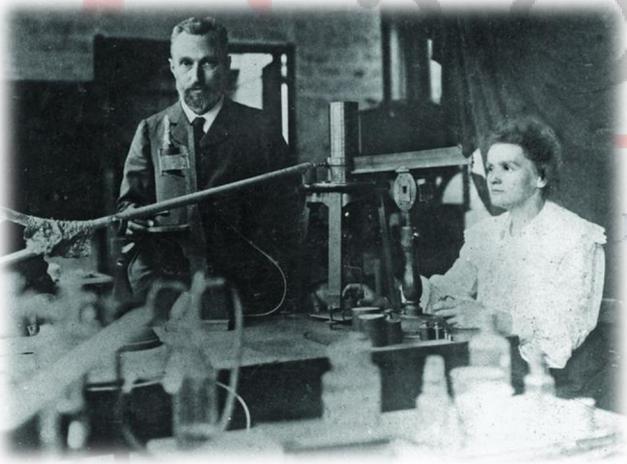


Today in History on 21 DEC

- 1898 - Chemists Pierre and Marie Curie discover radium.

The Curies reported to l'Académie des Sciences in December, 1898 that they had demonstrated strong grounds for the discovery of an additional very active substance that behaved chemically like almost pure barium. They suggested the name radium for the new element. The compound formula for radium is $RaBr_2$. Radium is formed by the radioactive decay of uranium. The intensity of radiation emitted by radioactive substances decreases with time.



- 1914 - Tillie's Punctured Romance, the first silent comedy feature film in the US, is released.

Tillie's Punctured Romance is a 1914 American silent comedy film directed by Mack Sennett and starring Marie Dressler, Mabel Normand, Charlie

Chaplin, and the Keystone Cops. The film is the first feature-length comedy and was the only feature-length comedy made by the Keystone Film Company.



- 1923 - Nepal became a fully independent country, freeing itself from the status of a British protectorate.

The treaty was registered in the League of Nations in 1925. On 21 December 1923, Great Britain recognised Nepal as an independent and sovereign state. The treaty was the first formal acknowledgement by the British that Nepal, as an independent nation, had the right to conduct its foreign policy in any way it wished and is considered "a crowning achievement of 25 years of Chandra Shumsher's diplomacy".



December 1949: Sovereignty handed over to Indonesia According to international law, 27 December 1949 is the official date on which Indonesia became a sovereign nation. But in fact 17 August 1945 is the actual moment when the former colony Netherlands Indies can be considered an independent nation based on the principle of self-determination.

➤ 1931 - The world's first crossword, created by Arthur Wynne, was published in the New York World newspaper.



That's because Wynne created the world's first crossword in The New York World on December 21, 1913. Necessity was the mother of invention: as a section editor he had a surplus of space and needed something to fill it. Arthur Wynne was an editor and puzzle creator.

Important NEWS on 21 DEC

➤ **India Emerges as 3rd Largest Exporter in Smartphone Market**

India's ascent from the 23rd position in global smartphone exports in 2019 to securing the 3rd spot in 2024 marks a monumental achievement in its manufacturing and export capabilities. With smartphone exports crossing ₹20,000 crore in November 2024, this growth highlights India's success in leveraging government initiatives and a robust domestic production ecosystem.



➤ 1949 - Portuguese rulers declare Indonesia a sovereign nation.



➤ Historic Dolphin Tagging Initiative in Assam

India has achieved a significant milestone in wildlife conservation with the first-ever satellite tagging of a Ganges River Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*). Conducted in Assam, this initiative marks a major advancement under Project Dolphin, led by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC). The collaborative effort of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), the Assam Forest Department, and the organization Aaranyak, funded by the National CAMPA Authority, aims to deepen the understanding of the species' ecological needs, migratory patterns, and habitat use.



➤ Bhutan Confers Royal Honour on Indian Educationist Arun Kapur

Indian educationist Arun Kapur, known for his contributions to education in India, Bhutan, and Oman, has been honoured by Bhutan's King Jigme Khesar Namgyel. At the 117th Bhutanese National

Day celebrations, held at the Changlimithang stadium in Thimphu, Kapur was conferred the prestigious Red Scarf and the title 'Dasho', a rare honour usually given to senior Bhutanese officials.



➤ Uttarakhand to Implement Uniform Civil Code from January 2025

Uttarakhand will become the first Indian state to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) starting January 2025, fulfilling a key promise made by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami during the 2022 assembly elections. The UCC aims to establish uniform personal laws on marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption, regardless of religion or caste, while excluding tribal communities. With preparations reportedly complete, this move marks a significant legal reform in India post-independence.



