

The Achievers IAS Academy

Patliputra colony, Near: Tennis Court; Patna. Contact: 8434931877, 7250667974

1. Chief Justice of India

Way to the top

A brief profile of Justice N.V. Ramana

Aug. 27, 1957: Born in an agricultural family in Ponnavaram village in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh

Feb. 10, 1983: Enrolled as an advocate

June 27, 2000: Appointed permanent judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court

March 10-May 20, 2013: Functioned as Acting Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court

Sept. 2, 2013: Elevated as the Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court

Feb. 17, 2014: Elevated as a judge of the Supreme Court



■ He has practised in the High Court of Andhra Pradesh, Central and Andhra Pradesh Administrative Tribunals and the Supreme Court in civil, criminal, constitutional, labour, service and election matters

■ Justice Ramana specialises in constitutional, criminal, service and inter-State river laws

- Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde has recommended Justice N.V. Ramana, the senior most judge of the Supreme Court, as the next top judge.
- Justice Ramana is now set to take over as the 48th Chief Justice of India from April 24.
- Chief Justice Bobde handed over a copy of his letter of recommendation to Justice Ramana on Wednesday after sending it to the government.
- The Centre had recently asked Chief Justice Bobde, who is retiring on April 23, to initiate the transition process to the top judicial office.
- Justice Ramana would be the CJI till August 26, 2022. He was elevated to the Supreme Court on February 17, 2014 when he was the Chief Justice of Delhi High Court.
- Justice Ramana was born in an agricultural family on August 27, 1957 in Ponnavaram village in Krishna district.

FACTS

- The chief justice of India is the chief judge of the Supreme Court of India as well as the highest-ranking officer of the Indian federal judiciary. The Constitution of India grants power to the President of India to nominate, and with the advice and consent of the Parliament of India, appoint a chief justice, who serves until they reach the age of sixty-five or until removed by impeachment.

2. double mutant' coronavirus variant.



- A unique "double mutant" coronavirus variant — with a combination of mutations not seen anywhere else in the world — has been found in India, the Health Ministry said on Wednesday. However, it is still to be established if this has any role to play in increased infectivity or in making COVID-19 more severe.
- Genome sequencing of a section of virus samples by a consortium of 10 labs across the country, called the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Consortium on Genomics (INSACOG), revealed the presence of two mutations, E484Q and L452R together, in at least 200 virus samples from Maharashtra, as well as a handful in Delhi, Punjab and Gujarat.
- Mutations in the virus per se are not surprising but specific mutations that help the virus evolve to thwart vaccines or the immune system, or are linked to a spike in cases or in disease severity, are of interest. While the two mutations have been individually identified in other variants of SARS-CoV-2 globally, and have been associated with a reduction in vaccine efficacy as well as infectivity, their combined effect and biological implication has not yet been understood. In the days ahead, the INSACOG will submit details of this variant to a global repository called GISAID and, if it merits, classify it as a "Variant of Concern" (VOC).
- India has not yet conducted studies on how vaccine efficacy is influenced by variants, except for limited laboratory trials, but international studies have shown reduced efficacy of vaccines — particularly those by Pfizer, Moderna and Novavax — to certain variants. However, the vaccines continue to be significantly protective in spite of this.
- So far, only three global VOCs have been identified: the U.K. variant (B.1.1.7), the South African (B.1.351) and the Brazilian (P.1) lineage. So far, of 10,787 samples from international passengers, 771 instances of these VOCs have been identified in 18 States of the country. After the new double variant has been submitted to GISAID, it will be categorised under a formal lineage, and will have its own name.

