



# Current Affairs for Prelims

**January** 2022

For Admission & Enquiry

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### 1. Konyak Nagas

- They are known to be one of the **fiercest warrior tribes in Nagaland**.
- Population of roughly 3 lakh, the area inhabited by the Konyaks extends into **Arunachal Pradesh**, with a sizable population in **Myanmar** as well.
- The Konyaks were the last to give up the practice of head-hunting – severing heads of enemies after attacking rival tribes – as late as the 1980s.
- **Mon** is the only district in Nagaland where the separatist group has not been able to set up base camps, largely due to resistance from the Konyaks.
- The Konyaks therefore, are imperative for a smooth resolution of the peace talks, as well as the post-talk peace process in the state.
- Around 4,700 Konyak Naga women, in their colourful traditional attire came together on April 5, 2019, in an attempt to set a Guinness World Record for the “Largest Traditional Konyak Dance”.

### 2. Dark Genome

- The dark genome is a vast space, accounting for the ~98.5% of genomic space where repeat elements, enhancers, regulatory sequences, and non-coding RNAs reside.
- Researchers investigating the “dark genome” report that they have discovered recently evolved regions that code for **proteins associated with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder**.
- They say these new proteins can be used as biological indicators to distinguish between the two conditions, and to identify patients more prone to psychosis or suicide.
- Hotspots in the dark genome associated with the disorders may have evolved because they have beneficial functions in human development, but their disruption by environmental factors leads to susceptibility to, or development of, schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.
- The researchers think that these genomic components of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are specific to humans—the **newly discovered regions are not found in the genomes of other vertebrates**.

### 3. New IPO guidelines by SEBI

- According to the new SEBI rules, the price band of an IPO should be set in such a way that the ceiling price is at least 105% of the floor price.
- Secondly, companies will not be allowed to use more than 35% of the money that they collect through IPOs to fund the purchase of other businesses **unless they offer sufficient details.**
- Thirdly, promoters with a stake of over 20% in a company cannot sell more than half of their stake in an IPO.
- And lastly, anchor investors will not be able to sell more than half their shares before 90 days from the date of the IPO, against the current time stipulation of 30 days.

### Initial Public Offering (IPO)

- An initial public offering (IPO) refers to the **process of offering shares of a private corporation to the public in a new stock issuance.**
- An IPO allows a company to raise capital from public investors.
- Companies must meet requirements by exchanges and SEBI to hold an IPO.
- IPOs provide companies with an opportunity to obtain capital by offering **shares through the primary market.**
- Companies hire investment banks to market, gauge demand, set the IPO price and date, and more.
- An IPO can be seen as an exit strategy for the company's founders and early investors, realizing the full profit from their private investment.

### 4. World Press Freedom Index

- **India ranked 150** on the World Press Freedom Index 2022. This index is released by the **Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF).**
- In this year's index, the country slipped eight positions from 142 to 150th position. India is said to be one of the most dangerous countries for the

press. In the country, an average of 3 to 4 journalists are killed each year. In this index's inaugural edition, India was ranked 80th.

- This index has been published annually since the year 2020. This index is published by the Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) or Reporters Without Borders.
- This index is used to rank countries according to the press freedom levels available to the journalists of a country. The index **doesn't serve as an indicator of journalism quality**.

### Reporters Sans Frontières

- RSF is an **international non-governmental as well as a non-profit organization** that safeguards the right to freedom of information.
- RSF enjoys consultative status at UNESCO, the United Nations, the International Organisation of the Francophonie, and the Council of Europe.

## 5. Pangong Tso Lake

- Pangong Tso is a **long narrow, deep, landlocked lake** situated at a height of more than 14,000 ft in the **Ladakh, Himalayas**.
- The 135 km-long lake sprawls over 604 sq km in the shape of a boomerang, and is 6 km wide at its broadest point.
- The western end of Pangong Tso lies 54 km to the southeast of Leh.
- The brackish water lake freezes over in winter, and becomes ideal for ice skating and polo.





