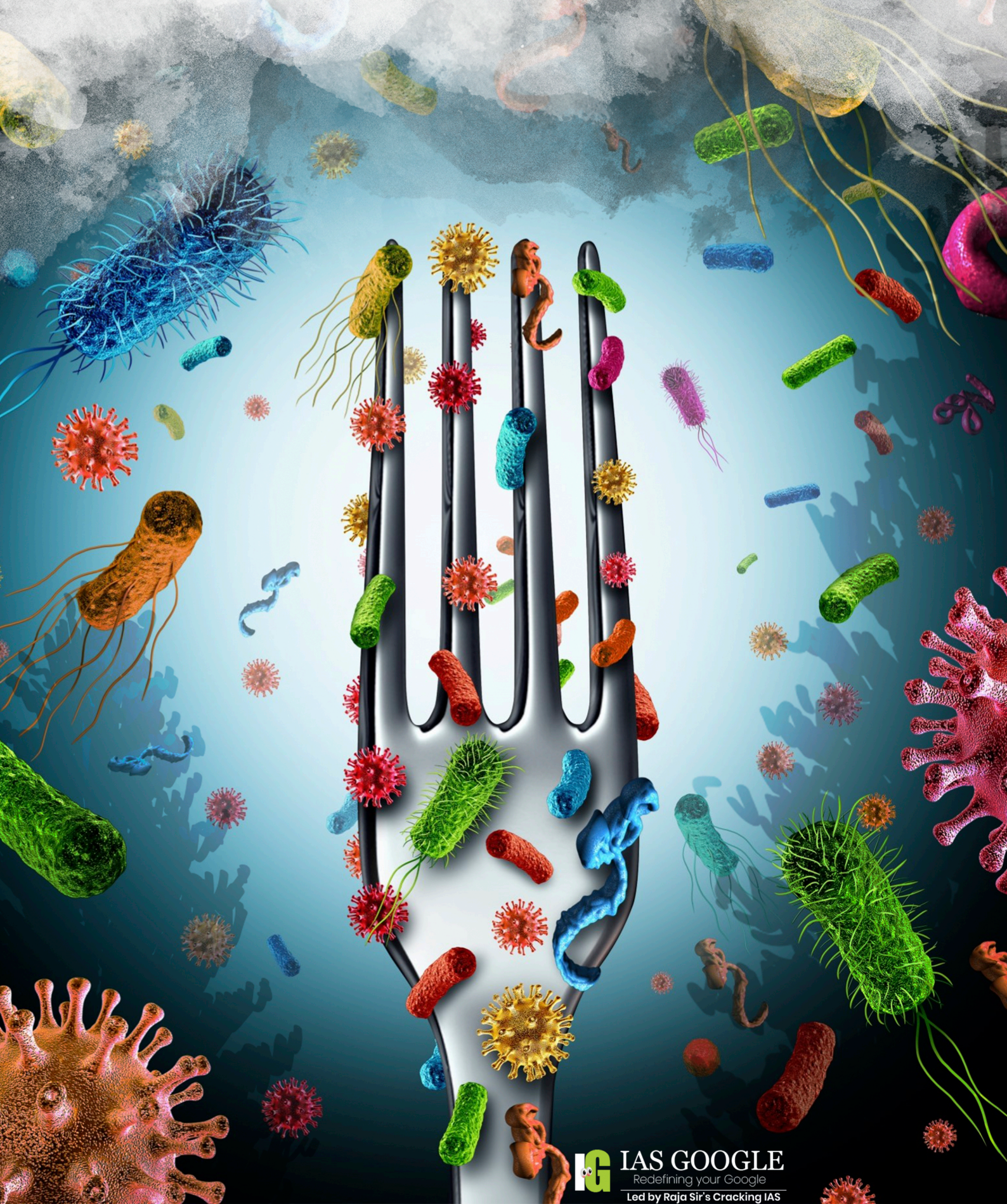


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MAY 1

India to develop and build first indigenous Hydrogen Fuel Cell

- Hydrogen Fuel cells can be used in a wide range of applications, including transportation, material handling, stationary, portable, and emergency backup power applications.
- Fuel cells operating on hydrogen fuel are an efficient, environmentally-friendly, zero emission, direct current (DC) power source already applied to heavy duty bus, truck, and train applications, and are now under development for marine applications.
- The project would be carried out by Cochin Shipyard Limited in collaboration with Indian partners and the ground work in this regard have already begun
- The Hydrogen Fuel Cell Vessel based on Low Temperature Proton Exchange Membrane Technology (LT-PEM) called Fuel Cell Electric Vessel (FCEV) is

expected to cost around Rs. 17.50 crores of which 75% would be funded by the Government of India.

- This project is expected to augment the efforts of the nation in achieving the Prime Minister's ambitious target of becoming carbon neutral by 2070 and also in complying with the standards set by International Maritime Organization (IMO) that envisages a reduction in carbon intensity of international shipping by at least 40% by 2030 and progressively to 70% by 2050.

OIL signs MoU for Carbon sequestration and restoration of degraded forest land in Digboi:

- The initiative has been undertaken under OIL's CSR project Vasundhara.
- Under the project, reforestation and afforestation in 100 hectare of degraded forest area is planned to be undertaken through plantation of 2,50,000 saplings by March 2025.
- Apart from plantation, establishment of a Bambusetum and other activities to reduce dependency on the forest by providing alternate livelihood opportunities is also planned to be undertaken.

Mandatory hallmarking of gold

- The second phase of the mandatory hallmarking will cover additional three caratages of gold jewellery/artefacts viz. 20, 23 and 24 carats as mentioned in the Indian Standard IS 1417.
- The second phase will cover 32 new districts under the mandatory hallmarking regime wherein an AHC has been setup post implementation of the first phase of the mandatory hallmarking order. The Centre notified the order on April 04, 2022.
- BIS has been successful in implementation of Mandatory Hallmarking by Bureau of Indian Standards in 256 districts of the country with effect from 23 June 2021, wherein more than 3 lakh gold articles are being hallmarked with HUID every day.
- BIS has made a provision to allow a common consumer to get the purity of their unhallmarked gold jewellery tested at any of the BIS recognized Assaying and Hallmarking Centres (AHC).

- The AHC shall undertake the testing of gold jewellery from common consumers on priority and provide a test report to the consumer.
- The test report issued to the consumer will assure the consumer about the purity of their jewellery and will also be useful if the consumer wishes to sell the jewellery lying with him.
- The charges for testing of gold jewellery up to 4 articles is Rs 200. For 5 or more articles, the charges are Rs 45 per article.

APEDA launches gluten-free millet products

- A gluten-free diet (GFD) is a nutritional plan that strictly excludes gluten, which is a mixture of proteins found in wheat (and all of its species and hybrids, such as spelt, kamut, and triticale), as well as barley, rye, and oats.
- Gluten may cause both gastrointestinal and systemic symptoms for those with gluten-related disorders, including coeliac disease (CD), non-coeliac gluten sensitivity (NCGS), gluten ataxia, dermatitis herpetiformis (DH), and wheat allergy.
- Gluten proteins have low nutritional and biological value and the grains that contain gluten are not essential in the human diet.

Forest Fires Run Wild in Himachal Pradesh

- The early onset of summer this year in the hills posed a major challenge to the State government's efforts to control forest fires and with dry weather conditions and high temperatures expected to continue, the task has become more difficult.
- Till April 28 this year, as many as 719 incidents of forest fires have been reported across the State, affecting close to 5,662 hectares under forest circles of Shimla, Chamba, Bilaspur, Dharamshala, Hamirpur, Kullu Mandi, Rampur, Nahan and the Great Himalayan National Park at Shamshi in the Kullu region.
- The estimated loss so far has been pegged at around ₹ 1.4 crore.
- In 2018-19, the State witnessed as many as 2,544 forest fire incidents while in 2019-20 the figure was down to 1,445. In 2020-21, there were 1,045 forest fire incidents and in 2021-22 as many as 1,275 fire instances were reported.

- The maximum number of forest fires are human-generated – many accidental but a few deliberate ones. In several areas, there is a practice of burning the pasture lands to get rid of the dry leaf litter to ensure fresh grass growth for livestock.
- Usually, when there is intermittent rainfall, such fires do not go out of control but when there's prolonged dry weather, many of these fires go out of control.

Hottest April in Northwest, central India in 122 years: IMD

- Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh experienced the hottest April in over 122 years.
- As per the IMD, the average maximum temperature in April was recorded to be the highest-ever at 37.78 degree Celsius for central India, while it stood at 35.9 degrees for northwest India, nearly 3.35 degrees above normal.
- The all-India temperature was the fourth-highest at 35.05 degree Celsius since 1901. The rains have been scanty, and most western disturbances that impacted the region have been dry.

Judicial Infrastructure Development Authority to be formed at state level

- The resolution regarding this was passed during the Joint Conference of Chief Ministers of the States and Chief Justices of High Courts in New Delhi.
- The body will be created at the state level with the involvement of the CMs and Chief Justices or their nominees.
- The Centrally Sponsored Scheme for development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary has been extended till 2025-26 with a budgetary outlay of Rs. 9,000 crores including the central share of Rs. 5,307 crores.
- Chief Justice of India NV Ramana has said lack of infrastructure is one of the main causes of delaying in delivering Justice. Chief Justice said, effective steps will be taken to ensure the clearing of cases pending for more than five years.

Online sale of wireless jammers illegal; CCPA warns

- Consumer Affairs Ministry said, sale and use of any wireless device without authorization and license under the Indian Telegraph Act or Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act is illegal.
- The Ministry said, as per the guidelines issued by the Central Government, Jammers may be allowed only under exceptional circumstances, only when authorized by Secretary (Security) and Cabinet Secretariat.
- The Department of Telecommunication had also issued an advisory in January this year with reference to illegal facilitation and sale of wireless jammers on online platforms.

MAY 2

Railways planning major restructuring

- Established in 2016, the SRESTHA directorate, part of the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO), was tasked with the role of taking up long-term railway research projects requiring technological advancement.
- As part of the restructuring plan, the Railways also decided to merge 32 directorates of the RDSO and brought them under seven verticals – administration, infrastructure, rolling stock, traction and power supply, signal and telecommunication, resource and testing and traffic and psychology.
- Another notification is that the Geotech Engineering Directorate will be merged with the Track and Bridges & Structures Directorate.
- The Railways also proposed to create new posts in the rank of Executive Director, Design, to be posted at the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai, Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala and Modern Coach Factory, Rae Bareli, under the Railway Board's Rolling Stock Directorate.
- The restructuring plan of the Indian Railways is in line with the recommendations for rationalisation of government bodies made by Principal Economic Adviser Sanjeev Sanyal.

Narendra Modi embarks on first foreign visit of 2022

- Germany**: India and Germany have a 'Strategic Partnership' since May 2000, and it has been strengthened with the launch of the Inter-Governmental Consultations (IGC) in 2011 at the level of heads of government.
- Denmark**: Bilateral relations were elevated to the level of a "Green Strategic Partnership" during the Virtual Summit held in September 2020 between Modi and Danish PM Mette Frederiksen.
- France**: The visit to France has been planned after President Emmanuel Macron was re-elected in a tough election. India and France entered into a Strategic Partnership, with defence & security cooperation, space cooperation and civil nuclear cooperation being its pillars.

India-Nordic summit

- The first India-Nordic Summit took place in April 2018 to explore new areas of cooperation.
- This format is special; the only other country with which the Nordic countries – Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Iceland – have this kind of engagement is with the US.

Police bust fake body supplements racket

- Anabolic steroids are essentially lab-made versions of the male hormone testosterone and have a similar effect of increasing muscle mass as the natural hormone does.
- It also increases male characteristics in a person, such as facial hair and a deeper voice.
- The anabolic steroids have a very limited medical role and are mainly used by doctors to help patients gain weight after a severe illness or injury. It could also be prescribed in small doses to the elderly to build muscle mass and in some cases also helps to treat anaemia.

- More than being a drug prescribed by doctors, anabolic steroids are usually used by bodybuilders. The anabolic steroids are misused mainly by those who want to bulk up as it helps increase one's muscle mass.
- Use of anabolic steroids in the short-term can cause acne and hairfall. Extended misuse of the substance can also lead to gynaecomastia (growth of breasts in men) and erectile dysfunction.
- In women, it can lead to growth of facial hair. It may also cause extreme anger, paranoia, and impaired judgement.

A portable device that turns seawater into drinking water, without using filters

- The unit relies on a technique called ion concentration polarisation.
- Rather than filtering water, the process applies an electrical field that causes positively or negatively charged particles – including salt molecules, bacteria, viruses – to be repelled as they flow past.
- The charged particles are funnelled into a second stream of water that is eventually discharged. The process removes solids, allowing clean water to pass through the channel.
- The suitcase-sized device requires less power to operate than a cell phone charger. It can also be driven by a small, portable solar panel, which can be purchased online for around \$50.
- The device automatically generates drinking water that exceeds World Health Organization (WHO) quality standards. The device runs with the push of one button.
- Eliminating the need for replacement filters greatly reduces the long-term maintenance requirements.
- This could enable the unit to be deployed in remote and severely resource-limited areas. It could also be used to aid refugees fleeing natural disasters or by soldiers carrying out long-term military operations.

Charak Shapath instead of Hippocratic Oath Row

- The controversy began after the National Medical Commission (NMC), the regulator for medical education and practices (which replaced the Medical Council of India in 2020) suggested to medical colleges on February 7 that the Hippocratic Oath should be replaced by a “Charak Shapath”.
- On March 31, the NMC issued a circular on “Implementation of new Competency Based Medical Education for Undergraduate Course Curriculum”, in which it said: “Modified ‘Maharshi Charak Shapath’ is recommended when a candidate is introduced to medical education”.

Hippocratic Oath

- The Hippocratic Oath is attributed to Hippocrates of the island of Kos, a Greek physician of the classical period (4th-5th centuries BC), broadly corresponding to the period from the death of the Buddha (486 BC) to the rise of the Mauryas (321 BC) in India.
- The Oath is a charter of ethical principles that physicians over the ages have sworn to uphold in the practice of their profession.

Charak Samhita

- The Charak Samhita is a medical pharmacopoeia and collection of commentaries and discussions on medical practices that is historically dated to the 1st-2nd centuries AD.
- Along with the compendium of Susruta (c. 4th century AD), which is about surgery, the Charak Samhita is considered the foundational text of ancient Indian medicine, which was an evolved system of understanding and treating disease that was in several ways ahead of the Greeks.

NCTE Invites Applications For 4-Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme

- ITEP, as notified on 22nd October 2021, is a dual-major holistic bachelor's degree offering B.A. B.Ed./ B. Sc. B. Ed. and B.Com. B.Ed.

- It is one of the major mandates of the National Education Policy 2020 related to Teacher Education. It will be offered in pilot mode initially in multidisciplinary Central/State Government Universities/Institutions across the country.
- Admission for the same will be carried out by the National Testing Agency (NTA) through the National Common Entrance Test (NCET).
- NCTE under Ministry of Education has devised the curriculum for this course as per NEP 2020 in such a way that it enables a student-teacher to get a degree in education as well as a specialized discipline such as history, mathematics, science, arts, economics, or commerce.
- The 4 Year ITEP will be available for all students who choose teaching as a profession after secondary, by choice.
- This integrated course will benefit students since they will save one year by finishing it in four years rather than the customary five years required by the present B.Ed. plan.

India's pharma exports rise to Rs 1.83 lakh crore

- The exports achieved in 2021-22 is the Pharma Sector' best export performance ever.
- It is a remarkable growth with exports growing by almost USD 10 billion in 8 years.
- The pharma exports in 2021-22 sustained a positive growth despite the global trade disruptions and drop in demand for COVID related medicines. The trade balance continues to be in India's favour, with a surplus of USD 15175.81 Million.
- 60 per cent of the world's vaccines and 20% of generic medicines coming from India.
- India ranks 3rd worldwide for production by volume and 14th by value.
- Behind India's pharma success story is our world class manufacturing excellence, robust infrastructure, cost-competitiveness, trained human capital and innovation.

- The current market size of the Indian pharmaceutical industry is around USD 50 billion.
- The share of pharmaceutical and drugs in our global exports is 5.92%.
Formulations and biologicals continue to account for a major share of 73.31% in our total exports, followed by Bulk drugs and drug intermediates with exports of USD 4437.64 million.
- India's top 5 pharma export destinations are USA, UK, South Africa, Russia and Nigeria.

India-Uae Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement Comes Into Force

- Overall, India will benefit from preferential market access provided by the UAE on over 97 % of its tariff lines which account for 99% of Indian exports to the UAE in value terms particularly from labour-intensive sectors such as Gems and Jewellery, Textiles, leather, footwear etc.
- As regards trade in services, Indian service providers will have enhanced access to around 111 sub-sectors from the 11 broad service sectors.
- CEPA is expected to increase the total value of bilateral trade in goods to over US\$100 billion and trade in services to over US\$ 15 billion within five years.

MAY 3

Transnistria: The nextfront of the Ukraine war

- The de facto state lies between Moldova to its west and Ukraine towards its east.
- Often described as a "remnant of the Soviet Union", Transnistria declared independence like Moldova did soon after the break-up of the Soviet Union.
- When Moldovan troops attempted to take over the territory in 1990-1992, Transnistria was able to resist them because of Russian soldiers based in Transnistria.

- Since then, it has remained free of Moldovan control. However, most countries continue to see Transnistria as part of Moldova.
- Transnistria is not recognised as independent even by Russia and its economy is dependent on Russia for subsidies and free gas. Most Transnistrians have dual citizenship of Russia and Transnistria or triple citizenship of Moldova, Transnistria, and Russia.
- Unlike the rest of Moldova, which speaks Romanian, the majority of people in Transnistria speak Russian and use the cyrillic script like Russians.



IIT Bombay collaborates with IMD to develop climate solutions to combat climate crisis

- This collaboration is likely to work on the development of Sensors and Drone-based Smart Monitoring systems, Climate-smart agriculture technology for water and food security, Intelligent and automated early warning systems, and Smart power grid management.

- Talking about the Interdisciplinary Program in Climate Studies at IIT Bombay, Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Dr. M. Ravichandran said just like science, multiple disciplines like mathematics, engineering, and social sciences are required to understand the discipline of climate studies as well.
- IIT Bombay's mission is to be a thought-leader in Climate Studies.

Newly identified drug can be used as oral treatment for diabetes: IIT Mandi study

- The molecule, called PK2, is able to trigger the release of insulin by the pancreas, and can potentially be used as an orally administered medicine for diabetes.
- The findings of the research have been published in the Journal of Biological Chemistry.
- The researchers found that PK2 was rapidly absorbed by the gastrointestinal tract, which means that it can be used as an oral medication rather than an injection.
- After two hours of administration, PK2 was found distributed in the liver, kidney, and pancreas of the mice, but there were no traces of it in the heart, lungs, and spleen.
- There was a small amount present in the brain, which shows that the molecule may be able to cross the blood-brain barrier. It was cleared from circulation in about 10 hours.
- Beyond increasing insulin release, PK2 was also able to prevent and even reverse beta cell loss, a cell essential for insulin production, making it effective for both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.

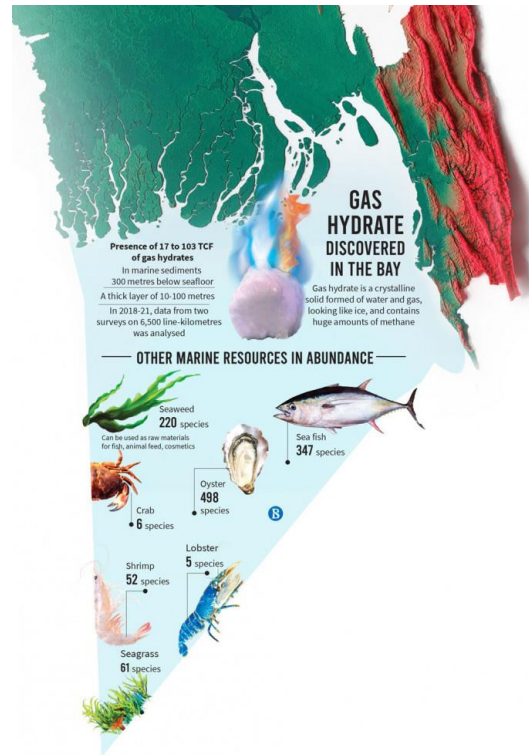
Govt to provide 50% subsidy to SC-ST, small and marginal, women and farmers of northeastern states

- Mr Tomar said this while addressing the conference on Promoting Kisan Drones organized as part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' in New Delhi. The government is promoting the use of Kisan Drone for crop assessment, digitization of land records, and spraying of pesticides and nutrients.
- He said, for other farmers, financial assistance will be given up to 40 percent or a maximum of four lakh rupees to buy drones.

- Financial assistance @ 100 % cost of drone is extended under Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM) to the Farm Machinery Training & Testing Institutes, Institutions of Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) and State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) for its demonstration on the farmer's fields.
- Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs) are provided grants @ 75% for purchase of drones for its demonstration on the farmers' fields.

Bangladesh discovers huge natural gas hydrate deposits in Bay of Bengal

- Bangladesh has discovered a new gas field with the capacity to produce 20 million cubic feet of gas per day (MMCFD) at the Koilastila Gas field.
- Koilastila Gas Field is one of the five gas fields purchased from the Shell Oil company by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975
- So far 7 wells have been drilled in the Koilastila gas field of Sylhet Gas Fields Limited (SGFL).
- The first gas field in Bangladesh was made in Sylhet in 1955. Bangladesh currently produces 2370 MMCFD from its 26 commercial gas fields out of which 85 percent comes from the top 4 gas fields. Bibiyana Gas Field and Titas Gas field are its major locations for production of gas. It is estimated that Bangladesh has a remaining gas reserve of 11 trillion cubic feet.



Joint Statement: 6th India-Germany Inter-Governmental Consultations

- The biennial IGC is a unique dialogue format that also sees participation of several Ministers from both sides.
- This was the Prime Minister's first IGC with Chancellor Scholz and also the first such Government-to-Government consultations of the new German Government, which assumed office in December last year.
- Mr Modi expressed happiness that his first foreign visit this year was to Germany.
- He informed that Germany has committed to support Green Goal Plans of India. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz invited Prime Minister Modi for G-7 summit to be held in Germany.
- Prime Minister Modi and Chancellor Scholz signed the Joint Declaration of Intent establishing the Green and Sustainable Development Partnership.
- This Partnership envisages a whole-of-government approach to India-Germany cooperation on SDGs and climate action, under which Germany has agreed to

make an advance commitment of 10 billion Euros of new and additional development assistance until 2030.

- This JDI will also create a Ministerial mechanism within the framework of the IGC to provide high-level coordination and political direction to the Partnership. A number of agreements were concluded during the Ministerial bilateral meetings.

List of agreements signed on the occasion of 6th India-Germany Inter-Governmental Consultations.

- Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) on Green and Sustainable Development Partnership
- JDI on the implementation of Triangular Development Cooperation projects in Third Countries
- JDI on the establishment of an agreement on the exchange and mutual protection of classified information and on the establishment of an agreement to establish a direct encrypted connection between MEA and German Foreign Office
- Indo-German Development Cooperation Regarding Renewable Energy Partnership
- Joint Declaration on the Initialing of the Agreement on a Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership
- JDI on continuation of cooperation in the field of advanced training of corporate executives and junior executives from India
- Indo-German Green Hydrogen Task Force
- JDI on Agroecology
- JDI on Forest Landscape Restoration

National Open Access Registry(NOAR) goes live successfully

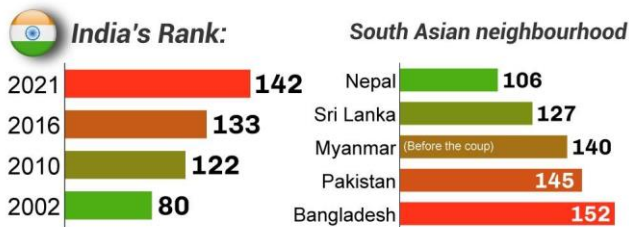
- NOAR is an integrated single window electronic platform accessible to all stakeholders including open access participants, traders, power exchanges, national/regional/state load despatch centres for electronic processing of short-term open access application thereby automating the administration of the short-term open access in inter-state transmission system.

- The NOAR platform shall act as a repository of information related to short term open access in inter-state transmission including standing clearance issued by RLDCs or SLDCs and short-term open access granted to the open access customers etc. and make such information available to the stakeholders online.
- National Load Despatch Centre (NLDC) operated by Power System Operation Corporation Limited (POSOCO) has been designated as the nodal agency for implementation and operation of NOAR.
- NOAR would be the key to facilitate faster electricity markets and enable integration of Renewable Energy (RE) resources into the grid.
- NOAR is part of the Ministry of Power, Government of India's initiative and the required regulatory framework has been notified by the CERC through operationalization of the 5th Amendment Regulation of Open Access in inter-State Transmission.

MAY 4

India slides 8 places to 150 in 2022 Press Freedom Index

World Press Freedom index



- India's ranking, as per the report, fell on the back of increased "violence against journalists" and a "politically partisan media", which has landed press freedom in a state of "crisis" in the world's largest democracy.
- The ranking of India's neighbours, except that of Nepal, have also slid down, with the index placing Pakistan at 157th position, Sri Lanka 146th, Bangladesh 162nd and Myanmar at 176th position, the report released by Reporters Without Borders said.
- According to the RSF 2022 World Press Freedom Index, Nepal has climbed up by 30 points in the global ranking at 76th position.
- This year, Norway (1st) Denmark (2nd), Sweden (3rd) Estonia (4th) and Finland (5th) grabbed the top positions, while North Korea remained at the bottom of the list of the 180 countries and territories ranked by the Reporters Without Borders.
- About the global scenario, the RSF said the 20th World Press Freedom Index reveals a two-fold increase in "polarisation" amplified by information chaos, that is, media polarisation fuelling divisions within countries, as well as polarisation between countries at the international level.

