

**National / State News**

1. Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan will launch Which Programmed Of 100-day reading campaign on January 1, 2022 ?

- A. Ujjwal Bharat
- B. Padhe Baharat**
- C. Utkarsh Bharart
- D. Shikshit Bharat

## Padhe Bharat campaign to develop reading proficiency

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**P**adhe Bharat campaign aims to bring reading proficiency among first-generation learners which started on January 1, 2022. The campaign aims at inculcating a reading habit among students to help them enhance their vocabulary, critical thinking and enrich them with creative ideas. The initial five books that have been recommended for the reading are: *Atomic Habits* by James Clear, *Little Book of Happiness* by Ruskin Bond, *Reflection* by Swami Vivekanada, *Chilika* by K R Ray and *Atonement* by F M Senapati.

Speaking to *Education Times*, Bonny Bhansali, prin-

cipal, The Green Acers Academy, Mumbai, which will start implementing this programme from January 10, says, "Padhe Bharat campaign would help the first-generation learners by providing them with an exposure to an environment of being proficient in reading English and other regional languages even while being at their home." Kuldeep Singh, principal, Government Boys Senior Secondary School (GBSSS) Number 1, Adarsh Nagar says, "The first-generation learners find it difficult to identify alphabets and words. Teachers remain focussed on completing the syllabus and the content written in the textbooks without developing students' reading skills."

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched a 100-day reading campaign 'Padhe Bharat'

The launch of the 100 Days Reading Campaign is in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

Padhe Bharat campaign will focus on children studying in Balvatika to Grade 8.

The reading campaign will be organized for 100 days (14 weeks) starting from January 1, 2022, to April 10, 2022. This campaign has also been aligned with the vision and goals of the foundational Literacy and Numeracy mission.

2. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi released 10th instalment of financial benefit under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme enabled the transfer of an amount of more than Rs. 20,000 crore to more than 10 crore beneficiary farmer families From When Was PM-KISAN Cecame Operationalised?

- A. 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016
- B. 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017
- C. 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018
- D. 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019

## PM-KISAN scheme: Modi releases ₹20,900 cr to farmers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi, January 1

**PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA** Modi on Saturday released over ₹20,900 crore to more than 10.09 crore farmers across India as 10th instalment of financial aid under the PM-KISAN scheme.

Modi released the amount to beneficiaries at an event held through video conference.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme, a financial benefit of ₹6,000 per year is provided to the eligible farmer families, payable in three equal instalments of ₹2,000. The money is transferred directly to the bank account of the beneficiaries.

During the virtual event, the Prime Minister also released an equity grant of more than ₹14 crore to about 351 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), benefiting 1.24 lakh farmers.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the release of the 10th instalment of financial aid under the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme, in New Delhi on Saturday

The virtual event was attended by as many as nine chief ministers, several ministers from different states, and representatives of agricultural institutions.

On the occasion, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said on the first day of the New Year 2022, around ₹20,900 crore is being transferred to about 10.09 crore beneficiaries. He also said the PM-KISAN programme was launched as part of government's effort to help double income of farmers. The 9th instalment of PM-KISAN was released by in August 2021.

With the released latest tranche, the total amount provided under the scheme has touched about ₹1.8 lakh crore. PM-KISAN scheme was announced in February 2019 Budget. The first instalment was for the period December 2018 to March 2019.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the 10th installment of financial benefit under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme around ₹20,900 crore is being transferred to about 10.09 crore beneficiaries.

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the PM-KISAN scheme was announced in February 2019. Under the PM-KISAN scheme, a financial benefit of ₹6,000 per year is provided to the eligible farmer families, payable in three equal installments of ₹2,000.

3. Which Of The Following State stood first in the country in the list of **highest number of open defecation free (ODF Plus) villages** under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase II programme till December 31, 2021 ?

A. Uttar Pradesh

B. Odisha

**C. Telangana**

D. Tamil Nadu

## Telangana tops Open Defecation Free plus list

13,737 of 14,200 villages in State feature on the Central list

R. AVADHANI  
HYDERABAD

Once again, Telangana stood first in the country in the list of highest number of open defecation free (ODF Plus) villages under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase-II programme till December 31, 2021.

As many as 13,737 out of 14,200 villages in the State are in the ODF Plus list, which is 96.74%. Tamil Nadu followed with 4,432 villages (35.39%) and Karnataka with 1,511 villages (5.59%). Gujarat took the 17<sup>th</sup> position with only 83 villages (0.45%).

The Telangana government has enacted a new Telangana Panchayat Raj Act to



Garbage being collected at Malyala village in Telangana.

ensure holistic development of villages.

A secretary has been posted in every panchayat for smooth execution of welfare programmes, close monitoring, digital reporting and to ensure prevalence of good

governance in villages.

The government has stressed on garbage collection and scientific disposal. Garbage bins have been distributed to all households

“The implementation of *Palle Pragathi* programme for holistic development of villages is being uploaded on SBM (G) 2.0 mobile app, which gets reported at the national level dashboard. Telangana State, as per the SBM (Grameen) phase-II dashboard, became *numero uno* in India by declaring the highest number of ODF villages,” commissioner of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development A. Sharath told *The Hindu*.

Telangana stood first in the country in the list of highest number of open defecation free (ODF Plus) villages under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase-II programme till December 31, 2021

As many as 13,737 out of 14,200 villages in the State are in the ODF Plus list,

This was followed by Tamil Nadu with 4,432 villages (35.39%) and Karnataka with 1,511 villages (5.59%).

Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) - the Prime Minister of India had launched the Swachh Bharat Mission on 2nd October 2014

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**First Week of January (1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022)**

**4. Consider The Following Statements Regarding Parliamentary Pannel Which Seeks To *Raise Legal Age Of Women To 21***

**1. The Pannel which seeks to raise the legal age of marriage for women to 21 has only one woman *BJP MP Sushmita Dev* out of 31 members.**

**2. The parliamentary standing committee, Is *led By BJP leader Vinay Sahasrabudhe* Which Of The Following Statement Is Correct**

**A. Only 1**

**B. Only 2**

**C. Both 1 And 2**

**D. None Of The Above**



**Only 1 woman MP in marriage Bill panel**

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NEW DELHI

The parliamentary panel assigned to examine the landmark Bill that seeks to raise the legal age of marriage for women to 21 has only one woman MP out of 31 members.

The Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, which will have wider influence over society, especially females, was introduced in Lok Sabha during the winter session and referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth, and Sports.

The bill, piloted by the women and child development ministry, seeks to increase the legal age of marriage from 18 to 21.

According to the members' list of the parliamentary standing committee, led by senior BJP leader Vinay Sahasrabudhe, available on the Rajya Sabha website, TMC MP Sushmita Dev is the only woman among the 31 members.

Dev said, "I wish there were more woman MPs in the committee but having said that we will make sure all interest groups are heard."

NCP MP Supriya Sule echoed Dev. Sule, who has been raising women-centric issues in parliament, said that the chairman has the power to invite people before the panel. So for more inclusive and wider discussions, he can invite other woman MPs.

The department-related standing committees are permanent, while joint and select committees are constituted from time to time to deal with bills and relevant subjects of various ministries. These panels are constituted by both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

The proposed law will apply to all communities in the country and, once enacted, will supersede existing marriage and personal laws.

**TMC MP Sushmita Dev is the only woman among the 31 members in the panel led by BJP leader Vinay Sahasrabudhe**

the parliamentary standing committee, Prohibition on Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill Will Be Headed By senior BJP leader Vinay Sahasrabudhe,

Trinmool Congress MP Sushmita Dev is the only woman among the 31 members.

the bill will amend seven personal laws -- the Indian Christian Marriage Act; the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act; the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act; the Special Marriage Act; the Hindu Marriage Act; and the Foreign Marriage Act.

This amendment gives equality to men and women in allowing both to marry at 21.

5. Consider The Following Statement Regarding Kaziranga elevated road plan :
1. The 35 km elevated road will run along an existing arterial highway.
  2. Centre had virtually cleared the 35km project worth Rs 6,000 crore.
  3. Kaziranga project” will have two tunnels — one with an estimated length of 1.5 km and the other of 600 metres.

Which Of The Following Statement Is Correct ?

- A. Only 1 And 3
- B. Only 1 And 2
- C. All Of The Above
- D. Only 2 And 3

## Kaziranga elevated road plan awaits nod

The 35-km stretch will run over nine corridors used by animals of the park

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The Assam government is awaiting the Centre's clearance for an elevated road over nine corridors used by the animals of the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve usually during high floods.

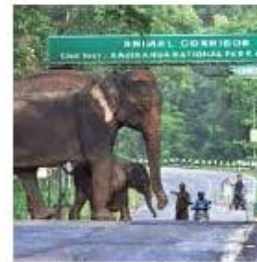
The 35-km elevated road will run along an existing arterial highway.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday said the Centre had virtually cleared the 35-km project worth ₹6,000 crore. But officials of the Public Works Department said they were awaiting clearance from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways

(MoRTH). “But we expect the clearance in a fortnight or so,” a senior official said.

One of the reasons why the MoRTH took longer to process the project was the State government's alignment report for a two-lane road that was deemed to be short-sighted. The Ministry sought a revised report, advising the State authorities to think “100 years ahead” and go for a four-lane project.

“We will have to prepare a detailed project report to the Ministry after receiving its go-ahead. The next stage entails obtaining clearance from the Environment Ministry and the National Board for Wildlife,” the official said.



An elephant and a calf waiting to cross a road at the Kaziranga park • FILE PHOTO

According to the blueprint, the “Kaziranga project” will have two tunnels – one with an estimated length of 1.5 km and the other of 600 metres.

“The alignment was fixed in coordination with the Wildlife Institute of India. Apart from the engineering aspect, the designing was done to ensure minimum harm to

the wildlife and human settlements along the highway,” the official said.

‘Clear encroachments’

Kaziranga's field director P. Sivakumar said the project would not benefit the park known as the best address of the one-horned rhino if the settlements and encroachment on the animal corridors were not cleared. “People settled on or near the corridors need to be relocated and compensated,” he said.

The highway along the southern edge of Kaziranga has often proved fatal for animals fleeing the park during floods for the safety of the hills of the Karbi Anglong district further south. Speed restrictions during the monsoon often fail to prevent the animals from being run over.

The Assam government is awaiting the Centre's clearance for an elevated road over nine corridors used by the animals of the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve usually during high floods

The 35-km elevated road will run along an existing arterial highway

The “Kaziranga project” will have two tunnels — one with an estimated length of 1.5 km and the other of 600 metres. It is a national park in the Golaghat and Nagaon districts of Assam.

Governor Jagdish Mukhi Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma

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6. With reference to the **air sports**, consider the following statements:

1. According to draft National Air Sports Policy 2022 (NASP), an **Air Sports Federation of India (ASFI)** will be established as the apex governing body.
2. The **Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI)**, headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland is the world governing body for air sports.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only  
 B. 2 only  
**C. Both 1 and 2**  
 D. Neither 1 nor 2

## New policy aims to make India top air sports nation

**TE RAJA SIMHAN**

Chennai, January 2

The Civil Aviation Ministry on Saturday has released a draft National Air Sports Policy 2022 (NASP) to promote air sports sector. The policy aims to make the sport safe, affordable, accessible, enjoyable and sustainable. The vision is to make India as one of the top air sports nations by 2030.

The Ministry has sought feedback and comments by January 31.

Air sports encompasses various activities such as air-racing, aerobatics, aeromodelling, hang gliding, paragliding, paramotoring and skydiving.

Systems and processes need to be simplified and made more transparent; quality, safety and security needs to be enhanced; and investments in infrastructure, technology, training and awareness building need to be facilitated, the draft policy said.

India has the potential to be among the top nations in air sports. It is time to make it hap-



pen, said Amber Dubey, Joint Secretary to the Government of India, Chairperson, NASP Drafting Committee.

### What does it entail?

The draft NASP 2022 was prepared by the committee comprising senior officials from the Centre, Armed Forces, Aero Club of India, National Cadet Corps and experts.

The plan is also to develop and manufacture air sports equipment in India in line with the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, the draft policy says.

The plan is to have a two-tier governance structure with Air Sports Federation of India as the apex governing body and air sport-specific associations handling day-to-day activities.

ASFI shall be an autonomous

body under the Ministry of Civil Aviation and represent India at FAI and other global platforms related to air sports. It will also provide governance over all aspects of air sports including but not limited to, regulation, certification, competitions, awards and penalties.

The State governments and Union Territories will endeavour to develop the necessary infrastructure and facilitate promotion of air sports and tourism. This may include development of new air sports centres, construction of new runways or repairing existing ones, development of new launch and landing pads; and financial support for events and training.

The International Olympic Committee is considering the inclusion of air sports in IOC-approved events. Competitions will be conducted in compliance with the Switzerland-based Fédération Aéronautique Internationale enabling associations to keep track of performances as per global norms, the draft paper said.

The vision of the policy is to make India one of the top air sports nations by 2030.

NASP 2022 covers sports like aerobatics, aeromodelling, amateur-built and experimental aircraft, ballooning, drones, gliding, hang gliding and paragliding; microlighting and paramotoring; skydiving and vintage aircraft.

An Air Sports Federation of India (ASFI) will be established as the apex governing body

The Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland is the world governing body for air sports.

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7. **Kalpna Chawla Centre for Research in Space Science & Technology has been inaugurated in which university?**

- a. Madras University
- b. Chandigarh University**
- c. Allahabad University
- d. Delhi University

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday inaugurated the Kalpana Chawla Centre for Research in Space Science & Technology at Chandigarh University

The Union Minister also launched Chandigarh University's Defence Scholarship Scheme, worth Rs 10 Crore, for the wards of Defence Personnel of the three services

this state-of-the-art space centre would be the Ground Control Station (GCS) for the Chandigarh University's Student Satellite (CUSAT), an in-house developed nano-satellite being designed by the students of Chandigarh University

With the launch of CUSAT, Punjab will become the first border state in India to have its own satellite in space.

8. **Union Education Minister and Skill Development Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan launched NEAT 3.0, a single platform to provide the best-developed ed-tech solutions and courses to students of the country. What Is The Full Form Of NEAT ?**

- a. National Educational Alliance for Technology**
- b. National Educational Association for Technology
- c. Non Educational Alliance for Technology
- d. National Educational Alliance for Training

Union Education Minister and Skill Development Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan launched NEAT 3.0, a single platform to provide the best-developed ed-tech solutions and courses to students of the country.

He also launched AICTE prescribed technical books in regional languages.

58 global and Indian start-up ed-tech companies are onboard NEAT and are offering 100 courses & e-resources for bettering learning outcomes,

Under NEAT 3.0, more than 12 lakh socially and economically disadvantaged students have received free ed-tech course coupons worth over ₹253 crore.

National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) is an initiative to provide the use of best-developed technological solutions such as Artificial Intelligence in the education sector

9. On 04 January 2022, PM Modi inaugurated New Integrated Terminal Building at **Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport** At Which Of The Following Place ?

- A. Agartala
- B. Imphal
- C. Itanagar
- D. Dispur

### PM opens integrated terminal building at airport in Agartala

**New Delhi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the New Integrated Terminal Building of Maharaja Bir Bikram (MBB) Airport in Agartala on Tuesday. Addressing the gathering, the PM said, "The airport is a blend of Tripura's culture, natural beauty and modern facilities. It will play a big role in enhancing air connectivity in the North East. We are progressing in full earnest to make Tripura the gateway to the northeast." **SWATI LUTHRA**

PM Modi inaugurated New Integrated Terminal Building at Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport At Agartala

Prime Minister said that the current regime came up with the Mantra of HIRA - H to Highway, I to Internet way, R to railways and A to Airways for improving the connectivity in Tripura.

The New Integrated Terminal Building of Maharaja Bir Bikram Airport is built at a cost of about ₹450 crore

He also launched Mukhyamantri Tripura Gram Samridhi Yojana and Project Mission 100 of Vidyajyoti Schools.

10. Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh has launched a web portal for **PM's Excellence award in Public Administration for the year 2021-22**. The prize money has been increased from Rs.10 lakh to What Amount to the awarded District/Organization ?

- A. Rs 15 Lakh
- B. Rs 20 Lakh
- C. Rs 50 Lakh
- D. Rs 25 Lakh

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh has launched a web portal for PM's Excellence award in Public Administration for the year 2021-22.

Now, the award is given on the performance of the district rather than the performance of the District Collector or individual civil servant

The prize money has also been increased from Rs.10 lakh to Rs.20 lakh to the awarded District/Organization.

Now, it has become mandatory for all District Collectors to apply for the Award



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**11. In January 2022, which state collaborated with the *Indian School of Business (ISB)* to empower the state's *forest economy*?**

- a. Uttarakhand
- b. Jharkhand**
- c. Chhattisgarh
- d. Assam

Taking a significant step towards creating jobs and wealth through a model of sustainable development, the Jharkhand government has collaborated with the Indian School of Business (ISB) for a unique initiative to empower the state's forest economy. The Jharkhand government has joined hands with the Indian School of Business to launch an initiative aimed at empowering state's forest economy and creating jobs and wealth through a sustainable development model.

Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste, Minority and Backward Class Welfare along the Department of Forests, Jharkhand, signed an MoU with the Bharti Institute of Public Policy at Indian School of Business (ISB), Hyderabad, to develop scalable and sustainable solutions focussing on forest-based industrial value chains.

**12. Recently In January the central government Has Announced To launch a *first of its kind a district level Good Governance Index* in Which Of The Following State to assess the status of governance ?**

- A. Kerala
- B. Jammu And Kashmir**
- C. Delhi
- D. Punjab

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will release the District Good Governance Index for 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir, the first of its kind index for a union territory.

The event to be organised jointly by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) and Jammu and Kashmir with the technical support from the Centre for Good Governance (CGG) Hyderabad in pursuance of the announcements made in the "Behtar e-Hukumat – Kashmir Aelamia" resolution adopted on July 2, 2021

Jammu district topped the composite ranking, followed by Doda and Samba districts of the Jammu Division. This was followed by Pulwama district of the Srinagar Division at fourth spot and Srinagar district at the fifth

Srinagar district bagged the first rank in in Public Infrastructure and Utilities sector

13. Recently In January Which Of The Following State Has Announced A New Scheme

**“Mukhyamantri Krishak Uparjan Sahayta Yojana” A Scheme Aimed At Providing Budgetary Allocation To Food And Civil Supplies Corporation ?**

A. Uttar Pradesh

**B. Madhya Pradesh**

C. Jharkhand

D. Bihar

## MP cabinet approves scheme to help govt procurement agencies

IRAM SIDDIQUE  
BHOPAL, JANUARY 4

THE MADHYA Pradesh government in a Cabinet meeting Tuesday gave its nod to MP Mukhyamantri Krishak Uparjan Sahayta Yojna, a scheme aimed at providing budgetary allocation to enable government agencies such as Food and Civil Supplies Corporation and Markfed to tide over operational losses incurred during procurement of grains from farmers.

The announcement comes at a time the MP government has suffered a cumulative operation loss of nearly Rs 6,000 crore in procurement of grains, and another Rs 12,000 crore is stuck in unsettled accounts of grains procured by the Centre.

The MP government procures grain through the Department of Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection, along with MP Markfed. It receives payments for procured grain from the Centre after the stock is lifted. These agencies in turn borrow loans to pay farmers within 10 days, while awaiting its dues with the Centre to be settled.

“This scheme had been brought to ensure agencies such as MP Markfed out of the vicious

cycle of paying heavy interest on loans taken to ensure procurement and timely payment to farmers,” state Agricultural Minister Kamal Patel said. “If the present set-up continues without any interventions, these departments reeling under huge debts will not be able to undertake procurement.”

He also said that in cases of many crops, and pulses such as moong, the state government procured around 1 lakh metric tons against the stipulated procurement limit of 95,000 metric tons set by the Centre.

The move was undertaken to ensure farmers get a fair market price. However, the cost of increased procurement was borne by the state government through loans. But the dues are paid back to the state government only once the stock is lifted from the godown.

A senior state official said that in cases where stocks are not taken, refused, or rejected, the operation and other procurement cost is entirely borne by government agencies.

Until March 2021, the MP government had a debt of Rs 2.5 lakh crore in loans, which exceeded its budget of Rs 2.41 lakh crore. The government presently pays Rs 20,942 crore every year as interest.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Farmer Crop Acquisition Assistance Scheme 2022: Madhya Pradesh government has launched a new MP Mukhyamantri Krishak Fasal Uparjan Sahayata Yojana 2022 for farmers.

For Mukhyamantri Krishak Fasal Uparjan Sahayata Yojana, govt. has allocated Rs. 2,000 crore in the MP state budget 2021-22.

MP Mukhyamantri Krishak Uparjan Sahayta Yojna, a scheme aimed at providing budgetary allocation to enable government agencies such as the Food and Civil Supplies Corporation and Markfed to tide over operational losses

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**14. Recently, R K Singh has dedicated *Automatic Generation Control* to the nation. It will be operated by Which Of The Following ?**

- A. Tata Power**
- B. National Thermal Power Corporation Limited**
- C. Power Grid Corporation of India Limited**
- D. Power System Operation Corporation**

Union Power and New and Renewable Energy Minister, R K Singh has dedicated Automatic Generation Control to the nation.

It will help in achieving the government's target of 500 GW non-fossil fuel-based generation capacity by 2030. Automatic Generation Control will be operated by Power System Operation Corporation (POSOCO) through National Load Despatch Centre.

POSOCO will send signals to every power plant through AGC every 4 seconds to maintain the frequency and reliability of the Power System. R.K. Singh has also released a report titled "Assessment of Inertia in Indian Power System". It has been prepared by POSOCO with the help of IIT Bombay. Power System Operation Corporation:

It is responsible for monitoring the integrated operation of the Power System in India

**15. Which ministry in association with *Common Services Centers (CSC)* will undertake the first-ever cultural survey of India's villages ?**

- A. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**
- B. Ministry of Culture**
- C. Ministry of Education**
- D. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**

Ministry of Culture in association with Common Services Centers (CSC) will undertake the first-ever cultural survey of India's villages

The survey titled 'Mera Gaon, Meri Dharohar' will document the cultural identity at the village level. It is expected to be completed by mid-2022.

It will identify the uniqueness of village, block, and district. It will conduct meetings with citizens and gather facts about their villages, customs, traditions, festivals, and beliefs

Common Services Centers will develop a mobile application and train more than 4 lakh Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) for conducting surveys

It will conduct the survey in 6.38 lakh villages and upload the details on the mobile application.

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16. Which district of Odisha has declared itself a *child marriage free district* in January 2022?

- A. Khordha
- B. Dhenkanal
- C. Ganjam**
- D. Gajapati

The Odisha government has declared Ganjam as the first district in the state to be free of child marriages

Ganjam had started a programme called Nirbhaya Kadhi (Fearless bud) in 2019. The campaign helped prevent adolescent girls from dropping out of school, and counselling them.

government has announced ₹50,000 for people who inform them about any child marriage happening in their area. Previously, the reward money used to be ₹5,000."

17. In January 2022, which of the following ministry has launched "*Smart Cities and Academia Towards Action and Research (SAAR)*" program?

- A. Ministry of Home Affairs
- B. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**
- C. Ministry of Rural Development
- D. Ministry of Jal Shakti

It is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, National Institute of Urban Affairs and leading Indian academic institutions of the country.

Under the program, 15 premier architecture & planning institutes of the country will be working with Smart Cities to document landmark projects undertaken by the Smart Cities Mission.

Smart City Mission Launched In 2015 under MoHUA to drive economic growth and improve the quality of life of people by enabling local development and harnessing technology as a means to create smart outcomes for citizens.

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18. How many **One District One Product (ODOP) brands under PMFME scheme** have been launched by Food Processing Industries Minister Pashupati Kumar Paras?

- A. Three
- B. Six**
- C. Eight
- D. Ten

Food Processing Industries Minister Pashupati Kumar Paras has launched six One District One Product (ODOP) brands under PMFME scheme.

The names of brands are Amrit Phal (Gurugram, Haryana), Cori Gold (Kota, Rajasthan), Kashmiri Mantra (Kulgam, Jammu and Kashmir), Madhu Mantra (Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh), Somdana (Thane, Maharashtra), and Whole Wheat Cookies (Delhi) of Dilli Bakes.

Ministry has signed an agreement with NAFED for developing 10 brands of selected One District One Product under branding and marketing component of the scheme. Out of these, six brands were launched

PMFME Scheme - Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises

19. The Karnataka government has inked an MoU with the Singapore-based LNG Alliance Company to **build the state's first LNG terminal** in which of the following city?

- A. Bengaluru
- B. Mangaluru**
- C. Mysuru
- D. Vijayapura

The Karnataka government has inked an MoU with the Singapore-based LNG Alliance Company to build the state's first LNG terminal in Mangaluru

The terminal will be established in collaboration with the New Mangalore Port Trust (NMPT) and would cost Rs 2,250 crore.

The project is part of the Union Government's strategy to boost the alternative fuel sector in order to reach net-zero carbon by 2070.

20. In A First **Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI)**, has signed a historic memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Which State government to promote hospitality and related infrastructure .?

- A. Jharkhand
- B. Jammu And Kashmir**
- C. Haryana
- D. Himachal Pradesh

Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) has signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) to promote hospitality and related infrastructure in the Union Territory.

This is the first time in history that a joint MoU has been signed between an Association of hotels and restaurants and the Government

The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) is the apex body of the Indian Hospitality industry. Founded in 1955, is the third-largest Hospitality association in the world and has diligently built on its rich legacy.

21. Recently In January **RailTel**, a public sector undertaking of the Railway Ministry, has operationalised a scheme in partnership with '**CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd**' (CSC-SPV) and the Ministry of Electronics and IT under which Common Service Centre (CSC) kiosks will come up at How Many railway stations across India ?

- A. 216
- B. 200**
- C. 191
- D. 142

In a unique public friendly initiative, RailTel, a PSU of Ministry of Railways has operationalized a scheme of setting up of Common Service Centre (CSC) Kiosks (stalls) at Railway Stations across India at around 200 Railway stations

The move will help the public visiting railway stations to take advantage of various services offered by CSC at station itself. The services offered by CSC include booking of the travelling tickets These kiosks have been named as 'RailWire Saathi Kiosks' as RailWire is the brand name of the retail broadband service of RailTel

To begin with, the RailWire Saathi CSC kiosks at Varanasi City Railway station and Prayagraj City Railway station in Uttar Pradesh

22. Consider The Following Statement Regarding 3rd National Water Awards-2020 :

1. The first National Water Award was launched by the Jal Shakti Ministry in 2018.
2. In the Best State category, Uttar Pradesh has been awarded first prize, followed by Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.

Which Of The Following Statement Is Correct ?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 And 2
- D. None of the Above

## UP tops Jal Ministry's National Water Awards

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 7

THE UNION Jal Shakti Ministry on Friday announced the winners of National Water Awards 2020, with Uttar Pradesh getting first prize in the best state category and ITC Limited Kolkata and Adani Foundation, Gujarat securing 1st and 2nd prize respectively in the best industry for CSR activities category.

Announcing the winners, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Shekhawat said that India's current water requirement is estimated to be around 1,100 billion cubic meters per year, which is projected to go up to 1,447 billion cubic meters by 2050. He said the aim of the awards is to encourage competition.

In the best state category, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu have bagged 2nd and 3rd prize. In the best institution/RWA/ religious organizations for campus category, Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board bagged the first prize. Welspun India Textile Ltd, Gujarat and Hyundai Motor India Ltd, Tamil Nadu bagged 1st and second prize in the best industry category.

