

Current Affairs search results for tag: national-news

1. International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) (Feb. 5, 2022)

The Prime Minister inaugurated the 50th Anniversary celebrations of ICRISAT.

- He inaugurated ICRISAT's Climate Change Research Facility on Plant Protection and ICRISAT's Rapid Generation Advancement Facility.
- These two facilities are dedicated to the smallholder farmers of Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.
- The Prime Minister also unveiled a specially designed logo of ICRISAT and launched a commemorative stamp issued on the occasion.

ABOUT ICRISAT

ICRISAT is a non-profit international organisation founded by renowned agricultural scientists **M.S.Swaminathan,C.Fred Bently and Ralph Cummins in 1972 at Patancheru, Hyderabad.**

- It was set up to conduct agricultural research for development in the drylands of Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.
- Its mission is to empower these poor people to overcome poverty, hunger and a degraded environment through better agriculture.
- It helps farmers by providing improved crop varieties and hybrids and also helps smallholder farmers in the drylands fight climate change.
- It has two regional hubs at Nairobi(Kenya) and Bamako(Mali). It has country offices in Niger, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Ethiopia and Mozambique.

2. Prime Minister unveiled Statute of Equality in Hyderabad (Feb. 5, 2022)

Prime Minister on a visit to Telangana on 5 February, has unveiled the 'Statue of Equality' at Muchintal near Shamshabad and has also inaugurated Climate Change Research Facility on Plant Protection and a Rapid Generation Advancement Facility at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), campus in Patancheru, Hyderabad.

Statute Of Equality

- The 126 feet tall statue which is dedicated to the 11th century Bhakti Saint Sri Ramanujacharya is located in Muchintal, Shamshabad, Telangana near Hyderabad city.
- The unveiling of the Statue of Equality is a part of the 12-day Sri Ramanuja Sahasrabdi Samaroham, the ongoing 1000th birth anniversary celebrations of Sri Ramanujacharya.
- The Statue is made of 'panchaloha', a combination of **five metals: gold, silver, copper, brass, and zinc.**

- It is the **second-largest sitting statue** in the world after the **Great Buddha Statue in Thailand** which is 300 feet high.
- It is mounted on a 54-ft high base building, named '**Bhadra Vedi**'.
- The statue has been conceptualised by **Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swami of Sri Ramanujacharya Ashram**.

3. Iceland to stop hunting whales in 2024 (Feb. 5, 2022)

Iceland to stop hunting whales in 2024

Iceland, one of the three countries which commercially hunt whales, has decided to stop hunting from 2024 due to sharp decline in the demands of whale meat .

- Iceland's biggest market for whale meat was Japan. In 2019 Japan decided to resume commercial hunting of whales resulting in a sharp decline of Icelandic products in Japan.
- **Iceland, Japan and Norway** are the only three countries in the world which still allow commercial hunting of whales despite criticism from animal rights and environmental groups .

Iceland

It is a Nordic European island country in the Northern Atlantic Ocean.

Nordic countries includes **Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden**

The capital of Iceland : **Reykjavik**

Currency of Iceland : **Icelandic Krona**

4. IS leader Abu Ibrahim Al-Hashmi Al-Qurayshi killed during US raid in Syria (Feb. 4, 2022)

The United States President Joe Biden declared on 3rd February 2022, that the the Islamic State (IS) leader- Abu Ibrahim al-Hashmi al-Qurayshi was killed during a US special force operation at his hideout in the town of Atmeh, which is in the northern Idlib province of Syria close to the border with Turkey.

- Qurayshi blew himself up with the bomb when the US forces approached his compound which killed him and the members of his family.
- An Iraqi, Abu Ibrahim Al-Hashimi Al-Qurayshi also known as "the Destroyer", became the leader of the Islamic State in 2019 after the death of Abu Bakr al Baghdadadi.