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3. Tulip garden (J&K)



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked everyone to visit **tulip garden, located at the foothills of Zabarwan range** in Jammu and Kashmir, and enjoy the warm hospitality of the people of the Union territory.
- Tweeting about the gardens, the Prime Minister said, "Whenever you get the opportunity, do visit Jammu and Kashmir and witness the scenic Tulip festival. In addition to the tulips, you will experience the warm hospitality of the people of Jammu and Kashmir,."
- Tomorrow, 25th March is special for Jammu and Kashmir. A majestic tulip garden on the foothills of the Zabarwan Mountains will open for visitors. The garden will see over 15 lakh flowers of more than 64 varieties in bloom," Mr. Modi said in another tweet.
- The tulip garden is located at the foothills of Zabarwan range with an overview of Dal Lake and is the largest tulip garden in Asia. It is spread over an area of about 30 hectares.
- The garden was opened in 2007 with the aim to boost floriculture and tourism in Kashmir Valley by the then Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad.
- The garden is built on a sloping ground in a terraced fashion consisting of seven terraces. Apart from tulips, many other species of flowers like hyacinths, daffodils and ranunculus have been added.
- The Tulip festival, organised at the onset of spring season in the Valley, is an annual celebration that aims to showcase the range of flowers in the garden as part of tourism efforts by the government of Jammu and Kashmir.

4. National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professionals Bill, 2021.



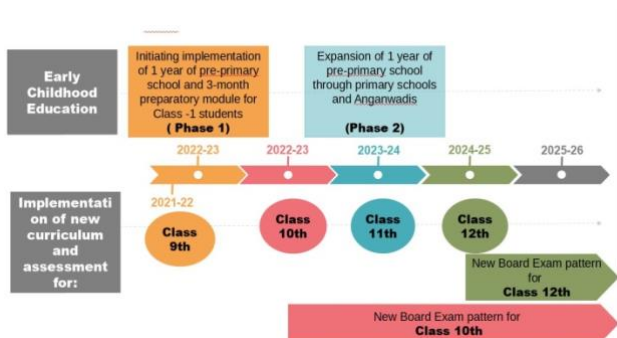
- The Lok Sabha on March 24 cleared the **National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professionals Bill, 2021**, which seeks to set up a commission to regulate the allied healthcare sector, standardise training and qualifications across the country. The Rajya Sabha passed the Bill on March 16.
- Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said that the legislation, which got bipartisan support across party lines in the Lok Sabha, is aimed at fulfilling long-pending demands of the sector, and enhance employment opportunities for professionals.
- The paramedics and allied healthcare workers are critical part of the medical profession and their contribution is similar to doctors, if not more. The group of allied professionals is large and the bill is trying to regulate this field by providing dignity to their roles," he said.
- The Bill will set up a regulatory structure for 50 categories of allied healthcare and try and shift the treatment of patients from being doctor centric to team centric.
- The Bill aims to establish a statutory body or commission that frames policies and standards, regulate professional conduct and qualifications for allied healthcare professionals, besides providing uniformity of service standards across institutions. The chairman and vice-chairman of the body will be selected for two years and they would be eligible for renomination for further two terms. State governments will be represented in the commission, 12 seats have been set aside for them, and State-level commissions are also to be set up under the Bill.

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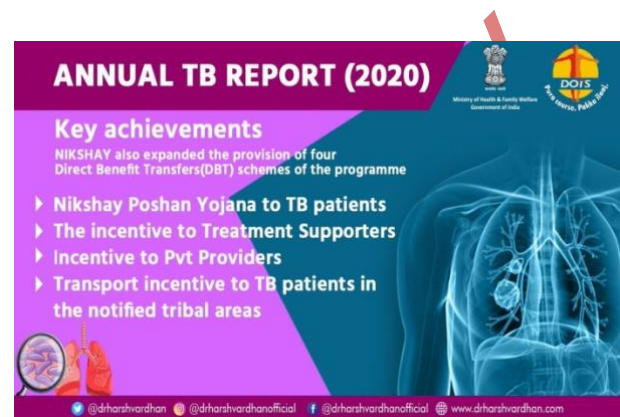
- The standards for regulation, training, eligibility and service have been coded by international yardsticks and according to International Labour Code (ILO) codes. The Bill had been pored over by the standing committee on health which had suggested 110 amendments of which 102 have been incorporated into the Bill, one of the reasons for bipartisan support for it.

