, and Sivaporn Dardarananda, Secretary-General of the Elephant Reintroduction Foundation in Thailand.
- It was officially founded, supported and launched by Patricia Sims and the Elephant Reintroduction Foundation on August 12, 2012.
- There are three species of elephants — African Forest, African Savanna (bush), and Asian. The animals can be differentiated by their ears and trunks. African elephants are larger. Their ears are also larger and shaped like Africa.

Digitalisation of AYUSH sector: Ministry of AYUSH signs MoU with Ministry of Electronics and Information...

- The Ayush Grid project was initiated by the Ministry in 2018 for creating a comprehensive IT backbone for the entire sector.
- Digitalization of the entire Ayush Sector will lead to its transformation in fields of health care delivery at all levels, including research, education, various health programmes and drug regulations.

Government commences Basmati crop survey to estimate acreage, assess crop health, expected yield of Basmati rice during 2022-2023 crop year

- The survey is being executed under the Basmati Export Development Foundation (BEDF), which is an arm of APEDA. The final survey report is to be finalized by December this year.
- India has exported Basmati to the tune of close to USD 12 billion in the last three years.
- Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Kuwait, United Kingdom, Qatar and Oman have a share of close to 80 per cent in total shipments of aromatic long grained rice from India in 2021-22.

Retail inflation in India eases to 6.71% in July

- This is the seventh month in a row that the pace of price rise has been over the upper tolerance limit of 6% pursued by the central bank's monetary policy committee.
- While inflation in edible oils, meat and fish, and vegetables relented in July, price rise in fruits and eggs accelerated, and cereals inflation hit a multi-year high of 6.9%. Rural inflation eased from 7.09% in June to 6.8% in July, while urban consumers faced 6.49% inflation, from 6.86% in June.

Bengaluru woman goes to Delhi HC to stop friend's euthanasia trip to Europe

- Also known as myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME/CFS), Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, is a serious and debilitating disease that affects the nervous system, the immune system and the body's production of energy.
- Experts have suggested that the term can trivialize the severity of the illness. In a 2015 report, the US Institute of Medicine proposed the term systemic exertion intolerance disease (SEID).
- Its causes are still unknown. However, the potential triggers would include viral or bacterial infection, hormonal imbalances and genetic predispositions. There is no specific test for the disease, and doctors have to rely on medical examinations, blood and urine tests.

- ME/CFS can affect anyone, from children to adults of all ages. According to the CDC, it's more common in women and people between 40 and 60 years old.
- As of yet, there is no specific cure or approved treatment.

India's NATO Engagement

- Attended by senior officials, including from the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Defence, the idea was to ensure the dialogue was primarily political in character, and to avoid making any commitment on military or other bilateral cooperation.
- The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, or NATO, is a political and military alliance of 28 European countries and two countries in North America (United States and Canada).
- It was set up in 1949 by the US, Canada, and several western European nations to ensure their collective security against the Soviet Union. It was the US's first peacetime military alliance outside the western hemisphere.
- Thirty countries are currently members of NATO, which is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium. The headquarters of the Allied Command Operations is near Mons, also in Belgium.

Union Home and Cooperation Minister Shri Amit Shah addressed the National Conference of Rural Co-operative Banks in New Delhi

- Shri Amit Shah also presented awards to outstanding State Co-operative Banks, District Central Co-operative Banks and Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS).
- The Union Home and Cooperation Minister said there are about 8.5 lakh cooperative societies in the country, out of which there are 1.78 lakh different types of credit societies.
- In the field of agricultural credit, there are 34 state cooperative banks with more than 2,000 branches, 351 district cooperative banks with 14,000 branches and about 95,000 PACS.

August 14

Drought declared in parts of England

- Where has a drought been declared? Devon and Cornwall; Solent and South Downs; Kent and South London; Herts and North London; East Anglia; Thames; Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire; and East Midlands.
- What happens when a drought is declared?

- All water companies are required to have a drought plan in place setting out what restrictions they may put in place on their customers in the event of a drought.
- Water companies will implement these plans, which will include temporary water use restrictions such as hosepipe bans to reduce the demand for water.
- They can also apply for drought orders and permits which legally allow more flexibility in managing water resources including abstracting more water from rivers, reservoirs or aquifers.

Five years after Supreme Court's triple talaq verdict, petitioners living life as 'half-divorcees'

- Technically still married, practically divorced, they enjoy no conjugal rights nor receive any regular maintenance from the estranged husbands. Practically abandoned, the women cannot remarry in the absence of a legally valid divorce. After the verdict, none of the men were visited by law enforcement bodies and told to take back their wives.
- Further, no arrests could be made for giving instant triple talaq as the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019 came into force long after pronouncement of instant talaq.
- A cloud of confusion hangs in the air as the women are uncertain of their eligibility for a fresh marriage. The top court invalidated instant triple talaq in the Shayara Bano versus the Union of India case while refraining from commenting on the state of their marriages directly.

Drought is looming over Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand & Bihar

- Between June 1 and August 12, the rainfall recorded over Jharkhand was 371.9mm against a normal of 627.6mm, a 41 per cent seasonal deficit.
- This is the lowest ever rainfall recorded over Jharkhand (June to August) since 1901, the IMD's rainfall data stated.
- For Uttar Pradesh, too, the picture is grim, as the state has recorded only 251.7mm of the seasonal average of 449.1mm till August 12.
- UP is the most rain deficient Indian state this year and has remained so since the start of the monsoon season, like Jharkhand.
- Between 1901 and 2021, UP's driest monsoon months (June to August) were during 1987 (349.3mm), 2009 (365mm), 1996 (392mm), 2014 (394.3mm), and 1972 (424.3mm).

Divide between social media companies over a self regulatory body

- Social Media Companies have opposed an industry proposal to create such a body.
- They have flagged concerns over the potential inability to legally challenge any final content moderation decisions of a self-governing body, in addition to the difference in the moderation policies of different platforms.
- Social media companies, along with industry body Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), are currently chalking up the contours of a self-regulatory mechanism.
- This is in response to the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY)'s proposal to set up "government-appointed committees" to address complaints raised by users about social media companies' content-moderation decisions.

Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment Dr. Virendra Kumar launches "SMILE" scheme

- The Initiative aims to make cities, towns and municipal areas begging-free and make a strategy for comprehensive rehabilitation of the persons engaged in the act of begging through the coordinated action of various stakeholders.
- The Ministry has allocated a total budget of a hundred crore rupees for the project till 2025-26.
- Through the project, the Ministry envisions developing a support mechanism for holistic rehabilitation of those engaged in the act of begging and building an India where no person is forced to beg in order to survive and fulfill their basic needs.
- The Ministry highlighted that under the initiative seventy-five Municipal Corporations in collaboration with Non-Government Organisations and other stakeholders will cover several comprehensive welfare measures for persons who are engaged in the act of begging.

Government to bring model by-laws to govern all farm cooperatives

- He said, the sick and defunct PACS should be revived or taken for liquidation.
- Mr Shah was addressing a national conference on rural cooperative banks organised by the Ministry of Cooperation and the National Federation of State Cooperative Banks (NAFSCOB) at Vignan Bhavan in New Delhi.
- Describing the PACS as pillars of the cooperative movement, Mr Shah called for strengthening of the PACS by diversifying them into various other activities.
- Mr Shah stressed the need to establish more than 2 lakh new PACS across the country to achieve the target of providing agri-finance worth 10 lakh crore rupees through cooperatives.

11 more Indian wetlands have got Ramsar recognition

- Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change said, the 11 new sites include, four in Tamil Nadu, three in Odisha, two in Jammu and Kashmir and one each in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.
- India is one of the Contracting Parties to Ramsar Convention, signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971.
- India signed it on 1st February 1982. During 1982 to 2013, a total of 26 sites were added to the list of Ramsar sites, however, during 2014 to 2022, the country has added 49 new wetlands to the list of Ramsar sites.
- Tamil Nadu has maximum number of Ramsar sites which is 14, followed by Uttar Pradesh which has 10 numbers of Ramsar sites.

India unveils first Saline Water Lantern using sea water to power specially designed LED lamps

- The Minister visited the SAGAR ANVESHKA, a Coastal Research Vessel, operated and used by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai to review the progress of the implementation of the Deep Ocean Mission of India.
- The saline Water Lantern will bring “Ease of Living” to the fishing community living along the 7500 Kilometres long coastal line of India. Saline water-powered Roshini LED lamps will also boost and supplement Prime Minister Narendra Modi's UJALA scheme.
- Jitendra Singh hoisted tricolour on board the ship and extended the campaign of 'Har Ghar Tiranga', to 'Har Jahaj Tiranga'.

August 16

PM Modi's 'Panch Pran' to make India a developed nation in next 25 years

- He spelled out "Panch Pran" (five resolves) to fulfil freedom fighters' dreams for the country at India's independence centenary by 2047.
- He said we should focus on the five pledges -- a resolve of developed India; removing any trace of the colonial mindset; taking pride in our legacy; our strength of unity; and fulfilling the duties of citizens with honesty, which should be done by the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers as well.

ZAPORIZHZHIA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

- Experts have repeatedly raised an alarm over the plant being in an active combat zone. The International Atomic Energy Agency has underlined that the current situation poses a grave risk of a nuclear catastrophe.

- Located in southern Ukraine on the banks of Kakhovka reservoir on the Dniipro river, Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Plant is Europe's largest, and 10th biggest in the world. Before the war started, it produced half of Ukraine's power with a total capacity of 5,700 MW. The plant has six reactors with a capacity of 950 MW each.
- Geographically, the plant is located 200-km from Russia-annexed Crimea, and 500-odd km from Ukraine's capital Kyiv.

Tension between Nicaragua and the Catholic Church

- Nicaragua is the largest country in the Central American isthmus, bordered by Honduras to the northwest, the Caribbean to the east, Costa Rica to the south, and the Pacific Ocean to the southwest.
- Managua is the country's capital and largest city.
- As of 2015, it was estimated to be the second largest city in Central America.

Women heroes of India's freedom struggle, mentioned by PM in his I-Day speech

- Rani Laxmibai: The queen of the princely state of Jhansi, Rani Laxmibai is known for her role in the First War of India's Independence in 1857.
- Jhalkari Bai: A soldier in Rani Laxmibai's women's army, Durga Dal, she rose to become one of the queen's most trusted advisers.
- Durga Bhabhi: A member of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, she helped Bhagat Singh escape in disguise from Lahore after the 1928 killing of British police officer John P Saunders.
- Rani Gaidinliu: Born in 1915 in present-day Manipur, Rani Gaidinliu was a Naga spiritual and political leader who fought the British. She joined the Heraka religious movement which later became a movement to drive out the British.

DigiYatra soft-launched at Delhi Airport

- DigiYatra, the passenger processing system based on facial recognition technology, has been piloted at the Delhi airport and has had the required infrastructure set up at the airport's Terminal 3.
- DigiYatra envisages that travellers pass through various checkpoints at the airport through paperless and contactless processing, using facial features to establish their identity, which would be linked to the boarding pass.