5. India to diplomatically boycott Beijing Winter olympics (Feb. 4, 2022)

The Ministry of External Affairs has announced that India will diplomatically boycott the 24th Winter Olympics to be held in Beijing, China from 4 to 20 February 2022. It means that no Indian government officials will participate in the opening and the closing ceremony of the event. The Prasara Bharti Chief Executive Officer, Shashi Shekhar Vempati has also announced that Doordarshan will not telecast the opening and the closing ceremony of the game.

- India announced this move after China included **a regiment commander, Qi Fabao of the People Liberation Army (PLA)** involved in the June 15, 2020 clash with the Indian Army in Galwan as one of the torch bearers of the Winter Olympics.
- However the only Indian player, **Arif Khan of Jammu and Kashmir**, will compete in the Slalom and Giant Slalom event.
- The **US, Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, Japan and New Zealand** are also diplomatically boycotting the Beijing Winter Olympics over protest against the Chinese government treatment of Uygur Muslims in China and their human rights violation.
- Japan though has not officially announced a diplomatic boycott of the Olympics but as a protest against the human rights abuse in China, it is not sending any official delegation to the game.
- However, athletes from these countries will participate in the games.

6. Jammu and Kashmir the most dangerous place for Journalist (Feb. 3, 2022)

According to the **India Press Freedom Report 2021** at least 8 journalists were killed, 108 attacked and 13 media houses or newspapers were targeted across India in 2021.

The report released by Rights and Risk Analysis Groups says that the maximum incidents happened in Jammu and Kashmir (25), followed by Uttar Pradesh (23) and Madhya Pradesh (16).

Note

In the Freedom of Press Index 2021 published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), India was ranked 142 out of 180 countries in the world. Norway was ranked as the country having the most free of Press in the world and was ranked at the top.

7. Government set up a panel for framework on Indian University to start foreign campus (Feb. 3, 2022)

The Government of India has set up a 16 member panel to lay down a road map for the Indian Universities to set up a foreign campuses.

The panel is headed by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) council standing committee chairman **K Radhakrishnan**.

- The committee includes the directors of seven IITs of Dhanbad, Madras, Mumbai, Delhi, Kharagpur, Kanpur, Guwahati, the vice chancellors (VCs) of four central universities — Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Banaras Hindu University and University of Hyderabad and the director of the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru.
- The committee was set up after IIT Delhi submitted a proposal to set up a campus in Saudi Arabia and in Egypt.

8. North Korea test Intermediate Range Ballistic missile (Feb. 2, 2022)

North Korea tested its seventh missile of the year. It tested the **Hwasong-12** surface-to-surface Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) on 30 January, which was confirmed later.

- The missile has a range of 4500 km.
- This missile threatens the U.S military base of Guam, situated in the western Pacific Ocean.
- The test was condemned by the United States and it has requested an emergency session of the United Nations on the issue on 3 January 2022.

North Korea

It is officially called as Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Capital: **Pyongyang**

Leader: **Kim Jong-Un**

Types of Missile

Surface to Surface missile has been classified into different types based on their range

- **Short Range Missile** : Missile which has a range of 500 km to 1000 km
- **Medium range or Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM)** : The missile which has a range of 1000 km to 5,500 km.
- **Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM)**: The missile which has a range of more than 5,500 Km.

9. Chhattisgarh becomes the 35th State/UT to Join “One Nation One Ration Card” plan (Feb. 2, 2022)

Chhattisgarh formally joined the “One Nation one Ration Card” (ONORC) on 2 February 2022 and became the 35th State/Union Territory government which is now part of this scheme.

- The scheme now covers almost **96.8%** National Food Security Act (NFSA) population (about **77 Crore** NFSA beneficiaries) in the country
- The ONORC scheme was launched by the Government of India in August 2019. Under this scheme the eligible ration card holders are linked with their Aadhaar card number.
- The beneficiaries who are part of the scheme can get foodgrains under National Food Security act (NSFA) and Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) from any Fair Price Shop (also called ration shop) in the country.
- This scheme was devised to help the migrant workers who faced a lot of problems during the corona pandemic-induced lock down in the country.

