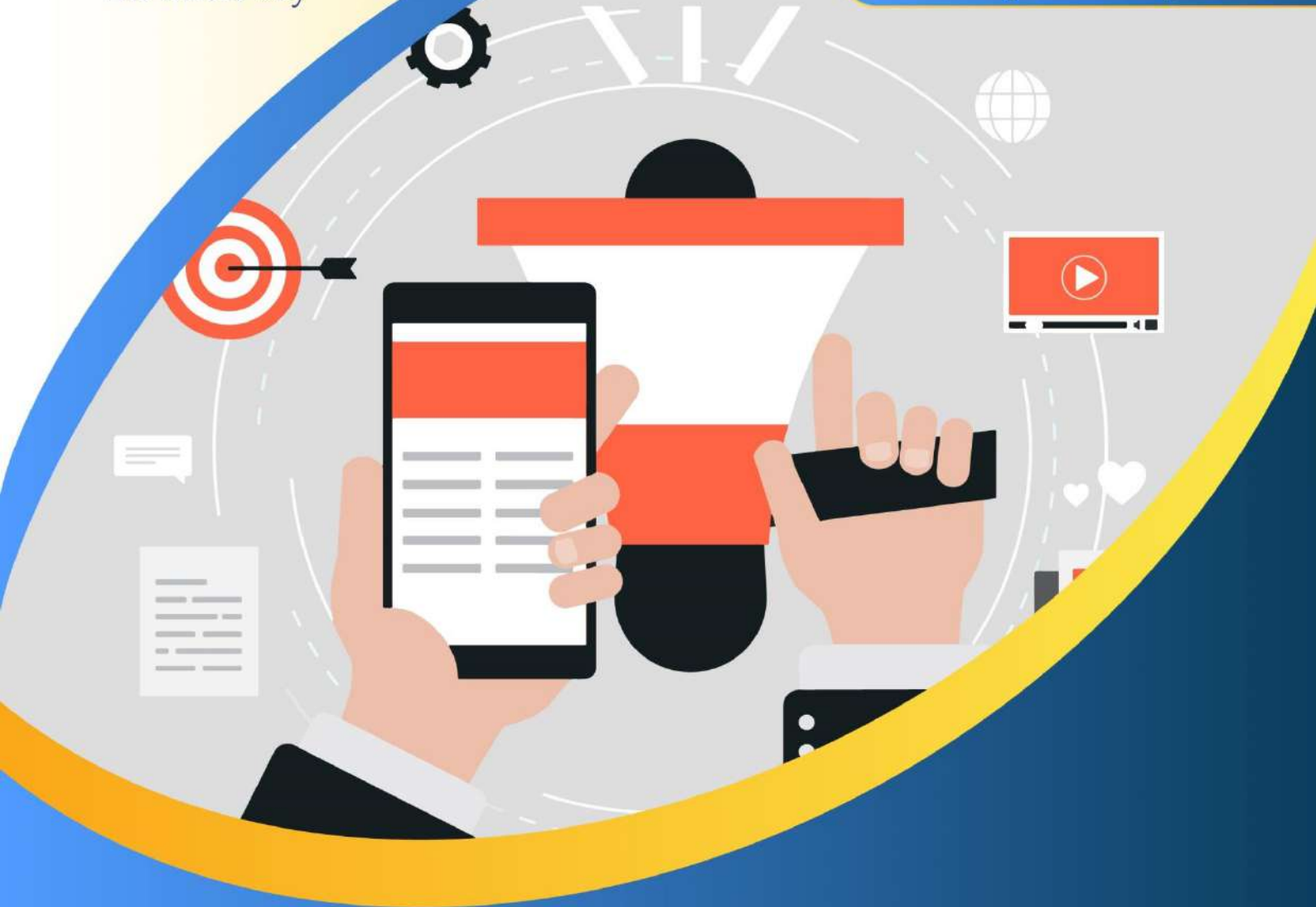


January to July 2021



# 2021 Current Affairs for Prelims 2021

## PEOPLE IN NEWS

**Contact Us : 9964432222**

[portal.manifestias.com](http://portal.manifestias.com)/[www.journalsofindia.com](http://www.journalsofindia.com)