India-made howitzer gun 'ATAG' used for 21 gun salute

- Developed by the DRDO, the Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS) was used alongside the traditional British-origin '25 Pounders' artillery guns.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi also referred to the gun while speaking about the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative of the Centre during his Independence Day speech.
- The ATAGS is an indigenous 155 mm x 52 calibre howitzer gun developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) with its Pune-based facility Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) being the nodal agency.
- The ATAGS project was started in 2013 by DRDO to replace older guns in service in the Indian Army with a modern 155 mm artillery gun.
- Howitzers is an umbrella term for a category of long-range artillery guns.

Independence Day 2022: Postal Service's PIN Code Turns 50

- According to the Department of Posts, there were 23,344 post offices, primarily in urban areas, in India at the time of Independence. But, the country was growing rapidly and the postal network had to keep pace.
- The PIN code was meant to ease the process of mail sorting and delivery in a country where different places, often, have the same or similar names, and letters are written in a wide variety of languages.
- The PIN is made up of six digits. The first number indicates the postal region — Northern, Eastern, Western, Southern; and number 9, which signifies the Army Postal Service.
- The second number denotes a sub-region, and the third represents the sorting district. The remaining numbers narrow the geography further to the specific post office making the delivery.

Partition Horrors Remembrance Day

- The commemoration was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on this date last year. This date also marks Pakistan's independence day.
- The Partition is acknowledged as one of the most violent and abrupt displacements in the recent history of the world.
- Estimates of the numbers of those killed vary; according to the official document, it could be between 500,000 to over a million, but "the generally accepted figure stands at around 500,000".

Johnson & Johnson Ends Worldwide Sale of Talc-Based Baby Powder

- The announcement came amidst the tens of thousands of lawsuits from women who claim that the product caused them to have ovarian cancer, due to the alleged contamination of asbestos, a known carcinogen.
- Talc is the softest known mineral and is mined from underground deposits. Chemically, it is hydrous magnesium silicate, according to the US Food & Drug

Administration (FDA), and is used in a variety of cosmetic and personal care products, like baby powder, lipstick, eyeshadow and foundation.

- When reduced to a fine powder, it is able to absorb moisture and reduce friction which keeps the skin dry, helps prevent rashes, stops makeup from caking and generally helps improve the feel and texture of a product.
- Asbestos, the name for another group of naturally occurring silicate minerals, can also be found near talc deposits.
- There is the potential for contamination of talc with asbestos. Asbestos has been used in construction and manufacturing, and is known to cause lung cancer, ovarian cancer, mesothelioma and other health conditions.

August 17

Corneas bioengineered from pig collagen can restore sight, study finds

- The implant was used to successfully restore the vision of 20 people in India and Iran, most of whom were blind due to keratoconus, a disease that leads to thinning of the cornea. The findings were published in the journal Nature Biotechnology on August 11.
- Researchers claim that there is a severe shortage of corneas, with only one available for 70 patients.
- As a substitute for human corneas, the researchers utilised medical-grade collagen derived from pig skin, a byproduct of the food industry that is already used in medical devices for glaucoma surgery.
- This is not only cheaper and easier to access than donated corneas, but requires a less invasive procedure and can be stored for a significantly longer period — up to two years, the study notes.

India contributes four lakh US dollars to Voluntary Trust Funds for support United Nations Human Rights

- India's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, Geneva in a tweet said that the contribution reflects India's commitment in this regard.
- The four Trust Funds to which contribution has been made include the Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation, the Voluntary Fund for financial and technical assistance for the implementation of Universal Periodic Review, and the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to support the participation of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDs) in the work of the council.

On August 16, Navroz or the Parsi New Year is being celebrated.

- It is the most widely celebrated festival of the Parsi community.
- This is seen as a harbinger of peace and prosperity. In Mumbai and its suburbs, which host a considerable population of Parsi community, the festival is celebrated with grand lunch and dinner with the best and finest variety of Parsi cuisine.
- Parsis see this festival as the great occasion to get together, eat and mingle.
- On this day, the Parsis visit the Agyaris or the fire temples to offer prayers. They feed the poor on this day, as the new year has to start on a good note. President Droupadi Murmu, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar have greeted the people on the occasion.

Indian flag unfurled 30 kilometers above earth by Space Kidz India

- The flag was sent to an altitude of 1 lakh 6 thousand feet above the planet on a balloon that unfurled it.
- The event was part of the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav slogan and under the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to celebrate the historic anniversary.
- Space Kidz India is an organization creating 'young scientists for the country and spreading awareness among children for a borderless world.'
- The organization recently launched a satellite into Low Earth Orbit. AzadiSAT was developed by 750 girl students from across India to mark the 75 years of Independence.

NHA announces performance-based fund allocation to states UTs for strengthening registries of healthcare professionals

- This performance-based fund allocation will help in structured implementation of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission.
- CEO of National Health Authority Dr RS Sharma said, the benefits of digital health services can be further extended to masses with the enthusiastic support from the States and UTs in registering more healthcare professionals and health facilities.
- He said, States and UTs support will help in building national-level registries of healthcare professionals and health facilities. Five hundred crore rupees had been demarcated for setting up of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission's offices at State and UTs by the financial year 2025-26.

Indian Bureau of Mines to create individual portal for Mines

- The Ministry highlighted that two data layers of the portal have been created so far.
- The first layer covers the spatial data of Mineral concessions and the second layer includes mineral auction blocks.
- It said that spatial data of around over three thousand mining leases covering over two lakh ninety-seven thousand Hectare area all over the country have been uploaded on the portal.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh hands over several indigenous defence equipment to Indian Army

- Future Infantry Soldier, new generation anti-personnel mine, upgraded sights system for tanks, high mobility Infantry Protected Vehicles and Assault Boats are among the state-of-the-art equipment's.
- The equipment/systems have been jointly developed by Indian Army in collaboration with Defence Research and Development Organisation and the Industry, in line with the Prime Minister's vision to modernise the Armed Forces, under the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan'.

Dharmendra Pradhan urges citizens to participate in National Curriculum Framework survey

- He said, a dynamic National Curriculum Framework in line with the National Education Policy- 2020 will play a major role in achieving the goal of Viksit Bharat.
- Ministry of Education has invited suggestions of the public through an online public consultation survey for the formulation of National Curriculum Framework and subsequently design of syllabus, textbooks and other instructional materials.
- The Government has announced the National Education Policy in July 2020, which recommends quality improvement of the system of education through the development of a National Curriculum Framework.
- The process of the Framework has been started through the constitution of the District Consultation Committees, State Focus Groups, and State Steering Committee, National Focus Groups and National Steering Committee.

August 18

Earth's Early Magma Oceans Detected in 3.7 Billion Year-Old Greenland Rocks

- In an article published in the journal Nature Astronomy on August 15, scientists from Japan suggest that water and organic materials might have been brought to our planet from the outer edges of the solar system.
- The scientists made the hypothesis after analysing samples from the asteroid Ryugu, collected by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's (JAXA) Hayabusa-2 probe, which had brought 5.4 grams of rocks and dust from the asteroid to Earth in December 2020.
- The Hayabusa-2 mission was launched in December 2014 when the spacecraft was sent on a six-year voyage to study the asteroid Ryugu.

PM Modi gives 'Panch Pran' call to make India developed country by 2047; speaks against corruption, nepotism

- NTPC is steadily lowering its carbon footprint by reducing greenhouse gas emissions through the installation of renewable energy projects in its existing stations as well as putting up green field RE projects.
- The Company has planned 262 MW floating solar on over 1300 acres of its reservoir area by installing over 9,50,000 PV modules at its various stations out of which 242 Mega Watt has been commissioned.
- This includes the country's largest floating solar of 100 MW at Ramagundam in Telangana, 92 MW at Kayamkulam in Kerala, and 25 MW each at Simhadri, Andhra Pradesh, and Kawas in Gujarat.

NTPC augments its solar footprint and achieves 69454 MW of installed capacity

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Namaste is a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) as a joint initiative of the MoSJE and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

- Zero fatalities in sanitation work in India
- All sanitation work is performed by skilled workers
- No sanitation workers come in direct contact with human faecal matter
- Sanitation workers are collectivized into SHGs and are empowered to run sanitation enterprises
- All Sewer and Septic tank sanitation workers (SSWs) have access to alternative livelihoods
- Strengthened supervisory and monitoring systems at national, state and ULB levels to ensure enforcement and monitoring of safe sanitation work
- Increased awareness amongst sanitation services seekers (individuals and institutions) to seek services from registered and skilled sanitation workers

Ministry of Coal Signs 16 Agreements with Successful Bidders of Coal Mines

- He was addressing a function in which the Ministry of Coal has executed agreements with the successful bidders for 16 coal mines under sale of coal of 13th tranche, 14th tranche and second attempt of 12th tranche.
- The Minister said that during the last four months Coal India Ltd has set new record by producing around 207 million ton coal. Ministry of coal is targeting production of 900 million ton this financial year and the target of CIL comes to 700 million ton.

Cabinet approves Interest subvention of 1.5% per annum on Short Term Agriculture Loan upto Rupees Three lakh

- Thus, Interest Subvention of 1.5% will be provided to lending institutions (Public Sector Banks, Private Sector Bank, Small Finance Banks, Regional Rural Banks, Cooperative Banks and Computerized PACS directly ceded with commercial banks) for the financial year 2022-23 to 2024-25 for lending short term agri-loans upto Rs 3 lakh to the farmers.
- This increase in Interest Subvention support requires additional budgetary provisions of Rs 34,856 crore for the period of 2022-23 to 2024-25 under the scheme.
- Increase in Interest Subvention will ensure sustainability of credit flow in the agriculture sector as well as ensure financial health and viability of the lending institutions especially Regional Rural Banks & Cooperative Banks, ensuring adequate agriculture credit in rural economy.

Centre Approves Limit of Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme(ECLGS) to 5 Lakh Crore

- ECLGS is a continuing scheme. The additional amount of Rs. 50,000 crore would be made applicable to enterprises in hospitality and related sectors till validity of the scheme which is 31.3.2023.
- ECLGS is an already operational scheme and on account of the disruptions caused by the COVID 19 pandemic on hospitality and related sectors, Government has specifically earmarked an amount of Rs. 50,000 crore for enterprises in these sectors.
- The enhancement is expected to provide much needed relief to enterprises in these sectors by incentivizing lending institutions to provide additional credit of up to Rs. 50,000 crore at low cost, thereby enabling these business enterprises to meet their operational liabilities and continue their businesses.
- Loans of about Rs. 3.67 Lakh crore have been sanctioned under ECLGS till 5.8.2022.

Cabinet approves widening access of the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) database to users

- The opening up of the TKDL is also envisaged to inculcate thought and knowledge leadership through Bharatiya Gnana Parampara, under the New Education Policy 2020.
- The Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) is a prior art database of Indian traditional knowledge established in 2001, jointly by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Department of Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy (ISM&H, now Ministry of AYUSH).
- The TKDL is a first of its kind globally and has been serving as an exemplary model to other nations. The TKDL currently contains information from existing literature related to ISM such as Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa and Yoga.
- The information is documented in a digitized format in five international languages which are English, German, French, Japanese and Spanish.

August 19

The first case of a dog being infected with monkeypox via humans

- Following the news, the United States public health agency, the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention, has updated its prevention recommendations on infected persons having pets at home.

- The infected dog showed symptoms such as lesions on the skin, specifically “mucocutaneous lesions, including abdomen pustules and a thin anal ulceration”.
- It is unclear right now if dogs can further spread the disease to other dogs or humans.