PM Modi, Danish counterpart hold delegation-level

- Both leaders reviewed the progress of the Green Strategic Partnership which was the first of its kind arrangement between India and Denmark. During the India-Denmark Virtual Summit in October 2020, the two sides gave their relationship the status of a Green Strategic Partnership.
- Prime Ministers of two sides participated in India-Denmark Business Forum with top business leaders from the two countries at the Confederation of Danish Industry.
- Earlier nine agreements were inked between the two countries in various sectors.

List of agreements signed/announced during the visit of Prime Minister to Denmark

1. Declaration of Intent (DoI) on Migration and Mobility
2. Letter of Intent (LoI) between Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, GOI and Ministry of Business, Industry and Financial Affairs of Denmark on Centre of Excellence in Green Shipping
3. Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between the Ministry of Culture, GoI and Ministry of Culture of Denmark for the years 2022-2026
4. Letter of Intent (LoI) of between Ministry of Jal Shakti and Ministry of Environment of Denmark
5. MoU on Cooperation in the field of Skill Development, Vocational Education and Entrepreneurship
6. Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) on Cooperation in the fields of Animal Husbandry and Dairying
7. Launch of Energy Policy Dialogue at Ministerial level
8. India to join as mission partner to ICARS (International Centre for Anti-Microbial Resistance Solution)
9. Letter of Intent between Invest India and Technical University of Denmark to facilitate start-up collaboration

2nd India-Nordic Summit

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the 2nd India-Nordic Summit along with Prime Ministers of Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Sweden and Norway.
- The summit will be hosted by Denmark.
- The Summit will focus on subjects like post-pandemic economic recovery, climate change, innovation and technology, renewable energy, the evolving global security scenario and India-Nordic cooperation in the Arctic region.
- Nordic countries are important partners for India in sustainability, renewable energy, digitisation and innovation. The visit will help in expanding India's multifaceted cooperation with the Nordic region.

Lokpal to get permanent office at World Trade Centre in Delhi, office space bought for ₹ 254 cr.

- The office has been purchased for ₹ 254.88 crore, according to the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), the administrative Ministry for the Lokpal.
- On March 19, 2019, Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghosh was appointed India's first Lokpal along with eight other members.
- The appointment itself was made five years after the Lokpal and Lokayukta Act was passed in 2013 to investigate cases of corruption against certain categories of public servants.
- The Lokpal can inquire into allegations of corruption against anyone who is or has been Prime Minister, or a Minister in the Union government, or a Member of Parliament, as well as officials of the Union government under Groups A, B, C and D.
- The body also covers complaints against chairpersons, members, officers and directors of any board or autonomous body either established by an Act of Parliament and any society or trust or body that receives foreign contribution above ₹ 10 lakh.

'Political Neutrality Must For Civil Servants', Says Supreme Court

- This was stated by a Bench of Justices Indira Banerjee and A.S. Bopanna while replying to a writ petition seeking a direction to the legislature to frame a law imposing a cooling-off period for retired bureaucrats with political ambitions.

- The petitioner said the need to give time to cool off after retirement was necessary owing to a high probability that civil servants, while in service, may do favours for certain parties with an eye on a political future or a high position.
- The Bench categorically said that civil servants would be liable for stringent action in case of any such breach in ethical standards under the All India Services (Conduct) Rules of 1968.
- It said that for civil servants, “courtesy, accountability and transparency, integrity, impartiality, neutrality, transparency and honesty are non-negotiable”.
- However, the Bench stated that the court could not make a law to introduce a cooling-off period for civil servants. The question whether to make such a law or not was best left to the legislature.

Lapsus\$: how two teenagers hacked big tech firms

- Lapsus\$ is said to be based in South America and is led by two teenagers, a 16-year-old and a 17-year-old.
- The group is relatively new but has successfully breached major firms like Microsoft. It has also publicly taunted their victims, leaking their source code and internal documents.
- Their hacking tactics include phone-based social engineering, SIM-swapping to facilitate account takeover, accessing personal email accounts of employees at target organisations etc.

President Kovind to attend Bodo Sahitya Sabha at Kachubari in Tamulpur district, Assam

- It is a historic moment for the Bodo Sahitya Sabha as no President of India has ever attended any literary event of any language in the northeastern region.
- Boro, also called Bodo, is the largest ethnolinguistic group in the Assam state of India.
- They are spread across north-eastern India.
- They are concentrated mainly in the Bodoland Territorial Region of Assam, though Bodos inhabit all other districts of Assam and Meghalaya.

- Bodos are officially identified as "Boro, Borokachari" scheduled tribe under the Constitution of India. Bodos speak Bodo language, which is recognised as one of twenty-two Scheduled languages of India.

Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurates NATGRID premises at Bengaluru

- The NATGRID CEO informed that the services of NATGRID solution will be available to 11 central agencies and police of all States and Union Territories.
- It will link user agencies with data holders, giving them access to real-time information needed for intelligence services and investigations.
- C-DAC Pune has been roped in as Technology Partner and IIT, Bhilai as Plan Management Consultant for the development of NATGRID solution.
- The National Intelligence Grid or NATGRID is the integrated intelligence master database structure for counter-terrorism purpose connecting databases of various core security agencies under Government of India collecting comprehensive patterns procured from 21 different organizations that can be readily accessed by security agencies round the clock.
- NATGRID came into existence after the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

RPF launches Focused effort under "Operation Satark"

- Railway Protection Force (RPF) is a security force under the ownership of Indian Railways, Ministry of Railways, Government of India.
- It was formed in 1872 under the Railway Protection Force Act, 1957.
- It is the lead security agency in the field of railway security having a pan India reach. It is entrusted with the security of railway property, passenger area and passengers.
- Railway Protection Force has recently started "Operation Satark" with an objective of taking action against illicit liquor/FICN/illegal tobacco products/unaccounted gold and any other items being transported through railway network for the purpose of tax evasion and smuggling.

MAY 5

RBI surprises with 40 bps rate increase in Repo Rate

- Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) had in an off-cycle meeting reviewed the latest economic developments including the impact of the war in Ukraine and decided to increase the policy interest rates in a bid to curb accelerating inflation.
- The MPC, however, retained its 'accommodative' policy stance even as it focuses on withdrawal of accommodation to keep inflation within the target range while supporting growth.
- As part of the withdrawal of accommodation, the RBI also raised the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) by 50 basis points to 4.5% with effect from May 21 so as to drain surplus liquidity of about ₹ 87,000 crore.
- As part of the increases, the standing deposit facility (SDF) rate would become 4.15% and the marginal standing facility (MSF) and bank rate would be 4.65%.
- These decisions are in consonance with the objective of achieving the medium-term target for consumer price index (CPI) inflation of 4% within a band of +/- 2%.

Recorded deaths rose to 81 lakh in 2020 from 76 lakh in 2019

- Of course all the deaths reported are not COVID deaths. The COVID deaths have been systematically collected and released by the Health Ministry regularly.
- The report added that based on information provided from 34 States and Union Territories, the share of institutional deaths in total registered deaths is 28%.
- India faced its first COVID wave during 2020 and this information is vital in terms of giving India and all agencies which wants to use these figures for analysis on how health systems need to be best worked with to minimise human tragedy during a pandemic.

- The World Health Organization (WHO) is set to release an estimate of COVID deaths, from across the world, during the pandemic period and indicates excess deaths in India.
- The Indian government responded to this earlier saying that it has objection to the report centred on the “methodology adopted for the same”.

The status of GST compensation dues

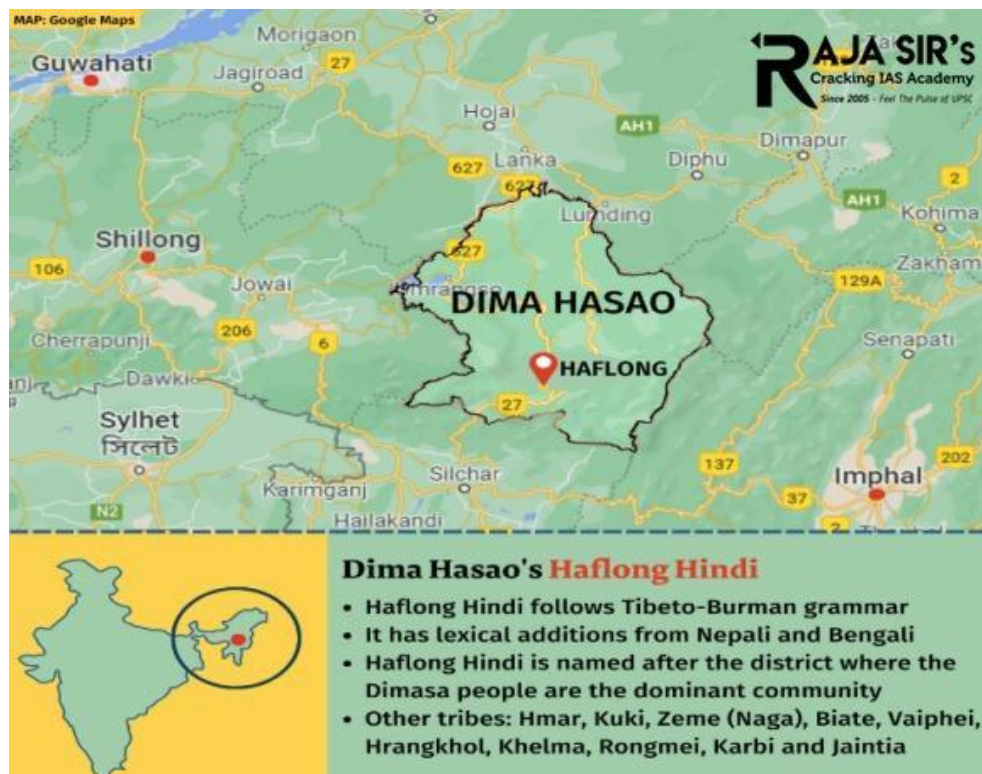
- The GST regime entailed doing away with multiple State and Central levies to create a simplified tax system for businesses.
- As this meant that States had to give up several taxation powers in the process, they were assured that revenue losses will be compensated for five years.
- The compensation was to be calculated by assuming a 14% year-on-year growth over revenues in 2015-16 from the State taxes subsumed in GST, and remitted from a compensation cess fund backed by cess levies on sin and luxury goods like pan masala, tobacco, coal and cars.
- According to the Finance Ministry, outstanding GST compensation dues to States for 2021-22 stood at ₹ 78,704 crore, equivalent to four months of such accruals.
- This means that dues have been remitted to States for the eight-month period of April 2021 till November 2021.
- From July 2017 when the GST regime kicked off till now, about ₹ 7.35 lakh crore has been released as GST compensation to States.

In 2020, Ladakh recorded highest sex ratio in the country, Manipur lowest

- Highest Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) based on registered events has been reported by Ladakh (1,104) followed by Arunachal Pradesh (1,011), A&N Islands (984), Tripura (974), and Kerala (969), the report released by the Registrar-General of India said.
- The lowest sex ratio was reported by Manipur (880), followed by Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (898), Gujarat (909), Haryana (916) and Madhya Pradesh (921).

- In 2019, the highest sex ratio at birth was reported by Arunachal Pradesh (1,024), followed by Nagaland (1,001), Mizoram (975) and A&N Islands (965), and the lowest sex ratio was reported by Gujarat (901), Assam (903), Madhya Pradesh (905) and Jammu & Kashmir (909).
- None of the States or UTs have recorded sex ratio at birth below 880.
- The report said that the requisite information from Maharashtra, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi on sex ratio was “not available.” They had not provided the said data in 2019 as well.
- Sex ratio at birth is the number of females per thousand males.
- The sex ratio at birth of registered events is an important indicator to map the sex differential of the population at the beginning of their life. The sex ratio at birth has been calculated after deducting the delayed registration of more than one year for the year 2020.

Amid language debate, Haflong Hindi tries to hold its own in Assam



- Hindi reached Dima Hasao, a district formerly called North Cachar Hills, in the late 1800s primarily through merchants and construction workers who worked on a mountain railway system.
- By the time the railway line was completed in 1899, the non-tribal settlers and diverse indigenous communities across the hills had developed a pidgin to communicate among themselves.
- It came to be known as Haflong Hindi, named after the headquarters of the district where the Dimasa people are the dominant community.
- Haflong Hindi follows the Tibeto-Burman grammar, not the Hindi grammar, and has lexical additions from Nepali and Bengali.
- It has a generic plural marker and does not use numbers as in Hindi.
- Some linguists feel pushing the standardised Hindi as a compulsory subject in school could affect the “earthiness” of variants in the Northeast such as Shillong Hindi, which is not pidgin but informal Hindi, and the “purer” Arunachalee Hindi with tribal intonations.

India has been chosen as first Country of Honour ever at Cannes Film Market.

- India will be the official Country of Honour at the upcoming Marche' Du Film, organized alongside the 75th edition of Cannes Film Festival, in France.
- It is the first time the Marché du Film has an official Country of Honour, and this special focus will continue annually with different nations in the spotlight at future editions.
- Notably France and India are marking 75 years of their diplomatic ties.
- India is also a “Country of Honour at the Cannes Next, under which 5 new Start Ups would be given an opportunity to pitch to the Audio-Visual Industry.

Marché du Film

- The Marché du Film (literally meaning Film Market) is the business counterpart of the Cannes Film Festival and one of the largest film markets in the world.

- Established in 1959, it is held annually in conjunction with the Cannes Film Festival.

Prime Minister addresses inaugural session of fourth edition of the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

- He noted that the coalition has expanded and made valuable contributions. He mentioned the initiative on 'Infrastructure for Resilient Island States' that was launched at COP-26 and CDRI's work on Resilient Airports studying 150 airports around the world.
- The 'Global Assessment of Disaster Resilience of Infrastructure Systems' that is being led by CDRI will help create global knowledge that would be immensely valuable.
- The Prime Minister said that in order to make our future resilient we have to work towards a 'Resilient Infrastructure Transition'. Resilient infrastructure can also be the centrepiece of our wider adaptation efforts.

International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI)

- The International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI) is the annual conference of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).
- It brings together member countries, organizations and institutions to strengthen the global discourse on disaster and climate resilient infrastructure.
- In 2018 and 2019, the first and second International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure took place in New Delhi, India. ICDRI 2021 was hosted virtually. The fourth edition of ICDRI is being organized in partnership with the United States Government, from 4 to 6 May 2022 in New Delhi, in hybrid format.
- CDRI was launched by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, at the 2019 UN Climate Summit.

Indian Coast Guard commissions its second ALH Mk III Squadron in Kochi

- The new Air Squadron, commissioned by Coast Guard Director General V S Pathania, is equipped with the indigenously developed Advanced Mark III (ALH Mark III) helicopters.
- The commissioning marks a tremendous leap towards self-reliance in the field of search and rescue operations and long-range maritime surveillance.
- Four helicopters have been positioned in Kochi to cover the entire coast of Karnataka, Kerala and Lakshadweep.

MAY 6

WHO says 47 lakh excess Covid deaths in India

- These are the highest, by far, for any country and make up nearly a third of the 15 million such deaths estimated by the agency globally.
- India officially estimated only 4.8 lakh cumulative deaths linked to COVID-19 as of December 2021, which implies that the WHO estimate is nearly 10 times the government count. As of May, India's official COVID-19 death toll is 5.2 lakh.
- Minutes after the WHO released its estimate, India reiterated its "objection to the methodology" used.
- Excess deaths are calculated as the difference between the number of deaths that have occurred and the number that would be expected in the absence of the pandemic based on data from earlier years.
- Excess mortality includes deaths associated with COVID-19 directly or indirectly (due to the pandemic's impact on health systems).

Over 1 lakh trees to be felled for proposed coal mining in Odisha

- Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), a joint venture company of the Government of India and Telangana, has proposed to mine coal at the Naini mine in Chhendipada tahasli of the district.

- The total requirement of land for the project is 912.799 hectares, of which 643.095 hectares is reserve forestland and 140.18 hectares is village forestland. The remaining is non-forestland.
- The SCCL is waiting for environment and forest clearance before diverting 783.275 hectares of forestland for the coal field, which is in the south-eastern corner of the lower Gondwana basin within the Mahanadi Valley.
- 1,05,092 trees would have to be felled in the Chhendipda reserve forest, 1,087 in a revenue forest and 327 in non-forestland.

UN agency in talks with India on wheat procurement amid Ukraine war

- India's wheat production stood at 109.59 million tonnes in the 2020-21 crop year (July-June).
- The World Food Programme launched the 2022 Global Report on Food Crises recently in which UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said that the war in Ukraine is "supercharging" a three-dimensional crisis - food, energy and finance – with devastating impacts on the world's most vulnerable people, countries and economies.
- **What is it?** The World Food Programme (WFP) is the food-assistance branch of the United Nations and the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security.
- **History:** The WFP was formally established in 1963 by the FAO and the United Nations General Assembly.

PM Modi, Macron agree to further expand strategic bilateral ties

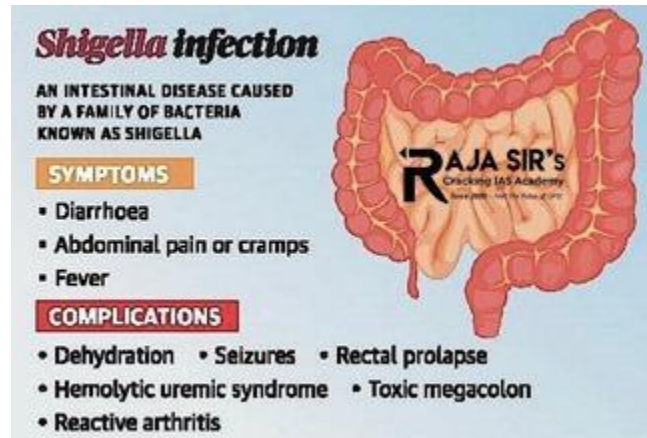
- The two leaders agreed on a blueprint to work together in making the India-France strategic partnership a force for global good.
- Modi arrived here on the final leg of his three-nation European tour.
- Both sides also agreed to work jointly to increase the mobility of students, graduates, professionals and skilled workers while strengthening their efforts to combat irregular migration.

- They also talked about food security issues and the FARM initiative, in which India will play a key role.
- President Macron's renewed mandate and the conversations between Prime Minister Modi and the French President allow the two countries to build on existing strengths and success of India-France strategic partnership.

Punjab Govt offers Rs 1,500/acre aid for direct seeding of rice

- With DSR, paddy seeds are sown directly with machine.
- With DSR technique, which is called 'tar-wattar DSR' (good soil moisture), farmers must sow paddy only after pre-sowing (rauni) irrigation and not in dry fields. Further, the field should be laser levelled.
- DSR technique can help save 15% to 20% water.
- DSR offers avenues for ground water recharge as it prevent the development of hard crust just beneath the plough layer due to puddled transplanting and it matures 7-10 days earlier than puddle transplanted crop, therefore giving more time for management of paddy straw.
- DSR can solve labour shortage problem because as like the traditional method it does not require a paddy nursery and transplantation of 30 days old paddy nursery into the main puddled field.
- Suitability of soil is the most important factor as farmers must not sow it in the light textured soil as this technique is suitable for medium to heavy textured soils including sandy loam, loam, clay loam, and silt loam which accounts for around 80% area of the state.
- It should not be cultivated in sandy and loamy sand as these soils suffer from severe iron deficiency, and there is higher weed problem in it.
- Also, avoid direct seeding of rice in fields which are under crops others than rice (like cotton, maize, sugarcane) in previous years as DSR in these soils is likely to suffer more from iron deficiency and weed problems.

Shigella caused food poisoning in girl who died after eating shawarma



- The presence of the bacteria was confirmed in the blood and faeces of people undergoing treatment after they consumed chicken shawarma from an eatery at Cheruvathur in Kasaragod.
- Shigella is a bacterium that belongs to the enterobacter family – a group of bacteria that reside in the intestine, not all of which cause disease in humans. It mainly affects the intestine and results in diarrhoea, sometimes bloody, stomach pain, and fever.
- Shigellosis is not a very common infection. It is a food- and water-borne infection, and can happen when someone consumes contaminated food – like in the case from Kerala – unwashed fruit or vegetables.
- The disease is easily spread by direct or indirect contact with the excrement of the patient. You can get the infection if you swim or take a bath in contaminated water.
- There are four types of Shigella bacteria that affect humans – Shigella sonnei, Shigella flexneri, Shigella boydii, and Shigella dysenteriae. The fourth type causes the most severe disease because of the toxin it produces.

Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurates three floating Border Outposts on Indo-Bangladesh Border

- Kochi Shipyard has built them. The cost of one BOP is Rs. 38 crore and it weighs around 53,000 metric tonnes.

- These floating BOPs are equipped with modern facilities and safety equipment, the front section of these BOPs are bullet proof, as well as arrangements have been made for plenty of food supplies and these BOPs can float with a DG set without refueling for a month.
- A BOP is accompanied by 6 small boats and it has adequate arrangements to prevent both infiltration and smuggling.

Centre earmarks ₹ 363 crore for film restoration project under National Film Heritage Mission

- The restoration project now awarded is set to commence in full swing at National Film Archive of India (NFAI). The Minister was in Pune to attend the review meeting of the organization.
- Under National Film Heritage Mission, approximately 2,200 films will undergo restoration.
- The titles have been shortlisted by language wise committees consisting of filmmakers, documentary filmmakers, film historians, producers etc.
- Eminent film personalities such as Aparna Sen, Shriram Raghavan, Anjali Menon and Vetrimaaran were part of the committees.
- The process involves frame-to-frame digital and semi-automated manual picture and sound restoration from the best surviving source material.
- The source negative/print will be scanned at 4K to .dpx files, which will be then digitally restored.
- The damages including scratches, dirt and abrasions in every frame of the picture negative will be cleaned during the restoration process.

MAY 7

NCRTC to receive India's first Regional Rapid Transit System train set at Salvi

- The RRTS train sets are being manufactured under Make In India initiative and are capable of running at a top speed of 180 kilometre per hour.

- The train set will be brought to Duhai Depot in Uttar Pradesh and will be maintained and operated from there.
- The fully air-conditioned train boasts of several modern commuter-centric features including cushioned seating, laptop-mobile charging, luggage racks and dynamic route-map.
- NCRTC is the implementing agency of India's first RRTS corridor between Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut. The construction work on the 82-kilometre-long corridor is in full swing.
- The 17 km long priority section between Sahibabad and Duhai is targeted to be commissioned by 2023 and the full corridor will be fully operational by 2025.

EAM Dr S Jaishankar holds bilateral talks with visiting Italian Foreign Minister

- Chief on the agenda was the Ukraine issue, climate change cooperation, and space cooperation between the two countries.
- The Ministers discussed implementing the “India-Italy Strategic Partnership on Energy Transition” announced last year during the Prime Minister’s visit to Italy for the G-20 meeting, and also discussed cooperating at multilateral organisations, including the G-20.
- Italy had agreed to hold the G-20 meeting in India’s place, as New Delhi had wanted more time in order to prepare its hosting of the event in 2023.
- They agreed to explore partnerships in areas such as gas transportation, green hydrogen, bio fuels and energy storage.
- In addition, they agreed to jointly organise an India - Italy Tech Summit on Energy Transition and Circular Economy, to be held in Delhi on November 17, 2022.

Venus mission: ISRO plans to make it a special one

- Shukrayaan-1 is a planned orbiter to Venus by the Indian Space Research Organization to study the surface and atmosphere of Venus.

- Although 2024 has been doing the rounds as the likely year for the ISRO's Venus mission, the space agency can announce a schedule only after the Indian government gives the go-ahead for the mission, said Mr. Somanath.
- Venus offers different challenges compared to Mars, given the thick atmosphere and surface activity, which make it a complex planet.

Centre-Delhi row heads to Constitution Bench

- A three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana said the tussle between the Union and Delhi governments over the limited question concerning 'services' or bureaucracy required an authoritative pronouncement by a five-judge Bench of the Court.
- The CJI said the court did not "deem it necessary to revisit" any other issues between the Centre and the Delhi government, which had already been settled in the earlier judgment of the court in 2018.
- Four years ago, a Constitution Bench had unanimously held that the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi was bound by the "aid and advice" of the popularly-elected Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government and both had to work harmoniously with each other.
- The 2018 judgment had made it clear that the powers of the Centre and the Delhi government were collective and coextensive.
- The judgment had not specifically dealt with the issue of 'services'. The National Capital Territory government had compared its predicament without power over the 'services' like that of a king without a kingdom.

Axis AMC suspends two fund managers for front-running

- Front-running, which is illegal in India, involves purchasing a stock based on advance non-public information regarding an expected large transaction that will affect the price of the share.
- When mutual funds make a big order, some fund managers buy the same shares in their personal accounts before executing the MFs' order. When MFs purchase in huge quantities, the price of the share is expected to go up.

- Sebi has categorised front running as a form of market manipulation and insider trading because a person who commits a front running activity expects security's price movements based on the non-public information.
- Sebi has investigated and penalised several fund houses and fund managers in the past for front-running.

Minister of State for Electronics & IT, Entrepreneurship & Skill Development has inaugurated 5 centers of the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT) in the north east for skill enhancement of the educated youth in the region

- These five centers of NIELIT are in Dibrugarh, Dimapur, Jorhat, Pasighat and Senapati.
- National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT), formerly known as the DOEACC Society, is a society that offers Information Technology and Electronics training at different levels.
- It is associated with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of the Government of India.

