

CURRENT AFFAIRS

April

- TOPIC WISE CURRENT AFFAIRS
- 150 QUESTION FOR PRACTICE
- DETAILED ANALYSIS OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

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PREFACE

This is our special edition of Current Affairs Magazine for various Central & State level Competitive Examinations, covering content from the month of April 2024.

The Magazine is divided into three sections:

Section 1: Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short

The first section is dedicated to Topic Wise Current Affairs with a short description to provide information about all major happenings this month.

Section 2: Practice Questions with Answers

The Second Section contains 150 Multiple Choice Questions based on daily current affairs.

Section 3: Detailed Analysis of important Event

The Third Section covers some major happenings in this month along with analysis. The content has been covered from various online & offline sources including reputed newspapers like The Hindu, Indian Express etc. All the news topics have been explained keeping in mind their underlying issues. Every issue has been covered comprehensively. Some of the information provided may not be directly relevant for the examination. As the content is very wide, we have only covered a limited set of issues. You can utilize it smartly along with Daily Study of News Papers as well as other sources.



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Section 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs

Section 2

Question with Answers

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Section 3

Detailed Analysis of Events

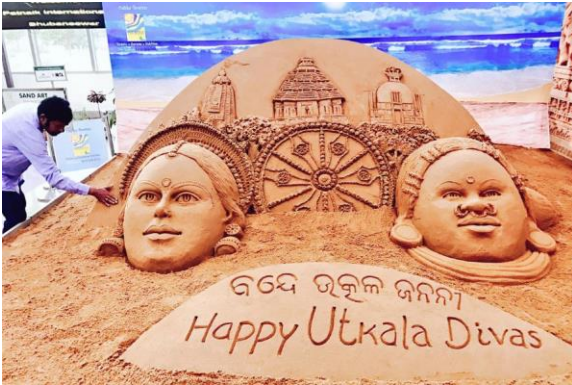
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SECTION 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short



1: Important Days



Odisha Foundation Day : 01 April :-

Every year on April 1, Utkal Divas, also known as Utakala Dibasha, is observed to commemorate the creation of the Odisha state following a protracted battle for statehood. Odisha was a part of the Bengal presidency, which included West Bengal, Bihar, and Odisha, during the British colonial era. The state was originally called Orissa but the Lok Sabha passed the Orissa Bill, and Constitution Bill (113rd amendment), in March 2011 to rename it Odisha. Naveen Patnaik of the Biju Janta Dal (BJD) is currently the Chief Minister of Odisha.

This particular day, held every year on April 2, aims to raise awareness of autism as an illness and to help individuals who suffer from it. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines autism spectrum disorders (ASD) as a wide range of illnesses. They are characterised by some degree of difficulty with social interaction and communication. The theme for World Autism Awareness Day 2024 is 'Empowering Autistic Voices.'



International Day of Mine Awareness : 04 April :-

On 8 December 2005, the General Assembly declared that the 4th of April will be formally proclaimed and marked as the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action. It was originally celebrated on April 4, 2006. This day raises awareness about the threat that landmines pose to civilian populations' safety, health, and lives, and it encourages state governments to implement mine clearance programmes. The theme of International Mine Awareness Day 2024 is 'Protecting Lives, Building Peace.'



World Autism Awareness Day : 02 April :-

Every year, the global awareness event World Autism Day is commemorated to promote awareness about autism's causes, symptoms, and prevention strategies.

NATIONAL MARITIME DAY



National Maritime Day (India) : 05 April :-

National Maritime Day is observed annually on April 5. The inaugural National Maritime Day took place on April 5, 1964. Since then, it has been observed annually on the same date. The day is observed with the goal of raising awareness and acknowledging the efforts and contributions of India's maritime industry to the country's economic growth and development. This day also aims to draw our attention to the struggles of this industry and help us come together to find solutions effectively.



International Day of Sports For Development And Peace : 06 April :-

The International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP) is commemorated on April 6 to recognize the importance of sports and physical activity in our personal lives and communities around the world. On

August 23, 2013, the United Nations General Assembly voted resolution 67/296, designating April 6 as International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, in its 67th session. The resolution report was published on September 18 that year. The global theme for 2024 is "Sport for the Promotion of Peaceful and Inclusive Societies".