Union Minister of Jal Shakti Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat announced 3rd National Water Awards-2020

In the Best State category, Uttar Pradesh has been awarded first prize, followed by Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu

India's current water requirement is estimated to be around 1,100 billion cubic meters per year, projected to go up to 1,447 billion cubic meters by 2050. The first National Water Award was launched by the Jal Shakti Ministry in 2018.

23. Recently In January Union Minister Of State For Science & Technology Jitendra Singh Inaugurated **India's First Open Rock Museum** At Which Of The Following Place ?

- A. Lucknow
- B. Hyderabad**
- C. Jhansi
- D. Delhi

## First open rock museum inaugurated

Rocks from across India displayed on CSIR-NGRI campus

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

Union Minister of State for Science & Technology Jitendra Singh inaugurated India's first open rock museum displaying different types of rocks gathered from different States of ages ranging from 3.3 billion years to around 55 million years on the campus of the CSIR-National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) here on Thursday.

About 46 rocks of different sizes have been displayed in a garden with descriptions giving the economic and scientific im-



**Diversity in stone:** The rock museum at the CSIR-NGRI in Hyderabad. • G. RAMAKRISHNA

portance of some of them located as deep as 175 km from the surface of the earth. The rocks are from Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir and others.

The Minister suggested that the museum be promot-

ed among students and enthusiasts. "It should be one of the important places to visit in this city of composite culture as these are monuments of modern India."

Pointing out that the country was celebrating 75 years of Independence and

CSIR celebrating 80 years of its formation, he said it was the right time to integrate synergies to make the country self-reliant in many sectors. About 75 science museums would be coming up in association with the Ministry of Culture, he said.

CM  
YK

Jitender Singh, Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, has inaugurated the first open rock museum on the CSIR-National Geophysical Research Institute campus (NGRI) in Hyderabad

The Open Rock Museum displays 35 various types of rocks from all around India, ranging in age from 3.3 billion years to roughly 55 million years

The stones have been brought from Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Jammu and Kashmir, and other states



24. How many tiger reserves of India have received accreditation of the Global Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA/TS)?

- A. 16
- B. 12
- C. 10
- D. 14**

The 19th meeting of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) was organized on 5th January under the chairmanship of Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav.

During the meeting, the environment minister unveiled the Action Plan for the introduction of Cheetah in India.

The cheetah has become extinct in India. Wildlife Institute of India and the Wildlife Trust of India will bring around 8-12 cheetahs from South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana to India. He also informed that the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change had organized the 'India for Tigers: A Rally on Wheels' campaign. 14 tiger reserves in India have received accreditation of the **Global Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA/TS)**. National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA): It was established in December 2005 on the recommendation of the Tiger Task Force. It has been constituted under the provision of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

25. In January 2022, **UNNATI portal** has been launched by Chief Minister of which of the following states?

- A. Uttarakhand
- B. Himachal Pradesh**
- C. Haryana
- D. Punjab

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has launched UNNATI portal. He also launched a website and mobile app of HP State Industrial Development Corporation (HPSIDC).

UNNATI portal will enable the users to work in collaboration with others and focus on individual projects.

**Rajendra Arlekar is the current Governor of Himachal Pradesh and Chief Minister is Jai Ram Thakur**

26. **NHPC Limited** has signed agreement with **GEDCOL** for **development of 500 megawatts floating solar projects on different water bodies in which of the following states?**

- A. Chhattisgarh
- B. Jharkhand
- C. Odisha**
- D. Bihar

NHPC Limited (National Hydroelectric Power Corporation) has signed an agreement with Green Energy Development Corporation of Odisha (GEDCOL). Under the agreement, 500 megawatts (MW) floating solar projects will be developed on different water bodies in the state

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the agreement was signed between NHPC and GEDCOL in July 2020.

In the first stage, about 300 MW floating solar capacity will be installed in the reservoir of Rengali hydro electricity project.

NTPC has already commissioned a floating solar PV project of 25 MW capacity on the reservoir of its Simhadri thermal station in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

27. **The 24th National Conference on e-Government (NCeG)** has been organized in which city on **January 7–8, 2022?**

- A. Mumbai
- B. Hyderabad**
- C. Lucknow
- D. Bangalore

24th National Conference on e-Government (NCeG) has been organized in Hyderabad on January 7–8, 2022.

□ This conference has been conducted by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), in collaboration with the Telangana state government.

The theme of the two-day conference is 'India's Techade: Digital Governance in a Post Pandemic World'.

During the conference, 26 e-Governance initiatives will be honoured with National Awards for e-Governance 2021 in six categories.

28. Which of the following statement is correct regarding the revised expenditure limit for contesting Lok Sabha and Assembly polls?

1. The expenditure limit for candidates contesting Lok Sabha elections has been increased from Rs 70 lakh to Rs 95 lakh.
2. The expenditure limit for candidates contesting Assembly polls has been increased from Rs 28 lakh to Rs 40 lakh.

Which Of The Following Statement Is Correct ?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 And 2
- D. None Of The Above

## Candidate Expenditure Limit Raised to ₹40L From ₹28L for State Polls; EC to Promote Virtual Rallies

Our Political Bureau

**New Delhi:** Ahead of the high-stakes assembly elections to five states, the Centre has hiked the expenditure limit for contesting candidates, on the recommendation of the Election Commission of India.

The limit has been increased to Rs 95 lakh from ₹70 lakh for parliamentary constituencies and to ₹40 lakh from ₹28 lakh for a candidate contesting assembly elections.

For smaller states, it is ₹75 lakh (up from ₹54 lakh) in parliamentary polls, and Rs 28 lakh in assembly elections (up from ₹20 lakh).

Candidates in Goa and Manipur will be able to spend ₹28 lakh now, while those in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Uttarakhand will have a ₹40 lakh limit. The new limits will come into effect immediately in the upcoming elections.

The law ministry has approved the



**VIRTUAL RALLY PUSH**



Increase to nudge political parties to hold virtual rallies amid pandemic

same and notified the increase with an amendment to Rule 90 of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.

ET was the first to report November 30 that the limits would be hiked in the ₹95 lakh to ₹40 lakh range.

The move comes at a time when the poll panel is set to advocate more reliance on virtual rallies than public ones in poll-bound states, in view of the Omicron variant of Covid-19.

Several political parties had earlier requested the poll panel to revise the expenditure limits, especially in view of increased expenses on account of virtual campaign modes and other social distancing norms necessitated due to the pandemic.

The poll panel had set up a two-member committee in 2020, under ECI Director General Umesh Sinha and ex-Indian Revenue Service officer Harish Kumar, to reassess existing expenditure limits for candidates.

The increase in the number of voters over the years and the rise in the Cost Inflation Index among other factors were considered by the panel.

The expenditure limit – the amount a candidate can legally spend for his campaign and must account for – was last revised comprehensively in 2014. The EC rulebook requires that each candidate file details of expenditure incurred in the campaign within 30 days of the declaration of election results.

Election Commission (EC) has decided to increase the expenditure limit for candidates contesting Lok Sabha, Assembly polls.

The expenditure limit for candidates contesting Lok Sabha elections has been increased from Rs 70 lakh to Rs 95 lakh. For Lok Sabha polls, the revised expenditure limit for candidate of smaller state is Rs 75 lakh. The expenditure limit for candidates contesting Assembly polls has been increased from Rs 28 lakh to Rs 40 lakh

For assembly polls, a candidate in smaller states can spend maximum Rs 28 lakh.

For the upcoming election, the expenditure limit for candidates in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Uttarakhand will be Rs 40 Lakh while it will be Rs 28 lakh for candidates in Goa and Manipur

29. Which of the following statements is/are correct with respect to scheme on **Green Energy Corridor (GEC) Phase-II for Intra-State Transmission System (InSTS)**?

1. Total estimated cost of the **scheme is Rs 12,031 crore.**
2. The scheme will facilitate grid integration of approximately **20 GW of renewable energy power projects in 7 states.**

Which Of The Following Statement Is Correct ?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 aND 2
- D. None Of The Above

## Cabinet clears ₹12k-cr green energy corridor

Swati Luthra and Utpal Bhaskar

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** As part of India's green energy push, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday approved the ₹12,031 crore second phase of setting up transmission projects for supplying electricity from renewable energy projects.

Green energy corridors are

### Nod for three agreements

**1 MoU with Turkmenistan on cooperation in disaster mgt:** This puts in place a system, where both benefit from each others' disaster mechanisms

**2 Agreement with Spain on mutual assistance in customs matters:** This will help make available, reliable, quick and cost-effective info and intel

**3 MoU with Nepal for construction of bridge over Mahakali River:** This clears the construction of a bridge over Mahakali River at Dharchula (India) - Dharchula (Nepal)

being set up in two phases with the second phase of the transmission corridors to supply 20 gigawatt (GW) of renewable

energy to the national grid from the seven states of Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka

continued on → 21

In a bid to achieve the target of 450

GW installed renewable energy capacity by 2030, the government on Thursday approved the second phase of green energy corridor with an outlay of Rs 12,031 crore.

The scheme will facilitate grid integration and power evacuation of approximately 20 GW of renewable energy (RE) power projects in seven states - Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

Under the scheme, the transmission systems will be created over a period of five year from financial year 2021-22 to 2025-26.

Central Financial Assistance (CFA) at 33 % of the project cost i.e. Rs 3,970.34 crore. will help in offsetting the intra-state transmission charges and thus keep the power costs down

**Weekly Optimum CA Q&A PDF -Based on Recent Exam Trend**  
**First Week of January (1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022)**

**30. Recently In January India With Which Of The Following Country Has Signed An *Mou In The Field Of Disaster Management* ?**

- A. Turkmenistan**
- B. Nepal**
- C. Bhutan**
- D. Denmark**

Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Turkmenistan on Cooperation in the field of Disaster Management.

The MoU seeks to put in place a system, whereby both India and Turkmenistan will be benefited from the Disaster Management mechanisms of each other and it will help in strengthening the areas of preparedness in the field of Disaster Management.

**Turkmenistan Capital Currency - Ashgabat , manat**

**31. In January 2022, The Cabinet has approved the signing of an agreement between India and which other country on "*Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters*"?**

- A. Morocco**
- B. Spain**
- C. Italy**
- D. Belgium**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday approved the signing of Agreement between India and Spain on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters.

The agreement will help in making available, reliable, quick and cost-effective information and intelligence for the prevention and investigation of Customs offences and apprehending of Customs offenders."

**Spain Capital - Madrid Euro Prime Minister - Pedro Sánchez**

32. Which of the following has been selected by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India for the **second phase of Passport Seva Programme**?

- A. Wipro
- B. Tata Consultancy Services**
- C. HCL Technologies
- D. Capgemini

## Govt selects TCS to drive second phase of Passport Seva Programme

Company to refresh facilities and systems, develop solutions for e-passports

### OUR BUREAUS

Mumbai/New Delhi, January 7

Tata Consultancy Services has been selected by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) for the second phase of the Passport Seva Programme, the country's largest mission-critical e-governance programme to date. While the company did not disclose the financial details of the project, industry experts estimate the project to be worth ₹7,000-8,000 crore over a 10-year period.

Launched in 2008, the Passport Seva Programme saw TCS transforming the delivery of passport-related services, digitising the processes, and setting global benchmarks in timeliness, transparency, and reliability.

In the next phase of the programme, TCS will refresh existing facilities and systems, and develop innovative new solutions to enable the issuance of e-passports and further enhance the citizen experience using technologies such as biometrics, artificial intelligence, advance



Industry experts estimate the project to be worth ₹ 7,000-8,000 crore over a 10-year period

data analytics, chatbots, auto-response, natural language processing, and the cloud.

### Driving digital India

"TCS has been playing a vital role in building a digital India, driving transformation programs of national importance. Our partnership with MEA over the last decade has become a benchmark in public-private partnerships for

citizen services. We are pleased to be selected for the next phase of the Passport Seva Program and look forward to driving further innovations and improving citizen experiences using our contextual knowledge and digital technologies," said Tej Bhatla, Business Unit Head, Public Sector, TCS.

Security aspects, including strategic assets such as data centres, database and the ap-

plication software will be owned by the government, according to a statement from the MEA. "There would be strict access controls across the system, incorporating biometrics," it added.

A data centre, disaster recovery centre and government secure repository are to be set up and networked to all passport offices and missions across the world.

It will also be networked to an electronic file system for passport processing running across the passport issuance ecosystem and 24x7x365 monitoring and supervision through state-of-art Network Operation Centre (NOC) and Security Operation Centre (SOC).

"The focus (of first phase) was on timely, transparent, more accessible and reliable platform, accessed by citizens in a comfortable environment through streamlined processes; and a committed, trained and motivated workforce," the MEA said.

The service provider provided support functions like citizen interface, technology backbone, call centres, training and change management, while the government continued to exercise all sovereign and security-related functions in the passport issuance process, it added.

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Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has selected Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) to implement the Passport Seva Program's second phase

It is the country's largest mission-critical e-governance program. TCS will continue to manage the project for another nine and a half years, which can be extended for two more years.

**TCS' Passport Seva Program, which began in 2008**, transformed the delivery of passport-related services by digitizing processes and established global benchmarks for timeliness, transparency, and reliability

**TCS and MEA have since opened 93 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs), 428 post office PSKs, and 36 passport offices**

33. The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Nepal for construction of a bridge over Which River at Dharchula in Pithoragarh of Uttarakhand?

- A. Ganga
- B. Yamuna
- C. Mahakali**
- D. Brahmaputra

New bridge to connect India, Nepal to come up in Dharchula

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 6

THE CABINET has cleared a plan to build a new bridge connecting India and Nepal, Union Minister for Information Broadcasting Anurag Thakur announced on Thursday. The two countries are set to sign a memorandum of understanding regarding the bridge, which will be built over the Mahakali river and link Dharchula in Uttarakhand with Nepal's Dharchula.

Thakur said the bridge will strengthen the relationship between the two countries. It will be completed within three years, he added.

The government said in a statement that with the signing of an MoU, the "diplomatic relation between the two countries will further improve".

"As close neighbours, India and Nepal share unique ties of friendship and cooperation characterised by an open border and deep-rooted people-to-people contacts of kinship and culture. Both India and Nepal have been working together on different regional forums," the government statement said.

Union Cabinet on Thursday approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Nepal for construction of a bridge over Mahakali River at Dharchula in Pithoragarh of Uttarakhand.

The bridge will be completed in three years, India and Nepal share unique ties of friendship and cooperation characterised by an open border

"The project will enhance cross-border connectivity between the Sudurpaschim province of Nepal and the Uttarakhand state of India across the Mahakali river where close people

The 110-metre bridge will be the second motor bridge on the India-Nepal border in Uttarakhand, according to Indian officials.

The other one, the Banbasa bridge, is situated in the Champawat district

34. Chairman KVIC Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena launched the country's first Mobile Honey Processing Van At Which Of The Following Place ?

- A. Lucknow
- B. Sonipat
- C. Ghaziabad**
- D. Merrut

KVIC launched the country's first Mobile Honey Processing Van at Village Sirora in Ghaziabad, UP.

The Mobile Van has been designed in-house by KVIC at its Multi-disciplinary Training Centre, Panjokehra.

The Mobile Honey Processing Van comes as a major development under KVIC's Honey Mission which aims at training beekeepers, distributing Bee Boxes to farmers and helping rural, to earn extra income through beekeeping activities.

The Honey Mission Programme was launched by Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC), under the Ministry of MSME, during 2017-18.



## International News

1. Recently In December Which Of The Following Country Has Approved "**Citizen Centric** " **National Security Policy For The Year 2022 – 26** ?

- A. Bangladesh
- B. Pakisatan**
- C. China
- D. Nepal

The policy was presented and approved at the 36th meeting of the National Security Committee (NSC), chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan

This is the first time a National Security Policy has been approved in Pakistan

National Security Adviser (NSA) Moeed Yusuf, presented the document

Pakistan Capital – Islamabad , Currency - Rupee

2. **Carmichael Mine** Which Was Seen In News Recently Is Loacted In Which Of The Follwoing Country ?

- A. Australia**
- B. Japan
- C. France
- D. Japan

Adani Group will begin exporting high quality, low sulphur coal from its Carmichael mine in Australia as early as this week, after battling a seven-year campaign by climate activists and defying a global push away from fossil fuels.

With this, the group taps a new multi-decade source to meet energy needs. "The first shipment of high-quality coal from the Carmichael mine is being assembled at the North Queensland Export Terminal in Bowen ready for export as planned," Bravus Mining & Resources — Adani Group's Australian mining company The conglomerate run by India's second-richest man Gautam Adani has planned an initial production of 10 million tonnes a year from the mines in the Galilee Basin.

The coal has low sulphur content and high calorific value. The Carmichael project, proposed in 2010, had provoked a sustained campaign by climate activists in Australia and other places globally, forcing banks and insurers not to work with Adani Group. The coal will be exported from a terminal at Abbot Point, which Adani bought for \$2 billion in 2011 and renamed North Queensland Export Termina

Weekly Optimum CA Q&A PDF -Based on Recent Exam Trend  
First Week of January (1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022)

3. Recently In January Which Of The Following Country Has Launched Satellite Rocket Named *Phoenix (Simorgh)* ?

- A. Japan
- B. China
- C. Iran
- D. South Korea

Iran used a satellite launch rocket to send three research devices into space, as indirect U.S. - Iran talks take place in Austria to try to salvage a 2015 nuclear deal.

Iranian defence ministry spokesman Ahmad Hosseini said the Simorgh (Phoenix) satellite carrier rocket had launched the three research devices at an altitude of 470 km (290 miles) and at a speed of 7,350 metres per second.

Iran Capital Currency - Tehran, toman, President – Ebrahim Raisi

4. Consider The Following Statement Regarding *World's longest Metro Line*

1. The *Shanghai* opened two new metro lines – *Line 14 and Phase One of Line 18*.
2. With this, the total length of metro network in *Shanghai* has extended to *831 km*.

Which Of The Following Statement Is Correct

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 And 2
- D. None Of The Above

Recently, World's longest Metro Line has been opened in China's Shanghai Province. With the new lines, the total length of *Shanghai's metro network* has extended to *831 km*, continuing to be the longest in the world.

- The city opened two new metro lines – Line 14 and Phase One of Line 18.
- The opening of two new lines has increased the total number of fully automatic metro lines in Shanghai to five, having an operating length of 167 km

5. Recently In December Which Of The Following Country Has Sought \$1 Billion Credit Line For Essential Import And \$ 500 Million For Petroleum Imports From India To Tide Its Economical Crisis ?

- A. Bangladesh
- B. Sri Lanka
- C. Pakisatabn
- D. Nepal

Sri Lanka has sought a \$ one billion credit line for essential imports and a \$ 500 million credit line for petroleum imports from India to tide over the economic crisis. In July 2020, the Central Bank of Sri Lanka and the Reserve Bank of India entered into a bilateral currency swap agreement of US dollars 400 million Under the Framework on Currency Swap Arrangement for South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries for 2019 – 2022,

India has been among the top three source countries of foreign direct investments (FDIs) to Sri Lanka during the recent years.

India recently bailed out Lanka with fertilisers for the island's farmers

Sri Lanka Capital - Colombo, Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte , Currency: Sri Lankan rupee , President: Gotabaya Rajapaksa , Prime Minister - Mahinda Rajapaksa

BURDENED BY COVID-19 AND CHINESE DEBT

## Lanka Seeks \$1.5b Indian Credit Line to Tide Over Crisis

DipanjanRoy.Chaudhury  
@timesgroup.com



**AJITH NIVARD CABRAAL**  
Governor, Central Bank of Sri Lanka

**New Delhi:** Sri Lanka has sought a \$ one billion credit line for essential imports and a \$500 million credit line for petroleum imports from India to tide over the economic crisis, Ajith Nivard Cabraal, Governor of Central Bank of Sri Lanka, told ET.

During the recent visit to India, Lankan Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa had sought a \$ one billion credit line for essential imports and a \$ 500 m credit line for petroleum imports, Cabraal told ET in an exclusive interview from Colombo.

Discussions are in progress for a \$ 400 million swap facility under the SAARC Finance Arrangement from the Reserve Bank of India, he further said.

"Given Sri Lanka's strategic geographical location and strong maritime connectivity, Sri Lanka would be a springboard for Indian multinationals to expand globally as well."

"The expected cooperation is likely to help both countries to continue the large volumes of trade and financial flows seen over the years."

Sri Lanka, reeling under an economic crisis following Covid-19 and mounting Chinese debt, had reached out to India to boost its sagging economy. India recently bailed out Lanka by supplying fertilisers after China-made fertilisers had to be rejected on grounds of quality.

ET had reported earlier this month that India is working out a package on an urgent basis to assist Sri Lanka following Basil Rajapaksa's visit. India is expected to extend a food & health security package to Sri Lanka, along with an energy security package and currency swap, and also push Indian investments, officials had told ET. It was agreed during Rajapaksa's visit that the procedures to realise these objectives would be finalised early, within a mutually agreed time.

Given Sri Lanka's geographical location and strong maritime connectivity, Sri Lanka would be a springboard for Indian multinationals to expand globally

Cabraal, who had earlier served as state minister, recalled that even during the pandemic, Sri Lanka received Indian assistance.

India has been among the top three source countries of foreign direct investments (FDIs) to Sri Lanka during the recent years. FDI inflows from India including foreign borrowings of companies registered with the Board of Investment of Sri Lanka amounted to \$80.4 m in the first half of 2021.

**6. Recently In January *South Africa Parliament Was Struck With Massive Fire* . Who Is The Presidnet And What Is The Currency Of South Africa ?**

- A. Olfa Scholz , Mollaba
- B. FW De Klerk Conarky
- C. **Cyril Ramaphosa , Rand**
- D. Salmon Hondok , Peso

# Fire ravages South African parliament

National Assembly fully destroyed; no casualties reported; safety cordon stretches to Tutu's burial site

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
CAPE TOWN

A massive fire in South Africa's houses of parliament in Cape Town has completely destroyed the National Assembly where parliamentarians sit, a spokesman said on Sunday as the blaze continued to rage.

"The entire chamber where the members sit... has burned down," Moloto Mothapo said, adding that the blaze had still not been extinguished.

No casualties have been reported so far but President Cyril Ramaphosa told reporters at the scene an arrest had been made.

"Someone has been held right now and is being questioned," he said.



**Billowing plumes:** Smoke rising from the Parliament in Cape Town, South Africa on Sunday. • REUTERS

An investigation has been opened into the blaze which started at around 0830 IST on Sunday in the parliament complex's oldest wing, which was completed in 1884 and has wood-panelled rooms.

As day dawned, smoke

could be seen billowing from the building against a blue sky.

"The roof of the Old Assembly building has collapsed and is gone," Jean-Pierre Smith, Cape Town's mayoral committee member for safety and security, told

reporters earlier. The historic building houses a collection of rare books and the original copy of the former Afrikaans national anthem "Die Stem van Suid-Afrika" ("The Voice of South Africa"), which was already damaged.

"The entire building has suffered extensively smoke and water damage," Mr. Smith said, adding "the fire has not been contained".

After ravaging the older wing of the building, the flames spread to newer parts of the complex which are currently in use.

The area around the fire in the upmarket neighbourhood was quickly cordoned off.

The cordon stretched to a

square where flowers were still displayed in front of the nearby St. George's Cathedral, where anti-apartheid icon Archbishop Desmond Tutu's funeral took place on Saturday.

After a simple, no-frills mass, with a cheap coffin his ashes were interred in the cathedral on Sunday.

Another fire also broke out in the older wings of parliament in March, but it was quickly contained.

Cape Town suffered another major fire in April, when a blaze on the famed Table Mountain which overlooks the city spread, ravaging part of The University of Cape Town's library holding a unique collection of African archives.

7. Recently In January Who has become the *first Indian-origin woman to trek solo to South Pole* ?

- A. Sneha Sharma
- B. Sunita Williams
- C. Srishti Bandla
- D. Harpreet Chandi**

## Harpreet Chandi 1st Indian-origin woman to trek solo to South Pole

**ADITI KHANNA**  
LONDON, JANUARY 4

CAPTAIN HARPREET Chandi, a 32-year-old Indian-origin British Sikh Army officer and physiotherapist also known as Polar Preet, has created history by becoming the first woman of colour to complete a solo unsupported trek to the South Pole.

Chandi announced her history-making feat on her live blog on Monday at the end of Day 40 after travelling 700 miles (1,127 kilometres) while pulling a pulk or sledge with all of her kit and battling temperatures of minus



Chandi announced her history-making feat on her live blog on Monday

50 degrees Celsius and wind speeds of around 60mph.

"I made it to the South Pole

where it's snowing. Feeling so many emotions right now. I knew nothing about the polar world three years ago and it feels so surreal to finally be here. It was tough getting here and I want to thank everybody for their support," she wrote.

"This expedition was always about so much more than me. I want to encourage people to push their boundaries and to believe in themselves, and I want you to be able to do it without being labelled a rebel," Chandi said.

She uploaded a live tracking map of her trek and also posted regular blogs of her journey to the snow-capped region. **PTI**

Captain Harpreet Chandi, an Indian-origin British Sikh Army officer, has scripted history by completing a solo unsupported trek to the South Pole

- Chandi announced her history-making feat on her blog at the end of Day 40 after travelling 1,127 kilometres

8. Recently, which of the following countries have adopted a joint statement to **further restrict the spread of nuclear weapons**?

- A. United States, Russia, Britain, France, and China**
- B. United States, Russia, Italy, India, and China
- C. United States, Japan, Britain, Australia, and China
- D. United States, Japan, Germany, France, and China

## Russia, China, Britain, US and France agree: No one can win a nuclear war

**REUTERS**  
MOSCOW, JANUARY 3

CHINA, RUSSIA, Britain, the United States and France have agreed that a further spread of nuclear arms and a nuclear war should be avoided, according to a joint statement by the five nuclear powers published by the Kremlin on Monday.

It said that the five countries – who are the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council – consider it their primary responsibility to avoid war between the nuclear states and to reduce strategic risks, while aiming to work with all countries to create an atmosphere of security.



The headquarters of the International Atomic Energy Agency. China, Russia, Britain, France and the US said it was their primary responsibility to avoid a nuclear war

“We declare there could be no winners in a nuclear war, it should never be started,” the Russian-language version of the statement read.

“As the use of nuclear arms would have far-reaching conse-

quences, we also confirm that nuclear arms – as long as they exist – should serve defensive aims, deterrence against aggression and prevention of war.”

France also released the statement, underscoring that the five powers reiterated their de-

termination for nuclear arms control and disarmament. They would continue bilateral and multilateral approaches to nuclear arms control, it said.

The statement comes amid increased geopolitical tensions between Moscow and Western nations over concerns about Russia's military build-up near neighbouring Ukraine. Moscow says it can move its army around its own territory as it deems necessary.

Last Thursday US President Joe Biden told his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin that a possible move on Ukraine will draw sanctions and an increased US presence in Europe, where tensions are high after Russia's military buildup at the border.

