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## 1. Dholavira in Gujarat on UNESCO World Heritage list .



- Dholavira, the archaeological site of a Harappan-era city, received the UNESCO world heritage site tag.

### KEY POINT

- While Dholavira became the fourth site from Gujarat and 40th from India to make the list, it is the first site of the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC) in India to get the tag.
  - “The ancient city of Dholavira is one of the most remarkable and well-preserved urban settlements in South Asia dating from the 3rd to mid-2nd millennium BCE (Before Common Era).
  - Discovered in 1968, the site is set apart by its unique characteristics, such as its water management system, multi-layered defensive mechanisms, extensive use of stone in construction and special burial structures,”
  - A range of artefacts of copper, shell, stone, jewellery, terracotta and ivory had been found at the site. “The two newly inscribed World Heritage Sites offer great insight into the knowledge and ways of life of earlier societies, customs, and communities,” UNESCO said.
- Located in the Kutch district, Dholavira is the larger of the two most remarkable excavations of the Indus Valley Civilisation dating back to about 4,500 years ago. The site had been on UNESCO’s tentative list since 2014 and India had submitted its dossier in January 2020, a Culture Ministry statement said.

## 2. 12th Edition of Indo-Russia joint military Exercise INDRA 2021 .



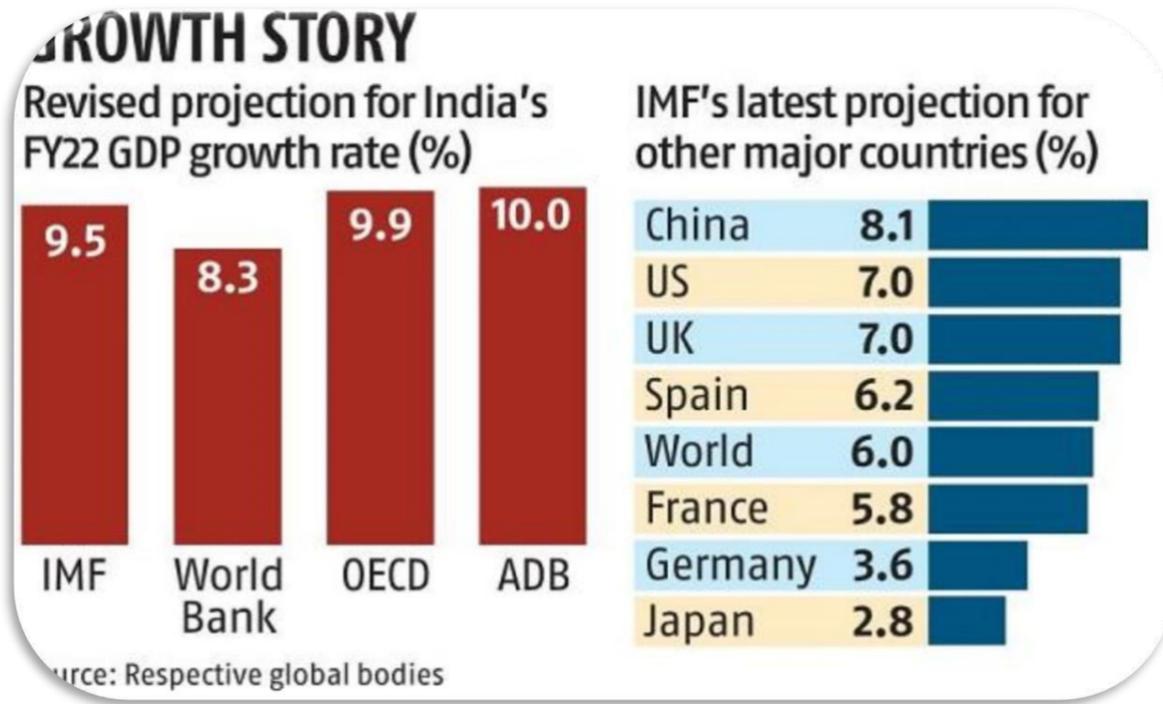
- 12th Edition of Indo-Russia joint military Exercise INDRA 2021 will be held at Volgograd, Russia from 01 to 13 August 2021.