NECB 2.0 project

- He also launched the NECB 2.0 project, for capacity building and training in digital skill sets and current industry demanding technologies for various sections of society in the north eastern states.
- The project is funded by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Govt of India.
- National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT) is the Implementing agency, through its centers at Agartala, Aizwal, Gangtok Guwahati, Imphal, Itanagar, Kohima & Shillong.

India's wave of unicorns reaches an all-time high with Neobank Open becoming the 100th unicorn in the country.

- Neobank startup, OPEN becomes the 100th unicorn in India with the latest funding of 50 million dollars from IIFL along with existing investors.

- The Indian Startup Ecosystem, the third-largest in the world in number of Unicorns, is now home to 100 unicorns with a total valuation of 332.7 billion dollars.
- Commerce & Industry Ministry said that one out of every 10 unicorns born globally belongs to India.
- The term 'Unicorns' is referred to startups that attain a valuation of more than 1 billion dollars.
- As per the ministry, in the first four months of 2022, India has given birth to 14 unicorns with a total valuation of 18.9 billion dollars.

World Tuna Day was recently observed on May 2, 2022.

- The day is aimed at promoting the importance of sustainable fishing practices and educating people on how tuna have become endangered species due to the high demand.
- In 2016, the United Nations General Assembly declared this day World Tuna Day to create awareness among the people to preserve the species.
- More than seven million metric tonnes of tuna and tuna-like species are harvested yearly.
- These migratory tuna species account for 20 percent of the value of all marine capture fisheries and over eight percent of all globally traded seafood.
- Tuna is rich in Omega-3 and it also contains minerals, proteins, and vitamin B12, among other advantages.

PM Modi addresses inaugural session of Jain International Trade Organisation

- JITO is a worldwide organisation of businessmen, industrialists, knowledge workers and professionals reflecting the glory of ethical business practices.
- The Prime Minister gave new dimension to the word EARTH.
- E means environment where one should encourage the practices that protect the environment.
- A, means agriculture and natural farming, farming technology and food processing sector, where one should make investments and make it more profitable.

- R means recycling and focusing on the circular economy. Work to reuse, reduce and recycle.
- T means technology for all.
- H means health care where the government is working on a large scale to establish medical colleges in every district.
- JITO should also encourage this sector.

MAY 8

Sedition law need not be revisited, government tells Supreme Court

WHAT THE APEX COURT SAID
This government has been scrapping many obsolete laws. We don't know why they are not looking into this law? Continuance of this law is a serious threat to liberty

- The enormous power of misuse of this section can be compared with a carpenter with a saw. Instead of cutting a tree, he cuts the entire forest
- There is no dispute that it is a colonial law and was used by the British to suppress freedom and was used against Mahatma Gandhi... Is this law still needed after 75 years of Independence?

WHAT IS SECTION 124(A)?
Under Section 124A of IPC, the offence of sedition is committed when any person brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the gov't established by law

- The penal provision is punishable with a jail term ranging between three years to life term

LOW CONVICTION RATE

- Between 2016 and 2019, the number of sedition cases rose by 160% to 93
- But in 2019, the conviction rate was 3.3%
- This means just 2 of the 93 accused were convicted

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- The 1962 KedarNath verdict allowed Section 124A (sedition) to continue to be part of the Indian Penal Code though it limited its applicability to “activities involving incitement to violence or intention or tendency to create public disorder or cause disturbance of public peace”.
- Instances of abuse of Section 124A did not justify reconsideration of a binding judgment upholding the sedition law. The remedy would lie in preventing such abuse on a case-to-case basis, the Centre said.

- A clutch of petitions by senior journalists and prominent bodies and personalities has challenged the legality of the colonial law.
- They have argued that the law of sedition is being rampantly misused by the government to curb fundamental rights of life, dignity, personal liberty, and the freedoms to protest and dissent.
- They said the Kedar Nath judgment had only covered how sedition affected free speech and expression enshrined in Article 19(1)(a) and did not touch upon how the provision would snuff out the right to life (Article 21) and right to equal treatment (Article 14).

Tough anteater (Pangolin) leaves forest officials antsy

- The endangered mammal has refused to accept any food given by the park staff and is mostly spending time in a burrow which it has dug out for itself.
- Pangolins or scaly anteaters are mammals of the order Pholidota.
- The eight species: There are a total of eight pangolin species across Africa and Asia.
- Asian species: Sunda Pangolin, Philippine Pangolin, Chinese Pangolin and 'Indian Pangolin'.
- African species: Long-tailed Pangolin, Tree Pangolin, Giant Pangolin and the Ground Pangolin.
- They have large, protective keratin scales covering their skin, and they are the only known mammals with this feature.
- They roll into a ball when threatened which can make them easy pickings for poachers.

MHA launches 'CAPF Punarvaas' to facilitate retired CAPF, Assam Rifle personnel to secure employment

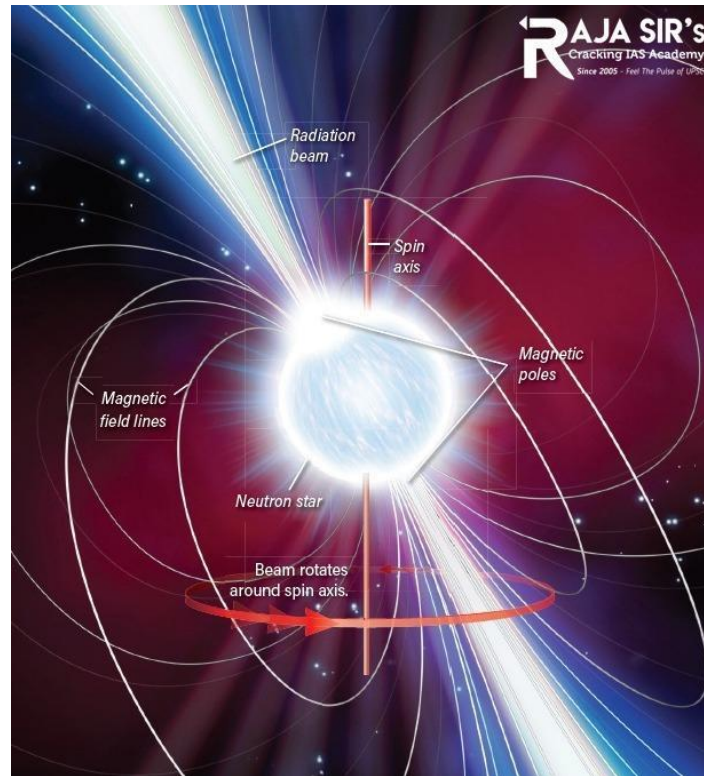
- This has been launched with an aim to facilitate retired Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) and Assam Rifle personnel to secure employment with private security agencies.

- The portal will help retired personnel seeking re-employment to find an appropriate match by uploading their personal details on the WARB website along with their area of expertise and preferred employment location.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs also runs a portal under Private Security Agencies Regulation Act (PSARA) for the registration of Private Security Agencies (PSAs).
- Both websites have now been interlinked whereby the database of retired CAPFs personnel who have applied on 'CAPF Punarvaas' can be accessed by PSAs through PSARA website resulting in a single platform for both job seekers and job providers.
- This new initiative of Ministry of Home Affairs provides access to the data base under 'CAPFs Punarvaas' to PSAs digitally.

VPN providers believe new rules will undermine users' privacy

- The new directive mandates they must maintain all customer data for five years.
- VPN service providers have said the new directive would mean a total loss of privacy for the users-one of the most important unique selling points of such services.
- Any and all devices connected to the internet are a part of a large network of computers, servers and other devices spread across the world.
- To identify each device connected to the internet, service providers globally assign a unique address to each such device called the internet protocol address or IP address.
- It is this IP address that helps websites, law enforcement agencies and even companies track down individual users and their accurate location.
- A virtual private network, when switched on, essentially creates a safe network within the larger global network of the internet and masks the IP address of the user by rerouting the data.
- Acting as a tunnel, a VPN takes data originating from one server and masks it in a different identity before delivering it to the destination server. In essence, a VPN creates several proxy identities for your data and delivers it safely without disturbing the content of the data.

A 'galaxy' is unmasked as a pulsar



- This pulsar could be the most luminous one ever found- 10 times brighter than any other detected.
- The newly found pulsar - called PSR J0523-7125 - is located well beyond the limits of the Milky Way within the Large Magellanic Cloud.
- A pulsar (from pulsating radio source) is a neutron star that rotates quickly and releases two polarised radio lights.
- The beams create a unique timing and polarisation signature as they burst across space.
- Pulsars are among the few celestial objects that emit circular polarised light.

Three distinct classes of pulsars are currently known to astronomers, according to the source of the power of the electromagnetic radiation:

1. rotation-powered pulsars, where the loss of rotational energy of the star provides the power,

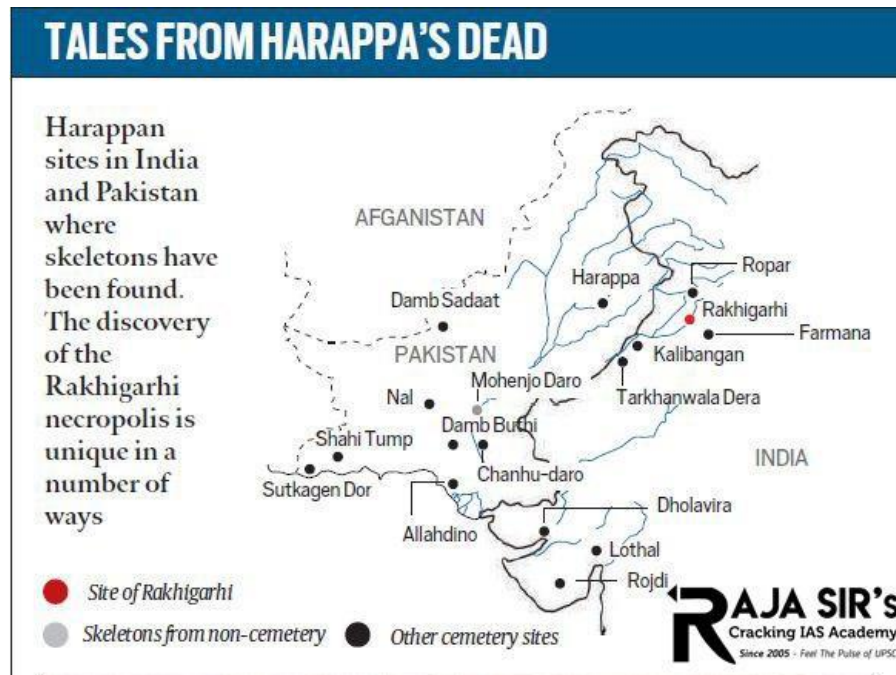
2. accretion-powered pulsars, where the gravitational potential energy of accreted matter is the power source (producing X-rays that are observable from the Earth),
3. magnetars, where the decay of an extremely strong magnetic field provides the electromagnetic power.

Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia, Jamshed Burjor Pardiwala take oath as Supreme Court judges

- Articles 124(2) and 217 of the Constitution governs the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court and High Courts respectively.
- Under both provisions, the President has the power to make the appointments “after consultation with such of the Judges of the Supreme Court and of the High Courts in the States as the President may deem necessary”.
- In three cases – which came to be known as the Judges Cases – in 1981, 1993 and 1998, the Supreme Court evolved the collegium system for appointing judges.

MAY 9

DNA samples from 2 human skeletons found in burial pits at Harappan-era Rakhigarhi sent for analysis



- The skeletons of two women were found a couple of months ago at mound number 7 (named RGR 7 by the Archaeological Survey of India or ASI), believed to be nearly 5,000 years old.
- Pots and other artefacts were also found buried next to them in a pit, part of the funerary rituals back in the Harappan Civilisation era.
- Seven mounds scattered around two villages (Rakhi Khas and Rakhi Shahpur) in Hisar district are part of the Rakhigarhi archaeological site.
- RGR 7 is a cemetery site of the Harappan period when this was a well-organised city.
- At present RGR 1, RGR 3 and RGR 7 have been taken up for investigation.

State of the World's Birds

- Humans eat 14% of the world's surviving species of birds. However, this is not the only reason why 48% of the extant bird species are undergoing population decline, a study led by the Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) says.

- The report has attributed the threat to almost half of the 10,994 recognised extant species of birds to the expanding human footprint on the natural world and climate change.
- The degradation and loss of natural habitats as well as direct overexploitation of many species are the key threats to avian biodiversity, the study
- The use of 37% of the surviving bird species as common or exotic pets and 14% as food are examples of direct overexploitation.
- The review found that 5,245 or about 48% of the existing bird species worldwide were known or suspected to be undergoing population decline.
- While 4,295 or 39% of the species had stable trends, about 7% or 778 species had increasing population trends. The trend of 37 species was unknown.

Modi to dedicate RFCL unit at Ramagundam

- The RFCL is a joint venture between National Fertilizers Limited, Engineers India Limited and Fertilizer Corporation of India, which operated the unit until it stopped production on March 31, 1999.
- By a 2015 revival package, the plant was commissioned with an investment of ₹ 6,180 crore.
- It was targeted to complete the works by 2018 but quite a few deadlines were jumped since.

India's Forex Reserves rise \$8.895 billion to record high of \$642.453 billion

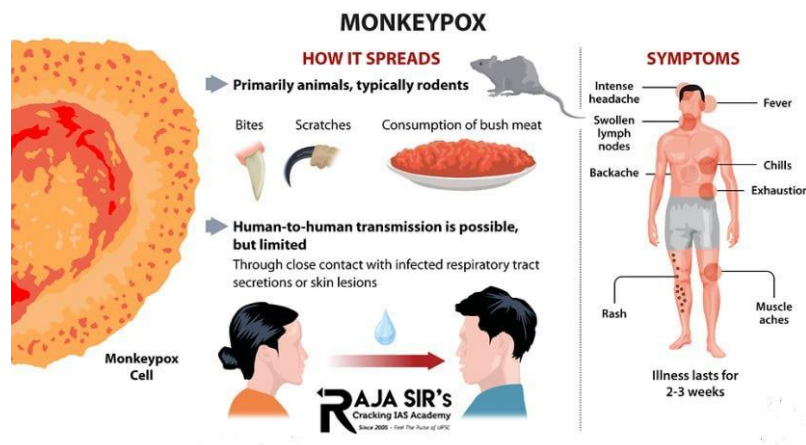
- Foreign exchange reserves declined by \$ 2.69 billion to \$ 597.72 billion during the week ended April 29.
- With this fall, forex reserves have declined \$ 44.73 billion from \$ 642.45 billion recorded on September 3, 2021, according to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data.
- The decline was on account of a fall in foreign currency assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves. The foreign currency assets also include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the reserves.

- A major reason for the decline in forex reserves is capital outflows by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) who pulled out \$ 21.43 billion since September 2021 as the US Federal Reserve started monetary policy tightening and interest rate hikes.

Mastodon, the 'Twitter alternative'

- Dubbed as an open-source and distributed or federated social network, Mastodon allows users to create their own networks or 'instances', essentially handing control and ownership of data back to the user.
- Each instance has its own policies related to content moderation, code of conduct, terms of service and privacy etc. Users can select which instance they want to be part of, based on which policies align best with what they want from the social media platform.
- But even if you are part of a certain instance, you can still communicate with users who are part of other instances.
- This is intended at giving users the flexibility to select an instance whose policies they prefer while still giving them the benefit of access to a wider social network.
- social is the flagship server of the service and it is run by a Mastodon gGmbH, a non-profit that is crowdfunded by Patreon donations.

Monkeypox virus case confirmed in U.K. after Nigeria travel link



- The monkeypox virus is an orthopoxvirus, which is a genus of viruses that also includes the variola virus, which causes smallpox, and vaccinia virus, which was used in the smallpox vaccine.
- Monkeypox causes symptoms similar to smallpox, although they are less severe.
- While vaccination eradicated smallpox worldwide in 1980, monkeypox continues to occur in a swathe of countries in Central and West Africa, and has on occasion showed up elsewhere.
- According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), two distinct clade are identified: the West African clade and the Congo Basin clade, also known as the Central African clade.
- Monkeypox is a zoonosis, that is, a disease that is transmitted from infected animals to humans.
- Cases occur close to tropical rainforests inhabited by animals that carry the virus. Monkeypox virus infection has been detected in squirrels, Gambian poached rats, dormice, and some species of monkeys.
- Human-to-human transmission is, however, limited. Transmission, when it occurs, can be through contact with bodily fluids, lesions on the skin or on internal mucosal surfaces, such as in the mouth or throat, respiratory droplets and contaminated objects.

Women and Foreign Correspondents press clubs get notice to vacate

- The Foreign Correspondents' Club (FCC) was founded in 1958 by overseas correspondents posted in India to cover the country and the region – including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, etc – for their publications.
- In 1990, the FCC was allotted premises on Mathura Road.
- The Indian Women's Press Corps (IWPC) is India's first association of women journalists.
- It came up on 5 Windsor Place in 1994 after 18 women journalists pooled in Rs 1,000 each, set up a trust and organised themselves as a support group to help

their colleagues meet challenges that were unique to women, and ensure women's bylines were respected and heard.

MAY 10

Severe cyclone Asani rages in Bay of Bengal; Odisha plans evacuation

- Systems formed over the Bay of Bengal in the peak of summer in May are among the strongest in the North Indian Ocean region. Warm seas present ripe conditions for cyclogenesis, and to fuel these systems over the water.
- The 'Extremely Severe' cyclone Fani and 'Super cyclone' Amphan wreaked havoc in Odisha and West Bengal respectively. Cyclone Asani by contrast, is expected to only graze the coast, and not make landfall.

NFHS-5 Report: Only one percent of women drink alcohol compared to 22 percent of men

- The percentage of women who consume alcohol is the highest in Arunachal Pradesh (18%), followed by Sikkim (15%).
- Alcohol use among men is the highest in Goa (59%), followed by Arunachal Pradesh (57%), and Telangana (50%), while it is the lowest in Lakshadweep (1%).
- Among women who drink alcohol, 17% consume it almost every day and 37% drink about once a week. Among men, while 15% consume almost daily, 43% drink about once a week, and 42% do less than once a week.
- Drinking alcohol is more common among women from Scheduled Tribes (4%) than from any other caste/tribe group. Consumption is also most common among Christian men (36%) and men belonging to "other" religions (49%).
- Overall the proportion of men who drink alcohol decreased from 29% to 22% between NFHS-4 in 2015-2016 and NFHS-5 in 2019-2021. During that period, the proportion of women who drink has remained unchanged.

Cyclone Asani, which developed over southeast regions of Bay of Bengal and intensified into a 'severe cyclone', was named by Sri Lanka. Asani means "wrath" in Sinhalese.

- In 2000, a group of nations called WMO/ESCAP (World Meteorological Organisation/United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) decided to start naming cyclones in the region.
- After each country sent in suggestions, the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones (PTC) finalised the list.
- The list of 169 cyclone names released by IMD in April 2020 were provided by these countries – 13 suggestions from each of the 13 countries.
- The proposed name should be neutral to (a) politics and political figures (b) religious believes, (c) cultures and (d) gender
- It should be short, the maximum length of the name will be eight letters
- The names of tropical cyclones over the north Indian Ocean will not be repeated. Once used, it will cease to be used again. Thus, the name should be new.

Assam Rifles honours surviving soldiers of India's most successful counter-insurgency operation

- A team of 15 soldiers of the Assam Rifles' 7th Battalion led by Naib Subedar Padam Bahadur Chhetri had on May 5, 1991, gunned down 72 Pakistan-trained extremists and captured 13 others at 14,000 ft in J&K.
- Two Assam Rifles soldiers died during the six-hour gun battle.

Andaman and Nicobar islands to get gas plant

- The Island Coastal Zone Regulation (ICRZ), 2019, limits infrastructure development on vulnerable coastal stretches.

- The National Coastal Zone Management Authority (NCZMA) has recommended that gas-based power plants be permitted within the Island Coastal Regulation Zone area only on islands with geographical areas greater than 100 sq. km.
- Following visits by the NTPC personnel, a dual-fuel power plant that runs on both diesel and LNG is expected to be commissioned.
- There has been an increased interest in the development of the Andaman region following a policy push by the NITI Aayog. A proposed project plans to develop the Greater Andaman region or the southernmost stretch of the island group.
- Proposals include a 22-sq.km airport complex, a transshipment port (TSP) at South Bay at an estimated cost of ₹ 12,000 crore, a parallel-to-the-coast mass rapid transport system and a free trade zone and warehousing complex on the southwestern coast.

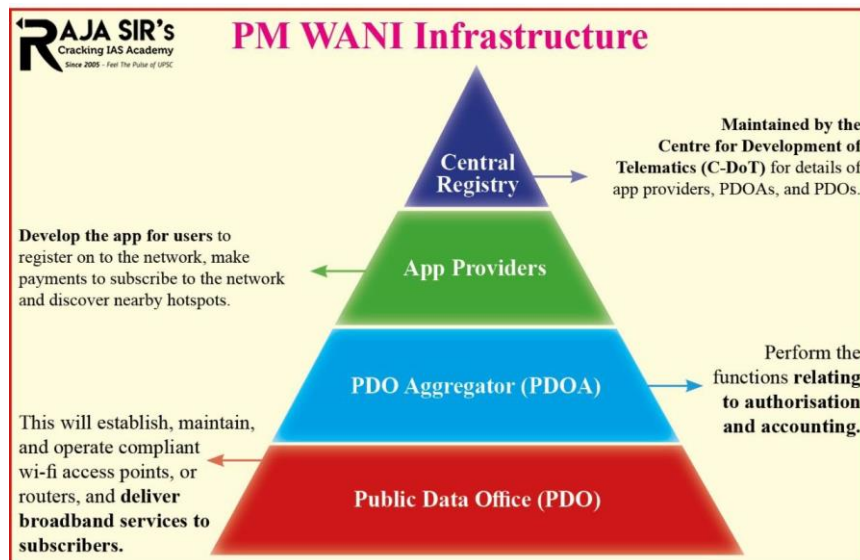
When MPs have been asking for an increase in the MP Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) fund, the Union Finance Ministry has ordered revised rules.

- The order of the Ministry dated April 11 was conveyed to the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha only by the last week of April.
- Each MP is allocated ₹ 5 crore annually under the scheme.
- The MPLADS fund is released to the district authority and the MPs only have power to recommend development work. The payment is also released by the designated district authority on completion of the work.
- So far, the interest accrued on the fund used to be added to the MPLADS account and could be used for the development projects.
- Opposition parties criticized the changed guidelines, arguing that the new order was in violation of the MPLADS guidelines of 2016.

RailTel launches PM-WANI based access to its WiFi across 100 railway stations

- To access this WiFi network, android users can download the mobile app 'Wi-DOT' available on Google Play Store. This app has been developed in close coordination with C-DOT.

- This method of accessing Wi-Fi through the 'mobile app' will be in addition to the existing method of accessing WiFi at these stations through the conventional method of selecting RailWire Service Set Identifier (SSID).
- PM-WANI is an ambitious program of the Department of Telecom (DoT) to connect all silo Wi-Fi networks for ease of use and proliferate broadband usage for the masses.
- The government further plans to extend the PM-WANI-based access of RailTel's public Wi-Fi services to all 6,102 railway stations in a phased manner by the end of June 2022.



Delhi HC Asks UIDAI Whether They Can Provide Info on Murder Suspect

- The UIDAI, which issues the unique Aadhaar number to residents of India, is prohibited by law from sharing any core biometric information with police.
- The Aadhaar Act requires the UIDAI to ensure confidentiality and security of the identity information it collects.
- According to UIDAI, the Delhi Police's prayer is contrary to Section 29 of the Act, which prohibits it from sharing core biometric information – fingerprint, iris scan or any such biological attribute – with any agency “for any reason whatsoever”.

- The UIDAI has also said that no Aadhaar data can be shared by any individual or entity with anyone without the consent of the resident or holder of the Aadhaar.

Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying inaugurated Mobile Veterinary Units.

- The component “ESVHFD-MVU” under Central Sector Scheme “Livestock Health & Disease Control” provides veterinary health services at farmers’ door-steps through Mobile Veterinary Units.
- The services are to be operated through Call Centers in the State/UTs, the farmers in case of any emergency will make call to these call centers and after prioritizing the emergencies, the services for diagnosis and treatment will be provided by a team of Veterinarian & Para-veterinarian in these Mobile Veterinary Units.

India Heatwaves and the role humidity plays in making them deadly

- Humans lose heat generated within their body by producing sweat that evaporates on the skin.
- The cooling effect of this evaporation is essential in maintaining a stable body temperature.
- As humidity rises, sweat does not evaporate –just like clothes take a long time to dry in humid locations - and makes it difficult to regulate body temperature. This is why we feel more discomfort in humid places.
- The humidity required to reach wet bulb temperatures in excess of 35°C over land is exceedingly difficult to achieve for a variety of reasons.
- In the recent IPCC report AR6, instead of the “dry bulb” temperature that is usually measured using a regular thermometer, an alternative metric known as the “wet bulb temperature” has been used to measure exposure to extreme heat.
- The report mentions that sustained exposures to wet bulb temperatures above 35°C are fatal, while sustained exposures to wet bulb temperatures above 32°C are dangerous for intense physical activity.

MAY 11

Government declares top sporting events as events of national importance

- The notification, which supersedes the earlier one issued in March 2021, has declared all Olympics Games, Commonwealth Games and Asian Games as events of national importance.

The following list is not exhaustive:

- Under the cricket category, all official One-Day, Twenty-20 and Test matches played by the Indian team and all International Cricket Council (ICC) Test matches featuring India; semi-finals and finals of ICC One-Day international World Cup; semi-finals and finals of ICC Twenty-20 World Cup have been recognised.
- The tennis category includes all matches featuring India in Davis Cup, and in Grand Slam tournaments, finals of men's singles, women's singles and all matches featuring Indian player from the quarter-finals onwards.