PMGKAY (Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana)

It was launched in March 2020 by the Government of India.

Under this scheme the government provides an additional free 5 kg wheat /Rice per person per month to the 80 crore beneficiaries of the National Food Security act.

[For more details kindly see the post of 25 November 2021.](#)

National Food Security act (NFSA)

The Public distribution system in India is covered under the National Food security act 2013. It covers 75% of the rural population and 50% Urban areas.

- Food Grains are provided to beneficiaries in two categories, Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Household (PHH).
- The Antodaya Anna Yojana beneficiaries get 35 kg of foodgrains per month and the Priority Household gets 5kg per person per month.
- The beneficiary gets rice/wheat or coarse cereals at a highly subsidised price.

10. UNION BUDGET 2022-23 (Feb. 2, 2022)

The Union Budget was presented in the Lok Sabha by the Union Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman on 1 February 2022. Like last year, this year's budget was also a paperless budget .

The Highlights of the Budget

- India's economic growth is estimated at **9.2%** in 2021-22 and it is the highest growth rate among all large economies.
- **60 lakh new jobs** to be created under the Productivity Linked Incentive(PLI) scheme in 14 sectors.
- PLI Schemes have the potential to create an **additional production of Rs 30 lakh crore.**
- Entering Amrit Kaal, the 25 year long lead up to India @100, the budget provides impetus for growth along **four priorities**. These priorities are as follows:
 - **PM GatiShakti**
 - **Inclusive Development**
 - **Productivity Enhancement & Investment, Sunrise opportunities, Energy Transition, and Climate Action.**
 - **Financing of investments**

PM GatiShakti

- PM GatiShakti is a transformative approach for economic growth and sustainable development.
- The seven engines that drive PM Gati Shakti are **Roads, Railways, Airports, Ports, Mass Transport, Waterways and Logistics Infrastructure.**

Road Transport

- National Highways Network to be expanded by **25000 Km** in 2022-23.
- **Rs 20000 Crore** to be mobilized for National Highways Network expansion.

Multimodal Logistics Parks

- Contracts to be awarded through Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode in 2022-23 for implementation of Multimodal Logistics Parks at four locations.

Railways

- **Railway will popularise the “One Station One Product”** concept to help local businesses & supply chains.
- **2000 Km of railway network to be brought under Kavach**, the indigenous world-class technology for safety and capacity augmentation in 2022-23
- **400 new generation Vande Bharat Trains** to be manufactured during the next three years.
- **100 PM GatiShakti Cargo terminals for multimodal logistics** to be developed during the next three years.

Parvatmala: National Ropeways Development Programme

- As an alternative to surface road, ropeways will be developed in difficult hilly areas and congested urban areas as a means of transportation.
- In 2022-23 the government will award contracts for **8 ropeway projects of 60 Km length**.

Inclusive Development**Agriculture**

- The procurement of wheat in Rabi 2021-22 and the estimated procurement of paddy in Kharif 2021-22 will cover 1208 lakh metric tonnes of wheat and paddy from 163 lakh farmers.
- The government will transfer an estimated Rs 2.37 lakh crore direct payment of MSP value to the farmers' accounts.
- Chemical free Natural farming to be promoted throughout the country. Initial focus is on farmer's lands in 5 Km wide corridors along river Ganga.
- **2023 has been announced as the International Year of Millets.** The government will support post harvest value addition, branding and consumption of millets nationally and internationally.
- Government will promote 'Kisan Drones' for crop assessment, digitization of land records, spraying of insecticides and nutrients.