World Health Day : 07 April :-

Every year, World Health Day is observed on the anniversary of the World Health Organization's (WHO) inception. Every year on April 7, the day is commemorated to raise awareness about global health challenges and emphasize the significance of well-being. The World Health Organization's constitution was adopted on April 7, 1948. The World Health Assembly (WHA) was established to oversee the operations of the WHO. The year 2024 marks the 76th anniversary of WHO and as a part of celebration WHO has chosen 'My Health, My Right' as the theme of World Health Day 2024.



World Homeopathy Day : 10 April :-

Every year on April 10, the world celebrates World Homeopathy Day in honor of German physician and chemist Dr. Samuel Hahnemann. Although homeopathy is thought to have originated in the fifth century BC, it wasn't until the nineteenth century that it became well-known in Europe and eventually made its way to North America. Practitioners of homeopathy employ trace amounts of organic materials, such as plants and minerals, to encourage the body's own healing mechanism. The day is celebrated in India under the aegis of the Ministry of AYUSH, govt of India, for the last few years. The theme for World Homeopathy Day 2024 is 'Empowering Research, Enhancing Proficiency: A Homeopathy Symposium'.

**World Parkinson's Day : 11 April :-**

Dr. James Parkinson discovered Parkinson's Disease for the first time in 1817. The European Association for Parkinson's Disease stated in 1997 that April 11 will be commemorated annually as World Parkinson's Day. Parkinson's disease is a progressive neurodegenerative ailment that primarily affects the neurological system and the body's nerve-controlled organs. Nerve cell damage in the brain leads to decrease in Dopamine levels – this leads to Parkinson's Disease. Some of the

symptoms of Parkinson's Disease are tremors, slow movement, stiffness and loss of balance.



11 APRIL
**NATIONAL
SAFE MOTHERHOOD DAY**

National Safe Motherhood Day (India) : 11 April :-

National Safe Motherhood Day is an annual event observed on April 11 in India. The White Ribbon Alliance India (WRAI) established this day to emphasize the importance of maternal health and minimize maternal mortality rates in the country. India has one of the world's highest maternal mortality rates, accounting for 12 percent of all maternal deaths. However, most of these deaths can be prevented with the use of right healthcare solutions to avoid or manage many complications during pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period.

**Jallianwala Bagh Massacre : 13 April :-**

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre, which took place on April 13, 1919, in Amritsar, Punjab, is a devastating emblem of the crimes committed against the Indian people during British monarchy. A sad tragedy occurred at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, where thousands of peaceful Indian protestors had congregated to commemorate the spring festival of Baisakhi. The area was enclosed by walls on all sides, with just one tiny entry. Without warning, Brigadier General Reginald Dyer, the British officer in-charge of the Amritsar region, marched into Jallianwala Bagh with fifty armed soldiers and ordered them to open fire on the crowd.



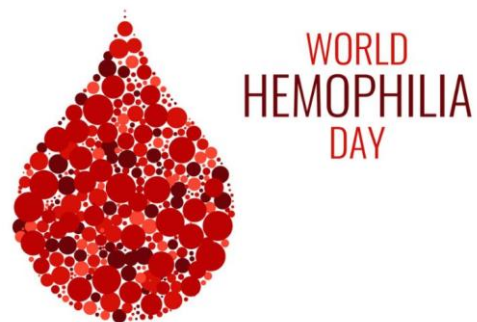
World Art Day : 15 April :-

Every year on April 15th, World Art Day is observed to appreciate artists' accomplishments and to raise awareness of the value of art in our lives. This day commemorates the birth of Leonardo da Vinci, a brilliant artist recognized as one of the best of all time. The International Association of Art (IAA) proposed World Art Day in 2011 during its 17th General Assembly in Guadalajara, Mexico. The proposal was accepted, and the first World Art Day was celebrated on April 15, 2012. The IAA was founded in 1954 in UNESCO's headquarters in Paris, to promote art and artists worldwide. The chosen theme for World Art Day is "A Garden of Expression: Cultivating Community through Art."