West Nile virus reported in two people in New York City

- West Nile Virus (WNV) can cause neurological disease and death in people. WNV is commonly found in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, North America and West Asia.
- WNV is maintained in nature in a cycle involving transmission between birds and mosquitoes. Humans, horses and other mammals can be infected.
- West Nile Virus (WNV) is a member of the flavivirus genus and belongs to the Japanese encephalitis antigenic complex of the family Flaviviridae.

Mudhol hounds to be a part of Prime Minister's security

- The dogs already serve with the Indian armed forces and some paramilitary forces and could become the first indigenous breed to be part of the SPG.
- The Mudhol hounds are believed to have been bred first by Raja Malojirao Ghorpade of the erstwhile Deccan kingdom of Mudhol.
- Known for their hunting and guarding skills, the characteristically lanky Mudhol hounds get their name from the erstwhile kingdom of Mudhol (in present-day Bagalkot), whose rulers first began to breed them. The dogs are fast runners, with excellent stamina and agility, and have a sharp vision and a keen sense of smell.

Scientists are planning to 'resurrect' the extinct Tasmanian Tiger

- The ambitious project aims to reintroduce the animal to its native place Tasmania to revive the region's lost ecological balance.
- Tasmanian Tiger (*Thylacinus cynocephalus*), the only animal in the Thylacinidae family to survive in modern times, was a marsupial mammal that raises young ones in a pouch.
- Even though the species earned its nickname Tasmanian Tiger because of the stripes along its back, it was a slow-paced carnivorous that usually hunted alone or in pairs at night.
- The sharply clawed animal had a dog-like head and ate kangaroos, other marsupials, small rodents, and birds.
- Once widespread in the grass and woodlands of continental Australia extending north to New Guinea and south to Tasmania, the animal's fate changed after the European Colonisation of Australia.

- The animals were reported to have eaten poultry of farmers, and were killed following official authorisation.

Megalodon: A giant transoceanic predator that lived 23 million to 2.6 million years ago

- According to the new study published in the journal Science Advances, the Megalodon could “completely ingest, and in as few as five bites,” a prey as big as the killer whale.
- According to the study, the Megalodon was bigger than a school bus at around 50 feet from nose to tail. In comparison, the great white sharks of the present can grow to a maximum length of around 15 feet.
- Using their digital model, the researchers have suggested that the giant transoceanic predator would have weighed around 70 tonnes — or as much as 10 elephants.
- Megalodons roamed the oceans an estimated 23 million to 2.6 million years ago.

Employees' State Insurance to expand its services in all 744 districts by December

- Announcing this at the Employees' State Insurance Corporation's Chintan Shivir at Surajkund in Haryana, Labour and Employment Minister Bhupender Yadav said, this expansion will take into consideration the increased beneficiary base, post implementation of Social Security Code.
- Yadav said, Centers of Excellence for Occupational Health will be set up to promote indigenous research on occupational diseases in India.
- He informed that Employees' State Insurance will explore developing Health Facilities and Medical Colleges in Aspirational districts of the country.

Aqua Bazar Online Marketplace App for Fish Farmers Launched by Fisheries Minister

- On this occasion, he also launched an online marketplace feature - 'Aqua Bazar' app.
- The app will help the fish farmers and stakeholders to source the inputs such as fish seed, feed and medicines and services required for fish culture. It will connect various stakeholders involved in aquaculture sector.
- He said, for the first time under the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, government has taken up promotion of startups by the entrepreneurs to achieve the targeted fish production.

Govt prepares draft Indian Ports Bill, 2022 to consolidate, amend the laws relating to ports

- The draft bill seeks to repeal and replace the existing the Indian Ports Act, 1908. Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has issued Draft Indian Ports Bill, 2022 for Stakeholder Consultation.
- The proposed bill will homogenize and streamline the development of the maritime sector, along with, promoting ease of doing business by eliminating unnecessary delays, disagreements and defining responsibilities.
- It will incorporate State Maritime Boards in the national framework.
- India has a 7,500 kilometre long coastline, 14,500 kilometer of potentially navigable waterways and strategic location on key international maritime trade routes.
- About 95 per cent of India's trade by volume and 65 per cent by value is done through maritime transport facilitated by ports.

PM Modi To Address "Har Ghar Jal Utsav" In Goa Virtually

- Goa is the first State to achieve 100 per cent Har Ghar Jal certification.
- Goa has become the first Har Ghar Jal certified State and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu are the first Union Territory in the country.
- In this state and UT, people from all the villages have declared their village as Har Ghar Jal through a resolution passed by the Gram Sabha.
- All two lakh 63 thousand rural households of Goa and over 85 thousand of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu have access to safe drinking water through tap connection.

August 20

FTA provisions to prevail in case of conflict over Rules of Origin on imported goods: CBIC

- The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs said customs field officers should be sensitive to applying CAROTAR and maintain consistency with the provisions of relevant trade agreement or its Rules of Origin.
- Customs (Administration of Rules of Origin under Trade Agreements) or CAROTAR Rules, came into effect from September 21, 2020.
- It empowers officers to seek further information from an importer, consistent with the trade agreement, in case the officer has reasons to believe that the country-of-origin criteria have not been met. Where the importer fails to provide

the requisite information, the officer can make further verification consistent with the trade agreement.

Uttar Pradesh eyes to develop 16,000 MW renewable energy capacity by 2027

- The policy was released by the Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA).
- The government has proposed to meet the ambitious 16,000 MW target by generating 4,000 MW from solar rooftop projects, 2,000 MW from distributed solar generation and the rest (10,000 MW) from utility/grid scale solar projects and solar parks.
- Under the proposed policy, the government would develop 20 solar cities covering 10 lakh households with rooftop installations. The draft also proposes rooftop solar installations in government buildings and in 21,000 unelectrified primary schools.

Under Indo-Russian joint venture, production of AK-203 rifles to begin by year-end at Amethi

- The production was originally scheduled to begin early this year. As per the contract, over 6.1 lakh AK-203 assault rifles costing over ₹ 5,000 crore will be manufactured by a Joint Venture, Indo-Russian Rifles Private Ltd (IRRPL), at Korwa, Amethi in Uttar Pradesh.
- IRRPL was set up jointly between erstwhile OFB [now Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited (AWEIL) and Munitions India Limited (MIL)] of India and Rosoboronexport (RoE) and concern Kalashnikov of Russia.
- As per contractual terms, first 70,000 AK-203 rifles will be produced in India with a phased increase in the extent of localisation from 5% to 70%. The remaining rifles will be produced with 100% localisation.

Indian team deliberating on ocean diversity pact

- The agreement follows a resolution by the UN General Assembly in May and is expected to be the final in a series set in motion since 2018 to draft an international legally binding instrument under the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
- The high seas comprise nearly 45% of the Earth's surface.
- A key aspect of the agreement is deciding on the rights of companies that undertake exploration for biological resources in the high seas.
- Last June, the Union Cabinet approved a 'Blue Economy' policy for India, a nearly ₹ 4,000-crore programme spread over five years. This among other things will develop a manned submersible vessel as well as work on "bio-prospecting of deep-sea flora and fauna including microbes".

119-year-old Curzon Gate in Bengal is at centre of political firestorm

- Of all the Viceroys of India, Curzon is possibly the most criticised — he is the man who partitioned Bengal in 1905, and triggered a wave of Bengali nationalism that contributed to the wider Indian national movement.
- He was also one of the more openly imperialist of viceroys, and a man who saw Britain's rule over India as critical to the survival of empire. In 1900, Curzon famously stated, "We could lose all our [white settlement] dominions and still survive, but if we lost India, our sun would sink to its setting."
- He served as Under-Secretary of State for India (1891-1892), and for Foreign Affairs (1895-1898), before being appointed Viceroy of India in 1899.
- Curzon created a separate Muslim majority province of the North-West Frontier Province, sent a British expedition to Tibet, established a separate police service, and established the Archaeological Survey of India, in order to study and protect historical monuments.

India, Thailand reviewed defence, trade ties: Ministry of External Affairs on Jaishankar's Bangkok visit

- The Devasthan is the Royal Brahmin Office of the Thai Royal Court and is the official centre of Hinduism in Thailand.
- India and the Southeast Asia region share a long history of cultural and commercial relations.
- The classical Sanskrit and Pali texts from India carry references of the region using various names such as Kathakosha, Suvarnabhumi (the land of god) or Suvarnadvipa (the golden island), indicating that this was a region that attracted Indian merchants.
- In more recent times, European and Indian scholars have referred to Southeast Asia as 'Farther India', 'Greater India', or 'Hinduised or Indianised states'.
- The Ramayana — known in Thailand as Ramakriti (the glory of Rama) or Ramakien (the account of Rama) — has provided an outlet of cultural expression in Thailand for both the elite and the common man. Episodes from the epic are painted on the walls of Buddhist temples and enacted in dramas and ballets.

Indian Air Force contingent to participate in Exercise Pitch Black in Australia

- The exercise is being held in Darwin till the 8th of next month.
- This is a biennial, multi-national exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force.
- The Defence Ministry said that the exercise will see the participation of over one hundred aircraft and two thousand 500 military personnel from various air forces.

The 17th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas 2023 will be held at Indore in January next year.

- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated every year on 9th January to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community in the development of India.
- It also commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India on 9th January 1915.

August 21

How will FIFA suspension impact Indian football?

- FIFA is an international governing body of association football, beach football and futsal.
- It was founded in 1904 to oversee international competition among the national associations of Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.
- Headquartered in Zürich, Switzerland, its membership now comprises 211 national associations; Russia was suspended in 2022.
- These national associations must each also be members of one of the six regional confederations into which the world is divided: Africa, Asia, Europe, North & Central America and the Caribbean, Oceania and South America.

Rohingya refugees in Delhi to be shifted to EWS flats and get police protection

- The Minister said “India respects & follows the UN Refugee Convention 1951 & provides refuge to all, regardless of their race, religion or creed.”
- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) under Amit Shah issued a clarification saying that no such direction had been given to provide EWS flats to “Rohingya illegal foreigners”.
- India is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol.
- All foreign undocumented nationals are governed as per the provisions of The Foreigners Act, 1946, The Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, The Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 and The Citizenship Act, 1955.

Merseyside park transformed with huge 'Mandala' artwork

- Mandala patterns are a centuries-old motif that are used to depict the cosmos, and have been adapted by artists the world over, each of whom have added their own interpretation and painted it as their own.

- Literally meaning “circle” or “centre” in Sanskrit, mandala is defined by a geometric configuration that usually incorporates the circular shape in some form. While it can also be created in the shape of a square, a mandala pattern is essentially interconnected.
- It is believed to be rooted in Buddhism, appearing in the first century BC in India. Over the next couple centuries, Buddhist missionaries travelling along the silk road took it to other regions.
- By the sixth century, mandalas have been recorded in China, Korea, Japan, Indonesia and Tibet. In Hinduism, the mandala imagery first appeared in Rig Veda (1500 – 500 BCE).

Himachal Pradesh CM Jai Ram Thakur expresses concern over heavy loss due to torrential rains

- Excessive or continuous rainfall over a period of days, or during particular seasons can lead to stagnation of water and cause flooding.
- Flash floods refer to such a situation, but occurring in a much shorter span of time.
- For instance, the US’s meteorological agency, the National Weather Service, says flash floods are caused when rainfall creates flooding in less than 6 hours.
- It adds that flash floods can also be caused by factors apart from rainfall, like when water goes beyond the levels of a dam.

