

24 February, 2022 Current Affairs

1. India to set up its first IIT outside the country in UAE



- The Indian Institute of Technology will establish its first branch outside India in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as part of the India-UAE trade deal signed.
- The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed between the UAE and India will usher in a new phase of joint strategic cooperation in all sectors.
- The two nations will also set up an India-UAE cultural council to facilitate and promote cultural projects, cross-cultural exchanges and exhibitions.
- The two countries and realising the need to establish world-class institutions that encourage and support innovation and technological progress, the leaders agreed to establish an Indian Institute of Technology in the United Arab Emirates.

2. Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh becomes 100th 'Har Ghar Jal' District



- Jal Jeevan Mission has achieved the significant milestone of providing tap water to every home of 100 districts across the country.
- Chamba, in Himachal Pradesh, has become the 100th 'Har Ghar Jal' district, the fifth aspirational district to be covered under the initiative.
- The other four Har Ghar Jal Aspirational districts are Bhadradi Kothgudem, Jayashankar Bhupalpalli, Komram Bheem Asifabad (all in Telangana) and Mewat in Haryana.
- To translate Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of providing clean tap water to every home in the country by 2024, in a short span of two and half years and despite COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown disruptions, Jal Jeevan Mission, has provided tap water supply to more than 5.78 Crore rural households.

3. Union Minister Giriraj Singh releases Rural Connectivity GIS Data in Public Domain



- Giriraj Singh, who is the Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, has released the Rural Connectivity GIS Data in Public Domain.
- This data includes the GIS data for more than 8 lakh rural facilities which have been collected and digitised using the GIS platform developed for the PM-GSY scheme.
- Other than Giriraj Singh, other Union Ministers like Faggan Singh Kulaste and Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti, were also present at the release event.

On this event, Giriraj Singh recalled that since the inauguration of this scheme:

- An estimate is that more than 6.90 lakh km of roads have been constructed, which connects 1,61,508 habitations with an expenditure of about 2.69 lakh crores of Indian rupees.
- Speed of the construction of rural roads under the PMGSY has seen massive growth during the last few years and the use of new technology has been emphasized which has resulted in a saving of about 5000 crores of Indian rupees.

- The data which has been made available in the public domain can be beneficial to the startups, entrepreneurs, businesses, civil society, academics and other government departments to build products, conduct research, and plan investments for a quicker disaster response.

4. SAAF & National Cross Country Athletics Championship to be held in Nagaland



- Nagaland is all set to host the South Asian Athletic Federation (SAAF) cross country championship and 56th National Cross-Country athletics championships from 26th of next month in Kohima.
- Meanwhile, the official mascot of the South Asian Cross Country Championships and 56th National Cross Country is a joyous happy running 'Hornbill'. The name of the Mascot is Akimji – a connotation of the word AMBITION derived from Sumi dialect of Naga tribe which exemplifies the ambition of the new generation of Naga youth.
- This event is going to be perhaps Nagaland's biggest sporting event in our 50 plus years of statehood and expressed optimism that the event will propel the image of Nagaland and the state's sporting dream towards national and international platforms. On this occasion, the official team Nagaland kit was also launched.
- **Chief Minister of Nagaland: Neiphiu Rio**

- **Governor of Nagaland: Jagdish Mukhi.**

5. Sanjeev Sanyal named full-time member of Economic Advisory Council to PM



- Finance Ministry's Principal Economic Advisor, Sanjeev Sanyal has been inducted as a full-time member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM), the panel's chairman Bibek Debroy announced.
- The appointment is for a tenure of two years. He had advised the finance ministry to devise economic policies during the pandemic. The EAC-PM is an independent body constituted by the Union government to advise the prime minister on economic matters.

6. Mastercard tieup with SBI Payments to boost digital payments infrastructure



- Mastercard, as an extension of its flagship campaign 'Team Cashless India' along with State Bank of India Payments partnered with the in Lucknow, Guwahati and Varanasi to boost the digital payments infrastructure.
- During these engagements, Mastercard Team Cashless India volunteers and SBI Payments spoke to micro-merchants about the convenience, safety, and other benefits of accepting digital payments.

The outreach was very well received across cities, generating incredible results:

- In Guwahati, Mastercard collaborates with All Assam's Restaurant Association (AARA) in line with the Government's 'Digital Northeast Vision 2022' which equips restaurant and hotel owners with a safe, seamless, secure mode of payment to consumers.
- In Lucknow, Mastercard partnered with local transport bodies, including the Auto Rickshaw Association, to enable more than 700 auto-rickshaw drivers to accept digital payments.
- In Varanasi, Mastercard partnered with the Boat Union to encourage over 1,000 members to accept digital payments from tourists and also local shopkeepers committed to digital payments which have increased tourism.