Bhim Jayanti or Ambedkar Remembrance Day : 14 April:-

Ambedkar Jayanti, also known as Bhim Jayanti, is celebrated on April 14th each year to honor the memory of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the first Law Minister of Independent India and the major author of the Indian Constitution. Ambedkar was born on April 14, 1891, in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh, which is now known as Ambedkar Nagar. He became a well-known activist against the inequalities of India's caste system, advocating for the advancement of Dalits and other impoverished communities. His efforts to advance the Hindu Code Bill demonstrated his dedication to increasing women's empowerment and gender equality in India.



World Haemophilia Day : 17 April :-

Established by the World Federation of Haemophilia (WFH) started the World Haemophilia Day is observed on April 17 annually. Haemophilia is a hereditary illness that can be handed down from parent to kid. Generally, this condition is more common among men. This condition is transmitted by chromosomes, which impede blood clotting and cause bleeding. Haemophilia patients lack a protein in their blood known as a clotting factor. When an injury is detected, this protein and platelets work together to stop bleeding. This means that after an injury, a person bleeds longer and is more likely to have internal bleeding. High levels of bleeding can be deadly. The theme for World Hemophilia Day 2024 is "Equitable access for all: recognizing all bleeding disorders".

theme for this year's World Heritage Day is "Discover and experience diversity".



World Liver Day : 19 April :-

In 2010, the European Association for the Study of the Liver (EASL) established the first World Liver Day to honor the organization's founding day in 1966. Since then, April 19 has been observed as World Liver Day every year. According to statistics, over 20 lakh people die each year from liver illnesses around the world, with the figure anticipated to rise by 35 percent by 2030. The day aims to urge people to have a healthier lifestyle and diet that can boost liver functioning and keep liver diseases at bay.



World Heritage Day : 18 April :-

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in 1982 proposed that World Heritage Day be observed annually on April 18th. The plan received approval from UNESCO's General Conference the following year. Since then, the special day has been honored annually on April 18. Human activity, natural catastrophes, and urbanisation frequently cause damage to heritage monuments and places. The day reinstates the importance of protecting and preserving them. The



National Civil Service Day : 21 April :-

National Civil Service Day is observed annually on April 21. After India gained independence, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel talked to the nation's first batch of civil servants. In this stirring speech to the country's government officials, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel referred to them as India's steel frame. Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel announced in 1947 that National government Service Day will be commemorated every year to honor government servants' services to the nation. In Vigyan Bhavan, on April 21, 2006, the first National Civil Services Day was observed.



World Earth Day : 22 April :-

Every year, April 22 is celebrated as Earth Day, an annual event where people take time out to demonstrate their support for protecting the planet and its environment. Gaylord Nelson, a Senator from Wisconsin, US, established Earth Day in response to growing concerns around pollution, biodiversity loss, and other ecological problems. This year, the theme of Earth Day 2024 is 'Planet vs. Plastics.' With this theme, the organisation aims to reduce plastic dependency and make the earth plastic-free.



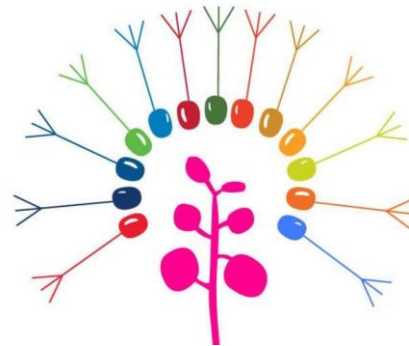
World Book and Copyright Day : 23 April :-

World Book and Copyright Day, often known as World Book Day, is observed annually on April 23 to emphasize the value of reading books. UNESCO has designated April 23rd as World Book Day to honour renowned literary personalities such as William Shakespeare, Miguel Cervantes, and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, who died on this date. This date was set in 1995 by the UNESCO General Conference in Paris to pay respect to and commemorate authors and books around the world. One of the main objectives of World Book and Copyright Day is to raise awareness about the importance of protecting copyrights and promoting the rights of authors and publishers. The theme for World Book and Copyright Day 2024 is 'Read Your Way'.



English Language Day : 23 April :-

Every year on April 23, World English Day, also known as English Language Day, commemorates the birth and death anniversary of William Shakespeare, the English playwright and poet. It was established for the first time in 2010 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to encourage multilingualism and cultural diversity, as well as to recognize the global importance of the English language. The English language is one of the most popular languages spoken around the globe. The day prospects the history, culture, development, and achievements associated with the language.



