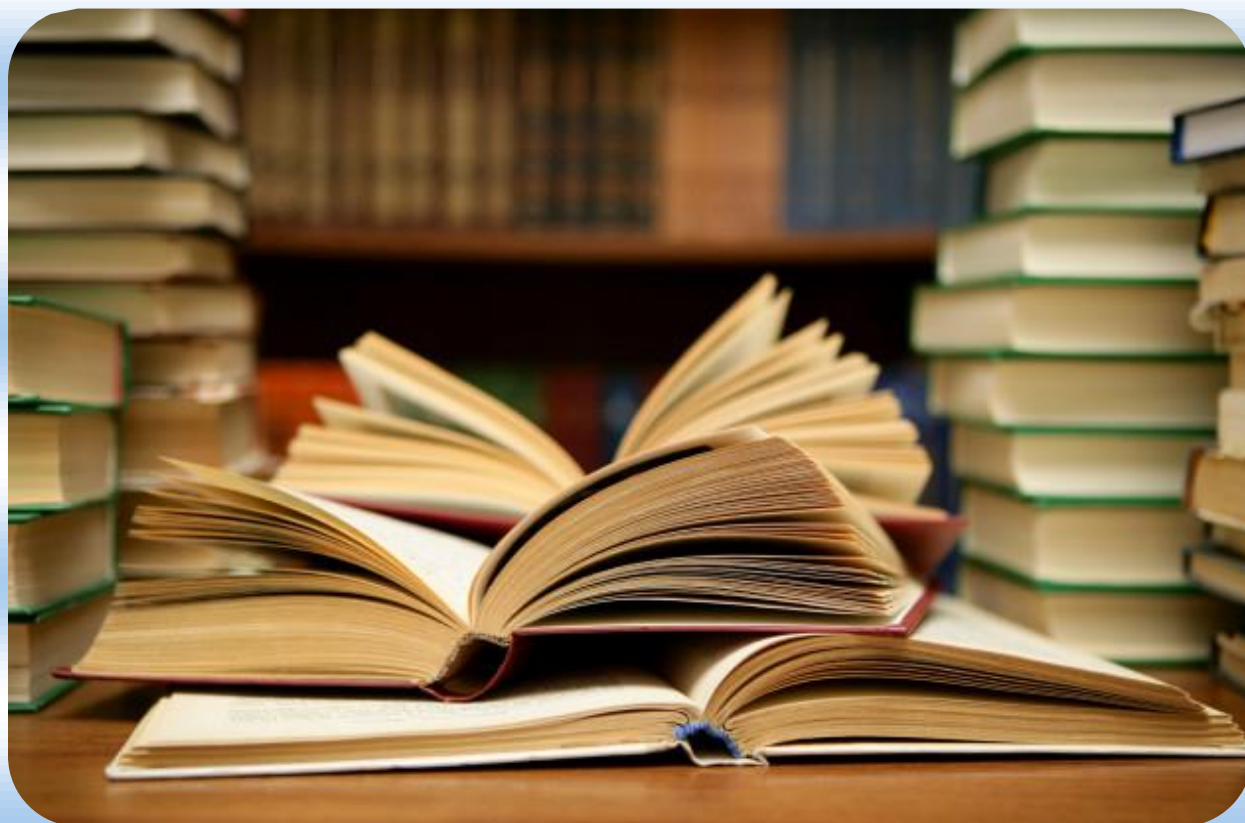


LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTER, NOIDA

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



OCTOBER-2021

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

WMO releases GHG bulletin

NEW DELHI: The abundance of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere once again reached a new record last year as economic slowdown from Covid-19 did not have any discernible impact, shows Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Bulletin of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), released on Monday.