- **Mastercard Founded: 16 December 1966, United States**
- **Mastercard Headquarters: New York, United States**
- **Mastercard CEO: Michael Miebach**
- **Mastercard Executive Chairman: Ajay Banga.**

7. **RBI announces dollar/rupee two-year sell buy swap auction**



- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced a US Dollar/Rupee two-year sell-buy swap auction with a view to elongating the maturity profile of its forward book and smoothening the receivables relating to forwarding assets.
- The Central bank will undertake a sell/buy swap auction of \$5 billion, which will enable access to a wider set of market participants. RBI will conduct a spot sale to sell USD 5 billion to banks in exchange of rupees, through this auction on March 10, 2022.
- On March 11, 2024, it will make a forward purchase from banks in two years. The forward purchase will help in reducing RBI's current foreign exchange reserves and increase its two-year forward USD purchases.

8. RBI cautions the public against using carpooling app sRide



- Reserve bank of India (RBI) has cautioned the public against carpooling app sRide. The caution against sRide App, stating that this firm was operating a semi-closed pre-paid instrument, without receiving authorization from the central bank, under Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.
- sRide Tech Private Limited is a registered company, with a registered office in Gurgaon, Haryana. This company is operating a semi-closed (non-closed) pre-paid instrument (wallet) through its 'sRide' carpooling app. Thus, RBI cautioned that persons dealing with the app will be doing at their own risk.
- sRide app is a carpooling mobile application, that connects people within the community to share rides. The app help users in sharing the cost of travel, increasing mobility, reducing travel time, and building communities. The app also helps in using existing infrastructure, reducing parking needs, traffic and emissions for cities and organisations.

9. Paytm Payments Bank is now official acquiring partner for e-RUPI vouchers



- Paytm Payments Bank Limited has announced that it is an official acquiring partner for 'e-RUPI vouchers'. e-RUPI, which is a government initiative, is a cashless prepaid voucher that beneficiaries can present via SMS or QR Code.
- Paytm's merchant partners can then scan, enter the amount to be paid and receive the payment directly in their bank account. This will benefit beneficiaries (users), even those who do not have access to formal banking services or smartphones to avail the convenience of digital payments.
- With this, merchants will be empowered with another digital payment collection method that will help them further increase their digital footprint and onboard more customers.
- PPBL is empowering merchants to accept e-RUPI vouchers, which gives it an opportunity to tap into a larger user base that is a beneficiary of this initiative. This will further encourage more merchants to embrace cashless transactions, leading to an increase of digital payments.
- **Paytm Payments Bank Founded: 2015**
- **Paytm Payments Bank Headquarters: Noida, UP**
- **Paytm Payments Bank Founder & CEO: Vijay Shekhar Sharma.**

10. PM CARE for Children scheme extended by the Centre till 28th Feb 2022



- The PM Cares for Children Scheme has been extended by the Ministry of Women and Child Development of the Government of India till February 28, 2022. Previously, the scheme was applicable till December 31, 2021.
- A letter has been written in this respect to all Principal Secretaries/ Secretaries, Women and Child Development, Social Justice & Empowerment Departments of all States and UTs, with a copy to all District Magistrates/District Collectors.
- To be eligible for the scheme, the child must be under the age of 18 at the time of their parents' death, to be considered eligible for payments under this plan. All children who have suffered the following losses are covered under the scheme: Lost both parent due to COVID-19 Pandemic and Legal guardian/adoptive parents/single adoptive parent, from 11.03.2020, the day on which WHO proclaimed and defined COVID-19 as pandemic.

11. India Ratings decrease GDP growth at 8.6% for FY22



- India Ratings has revised downwards its GDP growth forecast for 2021-22 to 8.6 per cent from the consensus 9.2 per cent projected earlier.
- According to an India rating analysis, National Statistical Organisation (NSO) is likely to peg the FY22 real gross domestic product growth at Rs 147.2 lakh crore. This translates into a GDP growth rate of 8.6 per cent, down from the 9.2 per cent forecast in the first advance estimate released on January 7, 2022.
- The major reason for the likely downward revision is the upward revision of FY21 GDP to Rs 135.6 lakh crore in the first revised estimate of national income for FY21, which was released on January 31, 2022.

12. Exercise Cobra Warrior 22: India to participate in multi-nation Exercise in March



- Indian Air Force will participate in a multi-nation air exercise named 'Exercise Cobra Warrior 22' at Waddington, in the United Kingdom from March 06 to 27, 2022. IAF Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas will participate in the exercise along with fighter aircraft of the UK and other leading Air Forces.
- Five Tejas aircraft will fly to the United Kingdom. IAF C-17 aircraft will provide the necessary transport support for induction and de-induction.
- The exercise is aimed at providing operational exposure and sharing best practices amongst the participating Air Forces, thereby enhancing combat capability and forging bonds of friendship. This will be a platform for LCA Tejas to demonstrate its manoeuvrability and operational capability.