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1. Gujarat CM unveils Urban G20 logo, website and social media handle (Dec. 19, 2022)

Gujarat CM unveils Urban G20 logo, website and social media handle

Chief Minister of Gujarat **Bhupendra Patel** unveiled the logo, website and social media handles of the Urban-20 conference in Gandhinagar on 19 December 2022. The ceremony was attended virtually by the Union Minister for Urban Development and Urban Housing Hardeep Singh Puri.

Urban 20

The UNESCO heritage city **Ahmedabad** will host the Urban 20 meetings as part of G 20 meetings between February to July 2023.

In July 2023, the U20 mayor's summit will be held in Ahmedabad to discuss urban development issues.

The Urban 20 will provide a platform for the G20 cities to facilitate discussions on important issues of urban development including climate change, social inclusion, sustainable mobility, affordable housing, and financing of urban infrastructure to propose collective solutions.

Indian Presidency of G 20

India officially assumed the Presidency of G20 on 1 December 2022 from Indonesia. The summit meeting of the Head of the States and the leaders of the G20 is scheduled to be held in September 2023 in New Delhi.

To prepare for the summit meeting a series of meetings is to be held by India.

The first meeting was the G-20 Sherpa meeting held in Udaipur in the first week of December 2022.

G-20

The G-20 was founded back in 1999 after the Asian financial crisis.

The Group of Twenty (G-20) comprises 19 countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkiye, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and the European Union.

The G-20 members represent around 85 per cent of the global GDP, over 75 per cent of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population.

2. ADB keeps India growth rate forecast at 7% for 2022-23 (Dec. 16, 2022)

ADB keeps India growth rate forecast at 7% for 2022-23

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) in its latest report **"Asian Development Outlook" Supplement December 2022** issued on 14 December 2022 has kept its forecast on the

Indian economy growth rate for 2022-23 to **7%**. In 2021-22 the Indian economy grew by **8.7%**.

The ADB in its last report issued in September had forecasted the growth rate of 7% for the Indian economy in 2022-23. The ADB expects India to grow by **7.2% in 2023-24**.

According to the National Statistical Office (NSO), the Indian economy grew by **6.3% in Q2 (July-September) of the fiscal year 2022-23**.

However in its recent Monetary policy statement the Reserve Bank of India had revised the Indian economy growth rate in 2022-23 to **6.8% from** its earlier 7% forecast.

Other key points of the report

ADB expects the Asia Pacific region to grow by 4.2% in 2022 (January -December) and 4.6% in 2023.

The South Asian region is expected to grow by 6.5% in 2022 and by 6.3% in 2023 due to slow down in the Bangladesh economy and flooding in Pakistan.

Asia's largest economy China is expected to grow by **3% in 2022** down from its earlier forecast of 3.3%.

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

It is a regional multilateral financial institution which focuses on the countries of Asia and Pacific region.

It was set up after a resolution was passed at the first Ministerial Conference on Asian Economic Cooperation held by the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East in 1963.

It started functioning from 19 December 1966 with 31 member countries.

At present it has **68 members**—of which 49 members are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside.

Japan is the largest shareholder of the ADB and a Japanese has always been the head of the ADB.

President of ADB: **Masatsugu Asakawa**

Headquarters: **Mandaluyong City, Manila, Philippines**

3. Narendra Singh Tomar chairs 32nd meeting of Board of Directors of NHB (Dec. 15, 2022)

Narendra Singh Tomar chairs 32nd meeting of Board of Directors of NHB

The **32nd meeting** of the **Board of Directors of the National Horticulture Board (NHB)** was held in **New Delhi** on 14th December under the chairmanship of the Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Chairman of the Board, **Narendra Singh Tomar**.

Important facts

- It was decided in the meeting that the process of approval of horticulture projects would be simplified for the farmers.
- Instead of two stages, now the process of approval of these projects will be completed in one go and it will be completely digital, as well as minimum documents will be required, due to which the farmers will not face any kind of trouble.
- It is noteworthy that many projects which used to be approved in a time period of about 6 to 8 months, will now be approved **in just 45 days.**
- The scheme framework, application filing system, documentation and approval process have been further simplified.
- The new simple design will come into effect from **January 1, 2023.**
- This process will make the system more transparent and efficient, promote ease of doing business for the benefit of the farming community and generate more hi-tech commercial projects for NHB funding.
- Under NHB, a new vertical has been created to promote organic and natural farming, which will oversee planning, monitoring, area expansion-market promotion for production, value chain development and infrastructure development.

Swachh Plant Programme

- The meeting also discussed in detail the new initiative of NHB- **Swachh Plant Programme.**
- Under the programme the problem of availability of planting material to the farmers will be solved by spending **Rs 2100 crore** with the assistance of **Asian Development Bank (ADB).**
- This will largely solve the problem of planting material, especially for many commercially important fruits.
- This programme will go a long way in providing a major contribution to the much needed quality planting material for horticulture crops in the country.

