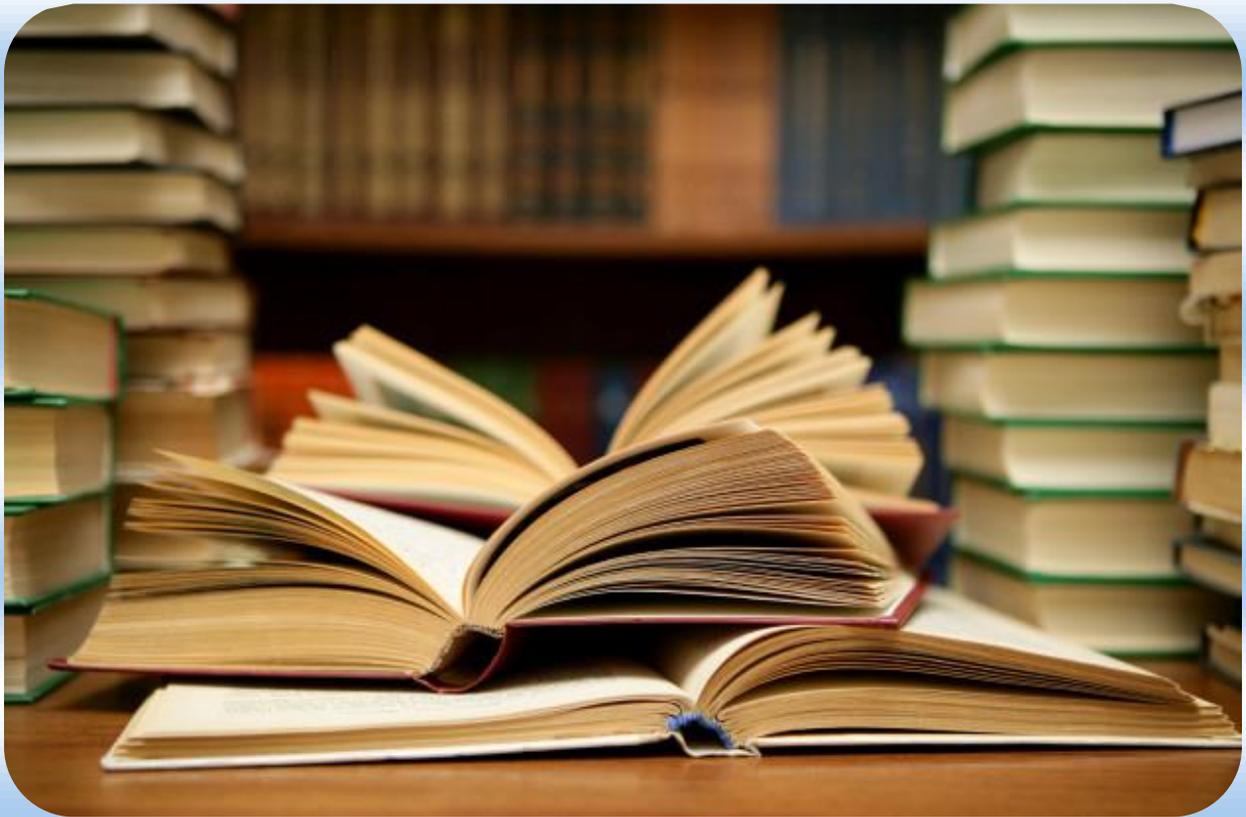


LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTER, NOIDA

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



JANUARY-2022

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Chips to Start-up (C2S) Programme

With an aim to train 85,000 engineers in the area of very-large-scale integration (VLSI) and embedded system design, the central government on Sunday said it is seeking applications from 100 academia, R&D organisations, start-ups and MSMEs under its Chips to Startup (C2S) Programme. According to a statement issued by the Union ministry of electronics and information (MeitY), the programme will result in the development of 175 ASICs (application-specific integrated circuits), working prototypes of 20 systems on chips (SoC) and IP core repository over a period of five years.

Param Vishisht Seva Medal

Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra has been bestowed the Param Vishisht Seva Medal in this year's list of defence decorations, which include gallantry medals for soldiers and police forces involved in counterterror operations in Jammu and Kashmir and the northeast. The PVSM is usually accorded to three-star officers for distinguished service to the nation. Chopra is a Subedar in the Rajputana Rifles. It is the highest non-gallantry decoration given to defence personnel.