Punjab promoting green manure big time

- Green manures are crops grown specifically for maintaining soil fertility and structure.
- They are normally incorporated back into the soil, either directly, or after removal and composting.
- There are three main varieties of green manure, including Dhaincha, Cowpea, Sunhemp.
- Also some crops such as summer moong, mash pulses and guar act as green manure.
- Green manure varieties are incorporated into the soil when the crop is 42-56 days old.
- Green manure must be leguminous in nature, bear maximum nodules on its roots to fix large amount of atmospheric nitrogen in the soil.

- It helps in enhancing the organic matter in the soil, meets the deficiency of the micronutrients and reduces the consumption of the inorganic fertilisers etc.

Medication Abortions Are Increasing

- Medication abortion is a regimen of pills women can take at home, a method increasingly used around the world.
- The protocol approved for use in the United States includes two medications.
- The first one, mifepristone, blocks a hormone called progesterone that is necessary for a pregnancy to continue. The second, misoprostol, brings on uterine contractions.
- The Food and Drug Administration has approved medication abortion for up to 10 weeks of pregnancy. World Health Organization guidelines say it can be used up to 12 weeks at home and after 12 weeks in a medical office.
- Is it effective, and is it safe? Yes on both counts. In US studies, the combination of these pills causes a complete abortion in more than 99% of patients and is as safe as the traditional abortion procedure administered by a doctor in a clinic.
- During the pandemic, medication abortion became more common because patients wanted to avoid going to clinics in person, and a change in federal law made it easier for them to get prescriptions via telemedicine.

Army Chief Gen. Manoj Pande receives Param Vishisht Seva Medal

- Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM) is a military award of India.
- It was constituted in 1960 and since then it is awarded in recognition to peacetime service of the most exceptional order and may be awarded posthumously.
- All ranks of the Indian Armed Forces including Territorial Army, Auxiliary and Reserve Forces, Nursing officers and other members of the Nursing services and other lawfully constituted Armed Forces are eligible for the award.

Four Reuters photographers win Pulitzer

- Arguably the most coveted award for journalists from across the world, the Pulitzer is announced by America's Columbia University and bestowed on the recommendation of the Pulitzer Prize Board.
- The Pulitzer Prize is an award for achievements in newspaper, magazine, online journalism, literature and musical composition within the United States.
- It was established in 1917 by provisions in the will of Joseph Pulitzer.
- Prizes are awarded yearly in twenty-one categories.

Indians who have previously won the Pulitzer

- A member of the Ghadar Party in America, Indian-American journalist Gobind Behari Lal, was the first from India to win the Pulitzer Prize for journalism in 1937. He won the award for reporting with four others, for their coverage of science at the tercentenary of Harvard University.
- In 2000, London-born Indian-American writer Jhumpa Lahiri won the Pulitzer Prize in Fiction for her debut short story collection Interpreter of Maladies.
- In 2011, Siddhartha Mukherjee (Indian-American physician, biologist and author) won the Pulitzer Prize for General Non-Fiction for his demystification of cancer in The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer.

Over half of India's population is still under age 30, slight dip in last 5 years

- There has been only a slight dip in the young population's share in the last five years.
- Between the National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-16) and NFHS-5 (2019-21), the under-15 population has declined by 2 percentage points, from 29% to 27%, while the over-60 population has increased by as many points, from 10% to 12%.
- Over half the population (52%) is below 30, compared to 55.5% in NFHS-4.
- The NFHS divides the population into 5-year age groups from 0-4 years to 75-79, while those over 80 are counted in a single age group.

- The age pyramid shows India's population is young, which is typical of developing countries with low life expectancy.
- The pyramid also shows that the average household size has decreased slightly between 2015-16 and 2019-21 (from 4.6 persons to 4.4).
- Just over one-sixth of households (18%) have female heads, up from 15% in NFHS-4.

J&K LG Manoj Sinha visits 8th Century Sun Temple in Anantnag

- The ASI, which functions under the Ministry of Culture, is the custodian of the protected monument.
- According to ASI officials, prayers are allowed at its protected sites only if they were "functioning places of worship" at the time it took charge of them. No religious rituals can be conducted at non-living monuments where there has been no continuity of worship when it became an ASI-protected site.
- Although the Martand Sun Temple was once a thriving place of worship, commissioned by Lalitaditya Muktapida in the eighth century, it was destroyed by Sikandar Shah Miri in the 14th century.

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Martand Temple : Jammu and Kashmir



- ❑ Gothic Temple architecture
- ❑ Built during 8th C CE
- ❑ Dedicated to Sun God, Bhaskar
- ❑ Colonnaded courtyard, with primary shrine in centre & surrounded by 84 smaller shrines
- ❑ Largest example of a peristyle in Kashmir
- ❑ Material: Limestone
- ❑ Entire complex has been built on top of a plateau near Anantnag

Himachal Pradesh is the first 'smoke-free state' in India.

- This milestone has been achieved due to the effective implementation of Central Governments' Pradhan Mantri 'Ujjwala Yojana'(PMUY) and 'Himachal Grihini Suvidha Scheme' of the Himachal Pradesh government.
- Now, 100% of households in Himachal Pradesh have LPG connections in their houses.
- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 1, 2016 from Ballia district in Uttar Pradesh to provide clean cooking fuel to poor households and the target to provide Eight crore deposit free LPG connections was achieved in September, 2019.
- With the implementation of PMUY, approx. 1 lakh people have got employment through the LPG distribution system all over India as of February 23, 2022.

MAY 12

Union Minister inaugurates Centre of Excellence for Khadi

- The CoEK hub in New Delhi and its spokes in Gandhinagar, Shillong, Kolkata and Bengaluru were inaugurated by Union Minister of MSME, Shri Narayan Rane, at NIFT Campus in New Delhi .
- An MoU, for setting up of CoEK, was signed between KVIC and NIFT last year and the project will be implemented over a period of 3 years.
- The CoEK will work to introduce the latest designs and adopt processes of international standards to create new fabrics and clothing as per the needs of the domestic and global buyers.
- The CoEK will also contribute to branding and publicity, visual merchandising and packaging for new Khadi products and increasing the global reach of Khadi by organizing Khadi Fashion shows and exhibitions in India and abroad.

Oil Marketing Companies enter into long-term purchase agreement for upcoming dedicated ethanol plants

- The first set of Tripartite Agreement was signed among Oil Marketing Companies and Banks of the respective Ethanol Plant Projects.
- State Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank and Indian Bank are three banks involved in this agreement with Oil Marketing Companies.
- As per the agreement, ethanol produced by these dedicated ethanol plants shall be sold to Oil Marketing Companies for blending with Petrol as per government Ethanol-Blended Petrol Programme.
- In Ethanol Supply Year 2021-22, India has achieved 9.90 per cent ethanol blending, consuming 186 crore litre of ethanol and saving of over nine thousand crore rupees of foreign exchange.

Union Environment Minister delivers the National Statement at the 15th Session of the Conference of Parties of UNCCD

- The fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is being held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, from 9 to 20 May 2022.
- The COP15 theme, 'Land. Life. Legacy: From scarcity to prosperity', is a call to action to ensure land, the lifeline on this planet, continues to benefit present and future generations.
- Several global developments indicate support to the objectives of UNCCD, such as the launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) that aims at halting and reversing ecosystem degradation and loss.
- The importance placed on increasing area, connectivity and integrity of natural ecosystems is visible in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
- For the first time, an Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) on effective policy and implementation measures for addressing drought under the United Nations Convention for Combating Desertification (UNCCD) was established by decision 23/COP.14. India held the 14th COP in Delhi in 2019.

Balkrishna Vithaldas Doshi has been conferred with the prestigious Royal Gold Medal 2022.

- The president of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), Simon Allford, presented the medal to the renowned architect in person at his residence in Ahmedabad.
- The Royal Gold Medal is approved personally by Queen Elizabeth and is given to people who have had a significant influence on the advancement of architecture.
- The 94-year-old architect is among the rare people to have been awarded both the Royal Gold Medal and the Pritzker Architecture Prize in their lifetime.

Delhi HC delivers split verdict on marital rape

- Justice Rajiv Shakdher, who headed the Bench, struck down as unconstitutional the exception to Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code, which says that sexual intercourse by a man with his wife aged 18 and above is not rape even if it is without her consent.
- The right to withdraw consent at any given point in time forms the core of the woman's right to life and liberty which encompasses her right to protect her physical and mental being," Justice Shakdher said, calling for a change in the 162-year-old law.
- However, Justice C. Hari Shankar rejected the plea to criminalise marital rape noting that any change in the law has to be carried out by the legislature since the issue requires consideration of social, cultural and legal aspects.
- In India, marital rape is not defined in law. The High Court's verdict came on a bunch of petitions, including by NGO RIT Foundation, the AIDWA and a marital rape victim.

Perarivalan case | Supreme Court slams government claim that only President has power to pardon

- A three-judge Bench said the government's argument, if taken on face value, would leave Article 161 (the constitutional power of Governors of States to grant pardon) a "dead letter".
- The court said then by the Centre's logic, every murder case convict would have to move the President for pardon.

- Article 161 of Indian constitution: ****The Governor of a State shall have the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence against any law relating to a matter to which the executive power of the State extends.

SC halts trials under colonial era sedition law

- All pending trials, appeals and proceedings with respect to the charge framed under Section 124A of the IPC be kept in abeyance,” a three-judge Bench ordered.
- It was argued in court that nearly 13,000 people were already in jail under the sedition provision.
- The court also made it clear that it “hopes and expects” the Centre and States to restrain from registering FIRs, continuing investigations or take coercive measures under Section 124A while the “reconsideration” of the colonial provision was on.
- Adding a fail-safe to protect civil liberties against any future misuse of Section 124A while it was under the Union’s microscope, the court ordered that the persons accused in fresh cases were free to approach courts.
- The court, meanwhile, gave the Union of India liberty to issue a directive to States and authorities to prevent the continued misuse of the sedition law.

“Tomato flu” cases being detected in Kerala.

- The flu gets its name because of the red blister it causes.
- The flu affects children below five years of age.
- The symptoms of this flu, also called Tomato fever, include rashes, skin irritation and dehydration. The flu can also cause tiredness, joint pain, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, coughing, sneezing, runny nose, high fever, and body ache. In some cases, it may also change the colour of the legs and the hands.

- This flu is a self-limiting one and there is no specific drug for this. This means that the symptoms will resolve overtime on their own if supportive care is given.
- Like other cases of flu, tomato fever is also contagious. If someone is infected with this flu, they need to be kept in isolation as this could spread rapidly from one person to another.
- It is essential to prevent children from scratching the blisters caused by the flu. Proper rest and hygiene is also advised. Utensils, clothes and other items used by the infected persons must be sanitised to prevent the flu from spreading.
- Fluid intake would also help counteract dehydration.

PM Modi launches Amrit Sarovar Mission

- The Mission is aimed at developing and rejuvenating 75 water bodies in each district of the country as a part of celebration of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- The Mission Amrit Sarovar is to be completed by 15th August 2023.
- In total, it would lead to creation of 50,000 water bodies of a size of about an Acre or more with a water holding capacity of 10,000 cubic meter.
- This Mission has been launched with a whole of Government Approach in which following Ministries/Department are involved: Dept of Rural Development , Department of land resources, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Department of Water resources, Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Ministry of Environment.
- Also Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Application and Geoinformatics(BISAG-N) has been engaged as Technical partner for the Mission.
- The Mission works through the States and Districts, through refocusing of various schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi NREGS, XV Finance Commission Grants, PMKSY sub schemes such as Watershed Development Component, Har Khet Ko Pani besides States' own schemes.

India elected as Chair of Association of Asian Election Authorities for 2022-24

- Commission on Elections, Manila was the current chair of AAEA. The new member in the Executive Board now includes Russia, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Taiwan and Philippines.

- In pursuance of the resolution passed by participants of the Symposium on Asian Elections in the Twenty First Century held from January 26-29, 1997 in Manila, Philippines, the Association of Asian Election Authorities (AAEA) was established in 1998.
- Currently 20 Asian EMBs are members of AAEA.
- Election commission of India (ECI) is a founder member EMB of the AAEA and also served on the Executive Board of the AAEA as the Vice Chair during 2011-13 and Chair during 2014-16.
- The mission of the Association of Asian Election Authorities is to provide a non-partisan forum in the Asian region for sharing experiences and best practices among election authorities.
- AAEA is also an Associate Member of the 118 member Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB).

MAY 13

The First Picture of the Black Hole at the Milky Way's Heart Has Been Revealed

- The image of Sagittarius A* (SgrA*) gave further support to the idea that the compact object at the centre of our galaxy is indeed a black hole, strengthening Einstein's general theory of relativity.
- In 2019, the Event Horizon Telescope facility, a collaboration of over 300 researchers, made history by releasing the first-ever image of a black hole, M87* – the black hole at the centre of a galaxy Messier 87, which is a supergiant elliptic galaxy.
- The ring-shaped image of SgrA*, which looked a lot similar to the one of M87*, occupied 52 microarcseconds in the field of view, which is as big a span of our view as a doughnut on the moon.
- The whole exercise was possible because of the enormous power of the Event Horizon Telescope, an ensemble of several telescopes around the world, which

together were like a giant eye on the earth with a sight that is 3 million times sharper than the human eye.

- Sagittarius A* is 27,000 light years from us.

Food production to dip, hunger to rise in India due to climate change, says report

- These projections are part of a IMPACT model that was used to evaluate the impact of climate change on aggregate food production, food consumption (kilocalories per person per day), net trade of major food commodity groups, and the population at risk of going hungry.
- IMPACT, as the model is called, simulates national and international agricultural markets.
- It was developed with inputs from scientists from the Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers (CGIAR) and other leading global economic modelling efforts.
- The number of Indians at risk from hunger in 2030 is expected to be 73.9 million in 2030 and, if the effects of climate change were to be factored in, it would increase to 90.6 million.
- The aggregate food production index will, under similar conditions, drop from 1.6 to 1.5.
- On a positive note, climate change will not impact the average calorie consumption of Indians and this is projected to remain roughly the same at 2,600 kcal per capita per day by 2030 even in a climate change scenario.

Calls for global efforts to curb match-fixing

- The participants discussed the emerging uses of technology, big data and social media given that criminal syndicates were increasingly operating across betting and sports markets.
- They also acknowledged that match-fixers are still very much relying on tried and true methods of manipulation, such as targeting the entourage of athletes and grooming young players, pointing to a continued need for education.
- The members deliberated on various mechanisms to improve intelligence sharing “such as the establishment of national platforms, as outlined in the

Macolin Convention, that centralise and analyse information on irregular and suspicious trends”.

- The Council of Europe Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions, known as the Macolin Convention, is a multilateral treaty aimed at checking match-fixing. It came into force on September 1, 2019.

The India hypertension control initiative

- The Health Ministry, the Indian Council of Medical Research, State Governments, and WHO-India began a five-year initiative in November 2017 to monitor and treat hypertension.
- Hypertension is defined as having systolic blood pressure level greater than or equal to 140 mmHg or diastolic blood pressure level greater than or equal to 90 mmHg or/and taking anti-hypertensive medication to lower his/her blood pressure.
- India has committed to a "25 by 25" goal, which aims to reduce premature mortality due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by 25% by 2025.
- One of the nine voluntary targets includes reducing the prevalence of high blood pressure by 25% by 2025.
- Southern States have a higher prevalence of hypertension than the national average, according to the latest edition of the National Family Health Survey.
- While 21.3% of women and 24% of men aged above 15 have hypertension in the country, the prevalence is the highest in Kerala where 32.8% men and 30.9% women have been diagnosed with hypertension.

On the question of notifying minorities

- The PIL specifically questions the validity of Section 2(f) of the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions or NCMEI Act 2004, terming it arbitrary and contrary to Articles 14, 15, 21, 29 and 30 of the Constitution.
- Section 2(f) says “minority ,”for the purpose of this Act, means a community notified as such by the Central Government.”
- Section 2(c) of the of National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act, 1992 also gives the Centre similar powers.

- In 2005, the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) at the Centre notified five communities – Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis – as minorities at the national level.
- In 2014, the Manmohan Singh government notified followers of Jainism as a minority community, making them the sixth on the national list.
- Centre's decision was arbitrary since the SC had held, in the T. M. A. Pai Foundation vs State Of Karnataka case of 2002 that, "for the purpose of determining minority, the unit will be State and not whole India."
- Centre's notification has created an anomalous situation in which the communities declared as minorities by the Centre enjoy the status even in States/UTs where they are in majority (Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir and Christians in Nagaland for instance) while followers of Hinduism, Judaism and Bahaim who are minorities are not accorded the same status under the Act.

Army to get special vehicles for high-altitude areas

- The PMV is essentially a wheeled armoured personnel carrier. It provides protection to the soldiers travelling inside the vehicle from mine blasts and sudden attack by small arms.
- India has the capability of producing PMVs. In April this year, the Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) handed over the first of such Infantry Protected Mobility Vehicles (IPMVs) to the then Chief of Army Staff, Gen MM Naravane.
- The TASL is now the first private sector company in the country to produce such wheeled armoured personnel carriers and has developed the IPMV in collaboration with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

PM Modi virtually addresses Utkarsh Samaroh in Gujarats Bharuch

- The programme has organized to mark the celebration of 100 percent saturation of four key schemes of the state government in the district. These will help in providing timely financial assistance to those in need.

- Bharuch district administration has carried out 'Utkarsh Initiative' drive to ensure complete coverage of schemes providing assistance to widows, elderly and destitute citizens.
- A total of 12,854 beneficiaries were identified across the four schemes, which include Ganga Swaroopa Aarthik Sahay Yojana, Indira Gandhi Vrudh Sahay Yojana, Niradhar Vrudh Aarthik Sahay Yojana and Rashtriya Kutumb Sahay Yojana.
- During the drive from January to March this year, taluka-wise Whatsapp helpline numbers were announced to collect information about those who were not receiving benefits of the scheme.
- Utkarsh camps were organized in all villages and wards of municipality areas of the district, to collect the necessary documents for on the spot approval. Incentives were also given to Utkarsh assistants to further facilitate the drive.

MAY 14

Scientists report spotting of fossil of Madtsoiidae snake

- Madtsoiidae is an extinct group of medium-sized to gigantic snakes, firstly appeared during the late Cretaceous and mostly distributed in the Gondwanan landmasses, although, their Cenozoic record is extremely scarce.
- From the fossil record, the whole group disappeared in the mid-Paleogene across most Gondwanan continents except for Australia where it survived with its last known taxon Wonambi till late Pleistocene.
- Now, scientists have reported for the first time a Madtsoiidae snake from the late Oligocene (part of the Tertiary Period in the Cenozoic Era, and lasted from about 33.7 to 23.8 million years ago) of India or the molasse deposits of Ladakh Himalaya.
- The occurrence of Madtsoiidae from the Oligocene of Ladakh indicates their continuity at least to the end of the Paleogene (geologic period and system that spans 43 million years from the end of the Cretaceous Period 66 million years ago).

India's first Amrit Sarovar opened to public in Uttar Pradesh

- With a view to conserve water for the future, the Prime Minister has launched a new initiative named Mission Amrit Sarovar on 24th April 2022.
- The Mission is aimed at developing and rejuvenating 75 water bodies in each district of the country as a part of celebration of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.
- Modi had namechecked Patwai during his monthly Mann Ki Baat programme in April.

Centre reviews progress of Ujh Multipurpose Project

- The expected timeline of completion of the project is about 6 years and once completed, the project will store around 781 Million Cubic meter of waters of river Ujh (a tributary of river Ravi).
- After completion of the project, utilization of waters of Eastern Rivers allotted to India as per the Indus Water Treaty would be enhanced by utilizing of the flow that presently goes across border to Pakistan.

Ministry Of Culture To Organise A Week-Long Celebration For 'International Museum Day' Across Its Museums

- The following Museums are undertaking special initiatives throughout the designated week:
 - National Museum (New Delhi),
 - National Gallery of Modern Art (New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru),
 - Allahabad Museum (Prayagraj),
 - Indian Museum (Kolkata),
 - Victoria Memorial Hall (Kolkata),
 - Salar Jung Museum (Hyderabad) and
 - Science cities and centers under National Council of Science Museums (in 24 locations across India).
- Earlier, Ministry of Culture's renewed mandate of 'Reimagining Museums in India' a Global Summit was held in February this year.

- Ministry of Culture is also set to announce the launch of 'Museum' - a hackathon with museum-centric problem statements; and a 'Museums in India' mobile app containing a digital repository of their collections.

ISRO successfully tests solid rocket booster for Gaganyaan programme

- The test was held at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.
- Designed and developed by the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) in Thiruvananthapuram for over two years, the HS200 booster is the 'human-rated' version of the S200 rocket boosters used on the geosynchronous satellite launch vehicle Mk-III (GSLV Mk-III), also called the LVM3.
- The GSLV Mk-III rocket, which will be used for the Gaganyaan mission, will have two HS200 boosters that will supply the thrust for lift-off.
- The HS200 is a 20-metre-long booster with a diameter of 3.2 metres and is the world's second largest operational booster using solid propellants.
- Since Gaganyaan is a manned mission, the GSLV Mk-III will have improvements to increase reliability and safety to meet the requirements of 'human rating.' Of the three propulsion stages of the GSLV Mk-III, the second stage uses liquid propellant while the third is a cryogenic stage.

China, Russia, Pakistan to attend SCO anti-terror meet in Delhi

- While both India and Pakistan have no bilateral engagement at present and have not attended other regional meets such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) meet, they both attended the Russia and China-led SCO meet.
- Last year, an Indian team also travelled to Pakistan to attend the SCO-RATS exercises in Pabbi.
- India is expected to host the SCO summit in 2023, which would see leaders of the eight-member grouping (China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) travelling to New Delhi.

- In October, joint anti-terrorist exercises titled “Manesar-Antiterror-2022” will be held on the NSG training campus in Manesar, and will be followed by another joint border operation of the SCO member states called “Friendship Border-2022” in Kazakhstan later this year.
- Both exercises were decided at a meeting of SCO-RATS in Tashkent on March 25 this year, which was chaired by India.
- The Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is the permanent body of the SCO RATS based in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan.

Iron in Tamil Nadu 4,200 years ago

- Before this, the earliest evidence of iron use was from 1900-2000 BCE for the country, and from 1500 BCE for Tamil Nadu. The latest evidence dates the findings from Tamil Nadu to 2172 BCE.
- Chief Minister M K Stalin said in the Assembly that it has been established that Tamils who lived 4,200 years ago were aware of iron.
- Dense forests were converted into fertile lands only after humankind began realising the use of iron. This finding has answered questions relating to the start of agricultural activity in Tamil Nadu.
- The excavations are from Mayiladumparai near Krishnagiri in Tamil Nadu. Mayiladumparai is an important site with cultural material dating back between the Microlithic (30,000 BCE) and Early Historic (600 BCE) ages.
- The site is situated in the midst of several archaeological sites such as Togarapalli, Gangavaram, Sandur, Vedarhattakkal, Guttur, Gidlur, Sappamutlu and Kappalavadi. All these important archaeological sites lie within 10 km.

PM Modi to virtually launch Madhya Pradesh Startup Policy and address Startup community

- He also launched the Madhya Pradesh Startup portal, which will facilitate and help promote the startup ecosystem. He also interacted with the startup entrepreneurs.
- He recalled that in 2014 when his Government was formed, the number of startups in the country was about 300-400. Today there are about 70000 recognized startups.
- He said about 50% of startups are from Tier II & Tier III cities and they cover many states and cities. They are associated with more than 50 industries.

NITI Aayog launched the National Data & Analytics Platform (NDAP) for open public use.

- The platform aims to democratize access to public government data by making data accessible, interoperable, interactive, and available on a user-friendly platform.
- It hosts foundational datasets from various government agencies, presents them coherently, and provides tools for analytics and visualization.
- This public launch follows a beta release of the platform in August 2021 that had provided access to a limited number of users for testing and feedback.

MAY 15

Blood marker identified for babies at risk of SIDS

- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is the unexplained death, usually during sleep, of a seemingly healthy baby less than a year old. SIDS is sometimes known as crib death because the infants often die in their cribs.
- In their study, babies who died of SIDS had lower levels of an enzyme called butyrylcholinesterase (BChE) shortly after birth, the researchers said.
- BChE plays a major role in the brain's arousal pathway, and low levels would reduce a sleeping infant's ability to wake up or respond to its environment.

Biomaterial from fungal extract helps heal wounds

- the work is a collaboration between scientists from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi, IIT Delhi and National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER) in Bhubaneswar.
- The biomaterial is derived from the polymer pullulan which is secreted by the fungus *Aureobasidium pullulans*. It is an exopolysaccharide, that is, this polymer is secreted by the fungus itself into the medium on which it is growing.
- Pullulan is basically a polymeric chain of glucose. Pullulan as a biomaterial is already successful and widely used commercially.
- It is exploited in food, cosmetics and pharmaceutical industry because of its non-toxic, non-mutagenic and non-immunogenic properties.

NAL successfully validates digital anti-skid brake management system developed for SARAS Mark II- 19 seat Light Transport aircraft

- The state-of-the-art brake by wire electro-hydraulic braking system is developed for the first time in India for civil aircrafts by NAL which is part of CSIR labs.
- Digital Anti-Skid Braking System integration on SARAS Mark 2 will benefit operation from airfields with short runways to boost regional air connectivity.
- SARAS Mark 2 aircraft is being developed by NAL. The Central Government had sanctioned the SARAS-Mk2-19 seat Light Transport project to NAL in June 2019.
- The Indian Air Force has already committed to induct 15 SARAS Mk 2 aircraft.
- It is also considered the most versatile aircraft of its class for connecting remotely located Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities and towns under UDAAN Scheme.
- The first flight of SARAS Mk 2 is planned for December 2024.