National Horticulture Board (NHB)

- It was set up by the Government of India in **1984** as an **Autonomous organisation** under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.**
- It is registered as a society under Societies Registration Act with its headquarters at **Gurugram.**
- Its main objective is to improve the integrated development of the horticulture industry and help in maintaining and coordinating the production and processing of fruits and vegetables.

4. India's largest and fourth business jet terminal commissioned at Cochin International Airport (Dec. 10, 2022)

India's largest and fourth business jet terminal commissioned at Cochin International Airport

Kerala Chief Minister **Pinarayi Vijayan** inaugurated the country's first and biggest charter gateway – the Business Jet Terminal -- at the Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) on 10 December 2022. Cochin airport has become the 4th airport in India after Delhi, Mumbai and Ahmedabad with dedicated private Jet terminals.

According to the CIAL Managing Director, S Suhas "The Business Jet Terminal is going to be India's first Charter Gateway, which will serve as a platform to integrate business jet service, tourism and business conferences,

The business jet terminal inaugurated today was built at a cost of 40 crore rupees by renovating the old domestic terminal. It covers an area of 40,000 sq feet with comfortable lounges, customs and immigration counters, a business centre and other modern facilities.

Cochin International Airport was the first airport in the world to run on solar power. It is the largest airport in Kerala and the seventh largest in India.

International Airports in Kerala

Kerala has the highest number of operational international airports in India. It has 4 international airports. They are:

- Trivandrum International Airport ,
- Cochin International airport ,
- Calicut International Airport and
- Kannur International Airport.

5. ADB approves \$250 million loan to strengthen logistics sector in India (Dec. 9, 2022)

ADB approves \$250 million loan to strengthen logistics

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on 9 December 2022 has approved a USD 250 million loan to support India's wide-ranging reforms that aim to strengthen and modernize the country's **logistics infrastructure**, improve efficiency, and lower costs.

The loan will finance the first sub-program of the strengthening multimodal and integrated logistics ecosystem program, which supports the government's efforts to create a comprehensive policy, planning, and institutional framework at the federal, state, and city level.

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Asian Development Bank is a regional bank which was set up to provide development loans to the countries of Asia-Pacific region.

Its Headquarters is at **Mandaluyong City, Manila, Philippines.**

68 countries are its members and Masatsugu **Asakawa** of Japan is the President of the ADB.

6. ADB approves \$780 million loan to the Chennai metro project (Dec. 9, 2022)

ADB approves \$780 million loan to the Chennai metro project

The [Asian Development Bank \(ADB\)](#) on 8 December 2022 has approved a **\$780 million loan** for the building of new lines for **Chennai's metro rail** and improving the network's connectivity with bus and feeder services.

ADB will provide an additional \$1 million technical assistance grant to help the Chennai Metro Rail with the planning and management of the metro system's multimodal integration. **Grant** means that the \$1 million will not be returned to the ADB.

According to the ADB the project will expand Chennai's metro rail system to provide a safe and integrated transport solution essential in improving urban mobility and make the city more liveable,

ADB has committed \$57.75 billion for 826 projects in India of that 18.85 billion is for 188 transportation projects.

In **2021**, ADB committed a record **\$4.6 billion** in sovereign loans to India. **Sovereign loans** means that it has been granted to the government of India. India is the **largest borrower of ADB**.

Headquarters of ADB: **Mandaluyong City, Manila, Philippines**

7. A UN panel has recommended that Australia's Great Barrier Reef be listed as a World Heritage Site (Nov. 29, 2022)

Australia's Great Barrier Reef be listed as a World Heritage Site

A **United Nations panel** recommended on November 29, 2022 that **Australia's Great Barrier Reef** should be listed as a **World Heritage Site** that is "**in danger**".

Important facts

- The world's largest coral reef ecosystem has been greatly affected by climate change and ocean warming.
- Frequent bleaching events and **La Nina** are threatening the reef.
- Bleaching occurs when water gets too warm, causing corals to expel the colourful algae living in their tissues and turn white.
- **Australia's** recently elected government has pledged to spend A\$1.2 billion (\$800 million) over the coming years to protect the reef.

What are Coral reefs?

- Coral reefs are one of the most **biologically diverse marine ecosystems on Earth**.
- They play an important role in marine ecosystems and support habitats for **flora and fauna** in the ocean.
- Each coral is called a **polyp** and thousands of such polyps live together to form a colony.