## 6. Small-Value Digital Payments in Offline Mode

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has come out with the framework for facilitating small-value digital payments in offline mode, a move that would **promote digital payments in semi-urban and rural areas.**
- The framework incorporates feedback received from the pilot experiments on offline transactions conducted in different parts of the country between September 2020 and June 2021.
- An offline digital payment does not require Internet or telecom connectivity.
- Under this new framework, such payments can be carried out face-to-face (proximity mode) using any channel or instrument like cards, wallets and mobile devices.
- Such **transactions would not require an Additional Factor of Authentication.** Since the transactions are offline, alerts (by way of SMS and / or e-mail) will be received by the customer after a time lag.
- There is a limit **of ₹200 per transaction and an overall limit of ₹2,000 until the balance in the account is replenished.**

## 7. Multi Agency Centre (MAC)

- It is a common counter-terrorism grid under the **Intelligence Bureau** that was made operational in 2001 following the Kargil War.
- As many as 28 organisations, including the **Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), armed forces and State police**, are part of the platform.
- Various security agencies share real-time intelligence inputs on the MAC.
- MAC was formed in December 2001 following the Kargil intrusion and the subsequent overhaul of the Indian national security apparatus suggested by the **Kargil Review Committee report and GoM report.**
- Accordingly, the Intelligence Bureau (IB) was authorized to create a multi-agency centre (MAC) in New Delhi.
- Now functioning **24/7 as the nodal body** for sharing intelligence inputs, MAC coordinates with representatives from numerous agencies, different ministries, both central and state.
- As noted in a 2016 parliamentary report the major contributors of intelligence inputs to the MAC were the **Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW).**

## 8. Build Back Better World

- The Build Back Better Plan is a **Covid-19 relief, future economic, and infrastructure package** proposed by G-7 countries for developing and lower-income countries.
- Through B3W, the G7 and other like-minded partners will coordinate in mobilizing private-sector capital in four areas of focus:
  - Climate,
  - Health and health security,
  - Digital technology,
  - Gender equity and equality.
- Infrastructure development carried out in a **transparent and sustainable manner—financially, environmentally, and socially —will lead to a better** outcome for recipient countries and communities.
- B3W to infuse investment by complying with the standards promoted by the Blue Dot Network, relating to the environment and climate, labor and social safeguards, transparency, financing, construction, anti-corruption, and other areas.
- The investments will be made in a manner consistent with achieving the goals of the **Paris Climate Agreement**.
- The investments will be made in a manner consistent with achieving the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement.

## 9. Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty

- Mutual Legal Assistance is a mechanism whereby countries cooperate with one another in order to provide and obtain formal assistance in prevention, suppression, investigation and prosecution of crime.
- The Centre has issued revised guidelines for mutual legal assistance in criminal matters with other nations.
- India has Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties, MLAT with 42 countries and is signatory to various International Conventions for cooperation in criminal matters.
- The Home Ministry is the designated central authority for the country.

- Under the MLAT, a country can request for obtaining evidence for criminal investigations and prosecutions. The evidence includes witness statements or the service of documents among others.

## 10. Prohibition of Child Marriage Act

- The **Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021** was introduced in Lok Sabha in 2021.
- The Bill amends the **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006** to increase the **minimum age of marriage of females**.
- The Act provides that the **minimum age of marriage is 21 years** in case of **males, and 18 years in case of females**.
- The Bill increases the **minimum age in case of females to 21 years**.
- The Bill also amends certain other laws relating to marriage to increase the minimum age of marriage of females under those laws to 21 years. These are:
  - Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872,
  - Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936,
  - Special Marriage Act, 1954,
  - Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, and
  - Foreign Marriage Act, 1969.
- Under the Act, a child marriage is one where either of the parties to the marriage is a child (i.e., their age is less than the minimum age of marriage).
- The Act provides that a child marriage may be annulled by the party who was a child at the time of marriage.
- Such parties may file a petition in a district court for a decree of nullity.
- The petition should be filed before such party completes two years of attaining majority (i.e., completes 20 years of age).
- The Bill amends this to allow such a party to **file the petition before completing five years of attaining majority** (i.e., completes 23 years of age).



## 11. AUKUS

- The US administration announced a new trilateral security partnership for the **Indo-Pacific, between Australia, the U.K. and the U.S. (AUKUS)**. As part of this, Australia will acquire nuclear-powered submarines with help from the U.K. and the US within 18 months.
- Under the AUKUS alliance, the three nations have agreed to enhance the development of **joint capabilities and technology sharing, foster deeper integration of security and defence-related science, technology, industrial bases and supply chains**.
- Under the first major initiative of AUKUS, Australia would build a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines with the help of the US and the UK, a capability aimed at **promoting stability in the Indo-Pacific region**.
- The nuclear-powered submarines will give Australia naval heft in the Pacific, where China has been particularly aggressive.
- While the **US and Britain have had the capability for decades, Australia has never had an n-sub**.