Ken Betwa project

- Government will implement the linking of Ken Betwa river projects which is expected to cost Rs 44,605 crores. This is aimed at providing irrigation benefits to 9.08 lakh hectare of farmers' lands, drinking water supply for 62 lakh people, 103 MW of Hydro, and 27 MW of solar power.
- The budget has allocated **Rs 1400 crore** for implementation of the Ken - Betwa link project.
- Government has identified Damanganga-Pinjal, Par-Tapi-Narmada, Godavari-Krishna, Krishna-Pennar and Pennar-Cauvery projects for interlinking of rivers..

Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)

- **Udyam, e-shram, NCS and ASEEM portals to be interlinked.**
- 130 lakh MSMEs provided additional credit under Emergency Credit Linked Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)
- ECLGS to be extended up to March 2023.
- Guarantee cover under ECLGS to be expanded by **Rs 50000 Crore to total cover of Rs 5 Lakh Crore.**
- **Rs 2 lakh Crore** additional credit for Micro and Small Enterprises to be facilitated under the Credit Guarantee Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE).
- **Raising and Accelerating MSME performance (RAMP) programme** with outlay of Rs 6000 Crore to be rolled out.

Skill Development

- **Digital Ecosystem for Skilling and Livelihood (DESH-Stack e-portal)** will be launched to empower citizens to skill, re skill or upskill through on-line training.
- Startups will be promoted to facilitate '**Drone Shakti**' and for **Drone-As-A-Service** (DrAAS).

Education

- **'One class-One TV channel' programme of PM eVIDYA** to be expanded to 200 TV channels.
- Virtual labs and skilling e-labs to be set up to promote critical thinking skills and simulated learning environments.
- High-quality e-content will be developed for delivery through Digital Teachers.
- The Government will set up a Digital University for world-class quality universal education with personalised learning experience to be established.

Health

- An **open platform** for the National **Digital Health Ecosystem** to be rolled out.

A '**National Tele Mental Health Programme**' for quality mental health counselling and care services will be launched.

- A network of **23 tele-mental health centres** of excellence will be set up, with National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) being the nodal centre and International Institute of Information Technology-Bangalore (IIITB) providing technology support.

Saksham Anganwadi

- Government has launched Mission Shakti, Mission Vatsalya, Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 to provide integrated benefits to women and children .
- Saksham Anganwadis are a new generation anganwadis that have better infrastructure and audio-visual aids, powered by clean energy and providing improved environment for early child development.
- **Two lakh anganwadis are** to be upgraded to Saksham Anganwadis.

Har Ghar, Nal Se Jal

- **Rs. 60,000 crore** allocated to cover **3.8 crore households** in 2022-23 under Har Ghar, Nal se Jal.
- The current target of the government under this scheme is to provide tap drinking water to 8.7 crore households . 5.5 crore households were covered in the last two years .

Housing for All

- **Rs. 48,000 crore** allocated for completion of **80 lakh houses** in 2022-23 under PM Awas Yojana.

Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North-East Region (PM-DevINE)

- New scheme PM-DevINE launched to fund infrastructure and social development projects in the North-East. The scheme will be implemented by North -Eastern Council.
- An initial allocation of **Rs. 1,500 crore has been made** to enable livelihood activities for youth and women under the scheme.

Vibrant Villages Programme

- Government of India will launch a Vibrant Villages Programme for development of Border villages with sparse population, limited connectivity and infrastructure on the northern border.

Banking

- **100 percent of 1.5 lakh post offices** to come on the **Core Banking System(CBS)**.
- To mark the 75 years of Independence ,Scheduled Commercial Banks will set up **75 Digital Banking Units (DBUs) in 75 districts of the country..**

e-Passport

- The Union External Affairs Ministry will issue e-Passports with embedded chips and futuristic technology.to enhance the convenience for the citizens for International travel.

Land Records Management

The government will encourage the state government to adopt Unique Land Parcel Identification Number to facilitate IT-based management of records.

Accelerated Corporate Exit

- The Government will set up the “**Centre for Processing Accelerated Corporate Exit (C-PACE)**” to facilitate and speed up the voluntary closing up of the companies from the currently required 2 years to less than 6 months.