<b>PLACES IN NEWS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1. STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE (SPR) INDIA.....	2
2. SOMNATH TEMPLE .....	2
3. CENTRAL VISTA AVENUE.....	3
4. MAHABAHU-BRAHMAPUTRA .....	3
5. MAJULI ISLAND .....	4
6. CARACAL .....	5
7. PUDUCHERRY.....	5
8. SRI JAGANNATH TEMPLE .....	5
9. INDIA'S 1ST AC RAILWAY TERMINAL: .....	6
10. SABARMATI ASHRAM .....	6
11. GREATER TIPRALAND .....	7
12. WHITSUN REEF .....	7
13. INDIA BRIDGE OF GUJARAT .....	8
14. GYANVAPI MOSQUE .....	9
15. FIRST MOVABLE FRESHWATER TUNNEL AQUARIUM .....	9
16. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND CONVENTION CENTRE – RUDRAKSHA.....	10
17. ALEXANDER DALRYMPLE AWARD .....	10

# PLACES IN NEWS

## 1. Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) India

**In News-** India's current national capacity for storage of crude oil and petroleum products has reached 74 days after the addition of three new locations at Visakhapatnam, Mangalore and Padur.

**About SPR programme:**

- To ensure energy security, the Government of India decided to **set up 5 million metric tons (MMT)** of strategic crude oil storages at **Visakhapatnam, Mangalore and Padur (near Udupi)**.
- In the 2017-18 budget, it was announced that two more such caverns will be set up at **Chandikhol in Jajpur district of Odisha** and **Bikaner in Rajasthan** as part of the **second phase**.
- These facilities are being **managed by Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL)**, a Special Purpose Vehicle, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Oil Industry Development Board (OIDB) **under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas**.
- The crude oil storages are constructed in **underground rock caverns** and are located on the **East and West coast of India**.
- Crude oil from these caverns can be supplied to the Indian Refineries either through pipelines or through a combination of pipelines and ships.
- **International Energy Agency** members maintain emergency oil reserves equivalent to at least 90 days of net imports.
- India will have oil reserves equivalent to at least 87 days of net imports, once the \$1.6 billion second phase of Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves, which aims to add 12 days of crude storage, is operational.
- These facilities together will help support 22 days of India's crude oil requirements.
- Indian refiners also maintain 65 days of crude storage, taking the total tally to 87 days.

## 2. Somnath Temple

**In News-** PRIME MINISTER was elected new chairman of the Shree Somnath Trust (SKT), the religious body which manages and maintains the famous Somnath temple near Veraval in Gujarat.

**Concept:**

- Somnath, literally translated as the **Lord of Moon (Soma)** houses the first of the 12 Jyotirlingas or the symbolic representation of Lord Shiva.
- This highly famed pilgrim destination is **located at the Viraval Port or PrabhasPattan in Saurashtra, Gujrat**.
- The temple is positioned in such a way that **not a single piece of land is visible from the Somnath seashore until Antarctica**.
- It is said the **first version** of the temple came into being even before the start of Christian era.
- The **second version** of the temple came into being under the initiative of the Vallabhi king around 408AD-768AD.
- This temple is often referred to as the '**eternal shrine**' because historical records say that this temple has been **destroyed several times** by invaders and have been resurrected several times too.
- Archaeological investigations point out that the temple of Somnath had been **rebuilt nearly thrice before the raid of Muhammad Ghaznavi in the year 1026**.
- It is said that the temple was looted and destroyed **as many as seventeen times**.

- **The latest rebuilding** of Somnath temple **was done in 1947 under the initiative of Sardar Vallabhbai Patel.**
- Renowned temple architect Prabhas Chandra designed it and the first President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad installed the Jyotirling in the new temple on May 11, 1951.
- The present structure was built by the Sompura Salat community in Kailash Mahameru Prasad Style or the **Chalukya style.**

### 3. Central Vista Avenue

**In news-** Recently, MoS(I/C) for Housing & Urban Affairs performed the Bhoomi Poojan ceremony of Central Vista Avenue.

#### **About the Central Vista Avenue-**

- Government approved a proposal for development of Central Vista Avenue with estimated cost of Rs.608 crores on 10th November, 2020.
- The Central Vista Avenue starting from North & South Block to India Gate, that includes the Rajpath, its adjoining lawns and canals, rows of tree, Vijay Chowk and the India Gate plaza is a 3 km long stretch.
- Annual Republic Day Celebrations (RDC) are held on this avenue every year.
- Other important functions like International Yoga Day, Indian Food festival, Paryatan Parv, Odia Parv and Prakram Parv are also held here annually.
- It has very high footfalls and is the most frequently visited place and important tourist attraction in Delhi.
- Why redevelopment?
- It lacks public amenities like toilets, pathways, designated vending zones, parking, proper lighting, signages etc.
- Its lawns and water canals are in depleted condition as they were not planned for heavy public use.
- The Republic Day arrangements take a long time and during that time most of the area become inaccessible to the public.
- Therefore, the government has decided to address these by **refurbishing and improving the avenue, as part of the comprehensive transformation of the Central Vista**