## 12. Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH)

- Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats' (IDWH) is an on-going **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** which has been made operational by adding more components and activities to the erstwhile Centrally Sponsored Scheme - "Assistance for the Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries" during the 11th Plan Period.
- Under IDWH, the financial assistance is provided to State/UT Governments for **protection and conservation of wildlife** and its habitats in **Protected Areas (PAs)** as well as outside PAs and also for the recovery programmes of the **critically endangered species**.

### Components of the scheme

- **Support to Protected Areas** (National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves)
- Protection of **Wildlife Outside Protected Areas**





- **Recovery programmes** for saving critically endangered species and habitats

### 13. Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use

- It recognises that to meet our land use, climate, biodiversity and sustainable development goals, both globally and nationally.
- It will require transformative further action in the interconnected areas of sustainable production and consumption; infrastructure development; trade; finance and investment; and support for smallholders, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities, who depend on forests for their livelihoods and have a key role in their stewardship.
- The **declaration interlinks trade to climate change and forest issues.**
- Twenty eight governments have also committed to remove deforestation from the global trade of food and other agricultural products such as palm oil, soya and cocoa.
- Governments representing 75% of global trade in key commodities that can threaten forests – such as palm oil, cocoa and soya – will commit to a common set of actions to deliver sustainable trade and reduce pressure on forests, including support for smallholder farmers and improving the transparency of supply chains.
- India did not sign the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use.
- **It is an ambitious declaration initiated by the United Kingdom to “halt deforestation” and land degradation by 2030.**
- India objected to “trade” being interlinked to climate change and forest issues in the agreement.
- The declaration has over 105 signatories including the **UK, US, Russia and China.**
- **India, Argentina, Mexico, Saudi Arabia and South Africa are the only G20 countries that did not sign the declaration.**

## 14. Gharials to Return to Orang National Park

The **Assam** government has issued a preliminary notification to make Orang National Park more than thrice its existing size for conserving Gharials.



### Gharials

- Gharials, sometimes called gavials, are a type of **Asian crocodilian**

distinguished by their **long, thin snouts**.

- Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*): IUCN Red List- Critically Endangered
- Natural Habitat: Fresh waters of the northern part of India.
- Primary Habitat: Chambal river (a tributary of Yamuna).
- Secondary Habitat: Ghagra, Gandak river, Girwa river (Uttar Pradesh), the Ramganga river (Uttarakhand) and the Sone river (Bihar).
- Significance: Population of Gharials are a good indicator of clean river water.

### Conservation Efforts:

- Kukrail Gharial Rehabilitation Centre in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, National Chambal Sanctuary (Gharial Eco Park, Madhya Pradesh).
- Orang National Park

### Orang National Park

- The Orang National Park also known as Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park is located on the **north bank of the Brahmaputra River in the Darrang and Sonitpur districts of Assam** and covers an area of 78.81 square kilometers.
- It was established as a wildlife sanctuary in 1985 but was declared as a National Park in 1999. It is also the 49th Tiger Reserve of the country, being notified in 2016.
- It is also known as the **mini Kaziranga National Park** since the two parks have a similar landscape made up of marshes, streams, and grasslands.



- It is the only stronghold of rhinoceros on the north bank of the Brahmaputra river.

### 15. INS Vikrant

- The **Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) 1**, which will be called INS Vikrant once it enters service with the Indian Navy, began another set of sea trials.
- INS Vikrant is the largest and most complex warship to be built in India.
- INS Vikrant served India from 1961 to 1997.
- India acquired the Vikrant from the **United Kingdom in 1961**, and the carrier played a stellar role in the **1971 war with Pakistan** that **led to the birth of Bangladesh**.
- In 2014, INS Vikrant, was broken down in Mumbai.
- In order to commemorate the legacy of INS Vikrant (decommissioned), the First IAC will be named as INS Vikrant.
- It is built at Cochin Shipyard Limited.
- It is currently undergoing sea trials and is likely to be commissioned in 2023.
- Its construction propelled India into a select group of countries having capabilities to build state-of-the-art aircraft carriers.