AVGC Promotion Task Force

- The Government will set up a promotion task force for the development of **animation, visual effects, gaming, and comic (AVGC) sectors..**

Export Promotion

- **Special Economic Zones Act to be replaced with a new legislation** to enable States to become partners in **‘Development of Enterprise and Service Hubs’.**

AtmaNirbharta in Defence:

- In order to reduce imports in the defence sector and to promote AtmaNirbharta in equipment for the Armed Forces , **68 per cent of the capital procurement budget will be earmarked for domestic industry in 2022-23, up from 58 per cent in 2021-22**
- Defence R&D to be opened up for industry, startups and academia with 25% of defence R&D budget earmarked for this purpose.
- Independent nodal umbrella body to be set up for meeting testing and certification requirements.

Defence

The allocation for defence has been increased for 2022-23 to Rs 5.25 lakh crores. Last year the allocation for defence was Rs 4.79 lakh crore.

Sunrise Opportunities

- Government contribution to be provided for R&D in Sunrise Opportunities like Artificial Intelligence, Geospatial Systems and Drones, Semiconductor and its eco-system, Space Economy, Genomics and Pharmaceuticals, Green Energy, and Clean Mobility Systems.

Energy Transition and Climate Action:

- Additional allocation of **Rs. 19,500 crore for Production Linked Incentive for manufacture of high efficiency solar modules** to meet the goal of 280 GW of installed solar power by 2030.
- In order to become a carbon neutral economy ,five to seven per cent biomass pellets are to be used in thermal power plant along with coal for production of power.

Benefits

- It will result in reducing the production of 38 MMT per year of carbon dioxide
- It will provide an extra source of income to farmers and job opportunities to locals,
- Help avoid stubble burning in agriculture fields.
- **Four pilot projects to be set up for coal gasification and conversion of coal into chemicals** for the industry

Public Capital Investment:

- To support the economy and to pull in private sector investment the government will continue to invest in the economy

- **Outlay for capital expenditure stepped up sharply by 35.4% to Rs. 7.50 lakh crore in 2022-23** from Rs. 5.54 lakh crore in 2021-22..

• Outlay in 2022-23 to be **2.9% of GDP**.

- **‘Effective Capital Expenditure’** of the Central Government is estimated at **Rs. 10.68 lakh crore in 2022-23**, which is about **4.1% of GDP**.

GIFT-IFSC

- World-class foreign universities and institutions to be allowed in the Gujarat International Financial Tech-City (GIFT- City).
- An **International Arbitration Centre** will be set up in GIFT-City to be set up for timely settlement of disputes under international jurisprudence.

Mobilising Resources

- **Data Centres and Energy Storage Systems** to be given infrastructure status.
- Venture Capital and Private Equity invested more than Rs. 5.5 lakh crore last year facilitating one of the largest start-up and growth ecosystems. Measures to be taken to help scale up this investment.

Blended funds to be promoted for sunrise sectors.

Government will issue **Sovereign Green Bonds** for mobilizing resources for green infrastructure.

Digital Rupee

- Introduction of **Digital Rupee by the Reserve Bank of India starting 2022-23**.

Providing Greater Fiscal Space to States

- Government of India will provide a 50-year, interest-free loan of ₹1 lakh crore to states to enable them to spend on capital investments, especially in infrastructure, under the PM GatiShakti Master Plan during 2022-23 under the **‘Scheme for Financial Assistance to States for Capital Investment’**:
- In 2021-22 the total outlay for the scheme was Rs 15,000 crore.

In 2022-23, States will be allowed a fiscal deficit of 4% of Gross State Domestic Product(GSDP), of which 0.5% will be tied to power sector reforms

Fiscal Management

The total expenditure in 2022-23 is estimated at Rs. 39.45 lakh crore, while the total receipts other than borrowings are estimated at Rs. 22.84 lakh crore.