### KEY POINT

- The exercise will entail conduct of counter terror operations under the United Nations mandate by a joint force against international terror groups.
- 250 personnel from both the nations will form part of the exercise. The Indian Army contingent comprising of a Mechanised Infantry Battalion underwent rigorous training at different locations in India to refine their drills for participation in the joint exercise.
- Exercise INDRA-21 will further strengthen mutual confidence and interoperability between the Indian & Russian Armies and enable sharing of best practices between the contingents of both the countries.

• The exercise will be yet another milestone in strengthening security cooperation and will serve to reinforce the longstanding bond of friendship between India and Russia.

### 3. International Monetary Fund projects India's growth rate at 9.5 per cent for current fiscal year .



- International Monetary Fund has projected India's growth rate at 9.5 per cent for the current fiscal year. For the next Financial Year 2022-23, IMF expects economic growth of 8.5 per cent, larger than the 6.9 per cent it had projected in April.

#### KEY POINT

- Forecast for the current year 2021-22 is lower than the 12.5 per cent growth in GDP that IMF had projected in April before the second wave of COVID-19 took a grip.
- India's economy is gradually recovering from a deep contraction in the fiscal year ended 31st March this year 7.3 per cent and a subsequent severe second wave of COVID-19. However, India's growth prospects for Financial Year 2022 remains higher than all other major economies.

- China's GDP is projected to grow at 8.1 per cent and the US at seven per cent. Overall, the global economy is projected to grow six per cent in 2021 and 4.9 per cent in 2022. The 2021 global growth forecast is unchanged from the April update but with offsetting revisions.

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## 4. Gross Environment Product (GEP)

- Uttarakhand will assign a monetary value to its natural resources in the form of Gross Environment Product (GEP). It is along the lines of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- A five-member committee has already been formed in this regard, headed by the principal secretary of forests, Uttarakhand. The committee will devise a method to measure the GEP in the same way as GDP, thereby framing policies that will allow sustainable development.

### What is Gross Environment Product (GEP)?

- Gross Environment Product (GEP) is an assessment system to measure the ecological

status of a region and is one of the components of green GDP.

- It is considered as the product and service value that the ecosystem provides for human welfare, economic and socially sustainable development including provisioning, regulating and cultural ecosystem services.
- In some cases, GEP could be more than GDP. For instance, in 2000, Qinghai's (China) GEP was greater than GDP and was three-fourths as large as GDP in 2015.

### Green GDP

- While calculating Green GDP, economic growth with environmental factors is taken into consideration along with the standard GDP of a country. It factors biodiversity losses and costs attributed to climate change.

### Advantages of Gross Environment Product (GEP)

- It can be applied as a scientific basis for Eco-Compensation and public financial transfers.
- It can be applied to measure the status of ecosystem services, an important indicator of sustainable development.
- It can also be used to measure the progress of eco-civilization.
- It can help assess the impact of anthropological pressure on our ecosystem and natural resources.