5. CBSE assessment to focus on competency, skills.



- The Central Board of Secondary Education has rolled out a new assessment framework for Classes 6-10 in English, Maths and Science in collaboration with the British Council. Under the new system, teachers will be trained to create question papers and other assessment methods that test the actual competency of students in these subjects, rather than their ability to memorise chunks of text.
- Launching the new framework, Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said it was aligned with the National Education Policy's vision of achieving a global standard in assessments, according to an official statement.
- In the first phase, the framework will be implemented in select Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas, CBSE schools in Chandigarh, and a few private schools. By 2024, it will be rolled out to 25,000 CBSE schools across the country, with 1.32 lakh teachers and two crore students.
- "The new National Education Policy 2020 envisages a significant shift in the education ecosystem in India. It aims at preparing students for the 21st century and lays emphasis on competency-based education rather than an education which tests rote learning," the statement said.

6. India TB(tuberculosis) report.



- In 2020, there were 18.05 TB notifications, which was a fall of 24% from 2019 due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic, according to the India TB report released by the Health Ministry on Wednesday.
- The report said between January and February 2020, the notifications were on an upward trajectory, with 6% more cases reported in the same period in 2019.
- As a result of the lockdown, notifications in the public sector fell by 38% and 44% in the private sector in April and May. Of the reported 24.04 lakh TB cases in 2019, treatment success was 82%, mortality rate was 4%, 4% patients were lost to follow up and treatment failure and regimen change after initiation of treatment was about 3%," said the report.
- It said the approved budgets toward the programme have increased substantially, from ₹640 crore in 2016-17 to ₹3,333 crores in 2019-20, however, there was a fall in budget to ₹3,110 crore in 2020-21.
- As per the report over 95% of all cases reported were initiated on treatment in 2020 and the treatment success rate for patients reported in 2019 was 82% (83% among patients in the public sector and 79% in the private).
- The report said 20,892 (42%) of patients were initiated on a shorter MDR-TB regimen at the time of diagnosis. "This is a significant decline from 2019 [71% were initiated on the shorter MDR-TB regimen]. In 2019, newer drug regimens were introduced for MDR-TB patients. In 2020, over 20,000 patients were initiated on Bedaquiline and 652 patients [including paediatric TB patients in the age group of 6-17] were initiated on Delamanid," said the report.

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7. Indian Coast Guard ship 'Vajra



- Indian Coast Guard ship 'Vajra', the sixth offshore patrol vessel to enhance coastal security, was formally commissioned into service in Chennai on 24 march 2021.
- At an event to mark the commissioning of the ship, Chief of Defence staff General Bipin Rawat formally unveiled a 'plaque' and the ship's name board 'Vajra' meaning 'Thunderbolt' at the Chennai Port Trust.
- The ship was indigenously designed and built by Larsen and Toubro Ship building Limited. Sixth in the series of seven offshore patrol vessels, Vajra is fitted with highly sophisticated navigation and communication systems.
- The ship has a 30mm gun as main armament and equipped with two FCS controlled 12.7 mm SRCG (Stabilised Remote Controlled Gun) for enhanced fighting efficiency.
- Some of the hitech features of the vessel include – an integrated bridge system, high power external fighting System, bow thruster and automated power management system.
- The ship is designed to carry one twin engine helicopter with night flying capabilities and also four high speed boats, two rigid hull inflatable boats for taking up search and rescue, law enforcement and maritime patrolling.
- A pollution response equipment to contain oil spills at sea is fitted in the ship, which is propelled by twin MTU 8000 series engines, capable of achieving 26 knots of top speed and endurance of 5,000 nautical miles.
- Deputy inspector general Alex Thomas is the commanding officer of the ship, which would have 14 officers and 88 men. The ship would be based at Tuticorin under the operational control of coast guard eastern region.
- In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the commissioning ceremony was conducted in full adherence to the standard operating procedures laid out by the government.