World Intellectual Property Day : 26 April :-

World Intellectual Property Day is observed annually on April 26. The Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, signed in 1883, provided additional protection for intellectual property. This was intended to protect inventions, trademarks, and industrial designs. The World Intellectual Property Organization Convention, signed in 1970, became known as WIPO. In 1974, WIPO became a specialised agency of the United Nations. The theme for this year's World Intellectual Property Day is – “IP and the SDGs: Building Our Common Future with Innovation and Creativity”.



National Panchayati Raj Day : 24 April :-

National Panchayati Raj Day is observed annually on April 24. In the early 1950s, the first National Development Council urged the establishment of a democratic system of administration at the grassroots. However, until 1993, the formation did not go into effect. The Panchayat system was adopted in rural regions in 1993 as part of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, allowing for grassroots development. The Panchayat Raj system had helped in uplifting the people in the rural areas by providing them a space to voice their opinions and being a part of development and empowerment.



World Immunization Week 2024 : April 24 To 30 :-

World Immunization Week (WIW) is a global health event that takes place from April 24 to April 30. The aim is to raise vaccination rates and protect people of all ages from infectious diseases. The global immunization programs during the second half of the twentieth century rank among humanity's greatest achievements. In 2024, the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) of the World Health Organisation will commemorate its 50th anniversary with the theme "Humanly Possible: Saving lives through immunization" during World Immunisation Week.



World Penguin Day : 25 April :-

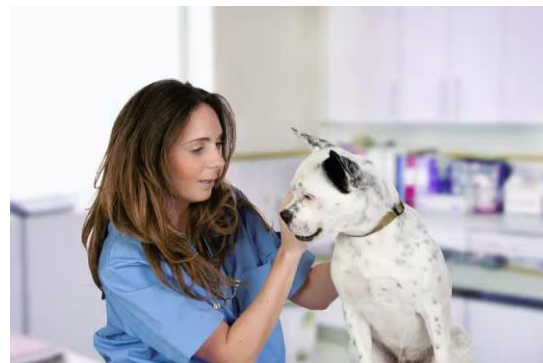
Every year on April 25th, we celebrate World Penguin Day. This day is notable because it marks the start of the Adelie penguins' northern migration. Adelie penguins are one of the penguin species that have been recognized worldwide. The majority of penguins live in the southern hemisphere, with approximately 20 identified species. The Emperor Penguin is the largest species of penguins, whereas the smallest are found along the coastal areas of New Zealand and Australia. Penguins are flightless birds, and their habitats are found in the southern hemisphere.



**WORLD
MALARIA
DAY**

World Malaria Day : 25 April :-

World Malaria Day, marked on April 25, raises awareness of the global fight to control and eventually eradicate malaria. World Malaria Day was first celebrated in 2008. It evolved from Africa Malaria Day, an event recognized by African countries since 2001. The parasite Plasmodium is the cause of malaria. The parasite can be spread to humans through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes called 'malaria vectors'. When a mosquito bites parasite is released into the bloodstream. The theme for this year is "Accelerate the fight against malaria for a more equitable world."



World Veterinary Day 2024 : 27 April :-

Once a year, the final Saturday of April is designated as World Veterinary Day to honour the tireless work of veterinarians around the world. The day recognizes the veterinarians' societal duties and responsibilities. This year's World Veterinary Day will be held on April 27. The World Veterinary Association (WVA) was founded in 1959 in Madrid, Spain. It was the WVA which came up with the World Veterinary Day in the year 2001. As of 2023, the association boasts of members from more than 70 countries and national veterinary associations from across the globe. The theme of World Veterinary Day 2024 is 'Veterinarians are Essential Health Workers'.

Organisation in an effort to minimise workplace accidents and illnesses.



International Dance Day : 29 April :-

International Dance Day, also known as World Dance Day is all about celebrating the amazing art of dance and showing how it brings people together. International Dance Day was created in 1982 by the Dance Committee of the International Theatre Institute (ITI). The ITI is a partner of UNESCO, which works to promote education, science, and culture around the world. They chose April 29th for International Dance Day because it's the birthday of Jean-Georges Noverre, a famous French dancer who helped create modern ballet.