masoor dal

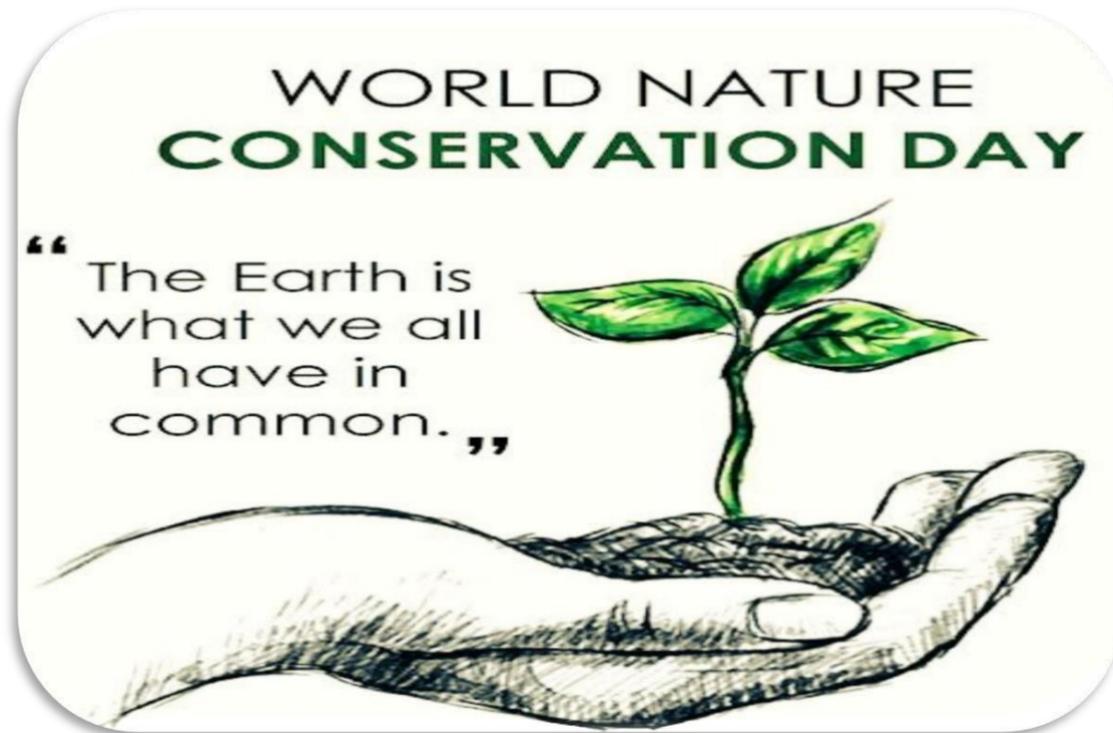


## 5. Import duty on masur dal cut to zero .

- The Centre reduced the import duty on masur dal to zero and also halved the Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess on the lentil to 10 per cent, in a bid to boost domestic supply and check rising prices.

### KEY POINT

- A notification in this regard was tabled in the Rajya Sabha by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
  - the basic customs duty has been reduced from 10 per cent to nil on lentils (masur dal) originated in or exported from countries other than the US.
  - Also, the basic customs duty has been reduced from 30 per cent to 20 per cent on lentils (masur dal) originating in or exported from the US, she said.
  - Further, the Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess on lentils (masur dal) has been reduced from the present rate of 20 per cent to 10 per cent, she added.
- Retail price of masoor dal has increased by 30 per cent to Rs 100 per kg now from Rs 70 per kg on April 1, this year, as per the data maintained by the consumer affairs ministry.
  - India annually needs 25 million tonne of pulses. But this year, we are expecting a shortage."
  - The government had introduced the Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess (AIDC) on certain items, including petrol, diesel, gold and some imported agricultural products, this fiscal in a bid to boost agriculture infrastructure.



## 6. World Nature Conservation Day 2021.

- The World Nature Conservation Day is observed on July 28 annually with an aim to conserve the trees and animals that are on the verge of going extinct from the Earth's natural environment.

### KEY POINT

- World Nature Conservation Day: Significance
- World Conservation Day is a reminder that how significant it is to preserve mother Earth.
- With rising global temperature, extinction of different species, and more deadly diseases impacting humans, Nature Conservation Day helps in making us understand that how significant is it to balance the beauty of Nature.
- The World Nature Conservation Day recognizes that a foundation for a stable and productive society is a healthy environment and participation by each and every individual is

important to conserve, protect and sustainably manage the natural resources.

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## 7. Union WCD Minister, Smt Smriti Irani Launches 24/7 Helpline for Women Affected by Violence .



- With the objective of further improving safety and security of women across the nation and in line with Union Government's efforts towards overall betterment of women, the Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt Smriti Zubin Irani inaugurated the National Commission for Women's 24/7 helpline number - 7827170170.

### KEY POINT

- The helpline aims to provide 24/7 online support to women affected by violence through referral by linking them with appropriate authorities such as police, hospitals, District Legal Service Authority, psychological services etc.
- The helpline will function with a team of trained experts. Any girl or woman aged 18 years and above can seek help by calling on this Helpline which will be operated from the

premises of the National Commission for Women, New Delhi.

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## 8. Puri becomes India's first city to provide quality drinking tap water .

### **1ST IN INDIA**

- Puri becomes first Indian city to get round-the-clock piped pure drinking water
- Water fountains have been set up at 400 locations which will also reduce plastic waste
- The project has been commissioned in 9 months
- Women's self-help groups have been roped in for quality control of drinking water
- Around 2 crore tourists visit the city every year

- Puri became the first city in India where people can avail high quality drinking water directly from the tap on 24-hour basis.