### 16. E Passports

- ePassport is an **upgrade to the traditional passport** and is aimed at making it more secure and ensuring smooth passage through immigration posts globally.
- The ePassports will be **embedded with a chip** that will include personal details of the holder including biographical information.
- The software for the ePassport has been developed by **IIT Kanpur and the National Informatics Centre (NIC)**.
- It will **ease immigration process across the world** and will also increase digital safety for the passport holders.
- The e-passports will follow the **International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) standards**, and will be tougher, as well as harder to destroy.



## ICAO

- ICAO is a **United Nations (UN) specialised agency**, established in 1944, which laid the foundation for the standards and procedures for peaceful global air navigation. **India is its member.**

## 17. Collective Security Treaty Organisation

- Collective Security Treaty Organisation is an **intergovernmental military alliance**, comprising six members namely, **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Belarus, Tajikistan and Russia. Uzbekistan** was also a member but it quit the organisation in 2012.
- This is also referred to as the “Tashkent Pact” or “Tashkent Treaty”.
- Three other post-Soviet states—Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Georgia—signed the next year and the treaty took effect in 1994.
- Five years later, six of the nine—all but Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Uzbekistan—agreed to renew the treaty for five more years, and in 2002 those six agreed to create the CSTO as a military alliance.

## 18. NATO

- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is **a military alliance established by the North Atlantic Treaty** (also called the Washington Treaty) of April, 1949, by the United States, Canada, and several Western European nations to provide collective security against the Soviet Union.
- NATO has an **integrated military command structure** but very few forces or assets are exclusively its own.
- There are **currently 30 member states.**
- All 30 allies have an equal say, the Alliance’s decisions must be unanimous and consensual, and its members must respect the basic values that underpin the Alliance, namely democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.
- NATO's protection does not extend to members' civil wars or internal coups.
- NATO is funded by its members. The U.S. contributes roughly three-fourths of NATO's budget.



- NATO **promotes democratic values** and enables members to consult and cooperate on defence and security-related issues to solve problems, build trust and, in the long run, prevent conflict.
- NATO is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes. If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military power to undertake crisis-management operations.

### 19. SCO

- SCO is a **permanent intergovernmental international organisation** of Eurasian Nations with a secretariat in Beijing.
- They represent 40% of the world population and approximately 20% of World GDP along with about 22% of the world landmass.
- It is a **political, economic and military organisation** that aims at **maintaining peace, security and stability in the region**.
- The SCO's official languages are Russian and Chinese.
- It currently has 8 members with the latest being **India and Pakistan who were made members in 2017**.
- There are 4 Observer States and multiple Dialogue Partners.

### 20. Eurasian Economic Union

- The Eurasian Economic Union is an **international organization** for regional economic integration. It has international legal personality and is established by the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union.
- The EAEU provides for **free movement of goods, services, capital and labor, pursues coordinated, harmonized and single policy** in the sectors determined by the Treaty and international agreements within the Union.
- The Member-States of the Eurasian Economic Union are the Republic of **Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Russian Federation**.
- The Union is being created to comprehensively upgrade, raise the competitiveness of and cooperation between the national economies, and to promote stable development in order to raise the living standards of the nations of the Member-States.



## 21. Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)

- SAGAR is a term coined by PM Modi in 2015 during his Mauritius visit with a focus on the blue economy.
- It is a **maritime initiative** which gives **priority to the Indian Ocean region for ensuring peace, stability and prosperity of India** in the Indian Ocean region.
- The goal is to seek a climate of trust and transparency; respect for international maritime rules and norms by all countries; sensitivity to each other's interests; peaceful resolution of maritime issues; and increase in maritime cooperation.
- It is in line with the principles of the **Indian Ocean Rim Association**.

## 22. Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty

- The INF Treaty was signed in December 1987 by President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev.
- It prohibited the United States and the Soviet Union from possessing, testing and deploying ground-launched cruise and ballistic missiles with ranges between 300 and 3,400 miles (488km and 5,472km).
- Under the treaty, Washington and Moscow destroyed 846 and 1,846 missiles, respectively.
- Short flight times and unpredictable flight patterns made these missiles hard to detect, so strategists argued that these systems exacerbated crisis instability and increased the chances of accidental nuclear war.
- Given their relatively limited range, these systems were designed chiefly to fight a theatre nuclear war in Europe.
- European countries, therefore, considered the destruction of these missiles highly beneficial to regional security.
- The **INF Treaty covered all types of ground-launched cruise and ballistic missiles** – whether their payload is conventional or nuclear.
- Moscow and Washington are prohibited from deploying these missiles anywhere in the world, not just in Europe.