The United States, Russia, Britain, France, and China have adopted a joint statement to further restrict the spread of nuclear weapons

According to this joint statement, permanent members of the United Nations Security Council should consider it their primary responsibility to avoid war between the nuclear countries

According to the Joint statement, all five Countries should take the responsibility to create an **atmosphere of security**

The United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) was set up in 1952 under the UN Security Council for the regulation and reduction of armed forces

Weekly Optimum CA Q&A PDF -Based on Recent Exam Trend  
First Week of January (1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022)

9. China has been experimenting with its 'artificial sun' to facilitate a way for clean energy in the future What Is The Name Of artificial sun made by China?
- a. SAST
  - b. EAST**
  - c. MSAT
  - d. KSAT

China is experimenting with an “artificial sun,” dubbed **Experiential Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST)**, to make way for clean energy in the future

- The device setup is a fusion reactor which ran successfully for almost 20 minutes at a stunning 70 million degrees Celsius in a recent test
- EAST, designed and built by the Chinese, has been used for nuclear fusion experiments since 2006

10. Recently In January Which Of The Following country has joined the **International Solar Alliance as 102nd member?**
- A. Antigua and Barbuda**
  - B. Kenya
  - C. Egypt
  - D. United States

Antigua and Barbuda has become the 102nd country to join International Solar Alliance. Antigua and Barbuda has signed the framework agreement of ISA

- International Solar Alliance aims to create a global market system to use the benefits of solar power by encouraging clean energy applications
  - Recently, the US has become the 101st member to join the International Solar Alliance**
  - International Solar Alliance (ISA):**It was established in 2015. Ajay Mathur is the current Director-General of International Solar Alliance. Its headquarters is located in Gurugram

11. Recently In January **Australia** With which Of The Following country held a virtual summit to sign a defence agreement on 6 January 2022?

- A. India
- B. Japan**
- C. China
- D. UK

## Australia, Japan sign defence pact as China concerns loom

The leaders of Japan and Australia signed a "landmark" defense agreement Thursday that allows closer cooperation between their militaries and stands as a rebuke to China's growing assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida met in a virtual summit to sign the Reciprocal Access Agreement, the first such defense pact signed by Japan with any country other than the United States. The agreement follows more than a year of talks between Japan and Australia aimed at breaking down legal barriers to allow the troops of one country to enter the other for training and other purposes. **AP**

Australia and Japan held a virtual summit to sign a defence agreement Both countries seek to strengthen defence cooperation in front of China's growing military power

- The agreement was signed between Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japan's Fumio Kishida.
- The Reciprocal Access Agreement will strengthen interoperability and collaboration between the Japanese Self-Defence Force and the Australian Defence Force



12. Recently In January **Pakistan** Has Sought To Appoint Whom As Its **First Female Supreme Court Judge** In The Country ?

- A. Sana Raichand
- B. Ayesha Malik**
- C. Zeba Rizwli
- D. Aliza Rizwi



Ayesha Malik

## Justice Ayesha Malik to become Pakistan's first woman SC judge

*Islamabad:* Pakistan on Thursday moved closer to appoint the first woman judge of the Supreme Court after a high-power panel approved the elevation of Lahore High Court judge Ayesha Malik to the apex court of the conservative Muslim-majority country.

The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) - headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed - approved Malik's elevation by a majority of five votes against four, *Dawn* newspaper reported. After endorsement by the JCP, her name will be considered by a parliamentary committee which rarely goes against the recommendation of the JCP. This is the second time that the JCP held a meeting to decide on Justice Malik's elevation. **PTI**

In a historic moment for Pakistan's judiciary, Lahore High Court's Justice Ayesha Malik was sworn in as the Supreme Court's first female judge

- The swearing in of the first female judge of Pakistan's highest court – which was established in 1956
- According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, women reportedly account for 17 per cent of judges overall and 4.4 per cent in high courts.
- Compare this to India, where the Supreme Court (established in 1950) currently has four female judges out of a total of 34.

13. In January 2022, which of the following country has signed an agreement with India to jointly redevelop the strategic World War II-era oil tank farm in south asia?

- A. Myanmar
- B. Maldives
- C. Sri Lanka
- D. Bangladesh

## Sri Lanka agrees to extend lease of strategic WWII oil tank farm to India for 50 yrs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
COLOMBO, DECEMBER 31

SRI LANKA has agreed to sign a fresh deal with India to lease out the strategic World War II era oil tank farm for 50 years in the eastern port district of Trincomalee, Energy Minister Udaya Gammanpila said on Friday.

Gammanpila said the deal will be signed next week after the Cabinet approval and is an extension of the 2002 agreement with the local operators of the Indian Oil Company, LIOC.

Sri Lanka in 2002 entered the original deal with India on the island's most strategic oil storage complex, which was used as a supply base during World War II.

India at all times had shown a strategic interest in the Trincomalee tank farm which the British rulers had built to refuel Allied warships and aircraft.

"The LIOC will have the control of just 14 of the 99 tanks over a 50-year lease," Gammanpila said while speaking to reporters.

He said 61 tanks out of the total number of 99 tanks would be

The Lanka IOC will have the control of just 14 of the 99 tanks over a 50-year lease"

UDAYA GAMMANPILAI  
SRI LANKA ENERGY MINISTER

run under the joint venture company formed between the state oil entity, Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) and the LIOC with CPC holding the majority 51 per cent stake.

Gammanpila, who had previously said his intention was to reacquire complete control of the tanks, claimed the new deal was "a triumph for Sri Lanka".

The next week's formalisation of the agreement will come in the background of Sri Lanka seeking India's help to tide over its current economic woes exacerbated by the ongoing foreign exchange crisis in the local economy.

Officials said that the island nation has shut its only refinery for its inability to pay for crude oil and was negotiating a credit line with India for fuel purchases.

Sri Lanka on Thursday formally signed an agreement with India to jointly redevelop the strategic World War II-era oil tank farm in the island nation's eastern port district of Trincomalee

- 85 of the 99 tanks now will be under the Sri Lankan control
- The Cabinet has approved the proposal to allocate 24 and 14 oil tanks of Trincomalee Oil Tank Complex to Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) and the local operators of the Indian Oil Company (LIOC) respectively

while remaining 61 oil tanks are to be developed under Trinco Petroleum Terminal Pvt. Ltd, with shares of CPC (51%) & LIOC (49%).

- the Sri Lankan subsidiary of India's oil major Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), has the leasing rights to 99 tanks at the facility for a period of 35 years for an annual payment of USD 100,000

**Weekly Optimum CA Q&A PDF -Based on Recent Exam Trend**  
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**14. Which Country Is Set To Become The First Foreign Customer Of BrahMos Missile Jointly Developed By India And Russia ?**

- A. France
- B. Philippines**
- C. Sri Lanka
- D. France

{ ALLOCATES 2.8 BILLION PESOS } FIRST FOREIGN CUSTOMER

## Philippines to buy BrahMos missile



BrahMos cruise missile has been jointly developed by India and Russia. PTI

**Rezaul H Laskar**  
 letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Philippines is set to become the first foreign customer for the BrahMos cruise missile jointly developed by India and Russia, with the government in Manila recently allocating 2.8 billion pesos (\$55.5 million) for initial funding for the weapon system.

The process for the acquisition of the medium-range supersonic cruise missile by the armed forces of the Philippines suffered a setback because of the Covid-19 pandemic but is

now back on track, people familiar with the matter said on condition of anonymity.

According to the website of the Philippines' department of budget management, two "special allotment release orders" worth 1.3 billion pesos and 1.535 billion pesos were issued on December 27 to cover the initial funding requirements for the "Shore-Based Anti-Ship Missile System Acquisition Project" of the Philippine Navy.

The people cited above confirmed this allocation was for the BrahMos missile system. They added that a team from

the Philippine Navy visited the production unit of BrahMos Aerospace in Hyderabad earlier this month as part of the acquisition process.

The BrahMos Integration Complex in Hyderabad is responsible for integration of mechanical systems and assembling electronic systems. Various sub-systems fabricated in other centres in India and Russia are integrated and checked at this complex.

"It is a done deal and there will be further developments early next year," one of the people cited above said.

{ BEYOND THE NEWS } EYE ON 2022

In a major boost to India's defence export plans, the Philippines has accepted Indian BrahMos Aerospace Pvt Ltd's proposal worth \$374.9 million to supply a Shore-based Anti-Ship Missile System Acquisition Project for its navy. Earlier, India extended a \$100-million defence-related LoC to Manila.

The BrahMos order is the first major military export by India. The supersonic missile has been developed jointly with Russia, The Missile Which Is Being Provided to Philippines has a range of 290 km

BrahMos is a supersonic cruise missile, which can reach a maximum speed of 2.8 mach, or 2.8 times the speed of sound It has a 300 km to 500 km range, and is a short-range, ramjet-powered,

India has set an ambitious target of achieving defence exports worth \$5 billion by 2025

Philippines Capital Currency Manila, Philippine peso

Weekly Optimum CA Q&A PDF -Based on Recent Exam Trend  
First Week of January (1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022)

15. In January 2022, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh flagged-in India's first multi-dimensional adventure sports expedition. It was conducted by the National Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports (NIMAS) in which country?

- A. USA
- B. Australia
- C. Canada
- D. France**

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, on January 07, 2022, flagged-in India's first multi-dimensional adventure sports expedition conducted by National Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports (NIMAS) in France.

- The expedition was conducted in November 2021 and the team was led by Director NIMAS Colonel Sarfaraz Singh, comprising 12 people - eight Army personnel and four youths of Arunachal Pradesh
- The expedition team carried out over 250 kilometres of winter trekking in the Alps Mountain Ranges, which included Tour De Mont Blanc trek covering the French, Swiss and Italian Alps.

## Banking And Economy

1. Recently In December Which Of The Following Has Approved The **Introduction Of Special Situation Fund (SSFs) For Investment Restricted To Stressed Asset With A Minimum Corpus Of Rs 100 Crore ?**

- A. RBI
- B. SEBI**
- C. SBI
- D. NABARD

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) in approved the introduction of Special Situation Funds (SSFs) for investment restricted to only stressed assets with a minimum corpus of ₹100 crore.

- The SSFs will be introduced under Category I Alternative Investment Funds as a sub-category
  - The SSFs can invest in stressed assets such as stressed loans available for acquisition in terms of Reserve Bank of India Directions, 2021, or as part of a resolution plan approved under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.
- The regulator said the minimum investment by an investor can be ₹10 crore, whereas it can be ₹5 crore in the case of an accredited investor, and that the minimum corpus will be ₹100 crore
  - The overall size of the AIF industry surpassed ₹5 lakh crore at the end of September, according to data available with Sebi.

## Sebi nod to introduce SSFs for investment in stressed assets

FE BUREAU  
Mumbai, December 28

**THE SECURITIES AND** Exchange Board of India (Sebi) in its board meeting on Tuesday approved the introduction of Special Situation Funds (SSFs) for investment restricted to only stressed assets with a minimum corpus of ₹100 crore. The SSFs will be introduced under Category I Alternative Investment Funds as a sub-category, it said.

The SSFs can invest in stressed assets such as stressed loans available for acquisition in terms of Reserve Bank of India Directions, 2021, or as part of a resolution plan approved under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016. Further, they can invest in securities receipts issued by Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs) and securities of companies in distress, Sebi said.

The regulator said the minimum investment by an investor can be ₹10 crore, whereas it can be ₹5 crore in the case of an accredited investor, and that the minimum corpus will be ₹100 crore. The newly announced funds will be exempt from the investment concentration norm in a single investee company and there will be no restrictions on investing their investible funds in unlisted or listed securities of the investee company.

The overall size of the AIF industry sur-

### Sebi to rationalise settlement norms

**THE TIME PERIOD** for filing settlement applications by entities will be 60 days from the date of receipt of the show-cause notice or a supplementary notice, whichever is earlier, according to Sebi. The decision, taken at the Sebi board on Tuesday, is aimed at rationalising norms on settlement proceedings. Changes will be made to the settlement proceedings regulations that came into force on January 1, 2019. — PTI

passed ₹5 lakh crore at the end of September, according to data available with Sebi. Analysts say investors are betting on several investments besides the traditional ones. The AIF industry is also expected to grow in the coming years, and could reach around ₹30 lakh crore in the upcoming 10 years, according to a report.

The regulator has also made amendments to other regulations, including tight norms for primary markets, consent for closure of mutual fund schemes and rationalisation of settlement regulations.

2. Recently In December Bajaj Auto Has Announced To Set Up Rs 300 Cr Electric Vehicle Plant At Which Of The Following Palce ?

- A. Snanad
- B. Pune
- C. Thrivur
- D. Simhadri

## Bajaj Auto to set up ₹300-crore electric vehicle plant in Pune

The factory at Akurdi will produce 5 lakh units per year

**OUR BUREAU**

Mumbai, December 29

Bajaj Auto, India's third largest two-wheeler manufacturer, will set up a dedicated electric vehicle manufacturing plant at Akurdi, Pune with an investment of ₹300 crore. The company hopes to roll out the first vehicle from this unit by June next, 15 years after the plant last produced a vehicle.

The new factory will have a production capacity of 5,00,000 units per annum. Akurdi is also the site of the original Chetak scooter factory that made Bajaj Auto a household name in India. Auto parts suppliers of Bajaj Auto will invest ₹250 crore to support manufacturing operations.

Rajiv Bajaj, Managing Director, Bajaj Auto, said, "Going forward, for the Bajaj portfolio, except for implementing



Rajiv Bajaj, MD, Bajaj Auto

one internal combustion engine platform that is currently under development, all our R&D drivetrain resources are now laser-focused on creating EV solutions for the future."

The electric Chetak is currently being built at the Chakan factory in Pune, which also produces motorcycles of LTM, Husqvarna and Pulsar. Bajaj believes the future focus on EVs will help put the company on path to achieve its ambition of being the market leader in this segment.

"This alignment reflects our belief that light electric vehicles for sustainable urban

mobility is an idea whose time may finally have come. Thus, this investment at Akurdi completes the virtuous cycle of hi-tech R&D competencies, high-efficiency engineering capabilities, world class supply chain synergies, and global distribution network which should leapfrog us into a market leading position in EVs in India and overseas," Bajaj added.

Spread over 500,000 sq feet, the new plant in Akurdi will have robotic and automated manufacturing systems for logistics and material handling, fabrication and painting, assembly and quality assurance. The plant will employ around 800 personnel.

These systems have been designed for flexible product mix, while keeping in mind the best worker ergonomics and maximum process efficiency.

**Akurdi plant**

Akurdi, which housed Bajaj Auto's first-ever manufactur-

ing plant, last saw a product roll out in 2007. Spread over 160 acres, the Akurdi plant currently houses Bajaj Auto's research and development (R&D), corporate centre, and purchase and sales operations.

Krystal was the last scooter made by Bajaj Auto from the Akurdi plant before a voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) was offered to workers affected by the shutdown.

Bajaj Auto currently has only one electric vehicle, the Chetak, in its line-up. The company is working on an electric model under the Husqvarna brand as well as further additions under its own brand. The long-delayed electric three-wheeler, which will mark Bajaj Auto's entry into the space, is likely to debut in 2022.

In July, Bajaj Auto decided to set up a wholly-owned subsidiary to tap growth opportunities in the electric and hybrid two-wheeler, three-wheeler and light four-wheeler categories.

Bajaj Auto announced an investment of Rs 300 crore as it commenced work at its brand-new unit at Akurdi, Pune, for manufacturing electric vehicles (EVs)

- The unit, which is spread over an area of half a million square feet Will have a production capacity of 500,000 EVs a year.
- Rajiv Bajaj, managing director, Bajaj Auto

3. The Central Government Has Notified The **Consumer Protection Rules 2021** , According To The New Rule The National Commission Will Have Jurisdiction To Entertain Complaint Where The Value Of Goods Exceed By How Much Amount ?

- A. Rs 1 Cr
- B. Rs 2 Cr
- C. Rs 5 Cr
- D. Rs 2 Lakh

## Centre notifies new rules for consumer commissions

Slashes pecuniary jurisdiction of district and State-level commissions

### OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, December 30

The Centre has notified the Consumer Protection (Jurisdiction of the District Commission, the State Commission and the National Commission) Rules, 2021, revising the pecuniary jurisdiction of the district, State and national commissions.

According to the notification, district commissions will have jurisdiction to entertain complaints where the value of the goods or services paid does not exceed ₹50 lakh. State commissions can handle complaints in the range of ₹50 lakh-₹2 crore.

"The National Commission shall have jurisdiction to entertain complaints where the value of the goods or services

paid as consideration exceeds ₹2 crore," it added.

### 'Will help tackle delays'

The Consumer Affairs Ministry in a statement said that it took this decision after it was observed that existing provisions related to pecuniary jurisdiction of consumer commissions was causing "rise in pendency and delay in disposal of cases, defeating the very object of securing speedy redressal to consumers as per the Consumers Protection Act."

So far, District Commissions were entertaining complaints where value of goods and services paid was up to ₹1 crore, State commissions between ₹1 crore and ₹10 crore and National Commission was taking up complaints where value of



The National Commission shall have jurisdiction to entertain complaints where the value of the goods or services paid as consideration exceeds ₹2 crore

goods exceeded ₹10 crore.

"It was observed that the existing provisions relating to pecuniary jurisdiction of consumer commissions were leading to cases which could earlier be filed in National Commission to be filed in State Commissions and cases which could earlier be filed in State

Commissions to be filed in District Commissions... This caused a significant increase in the workload of District Commissions," it added.

### Digital complaints

Meanwhile, the Ministry reiterated that consumers can also file complaints digitally through the E-Daakhil portal. Currently, the facility of E-Daakhil is available in 544 consumer commissions, which includes the National Commission and consumer commissions in 21 States and 3 UTs. So far, more than 10,000 cases have been filed using the E-Daakhil Portal and more than 43,000 users have registered on the portal, it added.

Under the Consumer Protection Act, there is also an option of resolving consumer disputes through mediation with the consent of both parties.

The Central Government has notified the Consumer Protection (Jurisdiction of the District Commission, the State Commission, and the National Commission

According to the notification, district commissions will have jurisdiction to entertain complaints where the value of the goods or services paid does not exceed Rs 50 lakh. Further, the State commissions can look onto complaints in the range of Rs 50 lakh- Rs two crores.

□ As per the existing provisions of the Act, District Commissions have jurisdiction to entertain complaints where value of the goods or services paid as consideration does not exceed Rs one crore. State Commissions have jurisdiction Where It , exceeds Rs 1 crore, but does not exceed Rs 10 crore rupees and National Commission has jurisdiction Where Its exceeds Rs 10 crores.

□ The new rules have been framed under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019

□ The Act also provides consumers the option of filing complaint electronically. To facilitate consumers in filing their complaint online, the Central Government has set up the E-Daakhil Portal

4. Recently In January Which Of The Following Has Applied For *On Tap For The Liscensing Of Small Finance Bank ?*

- A. V Soft Technologies
- B. West End Housing**
- C. Calicut City Co Operative Bank
- D. Dvara Kshetriya Gramin Financial Service

## RBI gets application from West End Housing for SFB licence

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday said it had received an application from West End Housing Finance under the “on-tap” small finance bank (SFB) licence guidelines of 2019, taking the total number of applicants who want to set up SFBs to seven. Headquartered in Mumbai, West End Housing is promoted by West End Investment and Finance Consultancy. It facilitates credit in the affordable housing segment. Previously, Cosmea Financial Holdings and Tally Solutions had applied for a SFB licence. In April, VSoft Technologies, Calicut City Service Co-operative Bank, Akhil Kumar Gupta, and Dvara Kshetriya Gramin Financial Services had applied for the SFB licence under the “on-tap” guidelines. **BS REPORTER**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday said it has received an application from West End Housing Finance under the “on-tap” small finance bank licensing guidelines of 2019, taking the total number of applicants to seven

- Other applicants under guidelines for 'on tap' licensing of small finance banks are VSoft Technologies Private Ltd, Calicut City Service Co-operative Bank Ltd, Akhil Kumar Gupta, Dvara Kshetriya Gramin Financial Services Private Ltd, Cosmea Financial Holdings Private Ltd and Tally Solutions Private Ltd.
- The guidelines for 'on tap' licensing SFBs were issued on December 5, 2019, The minimum paid-up voting capital/net worth for SFBs should be Rs 200 crore. In the case of urban co-operative banks desirous of voluntarily transiting into SFBs, the initial requirement of net worth is Rs 100 crore, which will have to be increased to Rs 200 crore within five years.
- The RBI had announced a Standing External Advisory Committee, headed by former RBI Deputy Governor Shyamala Gopinath, for evaluating applications for universal banks and small finance banks



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5. What Is The **Interest Rate On National Savings Certificate (NSC) For The 4th Quarter ?**

- A. 6.8%**
- B. 7.6%
- C. 7.1%
- D. 7.4 %

The rate of interest for various small saving schemes will remain unchanged for the January-March quarter of the current fiscal, the interest rate on small saving schemes is reviewed every quarter. The rate of interest on various small savings schemes for fourth quarter of financial year 2021-22 starting from January 1, 2022 and ending on March 31, 2022 shall remain unchanged from the current rates applicable for the third quarter (October 1 to December 31, 2021) for FY 2021-22," t Accordingly, investment in **Public Provident Fund (PPF) would continue to earn an interest of 7.1% while National Savings Certificate (NSC) will fetch 6.8% interest. Sukanya Samridhi Yojana will carry an interest rate of 7.6%**

The Senior Citizens Savings Scheme (SCSS) will continue to earn an interest of 7.40% in January-March quarter of the current fiscal

## Interest rates on small savings schemes unchanged for Q4

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
New Delhi, December 31

**THE GOVERNMENT ON** Friday kept interest rates on small savings schemes, including NSC and PPF, unchanged for the fourth quarter of 2021-22, amid rising cases of the more contagious coronavirus variant Omicron and elevated level of inflation.

The decision also comes ahead of assembly elections in five states: Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Goa. The schedule of elections is expected to be announced early next month.

Public Provident Fund (PPF) and National Savings Certificate (NSC) will continue to carry an annual interest rate of 7.1% and 6.8%, respectively, in the fourth quarter.

"The rates of interest on various small savings schemes for the third quarter of the financial year 2021-22 starting from January 1, 2022, and ending on March 31, 2022, shall remain unchanged from

**The decision also comes ahead of assembly elections in five states: Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Goa**

the current rates applicable for the third quarter (October 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021) for FY 2021-22," the finance ministry said in a notification.

According to analysts, the government has kept rates intact in view of upcoming assembly elections in five states. Uttar Pradesh is the second highest contributor to the small savings scheme after West Bengal.

Earlier this year, during the West Bengal assembly polls, the Centre decided to reduce the interest rate. But the finance ministry swiftly revoked a steep interest rate cut of up to 1.1% for the first quarter on small savings schemes, citing oversight.

6. As per the Reserve Bank directive, for transactions beyond the **free permissible limit for transactions through ATMs**, the banking customers would be required to pay \_\_\_\_\_ per transaction with effect from January 1, 2022.

- A. ₹35
- B. ₹21**
- C. ₹20
- D. ₹11

The Reserve Bank of India had constituted a Committee in June 2019 under the Chairmanship of the Chief Executive, Indian Banks' Association to review the entire gamut of Automated Teller Machine (ATM) charges and fees with particular focus on interchange structure for ATM transactions.

□ Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) across banks are all set to increase service charges per transaction from Saturday, following an order from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and customers will have to Rs 1 more beyond the permissible free transaction

Customers are eligible for five free transactions (inclusive of financial and non-financial transactions) every month from their own bank ATMs.

## IN BRIEF

### ATM usage over free limit gets costlier at ₹21 per transaction



Today onward, using ATMs beyond the permissible free transactions, cash and non-cash, will cost more. According to the Reserve Bank directive issued in June, customers will be required to pay ₹21 per transaction beyond the free permissible limit. Banks were allowed to charge ₹20 for such transactions through ATMs.

Customers would, however, continue to be eligible for five free transactions, financial and non-financial, every month from their own bank's ATMs. They would also be eligible for three free transactions from other bank ATMs in metro centres and five in non-metro centres. The charges have been hiked to meet the rising cost of ATM deployment and expenses towards maintenance. PTI

7. Which Of The Following Has become the **first company to turn unicorn in 2022** ?

- A. Misho
- B. Honasa**
- C. Uplift
- D. Cred

Mamaearth's parent company Honasa Consumer has closed the latest \$52 million funding round and became the first company to turn unicorn in 2022. **Varun Alagh, co-founder and CEO, Honasa Consumer HQ - Delhi**

- Honasa Consumer currently caters to over 1000 cities in India with brands like Mamaearth, The Derma Co. and Aqualogica
- As Of Current India Has 83 Unicorn

## Honasa turns 'first unicorn of new year'

*Mumbai:* Personal care-focused e-commerce platform Honasa Consumer, which sells its products under the labels of Mamaearth, The Derma Co and House of Brands, on Saturday said it has raised \$52 million in the latest funding round led by Sequoia, valuing it at \$1.2 billion, thus becoming the first unicorn in the new year.

The new funding round also had participation by Belgium-based investment fund Sofina Ventures and the UAE-based India-focused fund Evolvence Capital, said the Gurgaon-based firm. The company had earlier raised funds from Fireside Ventures and Stellaris Venture Partners.

The latest round has also given its employees an opportunity to monetise their vested ESOPs (employee stock option plans). **PTI**

8. Recently In January Which Of The Following Bank has received the RBI approval for commencing International Remittance business under the **Money Transfer Service Scheme (MTSS)** ?

- A. Jio Payment BANK
- B. Fino Payment Bank**
- C. Airtel Payment Bank
- D. Paytm Payment Bank

## Fino Bank gets RBI nod to start international remittance biz

### Approval given under the Money Transfer Service Scheme

#### OUR BUREAU

Mumbai, January 3

Fino Payments Bank has received the Reserve Bank of India's approval for commencing international remittance business under the Money Transfer Service Scheme (MTSS).

The Bank, in a statement, said it will be undertaking inward cross-border money transfer activities in association with an overseas principal, the details of which are being worked out. It also has plans to commence outward remittance services soon.

#### 'Remittance corridor'

Ashish Ahuja, Chief Operating Officer, Fino Payments Bank said, the Bank will be ready to offer the inward remittance services to its customers by Q1 (April-June) FY23. The Bank will also look at having this product

on our mobile application as well, he added.

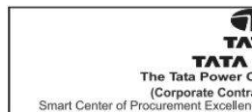
"There is a major inward remittance corridor in States like Gujarat, Punjab, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. We already have scaled up our merchant presence in all these geographies. We are therefore confident that the new offering will gain traction very quickly. We also expect to shore up more subscription-based saving accounts due to this initiative as customers would prefer to park the remitted money in a Fino Bank account itself," Ahuja said.

The Bank said the money remitted by family members abroad can now be directly withdrawn at the nearest micro-ATM or Aadhaar-Enabled Payment Services (AEPS) enabled by its neighbourhood merchant point.

Fino Bank has received the RBI approval to commence the international remittance business under the Money Transfer Service Scheme (MTSS) Customers of Fino Payments Bank will be able to receive remittance money sent from overseas

□ The money remitted by family members abroad can now be directly withdrawn at the nearest micro-ATM or Aadhaar-enabled payment services (AEPS)-enabled Fino Bank's neighbourhood merchant point.

□ **Fino Payment Bank HQ – Navi Mumbai ,  
Chairman - Mahendra Kumar Chouhan , Tagline -  
Qadar Aapki Mehnat Ki**



9. India's *merchandise exports* reached the *highest ever monthly level* in the month of December notching *How Much billion* ?

- a. \$36.75 billion
- b. \$37.29 billion**
- c. \$47.29 billion
- d. \$42.82 billion

## December goods exports touch \$37.3-billion high: Goyal

Numbers show 37% growth; Minister says services sector to see 'good' tidings too

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

India's merchandise exports in December touched \$37.29 billion, the highest-ever monthly figure, according to Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, Mr. Goyal highlighted the pursuit of export-oriented programmes by the Uttar Pradesh and Tripura governments.

"In every sector, there has been significant growth in exports," said Mr. Goyal. He claimed that every month's export data from April to December 2021 had displayed a "historic high".