#### **About new Central Vista structure-**

- As per the master plan, Central Vista axis — currently from Rashtrapati Bhavan, following Rajpath, up to India Gate — will be extended from the present 2.9 km to 6.3 km from ridge to river.
- It will house the Nav Bharat Udyan or the New India Garden.
- The structure is meant to be unveiled on August 15, 2022, the 75th year of Independence.
- The structure's size can be three times the height of India Gate as the maximum height permissible there is 134 metres from ground level
- The design should take into account factors like soil stability, wind velocity, seismic forces and vulnerability to flooding etc. as per National Building Code of India, 2016.

Only indigenous material is to be used as part of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

### 4. Mahabahu-Brahmaputra

**In news -** Recently, the Prime Minister launched 'Mahabahu-Brahmaputra' and laid the foundation stone of two bridges in Assam( Dhubri Phulbari Bridge & Majuli Bridge )

### Key updates-

- The launch of Mahabahu-Brahmaputra was marked by the inauguration of the Ro-Pax vessel operations between Neamati-Majuli Island, North Guwahati-South Guwahati and Dhubri-Hatsingimari
- The programme also includes shilanyas for construction of tourist jetties at four locations, namely, Neamati, Biswanath Ghat, Pandu and Jogighopa.
- A permanent Inland Water Transport Terminal will also be built at Jogighopa under the program.
- This Terminal will help in reducing the traffic on the Siliguri Corridor towards Kolkata and Haldia.
- It will also facilitate the uninterrupted movement of cargo even during flood season to various North-Eastern States like Meghalaya and Tripura and to Bhutan and Bangladesh as well.

### Dhubri Phulbari Bridge-

- The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the four lane bridge over the Brahmaputra between Dhubri (on North Bank) and Phulbari (on South Bank).
- The proposed Bridge will be located on NH-127B, originating from Srirampur on NH-27 (East-West Corridor), and terminating at Nongstoin on NH-106 in the State of Meghalaya.
- It will connect Dhubri in Assam to Phulbari, Tura, Rongram and Rongjeng in Meghalaya.
- It will reduce the distance of 205 Km to be travelled by Road to 19 Km, which is the total length of the bridge.

### Majuli Bridge-

- It is the two-lane Bridge on the Brahmaputra between Majuli (North Bank) and Jorhat (South Bank).
- The bridge will be located on NH-715K and will connect Nimatighat (on Jorhat side) and Kamalabari (on Majuli side).

### Various projects mentioned/launched by the Prime Minister-

- **Dr. Bhupen Hazarika Setu:** The Dhola–Sadiya Bridge, also referred to as the Bhupen Hazarika Setu, is a beam bridge in India, connecting the northeast states of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The bridge spans the Lohit River, a major tributary of the Brahmaputra River, from the village of Dhola in the south to Sadiya to the north.
- **Bogibeel Bridge:** Bogibeel bridge is a combined road and rail bridge over the Brahmaputra River in the northeastern Indian state of Assam between Dhemaji district and Dibrugarh district

**Saraighat Bridge:** The Saraighat Bridge is a rail-cum-road bridge over Brahmaputra River in Assam and is the first of its kind bridge over the river.

## 5. Majuli Island

**In news-** The Guinness World Records has officially designated Assam's Majuli as the largest river island in the world.

### More about it-

- It is situated in the Brahmaputra River.
- The river island covering an area of around 880 sqkm has toppled the previous record held by Brazil's Marajo island in the Amazon river.
- Majuli is the largest freshwater mid-river deltaic island in the world.
- It has been the abode of Assamese Vaishnavite culture, preached by Sankardeva, a pioneer of the medieval-age neo-Vaishnavite movement and established monasteries and hermitages known as 'satras' on the islet.

## 6. Caracal

- Caracal, a medium sized wildcat found in some parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat, is to be included into the list of critically endangered species for taking up conservation efforts with financial support under Centrally sponsored Development of Wildlife Habitat scheme.
- Now, there are 22 wildlife species under the recovery programme for critically endangered species.