### KEY POINT

- “Puri has become the first city in the country to implement a project of this kind. It has enabled the people of Puri to collect quality drinking water directly from the tap. Henceforth, people need not have to store or filter drinking water,” Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said while inaugurating the ‘Drink from Tap project’.

- “The inauguration of ‘Drink from Tap’ project marks a new chapter. No metropolitan city in India have such facility yet. Similar facilities are available only in world-class cities like London, New York and Singapore,”

- The project would benefit 2.5 lakh citizens of Puri and 2 crore tourists who visit the tourist place every year. They need not have to move around with water bottle. Puri would no more be burdened with 400 metric tonne of plastic waste,” he pointed out. Water fountains have been developed at 400 locations in Puri.
- A similar project is under various stages of implementation in 16 other urban centres of Odisha.

## 9. Lebanon names Najib Mikati as new Prime Minister .



- Lebanese telecoms tycoon and former Prime Minister, Najib Mikati, was chosen by lawmakers on July 26 to serve as Lebanon's new prime minister as the nation reels from multiple political-economic crises.

### KEY POINT

- The Harvard-educated Mikati secured sufficient votes from members of parliament. He is endorsed by most of Lebanon's political parties including the Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah, but he faces opposition from the party of President Michel Aoun, a Maronite Christian.
- Mikati previously served as Prime Minister in a caretaker capacity for three months in 2005 following the car bomb assassination of Rafik Hariri and again in 2011 and from 2013 to 2014. He has also served as minister of public works and transport in three different cabinets between 1998 and 2004. He is a Sunni Muslim from the northern city of Tripoli.
- The businessman owns the M1 Group, along with his brother Taha. The investment holding group owns shares in companies in various industries around the world, including South African telecom and French fashion companies. According to Forbes, he has a net worth of \$2.7 billion (€2.3 billion).

## 10. Rakesh Asthana appointed Delhi Police Commissioner .



- Gujarat cadre IPS officer Rakesh Asthana was appointed Delhi Police Commissioner.

### KEY POINT

- Mr. Asthana, a 1984-batch IPS officer, was to retire on July 31. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs order, Mr. Asthana, who was serving as Director General, Border Security Force, will join as the Delhi Police Commissioner with immediate effect.
- On July 1, Balaji Srivastava, a 1988-batch IPS officer, was given the additional charge of Commissioner of Delhi Police.
- While clearing Mr. Asthana's appointment as CP, Delhi, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the inter-cadre deputation from Gujarat to AGMUT cadre. The ACC also extended Mr. Asthana's service initially for a period of one year beyond the date of his superannuation or until further order, whichever is earlier.
- This is one of the very few instances when an IPS officer outside of the AGMUT cadre has been appointed as the Delhi Police chief.
- Mr. Asthana had earlier served as the Special Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation. He was the Narcotics Control Bureau chief when actor Rhea Chakraborty was arrested in a drugs case in Mumbai.

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## 11. No landless farmers in new database .



- The Centre's new National Farmers Database will only include land-owning farmers for now as it will be linked to digitised land records,

### KEY POINT

- A data policy was being prepared specifically for the agriculture sector in collaboration with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY),
- This exclusion of landless and tenant farmers becomes significant in light of the fact that, when asked whether the database would be used to select beneficiaries of government schemes, Mr. Tomar said, "Government can make use of the database for targeted service delivery with higher efficiency and in a focussed and time bound manner."

- OPPOSITION raising concerns about data protection and farmer inclusion in the Centre's new AgriStack initiative to create a digital ecosystem for agriculture.
- The database would be linked to the digital land record management system and would thus only include farmers who were legal owners of agricultural land. "In future, the possibility of including others may be considered in consultation with State governments and other stakeholders,"

## 12. over MSMEs, urges larger economic package .



- A Parliamentary panel has pulled up the government for offering inadequate relief measures for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that were worst-affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It mooted fresh measures to help them stay afloat, including a doubling of the 90-day limit for banks to classify their loan dues as problematic.

