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1. Release of over Rs 2 lakh cr as GST compensation to States for FY 2020-21 (April 28, 2022)

The Finance Ministry has said that an amount of Rs 2 lakh 78 thousand crore has been released to the states as GST compensation for the financial year 2020-21.

- The ministry has so far released 7 lakh 35 thousand crore rupees to the States including the assistance released on back-to-back basis.
- Presently only Rs 78 thousand 704 crore compensation for the year 2021-22 is pending due to insufficient amount in the fund, which is equivalent to four months' compensation.
- Normally, compensation for ten months of April to January of any financial year is released during that year and the compensation of February and March is released only in the next financial year.
- The GST compensation for eight out of the ten months of 2021-22 has already been released to the states and the pending amount will also be released after the cess amount is deposited in the Compensation Fund.
- At the time of the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax, GST, a constitutional amendment provided that Parliament would, by law, provide compensation to the States for the loss of revenue due to the introduction of the GST, for a period of five years.

2. Labour and Employment Ministry's 2021 third-quarter survey finds increase of 4 lakh jobs (April 28, 2022)

According to the Ministry of Labour and Employment's Third Quarter Employment Survey (QES) report, over four lakh jobs were created in nine selected sectors in October-December 2021 in firms with 10 or more workers.

- The Ministry's survey, which covered 10,834 units in the third round, found employment had increased from 3.10 crore in July-September 2021 to 3.145 crore in the next quarter.
- The survey covered construction, manufacturing, trade, transportation, education, health, housing and restaurants, IT/BPO and financial services.
- It creates 85% jobs in units with 10 or more workers.
- The survey does not cover units established after 2013-2014.
- The manufacturing sector accounted for 39% of the units, followed by education (22%).
- Overall, 23.55% units provided on-the-job training to workers, while the number was higher in health sector units (34.87%).
- At the same time, the nine sectors reported 1.85 lakh vacancies, with 81,846 in manufacturing, 47,076 in health and 39,014 in education.
- The report said that 86.5% of the vacancies were "in the process of filling".

- Around 4% of the vacancies could not be filled due to "non-availability of requisite skilled workers".

3. SC fixes final hearing on Sedition Law (April 28, 2022)

Supreme Court to give final hearing on May 5 on petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the offence of sedition under Section 124A of IPC.

- A three-member bench of CJI NV Ramana has fixed May 5 for hearing all the petitions related to this case together.
- Attorney General K.K. Venugopal is assisting the court in the case in the capacity of his constitutional office.
- The CJI had said sedition or Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code was prone to misuse by the government.

• Sedition Law

- Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code provides for the punishment of sedition.
- The Indian Penal Code (IPC) was enacted in 1860 during the British Raj.
- The then British government in India feared that religious preachers from the Indian subcontinent would wage war against the government.
- Throughout the British Raj, this section was used to suppress activists in favour of national independence, including Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi, both found guilty and imprisoned.
- In 1973, sedition was made a cognizable offence for the first time in India during the tenure of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
- A cognizable offence means arrest without a warrant.

• Constitutional validity

- After independence, it was found unconstitutional by two high courts, as it violates freedom of expression.
- The Supreme Court upheld its validity in Kedar Nath Singh v State of Bihar (1962).

4. Union Cabinet approves upgradation of communication to 4G in Naxalite areas (April 28, 2022)

The Union Cabinet approved the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) project to upgrade 2G mobile services to 4G at security locations in areas affected by Left Wing Extremism.

- This will enable better internet and data services in these LWE affected areas.

- The project envisages upgradation of 2,542 mobile towers to provide 4G services in LWE areas at a cost of Rs 2,426 crore in 10 states including Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Maharashtra.
- All the sites will be upgraded by BSNL at a cost of Rs 2,426 crores.
- The Union Cabinet also approved the Revised Cost Estimate on "Setting up of India Post Payments Bank".
- The facility of India Post Payments Bank will be available in all 1.56 lakh branches of post offices, for which an additional Rs 820 crore will be spent.
- This proposal is in line with the goal of providing mobile connectivity in rural areas and facilitating the delivery of various e-governance services, banking services, tele-medicine, tele-education etc. through mobile broadband in these areas.
- The Cabinet also gave its approval for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between India and Chile for cooperation in the field of disabilities.

5. Govt approves Rs 60,939 crore subsidy for phosphate-based fertilisers (April 28, 2022)

The Union Cabinet has approved nutrient based subsidy rates for Phosphatic and Potash, P&K fertilisers for Kharif season-2022.

- The subsidy will cover the period to September 2022.
- India provided a subsidy of 571.5 billion rupees for the previous 12 month period ending March 31.
- A subsidy of Rs 2,501 will continue to be available at Rs 1,350 for every 50 kg bag of crop nutrient diammonium phosphate in local markets.
- The decision to increase fertiliser subsidies was taken after rising crop nutrient prices in global markets, mainly due to supply chain disruptions after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, increased freight traffic and rising energy costs.
- **Background**
 - Government is providing Urea and 25 grade P&K fertilisers at subsidised prices to the farmers through fertiliser manufacturers/importers.
 - The subsidy on P&K fertilisers is being governed by the NBS Scheme.
 - In line with its farmer friendly approach, the Government is committed to ensure the availability of P&K fertilisers to the farmers at affordable prices.