RBI: All micro loans must be collateral-free

MUMBAI: The RBI has said it proposes to make micro-lending collateral-free, not just for microfinance institutions (MFIs) but for all lenders. This follows non-MFIs adopting harsh collection measures, arbitraging the different regulations for MFIs and other lenders. Delivering the inaugural address at the Sa-Dhan National Conference on 'Revitalising financial inclusion', RBI deputy governor Rajeshwar Rao said that current regulations have created a non-level playing field.

Chennai-Mysore-Chennai Shatabdi Express: First IMS certified train

Chennai – Mysore Shatabdi Express becomes the first Integrated Management Systems (IMS) certified train of the Southern Railway zone, first Shatabdi Express train, and second mail/express train on the Indian Railways network. According to the Railway Ministry, Train Number 12007/12008, Dr MGR Chennai Central – Mysore Junction – Dr MGR Chennai Central Shatabdi Express is Southern Railways' first ever train service to bag IMS Certification with ISO 14001:2015, ISO 9001:2015 as well as ISO 45001:2018 Certifications.

PM proposes India-ASEAN start-up festival

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on October 28, 2021, is addressing the 18th India-ASEAN Summit virtually at the invitation of the Sultan of Brunei. The Heads of State and Government of the ASEAN Countries will also attend the Summit. At the 18th ASEAN-India Summit, PM Modi will review the status of the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership and take cognizance of the COVID-19 pandemic, education and culture, and trade and commerce.

India Post Payments Bank and HDFC joined hands to offer home loans

India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) and mortgage lender HDFC Limited on Tuesday announced a strategic alliance to offer home loans to nearly 4.7 crore customers of IPPB. Leveraging its wide network of 650 branches and over 1.36 lakh banking access points, IPPB aims to make HDFC Ltd's home loan products and its expertise available to its customers across India. These home loans will be made available in unbanked and underserved areas with many of them having little or no access to finance.

Four Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme notified

The Education Ministry on Wednesday notified a four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), offering dual-major Bachelor's degrees which will become a mandatory requirement for recruitment of school teachers by 2030, according to the National Education Policy (NEP). As a pilot project in 2022-23, the programme will initially be offered in 50 selected multi-disciplinary institutions. Admissions to the programme will be carried out by the National Testing Agency through the National Common Entrance Test (NET).

QCI sets up expert team to execute proposed ONDC

NEW DELHI: The Quality Council of India (QCI) has established a team of experts and a number of small and medium enterprises have been on-boarded as volunteers for execution of a proposed project - Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), the commerce and industry ministry said on Tuesday. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has initiated this project, which aims to democratise digital or electronic commerce, moving it from a platform-centric model to an open-network.

'Knock every door' campaign for Second-dose Vaccination

Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Wednesday that there were more than 10.34 crore people in the country who had missed the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine that they were due to take. He added that adequate vaccine doses were available in the country, and more than 12 crore unutilised doses were available with the States. According to a release issued by the Health Ministry, the "Har Ghar Dastak" (Knock Every Door).

Ballistic missile Agni-V successfully test-fired

India on Wednesday successfully test-fired its longest range surface-to-surface ballistic missile, Agni-V. "A successful launch of the surface-to-surface ballistic missile, Agni-5, was carried out on October 27, 2021 at approximately 1950 hrs from APJ Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha," the Defence Ministry said. The three-stage solid-fuelled engine missile is capable of striking targets at ranges up to 5,000 km with a very high degree of accuracy and can reach.

India hands over Jaynagar-Kurtha rail link to Nepal

India on Friday handed over the 34.9km-long cross-border rail link connecting Jaynagar in Bihar to Kurtha in Nepal to the Nepal government, a move that is expected to enhance trade and commerce activities as well as people to people linkages between the two countries.



Haryana announces Free Education Scheme

In a bid to boost education-level in the state, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has announced free education for those whose verified family income is less than Rs. 1.80 lakh per annum. Khattar made this announcement while interacting with students who have cracked the civil services exam-2020 and JEE advance exam-2021 under Haryana's 'Super 100 Programme' during a state-level felicitation programme held at Panchkula.