World Day for Safety and Health at Work : 28 April :-

The World Day for Safety and Health at Work is commemorated on April 28th and promotes the prevention of workplace accidents and diseases around the world. Worker's Memorial Day is held to encourage workplace safety and health, and it pays tribute to those who have died as a result of a work-related injury or sickness. The World Day for Safety and Health at Work was first observed in 2003 by the International Labour

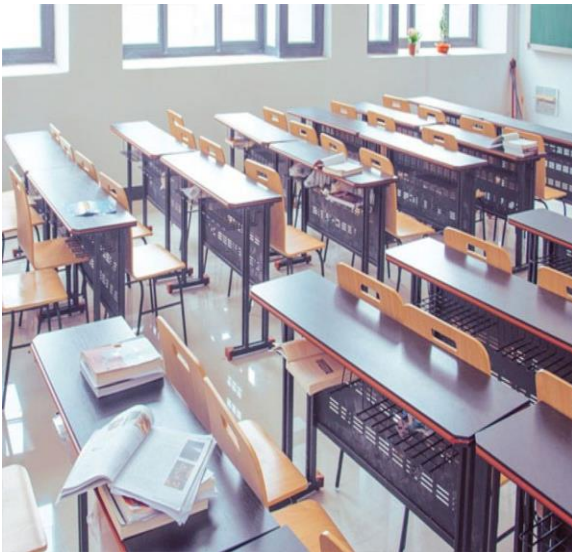


Ayushman Bharat Diwas : 30 April :-

Ayushman Bharat Diwas is a day set aside to commemorate the success and achievements of the Ayushman Bharat initiative, also known as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY). Every year on April 30, the day is held to commemorate the government of India's founding of the Ayushman Bharat initiative on

that date in 2018. The Ayushman Bharat scheme is the Government of India's main healthcare effort, with the goal of giving financial security to more than 10 crore poor and disadvantaged households in the country by allowing them to access secondary and tertiary healthcare services without using cash or paper.

2: Agreements



Odisha joins PM SHRI school initiative, signs MoU with ministry of education :-

In order to execute the PM SHRI school project, Odisha has consented to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Central Government, joining the other states in the initiative. With this ruling, the only states that have not yet finalized accords of a comparable nature are Delhi, Kerala, and West Bengal. The Ministry of Education emphasized how important this partnership is to improving student growth and education in Odisha. The PM SHRI scheme aims to upgrade thousands of schools across the country, aligning with NEP 2020 principles.



SIA-India And ABRASAT Sign MoU To Boost Space Sector Advancements :-

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed by SIA-India, the premier space association in India, and ABRASAT, the well-known Satellite Communications Association in Brazil, to establish a cooperative relationship. The goal of this partnership is to advance both nations' space industries and foster greater cooperation. This partnership is anticipated to facilitate business expansion and mutual cooperation between India and Brazil across various domains such as

satellite communication, rocket launches, payload development, and ground instrumentation.



SJVN Partners With IIT Patna To Enhance Tunneling Project Performance :-

SJVN Ltd, a public sector undertaking involved in hydroelectric power generation and transmission, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology Patna to use advanced geological models in tunneling projects, significantly reducing time and cost overruns, according to a press release from the Union Ministry of Power. SJVN chairperson & Managing Director Geeta Kapur said that the primary focus of the MoU is to develop cutting-edge methodologies which integrate diverse geotechnical data sources.



CSC e-Governance and Vision Karnataka Foundation ink MoU to train 5 lakh youths :-

CSC e-Governance Services India Limited (CSC SPV) and Vision Karnataka Foundation (VKF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the aim of revolutionizing rural empowerment and digital inclusion throughout Karnataka. According to an a representative, the strategic collaboration seeks to use over 50,000 digital service centers to deliver comprehensive rural coverage across the state's 6,000 gram panchayats. According to a press statement, this collaboration will reach out to 5 lakh youth in the state. The initiative will offer 100% rural penetration of gram panchayats with solutions and self-employment opportunities.