UN to end travel ban exemptions for 13 Taliban officials

- Under a 2011 UN Security Council resolution, 135 Taliban officials are subject to sanctions that include asset freezes and travel bans.
- In June this year, the 15-member UN Security Council's Afghanistan Sanctions Committee removed two Taliban education ministers from the exemption list over the regime's curtailment of women's rights. At the same time, they renewed the exemption for the others till yesterday.
- China and Russia have called for an extension, while the United States has sought a reduced list of the officials allowed to travel.

Union government awards GI tag to Mithila Makhana

- Mithila Makhana or Makhan (botanical name: Euryale ferox Salisb.) is a special variety of aquatic fox nut cultivated in Mithila region of Bihar and Nepal.
- Once a product gets this tag, any person or company cannot sell a similar item under that name. This tag is valid for a period of 10 years following which it can be renewed.
- Makhana is the one of the three prestigious cultural identity of Mithila. Pan, Makhan and Machh (fish) are the three prestigious cultural identity of Mithila.

- In Mithila, Makhana is also termed as Makhan. It is also very famous in Kojagara festival of Maithil Brahmins celebrated for newly married couples.
- Makhana contains protein and fiber, along with micronutrients like calcium, magnesium, iron, and phosphorus.

Himachal Pradesh: 10th National Conference of Women Police to begin in Shimla

- More than two hundred women police officers and employees across the country are participating in this two-day National conference.
- The conference is being organised by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD) in collaboration with Himachal Police.
- The main objective of this conference is to enhance the leadership potential of women police officers and discuss their problems and challenges.
- State Director General of Police Sanjay Kundu said, at present the strength of women in the police force in Himachal is 13 percent and the women quota in the police has been increased to 25 percent.

Maharashtra govt to take Rs 4000 cr loan from Asian Development Bank

- Maharashtra govt to take Rs 4000 cr loan from Asian Development Bank to set up medical colleges in 12 districts
- There are 12 districts in the state without a single medical college. These districts include Jalgaon, Satara, Alibaug, Sindhudurg, Usmanabad, Parbhani, Amravati, Ratnagiri, Gadchiroli, Bhandara and Ambernath.
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank established on 19 December 1966, which is headquartered in the Ortigas Center located in the city of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines.

Ocean sailing expedition on insv tarini to mauritius

- Covering a distance of almost 2500nm (approx 4500 km) one way, the crew, over a period of 20 - 21 days is expected to face extreme weather and rough sea conditions of monsoons.
- In addition to sailing in these conditions the crew will also be undertaking boat upkeep, machinery routines and preparing their meals. The passage would be nonstop once they leave the Indian shores.
- The Indian Navy has six ocean going Indian Naval Sailing Vessels (INSVs) viz Mhadei, Tarini, Bulbul, Hariyal, Kadalpura and Neelkanth in her inventory.

August 22

At least 21 killed in Himachal Pradesh rain havoc

- A cloudburst is a localised but intense rainfall activity. Short spells of very heavy rainfall over a small geographical area can cause widespread destruction, especially in hilly regions where this phenomenon is the most common.
- Not all instances of very heavy rainfall, however, are cloudbursts. A cloudburst has a very specific definition: Rainfall of 10 cm or more in an hour over a roughly 10 km x 10-km area is classified as a cloudburst event. By this definition, 5 cm of rainfall in a half- hour period over the same area would also be categorized as a cloudburst.

'forever chemicals' that are contaminating rainwater globally

- PFAs are man-made chemicals used to make non-stick cookware, water-repellent clothing, stain-resistant fabrics, cosmetics, firefighting forms and many other products that resist grease, water and oil.
- PFAs can migrate to the soil, water and air during their production and use. Since most PFAs do not break down, they remain in the environment for long periods of time. Some of these PFAs can build up in people and animals if they are repeatedly exposed to the chemicals.
- Variety of health risks are attributed to PFA exposure including decreased fertility, developmental effects in children, interference with body hormones, increased cholesterol levels and increased risk of some cancers.

Union Home Minister inaugurated the National Security Strategies Conference 2022 in New Delhi

- It is conceptualized and managed by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) at the Central Fingerprint Bureau (CFPB) in New Delhi.
- NAFIS project is a country-wide searchable database of crime- and criminal-related fingerprints.
- The web-based application functions as a central information repository by consolidating fingerprint data from all states and Union Territories.
- According to a 2020 report by the NCRB, it enables law enforcement agencies to upload, trace, and retrieve data from the database in real time on a 24×7 basis.
- In April 2022, Madhya Pradesh became the first state in the country to identify a deceased person through NAFIS.

Govt clarifies there is no plan to levy any charges for UPI services

- In a series of tweets, Finance Ministry said, UPI is a digital public good with immense convenience for the public and productivity gains for the economy. The clarification came amid some reports that there may be possibility of UPI transactions charge.
- The Ministry said, the concerns of the service providers for cost recovery have to be met through other means.
- It said, the government had provided financial support for the Digital Payment ecosystem last year and has announced the same, this year as well to encourage further adoption of Digital Payments and promotion of payment platforms that are economical and user-friendly.

Jaishankar unveils bust of Mahatma Gandhi in Paraguay

- Paraguay is a landlocked country in South America. It is bordered by Argentina to the south and southwest, Brazil to the east and northeast, and Bolivia to the northwest.
- It is a founding member of Mercosur, the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Lima Group.
- Asunción is the capital and the largest city of Paraguay.

Delhi Police in RTI reply: 80% match in facial recognition is deemed positive ID

- Facial recognition is an algorithm-based technology which creates a digital map of the face by identifying and mapping an individual's facial features, which it then matches against the database to which it has access.
- It can be used for two purposes: firstly, 1:1 verification of identity wherein the facial map is obtained for the purpose of matching it against the person's photograph on a database to authenticate their identity. For example, 1:1 verification is used to unlock phones. However, increasingly it is being used to provide access to any benefits or government schemes.
- Secondly, there is the 1:n identification of identity wherein the facial map is obtained from a photograph or video and then matched against the entire database to identify the person in the photograph or video. Law enforcement agencies such as the Delhi Police usually procure FRT for 1:n identification.
- The use of FRT presents two issues: issues related to misidentification due to inaccuracy of the technology and issues related to mass surveillance due to misuse of the technology.

Non-fungible tokens (NFTs) also took a hit as a result of the crypto fallout.

- NFTs are digital assets whose ownership is verified through transaction records stored on blockchains. Art work, digital avatars and accessorised monkeys are some of the most commonly traded NFTs.

- OpenSea is said to be one of the largest NFT marketplaces in existence. Earlier this year, the platform was valued at over \$13 billion after raising around \$300 million in venture capital.
- By August 2022, based on Ethereum blockchain data, OpenSea was used by two million traders who transacted at least once on the network.

Singapore to repeal colonial-era law against gay sex

- Inherited from the British colonial era, Section 377A of Singapore's penal code penalises sex between men with up to two years in jail.
- Gay rights campaigners have long said the law runs afoul of the affluent city-state's increasingly modern and vibrant culture, and had mounted two unsuccessful legal challenges.
- However, the repeal of the Section 377A stops short of full marriage equality.

Grameen Udyami Project launched in Ranchi for tribal skill development

- Grameen Udyami is a unique multiskilling project, funded by NSDC that aims to train 450 tribal students in Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand.
- The project is being implemented in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Gujarat.
- This concept was crystallized by Minister of Tribal Affairs and tribal MPs.

August 23

'Tomato flu' detected among children in India, says Lancet

- The “non-life-threatening” virus was first identified in Kollam district of Kerala on May 6.
- The primary symptoms of tomato flu are similar to those of chikungunya, which include high fever, rashes, and intense pain in the joints. As with other viral infections, further symptoms include fatigue, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, dehydration, swelling of joints, body aches, and common influenza-like symptoms, which are similar to those manifested in dengue.
- As tomato flu is similar to chikungunya and dengue as well as hand, foot, and mouth disease, the treatment is also similar — isolation, rest, plenty of fluids, and hot water sponge for the relief of irritation and rashes.
- Supportive therapy of paracetamol for fever and body ache and other symptomatic treatments may be required. Young children are also prone to this infection through the use of nappies, touching unclean surfaces, and putting things directly into the mouth.

- The 'tomato flu' is caused by Coxsackie virus A 16. It belongs to Enterovirus family.

'Kerala Savari', India's first online taxi service as a public option

- It is operated by the Motor Workers Welfare Board under the aegis of the Labour Department.
- Kerala Savari only charges an 8% service charge in addition to the rate set by the government.
- Of the 8% service charge, 6% will go to the technical partner, and the remaining 2% will go to the implementation of this scheme and for providing promotional incentives to passengers and drivers.
- Kerala Savari is a safe and reliable online service for women, children, and senior citizens.
- A police clearance certificate is mandatory for drivers joining the scheme apart from the required proper training.

New Excise Policy to generate revenue, ensure ease of doing biz: Delhi govt

- This has forced the government to scrap it with effect from August 1, 2022
- Under the new policy, the number of liquor vends in Delhi would have increased from around 630 to 850 — all privately owned and operated. One person could hold more than one liquor retail licence and the "heavily regulated" excise regime was to be eased for business.
- The revamped excise policy ran into controversy as private liquor vends were opening up across the capital. Many of these vends were sealed by the MCD for various violations related to non-conforming areas where certain businesses such as liquor retail are not allowed.

Supreme Court terminates CoA's mandate to run All India Football Federation

- The All India Football Federation (AIFF) is the governing body of football in India under jurisdiction of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India.
- Formed in 1935 founded at Darbhanga, the federation was one of the founding members of the Asian Football Confederation, the overseer of football in Asia.
- The federation is also responsible for managing the India national football team, as well as the women's team and the various youth national sides.
- The federation is currently based in Delhi.

Govt Launches 'Rashtriya Puruskar Portal' To Bring Awards Of Various Ministries Under One Platform

- Home Ministry in a statement said that this common portal facilitates every citizen or organization to nominate individuals or organizations for various awards instituted by the government. It informed that the nominations or recommendations for the Padma Awards are open till 15th of next month, while nominations or recommendations for Jeevan Raksha Padak will be invited till 30th of next month.

IREDA signs MoU with MAHAPREIT to provide loans for Green Energy projects

- In accordance with the MoU, IREDA will offer financing facilities to MAHAPREIT for the Renewable Energy projects to be implemented for state utilities, local bodies and the infrastructure of Renewable Energy Parks.
- Under this collaboration, IREDA will also undertake Techno-Financial due diligence of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency & Conservation projects for MAHAPREIT.
- IREDA established a specialised Business Development and Consultancy division two years ago to meet the growing demand in the RE sector. This is the ninth MoU inked by IREDA in the last two years to provide consultation services for the sustainable development of the country.
- SJVN, NHPC, TANGEDCO, NEEPCO, BVFCL, THDCIL, GSL, and CIPET have signed MoUs with IREDA to enhance their techno-financial expertise for green energy projects and IREDA has already started work on most of the MoUs.
- Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) is formed in 1987 as a statutory and autonomous organisation under Government of India and administratively controlled by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

India likely to get its first digital rupee by end of this year

- In her Budget speech on February 1, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said that the central bank would launch the CBDC in the financial year 2022-23.
- According to the RBI, "CBDC is the legal tender issued by a central bank in a digital form. It is the same as a fiat currency and is exchangeable one-to-one with the fiat currency. Only its form is different."
- The digital fiat currency or CBDC can be transacted using wallets backed by blockchain.
- Though the concept of CBDCs was directly inspired by Bitcoin, it is different from decentralised virtual currencies and crypto assets, which are not issued by the state and lack the 'legal tender' status.