8. ISSF World Cup: Chinki Yadav Wins Gold As India Sweep Medals In 25m Pistol Event.



- India made a clean sweep of the women's 25m pistol event winning gold, silver and bronze medal in the final at the ISSF World Cup 2021 in New Delhi on Wednesday.
- Chinki Yadav clinched the gold medal while compatriot Rahi Sarnobat bagged the silver and Manu Bhaker settled for bronze at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range in the capital.
- Chinki, who is trained by former Asian and CWG gold medallist Jaspal Rana, added the 9th gold medal in India's overall tally while Asian Games gold medalist Rahi Sarnobat bagged the 5th silver for the nation.
- India continue to lead the medals tally at the shooting World Cup with 19 medals so far - 9 gold, 5 silver, 5 bronze.
- Earlier, Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar added to India's tally by winning the men's 50M Rifle 3 Positions event by less than a point.
- Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar scored a total of 462.5 points to pip second-placed Istvan Peni of Hungary and clinch the top spot on the podium at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range. Steffen Olsen of Denmark took home the bronze medal with a score of 450.9 points.
- The other Indians in the final, veteran Sanjeev Rajput and Niraj Kumar finished 6th and 8th, respectively.

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9. PF threshold limit raised to Rs 5 lakh for tax-free interest.



- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday raised the limit for tax exemption on interest earned on provident fund contribution by employees to Rs 5 lakh per annum in specified cases as against Rs 2.5 lakh proposed in the Budget.
- In her Budget for 2021-22, Sitharaman had capped the tax-free interest earned on provident fund contribution by employees and employers together to a maximum of Rs 2.5 lakh in a year in an attempt to dissuade high earners from parking their surplus in what is supposed to be common man's retirement fund.
- Replying to a discussion on the Finance Bill 2021 in Lok Sabha, the minister said the tax-free limit is now being amended to a maximum of Rs 5 lakh per annum.
- This exemption, however, is subject to condition that the up to Rs 5 lakh contribution does not include employer's contribution beyond the statutory limit of up to 12 per cent of the basic pay.
- The new provision would come into effect from April 1.
- She clarified that the Rs 2.5 lakh limit is covering 92-93 per cent of the people who are subscribers and they are entitled for assured interest that is tax free under this scheme.
- The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has over six crore subscribers.
- The Finance Bill was later passed by the Lower House with 127 official amendments by voice vote.
- The government has budgeted Rs 1.75 lakh crore from stake sale in public sector companies and financial institutions, including two PSU banks and one general insurance company, in the next fiscal year beginning April 1.
- The amount is lower than the record Rs 2.10 lakh crore which was budgeted to be raised from CPSE disinvestment in the current fiscal year.
- For fiscal year 2021-22, out of the total Rs 1.75 lakh crore, Rs 1 lakh crore is to come from selling government stake in public sector banks and financial institutions. Rs 75,000 crore would come as CPSE disinvestment receipts.
- She also criticised a member for talking about a report by Freedom House, saying the MP should take up the matter of showing incorrect map of India with the think-tank.

10. Lok Sabha passes Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill 2021.



- The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed a Bill to amend the Juvenile Justice Act with the aim of strengthening the provisions on protection and adoption of children.
- Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani said the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2021 addresses several concerns that were flagged by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) while examining the earlier version of the Bill that was passed in 2015.
- Ms. Irani said the amended law made the District Magistrate (DM) a "synergising officer" for issues related to the protection of children by empowering DMs and Additional DMs with greater decision making powers on issues concerning childcare and adoption.
- The Bill also categorised offences wherein the maximum sentence was more than seven years' imprisonment but no minimum sentence or a minimum sentence of less than seven years had been provided as "serious offences" under the Juvenile Justice Act. Serious offences include offences for which the punishment under the Indian Penal Code is imprisonment between three and seven years.
- The Bill also sets the minimum qualification to be a member of the child welfare committee. No person shall be appointed as a member unless he or she had been actively involved in health, education or welfare activities pertaining to children for seven years or was a practising professional with a degree in child psychology, psychiatry, law, social work, sociology or human development.
- The Bill also sought to terminate the tenure of a member of the committee if they failed to attend the proceedings of the Child Welfare Committee consecutively for three months without any valid reason or if they failed to attend less than three-fourths of the sittings in a year.