India Secures Second Overseas Port: Sittwe Agreement Approved By MEA :-

India now has the authority to run Sittwe in Myanmar, a second overseas port in addition to Chabahar. An agreement to transfer management of the entire port situated on the Kaladan River to India Ports Global (IPGL) has been authorized by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways owns all shares in IPGL. China and India are fighting each other to gain more economic clout in the Indian Ocean. Ports have become highly significant in this rivalry.



KABIL And CSIR-IMMT Forge Alliance For Critical Minerals Advancement :-

Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research - Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (CSIR-IMMT) for Technical and Knowledge Cooperation in Critical Minerals. Under the terms of the MoU, KABIL will use CSIR-IMMT's technical expertise and services to complete a variety of projects, including the design and analysis of metallurgical test work plans, the development and review of process flowsheets, and the selection of process technologies for mineral processing, beneficiation, and metal extraction.



Amendment To India-Mauritius Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement :-

India and Mauritius recently filled another crack in their Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA), strengthening the vigilance on tax evasion on investments entering India. The most recent revision incorporates a Principal Purpose Test (PPT) to determine whether a foreign investor is truly qualified for treaty advantages, or if the tax benefit is the major purpose for routing investments through Mauritius. DTAA is a bilateral agreement aimed at preventing double taxation of income earned in one country (India) by residents of the other country (Mauritius).



PhonePe Partners With ESewa, HAN Pokhara To Promote UPI In Nepal :-



IMGC And Bank Of India Partner To Offer Mortgage Guarantee-Backed Home Loans:-

Bank of India and India Mortgage Guarantee Corporation (IMGC) have teamed to provide mortgage guarantee-backed home loan products to salaried and self-employed consumers in the affordable housing segment. IMGC is India's first mortgage guarantee organization, with over 5,100 branches, and intends to offer customers more flexible and secure home loan products. With healthy growth in the affordable housing segment, this partnership aims to mitigate the risk of defaults for the bank and offer more favourable loan terms to its customers.

Bharat Electronics Ltd. (BEL), a defence PSU, has inked a memorandum of understanding with the Indian Institute of Technology, Mandi, to collaborate on research and technology, product development, semiconductors, quantum technologies, and drones. According to BEL, the MoU aims to use BEL and IIT-Mandi's complementary strengths and skills. "It will support indigenisation of products/solutions being supplied by BEL to its customers and is in line with the Government of India's 'Make in India' initiative," BEL said.



Apple And CleanMax Collaborate To Advance Renewable Energy In India :-

CleanMax, a major renewable energy firm, has formed a cooperation with tech behemoth Apple in an effort to promote sustainable energy practices. The alliance intends to speed the spread of renewable energy alternatives throughout India. CleanMax has successfully installed 14.4 megawatts of rooftop solar at six industrial locations across the country as part of this partnership. These installations are forecasted to curtail approximately 207,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions throughout their operational lifespan.



BEL signs MoU with IIT Mandi for co-operation in various fields :-



IIT Delhi, armed forces sign MoU for novel medical device research :-

Armed Forces Medical Services and IIT-Delhi have joined forces to conduct collaborative research to develop breakthrough medical equipment and address health challenges unique to serving soldiers in diverse terrains. AFMS and the Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to conduct collaborative research and training. "The scope of this MoU includes undertaking research and innovation to develop novel medical devices and focus on solving health issues specific to serving soldiers in varied terrains," the defence ministry said in a statement.

Aramco And FIFA Forge Global Partnership :-

In a historic declaration, Saudi Arabia's oil powerhouse, Aramco, and FIFA, the international football governing body, have formed a strategic global collaboration. The agreement, which runs until 2027, establishes Aramco as FIFA's Major Worldwide Partner exclusively in the energy sector, with sponsorship rights for big events such as the FIFA World Cup 2026 and the FIFA Women's World Cup 2027. Aramco's President & CEO, Amin Nasser, emphasized the company's commitment to leveraging sports, particularly football, as a vehicle for societal impact and community development.



Tata Motors signs MoU with South Indian Bank for commercial vehicle financing :-

Tata Motors announced a partnership with South Indian Bank to provide finance solutions to its commercial vehicle customers and dealerships. Under a part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), South Indian Bank will provide financing options for the automaker's whole commercial vehicle portfolio, Tata Motors stated in a statement. Tata Motors sells an extensive range of sub 1-tonne to 55-tonne cargo vehicles and 10-seater to 51-seater mass mobility solutions, ranging in small commercial vehicles and pickups, trucks and buses.