- However, **the treaty only applies to ground-launched systems.** Both sides are free to deploy air- and sea-launched missiles within the 300- to 3,400-mile range

### 23. Dam Safety Act, 2021

- The Bill provides for proper **surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance** of all specified dams in the country to ensure their safe functioning.
- The Bill provides for the constitution of a **National Committee on Dam Safety** which shall evolve dam safety policies and recommend necessary regulations as may be required for the purpose.
- The Bill provides for the establishment of the National Dam Safety Authority as a **regulatory body** which shall discharge functions to implement the policy, guidelines and standards for dam safety in the country.
- The Bill provides for the constitution of a State Committee on **Dam Safety by the State Government.**
- According to **Entry 17 of State List**, the states are eligible to make laws on irrigation, water supply, canals, embankments, drainage, water power and water storage.
- According to **Entry 56 of the Union List**, the Parliament is allowed to make laws on regulation of river valleys and inter state rivers.
- **Article 252** allows the Parliament to make laws on subjects in the State list if two or more states pass resolutions requiring a law.
- In this issue, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh have passed resolutions asking for a law on dam safety.

### 24. Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)

- Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) was established in April 1987 by **Japan.**
- It aims to **limit the spread of ballistic missiles and other unmanned delivery systems** that could be used for chemical, biological, and nuclear attacks.



- It has 35 members, which include most of the world's key missile manufacturers, **India is a member in this group.**
- It seeks to restrict the exports of missiles and related technologies of any type of weapon of mass destruction.

## 25. Blue Dot Network

- The Blue Dot Network was formally announced on 4 November 2019 at the **Indo-Pacific Business Forum** in Bangkok, Thailand during the 35th **ASEAN summit.**
- The project is led by the US's **International Development Finance Corporation (DFC).**
- The initiative is meant to galvanise the private sector investment in infrastructure development in emerging markets.
  - It is expected to serve as a global evaluation and certification system for roads, ports, and bridges with a focus on the Indo-Pacific region.
  - The projects that are approved will get a "Blue Dot", which would set universal standards of excellence to attract private capital to projects in developing and emerging economies.
  - It will be a globally recognized symbol of market-driven, transparent and sustainable infrastructure projects.
  - It will foster sustainable economic growth by promoting excellence in infrastructure development and supporting alternatives to predatory lending.
- The Blue Dot Network will use **infrastructure development principles set by the G20 and G7 nations** as a foundation for its standards.
- **OECD will provide technical and operational input** to the global certification process.



## 26. Trincomalee Oil Tank Farm

- The Trincomalee Oil Tank Farm is **located** in 'China Bay'. It comprises 99 storage tanks, with a capacity of 12,000 kilolitres each, spread across Lower Tank farm and Upper Tank Farm.
- Currently, Lanka IOC runs 15 tanks. The new agreement is being negotiated for the remaining tanks.
- **Indian Oil Corporation** will work with the **Ceylon Petroleum Corporation** for developing the Upper Tank Farm.



## 27. Chilika Lake

- Chilika Lake is a **brackish water lagoon**, spread over the **Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts of Odisha**.
- Chilika Lake is a shallow bar-built estuary with large areas of mudflats.
- It is **located at the mouth of the Daya River, flowing into the Bay of Bengal**, covering an area of over 1,100 km<sup>2</sup>.



## 28. Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC)

- It is a company created in 2010 and jointly owned by advertisers, ad agencies, and broadcasting companies, represented by the Indian Society

of Advertisers, the **Indian Broadcasting Foundation and the Advertising Agencies Association of India.**