Indian Army's New Combat Uniform

Since 1949, January 15 has been celebrated as Army Day every year, to mark the day General KM Cariappa, who later became Field Marshal, took over as the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from Gen F R Roy Bucher.



India's First Woman Rafale Pilot

The country's first woman Rafale fighter jet pilot Shivangi Singh was part of the Indian Air Force tableau at the Republic Day parade on Wednesday. She is only the second woman fighter jet pilot to be part of the IAF tableau. Last year, Flight Lieutenant Bhawna Kanth became the first female fighter jet pilot to be part of the IAF tableau.

New Districts of Andhra Pradesh

With the addition of 13 new districts, Andhra Pradesh will soon get 26 districts in total. The state government has already issued draft notifications on Wednesday for carving out the new districts. Chief Secretary Sameer Sharma said, "The government, in the interest of better administration and development of the areas concerned, proposes to form a new district under Section 3 (5) of the AP Districts (Formation) Act, 1974." Citizens residing within a district are also invited to send objections and suggestions for the same. These would be taken into consideration within 30 days.

Bharat Biotech Nasal Booster Trials

India's drug regulator has given permission to Bharat Biotech to conduct phase-3 clinical trial for its intranasal Covid vaccine as booster dose on participants who have been previously inoculated with SARS-CoV 2 vaccines. India is yet to approve the use of intranasal COVID-19 vaccine BBV154 developed by the Hyderabad-based company. Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) on January 27 gave the nod to Bharat Biotech to conduct phase-3 randomised multi-centric clinical study to evaluate immunogenicity and safety of its intranasal vaccine as booster dose on participants who have been previously vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines approved under new drugs under New Drugs & Clinical Trials Rules, 2019.

National Startup Day

New Delhi: The country will celebrate January 16 as National Startup Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told a virtual gathering of over 150 entrepreneurs on Saturday as he termed startups as the "backbone" of new India and the engine that will power the nation's economic growth in the run up to the 100th year of Independence. The current decade, Modi said, is being referred to as the "techade" of India and his government will usher in massive changes to strengthen innovation, entrepreneurship and the startup ecosystem.

Indian Environment Service

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Centre whether it was planning a dedicated Indian Environment Service in the national bureaucratic set-up, as recommended by a committee headed by former Cabinet secretary TSR Subramanian in 2014. Issuing notice on a petition filed by a lawyer Samar Vijay Singh, a bench of justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and MM Sundresh said: "A prayer has been made in the petition for creation of an independent Indian Environment Service at the all-India level. The prayer arises from the recommendation of TSR Subramanian Committee. Prima facie it is doubtful if a mandamus (judicial command) can be issued but an enquiry can be made whether the government proposes to act as per the recommendation of the committee."

Twitter: NFT Profile Picture feature

Twitter on Friday announced a new way for users to authenticate their profile pictures, fueled by non fungible tokens (NFTs). This comes as good news for NFT owners who have been uploading jpeg images of their digital assets as profile pictures.



NASSCOM Study on Start-ups

More than 2,250 startups were added in the year 2021, over 600 more than what was added in the previous year, a report by Nasscom and Zinnov said on Friday. The study titled 'Indian Tech Start-up Ecosystem: Year of The Titans' said with rising investor confidence, startups leveraging deep-tech, and tapping unexplored talent pool.



Mangaluru Plastic Park

With the Central government giving final approval for establishing a plastic park at Ganjimath in Mangaluru taluk, the plastic manufacturing industry is expecting more investments in the sector and the creation of new jobs in the region. While giving the final nod, the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals under the Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers said the plastic park will be implemented by the special purpose vehicle (SPV) incorporated by Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB).

Hologram Statue of Netaji

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the hologram statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at India Gate today -- under the cupola where the statue of British monarch King George V once stood. "The role of our heroes, whose memories were being erased post-Independence... are now being revived," he said at the inauguration. In what appeared a swipe at the successive Congress governments since Independence, PM Modi said: "It is unfortunate that after Independence, along with the culture and rites of the country, work was done to erase the contribution of many great personalities."

Merger of Amar Jawan Jyoti

The Amar Jawan Jyoti at the India Gate was merged with the eternal flame at the National War Memorial (NWM) here on Friday. The Amar Jawan Jyoti will be put out and people can now pay their respects at the eternal flame at the NWM, military officials said.