Export figures for Decem-



**Across the board:** There has been significant growth in exports in every sector, says Piyush Goyal. •REUTERS

ber, reflected a 37% increase from \$27.22 billion a year earlier.

**'48.9% rise in April-Dec.'** Merchandise exports grew 48.9% to \$299.74 billion in the April-December 2021,

from \$201.37 billion seen in the same period of the previous year, Mr. Goyal said.

The Minister said the services side, especially the IT sector, had received special focus of the government. "We have seen \$178 billion

[services exports] in the first nine months and we are well on track to go up to about \$230 billion or upwards of that, which will also be a historic high [for] services exports," he said, explaining that the sector had performed successfully despite the "big setback" experienced by the travel and tourism industry because of the ongoing pandemic.

He also said that credit should also go to India's diplomatic missions across the world, exporters, industry associations and export promotion councils for collectively working to explore newer global regions and to help expand the "export basket".

India's merchandise exports reached the highest ever monthly level in the month of December notching \$37.29 billion

- Merchandise exports in April-December of FY22 crossed \$300 billion which exceeded the exports of entire financial year of FY21
- The government is hopeful of achieving its exports target of \$400 billion in FY22.
- India's total export in services for 2021-22 (Apr-Dec) stood at \$178.81 billion compared to \$150.08 billion in corresponding period of FY21.

**Weekly Optimum CA Q&A PDF -Based on Recent Exam Trend**  
**First Week of January (1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022)**

**10. Recently In January Which Of The Following Has Launched India's first index of Cryptocurrencies - IC15, a rule-based broad market index by market capitalization ?**

- A. WazirX
- B. BiteX
- C. CryptoWire**
- D. Coinbase

## CryptoWire launches index of cryptocurrencies

**KR SRIVATS**

New Delhi, January 3

CryptoWire, a crypto super app, has announced the launch of India's first index of cryptocurrencies - IC15. This is aimed at empowering knowledge on crypto and blockchain ecosystem.

The IC15 is a rule-based broad market index by market capitalisation, which tracks and measures the performance of the top 15 widely traded liquid cryptocurrencies listed on leading crypto exchanges of the world. The base value of the index is set at 10,000 and the base date is April 1, 2018. As on January 1, 2022, IC15 open value was at 71,463.30 Points.

**'Learn before earn'**

"With the launch of India's first index of crypto IC15, we intend to complete the knowledge circle for the entire crypto and blockchain ecosys-

### Constituents of IC15

Coins	Weights*
Bitcoin	51.57
Ethereum	25.79
Binance coin	5.03
Solana	3.1
Cardano	2.58
XRP	2.33
Terra	1.82
Avalanche	1.57
Polkadot	1.55
Dogecoin	1.33
Shiba Inu	1.08
Uniswap	0.63
Litecoin	0.60
Chainlink	0.54
Bitcoin cash	0.48

\*As of January 1, 2022



tem. This will not only push the 'learn before earn' initiative but also serve the industry with yet another powerful intervention," said Jigish Sonagara, MD & CEO, CryptoWire.

CryptoWire is a special business unit of Tickerplant. "At CryptoWire, our approach is to facilitate market development and mitigate risk to a great degree by presenting all possible tools to evaluate possibilities and make decisions," Sonagara said. "We want all participants to utilise this research-oriented technology-powered opportunity that we present to them for tracking the market. CryptoWire is positioned to emerge as the partner of industry to spread knowledge, research and information."

Over the past years, cryptocurrencies have emerged as an asset class in themselves, gaining wider acceptance and drawing people's interests. An index that captures over 80 per cent of market movement is, thus, a fundamental market tracking and assessing tool to base decisions on and enhance transparency. CryptoWire's Index Governance Committee - comprising domain experts, industry practitioners - will maintain, monitor and administer the index while rebalancing it every quarter.

Superapp CryptoWire has launched India's first crypto index, IC15, which will track the market capitalization and liquidity of top 15 global digital currencies,

- The IC15 is a rule-based broad market index by market capitalization that measures the performance of 15 widely traded liquid cryptocurrencies listed on exchanges across the world,
- Crypto assets such as Bitcoin, Ethereum, Binance coin, Solana, Cardano, Ripple, Terra, Dogecoin and Shiba inu will be monitored by the platform.

The base value of the index is set at 10,000 and the base date is 1 April 2018. As of 1 January, IC15 index's open value stood at 71,463.30 points.

- Jigish Sonagara, managing director and CEO, CryptoWire

**Weekly Optimum CA Q&A PDF -Based on Recent Exam Trend**  
**First Week of January (1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022)**

**11. Consider The Following Statement Regarding New Framework Of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) or small value digital payments in offline mode :**

1. As per the framework, the upper limit for an offline transaction would be Rs 200.
2. The total limit for offline transactions on a payment instrument shall be Rs 2,000 at any point in time
3. Replenishment of used limit shall be allowed only in online mode with AFA (Additional Factor of Authentication)

**Which Of The Following Statement Is Correct**

- A. Only 1 And 3
- B. Only 1 and 2
- C. Only 2 And 3
- D. All Of The Above

# RBI caps upper limit of offline payment transaction at ₹200

SUBRATA PANDA  
Mumbai, 3 January

Setting the ball rolling on digital payments through the offline mode, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday released a framework for such payments, wherein it stated that the upper limit of an offline payment transaction will be ₹200, the overall limit ₹2,000 on a payment instrument at any point in time until the balance in the account is replenished.

Offline payments can be made using any channel or instrument like cards, wallets, and mobile devices, the RBI had stated.

According to the RBI, an offline payment means a transaction not requiring internet or telecommunication (telecom)



## THE FRAMEWORK

- Payments can be carried out face to face using any channel or instrument like cards, wallets, mobile devices, etc
- Transactions are subject to an upper limit of ₹200; overall limit on a payment instrument shall be ₹2,000 at any point in time
- Transactions would not require an Additional Factor of Authentication
- But, replenishment of used limit shall be allowed only in online mode with AFA
- Offline mode of payment can be enabled only after obtaining specific consent of the customer

connectivity to take effect. "Offline transactions are expected to give digital transactions a push in areas with poor or weak internet or telecom connectivity, particularly in semi-urban and rural areas," the RBI said.

In October last year, the central bank had indicated that it would come up with a framework for carrying out small-value digital payments in the offline mode across the coun-

try, after the pilot tests undertaken by various entities during September 2020 and July 2021 gave encouraging feedback.

The central bank had announced its intention of doing pilot tests on transfers without internet in the developmental and regulatory statement dated August 6, 2020. After that, three pilots were successfully conducted under the scheme in different parts of the country between September

2020 and June 2021, involving small-value transactions covering a volume of 241,000 for a value of ₹1.16 crore.

The RBI said offline payments will be made in proximity (face-to-face) mode only and offline payment transactions can be offered without additional factor authentication (AFA). However, replenishment of used limit (₹2,000) will be allowed only in online mode with AFA.

To push digital transactions in rural and semi-urban areas, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday issued a framework allowing offline payments up to Rs 200 per transaction, subject to an overall limit of Rs 2,000.

- Under the offline mode, payments can be carried out face-to-face (proximity mode) using any channel or instrument like cards, wallets, and mobile devices.
- These transactions will not require an additional factor of authentication (AFA)

12. In January 2022, which of the following is country's first auto sector exchange-traded fund?

- A. ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company Ltd.
- B. Nippon Life India Asset Management Limited
- C. IDFC Mutual Fund
- D. Kotak Mahindra Mutual Fund

## ICICI Pru launches first silver ETF fund of fund

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Mumbai, 6 January

ICICI Prudential has announced the launch of country's first silver ETF fund of fund, which is an open-ended fund, offering a good mix of all asset classes.

The fund will open on January 13 and closes on January 27.

The fund house said it was the first to launch a silver ETF in the country and has now launched the first silver ETF FoF--ICICI Prudential Silver ETF

fund of fund.

Since silver is bulky in nature and hence difficult to store, we believe the fund form will be one of the preferred ways for investors.

By investing in this fund, investors need not worry about purity, quality or liq-

uidity of the underlying asset and is also free from storage related hassles. Given its low correlation with other asset classes, investors can consider taking exposure to silver as a part of their portfolio diversification exercise, the AMC said.

Two of the country's largest mutual fund houses are vying with each other to launch the country's first exchange traded fund (ETF) based on the auto and auto ancillary sectors

- On Monday, both Nippon Mutual Fund and ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund announced launching their respective Nifty Auto ETFs that will mirror the Nifty Auto Index,
- Nippon India Mutual Fund announces the launch of Nippon India Nifty Auto ETF, India's First Auto sector ETF. The Auto ETF is an open-ended scheme replicating/tracking the Nifty Auto Index,"
- Similarly, a statement from ICICI Prudential MF stated: "ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund has launched India's first Auto ETF namely ICICI Prudential Nifty Auto ETF.
- Interestingly, it is difficult to ascertain which one would be the first as the both the new fund offers (NFOs) will open on January 5. While the ICICI Prudential fund will close on January 10, the one by Nippon MF will be open till January 14.
- the minimum investment amount is also pegged at Rs 1,000 for both the schemes. The ICICI Prudential scheme, however, is expected to list first on the bourses as its NFO will close before the one by Nippon MF.



**13. Consider The Following Statement Regarding IRDAI New Remuneration Of CEO Director Of Private Users**

**1. The tenure of MDs, CEOs and whole-time directors (WTD) of an insurance company has been set at 15 years.**

**2 As applicable to banks, the prescribed maximum age of these functionaries will be 70 years. The maximum age limit for chairman and non-executive directors has been fixed at 75 years.**

**3. The total tenure of a non-executive director (NED), continuously or otherwise, on the board of a bank, should not exceed 10 years.**

**4. After completing 8 years on the board, the person may be considered for re-appointment only after a minimum gap of Two years.**

**Select The Correct Statement**

**A. Only 1, 2 And 3**

**B. Only 2, 3 And 4**

**C. Only 1 And 2**

**D. None Of The Above**

The tenure of MDs, CEOs and whole-time directors (WTD) of an insurance company has been set at 15 years. the incumbent will only be eligible for appointment as the CEO of the company after a gap of three years

- As applicable to banks, the prescribed maximum age of these functionaries will be 70 years. The maximum age limit for chairman and non-executive directors has been fixed at 75 years
- The total tenure of a non-executive director (NED), continuously or otherwise, on the board of a bank, should not exceed 8 years.
- After completing 8 years on the board, the person may be considered for re-appointment only after a minimum gap of Three years.

# 15-yr cap on tenure of MD, CEOs of insurers on cards

Proposed remuneration to be divided between fixed/variable pay, perquisites

SUBRATA PANDA  
Mumbai, 4 January

The insurance regulator has proposed to cap the tenure of managing directors (MDs) and chief executive officers (CEOs) of insurance firms at 15 years, aligning it with what the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has mandated for the top honchos of banks. It has also proposed changes to the compensation structure of the top management at insurance companies, so as to ensure sound compensation practices and avoid situations resulting from excessive risk-taking behaviour due to inappropriate compensation structures or incentive plans.

In an exposure draft, the regulator has said that the post of MD and CEO or whole-time directors (WTDs) cannot be held by an incumbent for more than 15 years. After 15 years, the incumbent will only be eligible to be appointed CEO of the company after a gap of three years, but in those three years, the individual cannot be associated with the company or its group entities, either directly or indirectly.

Further, the regulator has said, no individual can continue as MD and CEO or WTD of an insurance company beyond the age of 70 years. Also, if the MD and CEO or WTD is a promoter or a major shareholder (holding more than 5 per cent) of the insurance company, he/she cannot hold those posts beyond 12 years, unless the regulator permits the individual to continue up to 15 years. "The cap on tenure proposed by the regulator is aimed at bringing in benefits of change over the



## EXPOSURE DRAFT NORMS

- No person shall continue as MD & CEO or WTD beyond the age of 70 years
- MD & CEO who is also a promoter/major shareholder, cannot hold the posts for more than 12 years
- Fixed Pay should be reasonable and all the fixed items, including perquisites should be included
- At least 50% of the remuneration subject to maximum 300% of the fixed pay should be variable pay

long term with sufficient opportunity for leadership to make a difference. A forced change after 15 years is good for any organisation. Importantly, there is directional alignment with the practice in the banking space," said Rushabh Gandhi, deputy CEO, IndiaFirst Life Insurance.

According to Nilesh Sathe, former Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (Irdai) member, "The intent behind the exposure draft is to nudge

insurance companies to have a succession plan in place. The regulator is giving sufficient time to insurers to do so. The intent of the regulator is not to be disruptive. In that sense, 15 years' time should be enough for an MD and CEO to raise the insurance company to a higher platform," said Sathe.

"Irdai's efforts to emulate the banking model looks somewhat far-fetched. In case of banks, the loan assets are created and some of the bad examples in the banking system should not be the basis for the regulator to bring out similar guidelines. In any case, I don't think the regulator will not contemplate the application of the new regulations on a retrospective basis," said Ashvin Parekh, managing partner, Ashvin Parekh Advisory Services.

As far as remuneration is concerned, the regulator said it would be divided between fixed pay, perquisites, and variable pay. The fixed pay part of the remuneration will comprise all the fixed items, including perquisites. The variable pay will be at least 50 per cent of the remuneration structure or a maximum of 300 per cent of the fixed pay. Further, the regulator has proposed that the variable pay paid to MD and CEO or WTDs can be reduced if there is deterioration in the financial performance of the insurer, so much so that it can be even reduced to zero.

The regulator has proposed a variable pay formula, wherein 70 per cent weighting has been prescribed to quantitative parameters, such as premium growth, rise in market share, profitability, and persistency ratio, while 30 per cent weighting has been prescribed to qualitative parameters.

14. Recently In January Reliance New Energy Solar (RNESL) Has Acquired 25.90 Percent Stake In Sterling And Wilson Renewable Energy ( SWERL) For What Amount And Become The Promoter Compnay Of SWERL?

- A. Rs 6853 Cr
- B. Rs 1583 Cr**
- C. Rs 10533 Cr
- D. Rs 1253 Cr

## Reliance becomes promoter of Sterling & Wilson Renewable

Sterling and Wilson Renewable Energy (SWREL) said that Reliance New Energy Solar (RNESL) has become its promoter after acquiring 25.90 per cent equity in it. Reliance group firms had made an initial payment of ₹259.26 crore for acquisition of 49.1 million shares or 25.90 per cent equity stake in SWREL, according to a BSE filing. On Thursday, RNESL had deposited an additional over ₹1,583 crore, which together with the initial cash deposit "is equivalent to 100 per cent of the offer consideration payable under the open offer, assuming full acceptance of the open offer". With this transaction, RNESL and other group firms together hold over 40 per cent stake in SWREL. In October 2021, RNESL had executed definitive agreements with Shapoorji Pallonji, Khurshed Daruvala, and Sterling & Wilson Solar to acquire 40 per cent stake post-money in SWSL through a series of transactions. Sterling & Wilson Solar is now known as Sterling and Wilson Renewable Energy. PTI

Sterling and Wilson Renewable Energy Ltd (SWREL) on Monday informed that Reliance New Energy Solar Ltd (RNESL) has become its promoter after it paid a balance of Rs 1,583 crore for acquisition of 25.90% equity in it. With this transaction, RNESL and other group firms together hold over 40% stake in SWREL.

This October RNESL had executed definitive agreements with Shapoorji Pallonji and Company Private Ltd (SPCPL), Khurshed Daruvala, and Sterling & Wilson Solar Ltd (SWSL) to acquire 40% stake. Recently, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has also cleared the deal. accordance with the terms of the SSA and the SEBI (SAST) regulations, the acquirer (RNESL) has been classified as a promoter of the target company (SWREL) along with the existing promoter and promoter group of the target company with effect from December 30, 2021

15. Recently In January Which Of The Following Company Became *First In The World To Hit \$3 Trillion Market Capitalisation* ?

- A. Microsoft
- B. Apple**
- C. Amazon
- D. SpaceX

# Apple becomes 1st company to hit \$3-tn market value

REUTERS

BENGALURU, JANUARY 3

APPLE INC on Monday became the first company in the world to hit \$3 trillion in market capitalisation, thanks to investor confidence that the iPhone maker will keep launching best-selling products as it explores new markets such as automated cars and metaverse.

On the first day of trading in 2022, the company's shares rose to \$182.88 in mid-day trading, a new record. The world's most valuable company is the first to reach the milestone as investors bet that consumers will continue to shell out top dollar for iPhones, MacBooks and services such as Apple TV and Apple Music.

Apple's march from \$2 trillion to \$3 trillion in market value took about 16 months as its stock roared higher, leading a group of megacap technology companies

RISE SINCE iPHONE LAUNCH

## 5,800%

■ Apple's shares have climbed around 5,800 per cent since co-founder and former chief executive Steve Jobs unveiled the first iPhone in January 2007, far outpacing the S&P 500's gain of about 230 per cent during the same period

that benefited as people relied heavily on tech during the coronavirus pandemic.

Apple's shares have climbed around 5,800 per cent since co-founder and former Chief Executive Steve Jobs unveiled the first iPhone in January 2007, far outpacing the S&P 500's gain of about 230 per cent during the same period.

Apple, the computer company that started in a California garage in 1976, is now worth \$3 trillion. It became the first publicly traded company to ever reach the figure.

- Microsoft and Apple shared the \$2 trillion market value club but Microsoft is still at \$2.5 trillion and Apple has crossed the \$3 trillion mark.
- Apple HQ - Cupertino, California, United States, Ceo - Tim Cook

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16. Recently In January Which Of The Following Bank Has signed **Indian Cricketer Shafali Verma** as its brand endorser ?

- A. State Bank Of India
- B. Bank Of Baroda**
- C. Reserve Bank Of India
- D. Equitas Small Finance Bank

**Bank Of Baroda Ropes In Cricket Sensation Shafali Verma As Brand Endorser**

Bank of Baroda today announced signing of Indian Cricketer Shafali Verma as its brand endorser. In a welcome result of her consistent outstanding performance in the Women's cricket for India, the Bank has signed contract with the ace Cricketer.

Commenting of the association, Shri Sanjiv Chadha, MD & CEO, Bank of Baroda said, "Bank of Baroda has a history of associating with ace athletes and sportspersons as its brand endorsers and being a crucial part of their journey. The Bank continuously supports the youth of the country through its various banking and non-banking initiatives and this announcement reflects the Bank's ethos of adding value to its customer experience by choosing youth-icons like Shafali to inspire them. Shafali's personality resonates grit, determination and dependability which reflects the Bank's brand ideologies. On this occasion, Cricketer Shafali Verma said, "I am humbled and proud of being associated with an institution whose legacy is more than a century old. I am extremely grateful to Bank of Baroda for this association and for believing in my potential. I personally connect with the Bank's forward looking vision and its futuristic approach in all spheres of banking and technology."



Bank of Baroda announced signing of Indian Cricketer Shafali Verma as its brand endorser.

- Last year, the Bank launched its latest offering 'bob World Wave' – a wearable line of products for payments with a complete health ecosystem, under the bob World umbrella
- Bank of Baroda HQ - Alkapuri, Vadodara , Sanjiv Chadha, MD & CEO, Tagline - "India's International Bank"

17. Recently In January Which Of The Following has entered into a strategic engagement with **Zain KSA** to provide digital solutions in Saudi Arabia ?

- A. Reliance Industries
- B. Tata Communications**
- C. Adani Group
- D. Wipro

Tata Communications on Tuesday said it has entered into a strategic engagement with Zain KSA to provide digital solutions in Saudi Arabia.

"With this collaboration the combined ecosystems will deliver solutions and platforms to remodel cities with smart street lighting, smart waste management, connected workplace, healthcare and connected cars,"

18. Recently In January State-owned gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd has completed the acquisition of bankrupt Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services' (IL&FS) How Much Percnt Stake in ONGC Tripura Power Company (OTPC) ?

- A. 51 %
- B. 46 %
- C. 23 %
- D. 26 %

## IL&FS sells stake in ONGC Tripura to GAIL for ₹319 crore

The IL&FS Group has sold its 26 per cent stake in ONGC Tripura Power Company (OTPC) to GAIL (India) for ₹319 crore. According to officials in the know, this amount will be credited to IL&FS's cash balance and disbursed according to the resolution plan approved by the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT).

The 26 per cent stake that IL&FS held in OTPC was valued at ₹1,227 crore for this transaction. According to an IL&FS statement, around ₹3,656-crore debt, estimated to be part of the overall debt around ₹99,000 crore (as on October 2018) of the group, has been resolved through this

transaction.

IL&FS Group held the 26 per cent stake in OTPC through two subsidiaries. IL&FS Energy Development Company (IEDCL) held a 12 per cent stake and IL&FS Financial Services (IFIN) held the rest. According to the initial shareholding, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) held 50 per cent stake in OTPC, India Infrastructure Fund II had 23.5 per cent, and the government of Tripura held 0.5 per cent. Following this transaction, GAIL will hold 26 per cent in OTPC, with ONGC, Indian Infrastructure Fund II and the Tripura government holding their respective stakes. **TWESH MISHRA**

State-owned gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd has completed the acquisition of bankrupt Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services' (IL&FS) 26 per cent stake in ONGC Tripura Power Company (OTPC)

- OTPC is a special purpose vehicle set up by Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) to build a 726.6 megawatt combined cycle gas turbine (CCGT) thermal power plant at Palatana, Tripura
- The IL&FS group and the Government of Tripura (GoT) were partners in the special purpose vehicle (SPV).
- ONGC holds 50 per cent interest in the company Tripura government holds 0.5 per cent while India Infrastructure Fund II holds the balance 23.5 per cent stake

19. Consider The Following Statement Regarding Reserve Bank Of India Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) or institutions which are 'too big to fail' ?

1. The additional Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) requirement for D-SIBs was phased-in from April 1, 2016 and became fully effective from April 1, 2019.
2. The additional CET1 requirement will be in addition to the capital conservation buffer. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had announced SBI and ICICI Bank as D-SIBs in 2015 and 2016.
3. Based on data collected from banks as on March 31, 2017, HDFC Bank was also classified as a D-SIB.
4. The current update is based on data collected from banks as on March 31, 2021. The framework for dealing with D-SIBs was issued in July 2014.

Which Of The Following Statement Is Correct ?

- A. Only 1, 3, 4
- B. Only 2, 3 And 4
- C. All Of The Above
- D. Only 1, 2 And 3

The RBI on Tuesday said state-owned SBI, along with private-sector lenders ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank continue to be Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) or institutions which are 'too big to fail'.

- SBI, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank continue to be identified as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs), under the same bucketing structure as in the 2020 list of D-SIBs
- The additional Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) requirement for D-SIBs was phased-in from April 1, 2016 and became fully effective from April 1, 2019.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had announced SBI and ICICI Bank as D-SIBs in 2015 and 2016.
- Based on data collected from banks as on March 31, 2017, HDFC Bank was also classified as a D-SIB.
- The framework for dealing with D-SIBs was issued in July 2014
- The Additional Common Equity Tier 1 requirement as a percentage of Risk Weighted Assets (RWAs) in case of SBI is 0.6 per cent Which Is Bucket 3, and 0.2 per cent for ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank Which Is Bucket 1

## SBI, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank too big to fail: RBI

SUBRATA PANDA  
Mumbai, 4 January

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday said State Bank of India (SBI), ICICI Bank, and HDFC Bank continue to be identified as domestic systemically important banks (D-SIBs), or institutions that are too big to fail.

The current classification is based on the data collected from lenders as of March 31, 2021.

Under bucket 1, banks require 0.2 per cent of additional common equity Tier 1 capital as a percentage of risk weighted assets (RWAs). Under bucket 3, they require 0.6 per cent of additional common equity Tier 1 capital as a percentage of RWAs.

While private sector lenders ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank fall under bucket 1, SBI comes under bucket 3.

Essentially, systemically important banks are the ones that are perceived as too big to fail. The perception of too big to fail creates an expectation of government support for these banks at the time of distress.

Last year also, these three banks were identified as domestic systemically important banks and were placed in the same buckets as this year.

In 2015 and 2016, the RBI had classified SBI and ICICI Bank as D-SIBs. Further, based on the data collected from banks as of March 31, 2017, HDFC Bank was classified as a D-SIB, along with SBI and ICICI Bank.

20. Recently In January The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the inclusion of **Airtel Payments Bank** in the second schedule of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. When Was Airtel Payment Bank Launched ?

- A. January 2018
- B. January 2017**
- C. January 2016
- D. January 2015

## AIRTEL PAYMENTS BANK GETS PERMISSION TO FUNCTION AS SCHEDULED BANK FROM RBI

Airtel Payments Bank on Tuesday said it has been categorised as a scheduled bank by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

With this, Airtel Payments Bank can now pitch for government-issued Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and primary auctions and undertake both central and state government business, besides participating in government-operated welfare schemes, it said in a statement. "In a boost to its fast growing digital banking footprint, Airtel Payments Bank has been categorised as Scheduled Bank by the Reserve Bank of India," it said.

Airtel Payments Bank is among the fastest-growing digital banks in the country, with a base of 115 million users. It offers a suite of digital solutions through the Airtel Thanks app and a retail network of over 500,000 neighbourhood banking points.

PTI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday announced the inclusion of Airtel Payments Bank in the second schedule of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934

- Airtel Payments Bank was launched in January 2017, by Bharti Airtel, India's largest telecom provider, to support the cashless revolution promised by the Government of India.
- Its Is The 4th Payment Bank To GET second schedule Status Indian Post Payment Bank Was The First Payment Bank To Get second schedule Status**
  - Chairman - Sunil Bharti Mittal , Anubrata Biswas Managing Director & CEO**



**21. Consider The Following Statement Regarding Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) :**

1. The government restored licences of **79 non-governmental organisations (NGOs)** under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) after accepting their renewal applications
2. After the update, the total number of active **NGOs now stands at 16,908 from 16,829.**
3. Under FCRA 2020, it is compulsory for all NGOs to open an '**FCRA account**' with **State Bank of India main branch** in the national capital for initial receipt of foreign contribution from a foreign source.

Which Of The Following Statement Is Correct ?

- A. Only 1 And 3
- B. Only 1 And 2
- C. All Of The Above
- D. None Of The Above

The government restored licences of 79 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) after accepting their renewal applications which were filed on December 31 after 7 pm but before 12 am. After the update, the total number of active NGOs now stands at 16,908 from 16,829."

On January 1, FCRA licence of 5,968 NGOs, including Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, was cancelled after they failed to comply with revised guidelines or apply for renewal. While licences of 12,501 NGOs expired on December 31, licences of 5,710 NGOs lapsed on January 1. To receive foreign grants, NGOs have to register with the home ministry, which assigns a unique FCRA registration number, to be renewed every five years. Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Rules, 2011

**'TOTAL NUMBER OF ACTIVE NGOS NOW STANDS AT 16,908'**

## Home Ministry Restores FCRA Licences of 79 NGOs

Renewal applications filed on Dec 31 after 7 pm but before 12 am

Rahul.Tripathi@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** The government restored licences of 79 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) after accepting their renewal applications which were filed on December 31 after 7 pm but before 12 am. The NGOs informed the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Monday that they had filed the renewal applications online ahead of the deadline but their names were in the list of NGOs whose licences had lapsed.