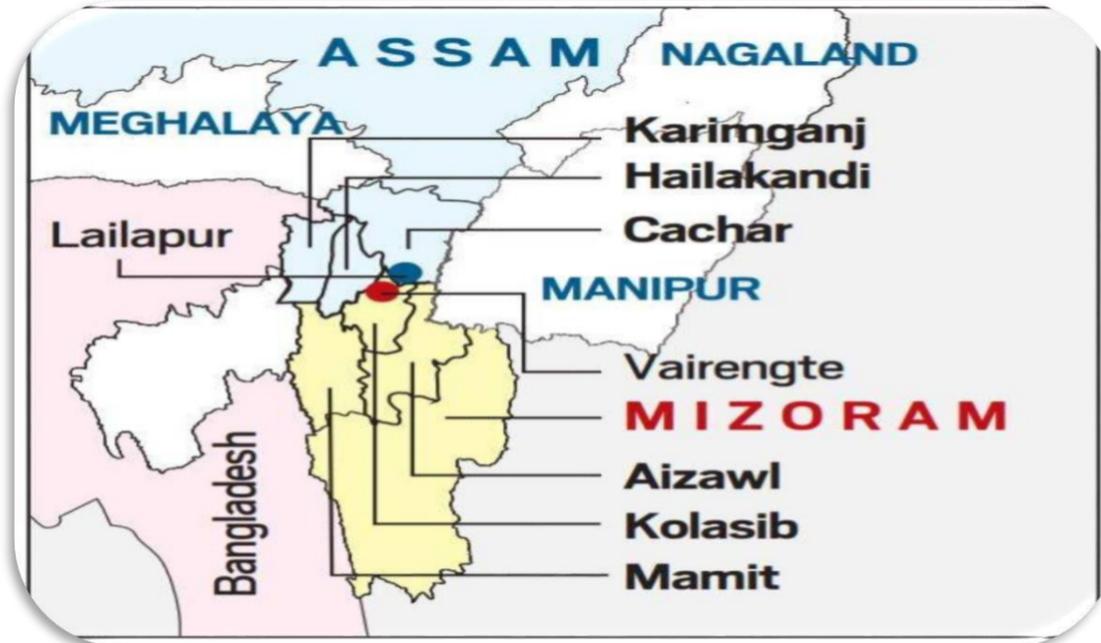
### KEY POINT

- Offering loans and long-term measures – as the government had done over the past year – instead of improving the cash flow to generate demand as immediate relief, have put small enterprises in a grim situation, the panel said in its report tabled in Parliament .

- The second COVID-19 wave this year ‘even more vigorously ripped the economy, particularly the MSME sector’ just as it was recovering from the initial lockdowns of 2020, the panel said.

- “The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Government should immediately come out with a larger economic package aimed at bolstering demand, investment, exports and employment generation to help the economy, including MSMEs to recover from the pandemic fall-out,”

### 13. On Assam-Mizoram border clash .



- Following a dangerous and avoidable escalation of an otherwise dormant border dispute, five policemen and a civilian from Assam were killed in the Mizo border town of Vairengte in clashes between police from the State and their counterparts in Mizoram ,

#### KEY POINT

- The sequence of events, beginning October 2020, suggests that what began as skirmishes between residents close to the disputed border between Assam's Cachar and Mizoram's Kolasib districts has snowballed into a violent confrontation between police and residents.
  - The events point to a failure of the constitutional machinery, empowered to de-escalate tensions at the border. The presence of central paramilitary forces should have helped maintain the peace, but it is curiously not the case.
- both Chief Ministers have been exchanging allegations on Twitter, seeking the intervention of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and using videos to tell a story that suited their version of the events – a farcical means of communication.
  - This also occurred just days after both Chief Ministers (along with others) met with Mr. Shah to discuss the resolution of inter-State border disputes.
  - Sectarian tribalism has been the bane of the North-eastern States, with underdevelopment acting as a catalyst in complicating knotty issues over land and other issues in the region.
  - There is no sure-shot and quick solution possible to the border disputes between various States without a spirit of give and take and a civic engagement brokered by the Union government.
  - A resort to one-upmanship will only prolong the disputes and harden stances. The Home Ministry must ensure that the Assam-Mizoram border situation is first subject to de-escalation and steps taken to return to the status quo that prevailed before the skirmishes began in October 2020 with the cooperation of the respective States.