### The Caracal-

- Wild cat native to Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, and India.
- In India its presence has been reported from only three states which are Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan.
- In Madhya Pradesh it is locally called as Shea-gosh or siyah-gush.
- In Gujarat, Caracals are locally referred to as Hornotro which means killer of a Blackbuck.
- In Rajasthan it is known as Junglee Bilao or Wildcat and occurs in Sariska Tiger Reserve and Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve.
- IUCN Red List: Least Concern since 2002
- Threats: Habitat loss due to agricultural expansion, the building of roads and settlements

## 7. Puducherry

**In news** - Puducherry was in news in the context of the recent political crisis and fall of its government.

### About Puducherry-

- “Puducherry” is the French interpretation of the original name “Puducheri” meaning “new settlement”
- It was officially known as Pondicherry until 2006 when it was renamed Puducherry.
- It was once the original headquarters of the French in India.
- It was merged with the Indian Union on 1st November 1954.
- But only in 1963 Puducherry became officially an integral part of India after the French Parliament in Paris ratified the Treaty with India.
- Puthucherry/Puducherry is unique as it spreads over three states, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.
- It consists of four non-contiguous enclaves, and named after the largest region, Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahe, Yanam(present districts).
- While Pudhucherry is located about 170 Kms. south of Chennai, Karaikal lies about 150 Kms. further down south, near Nagapattinam, Mahe lies on the western ghats surrounded by Kerala and Yanam is near Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh.
- Its French legacy is preserved in its French Quarter, with **tree-lined streets, mustard-colored colonial villas and chic boutiques.**

## 8. Sri Jagannath temple

**In news-** The draft architectural plan and design of the Sri Jagannath temple heritage corridor project was given the green signal by the temple managing committee.

### Jagannath Temple in Puri-

- The Jagannath Temple in Puri was called the “White Pagoda”.

- The temple is a part of Char Dham (Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri, Rameswaram) pilgrimages that a Hindu is expected to make in one's lifetime.
- When most of the deities in the temples of India are made of stone or metal, the idol of Jagannatha is made of wood which is ceremoniously replaced in every twelve or nineteen years by using sacred trees.
- The temple is believed to be constructed in the 12th century by King Anatavarman Chodaganga Deva of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty.
- The temple is famous for its annual Ratha Yatra or Chariot festival, in which the three principal deities (Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra) are pulled on huge and elaborately decorated temple cars
- Jagannath Puri temple is called 'Yamanika Tirtha' where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the power of 'Yama', the god of death has been nullified in Puri due to the presence of Lord Jagannath.

## 9. India's 1st AC Railway Terminal:

**In news:** The nation's first centralised AC railway terminal in Bengaluru is set to become operational soon.

### More about it-

- The terminal is named after Bharat Ratna Sir M Visvesvaraya.
- New coach terminal is planned at Baiyappanahalli in the city to meet the demand to introduce more express trains connecting Bengaluru.
- Modern station buildings with centralised air-conditioning and airport-like facade have been constructed.
- The station building is of 4,200 square metre covered area to cater to daily footfalls of 50,000.
- The terminal has seven platforms apart from eight stabling lines and three pit lines enabling the terminal to operate 50 trains daily.

## 10. Sabarmati Ashram

- Sabarmati Ashram, formerly known as '**Satyagraha Ashram**' is where Gandhi stayed from 1915 to 1933 and later on the Ashram was disbanded.
- **It was founded on May 25, 1915 in Ahmedabad at Kocharab Bungalow of Jivanlal Desai**, who was a barrister friend of Gandhi.
- The Ashram was shifted on the bank of river Sabarmati on 17 June, 1917.
- It was also from here on 12 March 1930 that Gandhi launched the famous Dandi march and vowed not to return to the Ashram till India gets freedom.
- It was **also called a Harijan Ashram**.

### Various places at Ashram & their significance:

- **Hridaya Kunj**': During his stay at the Ashram, Gandhiji lived in a small cottage which is now known as 'Hridaya (Heart) Kunj'.
- **Nandini**: It is on the right hand side of 'Hridaya Kunj'. It is an old Ashram guest house, where guests from India and abroad are put up.
- **Vinoba Kutir**: Named after Acharya Vinoba Bhave who stayed here, and also known as Mira Kutir after Mirababen, Gandhiji's disciple, daughter of a British Admiral.
- **Upasana Mandir**: It is an open-air prayer ground, situated between 'Hridaya Kunj' and 'Magan Kutir' (the hut where Maganlal Gandhi, the ashram manager, used to stay). Here, Gandhiji used to refer to individual questions after prayers and as the head of the family analysed and gave his solutions.
- **Gandhi Sangrahalaya**: It is a museum inaugurated by Jawaharlal Nehru on May 10, 1963. It has five units and a library, two photo-galleries and an auditorium.