Who was Pandurang Khankhoje, Ghadarite revolutionary and a hero of Mexico

- Khankhoje had a close connection with Mexico, the country in which he sought refuge due to his association with the radical pro-Indian independence Ghadar Party.
- Born in Wardha, Maharashtra, in the late 19th century, Pandurang Khankhoje came in contact with other revolutionaries early on.
- Khankhoje was one of the founding members of the Ghadar Party, established by Indians living abroad in 1914, mostly belonging to Punjab. Its aim was to lead a revolutionary fight against the British in India.
- The Mexican Revolution of 1910 had led to the overthrow of the dictatorial regime, and this inspired Khankhoje.

Anna Mani, one of India's 1st female scientists

- Anna Mani (1918 – 2001) was an Indian physicist and meteorologist.
- She retired as the Deputy Director General of the Indian Meteorological Department and further served as a visiting professor at the Raman Research Institute.
- She made several contributions to the field of meteorological instrumentation, conducted research and published numerous papers on solar radiation, ozone and wind energy measurements.

August 24

Three IAF officers sacked for BrahMos accidental firing into Pakistan

- The missile landed 124 km inside Pakistan, following which the IAF ordered a CoI headed by an Air Vice-Marshal, a two-star officer, to investigate the incident.
- A day after the incident, the Pakistan military said the supersonic surface-to-surface missile flying at three times the speed of sound at 40,000 feet ended up 124 km inside Pakistan, damaging some civilian property.
- BrahMos is a joint venture between the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Russia-based NPO Mashinostroyeniya and the missile derives its name from the Brahmaputra and Moskva rivers.

With eye on defaulters, Centre tweaks overseas investment rules

- With an eye on wilful defaulters, the new rules stipulate that any Indian resident who has an account appearing as a non-performing asset; or is classified as a wilful defaulter by any bank; or is under investigation by a

financial service regulator or by investigative agencies in India, will have to seek an no objection certificate before making any overseas financial commitment.

- Any resident in India acquiring equity capital in a foreign entity or overseas direct investment (ODI), will have to submit an Annual Performance Report (APR) for each foreign entity, every year by December 31.
- No such reporting shall be required where a person resident in India is holding less than 10% of the equity capital without control in the foreign entity and there is no other financial commitment other than equity capital or a foreign entity is under liquidation.

Stunning Jupiter images shown by NASA's James Webb telescope

- The photographs published have captured a new view of the planet, presenting in detail its massive storms, colourful auroras, faint rings and two small moons — Amalthea and Adrastea.
- Jupiter's famous Great Red Spot, a storm so big that it could swallow Earth, appeared bright white in the image, since it was reflecting a lot of sunlight, the space agency stated.
- NASA's \$10 billion James Webb Telescope was developed with the assistance of the European Space Agency and the Canadian Space Agency.
- It was launched to space on December 25, 2021 and is currently observing from Lagrange point 2, approximately 1.5 million km beyond Earth's orbit around the Sun. The telescope released its first image on July 11 2022.

SC declares retrospective use of benami law unconstitutional

- In a decision much awaited by businesses, a three-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana, declared as unconstitutional Sections 3(2) and 5 introduced through the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2016. The 2016 law amended the original Benami Act of 1988, expanding it to 72 Sections from a mere nine.
- Section 3(2) mandates three years of imprisonment for those who had entered into benami transactions between September 5, 1988 and October 25, 2016. That is, a person can be sent behind bars for a benami transaction entered into 28 years before the Section even came into existence.
- Justice Ramana, who wrote the 96-page judgment, held that the provision violated Article 20(1) of the Constitution. Article 20(1) mandates that no person should be convicted of an offence, which was not in force "at the time of the commission of the act charged as an offence".
- Section 5 of the 2016 Amendment Act said that "any property, which is subject matter of benami transaction, shall be liable to be confiscated by the Central Government". The court held that this provision cannot be applied retrospectively.

India-China dispute casts gloom over space project

- Scientists at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru, were among nine groups selected from 42 applicants in 2019 as part of a UN-led initiative that invites research teams from all over the world to compete for an opportunity to design payloads that will be shuttled to Tiangong aboard rockets of the Chinese Manned Space Agency.
- The project, called Spectrographic Investigation of Nebular Gas (SING), also involves collaboration with the Institute of Astronomy, Russian Academy of Sciences, and has been designed and developed by research students at the IIA. The plan is to have it ready by the year-end so that it can be launched in the summer of 2023.
- Though the plan is on schedule, scientists at the IIA are now consulting with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the External Affairs Ministry whether they are in the clear to go ahead with the project.

DRDO & Indian Navy successfully flight-test Vertical Launch Short Range Surface-to-Air Missile off Odisha coast

- The VL-SRSAM, a ship-borne weapon system, is meant for neutralising various aerial threats at close ranges, including sea-skimming targets, and was last test-fired in June.
- The flight test was carried out from an Indian naval ship against a high-speed unmanned aerial target for demonstration of vertical launch capability. The missiles, equipped with indigenous Radio Frequency (RF) seeker, intercepted the target with high accuracy.
- During the test launch, flight path and vehicle performance parameters were monitored using flight data captured by various range instruments, the statement said.

Union Minister for Commerce and Industry releases Booklets and Documents on Future Ready Commerce

- It comprised of fourteen volume Restructuring Dossier of 'Department of Commerce which has been created to facilitate transition.
- The restructuring programme for Department of Commerce has been undertaken with the key objective to equip the ecosystem to achieve two trillion dollar export target by 2030. Under it a dedicated Trade Promotion Body will also be set up to drive overall promotion strategy.
- He said, the 14 volumes defines the role of each section within the department and lays down the expected outcomes and key performance indicators.

- The restructuring exercise rests on five major objectives including to increase India's share in global trade, assume leadership position in multilateral organisations like WTO and democratisation of trade.

India to work towards unlocking trade potential with Central Asia through Chabahar Port

- Sonowal reviewed the progress in the work on the terminal and handed over six mobile harbour cranes “to improve efficiency”.
- The Chabahar plan had three main objectives — to build India’s first offshore port; to circumvent trade through Pakistan; and to find an alternative land route to Afghanistan.
- A fourth strategy has also emerged wherein the government hopes to provide Central Asia with an alternate route to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
- The development of the Shahid Beheshti terminal in Chabahar has hit geopolitical road-block after road-block; the biggest issue being Iran’s relationship with western countries, especially the U.S.

August 25

Wind project addition to peak by 2024, says report

- As part of its transition away from fossil fuels, India has committed to sourcing half its electricity in 2030 from non-fossil fuel sources and installing 60 gigawatt (GW, or 1000 MW) of wind power by 2022.
- So far, only 40 GW of wind power capacity has been established.
- Wind industry installations have been slowing down in India since 2017. Only 1.45 GW of wind projects were installed in 2021 with many delayed due to the second wave of COVID-19 and supply chain-related disruptions.
- To compensate, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) granted a blanket timeline extension for seven-and-a-half months after the scheduled commissioning date (SCD) for projects with power purchase agreements (PPAs) signed before June 2021, which pushed the SCD of 0.7 GW projects to 2022.

Expand food security coverage to benefit more needy persons, SC tells Centre

- The coverage under the NFSA is still decided by the population figures of the 2011 census.
- The SC ordered the Union government to re-determine the NFSA coverage in the States and Union Territories after considering the population increase between

2011 and 2021 so that benefits were not restricted to beneficiaries identified back in 2011.

- “The right to food is a fundamental right available under Article 21 of the Constitution,” the Supreme Court noted.

e-Shram portal

- In the order, the court directed the States which were not able to register unorganised workers, including migrant labourers, in the e-Shram portal to do so within six weeks.
- The Union Labour Ministry has developed a National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) portal and the e-Shram portal for registration of labourers spread over 400 occupations including in constructions, agriculture, fishing, and dairy, those self-employed and even ASHA and anganwadi workers.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to leave for Tashkent to attend SCO meet

- The SCO defence ministerial meeting is taking place around three weeks ahead of the annual summit of the SCO scheduled for September 15-16 in Samarkand.
- The SCO is an influential economic and security bloc and has emerged as one of the largest transregional international organisations.
- India and Pakistan became its permanent members in 2017.
- The SCO was founded at a summit in Shanghai in 2001 by the presidents of Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- India has shown a keen interest in deepening its security-related cooperation with the SCO and its Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS), which specifically deals with issues relating to security and defence.

The Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2022

- changes in certain definitions like “enterprise”, “relevant product market”, “Group”, “Control”, etc., to provide clarity;
- broadening the scope of anti-competitive agreements and inclusion of a party facilitating an anti-competitive horizontal agreement under such agreements;
- provisions for reduction of time-limit for approval of combinations from two hundred and ten days to one hundred and fifty days and forming a prima facie opinion by the Commission within twenty days for expeditious approval of combinations;
- provisions for “value of transaction” as another criteria for notifying combinations to the Commission;
- limitation period of three years for filing information on anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominant position before the Commission;

- appointment of the Director General by the Commission with the prior approval of the Central Government;

Researchers want Odisha's Angul to plan transition to green energy

- Angul currently accounts for 12% of India's and 56% of Odisha's coal production.
- The coal production in Angul is expected to increase nearly by three times in the next 10 years, reaching over 300 million metric tonnes (MMT) by 2033.
- The sector has given direct employment to 1,68,000 — nearly 69% of them are informal.

The Supreme Court verdict on PMLA, and why petitioners have sought a review

- In Vijay Madanlal Choudhary & Ors v Union of India, a judgment delivered on July 27, the Supreme Court upheld the key provisions of the PMLA.
- The SC accepted the government's arguments on virtually every aspect that was challenged by the petitioners: from reversing the presumption of innocence while granting bail to passing the amendments as a Money Bill under the Finance Act to defining the contours of the powers of the Enforcement Directorate (ED).
- A ruling by the Supreme Court is final and binding. However, Article 137 of the Constitution grants the SC the power to review its judgments or orders.
- A review petition must be filed within 30 days of pronouncement of the judgment.

Swiggy's moonlighting policy that allows staff to take up gigs beyond regular job

- Moonlighting is the act of working at an extra job beyond regular working hours, usually without the knowledge of the employer. Since the side job was mostly at nighttime or on weekends, it was referred to as moonlighting.
- The term gained popularity when workers in the US started seeking a second job beyond their regular 9-to-5 work for additional income.
- Moonlighting as an issue has been controversial, and seemingly commenting on the new Swiggy policy, Wipro chairman Rishad Premji tweeted on August 22, "There is a lot of chatter about people moonlighting in the tech industry. This is cheating – plain and simple."

Govt invites applications for National Gopal Ratna Awards -2022

- The last date for the submission of applications is 15th of next month. The awards will be conferred on the occasion of National Milk Day, 26th November.

- The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying is making all efforts to provide sustainable livelihood to the farmers. The Rashtriya Gokul Mission was launched in December 2014 for the first time in the country, with a view to conserve and develops indigenous bovine breeds in a scientific manner.

