

NEWS TODAY

RESERVE BANK OF INDIA (RBI) SETS UP NEW FINTECH DEPARTMENT

- It is being reported that new department has been set up to **promote innovation, identify challenges and opportunities in FinTech** and address them in a timely manner.

➤ All matters related to inter-regulatory coordination and international coordination on FinTech shall also be dealt with by the department.

- FinTech is broadly used to describe **emerging technological innovations in the financial services sector**, with ever increasing reliance on information technology.

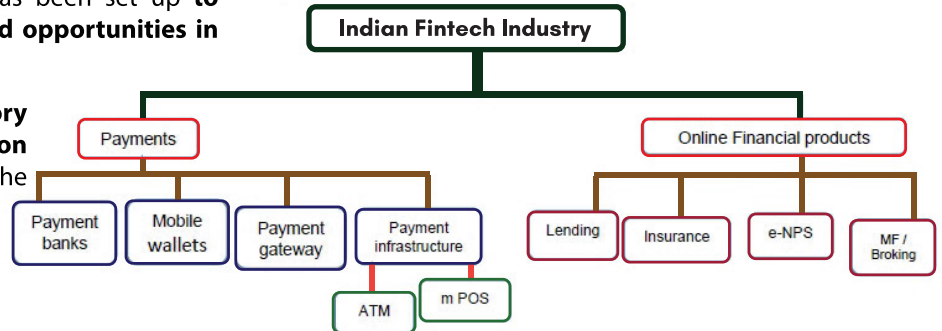
➤ **Some FinTech products and services currently used:** Peer to Peer (P2P) lending platforms, crowd funding, block chain technology, Big Data, Robo advisors, E-aggregators etc.

➤ Indian FinTech industry was **valued at \$ 50-60 Bn in FY20** and is estimated at **~\$ 150 Bn by 2025**.

- Benefits of FinTech are **efficiency improvements, risk and cost reduction and greater financial inclusion**.

➤ In India, FinTech can provide workable solutions to the problems faced by traditional financial institutions such as **low penetration, scarce credit history and cash driven transaction economy**.

- Key challenges:** Difficulty of regulating an evolving technology with different use cases, monitoring activity outside the regulated sector, identifying new risks arising from technology.



HYDERABAD DECLARATION' ON E-GOVERNANCE ADOPTED

- 24th National e-Governance conference** unanimously adopted the Hyderabad declaration.

➤ Conference was jointly held by Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances, in collaboration with Telangana Government.

- e-Governance is **use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)** at all level of Government **to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms** of government.

➤ It has helped **Government to enhance coverage, increase transparency, improve response to citizens** and lower costs and has **facilitated citizens to have better access, equity & social empowerment**.

- Key highlights of Hyderabad Declaration**

➤ **Transform citizen services** by using Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker, UMANG, e Sign etc.

➤ **Fast track implementation of national level public digital platforms** in key social sectors viz. Health, Education, Agriculture, etc.

➤ **Foster responsible use of emerging technology** such as AI, Machine Learning, Blockchain, 5G etc.

➤ **Robust technological solutions to withstand pandemic** like disruptions.

➤ Make **digital the primary aspect of government service design and delivery**.

➤ **National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA)** to be adopted in collaboration with MeitY.

Some e-governance initiatives:

○ **Bhoomi Project for (Karnataka):** Online Delivery of Land Records.

○ **eSeva** (Andhra Pradesh)

○ **Gyandoot** (MP): Service delivery initiative.

○ **Lokvani** (UP): For handling of grievances, land record maintenance and providing a mixture of essential services.

○ **FRIENDS** (Fast, Reliable, Instant, Efficient Network for the Disbursement of Services) in Kerala.

HAR GOBIND KHORANA'S 100TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED

- He was **born in Raipur village of Multan district** (Pakistan). He later **became naturalised citizen of US**.

➤ In 1969, he was **awarded Padma Vibhushan**.

- His **early training was in chemistry** but later he started applying chemistry to solve problems in biology, **starting field of chemical biology**.

Major Achievements

➤ **1968 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine** (shared with Nirenberg and Holley) for **interpretation of genetic code** and its function in protein synthesis.

➤ He **proved that genetic code consists of 64 different three-letter words**, which told the cell where to begin reading the code and where to stop.

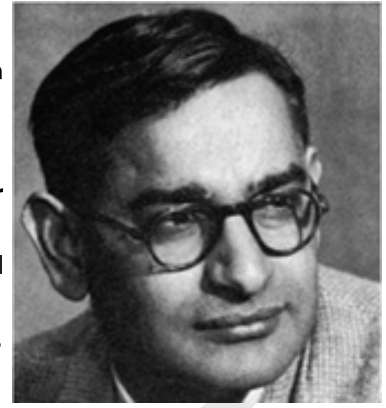
➤ **Constructed the world's first synthetic gene** paving the way for further advancements in the field of genetic engineering and biotechnology.

➤ He **investigated mutations in rhodopsin** that are associated with retinitis pigmentosa, which causes night blindness.