6. Digital India RISC-V Microprocessor (DIR-V) Program launched (April 28, 2022)

The Electronics and Information Technology ministry has launched the Digital India RISC-V Microprocessor (DIR-V) programme.

- It aims to enable manufacturing of microprocessors for the world in India and achieve industry-grade silicon and design by December 2023.
- IIT Madras Director Professor V Kamakoti will be the Chief Architect of DIRV-programme while S Krishnakumar Rao of C-DAC will be the Program Manager.
- DIR-V program will see partnerships between Startups, Academia and Multinationals, to make India not only a RISC-V Talent Hub for the World but also supplier of RISC-V System on Chips for Servers, Mobile devices, Automotive and Microcontrollers across the globe.
- The Ministry unveiled India's Strategic Roadmap for Semiconductor Design and Innovation to catalyse the semiconductor ecosystem along with the blueprint of the roadmap for the design and implementation of the DIR-V programme.

7. Cabinet approves opening of Indian Mission in Lithuania (April 28, 2022)

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the opening of a new Indian Mission in Lithuania in 2022.

- It will help expand India's diplomatic footprint, deepen political ties and strategic cooperation, enable the growth of bilateral trade, investment and economic engagement.
- It will facilitate stronger people-to-people contacts, allow more sustained political access in multilateral fora and help mobilise support for India's foreign policy objectives.
- The Indian Mission in Lithuania will better assist the Indian community and protect their interests.
- This will have a direct impact in increasing domestic production and employment in line with our goal of self-reliant India.

• India - Lithuania

- India recognized Lithuania (along with the other Baltic states of Latvia and Estonia) on 7 September 1991 following the acceptance of their independence by the then USSR.
- India's diplomatic relations with Lithuania were established on 25 February 1992.
- The Lithuanian language, the oldest surviving Indo-European language, has great similarities with Sanskrit, so it reflects ancient links with India.

8. Union Minister Giriraj Singh launches 'Azadi Se Antyodaya Tak' campaign (April 28, 2022)

Rural Development Minister Giriraj Singh today launched a 90-day inter-ministerial campaign 'Azadi se Antyodaya Tak' under the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.

- The campaign will be implemented by involving all rural stakeholders such as families of selected freedom fighters, Panchayati Raj Institutions, women's networks, youth groups and students highlighting the achievements of the schemes.

- The campaign has been launched with a mission to saturate 75 districts of 28 states and union territories with the beneficiary schemes of nine central ministries.
- Direct assistance to beneficiaries in saturation mode in 17 selected schemes during the campaign, will reach the person at the bottom of the pyramid in rural areas by each of the participating Ministries and Departments.
- in this campaign the following ministries and department will be involved -
 1. Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment,
 2. Ministry of Women and Child Development
 3. Department of Financial Services,
 4. Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship,
 5. Department of Agriculture and farmers Welfare,
 6. Department of Health and Family Welfare,
 7. Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying and Ministry of Labour and Employment.

9. India Tops The World In Real-Time Payment Volumes In 2021 (April 28, 2022)

According to the ACI Worldwide Report on Real-time Transactions, India's real-time transactions are ranked first in the world.

- In the year 2021, India's real-time transactions have grown to 48.6 billion.
- China ranks second after India with 18 billion real time transactions.
- India's transaction volume is more than seven times that of the US, UK, Canada, Germany and France combined (7.5 billion).
- Brazil, Thailand and South Korea lag behind India and China in terms of real-time transactions of 8.7 billion, 9.7 billion and 7.4 billion respectively.
- This research has found that more than half (52.71 percent) of consumers worldwide use mobile wallets.
- Real-time payment transactions worldwide crossed 118.3 billion in the year 2021, a growth of 64.5% on a year-on-year basis.
- **Reason to increase in real-time transactions**
 - The rise in the use of digital payments during the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the growth of QR code payments and UPI-based mobile payment apps among merchants, propelled real-time payments into 2021.
 - Consumers are moving from cash to digital real-time payment methods, which means that the share of real-time payments in total payment volume will exceed 70% in 2026.

10. Samba becomes first district in country with 100% Golden card Registration (April 28, 2022)

The Samba district of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has become the first district in the country where all the citizens, employees and pensioners have the Golden Card of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.

- Samba district achieved this feat after a special registration drive by the State Health Agency from April 11 to April 21.
- There are a total 62,641 families in Samba district out of which 3,04,510 people are eligible for AB-PM-JAY Sehat Golden Card.
- Under this scheme, the beneficiary family is being given the benefit of health insurance of Rs.5 lakh.
- Recently, Palli village of Palli Panchayat of Samba district became the first solar power village in the country, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 24 April.

• About Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

- Started- April 1, 2018
- Ayushman Bharat Yojana or Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana is a health scheme of the Government of India.
- The scheme was announced by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley during the budget session 2018.
- This scheme was started by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 14 April 2018 on the birth anniversary of Bhimrao Ambedkar from Ranchi district of Jharkhand.
- The objective of this scheme is to provide health insurance to the economically weaker people (BPL holders). Cashless health insurance up to Rs 5 lakh is provided to every family covered under this scheme.