E-passports set to be rolled out by January next year

- He said an e-chip and a few more features will be added to the passport book which will provide security upgradation of the Indian passport and enable machine reading.
- Stating that the interests of diaspora are important, the secretary said several steps are being taken to facilitate Indian citizens who are migrating to work in other countries and providing legal support.
- He said 87 billion dollars have been remitted to India by diaspora last year, compared to the 83 billion dollars in the previous year.
- Sayeed said maximum number of Immigration clearances are being given in Telangana.
- Referring to immigration processes, he said 15 more countries have been identified for signing Migration and Mobility Agreements while the agreement with 12 countries is currently in force.

Retired CJIs to get rent-free bungalow for six months

- A notification issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice said the accommodation would be other than the designated official residence.
- The amended Rules added that a retired Chief Justice and Judges of the Supreme Court shall be entitled to a chauffeur, a secretarial assistant and round-the-clock security cover, in addition to his or her personal security guard for a period of a year from the date of retirement.
- Further, the amended Rules mandated that a retired Chief Justice and judges should be extended, as per protocol, courtesies at ceremonial lounges at airports.
- The government has amended the original Supreme Court Judges Rules of 1959 in exercise of powers conferred on it under the Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act, 1958.
- A 2013 decision of the Supreme Court had taken a serious view of former Ministers, MPs and even retired Judges and government servants overstaying in bungalows beyond the allotted period.

August 26

Centre extends GAGAN compliance for Boeing 787 planes till Dec 2025

- The GPS-aided GEO augmented navigation (GAGAN) is an implementation of a regional satellite-based augmentation system (SBAS) by the Government of India.
- GAGAN helps aircraft with guided landing at airports that do not have an instrument landing system.
- It is a system to improve the accuracy of a GNSS receiver by providing reference signals.

India, Bangladesh discuss Ganga, Teesta and Koshiyara in Joint River Commission meeting

- The JRC meeting discussed the whole gamut of the issues related to the common rivers between the two countries, especially the Ganga, Teesta, Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Gumti, Dharla, Dudkhkumar and Koshiyara,” said an official statement issued by Dhaka after the talks.
- Bangladesh side requested for conclusion of the long-pending Teesta Waters Sharing Treaty at an early date. The Indian side assured of their utmost efforts in concluding the agreement.
- Teesta River is a 414 km long river that rises in the Pauhunri Mountain of eastern Himalayas, flows through the Indian states of Sikkim and West Bengal through Bangladesh and enters the Bay of Bengal.

India receives largest share of UK study, work, and visit visas

- As per the data, 1,17,965 students received student visas in the year ending June 2022, up 215% from 2019.
- India has displaced China to become the country with the highest number of sponsored study visas in the U.K. for the first time since the year ending June 2011. Indian and Chinese nationals get just under half of all sponsored study visas.
- Indians received 1,02,981 work visas in the year ending June 2022, an 80% increase compared to the year ending December 2019, just before the pandemic began. Nigeria, the Philippines, Zimbabwe and the United States followed India (in that order) for work visas.
- Forty-six percent of worker (formerly, ‘skilled worker’) visas went to Indians.

‘Arth Ganga’, govt’s new model for the river’s sustainable development

- PM Modi first introduced the concept during the first National Ganga Council meeting in Kanpur in 2019, where he urged for a shift from Namami Gange, the Union Government's flagship project to clean the Ganga, to the model of Arth Ganga.
- The latter focuses on the sustainable development of the Ganga and its surrounding areas, by focusing on economic activities related to the river.
- At its core, the Arth Ganga model seeks to use economics to bridge people with the river.
- **Do You Know?** Since 1991, the Stockholm International Water Institute has been organising the World Water Week every year to address global water concerns.

'Loose' garments, hosiery no more under provision of rules for packaged commodities

- The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution said that the amendment exempts the garment or hosiery industry selling in loose or open from 6 declarations required under the legal metrology (packaged commodities) rules, 2011.
- The notification issued is for ease of doing business by reducing compliance burden to industries without compromising the interest of consumers by declaring the information relevant to consumers.

Government notifies Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022

- New rules will replace Batteries (Management and Handling) Rules, 2001.
- The rules cover all types of batteries, viz. Electric Vehicle batteries, portable batteries, automotive batteries and industrial batteries.
- The rules function based on the concept of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) where the producers (including importers) of batteries are responsible for collection and recycling of waste batteries and use of recovered materials from wastes into new batteries.
- The rules will enable setting up a mechanism and centralized online portal for exchange of EPR certificates between producers and recyclers/refurbishers to fulfil the obligations of producers.
- The rules promote setting up of new industries and entrepreneurship in collection and recycling/refurbishment of waste batteries.
- Prescribing the use of certain amount of recycled materials in making of new batteries will reduce the dependency on new raw materials and save natural resources.
- On the principle of Polluter Pays Principle, environmental compensation will be imposed for non-fulfilment of Extended Producer Responsibility targets, responsibilities and obligations set out in the rules.

- The funds collected under environmental compensation shall be utilised in collection and refurbishing or recycling of uncollected and non-recycled waste batteries.

Newly identified gene could be clue to treatment of fungal infection in immuno-compromised patients

- The gene called CSA6 has been identified in Candida albicans a fungal species infamous for causing high rates of morbidity and mortality under certain immuno-compromised conditions such as AIDS or during cancer treatment.
- The fungal species residing in mucosal linings of the gastrointestinal and urogenital tract of healthy individuals turns into a pathogen under immuno-compromised conditions breaching the host defense causing superficial as well as life-threatening systemic infection.

August 27

What next for Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren amid disqualification buzz

- The case against him has its roots in a mining lease that he gave himself as a Minister for Mines in 2021. The BJP complained to the Governor on February 11, 2022, that this act was in violation of Section 9(A) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- On August 25, the ECI wrote to the Governor that Mr. Soren could be disqualified under Section 9(A). The awarding of a mining lease to himself was a brazen act of self-service, misuse of office and breach of people's trust.

Section 9A in The Representation of the People Act, 1951

- Section 9A in The Representation of the People Act, 1951 deals with Disqualification for Government contracts, etc.
- It says that "A person shall be disqualified if, and for so long as, there subsists a contract entered into by him in the course of his trade or business with the appropriate Government for the supply of goods to, or for the execution of any works undertaken by, that Government."

CBI records conviction rate of 67.56% in 2021

- The CBI registered 680 regular cases and 67 preliminary enquiries last year, while it had registered 589 regular cases and 87 preliminary enquiries in 2020.

- Last year, court judgments were received in 360 cases, which included 202 convictions, 82 acquittals and 15 of discharge from allegations. In 61 matters, cases were disposed of on other reasons. At the end of the year, a total of 10,232 cases were pending in various courts.
- In 2021, investigations were pending in 982 cases, whereas the figure stood at 1,117 the previous year. The probe was finalised in 798 regular cases and 86 preliminary inquiries last year.
- Of the total cases instituted last year, 457 pertained to various charges under the Prevention of Corruption Act. They involved 549 public servants, of whom 221 were gazetted officers.
- As per the report, 102 cases were registered for demand of bribe by public servants for showing favour and 40 for possession of disproportionate assets. Of the 747 cases, — 133 were taken up on court directions and 37 on references from State governments and Union Territories.
- The CBI said that in 2021-end, 177 cases were pending for grant of sanction for prosecution under Prevention of Corruption Act.

World Bank panel mulls investigation into complaints against Vishnugadh hydropower project

- The 444-MW VPHEP is being built by the Tehri Hydropower Development Corporation (THDC), a partially State-owned enterprise. The project is primarily funded by the World Bank and was sanctioned in 2011. It is proposed to be completed in June 2023.
- About 40% of the funds for the \$792 million project (₹ 64,000 crore approx.) has already been disbursed.
- Residents in their complaint have said muck dumping from the dam threatens the local Lakshmi Narayan Temple, which is deemed to be of historical and cultural importance by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

India, Tanzania to set up task force to prepare five-year 'future road map' on defence cooperation

- This was agreed at the bilateral meeting between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Tanzanian Minister of Defence.
- Tanzania is a country in East Africa within the African Great Lakes region.
- It borders Uganda to the north; Kenya to the northeast; Comoro Islands and the Indian Ocean to the east; Mozambique and Malawi to the south; Zambia to the southwest; and Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west.
- Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain, is in northeastern Tanzania.
- Three of Africa's Great Lakes are partly within Tanzania. To the north and west lie Lake Victoria, Africa's largest lake, and Lake Tanganyika, the continent's

deepest lake, known for its unique species of fish. To the south lies Lake Malawi.

Achieving net zero emissions target can boost India's GDP, says report

- This was stated by a report commissioned by the High-level Policy Commission on Getting Asia to Net Zero. This could create as many as 15 million new jobs by 2047.
- The Getting India to Net Zero report, as it is called, contains new research and modelling, and finds that policies to initiate the clean energy transition will be crucial in determining when India achieves net zero emissions and how much it could benefit from it.
- Positive economic impacts are driven in part by an improved trade balance amounting to \$236 billion due to reduced demand for fossil fuels.
- Ending new coal as soon as possible by 2023 and transitioning from unabated coal power by 2040 would be particularly impactful to get India to net zero emissions sooner.
- By reaching net zero by 2050, India could boost annual GDP by as much as 7.3% (\$470 billion), and create nearly 20 million additional jobs by 2032, compared with current policies.
- Net zero emissions by 2070 would require an economy-wide investment of \$10.1 trillion from now; 2050 calls for \$13.5 trillion, the research finds.

Army accelerates procurement of light tank 'Zorawar' for LAC

- In addition to the light tank, the Army will induct niche technologies such as loitering munitions, anti-drone capabilities and next generation Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities.
- The recent experiences along the northern borders have shown that armour equipment profile is one of the most prominent factors in defining the operational capability of land forces.

Maharashtra's first Divyang Park to come up in Nagpur soon

- Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has provided all possible support to establish the first "Divyang Park" of Maharashtra in Nagpur and the work towards this endeavor will be started soon.
- "Divyang Park" will have different kind of facilities for Divyangjans like sensory garden, textile Pathway touch and smell garden, skill training facility, rehabilitation facility, Sports & infotainment etc.

August 28

Lifetime chauffeurs, domestic help for retired CJIs, Supreme Court judges

- Retired CJIs would also get secretarial assistants. The staff would be paid the salary and allowances of regular employees of the Supreme Court.
- The first series of amendments in the Rules on August 23 had allowed retired Chief Justices of India and Supreme Court judges chauffeurs, secretarial assistants and security cover only for a year. There was no mention of “domestic help”, who would be an employee in the level of junior court assistant.
- The benefit of 24-hour security cover has been extended to five years for retired Chief Justices and three years for retired judges of the Supreme Court. The judiciary had recently raised concerns about attacks on judges.
- Besides, former CJIs and retired judges of the top court can get their monthly mobile phone and Internet bills reimbursed to the extent of ₹ 4,200.
- A retired CJI is also entitled to a rent-free Type VII accommodation, other than the designated official residence, in New Delhi for six months immediately after retirement.
- The notification issued by the Law Ministry however said these post-retirement benefits would be available only if the retirees were not getting similar facilities from any High Court or government body.