IAC Vikrant begins Second Phase of Sea Trials

India's first indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC) Vikrant set sail on Sunday for the second sea trials, ahead of its planned induction into the Indian Navy by August next year. The 40,000-tonne aircraft carrier, the largest and most complex warship to be built in India, successfully completed a five-day maiden sea voyage in August.



First Zika virus case reported in U.P

As many as 10 Zika virus cases have been reported in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur district so far, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Nepal Singh said on Sunday. While speaking to ANI, Singh confirmed that the total tally of Zika virus patients in the district has gone up to 10. The tally, which was at four till Sunday afternoon, increased to 10 as six more tested positive for the virus. "In the medical reports that came late this evening (Sunday), six other people were confirmed to be Zika infected," Singh said.

Indian Telegraph Right of Way (Amendment) Rules, 2021

The Indian government on October 21, 2021, notified Indian Telegraph Right of Way (Amendment) Rules, 2021, to incorporate the provisions related to nominal one-time compensation and uniform procedure for establishment of overground telegraph line in the Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules, 2016. The government has fixed a cap of Rs 1,000 per km as the amount of one-time compensation for the establishment of an overground telegraph line.

PM Modi to attend G-20 Leaders' Summit-2021

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday arrived in Italy to participate in the G20 Summit where he will join other leaders in discussions on global economic and health recovery from COVID-19, sustainable development and climate change.



Microsoft AI Innovate Program

NEW DELHI : India's burgeoning start-up ecosystem is deploying artificial intelligence (AI) in core business operations. To ensure they have access to the right AI resources, partnerships, and guidance to deploy AI at scale, Microsoft has launched a startup program called AI Innovate along with an AI Playbook that will help start-ups in the country adopt the technology. Big tech companies including Microsoft, Google, and Amazon have been proactive in identifying and supporting promising startups and providing them with launchpads to scale up their solutions.

NITI Aayog launches Geospatial Energy Map of India

NITI Aayog on Monday launched a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based Energy Map of India. "NITI Aayog in collaboration with Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has developed a comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS) Energy Map of India with the support of Energy Ministries of Government of India," a statement issued by the Aayog said. "The GIS map provides a holistic picture of all energy resources of the country which enables visualisation of energy installations such as conventional power plants, oil and gas wells, petroleum refineries, coal fields.

India, US, UAE, and Israel form a new QUAD

India is set to join Israel, the United Arab Emirates and the United States to launch an international forum for economic cooperation as a virtual meeting among the foreign ministers of the four nations has sowed the seeds of a new 'Quad'. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid joined the US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, and the UAE Foreign Minister, Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, in a video conference late on Monday.

Gita Gopinath to leave IMF

IMF's Chief Economist Gita Gopinath will leave her job in January next year and return to the prestigious Harvard University, according to the global financial institution. The 49-year-old prominent Indian-American economist had joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as the Chief Economist in January 2019. She was the John Zwaanstra Professor of International Studies and Economics at Harvard University when she joined the Washington-based global lender.

HDFC Bank, Mastercard, USAID commit \$100-mn credit facility

The new credit facility aims to expand lending to small businesses that need financing to maintain and grow their operations, and enable recovery through digitisation, with an emphasis on supporting women-led businesses, said a statement from HDFC Bank. The partnership is designed in such a way that HDFC Bank will look beyond its existing customer base and provide at least 50 per cent of the credit facility available to new small business borrowers.

Covaxin approved for emergency use in 2-18-year-olds

Bharat Biotech's COVID-19 vaccine Covaxin (BBV152) has been recommended for Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) for 2-18-year-olds by the Subject Expert Committee (SEC) of the Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation (CDSCO). Covaxin is the country's first indigenous, whole-virion, inactivated vaccine developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Medical Research Council (ICMR) and the National Institute of Virology (NIV).