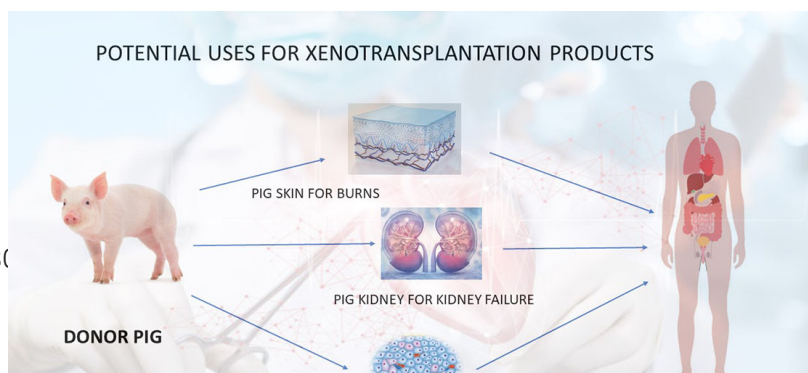
- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting notified the Policy Guidelines for Television Rating Agencies in India on January 10, 2014, and registered BARC in July 2015 under these guidelines, to carry out television ratings in India.
- It is built upon a robust and future-ready technology backbone, BARC India owns and **manages a transparent, accurate, and inclusive TV audience measurement system.**
- Apart from the currency products to the TV industry, BARC India also provides a suite of Insight products designed for Broadcasters, Advertisers and Agencies.
- The Big Data and Insights generated by BARC India powers efficient media spends and content decisions in a highly dynamic and growing television sector.

### 30. Pacific Nation of Tonga

- A volcano erupted in the southern Pacific Island of Tonga, which triggered Tsunami waves around the Pacific.
- The Tonga Islands occur along the **Ring of Fire**—a perimeter of heightened volcanic and seismic activity that encircles the Pacific Ocean basin.
- It is an Undersea Volcanic Eruption consisting of two small uninhabited islands, **Hunga-Ha'apai and Hunga-Tonga.**
- The Hunga-Tonga-Hunga-Ha'apai volcano has erupted regularly over the past few decades.
- This is one of the massive explosions the volcano is capable of producing roughly every thousand years.
- One of the reasons for it being highly explosive is the **Fuel-Coolant interaction.**

### 31. Xenotransplantation

- Xenotransplantation is any **procedure that involves the transplantation, implantation or infusion into a human**



**recipient of either (a) live cells, tissues, or organs from a nonhuman animal source, or (b) human body fluids, cells, tissues or organs** that have had ex vivo contact with live nonhuman animal cells, tissues or organs.

- Xenotransplantation, or transplanting organs across different species, was first tried in humans in the 1980s.
- The experiment was abandoned after the famous case of the American Baby Fae who was born with a congenital heart defect and received a baboon heart in 1984.
- However, pig heart valves have been used for replacing damaged valves in humans for over 50 years now.
- Nowadays, harvesting organs from genetically engineered pigs is seen as a viable alternative to meet organ shortage.
- Modern scientific supporters of xenotransplantation argue that the potential benefits to society outweigh the risks, making pursuing xenotransplantation the moral choice.
- None of the major religions object to the use of genetically modified pig organs for life-saving transplantation.

### 32. Mangar Bani Forest

- It is forested area in Faridabad district, **Haryana**.
- Archaeologists have discovered **cave paintings at a prehistoric site** here.
- They believe that these paintings belong to the **Upper Palaeolithic age**, which could potentially make them one of the oldest cave arts in the country.
- However, tools from the Palaeolithic age have been identified earlier in parts of the **Aravallis**.
- Moreover, the latest discovery will take the history of Haryana further back in time.

### 33. National Conservation Zone

- The **National Conservation Zone (NCZ)**, as defined in the Delhi NCR Regional Plan 2021, covers the entire **Aravalli range**.
- It **includes its forests, water bodies and groundwater recharge areas**.

- In this zone, **construction is allowed only on 0.5 per cent of the area** and that too only for regional parks and sanctuaries.
- **Construction for commercial, residential, tourism and real estate purposes is strictly barred.**

### 34. Denison Barb (Miss Kerala)

- Denison barb, a **native freshwater fish species** commonly found in parts of **Karnataka and Kerala**, has been included in **Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021.**



- It is a **red-line torpedo barb and roseline shark.**
- This species is known to inhabit fast-flowing hill streams and is often found in rocky pools with thick vegetation along river banks.
- It is an **endangered species** of freshwater fish endemic to the fast-flowing hill streams and rivers of the **Western Ghats in India.**
- **Threats:** Aquarium trade; pet collection.
- **Conservation status:** Endangered under IUCN Red list.

### 35. Kerala Bird Atlas (KBA)

- The Kerala Bird Atlas (KBA), the **first-of-its-kind State-level bird atlas in India**, has created solid baseline data about the distribution and abundance of bird species across all major habitats.
- It is Conducted as a citizen science-driven exercise.
- The KBA has been **prepared based on systematic surveys held twice over 60 days a year during the wet (July to September) and dry (January to March) seasons between 2015 and 2020.**
- It accounts for nearly three lakh records of 361 species.
- It is arguably Asia's largest bird atlas in terms of geographical extent.