1st Incredible India International Cruise Conference 2022

- The 1st Incredible India International Cruise Conference has been jointly organized by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Government of India and FICCI.

- He asserted that Indian cruise market has the potential to grow 10 folds over the next decade.
- Government has set up a Task Force headed by the Secretary, Tourism and Secretary, Shipping for development of cruise tourism.
- The Minister announced the setting up of a high level Advisory Committee, comprising national and international experts, to help the Task Force in creating an enabling eco-system for development of cruise tourism in the country.
- 'Four theme based coastal destination circuits such as Gujarat Pilgrimage tours, West Coast - Cultural and scenic tours, South Coast - Ayurvedic wellness tours and East Coast - Heritage tourism have been developed to activate cruise demand.
- India aims to increase cruise passenger traffic from 0.4 million at present to 4 million. Economic potential of Cruise tourism is expected to go up from USD 110 mn to USD 5.5 bn in the years to come.
- Upgradation and modernisation are being carried out at seven major ports in the country including the flagship New International Cruise terminal coming up in Mumbai at BPX-Indira Dock, which is expected to be commissioned by July 2024.
- Similar infrastructure upgradation is taking place in Goa, New Mangalore, Kochi, Chennai, Visakhapatnam and Kolkata. '

Home Minister Inaugurates National Cyber Forensic Lab at Hyderabad's CFSL

- He inaugurated the laboratory at the premises of the Central Forensic Science Laboratory located at Ramanthapur in the city.
- The Cyber and Information Security Division of the Home Ministry has set up the NCFL at the CFSL under Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Child scheme.
- The NCFL has created 4 specialized Hi-tech units to address issues in the field of digital forensics, which include a Mobile phone embedded system examination unit, a Digital storage Media Examination Unit, an Advanced Digital Forensic Unit, and Crime Scene Unit.

GatiShakti Sanchar portal launched

- This integrated and centralized portal will facilitate smooth deployment of digital communications infrastructure across the country.
- This portal was envisaged to streamline the process and for faster clearance of Right of Way (RoW) with transparency, accountability, and effective monitoring of various digital-based projects,
- This portal will help in the rollout of 5G network across the country.
- Integration of various infrastructures on this portal will help get clearance of right-to-way applications within a span of 20 to 22 days.
- The portal has been developed by MP State Electronics Development Corporation on behalf of Department of Telecommunication.

Luna crash has raised questions about stability of crypto assets

- The near-collapse of these stablecoins, considered to be comparatively safer investment bets within the crypto universe, has also prompted regulators and authorities to call for stricter laws governing these financial assets.
- Stablecoins are tokens pegged to the value of a government-backed currency such as the US dollar or commodities like gold or silver. Tether (USDT) and USD Coin (USDC) are the two leading stablecoins.
- The value proposition of these tokens is that they largely trade around \$1 per token, which gives investors some security in highly volatile market situations.
- TerraUSD, or UST, is different from Tether in that it is not backed by a fiat currency or other commodities, but instead relies on a complex mix of code and a sister token called luna to stabilise its price.
- Terra is referred to as an algorithmic stablecoin, meaning that its value is not determined by the financial collateral in the traditional markets but by lines of complex computer code.

Mystery 'space debris' falls from space in three Gujarat villages

- Space debris can include natural space debris such as meteoroids, or man-made ones which can include defunct spacecrafts and satellites, stages of

rockets which have launched payloads, dead satellites, satellite explosions and collisions.

- According to NASA, “more than 25,000 objects larger than 10 cm are known to exist” as space debris and the estimated population of particles between 1 and 10 cm in diameter is approximately 500,000.
- According to NASA's estimates, as of January 2022, the amount of material orbiting the Earth exceeded 9,000 metric tons.
- Most pieces of space debris burn up as they enter the Earth's atmosphere, the process starting from around a height of 100 km from Earth's surface to 20 km.
- However, sometimes, very heavy pieces may not burn completely, and some part of the object may make it down to the surface, either hitting a landmass or a waterbody.
- In cases of man-made debris, it often disintegrates into fragments, thus hardly ever creating large-scale impact. It is usually natural debris, such as asteroids and meteoroids, that cause relatively large-scale craters, if it ends up hitting a landmass.

MAY 16

India remains world's top remittance recipient

- This follows an almost record recovery of 8.6 percent in 2021, according to the World Bank's latest Migration and Development Brief released today.
- Remittances to Ukraine, which is the largest recipient in Europe and Central Asia, are expected to rise by over 20 percent in 2022.
- The top five recipient countries for remittances in 2021 were India, Mexico (replacing China), China, the Philippines, and Egypt.
- India topped the list in the world receiving USD 89 billion in remittance followed by Mexico at USD 54 billion, and China at USD 53 billion last year.

- Among economies where remittance inflows stand at very high shares of GDP are Lebanon (54 percent), Tonga (44 percent), Tajikistan (34 percent), Kyrgyz Republic (33 percent), and Samoa (32 percent).

3rd Bangladesh-India joint committee meeting on peaceful use of nuclear energy

- Both sides stated their desire for collaboration in societal applications of radiation technologies in areas such as cancer care, nuclear medicine and food preservation.
- The Bangladesh side expressed appreciation for the services being rendered by the Indian experts currently deployed at the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.
- Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant ****will be a 2.4 GWe nuclear power plant in Bangladesh.
- The nuclear power plant is being constructed at Rooppur on the bank of the river Padma.
- In 2018, India, Bangladesh and Russia signed an agreement to allow Indian firms in construction and installation works in the "non-critical" category for the Rooppur nuclear power plant project in northwest Bangladesh.

Yoon Suk Yeol to be sworn in as South Korea's new president

- One of Yoon's main challenges will be dealing with North Korea, which is accelerating its nuclear and missile development.
- South Korea is a country in East Asia, constituting the southern part of the Korean Peninsula and sharing a land border with North Korea. Its western border is formed by the Yellow Sea, while its eastern border is defined by the Sea of Japan.

Indian company produces tactical battery for battlefield conditions

- The heavy-duty power bank – Pravaig Field Pack – is portable and weighs 14 kilograms.
- It is of great utility to the digitally connected modern military and special forces personnel who have to operate in high-risk zones such as Ukraine and Libya, while using gadgets that require constant power back-up.

- A powerful tactical battery can be used even to operate larger military equipment such as drones and it can even help coordinate tactical operations which involves multiple weapons systems.
- This supply marks a major shift in the defence landscape of India, from users to developers, from importers to exporters.
- As illustrated by the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, digital coordination is now part of the battlefield readiness of modern soldiers and special forces personnel.

Premature release of convict has to be considered as per policy of state where crime committed: SC

- The Bench said under Section 432(7) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973, there cannot be a concurrent jurisdiction of two State governments on the issue of remission.
- Section 432 of the Code Of Criminal Procedure allows state governments to grant remission to convicts. But the exercise of this power is in itself subject to judicial review.
- The President and governors of states have also been given the right to remit sentences of any person convicted of any offence under Articles 72 and 161 of the Constitution.

India International Centre for Buddhist Culture & Heritage: Strengthening Buddhist heritage & legacy

- Lumbini is the place where Prince Siddhartha Gautama was born around 623 BC. He later attained enlightenment at Bodhgaya in Bihar district and came to be known as the Buddha.
- Modi will participate in the shilanyas [foundation stone laying] ceremony for the India International Centre and offer prayers at the Mayadevi temple that is dedicated to the mother of the Buddha.
- The work on the centre will be undertaken by the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC), which is a “grantee body” under the Ministry of Culture.

- The International Buddhist Confederation was registered on November 2, 2012, and is aimed at propagating and preserving the teachings and heritage of the Buddha across the world, and especially in India's immediate neighbourhood.
- The Buddhist centre would be the first "net zero emission" building in Nepal.

COVID 'Long Haulers': Long-Term Effects of COVID-19

- These sequelae have also been noticed in people who did not exhibit any symptoms during their infection stage.
- In the absence of a universally-accepted definition, post-COVID Syndrome, by consensus, is defined as signs and symptoms that develop during or after an infection consistent with COVID-19 which continue for more than 12 weeks and are not explained by alternative diagnosis.
- Technically, post-COVID defines symptoms that persist four weeks after infection and Long COVID, 12 weeks past a COVID-19 infection.
- The effects range from skin rash, sleep difficulties, fatigue or muscle weakness, hair loss, joint pain, palpitations, dizziness, cough, headache, sore throat, chest pain, smell and taste disorders, anxiety disorders and mobility issues.
- The Lancet study, perhaps for the first time, described Long COVID for the longest time possible – two years.

Vaccine against 3 encephalitis viruses found safe, effective

- EEEV, WEEV and VEEV are spread to humans through the bites of infected mosquitoes.
- Horses are also susceptible to infection, but horses cannot transmit the viruses directly to humans. Infections in humans are rare but can lead to flu-like symptoms and, in some cases, severe neurological damage or death.
- Researchers designed a virus-like particle (VLP) vaccine candidate that uses proteins from the outer shells of the viruses. VLPs do not contain the genetic material that the viruses need to replicate inside cells, so VLPs cannot cause infection.

Devasahayam Pillai, first Indian layman to be declared a saint by Vatican

- Pope Francis canonised Blessed Devasahayam during the Canonisation Mass in St Peter's Basilica.
- Devasahayam was born on April 23, 1712 in Nattalam village in Kanyakumari district, and went on to serve in the court of Marthanda Varma of Travancore.
- After meeting a Dutch naval commander at the court, Devasahayam was baptised in 1745, and assumed the name 'Lazarus', meaning 'God is my help'.

MAY 17

Kerala did virtually nothing for Endosulfan victims for 5 years: SC

- Endosulfan is an organochlorine pesticide that is being phased out globally.
- Endosulfan became a highly controversial agrichemical due to its acute toxicity, potential for bioaccumulation, and role as an endocrine disruptor.
- Because of its threats to human health and the environment, a global ban on the manufacture and use of endosulfan was negotiated under the "Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants" in 2011. The ban has taken effect in 2012.
- Supreme Court passed an interim order in 2011 in the backdrop of the incidents reported in Kasargode, Kerala, and banned the production, distribution and use of endosulfan in India.

PM Modi to virtually address silver jubilee celebrations of TRAI

- TRAI was established in 1997 through the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997.
- It is the regulator of the telecommunications sector in India.
- The TRAI Act was amended by an ordinance, effective from 24 January 2000, establishing a Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) to take over the adjudicatory and disputes functions from TRAI.
- During the programme, Prime Minister will also launch a 5G Test Bed, developed as a multi institute collaborative project by a total of eight institutes led by IIT Madras.

- The Test Bed will enable a supportive ecosystem for Indian industry and startups which will help them validate their products, prototypes, solutions and algorithms in 5G and next generation technologies.

Inauguration Of Amenities At Kanheri Caves

- The Kanheri Caves are a group of caves and rock-cut monuments cut into a massive basalt outcrop in the forests of the Sanjay Gandhi National Park, on the former island of Salsette in the western outskirts of Mumbai.
- The Kanheri caves comprise more than 110 different rock-cut monolithic excavations and is one of the largest single excavations in the country.
- These excavations were primarily undertaken during the Hinayana phase of Buddhism but also has several examples of the Mahayana stylistic architecture as well as few printings of the Vajrayana order.
- The name Kanheri is derived from 'Kanhagiri' in Prakrit and occurs in the Nasik inscription of the Satavahana ruler Vasisthiputra Pulumavi.
- They contain Buddhist sculptures and relief carvings, paintings and inscriptions, dating from the 1st century CE to the 10th century CE.
- Kanheri was mentioned in the travelogues of foreign travellers. The earliest reference of Kanheri is ascribed to Fa-Hein who visited India during 399-411 CE.

'Surat' and 'Udaygiri': Two indigenously built warships launched

- The Project 15B class of ships are the next generation stealth guided missile destroyers of the Indian Navy being built at the Mazgaon Docks Ltd, Mumbai.
- 'Surat' is the fourth ship of Project 15B Destroyers which heralds a significant makeover of the P15A (Kolkata Class) Destroyers and is named after the commercial capital of the state of Gujarat and also the second largest commercial hub of western India after Mumbai.
- 'Udaygiri', named after a mountain range in the state of Andhra Pradesh, is the third ship of Project 17A Frigates.

- These are follow on of the P17 Frigates (Shivalik Class) with improved stealth features, advanced weapons and sensors and platform management systems.
- Under the P17A program, a total of seven ships, with 04 at MDL and 03 at GRSE are under construction.
- Both 15B and P17A ships have been designed in-house by the Directorate of Naval Design (DND).

SC asks Varanasi DM to ensure 'shivling' area protected without impeding Muslims' access

- Section 3 of the Act bars the conversion, in full or part, of a place of worship of any religious denomination into a place of worship of a different religious denomination – or even a different segment of the same religious denomination.
- Section 4(1) declares that the religious character of a place of worship “shall continue to be the same as it existed” on August 15, 1947.
- Section 4(2) says any legal proceeding with respect to the conversion of the religious character of any place of worship existing on August 15, 1947, pending before any court, shall abate – and no fresh suit or legal proceedings shall be instituted.
- The proviso to this subsection saves suits, appeals and legal proceedings that are pending on the date of commencement of the Act, if they pertain to the conversion of the religious character of a place of worship after the cut-off date.
- Section 5 stipulates that the Act shall not apply to the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case, and to any suit, appeal or proceeding relating to it.

MoS External Affairs V Muraleedharan to lead Indian delegation for First International Migration Review

- It will serve as the primary inter-governmental global platform to review the progress made at the local, national, regional and global levels in implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).
- It will consist of four interactive multi-stakeholder round tables, a policy dialogue and a plenary.

- In the General Assembly resolution A/RES/73/195, Member States agreed to review the progress made at the local, national, regional and global levels in implementing the GCM in the framework of the United Nations.

President Kovind arrives in Kingston on two-nation visit to Jamaica and Saint Vincent & Grenadines

- The President, who is on a historic visit to Jamaica will inaugurate a street named after Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and a garden dedicated to India-Jamaica friendship.
- It is the first-ever visit by an Indian President to Jamaica.
- India and Jamaica have enjoyed cordial relations based on common linkages of history, a Parliamentary democratic system, membership in the Commonwealth, use of the English language and the love for cricket.
- There have been regular bilateral tournaments between India and the West Indies cricket team.
- The Indian Diaspora, of about 70,000 whose forefathers came from India (mainly from Eastern UP and Bihar) as indentured labour from 1845-1917, make up around 3% of the Jamaican population.
- Jamaica**:** Jamaica is an island country situated in the Caribbean Sea. It is the third-largest island of the Greater Antilles and the Caribbean (after Cuba and Hispaniola). Kingston is the country's capital and largest city.

Ramgarh Vishdhari notified as India's 52nd tiger reserve

- This is Rajasthan's fourth tiger reserve after Ranthambore, Sariska and Mukundra.
- Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary and adjoining areas as tiger reserves on July 5 last year.
- The newly notified tiger reserve includes the tiger habitat between Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in the northeast and Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve on the southern side and facilitates dispersal of tigers from Ranthambore Tiger Reserve.

- According to "Status of Tigers in India" report released in 2019, there are 2,967 tigers in 20 states across the country.

MAY 18

National Startup Advisory Council's 4th meeting

- Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) had constituted the National Startup Advisory Council to advise the Government on measures needed to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and startups in the country.
- Besides the ex-officio members, the council has non-official members, representing various stakeholders such as founders of successful startups.
- The Minister also launched NavIC Grand Challenge which aims at promoting adoption of NavIC as geo-positioning solution, a key proponent for digital Aatmanirbharta.
- The applications for the grand challenge are open on Startup India's website and it aims to identify and handhold solutions of startups which are engaged in developing NavIC enabled drones.

India should be ready to launch 6G services in 10 years: PM Narendra Modi

- In telecommunications, 6G is the sixth generation standard currently under development for wireless communications technologies supporting cellular data networks.
- It is the planned successor to 5G and will likely be significantly faster.
- Like its predecessors, 6G networks will probably be broadband cellular networks, in which the service area is divided into small geographical areas called cells.
- 6G networks are likely to support applications beyond current mobile use scenarios, such as virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR), ubiquitous instant communications, pervasive intelligence and the Internet of Things (IoT).

Urban heat islands: why are cities hotter than rural areas

- An urban heat island is a local and temporary phenomenon experienced when certain pockets within a city experience higher heat load than surrounding or neighbouring areas on the same day.
- These are not the typical islands around water bodies, but urban heat islands that record higher day temperatures than other localities.
- The temperature variation can range between 3 to 5 degrees Celsius.
- For example, a greener locality like Pashan in Pune often records cooler temperatures than urban areas like Shivajinagar, Chinchwad or Magarpatta.
- The variations are mainly due to heat remaining trapped within locations that often resemble concrete jungles.
- Rural areas have relatively larger green cover in the form of plantations, farmlands, forests and trees as compared to urban spaces. This green cover plays a major role in regulating heat in its surroundings.
- Cities usually have buildings constructed with glass, bricks, cement and concrete – all of which are dark-coloured materials, meaning they attract and absorb higher heat content.

Indian delegation lights up red carpet at Cannes

- Mame Khan, a traditional Manganiyar singer from Rajasthan, became the first folk artiste to open the red carpet event for the Indian contingent. He will also perform at the festival.
- He belongs to the Manganiyar community, a Muslim community found in the desert of Rajasthan, mostly in the districts of Barmer and Jaisalmer.
- Manganiyars along with the, Langha community, are known for their folk music.
- Their songs are passed on from generation to generation as a form of oral history of the desert.
- Their key Instruments are Kamaicha, Khartaal and Dholak.

Record spike in WPI inflation

- The heatwave led to a spike in prices of perishables such as fruits, vegetables and milk, which, along with a spike in tea prices, pushed up primary food inflation.
- The core-WPI inflation rose to a four-month high of 11.1% in April, with producers forced to pass on the input price pressures. Fuel inflation rose to 38.66 per cent, while inflation for manufactured products rose to 10.85 per cent.
- Much of the inflation spike is being seen as a result of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, with the contribution in retail inflation being seen at three-fourths of the index.
- WPI inflation has been in double digits for the thirteenth months in a row now.
- With WPI inflation remaining in double-digits, the probability of a repo hike in the June monetary policy has risen further.

Vadnagar's ties with Buddhism, and Govt's push to make it a heritage site

- In 2006, the Gujarat state archaeology department began excavations in Vadnagar, a small town in Mehsana district of north Gujarat.
- In 2014, the excavation work was taken over by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), and the combined efforts have thrown up Buddhist relics and around 20,000 artefacts, some dating back to the 2nd century.
- Among these, senior ASI officials revealed, are an elliptical structure and a circular stupa along with a square memorial stupa of 2×2 metres and 130 centimetres in height with a wall enclosure.
- Vadnagar is mentioned often in the Puranas and even in the travelogue of the great Chinese traveler, Hiuen Tsang (7th century), as a rich and flourishing town.
- Gujarat government has also launched the Tana-Riri annual music festival at Vadnagar in the name of two sisters, who were gifted singers, and who, by Gujarati folk lore, gave up their lives instead of agreeing to sing in the court of Emperor Akbar.

Indians' preference for sons, and Meghalaya women prefer more daughters

- The number of married people (age 15-49) who want more sons than daughters is several times the number who want more daughters than sons. In spite of these preferences, most Indians still believe an ideal family should include at least one daughter.
- Among the states and UTs, men in Mizoram (37%), Lakshadweep (34%) and Manipur (33%), and women in Bihar (31%) show the strongest preference for more sons than daughters.
- The only exception is women in Meghalaya, among whom the preference for more daughters than sons is more prevalent than the preference for more sons than daughters.
- The explanation for Meghalaya women's preference for daughters is that it is a matrilineal society.

How pollution continues to be a giant killer in India

- This is the largest number of air-pollution-related deaths of any country, according to a recent report on pollution and health published in The Lancet Planetary Health.
- The majority of the 16.7 lakh air pollution-related deaths in India - 9.8 lakh - were caused by PM2.5 pollution, and another 6.1 lakh by household air pollution.
- According to the report, air pollution is most severe in the Indo-Gangetic Plain. This area contains New Delhi and many of the most polluted cities.
- Burning of biomass in households was the single largest cause of air pollution deaths in India, followed by coal combustion and crop burning.
- Globally, air pollution alone contributes to 66.7 lakh deaths, according to the report, which updates a previous analysis from 2015.

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Cabinet approves Amendments to the National Policy on Biofuels

- The policy to introduce 20% ethanol in petrol will take effect from April 1, 2023.
- India achieved 9.45% ethanol blending as on March 13, 2022. The Centre projects that this will reach 10% by the end of financial year 2022.
- Immense Benefits could accrue to the country by 20% ethanol blending by 2025, such as saving ₹ 30,000 crore of foreign exchange per year, increased energy security, lowered carbon emissions, better air quality, self-reliance, better use of damaged foodgrains, increased farmers' incomes and investment opportunities.
- The new policy would allow more feed stock for producing biofuel and foster the development of indigenous technologies.
- A 20% blend could require some changes and may even drive up the prices of vehicles.
- A greater percentage of blending could also mean more land being diverted for water-intensive crops such as sugar cane, which the government currently subsidises.

Supreme Court allows OBC quota for Madhya Pradesh local body elections

- It said the Backward Classes Commission had submitted a revised report that satisfied the triple test for reservation for OBCs and gave a break-up of the reservation local body-wise.
- The SC in its March 4, 2021 judgment in Vilas Krishnarao Gawli judgment had provided for the triple test benchmark for states in quantifying OBC quota in local body elections.
- The three tests are:
 - To set up a dedicated Commission to conduct contemporaneous rigorous empirical inquiry into the nature and implications of the backwardness qua local bodies, within the State;
 - To specify the proportion of reservation required to be provisioned local body wise in light of recommendations of the Commission, so as not to fall foul of over breadth;

- In any case such reservation shall not exceed aggregate of 50% of the total seats reserved in favour of SCs/STs/OBCs taken together.

Finland, Sweden submit applications to join NATO

- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance between 30 member states - 28 European states, the United States, and Canada.
- The organization, headquartered in Brussels, implements the North Atlantic Treaty, which was signed on 4 April 1949.
- The reversal of the Nordic countries' long-standing policy of non-alignment came amidst the Ukraine-Russia conflict. The membership push could represent the most significant expansion of NATO in decades, doubling its border with Russia.
- But the applications face resistance from NATO member Turkey, which accuses the Nordic neighbours of harbouring anti-Turkish extremists.

Intelligence Bureau gets ₹ 138 crore

- The funds are meant to upgrade the multi-agency centre (MAC), a common counter-terrorism grid under the IB conceptualised in 2001 after the Kargil war.
- The idea behind the MAC was to create an institutional memory on terrorism and act as a platform to analyse the information on terror-related activities.
- The MAC had the main server in Delhi which is linked to the subsidiary multi-agency centre (SMAC) under the Subsidiary Intelligence Bureau (SIBs) in all States, which further disseminates information to the intelligence branch or wing of the respective State police forces.
- Plans are now afoot to link it to the district office of the Superintendent of Police which has been pending for more than a decade now. If MAC is linked to the district SP's office, relevant information on terror can be fed in the system leading to the expansion of terror database.
- As many as 28 organisations including the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), armed forces and State police are part of the platform and various security agencies share real time intelligence inputs on MAC.

Past seven years warmest on record

- La Nina is a cooling of surface temperatures in the Central Pacific. While this had a temporary cooling effect, it did not reverse the overall trend of rising temperatures. The average global temperature in 2021 was about 1.11 (± 0.13) degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level.
- Four key climate change indicators – greenhouse gas concentrations, sea-level rise, ocean heat and ocean acidification – set new records in 2021, according to the report.
- Extreme weather led to economic damage estimated at hundreds of billions of dollars and triggered shocks for food, water security and displacement that worsened in 2022.
- The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for promoting international cooperation on atmospheric science, climatology, hydrology and geophysics.
- It was established in 1950 and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

Indian Navy to commission 2nd squadron of P-8I aircraft

- During the mission, long range surveillance, electronic warfare, imagery intelligence, ASW missions and Search & Rescue capabilities employing the state-of-the-art mission suite and sensors were demonstrated.
- The induction of P8I aircraft commencing 2013, have significantly enhanced Indian Navy's persistent surveillance operations in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- The P-8I's state-of-the-art sensors such as multi-mode radars, electronic intelligence system, sonobuoys, electro-optic, infrared camera and advanced weapons provide the Indian Navy with a very potent platform with significant capability to deter and destroy.
- These aircraft have been utilised along the International Border, the Line of Control and the Line of Actual Control to keep an eye on adversaries' movement.

Article 142 of the Constitution under which Supreme Court ordered release of Perarivalan

About Article 142 of Constitution:

- **Title:** Enforcement of decrees, orders of Supreme Court and orders as to discovery, etc.
- **Provisions:** This article has 2 provisions -
 - **142(1):** The Supreme Court may pass an order for **doing complete justice**.
 - **142(2):** It confers three different powers on the Supreme Court. They are:
 - Securing the **attendance of persons** before it.
 - Discovery and production of **documents** and
 - Investigation and punishment of **contempt of itself**.
- About A-142(1): Doing Complete Justice
- The objective of Article 142(1) is that the Supreme Court must not be dependent on the executive for the enforcement of its decrees and orders.
- Such dependence would otherwise violate the principles of independence of the judiciary and separation of powers, both of which are part of the basic structure of the Constitution.
- In Supreme Court Bar Association v. Union of India (1998), it was decided that this article
 - Cannot be used to over-ride the existing law, but only to supplement the law and
 - Can be invoked for procedure purposes only.