Rajnish Kumar joins BharatPe as Chairman

Rajnish Kumar, former chief of State Bank of India, has joined the Board of BharatPe, a fintech firm, as chairman. He will be involved in defining the company's short-term and long-term strategies, and will so work closely with the other Board Members and CXOs on key business and regulatory initiatives, BharatPe said in a statement. BharatPe-Centrum Capital have received an in-principle nod from the Reserve Bank of India to set up a small finance bank.

Telangana to test Mobile-based e-voting system

The proposal has got the Telangana government's approval and the dry run will be held in the Khammam district on October 20. Guided by the necessity to hold polls in India under the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Telangana State Election Commission is set to conduct a dry run of a system which can facilitate voting using their smartphones from the confines of their home.



Moody's upgrades outlook on India's sovereign rating to Stable

While risks from a high debt burden and weak debt affordability remain, Moody's expects the economic environment to allow for a gradual reduction of the fiscal deficit over the next few years, preventing a deterioration of the sovereign credit profile. K.V. Subramanian, chief economic adviser in the finance ministry, said the outlook upgrade acknowledged the government's assessment that the fundamentals of the Indian economy are strong.

'Electronic Pension Payment Order' integrated with Digi Locker

The Centre on Tuesday announced that it has integrated the Electronic Pension Payment Order (EPPO) with Digi Locker. This will benefit over 23 lakhs defence pensioners. The official release said. department of ex-servicemen welfare, Ministry of Defence has integrated the Electronic Pension Payment Order (EPPO) generated by Principal Controller of Defence Accounts (PCDA) Pension, Allahabad with Digi Locker, in order to enhance 'Ease of Living' of Defence Pensioners.

RBI's new auto Debit Rules- Highlights

To bolster the safety and security of card transactions, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) mandated new auto-debit rules kick in from Friday. RBI's directive states that there will be no automatic recurring payment for various services including utility bills, recharge of phone, DTH, and OTT, among others as the additional factor of authentication (AFA) will become mandatory from today. Under the new norms, banks will be required to inform customers in advance about recurring payments due and transactions would be carried the following nod from the customer. So the transactions would not be automatic but would be done after authentication from the customer.

India wins Bronze at Asian TT Championships

The Indian men's table tennis team signed off with a bronze medal in the Asian Championships after losing to formidable South Korea 0-3 in the semifinals here on Friday. The Indian team, on Wednesday, was assured of a medal after beating Iran 3-1 in the quarterfinals. Both the semifinalists secure a bronze.



Football: Sunil Chhetri equals Pele with 77th goal

MALE: Talismanic captain Sunil Chhetri equalled the legendary Pele with his 77th international goal as his 83rd minute strike helped India beat Nepal 1-0 and saved his side from the verge of elimination in the SAFF Championships here on Sunday. The 37-year-old Chhetri, playing in his 123rd match for India, struck a late goal to place himself on even keel with the Brazilian great (77 goals from 92 matches).



India's foreign exchange reserves increased by USD 2.039 billion

The country's foreign exchange reserves rose by USD 1.492 billion to reach USD 641.008 billion in the week ended October 15, RBI data showed on Friday. In the previous week ended October 8, the reserves had increased by USD 2.039 billion to USD 639.516 billion. The reserves had touched a lifetime high of USD 642.453 billion in the week ended September 3, 2021.



INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Facebook rebrands as 'Meta'

The company said it would better "encompass" what it does, as it broadens its reach beyond social media into areas like virtual reality (VR). The change does not apply to its individual platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram and Whatsapp, only the parent company that owns them.



India's CEC visits Uzbekistan as International Observer for Presidential Elections

New Delhi: Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra visited Uzbekistan as an international observer for the October 24 presidential election there. The CEC led a three-member delegation, according to an Election Commission statement on Thursday.



Indian-origin Leader becomes Canada's new Defence Minister

Indian-origin Canadian politician Anita Anand was on October 26 appointed as the country's new Defence Minister in a Cabinet reshuffle by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, over a month after his Liberal Party returned power in the snap polls and amid calls for major military reforms.