About Great Barrier Reef

- It extends for **1400 miles** along the **north-east coast of Queensland, Australia** and is the world's most extensive and rich coral reef ecosystem.
- It is made up of more than **2,900 reefs and more than 900 islands**.
- It is the largest single structure in the world made by living organisms.
- This reef was selected as a **World Heritage Site in 1981**.

8. ADB to invest Rs 200 crore in the VA Tech Wabag water company (Nov. 26, 2022)

ADB to invest Rs 200 crore in the VA Tech Wabag

The [Asian Development Bank \(ADB\)](#) will invest **Rs 200 crore** in the **VA Tech Wabag company** which is in the business of treatment of municipal and Industrial wastewater and its technologies. This is the **first time** that ADB's is investing in a private sector water company. The fund will be used by the company for its working capital requirements.

The Chennai based VA Tech Wabag Company provides technologies and services for total water solutions in both municipal and industrial sectors. It employs over 1,600 professionals in 25 countries across four continents, and runs research and development centers in Austria, India and Switzerland.

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President of ADB: **Masatsugu Asakawa**

Headquarters: **Mandaluyong City, Manila, Philippines**

9. India moves up 6 place to be ranked 61st on the Network Readiness Index 2022 (Nov. 20, 2022)

India moves up 6 place to be ranked 61st

India has improved its rank by **6 places** to be ranked at **61 place** in the recently released Network Readiness Index 2022 (NRI 2022). The report prepared by the US-based non-profit body **Portulans Institute** compliments India and says that “India has a greater network readiness than would be expected given its income level”.

The Network Readiness Index ranks the **131 countries** on 58 variables across four pillars of four different pillars: Technology, People, Governance, and Impact.

India's Performance

- India improved its score from 49.74 in 2021 to **51.19** in 2022.
- India has secured 1st rank in “**AI talent concentration**”,
- 2nd rank in “**Mobile broadband internet traffic within the country**” and “**International Internet bandwidth**”,
- 3rd rank in “**Annual investment in telecommunication services**” and “**Domestic market size**”, 4th rank in “**ICT Services exports**” and
- 5th rank in “**FTTH/Building Internet subscriptions**” and “**AI scientific publications**”.
- India is ranked **3rd** out of 36 in the group of **lower-middle-income countries** after Ukraine (50) and Indonesia (59).

Top three countries on the Network Readiness Index

The **United States** topped the list with an overall score of 80.3. It was followed by **Singapore** with a score of 79.35 and **Sweden** with a score of 78.91.

In the **Asia Pacific region**, the list was led by **Singapore**, followed by **South Korea** and **Japan**.

Full Forms

FTTH: Fiber to the Home

ICT: Information Communication Technology

AI: Artificial Intelligence

10. International Gita Mahotsav to be organised in Kurukshetra, Haryana (Nov. 18, 2022)

International Gita Mahotsav to be organised

International Gita Mahotsav will be held from November 19 to December 6, 2022 in **Kurukshetra, Haryana**.

Important facts

- President **Draupadi Murmu** will formally inaugurate the main programs at the **Geeta Yagya** at **Brahma Sarovar** in Kurukshetra on November 29.
- She will also inaugurate a three-day **International Gita Seminar** at Kurukshetra University on the same day.
- In this seminar, renowned international and national scholars of **Shrimadbhagwadgita** and researchers from India and abroad will present their research papers on 'world peace and harmony'.
- Saras and Craft Mela will also be organized from 19th November to 6th December.
- Sculptors from across the country have created **21 special stone sculptures** based on Mahabharata and Gita. Various artisans will display their talents in this.
- A special pavilion has been set up by the Government of Madhya Pradesh at Purushottapura Bagh, Brahasarovar, which highlights the culture, crafts and food of the state.
- '**Gita Sthali**' Kurukshetra is a confluence of faith and tourism. Recently the grand form of Lord Krishna was unveiled at **Jyotisar**.

About International Gita Mahotsav

- Haryana Government has been celebrating **Gita Mahotsav** festival since the year **1989 in Kurukshetra town** in collaboration with Kurukshetra Development Board.
- **In the year 2016**, the Haryana government decided to celebrate the festival of **Gita Jayanti as International Gita Mahotsav**.
- Thereafter, in the years **2017, 2018 and 2019**, International Gita Mahotsav was organised in Kurukshetra.
- In this festival of the year 2022, **Nepal** will be the partner country and **Madhya Pradesh** will be the partner state.

About Kurukshetra

- Kurukshetra is a city and administrative headquarter of Kurukshetra district in the Indian state of Haryana.
- It is also known as '**Dharmakshetra**' and as the "**Land of the Bhagavad Gita**".
- It is believed that the Kurukshetra war of Mahabharata took place here.
- **Thaneshwar** whose urban area is merged with Kurukshetra is a pilgrimage center with many places said to be related to the Mahabharata.