- It was found that the species count was higher during the dry season than in the wet seasons.
- Species richness and evenness were higher in the northern and central districts than in the southern districts.
- Most of the **endemics were concentrated in the Western Ghats** while the threatened species were mostly along the coast.
- The survey ignored the short duration passage of migrant species.

## 36. Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS)

### Mission

- The Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) is a **NASA mission** that will look for planets orbiting the brightest stars in Earth's sky. It was led by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with seed funding from Google.
- The mission will monitor at least 200,000 stars for signs of exoplanets, ranging from Earth-sized rocky worlds to huge gas giant planets. TESS, however, will focus on stars that are 30 to 100 times brighter than those Kepler examined. This will help astronomers better understand the structure of solar systems outside of our Earth, and provide insights into how our own solar system formed.
- TESS will occupy a never-before-used orbit high above Earth. The elliptical orbit, called P/2, is exactly half of the moon's orbital period; this means that TESS will orbit Earth every 13.7 days. Its closest point to Earth (67,000 miles or 108,000 kilometers) is about triple the distance of geosynchronous orbit, where most communications satellites operate.
- It will **use a transit method to detect exoplanets**. It watches distant stars for small dips in brightness, which can indicate that a planet has passed in front of them. Repeated dips will indicate a planet passing in front of its star. This data has to be validated by repeated observations and verified by scientists.
- TESS is designed to build on the work of its predecessor, the **Kepler space telescope**, which discovered the bulk of some 3,700 exoplanets documented during the past 20 years and is running out of fuel.

- Nasa expects to pinpoint thousands more previously unknown worlds, perhaps hundreds of them Earth-sized or “super-Earth” sized – no larger than twice as big as our home planet.
- Those are believed the most likely to feature rocky surfaces or oceans and are thus considered the best candidates for life to evolve. Scientists have said they hope TESS will ultimately help catalogue at least 100 more rocky exoplanets for further study in what has become one of astronomy’s newest fields of exploration.

### 37. Statue of Equality

- The Statue of Equality is a 216-foot statue of the 11th-century saint and social reformer Sri **Ramanujacharya**.
- Statue of Equality is located in a 45-acre complex at Shamshabad on the outskirts of the city of **Hyderabad, Telangana**.
- The inner sanctum deity of Ramanujacharya is made of 120 kg of gold to commemorate the 120 years the saint walked this earth.
- The outdoor 216-foot statue would be one of the **tallest statues in a sitting posture**.
- The Statue of Equality is made of ‘panchaloha’, a mix of five metals – gold, silver, copper, brass, and zinc.
- The Statue of Equality complex has identical recreations of 108 Divya Desams, the 108 ornately carved Vishnu temples mentioned in the works of the **Alwars, mystic Tamil saints**.

### 38. Repo Linked Loan Rate (RLLR)

- Repo linked lending rate or RLLR is the **lending rate which is linked to the RBI’s repo rate**.
- However, the effective RLLR interest rate depends on multiple factors. For example, the RLLR-linked home loan interest rate will depend on several factors such as what the loan amount is, the loan-to-value of the loan and even the risk group of the borrower, amongst other things.
- There **can be a Spread or Margin charged by the bank**.



- When banks borrow funds from the RBI, it is at the repo rate. Lowering of repo rate by the RBI makes banks lend at a lower rate.
- Therefore, in case of lending based on RLLR, the home loan interest rate will move up or down as per the movement in the repo rate.
- In RLLR loans, the transmission is quicker as compared to MCLR loans. Typically, in the case of **MCLR-based loans** the reset period is 12 months.
- When the interest rate is on a downward trend, the RLLR home loans would suit borrowers. Conversely, they may hurt borrowers in the rising interest rate scenario.