US issues passport with 'X' gender marker

The United States has issued its first passport with an "X" gender designation — a milestone in the recognition of the rights of people who don't identify as male or female — and expects to be able to offer the option to nonbinary, intersex and gender-nonconforming people early next year, the State Department said Wednesday. The U.S.' special diplomatic envoy for LGBTQ rights, Jessica Stern, called the moves historic and celebratory, saying they bring the government documents in line with the "lived reality" that there is a wider spectrum of human sex characteristics than is reflected in the previous two designations.

Australia: In-principal support for net zero by 2050

Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced on Monday that a fifth National's party minister will join his Cabinet as part of deal to cement the junior coalition partner's support for a national target of zero net carbon emissions by 2050.



China adopts New Border Law

China said on Thursday that its new land border law will not affect the implementation of existing border treaties and urged relevant countries to avoid making "wanton speculation" about a "normal domestic legislation", a day after India raised concerns over the legislation. China's national legislature - the National People's Congress (NPC) - on October 23 adopted the new law on the protection and exploitation of the land border areas which drew sharp reaction from India as it was passed amid the protracted military standoff between the two sides in eastern Ladakh region.

UN warns of Afghan Food Crisis

More than half the population - about 22.8 million people - face acute food insecurity, while 3.2 million children under five could suffer acute malnutrition, the WFP said. "Afghanistan is now among the world's worst humanitarian crises, if not the worst," said David Beasley, the executive director of the WFP. "We are on a countdown to catastrophe." Afghanistan fell to the Taliban in August after the US pulled out the last of its remaining troops and the militants swept across the country retaking ground.

Saudi Arabia launches National Infrastructure Fund

Saudi Arabia, advised by the world's largest fund manager BlackRock, has launched a national infrastructure fund to support up to 200 billion riyals (\$53.32 billion) in projects over the next decade, state news agency SPA said on Monday. The National Infrastructure Fund will invest in areas such as water, transportation, energy, and health, contributing to Saudi Arabia's plans to transform the economy and make it less reliant on oil revenue.

Saudi Green Initiative Forum

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman opened the Saudi Green Initiative forum in Riyadh place on Saturday, announcing the Kingdom's new "green" objectives. The forum will discuss Saudi Arabia's environmental efforts with guests that include high-profile government leaders and international personalities. "We announce in this Forum the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's roadmap for protecting the environment and confronting climate change. This annual forum will serve as a platform to launch our new environmental initiatives and monitor the impact.

US successfully tests Hypersonic Missile Technology

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Pentagon successfully tested a booster rocket motor on Thursday designed to power a launch vehicle carrying a hypersonic weapon aloft, the Navy said. The United States and its global rivals have intensified their drive to build hypersonic weapons - the next generation of arms that rob adversaries of reaction time and traditional defeat mechanisms. Defense contractors hope to capitalize as they make the weapons and develop new detection and defeat mechanisms.

Alibaba launches new server chip based on advanced 5-nanometer tech

Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. unveiled a new server chip that's based on advanced 5-nanometer technology, marking a milestone in China's pursuit of semiconductor self-sufficiency. The Chinese tech giant's newest chip is based on micro-architecture provided by the SoftBank Group Corp.-owned Arm Ltd., according to a statement Tuesday. Alibaba, which is holding its annual cloud summit in Hangzhou, said the silicon will be put to use in its own data centers.

Sri Lanka receives first consignment of Nano Nitrogen Liquid Fertilizer from India

Sri Lanka has received the first consignment of 3.1 million litres high quality non-harmful Nano Nitrogen liquid fertiliser from India to help the island nation's Eastern province in the cultivation of maize and paddy, country's Agriculture Secretary Prof Udith Jayasinghe said on Wednesday. The import of Nano Nitrogen liquid fertiliser came months after President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's decision in May to stop chemical fertiliser imports sparked anger and widespread protests in the farmland districts of the country.