Officials said it is an "ongoing process" and it is possible that the number of NGOs who have filed for renewal of licences may increase upon scrutiny of documents and verification. When asked about the names of NGOs whose applications have been accepted, a senior home ministry official said on condition of anonymity, "They are engaged in various activities including religious, social, educational and cultural. After the update, the total number of active NGOs now

### 20,000 Licences Cancelled in 10 Years

FCRA licences of over 20,000 NGOs have been cancelled in the past 10 years, said officials



**FCRA licences of Oxfam Trusts and Oxfam Australia were cancelled in 2017 for violation of law**



A spokesperson for Oxfam India said the NGO applied for renewal of FCRA licence in April but was denied by the ministry

Oxfam India will reach out to the MHA and will urge them to lift the funding restrictions  
**AMITABH BEHAR**  
OXFAM INDIA CEO

### SAY GOVT OFFICIALS



**'It's an ongoing process and the number of NGOs who have filed for renewal of licences may increase upon scrutiny'**

stands at 16,908 from 16,829." On January 1, FCRA licence of 5,968 NGOs, including Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, was cancelled after they failed to comply with revised guidelines or apply for renewal. While

licences of 12,501 NGOs expired on December 31, licences of 5,710 NGOs lapsed on January 1. To receive foreign grants, NGOs have to register with the home ministry, which assigns a unique FCRA registration number, to be renewed every five years.

FCRA licences of more than 20,000 NGOs have been cancelled in the past 10 years, said officials. FCRA licences of Oxfam Trusts and Oxfam Australia were cancelled in 2017 for violation of law. A spokesperson for Oxfam India told ET that the NGO applied for renewal of FCRA licence in April last year but was denied by the ministry. The organisation is also registered under section 8 company under the 2013 Companies Act, he said.

**FIRST MEETING OF DANIEL TOMORROW**

22. Recently In January Which Of The Following Bank Has Taken Its Next Major Step In Ongoing Digital Transformations By Investing \$20 Million In Pine Labs An IPO Bound Start Up Focused On Digital Payments ?

- A. Bank Of Baroda
- B. Bank Of India
- C. State Bank Of India**
- D. Resreve Bank Of India

## SBI pumps \$20 million into Pine Labs in latest fintech bet

PEERZADA ABRAR  
Bengaluru, 4 January

State Bank of India (SBI) has invested \$20 million in Pine Labs, said the leading merchant commerce platform on Tuesday, indicating India's largest lender is betting on fintech as a way of future-proofing.

"We are thrilled to have the largest bank of India, State Bank of India, place their trust in us and welcome them in this journey where we are empowering merchants with seamless and secure payment experiences across offline and online platforms," said B Amrith Rau, CEO, Pine Labs.

In 2021, Pine Labs had raised a total round size of \$600 million from a marquee



**Pine Labs CEO B Amrith Rau said the firm aims to scale up its online payments products**

set of new investors and followed it up with a \$100-million fundraise from US-based Invesco Developing Markets Fund. In addition to aug-

menting its merchant commerce offerings at the offline point-of-sale, Pine Labs is now looking to invest in scaling Plural, its newly launched brand of online payment products and emerge as an omnichannel partner of choice for merchants.

"In the last one year, several marquee investors have placed their trust in our business model and growth momentum and that is a gratifying feeling. This association with SBI is a personally satisfying experience as I had started my career selling financial services technology to SBI."

Pine Labs, which is backed by Sequoia Capital, Temasek Holdings, Actis, PayPal and Mastercard among other leading global

investors, competes with other fintech companies such as BharatPe, Mswipe, Paytm and Razorpay.

It is also expanding its Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) business across India and Southeast Asia. The company has entered the consumer payment space with its April 2021 acquisition of Fave, one of Southeast Asia's leading consumer fintech platform, and has a leading presence in the Gift, Prepaid and Stored Value segment through its 2019 acquisition of Qwikilver.

In July 2021, it closed a \$600-million fundraising round at a \$3-billion valuation. The investment is expected to help the company in its plan to go public this year or early next year.

India's largest lender, the State Bank of India, has invested \$20 million in Pine Labs, the fintech startup

- Pine Labs, best known for its offline merchant payments tool, is also looking to list in the United States in the first half of 2022
- Pine Labs CEO Amrith Rau Sbi Chairman Dinesh Khara

23. Recently In January Which Of The Following Has Introduced The “Unified Presentment Management System (UPMS) For Recurring Bill Payments ?

- a. NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd
- b. NPCI BHIM Aadhaar Ltd
- c. NPCI National Financial Switch
- d. NPCI Immediate Payment Serv

## NPCI Bharat BillPay launches Unified Presentment Management System

Will enable customers to pay recurring bills

**OUR BUREAU**  
Mumbai, January 4

NPCI Bharat BillPay (NBBL), the wholly-owned subsidiary of National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has introduced the ‘Unified Presentment Management System’ (UPMS) for recurring bill payments.

“UPMS will enable the customers to set up standing instructions from any channel and for any mode on their recurring bill payments,” NPCI said in a statement.

The bills will be automatically fetched from the billers and presented to customers for their action, in terms of auto-debit and bill payment management. With the UPMS launch, the in-

tent is to enable all the Bharat BillPay Operating Units (BBPOU) to extend this facility to their customers/corporate clients with minimal effort through the centralised infrastructure and application support provided by Bharat BillPay Central Unit (BBPCU), NPCI said.

UPMS will help in democratising recurring bill payments and making them further convenient for customers, it added.

### ‘Great opportunity’

NPCI underscored that UPMS provides a great opportunity for the service providers and fintechs of the digital payments ecosystem to run through this feature in the sandbox environment of the Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS). Several operating units (OUs) and technical service providers (TSPs) are actively coming forward in the

rapid deployment of UPMS, it added. The statement noted UPMS assumes significance as a majority of the transactions in the new categories under BBPS like mutual funds, insurance, subscriptions, school fee payments, currently happen through presentment and standing instructions.



With an aim to enrich and simplify bill payments in the country, NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd. (NBBL), the wholly-owned subsidiary of National Payments Corporation of India has introduced a unique functionality called ‘Unified Presentment Management System’ (UPMS).

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) was incorporated in 2008
- NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of National Payments Corporation of India. Came into effect from April 1, 2021,
- Ms. Noopur Chaturvedi, CEO, NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd

**FACT THE FERTILISERS AND PIONEERS IN PROGRESS** (A Government of India I CORPORATE MATERIALS, PD ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING)  
E-mail: [akhila@factindia.com](mailto:akhila@factindia.com) / [jayakumar@factindia.com](mailto:jayakumar@factindia.com), Wi

**NOTICE INVITIN**  
Online competitive two bid tenders are invited for the  
**1) Renovation of B Flat Quarters in F**  
Tender No: 03009/2021-2022/E24596 e-t  
**2) Revamping of Lake View Hostel in FACT (Cochin**  
Tender No: 04038/2021-2022/E24586 e-  
**3) Health Study and Rehabilitation Measures of the**  
Conveyors from Urea Silo to Urea Bagging Plant incl  
FACT Cochin Division at Ambalamedu, Kochi  
Tender No: 04031/2021-2022/E24604 e-  
**Last date & time for submission of abo**  
The complete bidding process will be online (e-  
extension, Corrigendum, Addendum etc. if any, ri  
in fact.co.in/PPP Portal (eprocure.gov.in) and wil  
Date: 04.01.2022

24. With reference to the **gold imports by India**, consider the following statements:

1. India spent a record \$55.7 billion on gold imports in 2021, buying more than double the previous year's tonnage.
2. India is the world's biggest gold consuming nation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

## 'India spent record \$55.7 bn on gold imports in 2021'

'Deferred weddings conducted last year spurred demand'

REUTERS  
MUMBAI

India splurged a record \$55.7 billion on gold imports in 2021, buying more than double the previous year's tonnage as a price drop favoured retail buyers and pent-up demand emerged for weddings that were delayed when the pandemic first hit.

Details of the world's second-biggest consuming nation's soaring imports were disclosed to Reuters by a senior government official who requested anonymity. The 2021 gold import bill easily doubled the \$22 billion spent in 2020, and surpassed the previous high, set in 2011, of \$53.9



billion, according to the official, who tracks broad import trends. In volume, India imported 1,050 tonnes in 2021, the most in a decade, and far more than the 430 tonnes imported in 2020, the official said.

"Last year, demand was robust as lots of weddings were postponed to 2021 from 2020 because of the

coronavirus outbreak," said Harshad Ajmera, a gold wholesaler in Kolkata.

Mr. Ajmera noted a price correction had made gold more affordable for retail consumers in India early last year. Local gold prices hit a record of ₹56,191 per 10 gm in August 2020, but fell back to ₹43,320 in March 2021, when monthly imports spiked to a record 177 tonnes.

Imports could moderate in January as rising coronavirus cases have prompted local authorities to impose curbs, said a Mumbai-based bullion dealer. "Jewellers are afraid of lockdown. They have scaled down purchases," the dealer said.

India spent a record \$55.7 billion on gold imports in 2021, buying more than double the previous year's tonnage as a price drop favoured retail buyers and pent-up demand emerged for weddings that were delayed when the pandemic first hit.

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Last year, demand was robust as lots of weddings were postponed to 2021 from 2020 because of the coronavirus outbreak.

25. For non-compliance with regulatory requirements, which of the following Central government regulatory body has cancelled the authorization certificates of **Muthoot Vehicle and Asset Finance Ltd and Eko India Financial Services Private Ltd** for non-compliance with regulatory requirements in January 2022?

- A. Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
- B. Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)
- C. Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)
- D. Pension Fund Regulatory & Development Authority (PFRDA)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the Certificate of Authorisation (CoA) of two Payment System Operators (PSOs) — Muthoot Vehicle and Asset Finance Limited and Eko India Financial Services Private Limited citing non-compliance with regulatory requirements under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.

- Muthoot Vehicle and Asset Finance Ltd. (MVFL), is the Vehicle and Asset Finance Division of The Muthoot Group. The Company was incorporated in 1992. In the year 2008, the name of the Company was formally changed to Muthoot Vehicle and Asset Finance Ltd.
- Eko India Financial Services Private Limited is a private organization incorporated in 2007. It is classified as a non-govt company and is registered at the Registrar of Companies, Delhi.

**26. Consider The Following Statement Regarding RBI market making plan to promote retail participation in G-Secs :**

1. According to the market making scheme, primary dealers will rely on the **Know Your Customer (KYC) verification of the RDG account holders done under the retail direct scheme.**
2. **NDS-OM', or Negotiated Dealing Segment- Order Matching, refers to the RBI's screen-based, anonymous electronic order matching system for trading in government securities in the secondary market.**
3. **Under the RBI Retail Direct Scheme, retail investors (individuals) have the facility to open an online Retail Direct Gilt Account (RDG Account) with RBI. These accounts can be linked to their savings bank accounts.**

**Which Of The Following Statement Is Correct ?**

- A. Only 1 And 3
- B. Only 2 And 3
- C. Only 1 And 2
- D. All Of THE Above**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) notified the market making scheme to promote retail participation in government securities by providing prices/quotes to retail direct gilt (RDG) account holders enabling them to buy and sell securities under the RBI Retail Direct Scheme.

- **RBI Retail Direct Scheme has been launched on November 12, 2021 for providing one-stop access to facilitate investment in Government Securities by retail investors**
- **No further KYC verification is required for transacting with RDG account holders on the RFQ segment of NDS-OM,**
- **“NDS-OM” or Negotiated Dealing Segment – Order Matching means RBI’s screen based, anonymous electronic order matching system for trading in Government Securities in the secondary market** □ **Under the RBI Retail Direct Scheme, retail investors (individuals) have the facility to open an online Retail Direct Gilt Account (RDG Account) with RBI. These accounts can be linked to their savings bank accounts.**



**RBI notifies market-making scheme to promote retail participation in G-Secs**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Mumbai, January 4

**1 THE RESERVE BANK** of India (RBI) on Tuesday notified the market-making scheme to promote retail participation in government securities (G-Secs) by providing prices/quotes to retail direct gilt (RDG) account holders, enabling them to buy and sell securities under the RBI Retail Direct Scheme.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched the RBI Retail Direct Scheme on November 12, 2021, to provide one-stop access to facilitate investment in government securities by retail investors.

In this connection, to provide liquidity in the secondary market, a market-making arrangement, wherein the primary dealers shall be present on the NDS-OM platform (odd-lot and request for quotes segments) throughout market hours and respond to buy/sell requests from Retail Direct Gilt account holders (RDGAHs) has been notified.

According to the market-making scheme, primary dealers will rely on the KnowYour Customer (KYC) verification of the RDG account holders, done under the retail direct scheme.

“No further KYC verification is required for transacting with RDG account holders on the RFQ segment of NDS-OM,” the RBI said.

The ‘NDS-OM’, or negotiated dealing segment—order matching, refers to the RBI’s screen-based, anonymous elec-

**Under the market-making scheme, primary dealers will rely on the KYC verification of the RDG account holders, done under the retail direct scheme**

tronic order-matching system for trading in government securities in the secondary market.

The ‘request for quotes (RFQ) segment’ refers to the on-screen negotiation system of the RBI’s NDS-OM system.

Under the RBI Retail Direct Scheme, retail investors (individuals) have the facility to open an online Retail Direct Gilt account (RDG account) with RBI. These accounts can be linked to their savings bank accounts.

The RDG accounts of individuals can be used to participate in the issuance of government securities and secondary market operations, through the screen-based NDS-OM.

**Weekly Optimum CA Q&A PDF -Based on Recent Exam Trend**  
**First Week of January (1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022)**

**27. Recently In January Telecom major *Bharti Airtel* announced joint venture (JV) with Which Among The Following for providing satellite broadband services in India ?**

- A. Hughes Network Systems**
- B. Starlink Network**
- C. One Web**
- D. Genome Shine**

## Airtel, Hughes form JV to provide satellite broadband services in India

Operational as HCIPL, the entity has a combined base of over 200,000 VSATs

**OUR BUREAU**

New Delhi, January 5

Bharti Airtel and Hughes Communications India (HCIPL), a majority-owned subsidiary of Hughes Network Systems (Hughes), on Wednesday said they have formed a joint venture to provide satellite broadband services in India.

Operational as HCIPL, the entity combines the Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) businesses of both companies to offer flexible and scalable enterprise networking solutions using satellite connectivity for primary

transport, back-up and hybrid implementation, Airtel said in a statement.

The agreement, announced in May 2019, has received all statutory approvals, including those from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), and the JV has been formed, it said.

"With the combined capabilities of Airtel and Hughes, customers will get access to next generation satellite connectivity backed by proven enterprise grade security and service support," said Ajay



The agreement has received all statutory approvals

Chitkara, Director and Chief Executive Officer, Airtel Business.

**Multi-orbit solutions**

Now serving Airtel VSAT customers, HCIPL has a combined base of over 200,000 VSATs.

"Combining the proven

capabilities of both Hughes and Airtel, the partnership will bring synergies to the forefront - including multi-orbit solutions – for the benefit of customers across the length and breadth of India," Partho Banerjee, President and Managing Director, HCIPL, said.

HCIPL provides broadband networking technologies, solutions and services, including a full range of managed network services, for government offices and enterprises across segments such as banking, aeronautical and maritime mobility, small to medium-sized businesses, education, and telecom backhaul, among others.

Bharti Airtel has announced the formation of a joint venture with Hughes Communications India Pvt Ltd (HCIPL), an innovator in satellite and networks to offer satellite broadband services in India

- Hughes will hold a 67 per cent stake in the joint venture, while Airtel will hold a 33 per cent stake
- The entity will be known as HCIPL and will combine the Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) business of both companies,
- Airtel and Hughes Communications' agreement was first announced in May 2019, The JV has a combined base of over 2 lakh VSATs, making it the largest satellite service operator in the country. "

28. Recently In January Which Of The Following Has Become The **First Company To Disburse LAS (Loans Against Share) Digitally To Any Demat Account Holder Registered With NSDL ?**

- a. Pine Labs
- b. Hughes Communication
- c. **Geo Jit Financial Services**
- d. Payback Ltd

## Geojit launches platform for loan against shares

NSDL a/c holders can avail the facility

**V SAJEEV KUMAR**

Kochi, January 5

Geojit Credits, an NBFC, and subsidiary of Geojit Financial Services, on Wednesday launched its digital platform to offer loans against shares (LAS). With the launch of the digital platform, Geojit Credits becomes the first company to disburse LAS digitally to any demat account holder registered with NSDL.

The platform was formally launched by Padmaja Chunduru, Managing Director of National Securities Depository Ltd, in the presence of CJ George, Founder and Managing Director of Geojit, A Balakrishnan, Executive Director of Geojit, and Prashant Vagal, Executive

Vice-President of NSDL, at a function held in Kochi. Padmaja Chunduru said, "NSDL has, of late, undertaken various technology-driven initiatives such as the launch of Insta Demat account, Demat Gateway, etc, to offer superior convenience to its stakeholders. NSDL Digital LAS facility has been designed to provide instant liquidity to investors to help them fund further investments or to meet immediate personal expenses."

Geojit's LAS digital platform will enable clients to apply for loans by pledging shares by selecting a scheme of their choice and completing all documentation online. Once the loan application is digitally signed and approved, the amount will be instantly credited to the bank account of the client and interest will be charged only for the amount utilised.

Geojit Credits, an NBFC, and subsidiary of Geojit Financial Services, on Wednesday launched its digital platform to offer loans against shares (LAS).

□ With the launch of the digital platform, Geojit Credits becomes the first company to disburse LAS digitally to any demat account holder registered with NSDL.

□ The platform was formally launched by Padmaja Chunduru, Managing Director of National Securities Depository Ltd, in the presence of CJ George, Founder and Managing Director of Geojit



# RBI lays down eligibility norms for entities tapping credit bureau data

FE BUREAU

Mumbai, January 5

**THE RESERVE BANK** of India (RBI) on Wednesday laid down eligibility norms for entities tapping into data from credit information companies (CICs), or credit bureaus. The rules say a company must be owned and controlled by resident Indian citizens to become a specified user with a credit bureau, amid reports of lending apps with Chinese links operating in India.

In order to be eligible as a 'specified user' under the Credit Information Companies (Amendment) Regulations, 2021, an entity must be a company incorporated in India or a statutory corporation established in India. The governing statute of the statutory corporation or memorandum of association of the company should allow the business or activity of processing of information for the support or benefit of credit institutions, the norms said.

In the case of a company, it should have a net worth of not less than ₹2 crore as per the latest audited balance sheet, and shall meet the requirement on a continuing basis. The ownership of the company shall be well diversified.

The company shall have at least three years of experience in running the business or activity of processing information for the support or benefit of credit institu-



**In the case of a company, it should have a net worth of not less than ₹2 crore as per the latest audited balance sheet, and shall meet the requirement on a continuing basis**

tions and shall have a clean track record. The company, its promoters or directors should not have at any time in the past been convicted of any offence involving moral turpitude or any economic offence.

In addition, the entity should have a certification from a CISA-certified auditor that it has a robust and secure information technology (IT) system in place for preserving and protecting the data relating to the credit information as per the provision of the Credit Information Companies (Regulation) Act, 2005 and other applicable regulations or guidelines.

New Delhi

29. Consider The Following Statement Regarding **RBI New Norms On Tapping Credit Bureau**
1. In order to be eligible as a 'specified user' under the **Credit Information Companies (Amendment) Regulations, 2021**, an entity must be a company incorporated in India or a statutory corporation established in India
  2. In the case of a company, it should have a net worth of **not less than Rs 5 crore as per the latest audited balance sheet**,
  3. The company shall have **at least two years of experience** in running the business or activity of processing information
  4. The entity should have a certification from a CISA-certified auditor as per **Credit Information Companies (Regulation) Act, 2007**
- Which Of The Following Statement Is Correct ?
- A. Only 1, 3 And 4
  - B. Only 2 And 3
  - C. Only 1**
  - D. All Of The Above

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday laid down eligibility norms for entities tapping into data from credit information companies (CICs), or credit bureaus.

- The rules say a company must be owned and controlled by resident Indian citizens to become a specified user with a credit bureau
  - In order to be eligible as a 'specified user' under the Credit Information Companies (Amendment) Regulations, 2021, an entity must be a company incorporated in India or a statutory corporation established in India
- it should have a net worth of not less than Rs 2 crore as per the latest audited balance sheet, and shall meet the requirement on a continuing basis
- The company shall have at least three years of experience in running the business or activity of processing information for the support or benefit of credit institutions
- The entity should have a certification from a CISA-certified auditor as per the provision of the Credit Information Companies (Regulation) Act, 2005

Weekly Optimum CA Q&A PDF -Based on Recent Exam Trend  
First Week of January (1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022)

30. Which bank has won *UiPath Automation Excellence Awards 2021 for Best Automation under Crisis for Business Continuity*?

- A. South Indian Bank
- B. IDFC First Bank
- C. IndusInd Bank
- D. Bandhan Bank

The Kerala-based lender South Indian Bank has won the UiPath Automation Excellence Awards 2021 for Best Automation under Crisis for Business Continuity.

- The award was bestowed upon the Bank for its exceptional use of Robotic Process Automation capabilities. The UiPath Automation Excellence Awards aim to recognise the change-makers of automation.
- South Indian Bank is a private sector bank. It is headquartered in Thrissur, Kerala. Chairman - Mr. Salim Gangadharan

31. According To **SBI Research report On Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)** Which State Has Emerged As The Biggest beneficiary among states ?

A. Maharashtra

B. Gujarat

C. Himachal Pradesh

D. Uttar Pradesh

Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) launched by the government in 2020 to provide relief to MSMEs impacted by COVID-19 pandemic has saved 13.5 lakh firms from going bankrupt and consequently 1.5 crore jobs

□ According To The Report amongst the states, Gujarat has been the biggest beneficiary, followed by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

□ Under the scheme, 100 per cent guarantee coverage is being provided by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC) for additional funding of up to Rs 4.5 lakh crore to eligible MSMEs

## ECLGS stopped 14% of loans from slipping into NPA, says SBI report

ARUP ROYCHOUDHURY  
New Delhi, 6 January

The Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME), one of the government's key planks in reviving economic activity, has prevented 1.35 million MSME accounts from going under, according to a report by State Bank of India released on Thursday.

The scheme has saved around 15 million jobs and stopped 14 per cent of outstanding MSME loans from turning into non-performing assets (NPAs), said the report authored by SBI's Chief Economic Advisor Soumya Kanti Ghosh.

Since the launch of the scheme by Finance Minister

Nirmala Sitharaman in May 2020, MSME loan accounts worth ₹1.8 trillion in absolute terms were saved from slipping into NPAs.

"According to our analysis, if these units had turned non-performing, then 15 million workers would have become unemployed. In effect, the scheme saved the livelihood for 60 million families (assuming four family members per worker including herself)," said the report.

The report stated that of the 1.35 million MSMEs accounts that were saved due to scheme, almost 93.7 per cent are in the micro and small category.

According to SBI's analysis,

the trading sector, including small kirana shops, has benefited the most followed by food processing, textiles and commercial real estate.

"Amongst the states, Gujarat has been the biggest beneficiary, followed by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh," he said.

Ghosh said an older scheme, the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises, should be revamped using the best practices from ECLGS, its scope and role should be expanded, and it should be administered on the line of the US Small Business Administration.

For his research on the

impact of ECLGS, Ghosh told *Business Standard* that his team analysed the Special Mention Account (SMA) data for the banking system based on trends in SBI portfolio to quantify the benefits derived from ECLGS in terms of asset quality.

"We applied a simple yet appropriate methodology in which we considered all such accounts whose status improved or remained in the same category in Nov 2021 as compared to September 2020," he said.

Ghosh said the results were 'startling' going by the positive ramifications on multiple pivots, encouraging exploring feasibility of similar structure to provide holistic support to MSME sector in anchoring the economy.

**Of the 1.35 mn MSME accounts saved due to scheme, 93.7% are in the micro and small category**

Weekly Optimum CA Q&A PDF -Based on Recent Exam Trend  
First Week of January (1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022)

32. Which of the following has announced the launch of a campaign #BhahaneChoddoTaxBachao to increase awareness of Indians around the need to buy health insurance to save tax in January 2022?

- A. Reliance General Insurance
- B. HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company
- C. SBI General Insurance**
- D. Bajaj Allianz General Insurance

SBI General Insurance has announced the launch of a campaign to increase awareness of Indians around the need to buy health insurance to save tax.

- The campaign #BahaneChhodoTaxBachao will also underline other benefits of opting for health insurance.
- SBI General Insurance Hq - Mumbai Mr. Dinesh Kumar Khara is the Chairman of State Bank of India.

33. Reliance Retail has bought How Much Percent Stake in Dunzo, India's leading quick commerce player, for USD 200 million (around Rs 1,488 crore) as it looks to expand its presence in online grocery delivery business ?

- A. 25.8**
- B. 15.6
- C. 40.88
- D. 51

Reliance Retail has bought a 25.8 per cent stake in Dunzo, India's leading quick commerce player, for USD 200 million (around Rs 1,488 crore)

- The capital will be used to further Dunzo's vision to be the largest quick commerce business in the country, enabling instant delivery of essentials
- Dunzo launched its instant delivery model 'Dunzo Daily' in Bengaluru earlier this year, seeing over 20 per cent week on week growth.

### RIL's retail unit buys \$200 mn stake in Dunzo

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Dunzo, a quick commerce player, said it had raised \$240 million, including \$200 million from Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd., in its latest round of funding to expand into new geographies.

Reliance Retail will own 25.8% stake (on a fully diluted basis) in Dunzo, following its investment.

The capital will aid Dunzo's plans to enable instant delivery of essentials from a network of micro warehouses while also expanding its B2B business vertical to enable logistics for local merchants in Indian cities, it said in a statement.

In addition to the funding, both entities would also enter into certain business partnerships.

Weekly Optimum CA Q&A PDF -Based on Recent Exam Trend  
First Week of January (1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022)

34. Recently In January Which Has Become **First telecom player Tied Up With NPCI National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) For UPI AUTOPAY for the telecom industry ?**

A. VI

B. Jio

C. Airtel

D. BSNL

Jio users can now set standing instructions for auto-debit for their tariff plans through UPI after a tie-up between the telecom player and NPCI.

□ National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and Jio in a joint announcement Said That UPI AUTOPAY has now been introduced for the telecom industry with Jio.

□ Jio's integration with UPI AUTOPAY has made it the first player in the telecom industry to go live with the unique e-mandate feature that was launched by NPCI

35. Which Of The Following Payment Bank announced a collaboration with **Park+ to offer FASTag-based smart parking solutions to marquee commercial and residential properties across the country ?**

A. Jio Payment Bank

B. Airtel Payment Bank

C. Fino Payment Bank

D. India post Payment Bank

### Airtel Payments Bank, Park+ tie up to offer FASTag-based smart parking solutions

AIRTEL PAYMENTS BANK on Thursday announced a collaboration with Park+ to offer FASTag-based smart parking solutions to marquee commercial and residential properties across the country.

The partnership aims to leverage the distribution reach and digital payments stack of Airtel Payments Bank to digitize the parking ecosystem using FASTag associated with the vehicle, the com-

pany said.

Park+ operates in the area of automating parking spaces through FASTag and the majority of parking FASTag transactions in India are currently being processed through Park+ systems.

Park+ will offer its full suite of FASTag services including issuance, acquiring, recharge, and technology support to Airtel Payments Bank.

Airtel Payments Bank on Thursday announced a collaboration with Park+ to offer FASTag-based smart parking solutions to marquee commercial and residential properties across the country.

□ Backed by Sequoia Capital and Matrix Partners, Park+ is engaged in automating parking spaces through FASTag. □ The collaboration aims to leverage the deep distribution reach and digital payments stack of Airtel Payments Bank to digitize the parking ecosystem using FASTag associated with the vehicle.