## 39. Global Research on Antimicrobial Resistance (GRAM)

- The Global Research on Antimicrobial Resistance (GRAM) report used statistical modelling to estimate deaths linked to **23 pathogens and 88 pathogen-drug combinations**.
- Of the 23 pathogens studied, drug resistance in six (E coli, S aureus, K pneumoniae, S pneumoniae, A baumannii, and P aeruginosa) led directly to 9.29 lakh deaths and was associated with 3.57 million.
- One pathogen-drug combination – methicillin-resistant S aureus, or MRSA – directly caused more than 1 lakh deaths.
- Resistance to two classes of antibiotics often considered the first line of defence against severe infections – fluoroquinolones and beta-lactam antibiotics – accounted for more than 70% of deaths caused by AMR.
- A comprehensive estimate of the global impact of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), covering 204 countries and territories and published in The Lancet, has found that 1.27 million people died in 2019 as a direct result of AMR, which is now a leading cause of death worldwide, higher than HIV/AIDS or malaria.



## 40. First India–central Asia Summit and Delhi Declaration

- First India–Central Asia Summit was recently hosted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and attended by the Presidents of **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.**
- The India–Central Asia summit marked **30 years of diplomatic relations.**
- The summit came two days after a similar China–Central Asia Conference was held where China offered USD 500 million in assistance and pledged to ramp up trade to USD 70 billion from the present levels of about USD 40 billion a year.
- The Leaders discussed far-reaching proposals to further cooperation in areas of trade and connectivity, development cooperation, defence and security and, in particular, on cultural and people to people contacts. These included:
  - **Round-Table on Energy and Connectivity.**
  - Joint Working Groups at senior official level on Afghanistan and use of **Chabahar Port.**
  - Showcasing of **Buddhist exhibitions in Central Asian countries** and commissioning of an India–Central Asia dictionary of common words.
  - **Joint counter-terrorism exercises.**
  - Visit of 100 member youth delegation annually from Central Asian countries to India and special courses for Central Asian diplomats.
- A comprehensive Joint Declaration was adopted by the leaders that enumerates their common vision for an enduring and comprehensive India–Central Asia partnership.

## 41. National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd. (NARCL)

- The Union Budget 2021 announcement, the government has incorporated “National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited” (NARCL) under the **Companies Act.**





- It will acquire stressed assets worth about Rs 2 lakh crore from various commercial banks in different phases.
- Another entity – India Debt Resolution Company Ltd (IDRCL), which has also been set up – will then try to sell the stressed assets in the market.
- The NARCL-IDRCL **structure is the new bad bank.**
- To make it work, the government has provided Rs 30,600 crore to be used as a guarantee.
- The broad features of the arrangement are that NARCL will acquire and aggregate the identified NPA accounts from the banks, while IDRCL, under the exclusive arrangement, will handle the debt resolution process.
- The final approval and ownership for the resolution shall lie with NARCL as the principal.
- This arrangement will also be in full conformity with the provisions of the **SARFAESI Act** as well as outsourcing guidelines of the Reserve Bank.

## 42. Design-linked incentive (DLI) scheme

- Aims to **provide financial and infrastructural support** to companies setting up fabs or semiconductor making plants in India.
- It aims to attract existing and global players as it will support their expenditures related to design software, IP rights, development, testing, and deployment.
- **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC)**, a scientific society operating under MeitY, will serve as the nodal agency for the implementation of the DLI scheme.
- It has **three components** which are:
  1. **Chip Design infrastructure support:** C-DAC will set up the India Chip Centre to host the state-of-the-art design infrastructure (viz. EDA Tools, IP Cores, and support for MPW (Multi Project Wafer fabrication) & post-silicon validation) and facilitate its access to supported companies.
  2. **Product Design Linked Incentive:** Reimbursement of up to 50% of the eligible expenditure subject to a ceiling of Rs. 15 Crore per application

will be provided as financial support to the approved applicants who are engaged in semiconductor design.

3. **Deployment Linked Incentive:** An incentive of 6% to 4% of net sales turnover over 5 years subject to a ceiling of Rs. 30 Crore per application will be provided to approved applicants whose semiconductor design for Integrated Circuits (ICs), Chipsets, System on Chips (SoCs), Systems & IP Cores and semiconductor linked design are deployed in electronic products.

### 43. Magh Bihu

- Magh Bihu is a **harvest festival** that marks the end of the harvesting season in the month of Magh (between January and February).
- It is celebrated in **Assam**.
- The festival is marked by grand feasts and bonfires, made of green bamboo, firewood, hay, and dried banana leaves. As a tradition, people take bath before setting up the bonfire.
- On this occasion, people erect makeshift huts known as **Meji and Bhelaghar** with bamboo, leaves and thatch. And then, they burn the huts the next morning.