3: Appointments



Ms Sheyphali Sharan Takes Charge As Principal Director General, Press Information Bureau :-

Sheyphali B. Sharan, a senior IIS officer, succeeded Manish Desai as Principal Director General of the Press Information Bureau (PIB). Ms. Sharan is an Indian Information Service officer from the 1990 batch. Throughout her illustrious career spanning three decades, she has handled numerous roles, primarily overseeing media PR work as a Press Information Bureau officer for ministries such as Finance, Health and Family Welfare, and Information and Broadcasting. She has also served as the spokesperson for Election Commission of India (ECI).



Veteran Dealmaker Atul Mehra Joins Axis Capital As MD & CEO :-

Axis Capital has named Atul Mehra as its managing director (MD) and chief executive officer. The appointment is subject to receipt of the necessary permissions. Mehra, who formerly worked at JM Financial, would lead Axis Capital's investment banking and institutional equities businesses. His appointment follows the departure of Axis Capital's existing MD and co-CEO, Salil Pitale. In December, JM Financial roped in Chirag Negandhi — who was the co-CEO at Axis Capital — as its MD. Mehra is a veteran dealmaker with over three decades of experience and was the joint MD at JM Financial.



Sanjay Nayar Appointed As New ASSOCHAM President :-

Sanjay Nayar, Chairman of Sorin Investment Fund, has taken over as Assocham president for 2024-25, according to the industry group. He succeeds SpiceJet Chairman and Managing Director Ajay Singh, who served as the chamber's president. Nayar, the Founder and Chairman of Sorin Investment Fund, has four decades of expertise in global financial and capital markets, including 25 years

at Citi and nearly 14 years at KKR India before retiring last year. He had established KKR India operations in 2009 after leaving Citigroup.



Meenesh Shah Elected As Chairman Of NCDFI :-

The National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India Limited (NCDFI), the top body of dairy cooperatives, has chosen Meenesh Shah as chairman. Shah is the chairman and managing director of the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), headquartered in Anand. Shah was unanimously chosen chairman in elections presided over by Praveen Chaudhary, the Anand district collector and returning officer. With 28 years experience, he brings expertise in operations, infrastructure, business, logistics, customs procedures, and establishment of logistic hubs and Private Freight Terminals.



Wipro Appoints New CEO: Srinivas Pallia :-

Wipro announced that Srinivas Pallia has been named by the board to be the company's managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO), effective April 7, 2024. He takes over for Thierry Delaporte, who is leaving Wipro after leading a dramatic change there for the past four years in order to follow interests outside of work. The board of directors took note of Thierry Delaporte's resignation, which became effective on April 6, 2024. He will be relieved from the employment of the company with effect from the close of business hours on 31 May, 2024.



Air India Appoints Jayaraj Shanmugam As Head Of Global Airport Operations :-

Air India has appointed Jayaraj Shanmugam as Head of Global Airport Operations. Shanmugam will begin his duties on April 15 and report to Chief Operations Officer Capt Klaus Goersch. Shanmugam previously served as Chief Operating Officer of Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL). During his tenure, BIAL's new Terminal 2 became operational. Shanmugam is an industry veteran with a career spanning 25 years across airline, airport, and telecom industries. He had earlier worked with Singapore Airlines, Qatar Airways, and Jet Airways.



Harendra Singh Appointed As Coach Of Indian Women's Hockey Team Until 2028 Olympics :-

Soon after Janneke Schopman resigned as head coach of the Indian women's hockey team, Harendra Singh, a well-known hockey figure, emerged as a prominent contender to succeed the Dutchwoman. Harendra's coaching career with Indian hockey began in 1997, and he has led India to 11 gold medals, including the 2016 men's junior World Cup, the 2017 women's Asia Cup, and the 2018 Asian Champions Trophy (men). Harendra was brought in as the senior men's coach in 2017. During his tenure which lasted over a year, India claimed the bronze at the 2018 Asian Games and finished fifth at the FIH World Cup at home.