Japan: Mount Aso volcano erupts at Kyushu Island

Japanese authorities on Wednesday warned of the threat of lava flows and falling rocks after a volcano erupted on the main southern island of Kyushu. Mount Aso is one of the world's largest active volcanoes and the largest volcano in Japan. The 1,592-meter (5,223-foot) volcano is a popular tourist destination.



FATF adds Turkey to Grey List; Pak retained

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has retained kept Pakistan on its grey list and added its ally Turkey to the list, in a double blow for Islamabad which depended on Ankara's support to avoid entry into the blacklist earlier. Jordan and Mali were also added to the grey list. FATF denied that it acted under Indian pressure to keep Pakistan in the grey list. Pakistan "needs to further demonstrate that investigation and prosecution of proscribed terrorists and terror groups.

Nuri: South Korea's First Homegrown Space Rocket

The Korean Satellite Launch Vehicle II, known as Nuri, took off from Goheung, about 500km (310 miles) south of Seoul. President Moon Jae-in said the vehicle completed its full flight sequence but failed in its goal of putting a dummy satellite in orbit. Such launches are essential for a space programme but could potentially also have military applications.



US List of 'Countries of concern' on climate

The United States has categorised India as a 'country of concern' along with 10 others that in the assessment of the American intelligence community will bear the brunt of global warming that could include intensifying and more frequent heat waves and droughts and water and power scarcity. The other countries on the list are Afghanistan, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iraq, Pakistan, Nicaragua, Colombia, Myanmar and North Korea.

Germany launches World's First Self-Driving Train

German rail operator Deutsche Bahn and industrial group Siemens on Monday unveiled the world's first automated, driverless train in the city of Hamburg, billing it as more punctual and energy efficient than traditional trains.



Anshu Malik:1st Indian woman wrestler to reach World Championship final

Anshu Malik on Wednesday created history by becoming the first Indian woman wrestler to reach the World Championship final when she outclassed junior European champion Solomiia Vynnyk but Sarita Mor lost her semifinal and will fight for a bronze in Oslo.



WHO approves world's first Malaria vaccine

In a landmark announcement, the World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended the use of the first-ever malaria vaccine for children. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus endorsed the RTS,S/AS01 malaria or Mosquirix - a vaccine developed by British drugmaker GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) . According to Tedros, " RTS,S malaria vaccine – more than 30 years in the making – changes the course of public health history.

UAE announces Probe targeting asteroid between Mars & Jupiter

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) on October 5 announced plans to send a probe to land on an asteroid between Mars and Jupiter to collect data on the origins of the universe, the latest project in the oil-rich federation's ambitious space programme.



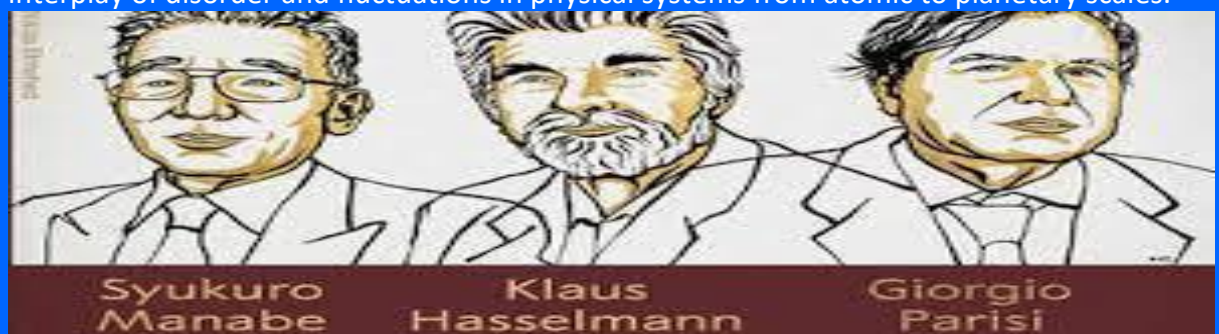
Nobel Peace Prize, 2021

Between 1901 and 2021, the Nobel Prizes and the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel were awarded 609 times to 975 people and organisations. With some receiving the Nobel Prize more than once, this makes a total of 943 individuals and 25 organisations. Below, you can view the full list of Nobel Prizes and Nobel Prize laureates.