➤ Indian Army Unveils AI Incubation Centre for Future Warfare

The Indian Army has launched the Indian Army AI Incubation Centre (IAAIC) in Bengaluru, marking a significant leap towards modernizing its operations and enhancing its technological capabilities. In a virtual inauguration led by Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Upendra Dwivedi, the initiative aims to revolutionize the Army's operational capabilities through Artificial Intelligence (AI).



➤ Rama Mohan Rao Amara Appointed as SBI's New Managing Director

The Indian government has appointed Rama Mohan Rao Amara as the new Managing Director (MD) of State Bank of India (SBI) for a period of three years. His appointment was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) and follows a recommendation by the Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB).



Current affairs MCQS on 21 DEC

Q.1. What is the name of India's first anti-insecticide bodysuit launched by the Ministry of Science and Technology?

- (a) Kisan Rakshak
- (b) Kisan Kavach
- (c) Agro Shield
- (d) None of these

Answer: (b) Kisan Kavach

Science and Technology Minister Dr Jitendra Singh has launched Kisan Kavach, India's first anti-pesticide bodysuit to protect farmers from exposure to harmful pesticides. Developed by Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC-InStem), Bengaluru, Bengaluru in collaboration with Sepio Health Pvt Ltd, the suit protects farmers and promotes sustainable agriculture. It is washable, can be used for up to a year and is priced at ₹4,000, making it even more affordable.

Q.2. Recently, which country has offered visa-free travel for Indians till 2025?

- (a) Israel
- (b) Russia
- (c) Japan
- (d) Malaysia

Answer: (b) Russia

Visa-free travel facility to Russia may soon be available for Indians, most likely to come into effect from the spring of 2025. The move is the result of talks between India and Russia in June 2024, aimed at easing travel and promoting group tourism. Currently, Indian citizens require a visa to travel to Russia, but the upcoming assistance will make travel easier, thereby strengthening tourism and tourism ties.

Q.3. Recently, which country has implemented a 'code of conduct' on online safety for the first time?

- (a) Japan

- (b) China
(c) Britain
(d) Singapore

Answer: (c) Britain

Britain's online safety regime comes into force, requiring social media companies such as Meta's Facebook and Bytedance's TikTok to take action to tackle criminal activity on their platforms and make them safer. Media regulator Ofcom said it has published its first code of conduct to tackle illegal harm such as child sexual exploitation and promoting or assisting suicide.

Q.4. The new survey vessel 'INS Nirdeshak' has recently been inducted into the Indian Navy at which place?

- (a) Visakhapatnam
(b) Mumbai
(c) Kochi
(d) Kolkata

Answer: (a) Visakhapatnam

INS Nirdesha, the second ship of the Survey Vessel Project, was officially inducted into the Indian Navy at the Naval Dockyard in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. INS Nirdesha, built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) in Kolkata, is one of the four advanced survey ships designed for hydrographic surveys, navigation aids and maritime operations. Apart from GRSE, the Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau and several Indian firms were also involved.

Q.5. Recently, Argentine President 'Javier Mille' has been granted citizenship of which country?

- (a) Canada
(b) France
(c) Italy
(d) Germany

Answer: (c) Italy

Italy recently granted citizenship to Argentine President Javier Melli due to his Italian ancestry, which has led to criticism in Argentina. Critics argue that the policy is unfair to the children of Italian

immigrants, who are often excluded from the citizenship process. The action of granting citizenship to the Argentine president will also pave the way for future commercial and political cooperation between Argentina and Italy.

Q.6. Who has recently become the world's third largest smartphone exporter?

- (a) India
(b) America
(c) China
(d) Japan

Answer: (a) India

Moving from 23rd place in global smartphone exports in 2019 to 3rd in 2024 is a major milestone in India's manufacturing and export capabilities. With smartphone exports crossing ₹20,000 crore in November 2024, this growth highlights India's success in leveraging government initiatives and a strong domestic manufacturing ecosystem.

Q.7. Where has the 10th International Forest Festival started recently?

- (a) Kolkata
(b) Mumbai
(c) Bhopal
(d) None of the above

Answer: (c) Bhopal

The 10th International Forest Fair held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh began and will continue till December 23. The fair focuses on promoting sustainable forest practices, empowering local communities and fostering collaboration among various stakeholders in the forestry sector. The event provides a platform for government officials, traders, producers, scientists and policy makers to engage in meaningful discussions and exchange of knowledge.

Q.8. Which Indian temple won the 'Sword of Honour' award for security excellence?