Nepal has put on hold Gorkhas recruitment under India's Agnipath scheme

- The decision to postpone these rallies has been taken by the Nepalese government as it is of the opinion that this new form of entry into the Indian military is not covered under the Tripartite Agreement signed between Nepal, Indian and UK governments in 1947, soon after Indian independence.
- As per the terms of this agreement four regiments of Gorkha soldiers – 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th – were transferred to the British Army while the rest – 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 8th and 9th – remained with the Indian Army.
- A new Gorkha Regiment, the 11th Gorkha Rifles, was raised by India soon after Independence.
- The agreement also provides for the terms and conditions of the Nepal-domiciled Gorkha soldiers in the Indian Army and for their post-retirement benefits and pensions.

Moderna sues Pfizer/BioNTech for patent infringement over COVID vaccine

- Just a decade old, Moderna, based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, had been an innovator in the messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccine technology that enabled unprecedented speed in developing the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The Moderna and Pfizer vaccines use the same technology, based on messenger RNA, or mRNA. Such vaccines make use of the messenger RNA molecules that tell the body's cells what proteins to build.
- mRNA enters cells shortly after vaccination and instructs them to create a SARS-CoV-2 spike protein, prompting the immune response.

Chhattisgarh's forest 'by mistake'

- The Union Ministry of Environment has objected to the transfer of thousands of hectares of land without following due process by Chhattisgarh from its Forest to the Revenue Department for setting up industries and for building road, rail, and other infrastructure.
- While the Chhattisgarh government has described these areas as non-forest land that were earlier given “by mistake” to the Forest Department, the Environment Ministry has warned that the land in question is “undemarcated protected forests”, which cannot be used for non-forest purposes without clearance under the Forest Conservation (FC) Act, 1980.
- Broadly, state Forest Departments have jurisdiction over two types of forests notified under the Indian Forest (IF) Act, 1927: Reserve Forests (RF), where no rights are allowed unless specified; and Protected Forests (PF), where no rights are barred unless specified. Certain forests, such as village or nagarpalika forests, are managed by state Revenue Departments.
- The FC Act, 1980, applies to all kinds of forests, whether under the control of the Forest or the Revenue Department, and it requires statutory clearance before forests can be used for any non-forest purpose such as industry, mining, or construction. In 1976, forests were included in List III (Concurrent List) under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.

California government to ban ICE cars by 2035

- The rule would kick in with a 35 per cent limit on new passenger vehicle sales to be “zero emission” (or Battery Electric Vehicles) by 2026, which then goes up to 68 percent by 2030, and 100 per cent in 2035.
- California, besides being the biggest US state, is one of the largest markets for car sales in the world. So, California's position on new car sales is extremely important.
- India has a target of meeting at least 65 per cent of all new vehicle sales to be electric by 2030.
- Progress has been patchy though, with 6.38 lakh EVs registered in India since 2012 – less than 1 per cent of the total vehicle count.

- What is encouraging is that over 15 states have issued or adopted EV policies so far.

FM Nirmala Sitharaman says Indian Economy will grow at 7.4% this fiscal and next year

- She said, International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have projected India's growth to be the fastest for the next two fiscal years, and their estimates are in sync with that of the Reserve Bank of India.
- On the issue of freebies, Ms Sitharaman said there is a need for a rigorous debate on the freebies side.
- She stressed that political parties making pre-poll promises should make budgetary provisions for taking care of the expenditures and not push the burden on other entities.

Indian Naval Ship Sumedha visits Port Klang in Malaysia

- Port Klang is a town and the main gateway by sea into Malaysia. Known during colonial times as Port Swettenham but renamed Port Klang in July 1972, it is the largest port in the country.
- INS Sumedha is an indigenously built Naval Offshore Patrol Vessel deployed for multiple roles independently and in support of Fleet Operations.

Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Participates in Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar Campaign at Puducherry

- "Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar/Clean Coast, Safe Sea" Campaign, is a 75-day citizen-led initiative, aimed at improving the coastal and ocean health via community action.
- The campaign began on July 5, 2022, and will culminate on 17th September 2022 - International Coastal Clean-up Day.
- The three strategic underlying objective of the Campaign is to alter and save the environment through behaviour change. The campaign's three overarching goals are:
 - Consume Responsibly,
 - Separate waste at home, and
 - Dispose of waste responsibly.
- The campaign is spearheaded by Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) in partnership of Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Indian Coast Guard, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), other central ministries/organisation and other social organizations and educational institutions.

- The coastal clean-up campaign is being taken at 75 beaches along the coast line of with average 75 volunteers for every kilometre of coastline.

Ministry of Culture celebrates the successful inscription of 'Durga Puja in Kolkata' on the Representative List of ICH of Humanity in 2021

- 'Durga Puja in Kolkata' was inscribed on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity during its 16th session held in Paris, France from 13th to 18th December 2021.
- India now has 14 intangible cultural heritage elements on the prestigious UNESCO Representative List of ICH of Humanity.

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U.S. warships transit Taiwan Strait, first since Pelosi visit

- Pelosi's Taiwan trip in early August infuriated China which saw it as a U.S. attempt to interfere in its internal affairs.
- China subsequently launched military drills near the island which have since continued. China has never ruled out using force to bring Taiwan under its control.
- The Taiwan Strait is a 180-kilometer-wide strait separating the island of Taiwan and continental Asia. The narrowest part is 130 km wide.
- The strait is part of the South China Sea and connects to the East China Sea to the north.
- Former names of the Taiwan Strait include the Formosa Strait or Strait of Formosa, from a dated name for Taiwan; and the Strait of Fokien or Fujian, from the Chinese province forming the strait's western shore.

Small Cells for 5G

- To expedite the roll-out of 5G, telecom operators in the country will leverage street furniture such as poles, advertisement hoardings and bus shelters for deploying low-power base stations called 'small cells' that will help bring the network closer to the consumers.
- Small cells are needed for deploying 5G as opposed to earlier generations such as 4G, because of the frequency. The higher the frequency, the lower the wavelength, which means that the distance they travel is less.
- Small cells are low-powered radio access nodes or base stations that have a coverage range from a few metres up to a few hundred metres. They are portable, easy to deploy and help provide localised coverage.

- As per the TRAI paper, small cells provide coverage for very short distances and therefore they are installed in a large number — even more than 200 per square kilometre — for good geographical coverage to provide highly reliable and high-capacity broadband.

The cyber threat to mobile banking

- According to a 2020 Statista survey across 25 States in India, two-third respondents said they had a smartphone.
- Of these, half said they sent and received money digitally, and about 31% said they had a mobile app for banking. Nearly 14% said they used their mobile phones for banking-related purposes.
- Global cybersecurity firm Kaspersky warns of an increase in cyberattacks on Android and iOS devices in the Asia Pacific (APAC) region.
- One mobile banking trojan, called Anubis, has been targeting Android users since 2017. Roaming Mantis is another prolific malware targeting mobile banking users.
- There is push from regulators to make payment platforms interoperable at a time when the demand for technical experts is a serious concern in the banking industry.

Rajnath Singh approves 3rd Positive Indigenisation List

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh approved the third Positive Indigenisation List (PIL) of 780 strategically important line replacement units (LRU), sub-systems and components, with a timeline beyond which they will only be procured from the domestic industry.
- This is different from the three PILs announced for the armed forces.
- This was done in line with the effort to promote self-reliance in defence manufacturing, and minimising imports by the defence public sector undertakings (DPSUs).
- This list is in continuation to the two PILs of LRUs, sub-systems, assemblies, sub-assemblies and components that were published in December 2021 and March 2022.
- These lists contain 2,500 items which are already indigenised and 458 (351+107) items which will be indigenised within the given timelines.
- Out of the 458 items, 167 items (163 from the first PIL, and four from the second PIL) have been indigenised, so far.
- The Ministry explained that indigenisation of these items will be taken up through different routes under the 'Make' category of procurement procedure.

Revisiting the S. Subramaniam Balaji vs Tamil Nadu judgment

- The 2013 Balaji judgment states that election manifesto promises do not amount to 'corrupt practice' under Section 123 of the Representation of People Act.
- This revisit by the Supreme Court on its earlier judgment is unique as the court is exploring whether judicial parameters can be set on a purely political act of promising freebies.
- In its order, the court foresees that "freebies may create a situation wherein the State government cannot provide basic amenities due to lack of funds and the State is pushed towards imminent bankruptcy".
- The court said it wants a transparent debate before the three-judge Bench on whether an "enforceable" judicial order can stop political parties from promising and distributing 'irrational freebies'.
- The case is unique as the Supreme Court is exploring whether judicial parameters can be set on a purely political act of promising freebies.

Full court meeting, called by the new Chief Justice of India soon after taking charge

- A full court meeting literally means one which is attended by all the judges of the court.
- When is it held? There are no written rules dealing with this.
- As per convention, full-court meetings are called by the Chief Justice of India to discuss issues of importance to the judiciary. The senior designations of practising advocates in the Supreme Court and high courts are also decided during the full court meetings.
- As a full court meeting is convened at the discretion of the Chief Justice of India, it does not follow any particular calendar.

PM Narendra Modi says 50 percent of India's energy production will be met by non-fossil fuel by 2030

- PM Modi said that a silent revolution is taking shape in India with rising demand for electric vehicles (EV). Prime Minister was addressing a function at Gandhinagar to mark on the completion of 40 years of Suzuki Motor Corp in India.
- Meanwhile, Suzuki Motor Corporation president Toshihiro Suzuki has announced the setting up of a new company, Suzuki R&D Centre India, a wholly-owned arm of Suzuki Japan. He said the Japanese company aims to strengthen its R&D competitiveness and capabilities in new fields of technologies not only for India but also for the global markets.

National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority to celebrate Silver Jubilee

- On the occasion, Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya launched Integrated Pharmaceutical Database Management System 2.0, an integrated responsive cloud-based application. It will provide a single window for submissions of various forms as mandated under Drug Price Control Order, 2013.
- The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) is a government regulatory agency that controls the prices of pharmaceutical drugs in India.
- It was constituted vide Government of India Resolution dated 29th August 1997 as an attached office of the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP).

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Global ocean protection treaty failed to pass

- Also referred to as the 'Paris Agreement for the Ocean', the treaty to deal with Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction has been under discussion for several years.
- The proposed treaty concerns the ocean existing beyond the Exclusive Economic Zones that lie from the coast of a country to about 200 nautical miles or 370 km into the sea, till where it has special rights for exploration. Waters beyond that are known as open seas or high seas.
- The treaty was to be negotiated under the United Nations Convention on Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982 which governs the rights of countries regarding marine resources.
- As there is no treaty for conserving the health of vast swathes of the earth's oceans, a UN resolution in 2017 had decided to rectify this while setting 2022 as the deadline.

Jio to launch 5G SA service in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata by Diwali

- The company said it will launch its 5G services on a "standalone" 5G architecture, against the "non-standalone" approach that other operators are betting on.
- 5G networks are deployed mainly on two modes: standalone and non-standalone.
- In the standalone mode, which Jio has chosen, the 5G network operates with dedicated equipment, and runs parallel to the existing 4G network, while in the non-standalone mode, the 5G network is supported by the 4G core infrastructure.