➤ Rhodopsin is a **light-sensitive protein found in the retina** of the vertebrate eye.

➤ **Contributed to the science of polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests**, used to detect genetic material from a specific organism, like a virus.

➤ **Discovered structure of transfer-RNA**, or tRNA (small RNA molecule that participates in protein synthesis).



GOVERNMENT RELEASES REVISED UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES

- **Central Public Works Department (CPWD)** released the Harmonised Guidelines and Standards for Universal Accessibility in India 2021 recently.

➤ These guidelines **succeed the earlier version of Harmonised Guidelines 2016** amidst new transformations and visions for urban futures and built environments in India.

Key objectives are:

➤ **Sensitize diverse stakeholders regarding accessibility needs** and provisions for diverse population groups.

➤ **Creation of inclusive environments for all** through responding to accessibility needs of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), elderly, women, children and all others through the universal design approach.

➤ **Recommend specific built environment elements** along with their accessibility attributes.

- Revised guidelines shift the **focus from creating a barrier-free environment to universal accessibility**.

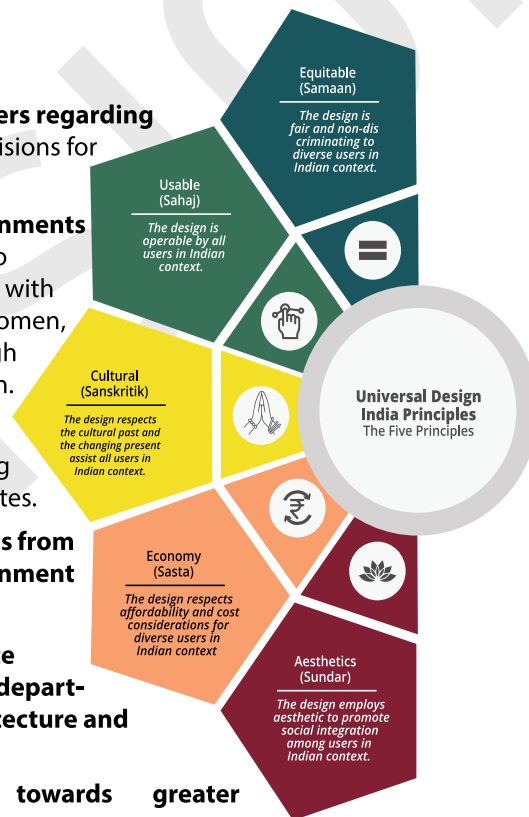
➤ Guidelines are meant **for State governments, government departments, private sector, architecture and planning institutes** etc.

- **Other initiatives taken towards greater accessibility for all**

➤ **Rights for Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016** advocates non discrimination in all services rendered both by public and private sectors.

➤ **Accessible India Campaign** (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) to facilitate barrier free urban development for PwDs.

➤ **Smart city mission** adopted the **principles of universal design** in their project formulation.



○ Universal Design approach aims to **provide a constructive and inclusive mindset** to respond to the needs of **diverse population types** including all and **free from any form of stigma** on the basis of age, gender, ability or any other human attribute.

CHINA'S CHANG'E 5 LUNAR PROBE FINDS FIRST ON-SITE EVIDENCE OF WATER ON MOON'S SURFACE

- **Presence of water had been confirmed by remote observation** but the lander has **now detected signs of water in rocks and soil**.

➤ It also **revealed that the moon had turned drier**, owing probably to the degassing of its mantle reservoir.

- Earlier, India's **Chandrayaan-1** (2008) **data showed evidence for water** in the exosphere of Moon, on the surface of Moon and also sub-surface.

➤ Also, **Chandrayaan-2** (2019) **confirmed the presence of water ice** in the permanently shadowed regions on the Moon.

- In the coming years, **several countries, including India, are planning to launch their lunar missions**.

Reasons for renewed interest

➤ **Economic:** Helium-3 (an isotope of the element helium) is abundant on the Moon, but rare on Earth. It is a potential fuel for nuclear fusion.





➤ **Base for future space exploration:** It is the best place to test how life reacts to harsh conditions of space.

➤ **To study Earth:** Moon and Earth share a common past, studying it will reveal how earth's early past.

- **Some future lunar missions:** Artemis (NASA), Volatiles Investigating Polar Exploration Rover (NASA), Korea Pathfinder Lunar Orbiter (South Korea), Chandrayaan-3 (India).