India's first UNDP Youth Climate Champion

Content creator and actress Prajakta Koli has become India's first UN Development Programme (UNDP) Youth Climate Champion under her partnership with the organisation. The title has been conferred to her following her contribution towards mental health, women's rights and girl child education through various global social campaigns.



RBI Special Repo Auction

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday conducted a variable rate repo operation to infuse liquidity, instead of its usual variable rate reverse repo operations (VRRR) to suck out cash, as a larger-than-expected goods and services tax (GST) collection tightened liquidity this week. The central bank proposed to lend the banking system Rs 50,000 crore for a day, and got bids for Rs 65,700 crore. The cut-off rate was 4.06 per cent, and the weighted average rate 4.10 per cent, higher than the repo rate of 4 per cent.

Azadi Ke Amrit Mahotsav se Swarnim Bharat Ke Ore

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday inaugurated the launch of 'Azadi Ke Amrit Mahotsav se Swarnim Bharat Ki Ore'. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is delivering the keynote address at the national launch ceremony of 'Azadi Ke Amrit Mahotsav se Swarnim Bharat Ke Ore' today via video conferencing. The program unveiled yearlong initiatives dedicated to Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav by the Brahma Kumaris, which include more than 30 campaigns and over 15000 programs and events.

SEBI's Saa᳚thi mobile app

Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Wednesday launched "Saa᳚thi" – a mobile app on investor education in Mumbai. The new app aims to create awareness among investors about the basic concepts of the securities market. Additionally, the app will also explain about KYC process, trading and settlement, mutual funds (MF), recent market developments, investor grievances redressal mechanism, etc, the market regulator said in a press release.

Flipkart: New Startup Programmes

E-commerce firm Flipkart announced the evolution of its flagship startup accelerator programme, Flipkart Leap, to identify wider and relevant market opportunities for its selected startups.



Oxfam India's 'Inequality Kills' Report

The income of 84 per cent of households in the country declined in 2021, but at the same time the number of Indian billionaires grew from 102 to 142, an Oxfam report has said, pointing to a stark income divide worsened by the Covid pandemic. The Oxfam report, "Inequality Kills", released on Sunday ahead of the World Economic Forum's Davos Agenda, also found that as Covid continued to ravage India, the country's healthcare budget saw a 10% decline from RE (revised estimates) of 2020-21.

India Edtech Consortium

Edtech companies have joined hands to form India EdTech Consortium (IEC) under the aegis of the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI). The edtech companies will adhere to a common 'Code of Conduct', IAMAI said in a statement. Moreover, the companies who have come together to form the consortium, will also establish a two-tier grievance redressal mechanism to protect consumer interest and promote their rights. The edtech firms that have joined the IEC include Byju's, Careers 360, Classplus, Doubtnut, Great Learning, Harappa, Times Edutech and Events Ltd, Scaler, Simplilearn, Toppr, Unacademy, upGrad, UNext Learning, Vedantu and WhiteHat Jr. As stated by IAMAI, the IEC will also focus on providing every learner with access to quality and affordable education.

Digital Sansad App

Soon after becoming the Lok Sabha Speaker, Om Birla has constantly been working to make the Parliament and Parliamentary proceedings accessible not just to the members but also to the public at large. Taking a step ahead, Parliament will soon expand its digital footprint. Parliament's official 'Digital Sansad App' is an initiative in that direction. Now citizens can watch Parliamentary proceedings activities in Parliament and the initiatives taken by the temple of democracy at the click of a button on the phone.

Air India Transferred to Tata Group

NEW DELHI : NEW DELHI: The divestment of national carrier Air India is expected to conclude on 27 January, with the government completing the handover of the airline to Tata Group by then. In a WhatsApp message to the employees of the national carrier on Monday, Air India's director (finance), Vinod Hejmadi, said the divestment of the national carrier is now decided to be on the 27 January.



India's First Geo Park

Jabalpur: The Geological Survey of India (GSI) has approved the setting up of the country's first geo park at Lamheta village on the banks of the Narmada river in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh, local MP Rakesh Singh said on Sunday. He said the GSI has sanctioned ₹ 1.30 crore to prepare a detailed project report of the geological rock formations in five acres in the Lamheta village, located 20 km away from the Jabalpur district headquarter, where the park will come up.



INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

China-Iran strategic agreement

China said on Saturday it would begin implementing a strategic agreement with Iran, strengthening economic and political cooperation between the two countries as Beijing blasted Washington's sanctions on Tehran. China and Iran signed the agreement last year after years of talks, with the wide-ranging partnership set to span areas including energy, security, infrastructure and communications. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian announced the start of the partnership's implementation at a meeting in east China's Wuxi on Friday.

China's Record-low Birth rate

Mainland China's birth rate dropped to a record low of 7.52 per 1,000 people in 2021, National Bureau of Statistics data showed on January 17, accelerating a downward trend that led Beijing last year to begin allowing couples to have up to three children. China scrapped its decades-old one-child policy in 2016, replacing it with a two-child limit to try to avoid the economic risks from a rapidly aging population, but the high cost of urban living has deterred couples from having more children.

China's Artificial Moon

China's space programme has been growing by leaps and bounds, with 2021 as one of the most successful years for Beijing in the 21st Century. The country has now built an artificial moon facility that will simulate lunar conditions and the environment for scientists to test new tech and future missions. Being called the "first of its kind in the world", the facility located in the eastern city of Xuzhou, in Jiangsu province, will make gravity "disappear". The facility can replicate low gravity environments for as long as one wants.

North Korea Railway-borne missile

North Korea confirmed on Saturday it test-launched ballistic missiles from a train in what was seen as an apparent retaliation against new sanctions imposed by the United States. South Korea's Yonhap news agency quoted its military as saying the latest projectiles flew around 430km (267 miles) at an altitude of 36km (22 miles) and a top speed of Mach 6 (7,350 kilometres per hour), six times the speed of sound. North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said the drill was aimed at "checking and judging the proficiency in the action procedures" of the missile, adding the two guided missiles hit a set target in the East Sea.

Artificial Snow in Beijing Winter Olympics

Organisers say they have prioritised protecting native species, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and cutting down on resources used. But there's been criticism that this will be the first Winter Olympics to rely entirely on artificial snow - and that some events will be held in the middle of a nature reserve. The Olympics will be hosted across three sites, and Yanqing will host the popular Alpine ski events.

China's Lithuania Blockade

(Bloomberg) -- The European Union took China to the World Trade Organization on Thursday over its coercive practices against Lithuania and some exporters from other member states. "These measures are a threat to the integrity of the single market because they affect intra-EU trade and EU supply chains and have a negative impact on EU industry," European Commission Vice President Valdis Dombrovski told Bloomberg in an interview

Airstrikes in Yemen

The UN has condemned an air strike on a Yemen detention centre that has killed more than 70 people. The facility in Saada, a stronghold of the rebel Houthi movement in north-western Yemen, was hit on Friday. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said in a statement that the "escalation needs to stop". In a statement on Saturday, the Saudi-led coalition fighting Houthi rebels in the country denied it had carried out the air strike. The coalition also said the site was not on a list of targets to avoid that had been agreed with the UN and had not been reported by the Red Cross.

Chinese bridge at Pangong Tso

The story so far: China is building a bridge across the Pangong Tso within its territory connecting the North and South Banks which will significantly reduce the time for moving troops and equipment between the two sides. This is part of the overall infrastructure build up by China on its side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) to address deficiencies it noticed since the standoff began in May 2020.

Russia's Ban on Cryptocurrencies

Russian authorities have drawn up a "road map" that envisages restrictions on cryptocurrencies but not a complete ban as advocated by the central bank, according to a document seen by Reuters. Politicians have pressed for a change of tack by the central bank, which has proposed restricting cryptocurrency trading and mining because of concerns it may cause financial instability. Working group participants include the finance, economy, digital and interior ministries, the FSB security service, and the central bank.

MY2022: Security Concerns in Chinese Olympics App

A smartphone app that's expected to be widely used by athletes and others attending next month's Winter Games in Beijing has glaring security problems that could expose sensitive data to interception, according to a report published Tuesday. Citizen Lab, an internet watchdog group, said in its report the MY2022 app has seriously flawed encryption that would make users' sensitive data — and any other data communicated through it — vulnerable to being hacked. Other important user data on the app wasn't encrypted at all, the report found.