MAY 20

Supreme Court says Centre, States have equal powers to make GST-related laws

- The apex court's decision came while confirming a Gujarat High Court ruling that the Centre cannot levy Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) on ocean freight from Indian importers.
- The court emphasised that Article 246A (which gives the States power to make laws with respect to GST) of the Constitution treat the Union and the States as "equal units". It confers a simultaneous power (on Union and States) for enacting laws on GST.
- Article 279A, in constituting the GST Council, envisions that neither the Centre nor the States are actually dependent on the other.
- The judgment said that though the Centre may have a larger share of power in certain instances to prevent chaos and provide security, the States still wielded power.
- After all, the court said, "Indian federalism is a dialogue between cooperative and un-cooperative federalism where the federal units are at liberty to use different means of persuasion, ranging from collaboration to contestation".

Kufos scientists standardise techniques for artificial breeding of barb fish

- These freshwater species of barbs and carp used to be found widely in the Idamalayar Dam, Bhoothathankettu, and the Kol fields of Thrissur district.
- However, indiscriminate fishing and changes in habitat conditions have brought these species, especially Kuruva Paral, to the brink of extinction.
- The conservation measures being taken up by Kufos are supported under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-India High Range Landscape project that also aims to help trained aquaculturists among Adivasis to take up farming of these freshwater species.
- The project, even though launched in January 2020, was delayed by a year due to the pandemic.
- The brood stocks for Kooral and Pachilavetti have been stored at the freshwater aquaculture facility at Kufos.

Latest climate report underscores urgent need to act on drought

- The Drought in Numbers report is a collection of data on the effects of droughts on our ecosystem and how they can be mitigated through efficient planning for the future.
- According to the report, the number and duration of droughts around the world has increased by an alarming 29% since 2000. Globally, droughts between 1998 and 2017 caused economic losses of approximately \$124 billion.
- If global warming reaches 3°C by 2100, drought losses could be five times higher than today's levels. The largest increase in drought losses is projected in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic regions of Europe.
- **Indian scenario:** Many parts of India fall under the list of regions that are vulnerable to drought globally. India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reduced by 2 to 5% between 1998 and 2017 due to severe droughts in the country.

NGT is not an excessive case of delegation of powers to the Central government

- NGT was not an excessive case of delegation of powers to the central government.
- The NGT came into existence as a sui generis institution established for enforcement of environmental rights protected under the Right to Life (Article 21 of the Constitution).
- The National Green Tribunal has been established on 18.10.2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010 for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection.
- The Tribunal shall not be bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, but shall be guided by principles of natural justice.
- New Delhi is the Principal Place of Sitting of the Tribunal and Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai shall be the other four place of sitting of the Tribunal.

Respiratory syncytial virus and the toll it takes on young children

- The study is the first to examine RSV disease burden in narrow age brackets.

- According to the report the incidence rate in India is 53 per 1,000 children per year (5.3%) and there were an approximate 61,86, 500 episodes of RSV-associated acute lower respiratory infection in children below five years.
- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is also called human respiratory syncytial virus (hRSV) and human orthopneumovirus.
- It is a common, contagious virus that causes infections of the respiratory tract.
- It is a negative-sense, single-stranded RNA virus, and its name is derived from the large cells known as syncytia that form when infected cells fuse.
- RSV is the most common cause of acute lower respiratory infection in young children.
- Globally, only 26% RSV-associated deaths occur in a hospital. This is particularly apparent in low- and middle-income countries.

Govt plans to construct 200 airports, waterdromes, and heliports across country in 4 years

- To achieve this target, the government has planned to construct 200 airports, waterdromes and heliports across the country in the upcoming four years.
- Union Minister for Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia said, the government is focusing on developing infrastructure and increasing the fleet size by putting in place a suitable ecosystem for civil aviation. He said, 67 new airports, waterdromes and heliports have been built in the last eight years as compared to only 74 airports that were built in the 70 years before that.
- The Minister appreciated the innovative capabilities of Indian scientists and engineers for developing the GAGAN Navigation System. Recently, Indigo became the first airline in the country to land aircraft using the indigenous navigation system GAGAN.

Rbi Directs Banks And Atms On Cardless Cash Withdrawals.

- In a circular, the RBI said, all banks, automated teller machine (ATM) networks, and White Label ATM Operators (WLAOs) may provide the option of ICCW at their ATMs.

- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has been advised to facilitate Unified Payments Interface (UPI) integration with all banks and ATM networks.
- The RBI said, while UPI would be used for customer authorization in such transactions, settlement would be through the National Financial Switch (NFS) and ATM networks.
- The on-us and off-us ICCW transactions shall be processed without levy of any charges other than those prescribed under the circular on Interchange Fee and Customer Charges, it added.
- In a bid to check fraud, RBI last month said, it has been decided to permit all banks to introduce card-less cash withdrawal through ATMs. According to the central bank, currently, cardless cash withdrawal through ATMs is offered by a few banks.
- A transaction carried out at an ATM of the card-issuing bank is called an On-Us transaction. A transaction carried out at any other ATM is called an Off-Us transaction.

MAY 21

FDI inflow hits all-time high of USD 83.57 billion in 2021-22

- In terms of top investor countries of FDI Equity inflow, 'Singapore' is at the apex with 27%, followed by U.S.A (18%) and Mauritius (16%) for the FY 2021-22.
- 'Computer Software & Hardware' has emerged as the top recipient sector of FDI Equity inflow during FY 2021-22 with around 25% share followed by Services Sector (12%) and Automobile Industry (12%) respectively.
- Under the sector 'Computer Software & Hardware', the major recipient states of FDI Equity inflow are Karnataka (53%), Delhi (17%) and Maharashtra (17%) during FY 2021-22.

- Karnataka is the top recipient state with 38% share of the total FDI Equity inflow reported during the FY 2021-22 followed by Maharashtra (26%) and Delhi (14%).
- Further, India is rapidly emerging as a preferred country for foreign investments in the manufacturing sector. FDI Equity inflow in Manufacturing Sectors have increased by 76% in FY 2021-22 (USD 21.34 billion) compared to previous FY 2020-21 (USD 12.09 billion).

World Bee Day 2022: Theme, history and significance of this special day

- World Bee Day is celebrated on May 20.
- On this day Anton Janša, the pioneer of beekeeping, was born in 1734.
- The purpose of the international day is to acknowledge the role of bees and other pollinators for the ecosystem.
- The UN Member States approved Slovenia's proposal to proclaim 20 May as World Bee Day in December 2017.
- The centrally funded scheme, 'National Beekeeping and Honey Mission' aims to establish 5 big regional and 100 small honey and other Bee Products testing laboratories, out of which 3 world class state-of-the-art laboratories have been setup.
- The Government of India is also providing assistance for setting up of Processing Units.
- More than 1.25 lakh metric tonnes of honey is being produced in the country, out of which more than 60 thousand metric tonnes of natural honey is exported.

AstroSat witnesses black hole birth for 500th time Astrosat witnesses black hole birth for 500th time

- Black holes have been a subject of intense scrutiny from astronomers from all over the world. However, Indian scientists are making great headway in studying black hole births using the indigenously built space telescope - Astrosat.

- Calling it a landmark achievement, Prof. Dipankar Bhattacharya, the current Principal Investigator of CZTI said, the wealth of data obtained on Gamma Ray Bursts is making a big impact worldwide.
- It may be noted that astronomers study Gamma Ray Bursts, also called the mini big bangs and X-rays from such bursts to better understand formation of black holes.
- Astrosat with a lift-off mass of 1,515 kilogram was launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, on 28th of September 2015.
- It is the most sensitive space telescope in the world; consisting of five instruments that can simultaneously study the universe in ultraviolet, optical and X-ray radiation.
- One of these instruments is the Cadmium Zinc Telluride Imager - CZTI, which discovers the birth of black holes. A unique aspect of CZTI is the ability to measure the polarisation of X-rays: an ability that is lacking in flagship missions like NASA's Neil Gehrels Swift Telescope or the US-Europe Fermi Space Telescope.

RBI to transfer Rs 30K cr surplus to govt for FY22

- The decision was taken after deciding to maintain the contingency risk buffer at 5.50 per cent of its balance sheet.
- According to the Bimal Jalan committee's report, the RBI, at all times, has to maintain a minimum contingency risk buffer of 5.5 per cent.
- This year's transfer is sharply lower than what the central bank had did in the previous financial year – Rs 99,126 crore.

Sri Lankan PM Ranil Wickremesinghe declares country bankrupt amid fuel crisis and food shortages

- Mr Wickremesinghe said, the last administration is to blame for the country has come to a point where it is bankrupt which has never happened before.
- We have no dollars, we have no rupees, we are not in a stable position, we are feeling the rise of the price of fuel, and we know it will go higher, he added.

- Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's central bank has secured foreign exchange to pay for fuel and cooking gas shipments that will ease crippling shortages.
- Most of Sri Lanka's petrol stations have run dry as the island nation battles its most devastating economic crisis since independence in 1948.

Citizens' right to feed stray dogs, and the dogs' right to food and water – now backed by Delhi HC and SC

- The SC's action paves the way for community dogs to be fed either at private driveways/porches or spots designated in consultation with resident welfare associations in Delhi. It will be incumbent on the local police to ensure that no caregiver or community dog feeder is harassed.
- The feeding and caring for stray dogs is a hugely divisive issue in urban neighbourhoods across India, with arguments and disputes breaking out frequently between dog lovers and those who feel scared or intimidated by the animals.
- Each side accuses the other of being insensitive and inconsiderate.
- A single-judge Bench of the High Court had observed that animals have a right under the law to be treated with compassion, respect, and dignity, and that their protection is the "moral responsibility of each and every citizen, including the governmental and non-governmental organisations". (*Dr Maya D Chablani vs. Radha Mittal and Ors*, 2021)

Indian Navy Successfully Test-fires 1st Indigenously Developed Naval Anti-Ship Missile

- The NASM-SR has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The NASM-SR has a range of 55 km and weighs 385 kg.
- This missile will replace the Sea Eagle missiles which are currently in use with the Navy. With the Sea King helicopters too being phased out, it is expected that the NASM-SR will be used with the new MH-60R multi-role helicopters, which are being inducted into the Navy.

- The NASM-SR carries a warhead of 100 kg and has sub-sonic capabilities, which means that it flies below the speed of sound at 0.8 Mach. The sub-sonic flight speed makes it difficult for the naval vessels on target to detect it.
- It has a launch altitude of maximum of 3 km and can skim 5 metres above sea level when on final approach to the target.
- The NASM-SR can also be fired from the shore to target vessels in the sea.

Government set to roll out 'Tour of Duty' for recruitment of personnel into armed forces

- All recruitment in the three services will be through ToD route only. The four year stint will include six months of training and three-and-a-half-years service. Army recruitment rallies have been on hold for over two years now due to the COVID-induced pandemic.
- Those recruited under ToD would get salary and benefits almost at par with regular personnel and there will be a severance package of around 10-12 lakhs after four years.
- This move is expected to bring significant reduction in pay and pensions and frees up funds for modernisation especially for the Army, which has a negatively skewed revenue to capital ratio in the budgetary allocation.

MAY 22

India's upcoming AI-powered wargame centre

- The project, which has been given a prototype name 'WARDEC', will be a first-of-its-kind simulation-based training centre in India that will use artificial intelligence (AI) to design virtual reality wargames.
- The Wargame Research and Development Centre will be used by the Army to train its soldiers and test their strategies through "metaverse-enabled gameplay". The wargame models will be designed to prepare for wars as well as counter-terror and counter-insurgency operations.

- The centre will come up in a military zone in New Delhi. The RRU will join hands with Tech Mahindra to develop the centre in the coming three to four months, officials added.
- The RRU, an institute under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), specialises in national security and policing. Located in Gandhinagar's Lavad village, it is an "institute of national importance" - a status granted to it by an Act of Parliament.

Mozambique Reports First Case Of Wild Poliovirus In 30 Years

- Polio is a crippling and potentially deadly disease that affects the nervous system. Because the virus lives in the faeces (poop) of an infected person, people infected with the disease can spread it to others when they do not wash their hands well after defecating (pooping).
- People can also be infected if they drink water or eat food contaminated with infected feces.
- The virus multiplies in the intestine, from where it can invade the nervous system and can cause paralysis. Once that happens, the patient is crippled for life because there is no treatment for the affliction. That is why polio is so dreaded.
- Polio infection, however, is easily preventable by a vaccine.
- There are three variants of the poliovirus, numbered 1 to 3. For a country to be declared polio-free, the wild transmission of all three kinds has to be stopped. For eradication, cases of both wild and vaccine-derived polio infection have to be reduced to zero.
- India launched the Pulse Polio immunisation programme in 1995, after a resolution for a global initiative of polio eradication was adopted by the World Health Assembly (WHA) in 1988. India was declared polio-free in January 2014.

HC quashed Delhi govt's doorstep ration delivery scheme

- It was called the 'Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojna'. The scheme was notified in February 2021.
- The foodgrain stock for the scheme was to be lifted by millers empanelled with the Delhi State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited and transported to milling units for processing and packaging.
- The packed items were then to be delivered at designated Fair Price Shops to be set up by Delhi Consumer's Cooperative Wholesale Store Ltd.
- The last step involved delivering the packaged items at the doorstep of beneficiaries through government-empanelled direct-to-home delivery agencies.
- From the moment the proposal was given a go-ahead by the Arvind Kejriwal government in 2018, it faced stiff opposition from the Lieutenant Governor as well as the central government on technical grounds.
- The Lieutenant Governor, said it may not eliminate corruption - one of the scheme's stated objectives - as it only sought to replace old service providers with new ones. The LG also advised the AAP government to place the matter before the Centre for approval.
- The Centre also said that it "will have no objection if a separate scheme is made by the state government without mixing elements of the NFSA (National Food Security Act) foodgrains".

A love story that ties Saint-Tropez with Himachal Pradesh

- Here, Thakur, a Lok Sabha MP from Himachal Pradesh, paid floral tributes to Maharaja Ranjit Singh (the first Maharaja of the Sikh Empire), Jean-Francois Allard (a general in Singh's army) and Allard's spouse Princess Bannu Pan Dei.
- Saint-Tropez was a military stronghold and fishing village until the beginning of the 20th century.
- It was the first town on its coast to be liberated during World War II as part of 'Operation Dragoon'. After the war, it became an internationally known seaside resort because of the influx of artists of the French New Wave in cinema.

Saint-Tropez has a historical connection with the state of Himachal Pradesh.

- General Jean-François Allard was born in Saint-Tropez. He served in the Napoleon army and fought in the Battle of Waterloo.
- Forced into exile after Napoleon's downfall, he served under Maharajah Ranjit Singh in Punjab, where he felt deeply in love with Princess Bannu Pan Deï, who was born in Chamba, Himachal Pradesh.
- They married and had seven children. On the family's return to Saint-Tropez in 1835, the general had an oriental-inspired Pan Deï Palais built as a token of his love for his wife.

World Retinoblastoma Awareness Week was observed from May 15 to 21.

- Retinoblastoma is the most common eye cancer (malignant tumor) occurring in young children.
- It can occur in one or both eyes and may be hereditary or sporadic. It can be life-threatening as well as take away vision if not treated timely and is detected by seeing White Reflex (WR).
- Nearly 1,500-2,000 children are diagnosed with retinoblastoma every year in India.
- Symptoms
 - White Reflex in the eye: Pupil that looks white or yellow instead of red when light hits it.
 - Squinting: A crossed eye, looking either toward the nose or towards the ear.
 - Poor vision with or without WR. The eye may be red or painful also.
- Treatment**:** Chemotherapy can be delivered intravenously or intra-arterial and is given by the paediatric oncologist and is the most common modality of treatment. This has to be followed up with local therapy, which is managed by the ophthalmologist using various modalities.

single national portal for Biotech StartUps

- The Portal "BioRRAP" will cater to all those seeking regulatory approval for biological research & development activity in the country.
- Biological Research Regulatory Approval Portal (BioRRAP) will also allow stakeholders to see the approvals accorded against a particular application through a unique BioRRAP ID.
- India is among the top 12 destinations for biotechnology globally and 3rd largest biotechnology destination in the Asia Pacific region.
- By 2025, the contribution of the Indian biotechnology industry in the global biotechnology market is expected to grow to 19% from a mere 3% in 2017. The Bio Economy's contribution to the national GDP has also grown steadily in the past years to 2.7% in 2020 from 1.7% in 2017.

The two-day-long National Workshop on Sowa-Rigpa for the Sowa-Rigpa practitioners from the North Eastern States

- An International Yoga & Naturopathy College will be set up in Sikkim which will boost the medical tourism sector in the Northeast India.
- A 30 bedded Sowa Rigpa Hospital is going to be set up in Sikkim.
- The Union Minister announced setting up of Yoga & Wellness centre at every Gram Panchayat level in the state along with an Ayurveda Medical College under Satellite Institute programme in Sikkim.
- The Union Ayush Minister also said that the Ministry is exploring the possibility to set up a Research Council for Sowa Rigpa.
- "Sowa-Rigpa" commonly known as Amchi system of medicine is one of the oldest living medical tradition of the world. It has been popularly practiced in Tibet, Magnolia, Bhutan, some parts of China, Nepal and Himalayan regions of India.

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav: Ministry of Culture to commemorate 250th Birth Anniversary of Raja Ram Mohan Roy

- Ram Mohan Roy (1772 - 1833) was an Indian reformer. He is considered to be the "Father of the Bengal Renaissance" by many historians.

- He crusaded against Hindu customs such as sati, polygamy, child marriage and the caste system. He demanded property inheritance rights for women.
- In 1830, Ram Mohan Roy travelled to the United Kingdom as an ambassador of the Mughal Empire to ensure that Lord William Bentinck's Bengal Sati Regulation, 1829 banning the practice of Sati was not overturned.
- He who was one of the founders of the Brahmo Sabha in 1828, the precursor of the Brahmo Samaj, a social-religious reform movement.
- In 1817, in collaboration with David Hare, he set up the Hindu College at Calcutta.
- His most popular journal was the Sambad Kaumudi. It covered topics like freedom of the press, induction of Indians into high ranks of service, and separation of the executive and judiciary.
- He was given the title of Raja by Akbar II, the Mughal emperor.

Google commemorated “The Great Gama” with a Doodle on his 144th birth anniversary.

- Ghulam Mohammad Baksh Butt (1878 - 1960), commonly known as Rustam-e-Hind (Rustam of India) and by the ring name The Great Gama, was an Indian pehlwani wrestler and strongman.
- He was Born in village Jabbowal, Amritsar District in the Punjab Province of colonial British India in 1878.
- In the early 20th century, he was an undefeated wrestling champion of the world, and was awarded a version of the World Heavyweight Championship on 15 October 1910.
- Undefeated in a career spanning more than 52 years, he is considered one of the greatest wrestlers of all time.
- During the partition of India, the Great Gama saved the lives of many Hindus and then spent the rest of his days until his death on May 23, 1960 in Lahore, Pakistan.

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Centre forms 3-member panel to investigate Ramban tunnel collapse

- According to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways office order, Professor J.T. Sahu of the IIT, Delhi will be the chairman of the committee, and it will submit the report within 10 days.
- The stretch between Digdole and Khooni Nallah of the Ramban Banihal section is prone to frequent landslip and shooting stones due to fragile geology.
- The Twin tube Tunnel work in 4-laning from Digdole to Panthyal on Jammu Srinagar Highway was awarded to M/s Ceigall India Limited in JV with Patel Engineering Limited. The construction work started on 1st February 2022.

PM Modi in Tokyo to attend Joe Biden's Indo Pacific Economic Framework launch

- Modi's attendance at the event is a significant step towards building economic ties among Quad countries (India, the U.S., Australia and Japan) in the Indo-Pacific.
- But officials were hesitant to bill the IPEF as a counter to the 15-nation Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the 17-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) that China is a member of.
- The IPEF would have a "very wide-ranging membership" and the programme was "designed to put workers at the centre with a focus on the digital economy, clean energy transition, infrastructure and resilient supply chains.
- India has not taken a decision on joining the framework, but is keen on understanding the "contours" of the American plan.

The International Tea Day is observed on May 21 every year

- The first International Tea Day was held in Delhi, India in 2005. It was in 2015 that the Indian Government proposed to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation to expand this day globally.
- The day is observed in the month of May because it is during this time of the year that tea production begins in most countries.

- Tea is believed to have originated from the north-eastern parts of India and southwestern China. In these regions, tea production is one of the main sources of livelihood.
- The Tea Board of India was established by the enactment of the Tea Act in 1953 with its headquarters in Kolkata. It is under the administrative control of ministry of commerce and industry.
- The Government through the Tea Board is implementing Tea Development and Promotion Scheme (TPDS) which provides financial assistance to the tea industry in the country.

India will have eVTOLs for urban air mobility

- An electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft is a variety of VTOL (vertical take-off and landing) aircraft that uses electric power to hover, take off, and land vertically.
- This technology came due to major advances in electric propulsion (motors, batteries, fuel cells, electronic controllers) and the growing need for new vehicles for urban air mobility (air taxi).
- Examples are being developed by aircraft companies such as Boeing, Airbus, Embraer, Honda, Toyota, Hyundai and NASA.

Music Academy announces Sangita Kalanidhi awards for three years

Madras Music Academy (MMA):

- It plays an important role in promoting the Carnatic Music.
- History: A music conference was held along with All India Congress Session held in Madras in 1927 and during the deliberations, the idea of a Music Academy emerged. Next year MMA was Inaugurated. Thus it's an offshoot of INC madras session, 1927.

It presents the following annual awards:

- Sangeetha Kalanidhi: ****Awarded to one person who has contributed to the field of Carnatic music. Considered as the highest accolade in the field of Carnatic music; Since 2005, the Sangeetha Kalanidhi also receives the MS Subbulakshmi Award instituted by The Hindu.
- Sangeetha Kala Acharya: ****Awarded to two senior musicians who have contributed by bringing several disciples to the concert platform.
- Natya Kala Acharya**:* Awarded to a senior dancer at the inauguration of the annual dance festival.
- TTK Award: ****Awarded to two senior musicians who have made a mark in the music field as icons and gurus. It is named after TT Krishnamachari, former Union Minister and industrialist, who was a great patron of the arts and was Vice-President of the Music Academy.
- Papa KS Venkataramiah award: ****Awarded to a Violinist of merit; This award is named after Papa KS Venkataramiah (a great violinist of the past).
- Musicologist Award: ****Awarded to a musicologist; A scholar who participates in musical research is a musicologist.
- Indira Sivasailam endowment concert and medal: ****Awarded during Navaratri each year, it is given to the top-ranking performing artist in the concert organized at that time.

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Center eases pension rules for kin of missing government employees

- According to the earlier rule, the next of the kin of an employee would not receive the family pension, if he went missing and the family pension would not be paid till the missing Government was declared dead in accordance with the law or till seven years had passed since he went missing.
- Now, in all cases where a government servant covered by NPS goes missing during service, the benefits of family pension will be immediately paid to the family of the missing government servant.

- In case he re-appears and resumes service, the amount paid as family pension during the intervening time of his missing period can be accordingly deducted from his salary.
- This is going to provide huge relief particularly in those regions where instances of government employees going missing are reported more frequently.
- It is a major relief, particularly for government employees serving in militancy-affected areas like Jammu and Kashmir, North-East as well as Naxal-prone pockets.

Khadi commission head Vinai Kumar Saxena is Delhi's new Lieutenant

- President Ram Nath Kovind accepted the resignation of Anil Baijal from the post and appointed Vinai Kumar Saxena to be the Lt. Governor of National Capital Territory of Delhi with effect from the date he assumes charge of his office.
- Saxena, in 1991, had formed an NGO, National Council for Civil Liberties, which opposed Medha Patkar's Narmada Bachao Andolan.
- Saxena is one of the members of the national committee to commemorate the 75th anniversary of India's Independence. This committee is headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Two F-18 Super Hornet jets in Goa to showcase compatibility with Indian aircraft carriers

- The demonstration is expected to continue up to the first week of June.
- These are part of demonstrations by the manufacturers to showcase the compatibility of their aircraft to fly from Indian Navy's aircraft carriers.
- Both the Rafale-M and F/A-18 are originally designed to operate from carriers with a catapult launch mechanism.
- India's first indigenous aircraft carrier Vikrant, which is in advanced stages of sea trials, is scheduled to be commissioned in August.

India's ASHA workers among six recipients of Global Health Leaders Award at World Health Assembly

- ASHA workers are volunteers from within the community who are trained to provide information and aid people in accessing benefits of various healthcare schemes of the government.
- They act as a bridge connecting marginalised communities with facilities such as primary health centres, sub-centres and district hospitals.
- The role of these community health volunteers under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) was first established in 2005.
- ASHAs are primarily married, widowed, or divorced women between the ages of 25 and 45 years from within the community. They must have good communication and leadership skills; should be literate with formal education up to Class 8, as per the programme guidelines.

How many ASHAs are there across the country?

- The aim is to have one ASHA for every 1,000 persons or per habitation in hilly, tribal or other sparsely populated areas.
- There are around 10.4 lakh ASHA workers across the country, with the largest workforces in states with high populations - Uttar Pradesh (1.63 lakh), Bihar (89,437), and Madhya Pradesh (77,531).
- Goa is the only state with no such workers, as per the latest National Health Mission data available from September 2019.

Russia has deployed the Terminator tank support system - the BMPT, also known as the BMPT 'Terminator'

- The Terminator or the Boyevaya Mashina Podderzhki Tankov (BMPT), is a tank support fighting vehicle developed by Russia.
- The tank support vehicles are designed to protect the Russian tanks against enemy infantry. They are basically a replacement for mechanised infantry troops in the urban battlefield.
- The list of potent weaponry that Terminator is equipped with are capable of firing in multiple directions in quick succession, thus suppressing firepower to prevent any attempt to take out the tank columns being protected.