□ The service is already operational at a South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) parking site, and will soon be made available at Aurangabad Airport and 32nd Avenue (32nd Milestone) in Gurugram

**36. Recently In January According To RBI Data Foreign Owned Assets In India Has Increased By How Much Billion In September Quarter And Stood Up At \$ 1258.9 Billion ?**

- A. \$37.3 Bn**
- B. \$31.9 Bn**
- C. \$42.6 Bn**
- D. \$51.6 Bn**

## Foreign-owned assets in India rose by \$37 bn in Q2: RBI data

‘Indian residents’ overseas financial assets rose \$31.9 billion’

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
MUMBAI

Foreign-owned assets in India increased by \$37.3 billion during the July-September quarter (Q2), according to RBI data.

Indian residents’ overseas financial assets rose \$31.9 billion, almost three-fourths of which came from build-up in reserve assets. This partly reflects the allocation of special drawing rights (SDRs) by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in August 2021, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said.

The regulator on Friday released data relating to India’s International Investment Position (IIP) at end-September 2021.

The International Monetary Fund describes a na-



tion’s IIP as showing the value of financial assets of residents of an economy that are claims on non-residents, or are gold bullion held as reserve assets; and of the liabilities of residents to non-residents.

Reserve assets accounted for 68.5% of India’s international financial assets in September 2021. The share of

**Reserve assets accounted for 68.5% of India’s international financial assets in September**

debt liabilities in total liabilities increased marginally to 47.8%. The ratio of international assets to international liabilities improved to 73.6% from 70.4% a year earlier. Net claims of non-residents on India increased by \$5.4 billion during July-September 2021.

**‘HFC applies for licence’** Separately, the RBI also said that West End Housing Finance Ltd. had applied for ‘on tap’ licence to set up a Small Finance Bank in the private sector.

Foreign-owned assets in India increased by USD 37.3 billion in the September quarter while Indian residents’ overseas financial assets rose by USD 31.9 billion during the same period, RBI data showed on Friday. According to India’s International Investment Position (IIP), the liabilities stood at USD 1,258.9 billion during the July-September quarter as compared to USD 1,221.6 billion at June-end 2021.

**The assets stood at USD 927.1 billion at September-end, up from USD 895.2 billion in June quarter**

**37. Recently In January Reserve Bank Of India Has Increased The Threshold Limit For Banks To Maintain Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) From Non Financial Small Business Customers From Rs 5 Cr To What Amount ?**

- A. Rs 10 Cr
- B. Rs 7.5 Cr**
- C. Rs 6 Cr
- D. Rs 7 Cr

#### LIQUIDITY COVERAGE RATIO FOR BANKS

## RBI ups limit on funds from non-financial small biz

OUR BUREAU

Mumbai, January 6

The Reserve Bank of India has upped the threshold limit for banks to maintain Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) on deposits and other extension of funds received from non-financial small business customers from ₹5 crore to ₹7.5 crore.

So, henceforth, all commercial banks (other than regional rural banks, local area banks and payments banks) will be required to maintain LCR if they receive deposits of ₹7.5 crore and above from non-financial small business customers against ₹5 crore earlier.

#### High quality liquid assets

LCR promotes short-term resilience of banks to potential liquidity disruptions by ensuring that they have sufficient high quality liquid assets (HQLAs) to survive an acute stress scenario lasting for 30 days. Banks are required to hold a stock of HQLA

at least as large as the expected total net cash outflows over the stress period.

The central bank said this upward revision in the threshold better aligns its guidelines with the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS) standard and enable banks to manage liquidity risk more effectively.

So, to extent of the upward revision in the threshold, banks may be able to lend instead of parking in HQLAs.

HQLAs include cash, including cash reserves in excess of required cash reserve ratio, and government securities (G-Secs) in excess of the minimum statutory liquidity ratio requirement.

Further, such assets will also include, within the mandatory SLR requirement, G-Secs to the extent allowed by RBI under Marginal Standing Facility; marketable securities issued or guaranteed by foreign sovereigns.



□ The Reserve Bank of India has upped the threshold limit for Banks to maintain Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) on deposits and other extension of funds received from non-financial small business customers from ₹5 crore to ₹7.5 crore

□ LCR promotes short-term resilience of banks to potential liquidity disruptions by ensuring that they have sufficient high quality liquid assets (HQLAs) to survive an acute stress scenario lasting for 30 days.

□ Banks are required hold a stock of HQLA at least as large as the expected total net cash outflows over the stress period



38. Mukesh Ambani-owned Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has **raised largest ever foreign currency bond issuance** Amounting To What long-term debt through US dollar (unsecured) bonds in three tranches to refinance its existing debt ?

- a. \$6 billion
- b. \$4 billion**
- c. \$5 billion
- d. \$2 billion

## Reliance raises \$4 bn in foreign currency bonds

'Largest issuance by an Indian firm'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) said it has raised \$4 billion in long-term debt of up to 40 years through the largest-ever foreign currency bond issuance by an Indian company.

The company plans to use the proceeds of the Senior Unsecured Notes across 10, 30 and 40-year tranches for refinancing of existing borrowings.

The bonds, due for maturity in 2032, are priced at 2.875%, while those due in 2052 and 2062 were priced at 3.625% and 3.750%, respectively.

RIL said the issue was oversubscribed almost three times.

"The notes have been



priced at 120 basis points (bps), 160 bps and 170 bps over the respective U.S. Treasuries benchmark," it said in a statement.

"RIL has joined a select group of issuers from Asia to have made jumbo bond issuances," the company said adding "this is the largest ever foreign currency bond issuance from India and first ever 40-year tranche by a BBB private sector corporate from Asia ex-Japan," it said.

Reliance Industries Ltd announced that it has raised \$4 billion in US dollar bond issuance in three-tranches. It has been the largest ever foreign currency bond issuance from India

- The conglomerate raised \$1.5 billion in a 10-year tranche, \$1.75 billion in a 30-year and \$750 million in a 40-year deal.

39. According To **IHS Markit Report** : India is likely to overtake Japan as Asia's second-largest economy by Which Of The Following Year ?

- A. 2025
- B. 2030**
- C. 2040
- D. 2027

India is likely to overtake Japan as Asia's second-largest economy by 2030 when its GDP is also projected to surpass that of Germany and the UK to rank as world's No 3

- Currently, Indian economy is the sixth-largest in the world, behind the US, China, Japan, Germany and the United Kingdom.
- India's nominal GDP measured in USD terms is forecast to rise from \$2.7 trillion in 2021 to \$8.4 trillion by 2030

## India to be Asia's 2nd largest economy by 2030: IHS

PTI  
feedback@livemint.com

India is likely to overtake Japan as Asia's second-largest economy by 2030 when its gross domestic product (GDP) is also projected to surpass that of Germany and the UK to rank as the world's No. 3, IHS Markit said on Friday.

Currently, India is the sixth-largest economy in the world, behind the US, China, Japan, Germany and the UK.

"India's nominal GDP measured in USD terms is forecast to rise from \$2.7 trillion in 2021 to \$8.4 trillion by 2030," IHS

Markit said. "This rapid pace of economic expansion would result in the size of Indian GDP exceeding Japanese GDP by 2030, making India the second-largest economy in the Asia-Pacific region."

By 2030, the Indian economy would also be larger in size than the largest Western European economies of Germany, France and the UK, it said.

"Overall, India is expected to continue to be one of the

world's fastest-growing economies over the next decade," IHS Markit said.

The long-term outlook for the Indian economy is supported by a number of key growth drivers.

"An important positive factor for India is its large and fast-growing middle class, which is helping

to drive consumer spending," IHS Markit said, forecasting that the country's consumption expenditure will double

from \$1.5 trillion in 2020 to \$3 trillion by 2030.

For the full FY22, India's real GDP growth rate is projected to be 8.2%, rebounding from the severe contraction of 7.3% year-on-year in FY21, IHS Markit said.

The Indian economy is forecast to continue growing strongly in FY23 at a pace of 6.7%.

The rapidly growing domestic consumer market as well as its large industrial sector have made India an increasingly important investment destination for a wide range of multinationals, in

many sectors, including manufacturing, infrastructure and services.

The digital transformation of India that is currently underway is expected to accelerate the growth of e-commerce, changing the retail consumer market landscape over the next decade.

"This is attracting leading global multinationals in technology and e-commerce to the Indian market," according to the report. "By 2030, 1.1 billion Indians will have internet access, more than doubling from the estimated 500 million internet users in 2020."

40. As Per The Data released by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)** Indian economy is estimated to grow at What Percent in 2021-22 fiscal ?

- A. 8.9 %
- B. 9.2 %**
- C. 9.9 %
- D. 7.4 %

FIRST ADVANCE ESTIMATE

# FY22 GDP growth put at 9.2% as agri, manufacturing shine

Govt sees limited impact of the Covid third wave

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, January 7

The government on Friday estimated the economic growth for the 2021-22 fiscal year at 9.2 per cent, expecting limited impact of the third Covid wave on the economy. With this, the size of India's economy is expected to swell to \$3.2 trillion. Also, this estimate is the highest in nearly two decades.

Covid effect uncertainty

Releasing the First Advance Estimate for FY22, National Statistical Office said: "These are early projections for 2021-22. Actual performance of various indicators, actual tax collections and expenditure incurred on subsidies in the following months, fresh relief measures for the vulnerable sections (such as providing free foodgrains which has now been extended till March 2022) and other measures, if any, taken by the government to contain the spread of Covid-19 would have a bearing on subsequent revisions of these estimates."

The government number is, however, lower than the RBI estimate of 9.5 per cent, closer to India Ratings & Research revised forecast of 9.3 per cent, but higher than the projections by global and domestic agencies; some had put it under 9 per cent. Data show that the agriculture



Economic Growth (In %)

	GVA growth in 2021-22	
	Over 2020-21	Over 2019-20
Agriculture	3.9	7.66
Industry	11.82	4.04
Services	8.24	(-) 0.80
<b>GDP Growth</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
	9.2	(-)7.3
		4

sector continues to shine. Manufacturing and construction have shown good growth making an impact on the overall industrial scenario. The growth in agriculture and industry was higher than even in 2019-20 (FY20). The services sector has grown over FY21, but, overall, lags FY20.

Nominal growth up

According to DK Srivatsava, Chief Policy Advisor with EY, at 9.2 per cent growth, the magnitude of the 2021-22 real GDP, estimated at ₹145.7-lakh crore, would be only marginally above 2019-20's ₹145.7-lakh crore — a growth of 13 per cent over the pre-Covid GDP level. One positive feature of the GDP estimate is the nominal growth overtaking real growth by 8.4 percentage

points. This is mainly due to a high implicit price deflator (IPD)-based inflation of 7.7 per cent.

"The revival of the economy in 2022-23 would critically depend on containing the adverse impact of Covid's third and any subsequent waves to the minimum. Signals from the global economy indicate continued supply-side rigidities and a likely lowering of India's export growth due to the depressing effects of Covid's current surge," he said. Commenting on the GDP estimates, Swati Arora, Economist with HDFC Bank, said given that H1 FY22 (April-September) growth stood at 13.7 per cent (inflated by a low base from last year), the annual number estimates a growth of 5.6 per cent in

H2 (October-March) FY22.

Fiscal deficit cushion

"As the First Advance Estimate for FY22 GDP is extrapolated from past trends (data till November 2021), we see some upside for the Q3 FY22 figure and downside risk to Q4 FY22 growth due to the Omicron effect. Nominal GDP is estimated to expand by 17.6 per cent in FY22, higher than the 14.4 per cent assumed in Budget 2021-22. This is likely to provide a cushion of 30 bps to the fiscal deficit (as a percentage of GDP)," she said.

M Govind Rao, Chief Economic Adviser with Brickwork Ratings, said that an increase in the nominal GDP at 17.6 per cent provides additional expenditure space for the government. Per the nominal GDP estimates, the budgeted fiscal deficit for FY22 works out to 6.5 per cent of GDP. "Despite the shortfall in disinvestment proceeds and additional demand for supplementary grants, the fiscal deficit target of 6.8 per cent of GDP is likely to be achieved in FY22. The increase in nominal GDP also results in a substantial decline in the debt-to-GDP ratio, which is the focus of FRBM," he said.

The numbers in perspective

- Value of GDP at current prices takes the size of India's economy to over \$3 trillion
- GDP in October-March (H2) likely to be lower than April-September (H1)
- Economists expect Q3, Q4 GDP growth at 6-6.5 per cent and under 5 per cent respectively
- Expansion in nominal growth to help government keep fiscal deficit within Budget Estimate

covered Viewpoint | TCS board to | GDP 1

India's economy is expected to grow 9.2% in the current financial year, aided by the base effect of 7.3% contraction last year, according to the first advance estimates by the National Statistical Office (NSO)

□ The nominal gross domestic product (GDP) is forecast to rise 17.6% in the year against the budget estimate of 14.4% for the current year

Weekly Optimum CA Q&A PDF -Based on Recent Exam Trend  
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41. India's current account slipped into a deficit of **How Many Billion of GDP in the September quarter, According To the Reserve Bank ?**

- A. USD 7.6 billion or 2.8 per cent
- B. USD 4.8 billion or 7.4 per cent
- C. USD 9.6 billion or 1.3 per cent**
- D. USD 8.6 billion or 9.3 per cent

India's current account slipped into a deficit of USD 9.6 billion or 1.3 per cent of GDP in the September quarter, the Reserve Bank said on Friday.

The current account, which records the value of exports and imports of both goods and services along with international transfers of capital, was in a surplus mode both in the quarter-ago and year-ago periods.

India's current account surplus had stood at USD 6.6 billion or 0.9 per cent of GDP in the April-June 2021 quarter. For the reporting quarter, the deficit was mainly due to widening of trade deficit to USD 44.4 billion from USD 30.7 billion in the preceding quarter, and an increase in net outgo of investment income, the RBI said.

42. Union government has reported **fiscal deficit for April-November 2021 at How Much Percent of the Budget Estimate ?**

- a. 40%
- b. 42%
- c. 46%**
- d. 49%

Union government has reported a fiscal deficit for April-November 2021 at 46% of the Budget Estimate.

This is lower than over 135% fiscal deficit recorded during corresponding period of last fiscal.

Fiscal deficit for April-November period is the lowest in 24 years as a percentage of Budget Estimate. According to Chief Economist with India Ratings & Research (Ind-Ra), overall deficit is estimated to be 20 basis points lower than Budget target of 6.8%. According to data by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA), the tax collections had reached 73.5% of BE in the eight-month period. Non-tax revenue had reached around 92%.

## Fiscal deficit narrowed in April-Nov.

REUTERS  
NEW DELHI

India's federal fiscal deficit in April-November, the first eight months of current fiscal year, narrowed to 46.2% of the full-year budgeted target, helped by a rise in tax collections, government data showed on Friday.

The fiscal deficit had surged to 135.1% of the full-year target during the same period last fiscal year.

The fiscal deficit for eight months ended November 2021 stood at ₹6.96 trillion compared with the ₹15.07-trillion target for the whole fiscal year, the data showed.

In April-November, net tax receipts were ₹11.35 trillion while total expenditure was ₹20.75 trillion, the data released by the government showed.

## NTPC eyes 5% in Power Exchange

New Delhi: State-run power giant NTPC is looking at acquiring a 5% equity stake in Power Exchange of India (PXIL) that provides various electricity trading options, a senior official said.

PXIL is India's first institutionally promoted power exchange, which has been providing various electricity trading solutions and connecting buyers as well sellers since 2008. A senior official said that NTPC has plans "to buy up to 5% equity stake in PXIL. This decision has been taken in view of the government's intention to increase the share market to 25% of total electricity supply in India by 2023-24". The official explained that NTPC cannot buy more than 5% as it could also be a seller or buyer on the trading platform. PTI

## Number of ATMs operated by SCBs up in 2020-21

The total number of automated teller machines (ATMs) (on-site and off-site) operated by scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) increased during 2020-21 for the second consecutive year after declining in 2018-19, according to the Reserve Bank of India's 'Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2020-21'. SCBs' ATMs increased to 2,13,575 as at March-end 2021 against 2,10,760 as at March-end 2020.



The number of public sector bank (PSB) ATMs, however, declined to 1,37,113 as at March-end 2021 against 1,38,546 as at March-end 2020 in their pursuit of greater cost efficiency by leveraging network externalities. Private sector banks' (PVBs) ATMs increased to 72,394 against 69,369. ATMs of small finance banks and foreign banks increased to 2,131 (1,926) and 1,825 (903), respectively.

## Private banks disburse more funds under ECLGS



Private sector banks (PVBs) showed greater proclivity than public sector banks (PSBs) in utilising the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS), covering a larger number of beneficiaries (micro, small, medium and other business enterprises), according to the Financial Stability Report (FSR). A bank group-wise break-up shows that, PVBs disbursed ₹1.06 lakh crore under ECLGS Guarantee, followed by ₹83,000 crore by PSBs, ₹31,000 crore by non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) and ₹5,000 crore by foreign banks (FBs). PVBs covered 68 lakh borrowers under ECLGS, followed by PSBs (21.6 lakh), NBFCs (12 lakh) and FBs (10,000).

**Appointments News**

1. Recently In January Central Government Has Formed A Pannel Tp Prepare Energy Transition Strategy . The Pannel Is To Be Headed By Which Of The Follwoing ?

- A. Tarun Kapoor
- B. M Vasudevan
- C. Namita Gokhle
- D. Jaynati Krishnann



**Panel Formed to Prepare Energy Transition Strategy**  
 Roadmap has to be presented by mid-2022

**Urmi A Goswami & Sanjeev Choudhary**

**New Delhi:** The government is planning to draw up an energy transition roadmap for the oil and gas sector that could prove to be a key step on India's path to net-zero emissions by 2070. The oil ministry has set up the Energy Transition Advisory Committee headed by former petroleum secretary Tarun Kapoor, who demitted office in November, to draft the strategy.

**FOR GREENER FUTURE**  
 Ex-petroleum secy Tarun Kapoor is leading the energy transition panel

**Senior execs from all oil & gas PSUs are on the panel**

**It will focus on ways to increase share of alternative fuel sources such as biofuels, green hydrogen, solar, geothermal, nuclear, tidal in the country's energy mix**

The panel will include representatives of all public-sector oil and gas companies and will reach out to other stakeholders in the sector. The committee has until the middle of 2022 to recommend a roadmap for the sector's transition.

**'Oil Cos Already Preparing Plans' >> 12**

The oil ministry has set up the Energy Transition Advisory Committee headed by former petroleum secretary Tarun Kapoor

- The government is planning to draw up an energy transition roadmap for the oil and gas sector that could prove to be a key step on India's path to net-zero emissions by 2070.
  - The panel will include representatives of all public-sector oil and gas companies and will reach out to other stakeholders in the sector
  - The committee will focus on value chain development for green hydrogen infrastructure.**
- The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas - Hardeep Singh Puri**

2. Recently In January Who Has Been Appointed As The **New Chairman And CEO Of The Railway Board ?**

- A. **Vinay Kuamr Tripathi**
- B. Suneet Sharma
- C. Madhbhai Puri Bach
- D. MS Sahoo

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Vinay Kumar Tripathi, General Manager, North Eastern Railway to the post of Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Railway Board, New Delhi

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved a six-month extension, that is, upto December 2022

He Replaced Suneet Sharma

## VK Tripathi appointed chairman, CEO of rly board

VINAY KUMAR TRIPATHI has been appointed as chairman and chief executive officer (CEO) of the Railway Board, according to a statement.

His appointment has been approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC). He is currently general manager, North Eastern Railway, the statement issued by the railway ministry said.

Tripathi did his B.Tech (Electrical Engineering) from Roorkee and joined Railways through the Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers batch of 1983. His first posting was as an assistant electrical engineer for Northern Railway.

He will replace Suneet Sharma, a 1982 batch IRSME officer.

— PTI

3. Who has been appointed as **Executive Director of Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) on 31 Dec 2021?**

- A. Satish Ray
- B. Sunit Kumar
- C. Mukul Sharma
- D. **Asheesh Pandey**

## Asheesh Pandey appointed ED of Bank of Maharashtra

Asheesh Pandey has joined Bank of Maharashtra as its executive director. Prior to joining the Pune-based public sector bank, Pandey was the chief general manager and chief operations officer at Union Bank of India. He has handled a diversified portfolio, ranging from credit, credit monitoring, treasury, merchant banking, foreign transactions and joint ventures. Pandey is a mechanical engineer with a Post Graduation in Management (Finance & Marketing). He is a certified associate of Indian Institute of Bankers.

PTI

State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) on Friday said that Asheesh Pandey has joined as an executive director.

Prior to joining BoM, Pandey was chief general manager and chief operations officer (COO) at Union Bank of India and has a progressive professional career spanning more than 24 year

**Bank Of MAHARASTRA Estd 1935 ,Hq PuNE Maharashtra Tagline One Family One Bank**

4. Recently In January Indian Council Of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Has Appointed A National Level Committie On Preparation Of Syllabus For Natural Farming Headed by Which Of The Following ?

- A. MS Sahoo
- B. Praveen Rao
- C. Ranveer Singh
- D. N ravishankar

## 8-member panel to prepare syllabus for natural farming

Praveen Rao to head ICAR panel

### OUR BUREAU

Hyderabad, December 31

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has appointed a national-level committee, headed by Praveen Rao, Vice-Chancellor of Prof. Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU).

The eight-member committee will hold discussions with stakeholders and prepare a syllabus for students of Under Graduate and Post Graduate students in various agricultural colleges and universities.

### Committee members

The committee also comprises E Somasundaram, professor of agronomy at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU); S K Sharma (Director - Research at



Praveen Rao, Vice-Chancellor, PJTSAU

Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture and Technology); Ranveer Singh (Indian Veterinary Research Institute); and N Ravishankar, Principal Scientist (Indian Institute of Farming Systems Research).

The ICAR has decided to equip the students with knowledge and skills required to promote natural farming. This decision came close on the heels of Prime Minister Narendra Modi advocating for chemical-free farming.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has appointed a national-level committee, headed by Praveen Rao, Vice-Chancellor of Prof. Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU)

- The eight-member committee will hold discussions with stakeholders and prepare a syllabus for students of Under Graduate and Post Graduate students in various agricultural colleges and universities
- The ICAR has its headquarters at New Delhi. The Council is the apex body for co-ordinating in agriculture including horticulture, in the entire country.



**Weekly Optimum CA Q&A PDF -Based on Recent Exam Trend**  
**First Week of January (1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022)**

5. Who has taken over as the **24th Chief of Indian Coast Guard on 31 December 2021?**

- A. Rajendra Rathore
- B. Krishnaswamy Natarajan
- C. Tanmay Tripathi
- D. VS Pathania**

Director General VS Pathania took over as the 24th Chief of the Indian Coast Guard

- Indian Coast Guard is an armed force that protects India's maritime interests and enforces maritime law
- It was formally established in 1978 by the Coast Guard Act, 1978 as an independent Armed force of India
  - HQ - New Delhi

**IN BRIEF**



**V.S. Pathania takes over as Coast Guard chief**

NEW DELHI

V.S. Pathania took over as the 24th Director General (DG) of the Indian Coast Guard on December 31 from Krishnaswamy Natarajan who retired from service. "The Flag Officer is an alumni of the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, and the National Defence College, New Delhi. He is a qualified helicopter pilot and holds a Master's degree in defence and strategic studies from the University of Madras," the Coast Guard said in a statement. He has undergone specialisation in search and rescue and port operations with U.S. Coast Guard, it said.

6. Recently In January Who Has Become **Bihar's first chief secretary belonging to the minority community ?**

- A. Tarakishor Prashad
- B. Tripurari Sharan
- C. Amir Subhani**
- D. Shanwaz Hussain

Chief minister Nitish Kumar appointed 1987-batch IAS officer Amir Subhani as the chief secretary of Bihar. He will replace Tripurari Sharan,

- He is Bihar's first chief secretary belonging to the minority community.
  - Subhani's batch-mate Atul Prasad has been made development commissioner, the post held earlier by Subhani

7. Consider The Following Statement Regarding The Newly Set Up Task Forces To Explore 6G Tech Innovations

1. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) Thursday formed as many as six academia-driven task forces under the Technology Innovation Group (TIG) on sixth-generation or 6G technology,
2. Last Month the government formed a 22-member innovation group headed by K Rajaraman, telecom secretary to create a vision for the 6G roadmap development in the country.

Which Of The Following Statement Is Correct ?

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 And 2
- D. None Of The Above

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) Thursday formed as many as six academia-driven task forces under the Technology Innovation Group (TIG) on sixth-generation or 6G technology

- The new task groups are headed by ,
- Bhaskar Ramamurthy - Group for multi platform for next generation networks
- Abhay Karandikar - Group for spectrum policy
- Bharadwaj Amrutur - Group for multi-disciplinary innovative solutions
- Kiran Kumar Kuchi - Group for Devices
- Ashok Kumar Tiwari - Group for financing research and development
- NG Subramaniam - Group for task force on international standards
- Last month, the government formed a 22-member innovation group headed by K Rajaraman, telecom secretary to create a vision for the 6G roadmap development in the country.

## Centre sets up task forces to explore 6G tech innovations

AYUSHI KAR

Mumbai, December 31

The government has set up multiple task forces to explore technological innovations and various commercial use cases for 6G. These task forces consist of multiple members of academia, government and the industry.

Under the 6G Technology Innovation Group, set up by the Department of Telecommunications, these task forces will be constituted to provide inputs.

The task forces include members from IITs, IISc, Ministry of Electronics Information and Technology, Department of Science and Technology, Defence, as well as prominent industry players including Qualcomm, Samsung, Ericsson, Infosys, and COAI to name a few.

### 4 task forces

The government will be setting up four task forces, the first for Multiplatform Next Generation Networks, chaired by Professor Bhaskar Ramamurthi, Director of IIT Madras. He was also a major contributor to the development of indigenous 5G standard, 5Gi. There will also be a Spectrum Policy task force headed by Professor Abhay Karandikar. The remaining task forces will look at 6G-enabled solutions along with devices.

These task forces have to contribute to a White Paper on 6G, regarding the mission, objective and structure on the next gen technology.

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8. Recently In January **Abdalla Hamdok** resigned as Prime Minister of which nation on January 2, 2022?

- A. Egypt
- B. Tanzania
- C. Sudan**
- D. Yemen

## Sudan PM Abdalla Hamdok resigns amid political crisis

Sudan's Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok announced his resignation Sunday amid a political deadlock and widespread pro-democracy protests following a military coup that derailed the country's fragile transition to democratic rule. Hamdok had been reinstated as PM in November as part of an agreement with the military following the October coup. In that time he had failed to name a Cabinet and his resignation throws Sudan into political uncertainty.

AP

Prime Minister of Sudan Abdalla Hamdok resigned on January 2, 2022, more than two months after a coup as well as another deadly crackdown on the protestors, with the military now firmly in control. Sudan PM Hamdok has also failed to name a government as the protests in the country continued against the military takeover in October 2021. Hamdok's resignation came six weeks after returning to his post in a deal with the military which stated that his reinstatement could save a transition of Sudan towards democracy.

its capital is Khartoum Currency Pound

9. Recently In January Who took over as the **new Director General for the National Mission for Clean Ganga, Ministry of Jal Shakti** ?

- A. Tanushree Poddar
- B. Swapnil Pandey
- C. G Asok Kumar**
- D. VS Pathania

Shri G Asok Kumar, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Jal Shakti took over as the new Director General for the National Mission for Clean Ganga, Ministry of Jal Shakti.