- (a) Ram Mandir, Ayodhya
(b) Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Varanasi

- (c) Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple, Mathura
(d) Maa Vindhyavasini Temple, Mirzapur

Answer: (a) Ram Mandir, Ayodhya

The Ram Mandir in Ayodhya has received the prestigious 'Sword of Honour' award from the British Security Council for excellence in security management. The award requires a five-star security audit and on-site assessment by the British Security Council. Larsen & Toubro, the construction company of the temple, had earlier received the 'Golden Trophy' from the National Security Council for security measures. The construction of the temple, including the shikhara and major idols, is in the final stages, which is targeted to be completed by June 2025. The construction of Shri Ram Darbar and idols of various sages will be completed by January 2025, using 15 lakh cubic feet of Bansi Paharpur stone.

Q.9. Which novel has recently been selected for the 34th Vyas Samman?

- (a) Deepti Agarwal
(b) Suryabala
(c) Praveena Rai
(d) None of the above

Answer: (b) Suryabala

Hindi writer Suryabala was awarded the 34th Vyas Samman 2024 for her novel "Kaun Desh Ko Vaasi: Venu Ki Diary". The novel was published in 2018 and highlights the cultural conflicts and identity-related problems faced by Indian youth living in the US. Established in 1991 by the KK Birla Foundation, the Vyas Samman honours outstanding Hindi literary works published in the last decade. It carries a cash prize of Rs 4 lakh, a citation and a memento. The selection committee was chaired by eminent litterateur Prof. Ramji Tiwari.

Q.10. Recently in which city Uber has launched bike taxi service "Moto Woman" for women?

- (a) Bengaluru
(b) New Delhi
(c) Mumbai

- (d) Bhopal

Answer: (a) Bengaluru

American ride-hailing giant Uber recently launched a bike taxi service for women called 'UberMoto Women' in Bengaluru, Karnataka. The initiative aims to address the safety and mobility needs of women, while creating flexible earning opportunities for women drivers. The service is specially designed for women riders, connecting women with female drivers to hail two-wheelers on demand.

Q.11. National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval has recently visited which country?

- (a) Argentina
(b) China
(c) Poland
(d) Russia

Answer: (b) China

After a gap of five years, India and China will hold Special Representative talks on the border issue in Beijing and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval will lead the Indian delegation in the talks. Announcing the Special Representative (SR) talks, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the two sides will discuss management of peace and tranquility in the border areas and seek a "fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable" solution to the boundary question.

Q.12. Who has been awarded the 'Jamshedji Tata Award' recently?

- (a) Kiran Mazumdar Shaw
(b) Sanjay Murthy
(c) Anand Neelakantan
(d) None of the above

Answer: (a) Kiran Mazumdar Shaw

Biocon Group Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw was conferred the prestigious Jamsetji Tata Award by the Indian Society for Quality (ISQ) for her role in spearheading the bioscience movement in India. "This Award holds a very special significance for me as it is named after one of India's greatest visionaries – a man whose legacy of excellence, innovation and

nation-building inspires us all," Mazumdar-Shaw said.

Q.13. Nat Cyber Brunt, who recently scored the fastest century in ICC Women's Test Cricket, is a player of which country?

- (a) Australia
- (b) Africa
- (c) New Zealand
- (d) England

Answer: (d) England

England made a historic performance in women's cricket at Mangaung Oval in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Nat Sciver-Brunt and Maya Bushier made amazing records. Sciver-Brunt scored the fastest century in women's Test cricket, while Bushier scored a century in her first Test. Their aggressive performance put England in a strong position, but both batsmen were dismissed before converting their centuries into big scores.

Q.14. Recently the Chief Minister of which state has participated in the National Day of Bhutan?

- (a) Assam
- (b) Madhya Pradesh
- (c) Goa
- (d) Kerala

Answer: (a) Assam

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma along with his wife Riniki Bhuyan Sarma attended the 117th National Day celebrations of Bhutan. They visited Bhutan to attend the celebrations at the invitation of the Royal Government. Sarma was on a four-day official visit to the state. Sarma met Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and discussed strengthening the historical ties between Assam and Bhutan and furthering collaborative efforts between the two regions. The discussion also focused on promoting Bhutan's development, enhancing the welfare of its people and promoting comprehensive regional economic development.

Q.15. Sanjay Ram Marathe has passed away recently, who was he?

- (a) Classical singer
- (b) Writer
- (c) Director
- (d) Journalist

Answer: (a) Classical singer

Popular classical singer and harmonium player Pandit Sanjay Ram Marathe died at a hospital in Thane city of Maharashtra. He was 68 years old. Pandit Sanjay Ram Marathe was seen in some programs organized on the occasion of his father's birth centenary in the year 2024. Along with his younger brother Mukund Marathe, Pandit Sanjay Marathe revived the famous Marathi musical drama 'Sangit Mandarmala' to commemorate his father's centenary. Pandit Sanjay Marathe is survived by his wife, a son and granddaughter. He had received prestigious awards and honors for harmonium playing and singing.