- The BMPT destroys targets such as infantry personnel carrying anti-tank weapons, as well as lightly and heavily armoured targets, like tanks.

WORLD OF WORK REPORT

- After significant gains during the last quarter of 2021, the number of hours worked globally dropped in the first quarter of 2022, to 3.8 per cent below the pre-crisis benchmark (fourth quarter of 2019). This is equivalent to a deficit of 112 million full-time jobs.
- Multiple new and interconnected global crises, including inflation (especially in energy and food prices), financial turbulence, potential debt distress, and global supply chain disruption - exacerbated by war in Ukraine - means there is a growing risk of a further deterioration in hours worked in 2022.
- The gender gap in hours worked also grew during the pandemic.
- The report spells out a series of measures as a way forward, which are in line with ILO's Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery , and the ILO-led UN initiative, the Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection.

Discovery of a primitive forest at the bottom of a giant sinkhole in China

- In Mandarin, giant sinkholes are called Tiankeng or “heavenly pit”.
- Sinkholes are depressions formed in the ground when layers of the Earth's surface start collapsing into caverns.
- They can occur suddenly and without warning, because the land under the surface of the Earth can stay intact for a period of time until the spaces get too big.
- Sinkholes can be formed due to natural processes or human activity.
- Typically, sinkholes form in areas of “karst” terrains, where the rock below the surface of the Earth can be easily dissolved by groundwater.
- Karst terrain is created from the dissolution of soluble rocks, mostly limestone and dolomite and is characterised by distinctive landforms such as caves, sinkholes and springs.

- Sinkholes can also be formed due to human activity due to broken land drains, water mains and sewerage pipes, increased rainfall, storm events, underlying limestone and diverted surface water, among other reasons.

Battery-like device that captures carbon dioxide while charging

- Then, when it discharges, the carbon dioxide can be released in a controlled way and collected to be reused or disposed of responsibly.
- The supercapacitor device, which is similar to a rechargeable battery, is the size of a coin, and is made in part from sustainable materials including coconut shells and seawater. The supercapacitor consists of two electrodes of positive and negative charge.
- The supercapacitor could help power carbon capture and storage technologies at much lower cost. The most advanced carbon capture technologies currently require large amounts of energy and are expensive.

ONGC first Indian Exploration & Production company to trade domestic gas on Indian Gas Exchange

- The first online trade was made on 23 May 2022 by ONGC Director (Onshore) In-charge Marketing on India's first automated national level Gas Exchange, IGX.
- The gas traded is from ONGC Krishna Godavari 98/2 block.
- The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is an Indian oil and gas explorer and producer.
- It is under the ownership of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India.
- Its headquarters is situated in New Delhi.
- ONGC was founded on 14 August 1956 by the government of India.
- It was conferred with 'Maharatna' status by the Government of India in November 2010.
- On Jan 30th 2018, ONGC acquired the entire 51.11% stake of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL).

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Prime Minister's Visit to Japan for Quad Leaders' Summit

- They announced the formation of the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA), which will build a “faster, wider, and more accurate maritime picture of near-real-time activities in partners’ waters.”
- It will allow tracking of “dark shipping” and other tactical-level activities, such as rendezvous at sea, as well as improve partners’ ability to respond to climate and humanitarian events and to protect their fisheries.
- The grouping would enhance the sharing of data as a part of the “Quad Satellite Data Portal” that would enhance cooperation among the satellites of the member countries.
- The summit welcomed the progress made regarding the J&J vaccine production at the Biological E labs in India under the Quad Vaccine Partnership.
- The Quad is an informal multilateral grouping of India, the U.S., Australia, and Japan aimed at cooperation for a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Qutub Minar not a place of worship: ASI

- It said this while opposing a plea challenging the dismissal of a civil suit seeking “restoration” of Hindu and Jain temples on the premises.
- The original suit, which claimed that 27 temples were demolished to build the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque at the Qutub Minar complex, was dismissed last year under the provisions of Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991.
- The Qutub Minar complex are monuments and buildings from the Delhi Sultanate at Mehrauli in Delhi. Construction of the Qutub Minar "victory tower" in the complex, named after the religious figure Sufi Saint Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiar Kaki, was begun by Qutb-ud-din Aibak, who later became the first Sultan of Delhi of the Mamluk dynasty.

- It was continued by his successor Iltutmish, and finally completed much later by Firoz Shah Tughlaq, a Sultan of Delhi from the Tughlaq dynasty (1320-1412) in 1368 AD.
- Apart from the Qutb Minar and the Quwwat ul-Islam Mosque, other structures in the complex include the Alai Darwaza gate, the Alai Minar and the Iron pillar. Inside the complex lie the tombs of Iltutmish, Alauddin Khalji and Imam Zamin.
- The iron pillar of Delhi was constructed by Chandragupta II (reigned c. 375-415 CE). It is famous for the rust-resistant composition of the metals used in its construction.

Environment Ministry brings out draft EPR notification

- India has a formal set of rules for electronic waste management, first announced these rules in 2016 and amended them in 2018. The latest rules are expected to come into effect by August.
- According to it, Consumer goods companies and makers of electronics goods have to ensure at least 60% of their electronic waste is collected and recycled by 2023 with targets to increase them to 70% and 80% in 2024 and 2025, respectively.
- The rules bring into effect a system of trading in certificates, akin to carbon credits, that will allow companies to temporarily bridge shortfalls. Draft notification says companies will have to pay 'environmental compensation' for missed targets.
- Along with specifying targets, the rules lay out a system of companies securing extended producer responsibility (EPR) certificates.
- The chief entity that will coordinate the trade of EPR certificates and monitor if companies are meeting their targets is the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Antiviral drugs could reduce monkeypox symptoms, says Lancet study

- The study documents patients' response to two antiviral medications - brincidofovir and tecovirimat. These were developed to treat smallpox, and have previously demonstrated some efficacy against monkeypox in animals.
- The study found little evidence that brincidofovir was of clinical benefit, but concluded that further research into the potential of tecovirimat would be warranted.
- Monkeypox, a rare disease, is caused by a virus that is a close relative of the smallpox virus. There are currently no licensed treatments.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has said that Monkeypox can be contained in countries outside of Africa where the virus is not usually detected.
- According to media reports, more than 100 cases of the virus, which causes a rash and a fever have been confirmed in Europe, Americas, and Australia.
- The virus is most common in remote parts of Central and West Africa.

World Economic Forum launches alliance to supercharge India's climate action

- Part of the World Economic Forum's Climate Action Platform, the alliance will continue efforts to achieve the vision outlined in the white paper released last year, 'Mission 2070: A Green New Deal for a Net Zero India', on India's low-carbon transition by 2070.
- It will bring together the government, businesses, and other key stakeholders to achieve Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious 'Panchamrit' pledge, which includes the country's net-zero target by 2070.
- A collaboration between the management consultancy Kearney and the Indian think-tank Observer Research Foundation, the alliance will serve as a high-level platform to support business leaders in planning and implementing plans and programmes to achieve climate targets, including net-zero economic growth.

China Building Second Bridge On Pangong Tso, MEA Confirms

- The second bridge, which is still under construction, is a permanent structure. A previous bridge, which came up around January, seemed to have been built to facilitate work on the new one.

- After completion, this second bridge will allow swift movement of armoured vehicles between the north and the south banks of Pangong Tso.
- The site of the bridge is around 20 km east of Finger 8 on the lake's north bank - which is where the Line of Actual Control (LAC) passes.
- The construction site is just east of an old ruin called Khurnak Fort, where China has major frontier defence bases. China calls it Rutong Country.
- Although it is being built in territory that is under China's control since 1958, the exact point is just west of India's claim line, which means India considers it its own territory.
- Pangong Tso is a 135-km long landlocked lake. India has around 45 km of Pangong Tso under its control, while China has more than two-thirds. The site of the new bridge is near the halfway mark of the lake.

India's first Olympic Values Education Programme launched in Odisha

- OVEP will be integrated into the school education system of Odisha. It will be a values-based curriculum, to be implemented initially in 90 schools of Rourkela and Bhubaneswar, catering to about 32,000 children.
- The OVEP is a practical set of resources designed by the IOC to introduce young people to the Olympic values of excellence, respect and friendship.
- The OVEP was developed in 2006 to address the challenges of sedentary lifestyles, lack of concentration and adolescents dropping out of school.

Secretary, MoHUA launches Swachh Survekshan 2023

- In SS 2023, additional weightage has been given to source segregation of waste, enhancement of waste processing capacity of cities to match the waste generation and reduction of waste going to the dumpsites.
- Indicators have been introduced with additional weightage on emphasizing the need for phased reduction of plastic, plastic waste processing, encourage waste to wonder parks and zero waste events.
- Ranking of Wards within the cities is also being promoted through Swachh Survekshan 2023.

- The cities would also be assessed on dedicated indicators on the issues of 'open urination' (Yellow Spots) and 'open spitting' (Red Spots), being faced by the cities.
- Further, this year MoHUA is also promoting cleaning of back lanes of the residential and commercial areas.
- Swachh Survekshan was introduced by MoHUA in 2016 as a competitive framework to encourage cities to improve the status of urban sanitation while encouraging large scale citizen participation.

National Health Authority launches revamp Ayushman Bharat Health Account mobile app

- The ABHA app was previously known as NDHM Health Records app.
- The ABHA mobile application enables an individual to create an ABHA address, an easy-to-remember username that can be linked with the 14-digit randomly generated ABHA number.
- The mobile application also enables users to link their health records created at Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission compliant health facility and view them on their smartphones.
- The application also allows self-uploading of physical health records, along with sharing of digital health records such as diagnostic reports, prescriptions, CoWIN vaccination certificates after the consent of an individual.

Akshay Kumar's 'Prithviraj' Lands Into Controversy Over The King's Clan In Rajasthan

- Prithviraj belonged to the Chauhan or Chahamanas dynasty of Ajmer which emerged after the decline of the Pratiharas empire in the 11th century AD.
- He ascended the throne in 1177 or 1178, and very quickly expanded his kingdom, defeating many of the smaller Rajput states.
- However, he struggled against the Chalukyas of Gujarat, and was forced to look towards the Ganga valley instead.

- While Prithviraj's army was able to decisively defeat the invading Ghurids in the First Battle of Tarain (present-day Haryana) in 1191, he was defeated in the Second Battle of Tarain in the following year.
- The battle marked a watershed moment in the history of medieval India, paving the way for the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate and the beginning of Muslim rule.
- Prithviraj was depicted in 'Prithviraj Raso', a poem in Brajbhasha attributed to Chand Bardai, which is thought to have been composed in the 16th century.

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National Achievement Survey - Ministry of Education

- It assesses the health of school education system in the country by conducting comprehensive evaluation survey of children's learning competencies at classes III, V, VIII and X with a cycle period of three years.
- The report also evaluated competencies of students in subjects such as mathematics, languages, and environmental studies (EVS) for Classes 3 and 5; language, mathematics, science and social science for Class 8; and language, mathematics, science, social science and English for Class 10.
- Nearly 80% students found learning at home during the pandemic "burdensome" and felt that they learnt better in school with help from peers.
- As many as 24% students said they had no digital device at home. Though 45% students found the experience "joyful", 38% also said that they had difficulties in learning.
- Out of a score of 500, students across various classes performed better in languages, but lagged behind in subjects like mathematics and science.
- across various subjects and classes, SC, ST and OBC students perform worse than general category students.

End discrimination, frame specific policies for LGBTIQ+ workers: ILO

- Around the world, LGBTIQ+ persons face harassment, violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.
- Discrimination has an economic cost not just to LGBTIQ+ persons and their families but also to enterprises and national economies. Studies have shown that diversity in the workplace, including LGBTIQ+ persons, is better for business.
- It recommended member countries, employers' organisations and representatives of workers to launch social protection programmes to remove barriers that LGBTIQ+ persons face in society.
- A national policy and labour law review will allow governments to assess their country's work policy environment for LGBTIQ+ persons.
- Consultation with LGBTIQ+ communities and employers' and workers' organisations will allow the identification of barriers faced by LGBTIQ+ persons when entering the labour market and accessing government schemes, including those on social protection.
- The ILO asked trade unions to help LGBTIQ+ workers to organise and exercise their right to freedom of association.

Supreme Court says sex work is 'legal profession'

- The Supreme Court has directed that police should neither interfere nor take criminal action against adult and consenting sex workers.
- Notwithstanding the profession, every individual in this country has a right to a dignified life under Article 21 of the Constitution.
- The Bench ordered that sex workers should not be "arrested or penalised or harassed or victimised" whenever there is a raid on any brothel, "since voluntary sex work is not illegal and only running the brothel is unlawful".
- A child of a sex worker should not be separated from the mother merely on the ground that she is in the sex trade.
- Further, if a minor is found living in a brothel or with sex workers, it should not be presumed that the child was trafficked.

- Sex workers who are victims of sexual assault should be provided every facility including immediate medico-legal care, a three-judge Bench directed in an order which was passed after invoking special powers under Article 142 of Constitution.

Levying service charges on customers 'not an unfair trade practice': NRAI

- Ministry of Consumer Affairs wrote a letter to NRAI - the umbrella restaurant body - saying the restaurants are collecting service charges from consumers by default, even though collection of any such charge is voluntary and at the discretion of consumers and not mandatory as per law.
- A restaurant bill in India comprises food charge (from the menu), with an addition of service charge (anywhere between 5 to 15 per cent) and a 5 per cent GST on this amount (IGST+SGST). This is for all kinds of standalone restaurants.
- While the GST is a mandatory component as per law, it is the service charge which is supposed to be optional. It is the equivalent of what is known as gratuity around the world, or tip, in casual parlance.
- In the past, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs had come out with "Guidelines on Fair Trade Practices Related to Charging of Service Charge from Consumers by Hotels/ Restaurants".
- Under this, it was clearly mentioned that "a component of service is inherent in the provision of food and beverages ordered by a customer, and therefore the pricing of the product is expected to cover both the goods and service components".
- It also said that hotels and restaurants charging tips from customers "without their express consent in the name of service charges" amounts to unfair trade practice.

Demand for a separate state of Bhil Pradesh

- Bhils or Bheels are an Adivasi ethnic group in West India. Bhils are listed as tribal people of the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan
- Bhils are one of the largest tribal group in India. They speak the Bhil languages.
- The Bharatiya Tribal Party (BTP), a political party based in Gujarat, was formed in 2017.
- It envisions Bhil Pradesh as a separate state carved out of 39 districts spread over four states: 16 in Gujarat, 10 in Rajasthan, seven in Madhya Pradesh, and six in Maharashtra.

Mangarh massacre

- Bhil social reformer and spiritual leader Govind Guru first raised the demand for a separate state for tribals back in 1913 after the Mangarh massacre.
- The massacre, which took place six years before Jallianwalla Bagh and is sometimes referred to as the "Adivasi Jallianwala", saw hundreds of Bhil tribals being killed by British forces on November 17, 1913 in the hills of Mangarh on the border of Rajasthan and Gujarat.

PARAM PORUL Supercomputer inaugurated at NIT, Tiruchirappalli

- A MoU was signed between NIT Tiruchirappalli and Centre for Development in Advanced Computing (C-DAC) in 2020 to establish this 838 TeraFlops Supercomputing Facility under NSM.
- NIT, Tiruchirappalli has been carrying out research in the areas of societal interest such as Health, Agriculture, Weather, Financial Services. The facility installed under NSM will strengthen this research.
- PARAM PORUL system is based on Direct Contact Liquid Cooling technology to obtain a high power usage effectiveness and thereby reducing the operational cost.

National Supercomputing Mission (NSM)

- National Supercomputing Mission (NSM) is a joint initiative of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Department of Science and Technology (DST).
- Under NSM, till date 15 supercomputers have been installed across the nation with compute capacity of 24 petaflops. All these supercomputers have been manufactured in India and operating with indigenously developed software stack.

Renewable energy minister R K Singh asks states, UTs to set up committees for energy transition

- These Steering Committees will work under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretaries of the States and Union Territories.
- The Principal Secretaries of Power and New and Renewable Energy Departments, Transport, Industries, Housing and Urban Affairs, Agriculture, Rural Development and Public Works Departments will act as members of these Committees.
- The States and Union Territories will work on the annual strategy of energy transition under the mandate of the committee.
- Some states like Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttarakhand have already constituted such committees.
- He added that the energy transition is the only means of reducing carbon emissions and fulfilling our commitments made at international forums. He also urged the States to make efforts for zero diesel in agriculture by 2024 by limiting the consumption of diesel in the agriculture sector.

After wheat, the Government of India has decided to restrict the export of sugar to 10 million tonnes.

- The Union Department of Food and Public Distribution said the decision was in the wake of “unprecedented growth in exports of sugar” and the need to maintain sufficient stock of sugar in the country.
- It is for the first time in six years that the Centre is regulating sugar exports.
- The move will come into effect from June 1.

- According to the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA), the industry has signed contracts to export over 8.5 million tonnes of sugar. Of these, around 7.1 million tonnes have been physically exported out of the country till the end of April.
- In the last year, the country had exported 4.3 million lakh tonnes till April, 2021.

Centre allows duty-free imports of crude soyabean, sunflower oil

- Retail inflation in edible oils and fats was 18.8% in March and 17.3% in April, and sunflower oil imports have been constricted due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict since February 24.
- The Finance Ministry has notified the duty structure changes which will become operational from May 25, stating that this would provide significant relief to consumers.
- Ukraine was the world's largest sunflower oil exporter before the conflict began and India has been striving to tap alternative supplies from rival Russia and countries such as Argentina.
- Last October, the government reduced the basic import duties on edible oils amid runaway prices. The import duty on crude palm oil was slashed to 2.5%, from 10%, while those on crude soya and sunflower oils were cut to 2.5%, from 7.5%.

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Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated India's 'First Lavender Festival' in Bhaderwah.

- He described Bhaderwah as the birthplace of India's Purple Revolution and said that Bhaderwah is the potential destination of Agri-tech StartUps of the country.

- India's first National Institute of High Altitude Medicine is also being built in Bhabharwah.
- Bhabharwah (also Bhabharwah Valley) is a town, tehsil and sub-division in the district Doda of Jammu.
- Lavandula (common name lavender) is a genus of 47 known species of flowering plants in the mint family, Lamiaceae.
- The flowers may be blue, violet or lilac in the wild species, occasionally blackish purple or yellowish. Lavender has been used over centuries in traditional medicine and cosmetics.
- CSIR-AROMA Mission, under the Ministry of Science & Technology aims to develop and disseminate the aroma-related science and technology to reach the end user/clients of CSIR: Farmers, industry and society.

Delhi Customs launches Project 'NIGAH' at ICD Gurugram

- Project NIGAH is an initiative to track container by using ICTM (ICD Container Tracking Module) which will help in better visibility of the container movement inside the ICD.
- It will help Customs to expedite long standing containers and monitor timely clearances, thereby enhancing Ease of Doing Business along with ensuring lead preventive checks.

India to be the leader of green hydrogen: Puri in Davos

- The 'green' depends on how the electricity is generated to obtain the hydrogen, which does not emit greenhouse gas when burned.
- Green hydrogen is produced through electrolysis using renewable sources of energy such as solar, wind or hydel power.
- In Apr Oil India Limited (OIL) commissioned India's first 99.99% pure green hydrogen plant in eastern Assam's Jorhat.
- India has just begun to generate green hydrogen with the objective of raising non-fossil energy capacity to 500 gigawatts by 2030.

- The National Hydrogen Mission was launched on August 15, 2021, with a view to cutting down carbon emissions and increasing the use of renewable sources of energy.
- Grey hydrogen is generated through fossil fuels such as coal and gas and currently accounts for 95% of the total production in South Asia.
- Blue hydrogen, too, is produced using electricity generated by burning fossil fuels but with technologies to prevent the carbon released in the process from entering the atmosphere.

Import of paper brought under compulsory registration

- The import policy of major paper products has been amended from 'Free' to 'Free subject to compulsory registration under Paper Import Monitoring System'. A notification to this effect has been issued by DGFT.
- This order shall be applicable on a range of paper products, such as newsprint, handmade paper, wallpaper base, duplicating paper, coated paper, uncoated paper, Litho and offset paper, tissue paper, parchment paper, carbon paper, wall paper, envelops, toilet paper, cartons, account books, labels, bobbins, etc.
- All imports arriving on or after 1.10.2022 shall be governed by this policy.
- Paper products like currency paper, bank bond and cheque paper, security printing paper, etc. have been excluded from this policy change.
- Domestic paper industry has been raising issues of dumping of paper products in the domestic market by way of under-invoicing, entry of prohibited goods by mis-declaration, re-routing goods through other countries in lieu of trade agreements.

Road accidents parameters register a significant decline in 2020

- Road accidents parameters registered a significant decline in 2020 compared to 2019.
- Total accidents decreased on an average by 18.46 per cent, the number of persons killed decreased by 12.84 per cent and the number of injures decreased by 22.84 per cent over previous year's average.

- A total of 3,66,138 road accidents have been reported by States and Union Territories (UTs) during the calendar year 2020, which claimed 1,31,714 lives and caused 3, 48,279 injuries.
- The number of road accidents has been on decline since 2016 except for a marginal increase of 0.46 per cent in 2018. For the second consecutive year, the total number of road accidents fatalities has declined in 2020.
- Similarly, the number of persons injured has been on the decline since 2015.
- For the third consecutive year in 2020, the fatal road accident victims largely constitute young people in the productive age groups.
- Young adults in the age group of 18 - 45 years accounted for 69 per cent of victims during 2020.
- People in the working age group of 18 - 60 years share 87.4 per cent of total road accident fatalities.

DRI seizes 52 kgs of Cocaine under 'Operation Namkeen'

- Operation Namkeen was launched by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI).
- The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) is an Indian intelligence agency. It is India's apex anti-smuggling intelligence, investigations and operations agency.
- The Directorate is run by officers from the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC).
- The DRI came into existence in 1957.

GRSE launches Indian Navy survey vessel 'INS Nirdeshak'

- The ship has taken its name from erstwhile Nirdeshak which was also an Indian Naval Survey ship and was decommissioned after 32 years of glorious service in Dec 2014.
- Part construction of three out of four ships of SVL is being undertaken at L&T, Kattupalli as part of collaborative approach between GRSE and L&T shipbuilding.

- The contract for building four SVL ships was signed between MoD and Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata on 30 Oct 2018. The first of class ship 'Sandhayak' was launched on 05 Dec 2021 at GRSE, Kolkata.
- The SVL ships will replace the existing Sandhayak Class survey ships with new generation hydrographic equipment to collect oceanographic data.

Aarohan 4.0: Two days meet of senior functionaries of Postal Department and India Post payments Bank (IPPB) begins today

- The agenda of the meeting is to deliberate ways to further deepen Financial Inclusion drive in the country.
- India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) has been established under the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communication with 100% equity owned by Government of India.
- IPPB was launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on September 1, 2018.
- The fundamental mandate of IPPB is to remove barriers for the unbanked and under-banked and reach the last mile leveraging a network comprising 160,000 post offices (145,000 in rural areas) and 400,000 postal employees.

App-based attendance hits rural jobs scheme workers

- The Rural Development Ministry had started the exercise on a pilot basis in May 2021.
- Initially, the utilisation of application was to be voluntary, but from May 16, 2022, it has been made mandatory.
- The Ministry's directive claims that the app, which requires two time-stamped and geotagged photographs of the workers in a day, encourages transparency and increases citizen oversight.
- The decision comes despite many problems, including patchy Internet connectivity in rural areas and little or no technical support. In a majority of cases, the employees' families are averse to giving phones to women, especially smartphones. Hence, many women have dropped out.

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PM Modi inaugurates India's biggest Drone Festival

- Several industry leaders, government officials, foreign diplomats, representatives from Public Sector Units, private companies and drone start-ups are participating in the Mahotsav. They will deliberate upon India's Civil Aviation sector.
- PM Modi highlighted the importance of drone technology in the fields of defence, disaster management, agriculture, tourism, film and entertainment. He said that the use of this technology is bound to increase in the coming days.
- Appreciating the use of drones in PM-SVAMITVA scheme, he said, 65 lakh property cards have been generated with the help of drones.
- Drone industry in India is estimated to achieve 15 thousand crore rupees turnover by the year 2026. He also narrated the use of drones in his official decision making through examples of PRAGATI reviews and Kedarnath projects.

International Booker Prize Goes to Geetanjali Shree's Tomb of Sand, Translated by Daisy Rockwell

- Tomb of Sand is the first book originally written in any Indian language to win the International Booker Prize, and the first novel translated from Hindi to be recognised by the award.
- Set in northern India, the novel follows the adventures of an 80-year-old woman who unexpectedly gains a new, and highly unconventional, lease of life.
- Shree and Rockwell will split the £50,000 prize money, giving the author and translator equal recognition. This book has also won the English PEN translation award.
- In 2005, the International Booker Prize opened for English translations of foreign language books and from 2016 onwards, it equally recognised the work of both author and translator.

- The award is given every year to a book translated into English and published in Britain or Ireland.
- It's distinct from the Booker Prize, which has been won by Indian writers like Arundhati Roy and Aravind Adiga in the past.

IISc develops device to improve data encryption

- This can improve data encryption and provide improved security for sensitive digital data such as credit card details, passwords and other personal information. The study describing the device has been published in the journal ACS Nano.
- Cryptographic keys are typically generated in computers using pseudorandom number generators, which rely on mathematical formulae or pre-programmed tables to produce numbers that appear random but are not. In contrast, a TRNG extracts random numbers from inherently random physical processes, making it more secure.
- In IISc's TRNG device, random numbers are generated using the random motion of electrons.
- It consists of an artificial electron trap constructed by stacking atomically-thin layers of materials like black phosphorus and graphene.