- **National Mission for Clean Ganga(NMCG)** was registered as a society on 12th August 2011 under the Societies Registration Act 1860
- **NMCG Is Launched To maintain minimum ecological flows in the river Yamuna** with the aim of ensuring water quality and environmentally sustainable development

10. Recently In January Who Has Been Appointed As The **First Woman To Head The Energy Major ONGC (Oil And Natural Gas)**

- A. Alka Mittal
- B. Soma Mondal
- C. Falguni Nayar
- D. Shobha Srimatri

# Alka Mittal first woman to head oil giant ONGC

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Alka Mittal has become the first woman to head India's largest exploration and production company, ONGC, and the second woman in the country to helm an oil company after Nishi Vasudeva, who had made history in March 2014 after taking over the reins of oil refiner-fuel retailer Hindustan Petroleum.

DoPT on Monday appointed Mittal to the post, 72 hours after it fell vacant when Subhash Kumar, who held the charge since February 2021 in addition to his regular job as director (finance), retired on December 31. Mittal, currently director (HR), has been appointed for six months, or till a regular chief is appointed. Yet, her ascent to the corner office in ONGC signifies

## GLOBAL PEERS

> **Alka Mittal:** First woman chairperson of ONGC (pic)



> **Vicki Hollub:** CEO, Occidental Petroleum, 1st woman chief of a US oil co

> **Linda Cook:** CEO, Premier Oil-Chrysaor Holding, largest oil producer of North Sea oil

> **Catherine Roe:** CEO, Tanzania-focused UK-listed Wentworth Resources

> **Mariana Gheorghe:** OMVPetrom of Austria, largest energy company in southern and eastern Europe

increasing diversity in the 'macho' oil and gas industry that is still one of the last bastions of male dominance.

▶ **On ONGC board, P16**

Alka Mittal has been appointed an interim chairman and managing director of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), the first woman to head the country's largest oil and gas producer.

- Mittal replaces Subhash Kumar, another interim head who retired after reaching superannuation age on December 31.
- Mittal, 59, is the first woman to head an oil and gas exploration and production company.
- Nishi Vasudeva was the first woman to head an oil company, when in 2014 she took over the reins of oil refiner and fuel marketing company Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL).

11. Recently In Jnauray Who Has Been Re-Appointed As The New Chairman Of Commission For Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) ?

- A. Alka Mittal
- B. Subhash Kumar
- C. **Vijay Paul Sharma**
- D. Vinay Kuamr Tripathi

The Centre has reappointed Vijay Paul Sharma as chairman of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) after he resigned in May last year at the end of his five-year term.

- The chairmanship of the CACP will be critical in the proposed committee on the minimum support price (MSP) and other reforms.
- The Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, established in 1965, In New Delhi is an apex advisory body under the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India. It's an expert body that recommends the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) by taking into consideration various factors

## Vijay Paul Sharma re-appointed as CACP chief

### OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, January 3

The Centre has re-appointed Vijay Paul Sharma as the chairman of Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) after he re-



linquished the post in May last year following completion of a five-year tenure.

Sharma, a professor at the Centre for Management in Agriculture in Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad was first appointed as CACP Chairman in June 2016.

He played a critical role in acceding to the government's decision of fixing the MSP at 50 per cent over the cost of production. The government-controlled body used to recommend the MSP based not only on inputs costs, but also by considering other factors such as global and domestic prices, acreage under crops, etc.

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**12. Recently In January Reserve Bank Of India Has Appointed Whom As Its Executive Director with effect from January 03, 2022.**

- A. Yogesh Dayal
- B. Ajay Kumar Choudhary
- C. Shantanu Gupta
- D. Both Deepak Kumar And Ajay Choudhary**



**RBI promotes Kumar, Choudhary as EDs**

MUMBAI  
 The Reserve Bank of India has elevated Deepak Kumar and Ajay Kumar Choudhary as Executive Directors (EDs) with effect from January 03. Previously, Dr. Kumar was heading the Department of Information Technology of RBI while Mr. Choudhary was the Chief General Manager-in-Charge, Department of Supervision.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday has appointed Dr. Deepak Kumar and Ajay Kumar Choudhary as executive directors with effect from January 3, 2022.

- Dr Kumar was heading the department of information technology of RBI. Dr Kumar has, over a span of three decades
- Kumar will look after the foreign exchange department, department of communication and Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation

**13. Recently In January Which Of The Following Has Been Appointed As President Of US India Business Council (USIBC) An Industry Body Of US Chamber Of Commerce ?**

- A. Alka Mittal
- B. Nishi Vasudevan
- C. Atul Keshap**
- D. Nisha Biswal

The US Chamber of Commerce said on Tuesday ambassador Atul Keshap was being appointed as president of the US-India Business Council (USIBC) effective from January 5 Nisha Biswal, a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, and Ambassador Keshap's predecessor as President of USIBC, will remain deeply involved with the organization as the U.S.

- The U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) represents top global companies operating across the United States, India, and the Indo-Pacific

**Diplomat Keshap to helm U.S.-India industry body**

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

The former Chargé d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, Atul Keshap, has been appointed president of the U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC), an industry body, according to a statement from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. He will replace Nisha Biswal, who has been appointed the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Senior Vice President of International Strategy and Global Initiatives and South Asia.



Atul Keshap

"With the two countries on the cusp of entering an

even more robust era in our strategic partnership, I feel privileged and honored to lead USIBC," Mr. Keshap said about his appointment.

Mr. Keshap was also previously the U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

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**14. Recently In January Who Was Named the *new Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the United Nations on January 4, 2022* ?**

- A. Gita Gopinath**
- B. Shikha Verma**
- C. TS Tirumurti**
- D. Ashok Kumar Choudhary**

India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, TS Tirumurti, was named the new Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the United Nations on January 4, 2022.

- India will chair the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Un Security Council in January 2022
  - In 2021, the country was asked to chair three important Committees of the United Nations Security Council. It includes the Counterterrorism Committee, Taliban Sanctions Committee, and the Libyan Sanctions Committee.
- The United Nations Security Council Counter-terrorism committee was formed in September 2001 soon after the attack of 9/11 in New York. India had chaired the committee in the UN Security Council in 2011-2012

**15. Who of the following is not a member of the *committee set up by Ministry of Home Affairs to enquire into security lapses during PM Modi's Punjab visit*?**

- A. Sudhir Kumar Saxena**
- B. D. S. Sharma**
- C. Balbir Singh**
- D. S. Suresh**

Ministry of Home Affairs has set up a three-member committee to enquire into security lapses during PM Modi's Punjab visit.

- The committee has three members. It will be led by Sudhir Kumar Saxena, Secretary (Security), Cabinet Secretariat.
- The committee includes Balbir Singh, Joint Director, Intelligence Bureau (IB) and S. Suresh, Inspector General (IG), Special Protection Group (SPG) as members.
- Special Protection Group (SPG) : It provides proximate security to the Prime Minister of India, former Prime Minister and their immediate family members Arun Kumar Sinha is its current Director.

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16. Who has taken over as the **new secretary-general of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in January 2022?**

- A. Peng Sui
- B. Wang Yaping
- C. Zhang Ming**
- D. Zhou Chou

Zhang Ming, a senior Chinese diplomat, has been named as Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

- Zhang has taken over from Vladimir Norov, Uzbekistan's former Foreign Minister, on January 1, 2022 for a three-year term.
- The SCO was founded by the Presidents of Russia, China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan at a summit in Shanghai in 2001. It is the successor of Shanghai five.
- In 2017, India and Pakistan joined as permanent members of SCO.

17. Recently In January Who took over as the **Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Vistara airline?**

- A. Anil Deshmukh
- B. Vinay Kuamr Tripathi
- C. Vinod Kannan**
- D. Anil Subhasini

Vinod Kannan took over as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Vistara airline on Saturday, a statement said.

Kannan replaced Leslie Thng who was the CEO from July 16, 2017 to December 31, 2021. Vistara said Deepak Rajawat has been elevated to take up the role of Vistara's Chief Commercial Officer

Vistara, is a 51:49 joint venture between Tata Sons Private Limited and SIA. HQ – Gurgaon Haryana

## Vinod Kannan takes over as CEO at Vistara

VINOD KANNAN TOOK over as the chief executive officer (CEO) of Vistara airline on Saturday, a statement said.

Kannan replaced Leslie Thng who was the CEO from July 16, 2017 to December 31, 2021. In its statement, Vistara said Deepak Rajawat has been elevated to take up the role of Vistara's chief commercial officer from Saturday onwards.

"Kannan started his stint with Vistara as the Chief Strategy Officer in June 2019 and took over as Chief Commercial



Vistara CEO Vinod Kannan

Officer in January 2020 with responsibility for developing, executing, and sustaining Vistara's corporate strategy and ensuring the airline's commercial success," it mentioned.—PTI



18. Markets regulator SEBI it has Reconstituted an ad-visory committee On Market Data That Recommends Policy Measure Per Training Areas Of Securities Maarket .The Advisory Committie For Market Data Access And Privacy Is To BE Headed By Whom ?

- A. Madhbhai Puri Bach
- B. Harsh Bhanwalla
- C. MS Sahoo
- D. Ajay Kondikar

...one consecutive week of gain for the research analyst at L&F Securities, the pos- ...

## Sebi restructures market data advisory committee

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi, December 31

SEBI HAS RESTRUCTURED its advisory committee on market data that recom- mends policy measures per- taining to areas like securi- ties market data access and privacy. Rejigging its market data advisory committee, Sebi has said the panel will now be chaired by MS Sahoo, professor at National Law University, Delhi and former chair- person, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), as per the latest informa- tion with the regulator.

The 20-member committee was earlier headed by Madhabi Puri Buch, a former whole time member of Sebi.

Apart from Sahoo, the panel has CEOs of stock exchanges and depositories, rep- resentatives of various stakeholders and senior officials of Sebi as members.

The scope of the work of the com- mittee includes identifying segment- wise data perimeters, data needs and gaps, recom- mending data privacy and data access regulations applicable to market data. It is responsible for recom- mending appropriate policy for access to securi- ties market data. In addition, the com- mittee recommends standardization of data definitions; data identification logic (usage of uniform codes for iden- tifying and storing data - raw data and derived data) and data validation tech- niques (single source of truth, valida- tion).

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PRESS TR New Dell

SHARES ... any CMS ... a nearly 2 ... around 1 ... price. The ... 1.15% o ... jumped : ... ₹237.40, ... On th ... ₹220.20, ... at ₹238.2 ... The cc ... valuation ... In vol ... were trad ...



Sebi has restructured its advisory policy committee on market data that recommends policy measures pertaining to areas like securities market data access and privacy. Rejigging its market data advisory committee, Sebi has said the panel will now be chaired by S Sahoo, Professor at National Law University, Delhi and former chairperson, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), as per the latest information with the regulator.

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**Awards / Books / Sports**

1. Recently In January Who was posthumously awarded as the '**Journalist of the Year**' In ..... Edition Of **Redink Awards 2021** by the Mumbai Press Club ?

- A. Prem Shankar Jha , 9th
- B. Danish Siddiqui, 10th**
- C. Ishan Kukreti , 10th
- D. Varsha Tolgalkar , 11<sup>th</sup>

Senior journalist Prem Shankar Jha will get the lifetime achievement award,

- Reuters' photojournalist Danish Siddiqui, who died while reporting in Afghanistan will be bestowed upon the journalist of the year, posthumously.
- The RedInk Awards for Excellence in Indian Journalism will be presented by Chief Justice of India N V Ramana virtually
- Instituted by the Mumbai Press Club In 2011

2. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone of **first-of-its kind Sports Major Dhyan Chand Sports University** in Which City on January 2, 2022. With An estimated cost of around Rs 700 crore ?

- A. Lucknow
- B. Merut**
- C. Chandigarh
- D. Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today layed the foundation stone of Major Dhyan Chand Sports University in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut.

- The university is established at Salawa and Kaili villages of Sardhana town in Meerut at an estimated cost of about ₹700 Crore.
- Uttar Pradesh's Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

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3. Recently In January India Defeted Sri Lanka To Lift U-19 Asia Cup For The Record 8th Time . tHe Tournament Was Palyed In Which Of The Following Country ?

- A. Australia
- B. Bangladesh
- C. Dubai**
- D. Oman

## India wins U-19 Asia Cup title

Steamrollers Sri Lanka by nine wickets



**Champions:** India reaffirmed its supremacy with a record eighth title. •BCCI.TV

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
DUBAI

India reaffirmed its supremacy in the U-19 Asia Cup with a record eighth title as it hammered Sri Lanka by nine wickets in a rain-hit summit showdown here on Friday.

The Indian bowlers were all over Sri Lanka, which was gasping at 74 for seven in 33 overs, when heavy rain

lashed the Dubai International Cricket Stadium and stopped play for more than two hours.

It became a 38-over-a-side contest when play resumed with Sri Lanka limping to 106 for nine.

India was set a revised 102-run target in 38 overs via DLS method which it reached rather comfortably in 21.3 ov-

ers with opener Angkrish Raghuvanshi scoring an unbeaten 56 off 67 balls.

India's only loss in the competition came against Pakistan, which lost to Sri Lanka in the semifinals.

**The scores:** Sri Lanka 106/9 (Vicky Ostwal 3/11) lost to India 104/1 (Angkrish Raghuvanshi 56 n.o., Shaik Rasheed 31 n.o.) via DLS method.

India's U-19 team defeated Sri Lanka's U-19 team by nine wickets on Friday at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium to lift a record-extending eighth ACC U-19 Asia Cup

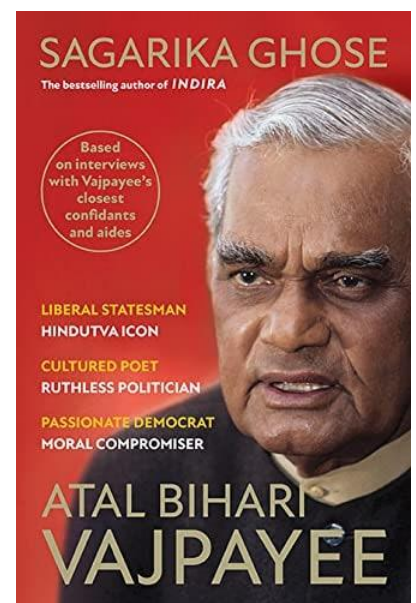
- Yash Dhull-led side ahead of the U-19
- Harnoor Singh was named man of the series. The 18-year-old, who is the opening batsman for the side, ended the series as the leading run-scorer

4. Who Is The Author Of The Book Titled “ Atal Vihari Bajpayee “ Released In December ?

- A. Shantanu gupta
- B. Sgarika Ghose**
- C. Sanju Verma
- D. Swapnil Pandey

A portrait of Atal Bihari Vajpayee that includes new insights and anecdotes from his closest confidants. Has Been Penned By Sagarika Ghosh

- This book tells the gripping story of how he achieved this ambition, becoming the first non-Congress prime minister to serve a full five-year term, paving the way for the BJP's political dominance.



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5. Who has become the first Indian athlete to qualify for two different events of the Winter Olympics 2022?

- A. Manpreet Singh
- B. Arif Mohammed Khan**
- C. Anchal Gupta
- D. Mairaj Ahmad Khan

Mohammad Arif Khan who hails from Jammu and Kashmir is the first and only Indian to win direct quota spots in two different Winter Olympics events

- He will compete in the Men's slalom and Men's giant slalom events at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, which begin February 4
- Beijing is the first to host both the Summer and Winter Olympics.

6. All-rounder Nicknamed *Mr Professor Mohammad Hafeez* has announced retirement from international cricket. He played for which nation's cricket team?

- A. Bangladesh
- B. Pakistan**
- C. England
- D. Afghanistan



### Ex-Pakistan captain Hafeez retires

LAHORE

Former Pakistan captain Mohammad Hafeez announced his retirement from international cricket on Monday, ending an 18-year career that included a 12-month ban from bowling because of a suspect action. The 41-year-old last played for his country at the Twenty20 World Cup in the United Arab Emirates in October-November last year when Pakistan lost in the semifinals to eventual champion Australia. AFP

Pakistan all-rounder Nicknamed Professro Mohammad Hafeez announced his retirement from international cricket on bringing the curtains down on an 18-year-long career

- Mohammad Hafeez, however, will continue to play franchise-based league cricket across the globe
- The 41-year-old had announced his retirement from Test cricket earlier in 2018

7. Who is The Author Of The Book Titled " *Mamta Beyond 2021* " ?

- A. Swapnil PANDEY
- B. Jayanta Ghoshal**
- C. Anirudh Suri
- D. Vivek Sagar

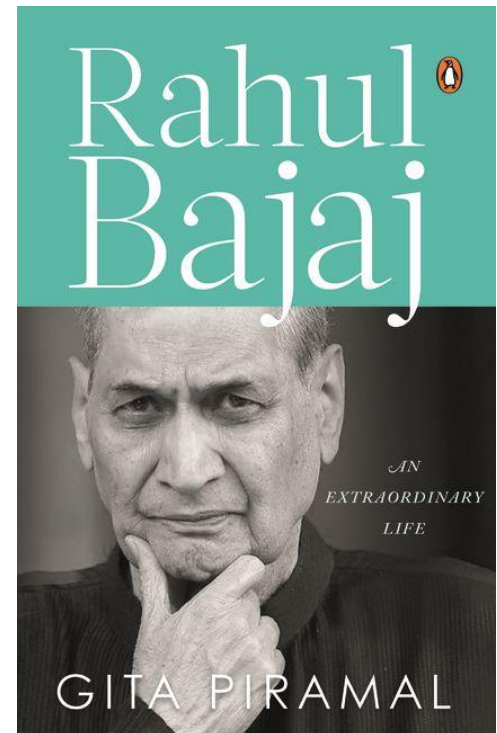


On the occasion of Mamata Banerjee's birthday HarperCollins announces the forthcoming release of *Mamata: Beyond 2021* by Jayanta Ghosal

- Publishing on 24 January 2022 In the West Bengal election of 2021, the longest state election in the history of India, Mamata Banerjee won the khela, and the BJP lost the plot

8. Who Is The Author Of The Book Titled " *Rahul Bajaj : An Extraordinary Life* " ?

- A. Swapnil Pandey
- B. Gita Piramal**
- C. Jyotshana Ghosh
- D. Dharendra k Jha



Rahul Bajaj is a billionaire businessman, the chairman emeritus of the Bajaj Group and a former member of Parliament

- This book is not just the story of Rahul Bajaj but the story of India.
- Based on unrestricted interviews, the book is full of anecdotes, business learnings and political asides. It is, at its core, a moving human story

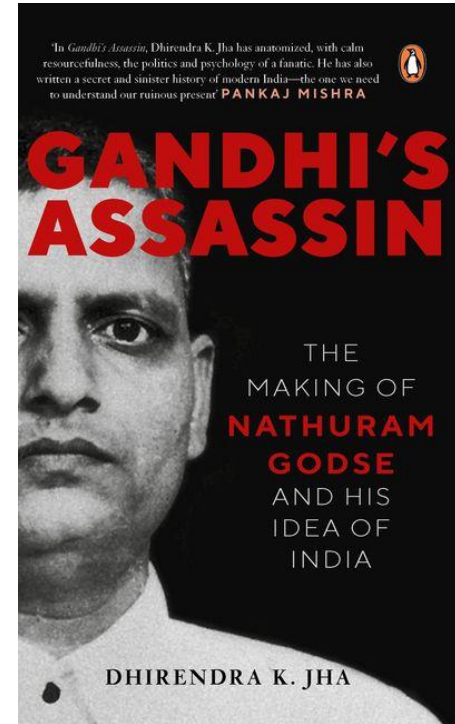
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9. Who Is The Author Of The Book Titled “*Gandhi's Assassin :The Making Of Nathuram Godse And Idea Of India* ?

- A. Swapnil Pandey
- B. Shantanu Gupta
- C. Shikha Sharma
- D. Dhirendra K Jha**

Gandhi's Assassin: The Making of Nathuram Godse and His Idea of India lays bare Godse's relationship with the RSS organizations that influenced his world view and gave him a sense of purpose

□ The book draws out the gradual hardening of Godse's resolve, and the fateful decisions and intrigue that eventually led to, in the chaotic aftermath of India's independence in 1947



10. Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports unveiled the Logo and Mascot of the *25th National Youth Festival* to be held in Which Of The Following Place from 12th -16th January 2022 ?

- A. Kerala
- B. Pondicherry**
- C. Goa
- D. Haryana

Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports unveiled the Logo and Mascot of the 25th National Youth Festival to be held in Puducherry from 12th -16th January 2022.

Shri Anurag Thakur also unveiled the tag-line of the National Youth Festival, Shiksham Yuva Shashakth Yuva meaning Capable Youth- Forceful Youth, Able Youth- Strong Youth. National Youth Festival is organized by the Government of India every year in collaboration with one of the States from January 12th to 16th to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda i.e. 12th January.

The basic objective of the NYF is to bring the youth of the country together in an attempt to showcase their talents in various activities

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11. Who Is The Author Of The First Authorized Biography Of Ratan Tata Titled "Ratan N Tata :The Authorized Biography ?

- A. Shantanu Gupta
- B. Thomas Matthew**
- C. Jayant Ghoshall
- D. Dibakar Banerjee

British publisher HarperCollins announced on Friday that it has acquired rights to publish the authorised biography of Tata Sons chairman emeritus Ratan Tata's.

- The book will be released in all formats in November this year.
- Titled Ratan N. Tata: The Authorized Biography, the book chronicles the life of one of India's biggest industrialists and philanthropists
- It is an authoritative biography with copious details about 84-years-old Ratan Tata's childhood, college years, and his early influences.



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**Days And Obituary**

1. *Global Family Day, also known as **World Peace Day**, is celebrated On Which Of The Following Day with the goal of starting the year off with a positive message of world peace and unity ?*

- A. 1<sup>st</sup> January**
- B. 31<sup>st</sup> December
- C. 2<sup>nd</sup> January
- D. 3<sup>rd</sup> January

Every year on 1st January, Global Family Day is commemorated.

Global Family Day, also known as World Peace Day, is celebrated with the goal of starting the year off with a positive message of world peace and unity. In the United States of America, this day is also observed as a global day of peace and sharing.

On January 1, 2000, it was the first time it was commemorated. In 2001, Global Families Day was declared an annual event by the United Nations

2. *Which day is celebrated as the foundation day of **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** every year?*

- A. 01 January**
- B. 27 December
- C. 31 December
- D. 2 January

64th foundation day of “Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)” was celebrated on January 1, 2022. In 63 years, DRDO has transformed the landscape of defence research and development in India.

DRDO also played a significant role in fighting against COVID-19 pandemic. It set up around 850 oxygen plants and Covid hospitals with the help from PM CARES Fund. It also developed a medicine named 2DG, to fight covid-19. **DRDO is the premier agency, working under the Department of Defence Research & Development in Ministry of Defence. The organisation is headquartered in Delhi. Current Secretary and Chairman of DRDO is Dr G Satheesh Reddy**



3. What Is The Name Of The **Famous Fossil Hunter** Who Passed Away Whose Discoveries Of Ancient Human Skulls And Skelton Helped Cement Africa's Place As Cradle Of Humanity ?

- A. Anthony Blinkins
- B. Richard Leakey**
- C. Matthew Rogers
- D. Jullie Bennet

### Richard Leakey, fossil hunter who helped cement Africa's standing as cradle of humanity, dies at 77

ALYSSALUKPAT & CHRISTINE CHUNG  
JANUARY 3

RICHARD LEAKEY, the Kenyan paleoanthropologist and fossil hunter whose discoveries of ancient human skulls and skeletons helped cement Africa's place as the cradle of humanity, died Sunday in Kenya. He was 77.

President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya announced Leakey's death in a statement, but did not specify the cause of death. Leakey died at his home outside Nairobi, said professor Lawrence Martin, director of Stony Brook University's Turkana Basin Institute, which Leakey founded.



Richard Leakey in 1997. Reuters

Leakey's parents, Louis and Mary Leakey, were towering figures in paleontology, but Leakey was determined to avoid his parents' field. He found work as a safari guide, but he eventually succumbed to fossil fever.

He might have changed his mind on a 1967 flight, when he looked down over the rocky shores of Lake Turkana in Kenya and had a feeling the area could yield a trove of fossils.

The fossils that Leakey and his "Hominid Gang" found there would change the world's understanding of human evolution.

One of his most celebrated finds came in 1984 when he helped unearth "Turkana Boy," a 1.6-million-year-old skeleton of a young male Homo erectus. The other was a skull called "1470," found in 1972, that extended the world's knowledge of the Homo erectus species several million years deeper into the past.

He wasn't just important for exploring new ground and finding fossils, said professor John Hawks, a paleoanthropologist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, but also for "creating an entire scientific, interdisciplinary infrastructure that enabled discoveries" and established a new model for scientific research.

Leakey parlayed his fossil hunter fame into a political career. Among his roles were Kenya's head of public service, the director of the National Museums of Kenya and the chair of the board for the Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenyatta said in his statement.

Leakey was also a passionate conservationist with a fiery personality. In 1989, he drew international attention when he took a stand against the ivory trade by helping to burn the country's stockpile of 12 tonnes of ivory. **NYT**

4. **World Braille Day** is celebrated every year on Which Of The Follwoing Day since 2019 ?

- A. 2<sup>nd</sup> January
- B. 3<sup>rd</sup> January
- C. 4<sup>th</sup> Janaury**
- D. 1<sup>st</sup> January

World Braille Day is celebrated every year on 4 January. It is being celebrated every year since 2019. It is celebrated to mark the birth anniversary of Louis Braille. It is observed to raise awareness about the importance of Braille as a means of communication for blind people. Braille is a tactile representation of alphabetic and numerical symbols with help of six dots. It can represent letter, numbers, mathematical and scientific symbols.

Braille is used by blind people or partially sighted people to read books and text printed in a visual font.

Braille was invented by Louis Braille in the 19th century

Weekly Optimum CA Q&A PDF -Based on Recent Exam Trend  
First Week of January (1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022)

5. *World Day for War Orphans* is observed every year on Which Of The Following Day ?

- A. 8 January
- B. 6 January**
- C. 9 January
- D. 10 January

World Day for War Orphans is observed every year on 6 January. It is celebrated to raise awareness about the children who have become orphaned due to wars

- The World Day of War Orphans was founded by a French Organisation SOS Enfants en Detresses to give the worldwide community an opportunity to address the difficulties faced by orphan children all over the world

**Science / Tech And Environment**

1. Recently In January Central Government Is Planning To Blend How Much Percnet Green Hydrogen With Piped Natural Gas ?

- A. 10 %
- B. 15 %**
- C. 20 %
- D. 12 %

The government is planning to blend 15 per cent green hydrogen with piped natural gas (PNG) for domestic commercial and industrial consumption

- The move is in line with India's ambitious targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and becoming carbon neutral by 2070.
- This initiative will be part of the government's National Hydrogen Energy Mission aimed at generating hydrogen from green power sources.
  - A mechanism will be created for hydrogen and it will be called hydrogen purchase obligation (HPO). The idea is to create demand for green hydrogen. HPO is likely to come from 2023

2. Which Of The Following Airport has been ranked eight for on-time performance among large international airports globally for 2021 by Cirium — a provider of aviation data to the travel, finance, aerospace and aviation industries ?

- A. Indira Gandhi International Airport
- B. Chennai International Airport**
- C. Khusinagar Airport
- D. Kaempgowda International Airport

Chennai Airport is ranked 8th in the global list for 'On Time Performance' among Large Airports in 2021 by 'Cirium', a top aviation analytics firm.

