

5 January, 2022 Current Affairs

1. Union Ministers Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari lay foundation stone of Lucknow Kanpur expressway



- Defence Minister and MP from Lucknow, Rajnath Singh and Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stone of Lucknow Kanpur expressway in a function in Lucknow.
- This 4,200 crore rupees project will reduce travel time between the two cities to barely 40 minutes.
- The Defence Minister also launched many development projects worth more than rupees 10 thousand crores for his constituency Lucknow.
- Rajnath Singh said that these projects will not only give impetus to development of Lucknow but the whole Uttar Pradesh state.
- A new era of development has begun in the country in the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- "Lucknow Kanpur Expressway", will emerge as an economic corridor and work as backbone for the Lucknow and Kanpur nodes of UP defence corridor.
- Union Minister Gadkari also launched National Highway projects of 821 kilometres worth 26778 crore rupees in Uttar Pradesh at different places.
- Mr Gadkari inaugurated and laid foundation of 8 National Highway projects in Kanpur which are being constructed with 14,199 crore rupees.
- He also laid the foundation stone of "Delhi-Amritsar- Katra expressway" and "national highway Amritsar- Ghoman-Tanda" projects through video conferencing.

- Later in state capital Lucknow, Mr Gadkari inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of 16 National Highway projects at Amausi. The projects are being constructed with 7410 crore rupees.

2. Smart Cities Mission launches “Smart cities and Academia Towards Action & Research (SAAR)” program



- Smart Cities Mission has launched “Smart cities and Academia Towards Action & Research (SAAR)” program.
- It is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, National Institute of Urban Affairs and leading Indian academic institutions of the country.
- Under the program, 15 premier architecture & planning institutes of the country will be working with Smart Cities to document landmark projects undertaken by the Smart Cities Mission. The documents will capture learnings from best practices.
- It will provide opportunities to students for engagement on urban development projects and enable real-time information flow between urban practitioners and academia.
- The first activity envisaged under SAAR is to prepare a compendium of 75 landmark urban projects in India under the Smart Cities Mission.
- These 75 urban projects are innovative, multi-sectoral, and have been implemented across geographies. The program marks the 75th anniversary of India’s independence.
- According to Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, the compendium of 75 urban projects would be launched by June this year.

3. Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh launches theme of National Science Day 2022



- Union Science and Technology Minister, Dr Jitendra Singh has launched the theme of National Science Day 2022.
- The theme of this year is **"Integrated Approach in Science and Technology for Sustainable Future"**.
- The National Science Day is observed every year on 28th February to mark the discovery of **"the Raman effect"**.
- Launching the theme in New Delhi, Dr. Singh expressed hope that through this all the institutions across the country will be able to chart out programmes to observe the day.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been reiterating that we have to come out of the culture of working in silos and now this is no longer only an option, it is a necessity. Dr Singh said, for India to live up to the global benchmarks, it has to live up to the global parameters.

4. ONGC Director Alka Mittal takes additional charge as CMD



- Alka Mittal has been given the additional charge of Chairman and Managing Director of ONGC. This makes her the first woman to head the Energy major.
- She was given the additional charge after incumbent Subhash Kumar superannuated on 31st of December 2021.
- Alka Mittal is the senior-most director on thr ONGC board.
- Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC): is an Indian government-owned crude oil and natural gas corporation. Its registered office is in New Delhi.
- It is under the ownership of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India. It is the largest government-owned-oil and gas exploration and production corporation in the country.

Founded: 14 August 1956

Headquarters: Deendayal Urja Bhawan, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi

5. India records first Omicron death in Rajasthan's Udaipur



- According to the Union health ministry, India on 5 January 2021 recorded the first death linked to the Omicron variant of the coronavirus after the samples of a man in Rajasthan's Udaipur, who died last week, showed the presence of the variant.
- The 73-year-old man, who was found infected with Omicron in genome sequencing and who had tested negative for the infection twice, died in a Udaipur hospital on 31 December 2021.

- He died due to post-Covid pneumonia coupled with comorbidities -- diabetes mellitus, hypertension and hypothyroidism -- Udaipur Chief Medical Health Officer (CMHO) Dr Dinesh Kharadi had said.
- The man was found Covid positive on December 15 and had symptoms like fever, cough and rhinitis and therefore, was admitted to the hospital.
- A sample was sent for genome sequencing and the results were received on December 25, in which he was found infected with the Omicron variant of the virus. The man had tested negative for COVID-19 twice on December 21 and 25.

6. Telangana tops in highest number of ODF villages

- Telangana stood first in the country in the list of the highest number of open defecation free (ODF Plus) villages under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) Phase-II programme till December 31, 2021.
- As many as 13,737 out of 14,200 villages in the State are on the ODF Plus list, which is 96.74%. This was followed by Tamil Nadu with 4,432 villages (35.39%) and Karnataka with 1,511 villages (5.59%). Gujarat took the 17th position with only 83 villages (0.45%).
- The State government has enacted a new Telangana Panchayat Raj Act to ensure the holistic development of villages.
- A secretary has been posted in every panchayat for smooth execution of welfare programmes, close monitoring, digital reporting and to ensure the prevalence of good governance in villages.
- Multi-purpose workers have been appointed to maintain proper sanitation in villages. There are 12,769 dedicated compost sheds in all gram panchayats. Tankers have also been provided to water the plants for greenery in villages.

7. Indian-origin Ashok Elluswamy was first employee to be hired for Tesla's



- Tesla founder and CEO Elon Musk, who has been using social media to recruit people, has disclosed that Indian-origin Ashok Elluswamy was the first employee to be hired for his electric vehicle company's Autopilot team.
- Before joining Tesla, Mr Elluswamy was associated with Volkswagen Electronic Research Lab and WABCO Vehicle Control System.
- Ashok Elluswamy holds a bachelor's degree in Electronics and Communication Engineering from the College of Engineering Guindy, Chennai and a Master's degree in Robotics System Development from Carnegie Mellon University.