- The standalone mode provides access to full 5G capabilities and new network functionalities such as slicing that provides greater flexibility to operators to efficiently use their spectrum holdings.
- Non-standalone networks are generally considered to be a stepping stone, and global precedent suggests operators that have launched non-standalone 5G networks eventually transition to standalone networks. The non-standalone mode, however, lets operators maximise the utilisation of their existing network infrastructure with relatively lower investment.

President Droupadi Murmu and Dutch Queen Máxima discuss bilateral ties

- During the discussion, the two leaders discussed the universal financial inclusion initiatives. Queen Máxima appreciated the progress made in India in this direction in the last few years.
- President Droupadi Murmu noted that the 'Strategic Partnership on Water' launched during the India-Netherlands virtual Summit in last year and other dimensions of bilateral relations have witnessed improvement in recent years. Queen Máxima is on a three day visit to India.
- The Netherlands is a country located in Northwestern Europe with overseas territories in the Caribbean.
- It is the largest of four constituent countries of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.
- The Netherlands borders Germany to the east, Belgium to the south, with a North Sea coastline to the north and west. It shares maritime borders with the United Kingdom, Germany and Belgium in the North Sea.

Road ministry standardises process for issuing international driving permit

- India, being a signatory to Convention on International Road Traffic of 1949 (Geneva Convention), is required to issue IDP as provided under this Convention, for the acceptance of the same on reciprocal basis with other countries.
- Currently, the format, size, pattern, colour etc. of the IDP being issued was differing across States in India. Due to this, many citizens were facing difficulties with their respective IDP in foreign countries.
- Now, through this amendment, the format, size, colour etc. for IDP has been standardized for issuance across India, and in adherence to the Geneva Convention.
- A comparison of vehicle categories across various Conventions and Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989 has also been added for facilitation of regulatory authorities. Helpline numbers and email have also been provided.

Commerce Ministry organises Workshop on Development of Enterprises and Services Hub (DESH) Bill 2022

- ****The workshop was organised in partnership with Export Promotion Council for EOUs and SEZs (EPCES).
- The government plans to facilitate easier financing norms to activities pertaining to the manufacturing and services hubs envisaged under the proposed revamped law for Special Economic Zones (SEZs), also known as Development (Enterprise and Services) Hub Bill, 2022.
- This will be done by giving them infrastructure status, at par with sectors such as road, rail waterways, airports, to improve access to finance and enable long-term borrowing from lenders at easier terms.

Violent crimes in 2021 back to pre-pandemic levels

- Murders, which did not come down even in 2020, continued to increase in 2021 too, according to data from National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)'s 2021 report.
- The number of registered rape cases increased from 28,046 in 2020 to 31,677 in 2021, closer to the 2019 figure of 32,032. Cases related to kidnapping and abduction fell to 84,805 in 2020 from 1,05,036 cases in 2019, but again rose to 1,01,707 in 2021.
- On the other hand, murder cases continued their consistent increase with 29,272 cases in 2021, up from 29,193 in 2020 and 28,915 in 2019.
- However, the number of overall registered cognisable crimes decreased from 66 lakh in 2020 to 60.9 lakh in 2021, a 7.6% fall.
- The crime rate (crimes per 1 lakh people) also decreased from 487.8 in 2020 to 445.9 in 2021.
- The decline in overall crimes in 2021 can be attributed to a sharp decrease in cases registered under 'disobedience to order duly promulgated by a public servant (Section 188 of the IPC).

IAF to raise first LCH squadron at Jodhpur in October

- Ten LCHs will be inducted in the first batch completing one unit.
- The IAF is still working out the total number of LCHs to be acquired, the official stated.
- The IAF operates the older Russian Mi-25 and Mi-35 attack helicopters, of which one squadron has been phased out following the induction of 22 Boeing AH-64E Apache attack helicopters.
- The existing Mi-35 squadron is in the process of being sent for overhaul which will extend its life by many years.
- The Army had already raised its first LCH squadron on June 1 in Bengaluru. The unit will move to the Eastern Command along the Line of Actual Control (LCH) on completion of the raising next year.

- The Army plans to acquire 95 LCHs of which seven units, each having 10 helicopters, are planned to be deployed for combat role in the mountains.
- The LCH is the first dedicated attack helicopter of the Army, which otherwise operates 75 Rudra helicopters, the weaponised variant of the indigenous Advanced Light Helicopter.

402 SEED registrations so far online, none approved yet

- The Union Social Justice Ministry received 402 applications online from across the country for benefits under the Scheme for Economic Empowerment of Denotified, Nomadic, Semi-nomadic (SEED) Tribes.
- More than 10 crore Indians from 1,400 communities belong to these groups, show the latest estimates available with the government.
- The scheme aims to provide free competitive exam coaching to students, health insurance and financial assistance for housing and uplift clusters of these communities through livelihood initiatives.
- The Ministry has been allocated ₹ 200 crore for this scheme to be spent over five financial years from 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- At the time of the launch, the Ministry announced that the scheme would be implemented through an online portal that would issue a unique ID to each applicant to apply and track the status of the application online.

RBI Mulls Setting, Up Of Fraud Registry To Check Banking Frauds

- Such a database would help prevent fraudsters from repeating the offence as the websites or phone numbers would be blacklisted, RBI executive director Anil Kumar Sharma said on Monday.
- There is no definite timeline for setting up of the fraud registry.
- Payment system participants would be provided access to this registry for near-real time fraud monitoring. The aggregated fraud data would be published to educate customers on emerging risks.
- Sharma also said that the customers of the Credit Investment Company (CIC) would come under the Reserve Bank — Integrated Ombudsman Scheme (RB-IOS), 2021.

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Mikhail Gorbachev, who ended the Cold War, dies aged 91

- Mikhail Gorbachev (1931 – 2022) was a Russian and Soviet politician who served as the last leader of the Soviet Union.

- As the country's head of state from 1988 to 1991, he served as Chairman of the Supreme Soviet from 1989 to 1990 and President of the Soviet Union from 1990 until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.
- Ideologically, Gorbachev initially adhered to Marxism–Leninism, but he moved towards social democracy by the early 1990s.
- Gorbachev believed significant reform was necessary, particularly after the 1986 Chernobyl disaster.
- He withdrew from the Soviet–Afghan War and embarked on summits with United States president Ronald Reagan to limit nuclear weapons and end the Cold War.
- Domestically, his policy of glasnost ("openness") allowed for enhanced freedom of speech and press, while his perestroika ("restructuring") sought to decentralize economic decision-making to improve efficiency.
- The recipient of a wide range of awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize, he was widely praised for his pivotal role in ending the Cold War.

Nearly 60% of fake money seized in 2021 were of ₹ 2,000 denomination

- Of the fake Indian currency notes with a face value of ₹ 20.39 crore seized in 2021, ₹ 12.18 crore was in the denomination of ₹ 2,000.
- The new ₹ 2,000 and ₹ 500 currency notes were introduced in 2016 after the old ₹ 500 and ₹ 1,000 notes were scrapped by the Union government. The government had said that curbing of fake notes was one of the primary objectives of the 2016 demonetisation exercise.
- Post-2016, there has been an increase in seizure of fake money, the NCRB data reveal.
- The highest recovery of fake ₹ 2,000 notes was made in Tamil Nadu (₹ 5 crore), followed by Kerala (₹ 1.8 crore) and Andhra Pradesh (₹ 1 crore).

Process underway to ensure commercial availability of Lumpy Skin disease vaccine

- Lumpi-ProVac has been developed by the National Research Centre on Equines, Hisar, Haryana, in collaboration with the Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Izatnagar (Bareilly). The vaccine was launched earlier this month by Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar.
- Lumpy skin disease is an infectious viral disease of cattle, which often occurs in epizootic form. The disease is characterised by the eruption of nodules in the skin, which may cover the whole of the animal's body.

Solomon Islands bans foreign navies from docking, in blow to U.S., U.K.

- The decision comes amid concerns over the Solomons' growing ties with China in recent years, switching diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 2019 and signing a security pact with the Asian power in April.
- Western governments are wary that the islands could provide China with a military foothold in a strategically important region.
- Solomon Islands is an island country consisting of six major islands and over 900 smaller islands in Oceania, to the east of Papua New Guinea and northwest of Vanuatu. Its capital, Honiara, is located on the largest island, Guadalcanal.

SC notice to NHRC, others on pleas challenging constitutional validity of polygamy, nikah halala

- The Supreme Court also issued notice in a separate petition in the batch, which said the personal law practices violated Section 494 of the Indian Penal Code.
- The section makes “marrying again during lifetime of husband or wife” an offence punishable with imprisonment up to seven years and fine. The case will be listed after the Dasara holidays.
- Petitioners argue that polygamy and nikah halala (bar against remarriage with divorced husband without an intervening marriage with another man) are unconstitutional.

Delhi Police first force to make collection of forensic evidence mandatory

- The order was issued hours after Union Home Minister Amit Shah visited the Police Headquarters here. Since Delhi is a Union Territory, its police force is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- The order comes following a push by Mr. Shah who had said the government was going to overhaul the British-era Indian Penal Code and one of the changes being considered was making collection of forensic evidence compulsory in criminal cases punishable by more than six years.
- “The era of third degree torture is over. Custodial torture has roots in colonial India. Conviction of criminals can be achieved based on forensic evidence that is irrefutable,” Mr. Shah had said.

Telangana tops inflation charts at 8.32%

- There are wide disparities in the pace of price rise experienced by consumers across the country, with a dozen States clocking an average inflation of less than 6% and another 12 States averaging more than 7% through 2022 so far.
- Headline inflation measured by the Consumer Price Index has averaged 6.8% in the first seven months of 2022, well above the 6% upper tolerance threshold set by policy makers.

- However, consumers in Telangana, West Bengal and Sikkim faced the steepest spike in prices, with their combined retail inflation for rural and urban areas averaging 8.32%, 8.06%, and 8.01%, respectively.
- Smaller States such as Manipur, Goa and Meghalaya have had an average inflation of less than 4% through this period, at 1.07%, 3.66%, and 3.84%, respectively.

Challenging the Special Marriage Act, 1954

- The Supreme Court dismissed a writ petition challenging the Constitutional validity of certain provisions of the Special Marriage Act, 1954 under which couples seek refuge for inter-faith and inter-caste marriages.
- The writ petition has called the provisions under the SMA violative of the right to privacy guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution as they require couples to give a notice of 30 days before the date of marriage inviting objections from the public.
- These public notices have been used by anti-social elements to harass couples getting married.

Effects of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) on Civil Aviation

- After nearly two years of COVID-19 lull, the increased international air traffic has helped Chennai airport climb one rank up to become the fifth busiest airport in the country after Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru.
- Till February 2014, Chennai airport held onto being the third busiest in the country and post March, Bengaluru airport overtook and continues to retain that position. Hyderabad and Kolkata airports too recorded sharp growth, relegating Chennai to the sixth spot.
- Interestingly, if one looks at the international passenger traffic data for July, Chennai airport stood third behind Delhi and Mumbai; it overtook Bengaluru and Hyderabad, recording 4.29 lakh passengers.
- But Chennai lags behind other metro cities in terms of domestic passenger traffic. In July, the Chennai airport had only 10.2 lakh domestic air passengers, far behind Delhi (36.5 lakh passengers), Mumbai (21.5 lakh passengers), Bengaluru (19.1 lakh passengers), Hyderabad (13.1 lakh passengers) and Kolkata (11.99 lakh passengers).