- Chennai Airport's On Time performance (OTP) data has been analysed for comparison in 'Large Airports' category for 2021 and is the only Indian airport listed in the Top 10. The on-time departures to 70 routes globally
- The top three are Miami Airport in the United States, Fukuoka Airport and Haneda Airport from Japan

2. *What Is The Name Of The Third 50Ton Bollard Pull Tugs Developed By M/s Hindustan Shipyard Ltd, Visakhapatnam at a cost of Rs. 260.70 Crores For Assisting assisting large naval ships ?*

- A. *Veeran*
- B. *Balram*
- C. *Balraj*
- D. *Vikrant*

A contract for construction of 50 Ton Bollard Pull Tugs was concluded with M/s Hindustan Shipyard Ltd in 2019 at the cost of Rs. 260.70 Crores.

- The third tug in the series “Balraj”, was delivered to Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam, on December 31, 2021.
  - These tugs have been designed and built under the classification rules of the Indian Register for Shipping with a service life of 20 years.
- Tugs “Veeran” and “Balram” have been inducted on 22 Oct 21 and 30 Oct 21 at Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam and Naval Dockyard, Mumbai respectively

3. The EU is Planned to label energy from nuclear power and natural gas as What sources for investment despite internal disagreement over whether they truly qualify as sustainable options ?

- A. Blue Sources
- B. Green Sources
- C. White Sources
- D. Grey Sources

The European Commission has labeled nuclear and gas as sustainable. Critics are calling the step "greenwashing" and say it could threaten the bloc's bid to become climate-neutral by 2050.

□ France, which derives about 70 percent of its electricity from nuclear plants, is — unsurprisingly — heading up the pro-nuclear fraction

□ European Union headquarters  
Brussels Belgium

□ European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen

## Nuclear, gas energy likely to receive 'green' tag in EU

### France and Austria are at loggerheads

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BRUSSELS

The EU is planning to label energy from nuclear power and natural gas as "green" sources for investment despite internal disagreement over whether they truly qualify as sustainable options.

The proposal, aims to support the 27-nation bloc's shift towards a carbon-neutral future and gild its credentials as a global standard-setter for fighting climate change.

But the fact the European Commission quietly distributed the text to member states late on Friday, in the final hours of 2021 after the much-delayed document had been twice promised

earlier in the year, highlighted the rocky road to draft it. If a majority of member states back it, it will become EU law, coming into effect from 2023.

#### Opposing views

France has led the charge for nuclear power – its main energy source – to be included, despite robust opposition from Austria and scepticism from Germany, which is in the process of shutting all its nuclear plants.

Fossil-reliant countries in the EU's east and south have also defended the use of natural gas, at least as a transitional source, even though it still produces significant greenhouse emissions.

**Weekly Optimum CA Q&A PDF -Based on Recent Exam Trend**  
**First Week of January (1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022)**

**5. Consider The Following Statement Regarding *Indian Navy's Milan Exercise* :**

1. *Indian Navy's multilateral Milan Exercise is scheduled to take place in February 2022. 46 navies are expected to participate in the Milan Exercise.*
  2. *The member countries of the QUAD (Japan, the US and Australia) and member nations of AUKUS (the UK, Australia & the US) will participate in the exercise this year.*
  3. *It began in 1995. It is held biennially. Till now, it has been held at Port Blair.*
- Which Of The Following Statement Is Correct ?**

- A. Only 1 And 3
- B. Only 1 And 2
- C. Only 2 And 3
- D. All Of The Above**

Indian Navy's multilateral Milan Exercise is scheduled to take place in February 2022 in Visakhapatnam (It has so far been held at Port Blair) □ The theme of this 11th edition of exercise Milan is camaraderie, cohesion and collaboration.

□ 46 navies are expected to participate in the Milan Exercise

□ member countries of the QUAD (Japan, the US and Australia) and member nations of AUKUS (the UK, Australia & the US) will participate in the exercise this year

**4. Recently In January Which Of The Following Company Has Made It To The List Of Bloomberg Most Valuable Paints Company In The World By Securing 2nd Postion ?**

- A. Kansai Paint
- B. White Jr
- C. Asian Paints**
- D. Sherwin Paints

Asian Paints has risen to become the world's second most valuable paints firm. The company's market capitalization increased by 22% to US\$ 43.7 billion at the end of December 31,

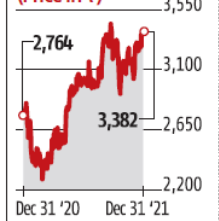
□ It now ranks 450th in the world in terms of m-caP

## Asian Paints second most valuable paints company in world

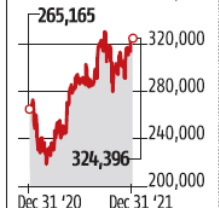
### TOP 15 GLOBAL PAINTS COMPANIES

Rank	Name	Market Cap (\$bn)
1	Sherwin-Williams Co/The	91.9
2	Asian Paints	43.4
3	PPG Industries Inc	40.6
4	Nippon Paint Holdings Co	25.8
5	RPM International Inc	13.0
6	Berger Paints India	9.9
7	Skshu Paint Co	7.9
8	Axalta Coating Systems	7.5
9	Kansai Paint Co	5.9
10	HB Fuller Co	4.2
11	Kansai Nerolac Paints	4.2
12	Avia Avian Tbk PT	4.0
13	Sunresin New Materials Co	3.3
14	KCC Corp	2.4
15	TOA Paint Thailand PCL	2.0

### ASIAN PAINTS (Price in ₹)



### M-cap (₹ cr)



7. Recently In Janaury **Mobile Brand Company BlacbeRRY** Has Completely Shut Down Its Mobile Business. Balckberry Is Market Company Of Which Of The Following Country ?

- A. USA
- B. Singapore
- C. Canada
- D. South Korea

Canadaian Firm BlackBerry shut down support for its devices, shut down its OS, email and messaging services and other assorted software.

□ BlackBerry is officially going to come to an end on January 4, 2022. The popular smartphone maker has sent out a support message to all those users still hanging on to their BlackBerry devices

### PULLING THE PLUG ON SERVICE

## BlackBerry buries business smartphone

Bengaluru: BlackBerry Ltd is pulling the plug on service for its once ubiquitous business smartphones, which were touted by executives, politicians and legions of fans in the early 2000s.

The move marks the end of an era as the phones, which sported a tiny QWERTY physical keyboard, pioneered push email and the BBM instant messaging service. BlackBerry lost favour with users with the advent of Apple's touchscreen iPhones and rival Android devices. In recent



BlackBerry phones Reuters file

years, the company pivoted to making cybersecurity software and embedded operating systems for cars. REUTERS

**IN BRIEF**

**World population surged 74 mn in 2021, expected to be 7.8 bn: US census bureau**

The world's population is projected to be 7.8 billion people on New Year's Day 2022, according to the US Census Bureau.

That represents an increase of 74 million people, or a 0.9% growth rate from New Year's Day 2021. Starting in the new year, 4.3 births and two deaths are expected worldwide every second, the Census Bureau estimated.

China remains the world's most-populous country with 1.4 billion people, though it is only narrowly ahead of India on 1.38 billion which is set to overtake it by 2025.

Meanwhile, the US grew by almost 707,000 people over the past year, and the nation's population is expected to be 332.4 million residents on New Year's Day 2022, according to the US Census Bureau.

The Census Bureau estimate represents a 0.2%



The figures represent a 0.9% growth rate from New Year's day 2021

growth rate from New Year's Day 2021 to New Year's Day 2022. Starting in the new year, the US is expected to grow by one person every 40 seconds from births, minus deaths, as well as net international migration.

The US is expected to experience a birth every nine seconds and a death every 11 seconds, as well as an additional person from international migration every 130 seconds.

**RIL unit to buy U.K.'s Faradion for £100 mn**

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI**

Reliance New Energy Solar Ltd. (RNESL), a wholly owned subsidiary of Reliance Industries Ltd., said it had agreed to acquire 100% in Faradion Ltd. for £100 million (about ₹1,000 crore).

RNESL also agreed to invest £25 million as growth capital to accelerate commercial roll-out. "With its patented sodium-ion battery technology, Faradion has a competitively superior, strategic, wide-reaching and extensive IP portfolio," RIL said in a statement, adding that it would use Faradion's technology at its proposed energy storage giga-factory at Jamnagar, India. Faradion is based out of Sheffield and Oxford in the United Kingdom.

**Govt approves 19th tranche of electoral bonds; sale opens on Jan 1**

**AHEAD OF ASSEMBLY** elections in five states, the government on Thursday approved the issuance of the 19th tranche of electoral bonds, which will be open for sale from January 1 to 10.

Electoral bonds have been pitched as an alternative to cash donations made to political parties as part of efforts to bring transparency in political funding. However, Opposition parties have raised concerns about alleged opaqueness in funding through such bonds.

"State Bank of India (SBI), in the XIX Phase of sale, has been authorised to issue and encash Electoral Bonds through its 29 Authorized Branches with effect from January 1 to January 10, 2022," the finance ministry said in a statement.

The 29 specified SBI branches are in cities, such as Lucknow, Shimla, Dehradun, Kolkata, Guwahati, Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, Patna, New Delhi, Chandigarh, Srinagar, Gandhinagar, Bhopal, Raipur, and Mumbai. — PTI

**NEW VARIANT 'IHU' IDENTIFIED IN FRANCE**

As the world grapples with the highly mutated Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2, scientists have identified a new strain of the virus in Southern France. Known as 'IHU', the B.1.640.2 variant has been reported by researchers at institute IHU Mediterranean Infection in at least 12 cases, and has been linked to travel to African country Cameroon. However, the researchers noted that it is too early to speculate on how this variant behaves as

far as infection and protection from vaccines is concerned. The yet-to-be peer-reviewed study, posted on the preprint repository MedRxiv on December 29, revealed that IHU has 46 mutations and 37 deletions resulting in 30 amino acid substitutions and 12 deletions. Most currently used vaccines are targeted at the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2, which the virus uses to enter and infect the cells.

PTI



# India plans to introduce 50 cheetahs in 5 years

Jayashree Nandi

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Union government on Wednesday launched an action plan under which 50 cheetahs will be introduced in the country in the next five years.

According to an 'Action Plan for Introduction of Cheetah in India', released by the environment ministry during the 19th meeting of National Tiger Conservation Authority on Wednesday, a cohort of around 12 to 14 cheetahs will be imported from South Africa or Namibia and each of them will be fitted with a satellite-GPS-very high frequency radio-collar.



A cohort of around 12 to 14 cheetahs will be imported from South Africa or Namibia.

Union environment minister Bhopender Yadav, in a statement, said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi is keen on protection and conservation of seven major

big cats... Cheetah numbering 50 over a period of five years will be introduced in various parks."

International transportation will be done by either a commer-

cial airline or by a chartered flight following which the wild cats will be transported to Kuno Palpur National Park (KNP) in Madhya Pradesh. Officials who attended the meeting said cheetah, the world's fastest land animal, was expected to be reintroduced into the country in November 2021 but the plan got derailed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The team and preparations are ready to take up translocation after the third wave recedes, the officials added. "The animals' lineage and condition shall be checked in the host country to ensure that they are not from an excessively inbred stock and are in the ideal age

group, so as to conform to the needs of a founding population," said the over 300-page plan.

As per the plan, the Union government, along with ministry of environment and the Cheetah Task Force, will create a formal framework to collaborate with governments of Namibia and/or South Africa, through the ministry of external affairs.

Anish Andheria, president of Wildlife Conservation Trust, said, "I think the ministry should start exploring other larger, more open habitats in Gujarat and Rajasthan and prepare them for cheetah introduction in 10 years by improving wild prey base and spreading awareness..."

# IRDAI sets norms for surety cover

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD**

Insurance regulator IRDAI has issued guidelines on surety insurance business, which will come into force on April 1 and permit general insurers to pursue the new line of business.

In doing so, the insurers would be required to comply with certain requirements, including maintaining a solvency margin of not less than 1.25 times of the control level of solvency specified by the regulator.

The guidelines set by the regulator cover different aspects of the business and prescribe a cap on the quantum of business the insurers can conduct.

# Tata firms jump ahead of CPSUs in m-cap race

It's first time that govt companies are not India's biggest biz group

KRISHNA KANT

Mumbai, 2 January

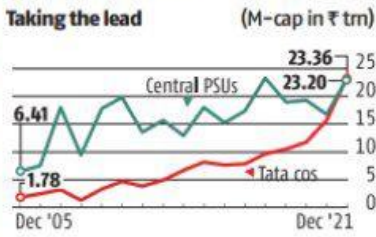
The Tata group companies are now more valuable than all the listed central public sector undertakings (CPSUs) or companies in the country. The key 20 listed Tata companies ended the 2021 calendar year with a combined market capitalisation of ₹23.36 trillion, ahead of the 70 listed CPSUs, which had a combined m-cap of ₹23.2 trillion. In comparison, these CPSUs had a combined market capitalisation of ₹16.7 trillion at the end of December 2020 against the Tata group firms' combined m-cap of ₹15.7 trillion.

This is the first time since the early 1990s that central government-owned companies are not the biggest business group in the country in terms of market capitalisation. Central PSUs were first listed on the bourses in the early 1990s and they were the biggest block in terms of market capitalisation.

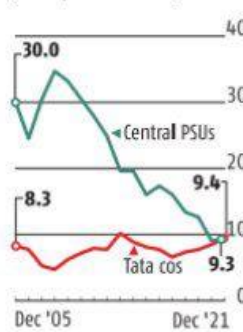
The *Business Standard* analysis is based on a common sample of 1,043 companies that are part of the BSE500, BSE MidCap, and BSE SmallCap indices. These companies had a combined m-cap of ₹248.7 trillion on Friday, accounting for 93.5 per cent of the combined m-cap of all the BSE-listed companies.

The Tata group's market capitalisation is up 48.7 per cent over the past

## TATA FIRMS: THE GROWTH STORY



### PSUs: A smaller pie (M-cap share in %)



\* Their share in the combined m-cap of all the listed firms in BS sample  
Source: Capitaline, Compiled by BS Research Bureau

12 months against a 38.9 per cent rise in the combined m-cap of listed CPSUs. In comparison, the combined market capitalisation of all the 1,043 companies in the *Business Standard* sample was up 35.8 per cent in CY21.

These Tata group companies have outperformed the broader market over the past five years and thus have raised their share in the overall market cap of all the listed companies in the country. The Tata group's m-cap share rose to an eight-year high of 9.4

per cent at the end of CY21, from 8.6 per cent a year ago and a low of 6.6 per cent at the end of 2017. However, it still remains lower than the group's all-time high m-cap share of 10.2 per cent at the end of December 2013.

This has been powered by a sharp rise in the market capitalisation of key group companies, such as Tata Consultancy Services, Titan Company, Tata Steel, Tata Consumer, and Tata Motors.

Turn to Page 3 ▶

# Est Day

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## Govt distributes 36.78 cr LEDs under UJALA

**THE POWER MINISTRY** has distributed 36.78 crore LED lights under the UJALA programme in seven years, which saved 47,778 million units of electricity per annum. The scheme was launched on January 5, 2015.

,Kar- met as central financial assis- iff-based competitive bidding. quently extended till June 2022.

## Govt mulls winding up BBNL; may assign BharatNet work to BSNL

**KIRAN RATHEE**  
New Delhi, January 6

Nearly a decade after Bharat Broadband Network (BBNL) was set up as a special purpose vehicle to connect all gram panchayats with high-speed optic fibre, the government is thinking of winding it up and assigning its role to state-owned telecom operator BSNL, sources said.

BBNL is the implementing agency of the BharatNet project, for which so far close to ₹24,000 crore has been disbursed by the Universal Service Obligation Fund. Of the 2.5 lakh gram panchayats in the coun-

try, 1.71 lakh gram panchayats have been connected so far.

The scope of BharatNet project was further extended in July last year when it was decided that all six lakh villages in the country would be connected with optic fibre, for which the government would provide ₹19,041 crore as viability gap funding. With this, the total outlay for BharatNet project increased to ₹61,109 crore, including the ₹42,068 crore approved in 2017.

According to sources, the idea to wind up BBNL and assign its functions to BSNL was mooted a couple of months ago, and four to five meetings have

taken place to finalise the modalities around it.

BBNL's work of laying optic fibre can be done by BSNL, but issues relating to fair play may come up since BSNL is a telecom operator which competes with private telecom players.

Earlier, BBNL had curtailed the scope of BSNL in maintaining the BharatNet project. BSNL used to get around ₹400 crore per year to maintain the BharatNet fibre, but as it failed to provide quality services, BBNL did not extend the contract and awarded it to CSCSPV.

BSNL's participation in phase II of BharatNet was also curtailed by over 50%.

## TaMo drives past Hyundai to grab 2nd-largest carmaker tag

**KRISHNA KANT**  
Mumbai, 3 January

Powered by strong demand for the latest range of sport utility vehicles (SUVs), Tata Motors has zipped past Hyundai Motor India (HMIL) to become the second-largest passenger car seller in the domestic market, behind Maruti Suzuki India (MSIL).

Tata Motors shipped 35,461 units of passenger vehicles (PVs) to its dealers in December 2021, against 32,312 units despatched by HMIL in the last months. While Tata Motors' shipment in the domestic market was up 50.5 per cent year-on-year (YoY), from 23,564 units in December 2020, HMIL's sales in the domestic market were down 31.8 per cent YoY, from 47,400 units a year ago.

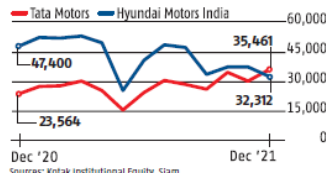
This is first time since its entry into the PV market in late 1990s that Tata Motors has become the second-largest PV seller in the country, behind industry leader MSIL, on the basis of monthly sales. The company was the third-biggest carmaker for nearly a decade in late 1990s and early 2000s, behind MSIL and HMIL, before it ceded market share to rivals after the commercial failure of its micro car - the Nano. HMIL, however, remains the No. 2 PV seller on a year-to-date basis. It shipped a total of 500,000 units of passenger cars in 2021, against 332,000 units shipped by Tata Motors during the period.

The Indian subsidiary of the Korean carmaker is also ahead of Tata Motors in the overall sales that includes exports. HMIL shipped a total of 48,933 units of PVs,



### OUTNUMBERING

The domestic sales of Tata Motors and Hyundai Motors India (in units)



Sources: Kotak Institutional Equity, Siam

including exports (16,621 units), in December 2021 — nearly 38.6 per cent higher than Tata Motors' overall sales dur-

ing the months. The recent surge in Tata Motors' sales volume is attributed to good customer response of its new launches in

the fast-growing SUV segment.

According to analyst estimates, nearly a quarter of Tata Motors' PV sales in December 2021 came from its two recent launches — the Punch and the Safari. The company also gained from a further rise in the popularity of its bestselling SUV - the Nexon — and strong offtake of its electric vehicle. "Tata Motors' PV business has been in revival mode for over a year now, thanks to strong customer response to its latest range of SUVs. This has enabled the company to regain most of the market share it had lost to rivals in the past decade or so," said Shailendra Kumar, chief investment officer, Namolia Securities.

Tata Motors posted its highest-ever monthly sales in December 2021, while its total shipments in October-December 2021

were its best quarterly sales since its inception. In contrast, HMIL sales in December 2021 were the lowest since May last year.

Analysts are, however, still undecided about the long-term trajectory of Tata Motors' sales volume in the domestic market. "It will be too early to extrapolate Tata Motors' recent success over the long term, given a lack of structural growth in the overall PV market in the country. Besides, not all carmakers have been affected uniformly from the global shortage of chips and electronic components," said Kumar.

However, despite all these caveats, the recent sales performance of Tata Motors' PV division is an encouraging sign for the company and its shareholders, given that the division has been a cash guzzler for the better part of the last two decades.

## N-E Rly will be 100% electrified by end-2022

**OUR BUREAU**

New Delhi, January 4

More than 75 per cent of North Eastern Railway (NER) routes, which primarily serve Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and western districts of Bihar, have been electrified and by the end of 2022 will be nearly fully electrified, according to the government.

"After electrification of main routes, the expenditure on high-speed diesel (HSD) has been considerably reduced, registering a saving of ₹361 crores," a statement issued by the Ministry of Railways on Tuesday said.

Indian Railways is working on an ambitious plan of fully electrifying its tracks by

December 2023. Total rail electrification would contribute to the goal of "net zero" emissions by 2030, by drawing its entire electrical load from renewable energy sources, according to plans.

**Overhead power**

Capacity Utilisation Factor based solar monitoring system has been implemented in the NER, which has resulted in 26 per cent higher solar energy generation in this year, as compared to corresponding period of last year with the same installed capacity of 4.72 MWp, said the release.

As many as 31 pairs of trains, which originate or ter-

minate on NER, are running on HOG (Head on Generation) system that allows power to be drawn directly from the over-head lines.

Over 700 kld of water recycling plants have been commissioned at four stations.

Cumulative loading till date is around 60 per cent more as compared to corresponding period of last year, the statement said.

"With the concerted efforts of Business Development Units (BDU) at zonal and divisional levels, 22 rakes of Kisan Rail have been loaded and run from Farrukhabad railway station of Izzatnagar division to North East Frontier Railway," it added.

## India set to test marine version of Rafale today

**Shishir Gupta**

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** India on Friday, will test the Rafael-M (Marine) jet for use on its Vikramaditya aircraft carrier as well as the indigenous aircraft carrier I (IACI), which will be deployed as the INS Vikrant, at the INS Hansa in Goa, a shore-based test facility. The aircraft for the test arrived on Thursday.

The marine version of the Rafale jet has a reinforced under-carriage and nose wheel, a bigger arrester hook, an integrated ladder and other minor differences from the Rafale in use in the Indian Air Force.

According to people familiar with the matter, the Rafale M is better suited for use on the aircraft carriers than the F18 Hornet fighter from the US for sev-

eral reasons. They pointed out it can fit into the lift bay of the Vikramaditya, unlike the F18; and that its dimensions also mean more of them (14) can fit onto the deck of the carrier as compared to 10 or 11 F18s.

They added that unlike the F18s, which require the carriers to be fitted with a new carrier optical landing system, the Rafale M's can work with the existing one on the Vikramaditya. There is also the benefit of a common platform across the navy and the Air Force, one of the people said.

Apart from synergies in logistics and maintenance, this person added, Indian Navy pilots could be trained on IAF's Rafales for "faster induction".

The navy will likely test the F18s at the same facility in March, HT learns.

**FUEL ETHANOL**

# India to surpass China as 3rd largest user

Domestic ethanol demand tripled between 2017 and 2021 with consumption at 3 crore litres in the last calendar year: IEA

**RISHI RANJAN KALA**

New Delhi, January 4

India is on course to race past China as the world's third largest ethanol consumer by 2026 as it accelerates the transformation towards a clean energy ecosystem. Ethanol demand in India tripled between 2017 and 2021 with consumption expected at 3 crore litres in the last calendar year, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said.

"In January 2021, India brought forward its target of 20 per cent ethanol blending of gasoline to 2025 from 2030, and is aiming to start selling 20 per cent blends in 2023," the agency said in a report.

IEA added that the country is supporting ethanol as it helps reduce oil imports, cut down air pollution and offers economic and employment opportunities for farmers.

Lifting ethanol demand is also aligned with its net zero pathway. India, the world's third largest oil importer and consumer, imported petroleum products worth more than ₹ 1.09-lakh crore in FY21.

**'Impressive progress'**

The agency noted that India made "impressive progress" in increasing ethanol blending. In 2017, blending stood at 2 per cent, but by the summer of 2021 it touched 8 per cent, putting the country on track to achieve 10 per cent blending this calendar year.

"India has also increased its policy commitment. In pursuit of its 20 per cent target, the country has set guaranteed prices per litre of ethanol according to feedstock; established financial support for new ethanol capacity; released an ethanol roadmap;



Lifting ethanol demand is also aligned with India's net zero pathway

and is planning to mandate flex-fuel vehicles that can operate on higher ethanol blends, it pointed out.

However, the target of achieving 20 per cent blending of ethanol has "significant challenges", IEA said adding that "Vehicle compatibility, greenhouse gas (GHG) and sustainability criteria, feedstock availability, and maintaining incentives at the right level will all require dedicated

attention". "In our accelerated case, we assume India meets these challenges and achieves its 20 per cent blending target in 2025," IEA projected.

**Compatibility concerns**

A large segment of India's existing vehicle fleet may have compatibility issues with fuel blends above E10. Retrofits are an option, but the scale of the undertaking may make that impractical. Flex-fuel vehicles or vehicles otherwise compatible with 20 per cent blends will need to be made available and consumers will need to be convinced to purchase them, IEA explained.

Clear GHG performance requirements and sustainability criteria will also help ensure ethanol production reduces emissions and avoids other impact. India estimates that ethanol blending has reduced its GHG emissions by 19 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent since 2014 and its ethanol roadmap notes the need to supplement sugar-

cane, a water-intensive crop, with less water-intensive feedstock, IEA said.

**Fixed rates**

India is currently guaranteeing fixed rates for ethanol according to the feedstock it is produced from. In November, it increased the incentive rates by 1-2 per cent to encourage production, it added.

"The incentive structure and funding system will need to be carefully structured. Here, too, India can learn from other examples. Indonesia for instance has scaled back its biodiesel blending ambitions because of high costs, a situation India would like to avoid. India may also look to other models, such as targets with credit trading, as applied under the US RFS, the agency suggested.

At present, public sector oil marketing companies are selling 10 per cent ethanol blended petrol. Similarly 5 per cent biodiesel is blended as per availability.

## Syntizen, Odisha govt partner to provide pensioners life certificates via video KYC

Odisha becomes the first State to ease the process by going digital

KR SRIVATS

New Delhi, January 6

Syntizen, a Digital Identity Solutions provider, has partnered with the Odisha government to provide a Video KYC solution to offer life certificates to pensioners.

Odisha has become the first State in the country to deploy a digital process which includes Aadhaar Validation for easing the process of obtaining a life certificate. There are over five lakh pensioners across the State.

Speaking about the initiative with the Odisha Government, Siddharth Kukatlappalli, Co-founder and CBO,



Syntizen, said, "Our identification checking and instant service delivery systems are ingenious and fool-proof. We are glad to showcase it on a large platform by helping the Odisha government facilitate efficient distribution of digital life certificates to around 5 lakh pensioners."

### AI/ML based solution

Receiving a pension is a tedious route where a pension seeker needs to submit a life certificate to get the retirement benefits. The physical process is slow and inconvenient.

Manoj Kumar Mishra, IRTS, Chairman OCAC & IT Secretary, Odisha, said, "We are looking forward to incorporating the digital authentication process into other government services as well".

Currently, Syntizen provides Aadhaar solutions to several States, such as Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh.

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## IN BRIEF



### Cabinet nod for ropeway, 5-star hotel at Jog Falls

BENGALURU

For providing more facilities for tourists at the Jog Falls, where water from river Sharavati takes a plunge from a height of 810 feet, the Karnataka Cabinet on Thursday decided to build a ropeway, a five-star hotel, coffee bars and other infrastructure there at a cost of ₹116 crore. This was announced by Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs J.C. Madhuswamy. The waterfall is located in a forest area in Shivamogga district.

## 2021 world food prices hit 10-year high

**WORLD FOOD PRICES** jumped 28 percent in 2021 to their highest level in a decade and hopes for a return to more stable market conditions this year are slim, the UN's food agency said on Thursday.

The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) food price index, which tracks the most globally traded food commodities, averaged 125.7 points in 2021, the highest since 131.9 in 2011.

The monthly index eased

slightly in December but had climbed for the previous four months in a row, reflecting harvest setbacks and strong demand over the past year.

Higher food prices have contributed to a broader surge in inflation as economies recover from the coronavirus crisis and the FAO has warned that the higher costs are putting poorer populations at risk in countries reliant on imports.

In its latest update, the food agency was cautious about

whether price pressures might abate this year.

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—REUTERS