Nusantara-Indonesia New Capital

Indonesia plans to name its new capital Nusantara, which translates as “archipelago”, when government offices are relocated to the province of East Kalimantan from Jakarta, on the island of Java. President Joko Widodo first announced the plan to move Indonesia's capital in 2019, in an effort to relieve the huge environmental challenges facing Jakarta, and to redistribute wealth. The move has been delayed due to the pandemic, but could go ahead in 2024.

Global Cybersecurity Outlook 2022

The first Global Cybersecurity Outlook flagship report identifies the trends and analyzes the near-term future cybersecurity challenges. The accelerated shift to remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with recent high-profile cyberattacks have resulted in bringing cybersecurity top of mind among key decision-makers in organizations and nations. Much still needs to be done to arrive at a shared understanding of how to strengthen cyber resilience.

Deportation of Novak Djokovic

The top men's tennis player was deported after losing a visa battle that centred on the fact he is unvaccinated. Supporters gathered at the airport in Belgrade, waving the national flag and chanting "we love Novak". "This is a shame what they did to Novak in Australia," one supporter said. "This is a shame what the world has come to." "I myself am vaccinated, double-jabbed, but I think no-one should be forced to do something.

Davos: Millionaires group calls for Wealth Tax

ZURICH (Reuters) - A group of more than 100 billionaires and millionaires has issued a plea to political and business leaders convening virtually for the World Economic Forum: make us pay more tax. The group calling itself the "Patriotic Millionaires" said that the ultra-wealthy were not currently being forced to pay their share of the global economic recovery from the pandemic. "As millionaires, we know that the current tax system is not fair. Most of us can say that, while the world has gone through an immense amount of suffering in the last two years.

Antarctica Icefish Breeding Colony

As soon as the remotely operated camera glimpsed the bottom of the Weddell Sea, more than 1,000 feet below the icy ceiling at the surface, Lilian Boehringer, a student researcher at the Alfred Wegener Institute in Germany, saw the icefish nests. The sandy craters dimpled the seafloor, each the size of a hula hoop and less than a foot apart. Each crater held a single, stolid icefish, dark pectoral fins outspread like bat wings over a clutch of eggs.

World Employment and Social Outlook Report

The International Labour Organisation has projected global unemployment at 207 million in 2022, almost 21 million more than 2019 while the total hours worked in 2022 to be almost 2% below their pre-pandemic level or a deficit of 52 million full-time equivalent jobs. “This outlook represents a substantial deterioration since the projections made in June 2021 when the shortfall in working hours relative to the fourth quarter of 2019 was projected to narrow to less than 1% in 2022,” he ILO said in its latest report on World Employment and Social Outlook, released on Monday.

Nepal’s Record Low Population Growth

Kathmandu: Nepal's population has witnessed a growth of mere 0.93 per cent, the lowest in the last eight decades, reportedly due to the outward migration of Nepalis for jobs and studies, media reports said on Wednesday.



Nordic “clinker boats” in UNESCO Heritage List

For thousands of years, wooden sailboats allowed the peoples of Northern Europe to spread trade, influence and sometimes war across seas and continents.



Pakistan Islamic Bond

Pakistan has raised a whopping \$1 billion loan through the Sukuk bond at a record 7.95% interest rate, the highest cost that the cash-strapped country has agreed to pay in its history on an Islamic bond, and has also agreed to pledge a portion of the Lahore-Islamabad Motorway in return for the much-needed loan, media reports said on Tuesday. The Ministry of Finance said the country had to raise the loan to keep the official foreign exchange reserves at their levels ahead of some major foreign loans' repayments, The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

World's fastest AI supercomputer

Facebook parent company Meta has said that its newly unveiled artificial intelligence supercomputer will be the fastest in the world by the middle of next year.



North Korea Hwasong-12 missile

North Korea has confirmed it fired a Hwasong-12 "mid-range ballistic missile" on Sunday, the first time it has tested a weapon of that size since 2017. Japan and South Korea both detected the launch of the suspected intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) on Sunday morning, the seventh weapons test this month.



First Woman President of Honduras

Speaking at the ceremony, the leftist leader said she was taking the lead of a "broken" country - but vowed to pursue social justice and transparency. Ms Castro, 62, has promised to tackle powerful drug trafficking gangs and liberalise strict abortion laws. But her agenda has been undermined by a feud in her Libre (Free) Party. Ms Castro's husband, Manuel Zelaya, ruled the country from 2006 until 2009, when he was ousted by a coup. She ran for office twice in the years following his removal from power, before her victory in the election last November.