## 11. Greater Tipraland

**In news:** After seventeen months of resigning as the Congress state president, Tripura royal scion Pradyot Kishore Manikya has recently announced his new political demand of 'Greater Tipraland'.

### What is Greater Tipraland?

- It is essentially an extension of the ruling tribal partner Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura (IPFT's) demand of Tipraland, which sought a separate state for tribals of Tripura.
- New demand seeks to include every tribal person living in indigenous area or village outside the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) under the proposed model.
- Idea also seeks to include 'Tiprasa' of Tripuris spread across Assam, Mizoram etc... and even those living in Bandarban, Chittagong, Khagrachari and other bordering areas of neighbouring Bangladesh.
- Demand would be placed before the central government for dialogue if all indigenous tribal leaders of Tripura including himself are invited for talks.
- **Call of 'Greater Tipraland' rose due to** unfulfilled demands of revising NRC in Tripura and opposition to CAA in the past.



### What are 'Tipraland' and 'Greater Tipraland'?

- **Tipraland:** Demand of the Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT), which is now in power in Tripura in alliance with the BJP. It was a political call for the creation of a separate state for indigenous groups.
- **Greater Tipraland:** Demands that every indigenous area or village which is today outside the TTAADC be included.

## 12. Whitsun reef

**In news-** Recently, Philippine authorities announced that many of the Chinese fishing vessels have been moored near the disputed Whitsun Reef **in the Spratly Islands**.



#### More information-

- Whitsun Reef, where more than two hundred Chinese vessels are currently moored through the area, comes under the Philippines' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- However, China claims the reef under their nine-dash line and says that the vessels stationed are fishing boats seeking refuge during bad weather and not Chinese maritime militia as reported.
- Currently, Philippine military aircrafts and navy are monitoring the situation daily, and China has been warned that there will be an increased military presence to conduct 'sovereignty patrols'.

#### Whitsun Reef-

- It is a reef at the northeast extreme limit of the Union Banks in the Spratly Islands of the West Philippine Sea.
- Other names of the reef are Whitson Reef and Julian Felipe Reef.
- It is the largest reef of the Union Banks.
- It is V-shaped with an area of about 10 km<sup>2</sup>.

#### Nine dash line-

- It is used by the People's Republic of China (China) and the Republic of China (Taiwan), for their claims of the major part of the South China Sea.
- The origins of the nine-dash line can be traced back to the official maps made by the Nationalist Kuomintang (also known as the Chinese Nationalist Party) government before and after World War II, according to the book, Asia's Cauldron, by US scholar and strategist Robert D. Kaplan.

## 13. India Bridge of Gujarat

**In news-** Recently, the Border Security Force (BSF) handed over the access control of India Bridge to Gujarat state Police.

#### About India Bridge-

- It is located on the Khavda-Vighakot highway, a crucial access point to the Indo-Pakistan international border in Kutch district.
- BSF handed over to Gujarat Police to facilitate movement of goods and resources for the proposed 30,000 MegaWatt (MW) hybrid renewable energy park in Kutch district.
- Currently, the BSF provides security and controls access to India Bridge, one of the crucial connecting points for movement of goods towards the India-Pak border.
- India bridge, around 39 km from the international border, is the first of three checkpoints that BSF controls (the other two checkpoints are BOP (border outpost) Dharamshala and Chidya mod)
- Earlier, India Bridge was the sole connecting link between the border and the inland areas and was also the last accessible point for civilians.

#### Hybrid renewable energy park & India Bridge-

- The Prime Minister of India had laid the foundation stone for the park at an event in Dhordo village near Khavda in December 2020.
- This park will consist of two zones - the first is a Hybrid Park Zone which will accommodate 24,800 MW of wind and solar power plants and the second zone will be an exclusive wind park zone which will accommodate wind mill projects.
- The project will be located between Khavda village (which is the last point that can be accessed by civilians in the area) and Vighakot.

- The closest to the border is the Exclusive Wind Park Zone, which will be located within 1-6 km of the international border.
- The project involves National Thermal Power Corporation Ltd, Gujarat State Electricity Corporation and several private firms including Adani Green Energy Ltd.
- For the entire exclusive Wind Zone Park, 23,000 hectares has been allotted to the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) to set up wind projects under the competitive bidding route policy.
- There are a number of “no-go zones” around the project that belong to either the Army or the BSF.