The total Market Borrowings of the government for 2022-23 are estimated to be at Rs. 11,58,719 crore.

Deficits

Fiscal Deficit

The expected Fiscal Deficit in 2021-22 has been revised to 6.9% of GDP. It is expected to be of ₹ 15,91,089 crore.

The target fiscal deficit for 2022-23 is 6.4% of GDP. It is estimated to be at ₹ 16,61,196 crore.

Revenue Deficit

The revenue deficit in 2021-22 is expected to be 4.7% of the GDP.

The target Revenue Deficit for 2022-23 is 3.8% of GDP.

Primary Deficit

The primary deficit for 2021-22 is expected to be 3.3% of GDP

The target primary deficit for 2022-23 is 2.8% of GDP.

[For understanding the concept of deficits kindly see our blogs and click on this link.](#)

Tax Proposals**DIRECT TAXES**

- There has been no changes in the Income Tax slabs.

Cooperative societies

- Alternate Minimum Tax paid by cooperatives brought down from **18.5 per cent to 15 per cent.**
- Surcharge on cooperative societies reduced from **12 per cent to 7 per cent** for those having total income of more than Rs 1 crore and up to Rs 10 crores.

Tax relief to persons with disability

- Payment of annuity and lump sum amount from insurance scheme to be allowed to differently abled dependent during the lifetime of parents/guardians, i.e., on parents/guardians attaining the age of 60 years.

Parity in National Pension Scheme Contribution

- Tax deduction limit increased from **10 per cent to 14 percent** on employer's contribution to the NPS account of State Government employees.
- This measure will bring the state government employees at par with central government employees.

Incentives for Start-ups

- Period of incorporation extended by **one year, up to 31.03.2023** for eligible start-ups to avail tax benefit. Earlier startups were offered tax incentives for the first three years of their incorporation by the government and now it has been extended by another year.

Scheme for taxation of virtual digital assets

- Specific tax regime for virtual digital assets introduced.
- Any income from transfer of any virtual digital asset to be taxed at the rate of **30 per cent**.
- No deduction in respect of any expenditure or allowance to be allowed while computing such income except cost of acquisition.
- Loss from transfer of virtual digital asset cannot be set off against any other income.
- To capture the transaction details, TDS to be provided on payment made in relation to transfer of virtual digital asset at the rate of 1 per cent of such consideration above a monetary threshold.
- Gift of virtual digital asset also to be taxed in the hands of the recipient.

Tax incentives to IFSC

- Subject to specified conditions, the following to be **exempt from tax**
 - Income of a non-resident from offshore derivative instruments.
 - Income from over the counter derivatives issued by an offshore banking unit.
 - Income from royalty and interest on account of lease of ship.
 - Income received from portfolio management services in IFSC.

Health and Education Cess

- Any surcharge or cess on income and profits **not allowable** as business expenditure.

INDIRECT TAXES**Special Economic Zones**

- Customs Administration of SEZs to be fully IT driven and function on the **Customs National Portal** – shall be implemented by 30th September 2022.

Project imports and capital goods

- Gradually phasing out of the concessional rates in capital goods and project imports; and applying a moderate tariff of **7.5 percent** – conducive to the growth of the domestic sector and 'Make in India'.

Gems and Jewellery

- Customs duty on cut and polished diamonds and gemstones being reduced **to 5 per cent**; Nil customs duty to simply sawn diamond - To give a boost to the Gems and Jewellery sector
- Customs duty of at least Rs 400 per Kg to be paid on imitation jewellery import - To disincentivise import of undervalued imitation jewellery.

MSME

- Customs duty on umbrellas being raised to 20 per cent. Exemption to parts of umbrellas being withdrawn.

Tariff measure to encourage blending of fuel

- Unblended fuel to attract an additional differential **excise duty of Rs 2/ litre** from the 1st of October 2022 - to encourage blending of fuel.