Nobel Prize for Physics, 2021

The Nobel Prize in Physics 2021 was awarded "for groundbreaking contributions to our understanding of complex systems" with one half jointly to Syukuro Manabe and Klaus Hasselmann "for the physical modelling of Earth's climate, quantifying variability and reliably predicting global warming" and the other half to Giorgio Parisi "for the discovery of the interplay of disorder and fluctuations in physical systems from atomic to planetary scales."



Nobel Prize for Chemistry, 2021

The Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2021 was awarded jointly to Benjamin List and David W.C. MacMillan "for the development of asymmetric organocatalysis."



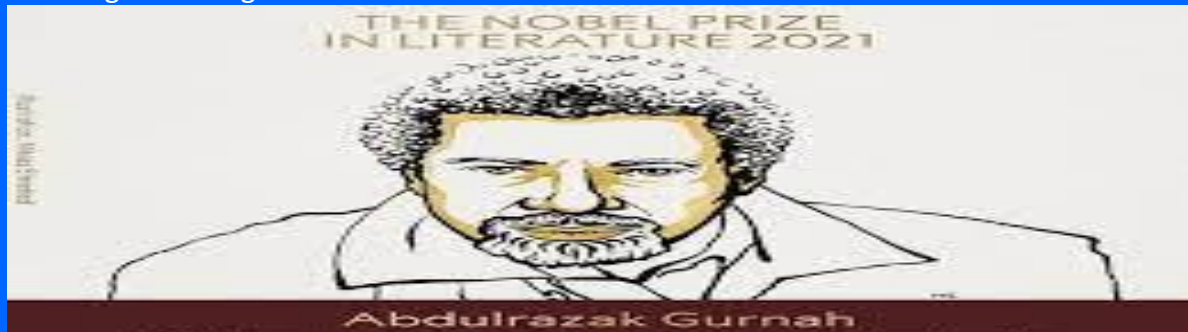
Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine, 2021

The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2021 was awarded jointly to David Julius and Ardem Patapoutian "for their discoveries of receptors for temperature and touch."



Nobel Prize in Literature, 2021

The Nobel Prize in Literature 2021 was awarded to Abdulrazak Gurnah "for his uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugee in the gulf between cultures and continents."



Nobel Prize for Peace, 2021

The Nobel Peace Prize 2021 was awarded jointly to Maria Ressa and Dmitry Andreychuk Muratov "for their efforts to safeguard freedom of expression, which is a precondition for democracy and lasting peace."



Nobel Prize for Economic Sciences, 2021

The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel 2021 was divided, one half awarded to David Card "for his empirical contributions to labour economics", the other half jointly to Joshua D. Angrist and Guido W. Imbens "for their methodological contributions to the analysis of causal relationships."



Russia test-fires Hypersonic missile from submarine

A prospective Russian hypersonic missile has been successfully test-fired from a nuclear submarine for the first time, the military said Monday. The Russian Defence Ministry said the Zircon missile was launched from the Severodvinsk submarine and hit a designated mock target in the Barents Sea. The launch marked Zircon's first launch from a submarine. It previously has been repeatedly test-fired from a navy frigate, most recently in July.

IMF Report on Crypto Ecosystem

The rapid growth of the crypto ecosystem presents new opportunities, the IMF has said but also cautioned that the digital currency assets pose financial stability challenges. Cryptocurrencies are digital or virtual currencies.