India likely to get its first semi-high speed freight train by this December

- Based on the Vande Bharat platform, the 16-coach 'Gati Shakti' train will be able to run at 160 km/hour, and will be manufactured at the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai.
- The overall target of 25 such trains had been set. The final number of trains would depend on how the initial trains will be received by market.
- With these trains, the Railways plans to target the e-commerce and courier parcel segment.
- With the turnover of \$50 billion in 2020, India had become the 8th largest market for e-commerce. India's e-commerce market is expected to reach \$111

billion by 2024, \$200 billion by 2026 and expected to reach \$350 billion by 2030.

New Arunachal monkey named after Sela pass

- Sela macaque (*Macaca selai*), the new-to-science primate was identified and analysed by a team of experts from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and the University of Calcutta.
- Their study has been published in the latest edition of *Molecular Phylogenetics and Evolution*. Phylogenetics relate to the evolutionary development and diversification of a species or group of organisms.
- The phylogenetic analysis revealed that the Sela macaque was geographically separated from the Arunachal macaque (*Macaca munzala*) of Tawang district by Sela.
- This mountain pass acted as a barrier by restricting the migration of individuals of these two species for approximately two million years, the study said.
- Sela is situated between Dirang and Tawang towns in western Arunachal Pradesh.
- The study says the Sela macaque has a tail longer than the Tibetan macaque, Assamese macaque, Arunachal macaque and the white-cheeked macaque but shorter than the bonnet macaque and toque macaque.
- Sela macaque belongs to the *sinica* species-group of *Macaca*, but it differs from all other members of this group through attributes such as brown collar hair and muzzle, and the absence of chin whiskers, the study says.



Errant IAS couple's transfer raises 'dumping ground' storm

- The Central government had shunted the duo – both 1994-batch IAS officers of the AGMUT cadre – out of Delhi after they had allegedly forced athletes at the Thyagraj Stadium to finish their training early in order to take their dog for an evening walk.
- AGMUT expands to Arunachal, Goa, Mizoram and the Union Territories.
- But the transfer of Mr. Khirwar to Ladakh and Ms. Dugga to Arunachal Pradesh has not gone down well.
- Many took to Twitter and other social media platforms to ask if the Centre viewed the northernmost and the north-easternmost parts of India as dumping grounds for errant bureaucrats.

Minister of edu Dharmendra Pradhan visits IISER Pune, inaugurates health facility

- The NFGFHD has been set up at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune. It has been built by IISER Pune and supported by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT).
- This will be one-of-its-kind large facilities providing timely supply of animal models to researchers studying a range of diseases from cancer to diabetes.
- Rats, mice and rabbits will be housed here, doing away with the need to import them.

- With a growing zoonotic disease burden on human health, there is an increased urgency to perform disease studies based on physiological evidence and methods.
- The facility houses molecular biology laboratories and micro-injection setups to generate mouse models, in which scientists will knock out existing genes and replace them with external or artificial genes that are linked to the disease under study. This is done through CRISPR / Cas9 systems.


Chhattisgarh is now the second state after Odisha to have recognised Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights

- The CFR rights of tribals living in Gudiyapadar, a hamlet inside the Kanger Ghati National Park in Bastar district, were recognised, giving the community power to formulate rules for forest use.
- Kanger Ghati National Park is the second national park, after Simlipal in Odisha, where CFR rights have been recognised.
- The community forest resource area is the common forest land that has been traditionally protected and conserved for sustainable use by a particular community.
- The community uses it to access resources available within the traditional and customary boundary of the village; and for seasonal use of landscape in case of pastoralist communities.
- The Community Forest Resource rights under Section 3(1)(i) of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act (commonly referred to as the Forest Rights Act or the FRA) provide for recognition of the right to “protect, regenerate or conserve or manage” the community forest resource.

FOREST AREA UNDER CFR AROUND THE WORLD		
Country	Forest Area % of country	Community Forest % of country
Nepal	25%	49%
Papua New Guinea	63%	97%
Brazil	62%	28%
Columbia	55%	49%
Tanzania	38%	63%

India is about 34.6 ha, nearly **45 per cent** of the total recorded forest area in the country. CFR rights have, thus, been recognized over less than 3 per cent of the potential area.

- Source: CSE



Indian Govt Launches Indian Business Portal For Small Indian Exporters

- FIEO in partnership with GlobalLinker, has designed and developed the “Indian Business Portal”, an International Trade Hub for Indian Exporters and Foreign Buyers.
- This is a B2B digital marketplace to empower SME exporters, artisans and farmers to identify new markets for their products and grow their sales globally.
- Strategic objectives of Indian Business Portal:
 - Digitizing Indian Exporters and help them become discoverable online
 - Encouraging virtual meetings between buyers and sellers
 - Providing a trusted network of Indian Exporters to Foreign Buyers

Government approves guidelines for small business cluster development programme

- The guidelines will be implemented during the 15th Finance Commission Cycle.
- The scheme aims at enhancing the competitiveness and productivity of Micro and Small Enterprises through interventions in Common Facility Centers and Infrastructure Development.

- Government grants for Common Facility Centers will be restricted to seventy percent of the cost of the project from five crore rupees to ten crore rupees and sixty percent of the cost of the project from ten crore rupees to thirty crore rupees.
- However, for North East and the Hill States including Island territories and Aspirational Districts, the grant will be given eighty and seventy percent of the cost of the project as per different project cost ranges.
- Grant for Infrastructure Development will be restricted to sixty percent of the cost of the project from five crore rupees to fifteen crore rupees for setting up of a new Industrial Estate, Flatted Factory Complex.
- Grant will be fifty percent of the cost of the project from five crore rupees to ten crore rupees for up-gradation of the existing Industrial Estate, Flatted Factory Complex.

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North India's first Biotech Park at Kathua inaugurated by Dr. Jitendra Singh

- This biotech park will carry out research on biodiversity, medicinal and aromatic plants of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, and it will also promote green category businesses.
- The biotechnology park at Kathua has a potential to produce 25 startups in a year which will be among its great contributions to this region.
- The work on the two Industrial Biotech Parks, one at Ghatti, Kathua, Jammu and other in Handwara, Kashmir jointly funded by department of Biotechnology, Govt. of India, Ministry of Science & Technology and Jammu & Kashmir Science, Technology & Innovation Council was started in February 2019.
- CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, (CSIR-IIIM) Jammu has been entrusted with the responsibility of implementation of this project.

Atal Innovation Mission organises national outreach meet in Goa

- ANIC is a flagship program of Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog.

- The program aims to seek, select, support and nurture technology-based innovations that solve sectoral challenges of national importance and societal relevance.
- Each ANIC winner will be eligible for a funding of up to INR 1 crore.
- The sectors in which ANIC 2.0 launched the challenges include E-mobility, Road Transportation, Space Technology and Application, Sanitation, Medical Devices and Equipment, Waste Management and Agriculture.
- The first edition of the ANIC program received more than 1000 applications for 24 challenges and is currently supporting 30+ startups through grants, partnerships, networking, tech support, mentorship, infrastructure and access to investors.

An IAS couple is transferred after dog-walking incident; what Rules govern the conduct of senior Govt officers

- The three All India Services (IAS, IPS, Indian Forest Service) are governed by the All India Service Conduct Rules, 1968.
- There are 23 Rules in all, which have been amended 37 times since they were first notified.
- The other civil services are governed by the Central Civil Services (CCS) Conduct Rules, 1964, which comprise 25 Rules which have seen 44 amendments so far.
- The overarching Rule for civil servants is: "Every member of the Service shall at all times maintain absolute integrity and devotion to duty and shall do nothing which is unbecoming of a member of the Service".

Centre extends scholarship scheme for Jammu and Kashmir students

- The Prime Minister's Special Scholarship Scheme (PMSSS) was introduced by the Congress-led UPA government in 2011 to provide funding to 5,000 meritorious students each year to study in private and government educational institutions across the country.

- Aimed at promoting employment opportunities for students from J&K and Ladakh, the scheme, with an annual budget of ₹ 180 crore to ₹ 190 crore, is implemented by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).
- The term of the scheme was due to end last year, but the Central government decided to extend it for another five years for the benefit of students.
- The scheme offers 4,500 seats for general education courses (Bachelor's in Arts, Commerce and Science), and 250 each for engineering and medical degrees.
- While the scholarship offered for general education courses is ₹ 1.3 lakh, including a ₹ 1 lakh maintenance fee to cover hostel and mess charges, it is ₹ 2.25 lakh for engineering and ₹ 4 lakh for medical degrees.

Bihar to allow exploration of India's 'largest' gold reserve in Jamui

- As per a Geological Survey of India (GSI) survey, around 222.88 million tonnes of gold reserve, including 37.6 tonnes of the mineral-rich ore, are present in the district.
- Union Minister of Mines Pralhad Joshi had last year informed the Lok Sabha that Bihar holds the highest share of India's gold reserves. He had said that Bihar has 222.885 million tonnes of gold metal, which amounts to 44% of the total gold reserves in the country.

Government To Prepare Framework To Prevent Fake Reviews in e-commerce website

- The Consumer Affairs Ministry, along with the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), held a virtual meeting with stakeholders, including e-commerce entities, to discuss the magnitude of fake reviews on their platforms.
- Fake reviews mislead consumers into buying online products and services. The Department of Consumer Affairs will develop these frameworks after studying the present mechanism being followed by the e-commerce entities in India and best practices available globally.
- Since e-commerce involves a virtual shopping experience without any opportunity to physically view or examine the product, consumers heavily rely

on reviews posted on platforms to see the opinion and experience of users who have already purchased the product or service.

UN-Habitat finds multi-hazard vulnerabilities in Jaipur city

- The global body has based its findings on a sustainable cities integrated approach pilot project, as part of which the “sustainable urban planning and management” component was implemented in collaboration with the Jaipur Development Authority and Jaipur Greater Municipal Corporation.
- Jaipur has received an overall sustainability rating of three on the Urban Sustainability Assessment Framework (USAF) on the basis of data collected for 87 of its 131 parameters.
- Experts have identified urban sectors where the city needs to pay maximum attention, and made recommendations to increase its green cover, strengthen urban biodiversity, and enhance the quality of life for citizens.
- The project has received funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF-6) to estimate the carbon sequestration potential of Indian cities.
- Mitigating urban sprawl remains a major challenge in the State capital, with the UN body emphasising the concept of a compact city with re-development and re-densification of the existing urban areas.
- As an indirect measure to curb development on the city's outskirts, linking the distance from the main city to the development charges imposed on citizens could be considered.

INS Gomati bids adieu after 34 years of service

- INS Gomati derives her name from the vibrant river Gomti and was commissioned on 16 April 1988 by the then Defence Minister, KC Pant, at Mazgaon Dock Ltd, Bombay.
- The third ship of the Godavari class guided-missile frigates, INS Gomati was also the oldest warrior of the Western Fleet when decommissioned.
- During her service, she participated in Operations Cactus, Parakram and Rainbow, and several bilateral and multinational naval exercises.

- For her remarkable spirit and stellar contribution to national maritime security, she was twice awarded the coveted Unit Citation, once in 2007-08 and again in 2019-20.

Russian frigate Admiral Gorshkov successfully test-fired a Tsirkon hypersonic cruise missile:

- The missile hit a naval target about 1,000 kms away in the White Sea and the flight of the projectile corresponded to the designed parameters.
- The Tsirkon missile has been test-fired several times from the Admiral Gorshkov frigate and a nuclear-powered submarine.
- The Tsirkon missile is capable of flying at Mach 9 or nine times the speed of sound and striking a target over 1,000 kms away.

India - UAE mou on climate action

- The basic objective of this MoU is to establish a framework to facilitate and enhance bilateral cooperation on climate action, and also contributes towards implementing the Paris Agreement 2015.
- The Paris Agreement was signed in 2015 at the end of the annual climate change conference for global collective efforts at reducing carbon emissions to restrict global temperature rise to preferably 1.5 degrees Celsius as compared to the pre-industrial area.

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The battle over mining in Chhattisgarh's Hasdeo forest

- The state government had in March given a go-head for coal mining in an area of 1,136 hectares under the second phase of Parsa East-Kete Basan (PEKB) coal block.
- A sprawling forest in the northern part of Chhattisgarh, Hasdeo Arand is known for its biodiversity and also its coal deposits.

- The forest falls under Korba, Sujapur and Sarguja districts with sizeable tribal population.
- The Hasdeo river, a tributary of Mahanadi, flows through it.
- Released in 2021, a report on the region by the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) termed Hasdeo Arand the “largest un-fragmented forests in Central India consisting of pristine Sal (*Shorea robusta*) and teak forests.”

US Replaces China as India's Biggest Trading Partner in 2021

- The bilateral trade between the U.S. and India stood at \$119.42 billion in 2021-22 as against \$80.51 billion in 2020-21.
- Exports to the U.S. increased to \$76.11 billion in 2021-22 from \$51.62 billion in the previous fiscal year, while imports rose to \$43.31 billion from about \$29 billion.
- Experts believe that the trend of increasing bilateral trade with the U.S. will continue in the coming years also as New Delhi and Washington are engaged in strengthening economic ties.
- India has joined a U.S.-led initiative to set up an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and this move would help boost economic ties further.

India-China trade

- During 2021-22, India's two-way commerce with China aggregated at \$115.42 billion as compared to \$86.4 billion in 2020-21.
- Exports to China marginally increased to \$21.25 billion last fiscal year from \$21.18 billion in 2020-21, while imports jumped to \$94.16 billion from about \$65.21 billion in 2020-21.
- Trade gap rose to \$72.91 billion in 2021-22 from \$44 billion in the previous fiscal year.

International Day of UN Peacekeepers 2022

- For the past two decades on this day, UN Peacekeepers, also known as the Blue Helmets, are remembered by the world for their role in promoting security, peace and stability.
- More than one million UN peacekeepers have taken part in 72 such operations since 1948.
- India has played a key role in UN Peacekeeping operations. It sent doctors and nurses to Congo in 1960 and then an all women team to Liberia in 2008.

Kerala on alert after 47-year-old dies of West Nile fever

- The West Nile Virus is a mosquito-borne, single-stranded RNA virus.
- It is "a member of the flavivirus genus and belongs to the Japanese Encephalitis antigenic complex of the family Flaviviridae".
- Culex species of mosquitoes act as the principal vectors for transmission.
- It is transmitted by infected mosquitoes between and among humans and animals, including birds, which are the reservoir host of the virus.
- WNV can also spread through blood transfusion, from an infected mother to her child, or through exposure to the virus in laboratories.
- It is not known to spread by contact with infected humans or animals. To date, no human-to-human transmission of WNV through casual contact has been documented.
- The disease is asymptomatic in 80% of the infected people. In rest of the 20% cases, the symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, body aches, nausea, rash, and swollen glands.
- This vector-borne disease can be prevented by protecting one-self from mosquito bites.
- Other steps are wearing clothing that acts as a barrier to exposure to bites, reducing breeding sites, covering water storage containers and eliminating puddles and drainage of places where water accumulates.

India, Bangladesh are rebooting their rail link

- The Bandhan Express between Kolkata and Khulna was also resumed with the flagging off of the train at Kolkata. It reached Benapole railway station around 9.45 a.m. local time.
- The newly introduced train Mitali Express between New Jalpaiguri and Dhaka will be flagged off jointly by the Railway Ministers of India and Bangladesh on June 1. The train will not have any commercial stoppage between Dhaka and New Jalpaiguri.
- Passenger train services between the two countries had remained suspended for over two year after the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.
- The resumption of the train services was eagerly awaited in Bangladesh as it provides a convenient and cheap mode of connectivity for the people travelling from Bangladesh to India and back.

Narendra Modi recounted how he received an interesting gift by a Self-Help Group from Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu.

- The gift was a special Thanjavur Doll, which is scripting a new saga of women empowerment as Women's Self-Help Groups' stores and kiosks are opening up in Thanjavur.
- With the help of such kiosks and stores, women are now able to sell their products directly to the customers. The initiative has been named 'Tharagaigal Kaivinai Porutkal Virpanai Angadi'.
- The Thanjavur doll is a type of traditional Indian bobblehead or roly-poly toy made of terracotta material.
- The centre of gravity and total weight of the doll is concentrated at its bottom-most point, generating a dance-like continuous movement with slow oscillations.
- These toys are traditionally handmade, finished with detailed, painted exteriors.
- They have been recognized as a Geographical Indication by the Government of India as of 2008-09.

NCTE launches online portal to streamline recognition process of teacher education programmes

- This will streamline the entire process right from the time of inviting application for courses till the stage of issue of recognition orders including the inspection of institutions.
- The applications for the recently launched four years Integrated Teacher Education Programmes will be processed on this portal.
- This portal will bring a paradigm shift in the functioning of NCTE. It aims to provide an automated robust framework thereby enhancing accountability, transparency and ease of doing business.

Projects worth ₹ 1,34,200 crore will boost rail, road, air network in northeast, says Nirmala Sitharaman

- Addressing the “Natural Allies in Development and Interdependence (NADI)” conclave here, she said the Union government had been pumping in huge money to develop a number of infrastructure projects throughout the region.
- The Centre is carrying out 20 railway projects worth ₹ 74,000 crore for 2,011 km, which are spread across the northeast.
- The Centre is also developing 4,000 km of roads in the region at a total cost of ₹ 58,000 crore.
- There are 15 ongoing air connectivity projects in the northeast, costing around ₹ 2,200 crore.
- India and Bangladesh had 50 riverine systems which could be leveraged for all types of transportation as the cost of travel through water was the least when compared to air, road and rail networks.
- The government is further developing the National Waterways (NW)-1 on the Ganga, NW-2 on the Brahmaputra and NW-16 on the Barak. The entire area between Sadiya and Dhubri in Assam along the Brahmaputra was being developed for better connectivity.
- The Eastern Waterways Connectivity Transport Grid, once completed, will offer seamless connectivity not only between the northeast and the rest of India but also on the subcontinent.

MeitY issues draft National Data Governance Framework

- It proposes the launch of a non-personal data based India datasets programme and addresses the methods and rules to ensure that non-personal and anonymised data from both government and private entities are safely accessible by the research and innovation ecosystem.
- The Framework will be of interest to artificial intelligence (AI) start-ups, AI research entities, and government departments.
- it would also accelerate digital government and digitisation of government with common standards, rules and guidelines for data storage and management across all departments.

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'Centre poised for advanced action on bank privatisation'

- In the Union Budget for 2021-22, Union Finance Minister had announced privatisation of two PSBs besides IDBI Bank. However, this year's Budget Speech had skipped the mention of the progress made for the privatisation of two PSBs.
- Even as the NITI Aayog has suggested names of two PSBs for privatisation, the Centre is yet to make an enabling provision in the law for the divestment of the government's stake sale below the 51 per cent threshold.
- The government had listed the introduction of Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970, in the Winter Session, but the Bill was not tabled. The Aayog had reportedly suggested privatisation of Central Bank of India and Indian Overseas Bank.
- According to the amendments to the Banking Companies Act moved last year, the government is looking to retain at least 26 per cent stake in PSBs post privatisation.
- The approval to privatise the two PSBs is yet to be considered by the Core Group of Secretaries on Divestment (CGD) headed by cabinet secretary.

- Once approved by the CGD, the proposal will be sent to the Alternative Mechanism (AM) that comprises Union Finance Minister Sitharaman and Union Minister of Roads Nitin Gadkari.
- After their nod, the Cabinet will take up the proposal.

Supreme Court upholds National Medical Commission's regulations for foreign medical graduates

- The regulations had in the recent past been a point of debate with relation to Indian students who were forced to return due to the Ukraine crisis.
- The Bench upheld the regulatory validity of the National Medical Commission (Foreign Medical Graduate Licentiate) Regulations, 2021 and the National Medical Commission (Compulsory Rotating Medical Internship) Regulations, 2021.
- The first one requires the foreign medical graduates (FMGs)
 - to undergo a medical course for a minimum of 54 months and an internship for a minimum duration of 12 months in the same foreign medical institution;
 - to register with a professional regulatory body competent to grant licence in the same foreign country and further undergo a supervised 12-month internship in India after applying to the National Medical Commission.
- The second lists rigorous conditions for internship in India for the FMGs.

India's move away from coal hampered by Ukraine war: Nirmala Sitharaman

- Coal consumption needs to come down as the power sector in India accounts for 49% of total carbon dioxide emissions, compared with the global average of 41%.
- As of February 2022, the installed capacity for coal-based power generation across the country was 2.04 lakh MW. This accounts for about 51.5% of power from all sources. Natural gas has been dubbed as the transition fuel.

- As per a letter by the power Ministry, Coal India, the country's largest supplier of the dry fuel is set to import coal for the first time since 2015. The aim of the exercise is to avoid a repeat of the power outage crisis that India faced in April.

VP Embarks On Three Nation Tour Of Gabon Senegal And Qatar

- The Vice President's visit to Gabon and to Senegal will add momentum to India's engagement with Africa and also emphasise its commitment to the African continent.
- The visit to Qatar, as both sides prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, will further enhance the bilateral ties.
- Gabon is a country on the west coast of Central Africa. Located on the equator, Gabon is bordered by Equatorial Guinea to the northwest, Cameroon to the north, the Republic of the Congo on the east and south, and the Gulf of Guinea to the west. Gabon's capital is Libreville.
- Senegal is a country in West Africa. Senegal is bordered by Mauritania in the north, Mali to the east, Guinea to the southeast, and Guinea-Bissau to the southwest. Senegal's capital is Dakar.

Two Indians Among 21 New Cardinals Named By Pope

- The two Cardinals from India are Archbishop Filipe Neri António Sebastião di Rosário Ferrão, Archbishop of Goa and Damão and -Archbishop Anthony Poola, Archbishop of Hyderabad.
- These cardinals represent the Church worldwide, and reflect a wide variety of cultures, contexts and pastoral ministries.
- He also said that he will meet from August 29 and 30 with all the cardinals to reflect on the new Apostolic Constitution Praedicate evangelium.
- A cardinal (literally "cardinal of the Holy Roman Church") is a senior member of the clergy of the Catholic Church, immediately behind the pope in the order of precedence. Collectively, they constitute the College of Cardinals, and are appointed for life.

Maharashtra overtook UP to re-emerge as top sugar producer

- The state's output for the 2021-22 crushing year (October-September) is expected at 138 lakh tonnes (lt). That is an all-time-high, beating the previous 107.21 lt of 2018-19.
- This record production is attributed to three factors.
- The first is the bountiful rainfall since the 2019 southwest monsoon.
- The second is higher yields from farmers taking extra care of their crop.
- The third factor is a huge jump in "unregistered" cane cultivation. The large "unregistered" area has meant that there is un-harvested cane still in the fields and mills will continue to crush till the first week of June.

Indian Council for Cultural Relations's (ICCR) ten days programme Gen Next Democracy Network concluded.

- Youth from democratic countries come to India under the Gen Next Democracy Network programme. During the programme, they get acquainted with India's heritage, culture and functioning of Indian democracy.
- In the closing ceremony, 27 delegates from six countries- Ghana, Bangladesh, Peru, Nepal, Brunei and Norway shared their experiences of visiting India.

Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)

- The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), is an autonomous organisation of the Government of India. The ICCR Headquarter is situated in New Delhi.
- It was founded in 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Education Minister of independent India. It is involved in India's global cultural relations, through cultural exchange with other countries and their people.
- The council also operates missions internationally, with established cultural centres in various countries. It also administers the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding, established by the Government of India in 1965, whose last award was in 2009.

PM releases benefits under PM CARES for Children Scheme

- Prime Minister of India had earlier launched the PM CARES for Children Scheme in 2021.
- Under this Scheme, an initiative was started in Feb 2022 to provide financial assistance to support such children who have lost both the Parents or legal Guardian or Adoptive Parents or Surviving Parent to COVID-19 pandemic.
- In line with the above initiative, the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has decided to provide scholarship assistance to such Children who have lost both the Parents or legal Guardian or Adoptive Parents or Surviving Parent to COVID-19 pandemic to continue their education without any hindrance.
- Accordingly, a new Scheme was formulated for the purpose namely; SCHOLARSHIP FOR PM CARES CHILDREN as a Central Sector Scheme.
- Under the Scheme Scholarship allowance would be ₹ 20,000/- per child per annum which will comprise monthly allowance of ₹ 1,000 per month and Annual academic allowance of Rs. 8,000 to cover the entire school fees, cost of the books and uniform, shoes and other educational equipment.
- The Scholarship will be disbursed through DBT to the Children from Class 1st until they pass out the 12 std Class.

DRI seizes Red Sanders worth Rs. 11.70 crore under "Operation Rakth Chandan"

- Red Sanders is a flora-species that is endemic to a distinct tract of forests in Eastern Ghats region of Andhra Pradesh and fall under 'endangered list' in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.
- Red Sanders is also listed in Appendix-II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wildlife Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- Its rich hue and therapeutic properties are responsible for its high demand across Asia, particularly China, for use in cosmetics, medicinal products and high-end furniture/woodcraft.
- The export of Red Sanders from India is prohibited as per the Foreign Trade Policy.

PARAM ANANTA Supercomputer commissioned at IIT, Gandhinagar

- PARAM ANANTA supercomputing facility is established under Phase 2 of the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM) - a joint initiative of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Department of Science and Technology (DST).
- It is a 838 TeraFlops Supercomputing Facility and is based on Direct Contact Liquid Cooling technology.
- Under NSM, till date 15 supercomputers have been installed across the nation with aggregate compute capacity of 24 petaflops. All these supercomputers have been manufactured in India and operating on indigenously developed software stack developed by Centre for Development in Advanced Computing (C-DAC).