## 14. Gyanvapi Mosque

**In news-** A court in Varanasi allowed a civil suit seeking an Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) study of the Gyanvapi Mosque site to determine if it had been “superimposed” after demolishing the Kashi Vishwanath Temple that might have originally stood there.

### About the Mosque-

- It is located in Varanasi near Lalita Ghat along the river Ganga, Uttar Pradesh.
- It was constructed by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in 1696.
- The façade is modeled partially on the Taj Mahal's entrance.
- The remnants of the Hindu temple can be seen on the walls of the Gyanvapi mosque.
- The demolished temple is believed by Hindus to be an earlier restoration of the original Kashi Vishwanath temple which had been destroyed and rebuilt a number of times.
- Aurangzeb's demolition of the temple was also attributed to the escape of the Maratha king Shivaji (with the help of Jai Singh I, the grandson of Raja Man Singh) and the rebellion of local zamindars (landowners).
- The temple's demolition **was intended as a warning to the anti-Mughal factions** and Hindu religious leaders in the city.

## 15. First movable freshwater tunnel aquarium

**In news-** Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation Ltd (IRSDC) in collaboration with HNi Aquatic Kingdom has opened Indian Railways first movable freshwater tunnel aquarium **at the Krantivira Sangolli Rayanna Railway Station, Bengaluru.**

### Key updates-

- The aquarium is a one-of-its-kind aquatic park based on the Amazon River concept.
- In addition to enhancing the passenger experience, the initiative would be a revenue earner for Indian Railways.
- The 12-feet long aquatic kingdom is Indian Railways first paludarium housing myriad flora and fauna.
- The Aquatic Kingdom will have a 3D "selfie" area, where a big fish will pop out of the aquarium.
- It is also home to various aquatic animals such as the alligator gar, sting rays, eels up to three-and-a-half feet, sharks, lobsters, snails and shrimps.
- A nominal entry fee of Rs 25 has been kept per passenger.
- IRSDC has been entrusted with the mandate to undertake facility management at five railway stations— KSR Bengaluru, Pune, Anand Vihar, Chandigarh and Secunderabad.

## 16. International Cooperation and Convention Centre – Rudraksha

**In news-** Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated the International Cooperation and Convention Centre – Rudraksha in **Varanasi**.

### About the centre-

- The two-storey convention centre has come up at Sigra area on 2.87 hectares of land and has a seating capacity of 1,200 people.
- Its roof is shaped like a Shiva Linga and as many as 108 Rudraksha have been installed at this convention centre.
- The objective of the project is to provide opportunities for social and cultural interactions between people at the international convention centre.
- It would strengthen the city's competitiveness by developing its tourism sector.
- The convention centre has been built with the assistance from Japan International Cooperation Agency.
- An environment-friendly building, the centre is equipped with adequate security and safety systems.

## 17. Alexander Dalrymple award

**In news-** Recently, the **Vice Admiral Vinay Badhwar**, Chief Hydrographer to the Govt. of India received the Alexander Dalrymple award from the British High Commissioner.

### Key updates-

- Vinay Badhwar joined the Indian Navy in 1982.
- He has extensive hydrographic surveying experience, including work in the Gulfs of Kutch and Khambhat, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands widely recognised as some of the most challenging environments to survey in the world.
- He has been a key member of the International Hydrographic Organisation's capacity building sub-committee since its creation.
- He has been awarded the Alexander Dalrymple award in recognition of his unparalleled dedication, professionalism and leadership in the disciplines of hydrography and nautical cartography.

### About Alexander Dalrymple-

- He was born on 24th July 1737 in New Hailes, Midlothian, Scotland.
- Dalrymple spent most of the time between 1757 and 1764 in the East Indies trying to further trade for the East India Company and became the company's hydrographer in 1779.
- He was the **first hydrographer of the British Admiralty** and proponent of the existence of a vast, **populous continent in the South Pacific, which he called the Great South Land**.
- In 1770–71 Dalrymple published his two volumes- 'Historical Collection of the Several Voyages and Discoveries in the South Pacific Ocean', in which he continued to assert the existence of the continent.
- The Alexander Dalrymple award was **first awarded by the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) in 2006**.
- Recipients are selected for their efforts in raising the standards of hydrography, cartography and navigation around the world.