ALSO IN NEWS

 <p>Model Code of Conduct (MCC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCC sets in 5 poll bound states. • MCC is a set of guidelines issued by Election Commission of India (ECI) to regulate political parties and candidates prior to elections, to ensure free and fair elections. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Article 324 empowers ECI to do so. • MCC is operational from the date election schedule is announced till the date results are announced. • It is not enforceable by law.
 <p>India Pakistan exchange list of nuclear installations, prisoners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lists of nuclear installation were exchanged as per the Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities, signed in 1988 and ratified in 1991. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > As per agreement, both countries have to inform each other of the nuclear facilities. • Lists of prisoners include civilians, defence personnel and fishermen. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > These are exchanged under the Agreement on Consular Access signed in 2008 which require two countries to exchange comprehensive lists on prisoners on January 1 and July 1 every year.
 <p>Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is yet to notify the CAA 2019 rules. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Without rules, the Act cannot be implemented. • CAA provides citizenship to six communities (Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian) from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who entered India on or before December 31, 2014. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > It exempts the members of the six communities from any criminal case under the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport Act, 1920. > Amendments on citizenship will not apply to certain areas including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura, as included in the Sixth Schedule, and > States regulated by Inner Line permit under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations 1873.
 <p>Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former RBI governor Urjit Patel was appointed vice-president of the AIIB. • AIIB is a multilateral development bank with a mission to improve social and economic outcomes in Asia. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > It was established in 2015 and is headquartered in Beijing • India is a founding member and second largest shareholder in AIIB with 7.6% voting shares while China holds 26.5 % voting shares being the largest. • AIIB has approved more loans for India (28 projects amounting to \$6.7 billion) than any other member.
 <p>All India Council for Technological Education (AICTE) launches two new programmes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two programmes are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Students Learning Assessment (Parakh): It will conduct assessments of students and faculty members of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and schools. > Higher Modules for National Initiative for Technical Teachers Training (NITTT): As part of their training, teachers will now have to serve industrial training and a semester-based mentorship. • AICTE is the statutory body and national-level Apex Advisory Body to conduct a survey on the facilities available for technical education and to promote development in the country in a coordinated and integrated manner.
 <p>Veer Baal Diwas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM announced 26th December as 'Veer Baal Diwas' to mark martyrdom of Sahibzada Zorawar Singh Ji and Fateh Singh Ji. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > While all four sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji were martyred, date has been chosen as it was the day observed as the martyrdom day of Sahibzadas Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, who were killed at the tender age of six and nine in Sirhind by Mughal forces. • PM described this as fitting tribute to the courage of the Sahibzades who preferred death instead of deviating from the noble principles of Dharma.
 <p>Startup India Innovation Week (10th -16th January 2022)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is organizing first-ever Startup India Innovation Week. • Primary goal is to bring together country's key startups, entrepreneurs, investors, and other stakeholders to celebrate entrepreneurship and promote innovation. • India has world's third-largest startup ecosystem (61,000 recognised startups as on date). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > These Startups represent 55 industries and are spread across 633 districts with at least one startup from every State and UT.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ These have created over 6 lakh jobs since 2016. ➤ 45% of the startups are from Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities and 45% are represented by women entrepreneurs.
 <p>Indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC) Vikrant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IAC Vikrant is heading out for the next set of sea trials. ➤ India currently operates a solitary aircraft carrier, INS Vikramaditya. • Vikrant, a STOBAR (short take-off but arrested landing) aircraft carrier, has an indigenous content of 76%. ➤ Designed by the Indian Navy's Directorate of Naval Design, Vikrant has been built at the state-owned Cochin Shipyard Limited. • Apart from India, only US, UK, Russia, France and China have the capability to build aircraft carriers.
 <p>Orang National Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government has issued notification to expand size of Park, facilitating reintroduction of Gharials. ➤ Gharials (IUCN status: Critically Endangered) were wiped out from the Brahmaputra River system in 1950s. • Orang National Park is located on the north bank of the Brahmaputra River in the Darrang and Sonitpur districts of Assam. ➤ Tributaries Dhansiri and Pachnoi divide the park into two halves. • Orang is one of the seven national parks in Assam. Others are Kaziranga, Manas, Nameri, Dibru-Saikhowa, Raimona and Dehing Patkai. • Fauna: One-Horned Rhinoceros, pigmy hog, Tiger, Elephants, Hog Deer, Wild Pig, Civet Cat etc.  <p><small>* Tentative figures, final numbers to come by end of 2017</small></p>
 <p>Personalities in News</p>	<p>Fatima Sheikh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She was born on 9th January 1831 • Values: Educator, Social reformer, Progressive, Feminist. • Significant Contribution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Worked relentlessly with Savitribai Phule to focus on issues of caste, Sati, female empowerment, widow remarriage, inter-caste marriage and education. ➤ Regarded to be India's first Muslim woman teacher. ➤ In 1848, co-founded (along with Savitribai Phule) Indigenous Library — which was one of India's first schools for girls. ➤ Took an active role in Phules' Satyashodhak Samaj (Truthseekers' Society) movement.
 <p>Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas (PBD)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Prime Minister greeted the Indian diaspora on the occasion of PBD. • About PBD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is celebrated every two years on 09 January to mark the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India in 1915. ➤ First PBD was celebrated in 2003. ➤ It is observed to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community towards the development of India as well as reconnect them with their Indian roots. ➤ On this day, the Government confers Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award.



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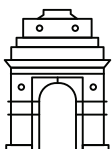
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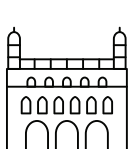
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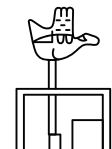
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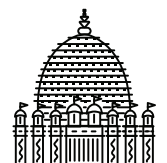
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CHANDIGARH



GUWAHATI