Sachidananda Mohanty Appointed As Member, University Grants Commission (UGC) :-

Sachidananda Mohanty, an alumnus of the University of Hyderabad (UoH) and former head of the English department, has been appointed to the University Grants Commission (UGC), according to a gazette notification published by the Ministry of Higher Education. Mr. Mohanty will be a member of the Commission for three years, beginning April 10, 2024. In a career spanning three decades, he had been a professor and a head of the Department of English at UoH, where he was an MA student of the 1977-79 batch. He also served as the Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Odisha.



Senior Bureaucrat Vandita Kaul Appointed As Secretary, Department Of Posts :-

Senior bureaucrat Vandita Kaul, a well-known professional with extensive experience in financial services and banking, has been appointed Secretary of the Department of Posts, according to a Personnel Ministry directive. Kaul, an Indian Postal Service (IPoS) officer from 1989, is currently a Member (Banking & Direct Benefit Transfer) on the Postal Services Board. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved her appointment as Secretary, Department of Posts and

she will succeed Vineet Pandey upon his superannuation, it said.



Saurabh Garg Appointed As Secretary Of The Ministry Of Statistics And Programme Implementation :-

Saurabh Garg, a 1991-batch IAS officer who is now the Secretary of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, has been designated additional role as Secretary of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. This responsibility was transferred on April 15, 2024, when Dr. G P Samanta's tenure ended. Mr. Garg will hold this post until a regular successor is named. Yatinder Prasad (IA&AS: 1993), Joint Secretary & Financial Advisor of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, has had his tenure extended for an additional two years beyond August 4, 2024.

BharatPe Appoints Nalin Negi As Chief Executive Officer :-

Nalin Negi, the interim CEO and CFO of fintech firm BharatPe, has been promoted to CEO. Negi was named as the company's chief financial officer in 2022 and served as interim CEO after then-CEO Suhail Sameer resigned in January 2023. He played a critical role in driving the company's tremendous expansion and strategic advancements in key business segments. Under his leadership, BharatPe witnessed a remarkable 182 per cent increase in revenue from operations in FY23 and achieved its first EBITDA positive month in October 2023, the company said in a statement.



Nalin Prabhat Appointed As Director-General Of NSG :-

Nalin Prabhat, a senior IPS official, has been appointed Director-General of the National Security Guard (NSG), the country's counter-terrorism force, according to a Personnel Ministry directive. Prabhat, an Andhra Pradesh cadre IPS officer from the 1992 batch, is currently serving as the CRPF's Additional Director General. "The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved his appointment as the Director General, NSG for a period up to August 31, 2028 i.e. the date of his superannuation," the order said.





Keki M Mistry appointed as new Chairman of HDFC Life :-

Deepak S Parekh, chairman of HDFC Life Insurance, has stepped down, the business announced in an exchange filing. Following Parekh's resignation, the business named Keki M Mistry as the new chairman of the board. "The Board has unanimously approved the appointment of Mr Keki M Mistry as the Chairman of the Board with immediate effect subject to approval of Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority," the firm said in a statement. Mistry has worked with the company since December 2000 and presently serves as Non-Executive Director.



FSIB recommends appointment of Rana Ashutosh Kumar Singh as SBI MD, Asheesh Pandey as Indian Bank MD :-

The Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB) has recommended the nomination of Rana Ashutosh Kumar Singh as Managing Director of State Bank of India and Asheesh Pandey as MD and CEO of Indian Bank. Singh presently serves as the Deputy Managing Director (Retail- Personal Banking & Real Estate) at SBI. Pandey is currently the Executive Director of Bank of Maharashtra (BoM). He took charge as ED of the public sector bank in December 2021. Prior to getting elevated as ED, Pandey was Chief General Manager and Chief Operations Officer at Union Bank of India.



Axis Bank Re-Appoints Amitabh Chaudhry As MD & CEO For Three More Years :-

The board of private lender Axis Bank has accepted Amitabh Chaudhry's reappointment as the company's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer for another three years, according to a stock exchange filing. Chaudhry's reappointment is subject to the Reserve Bank of India's approval, it stated. Chaudhry will continue to serve as Axis Bank's MD and CEO for another three years,

beginning January 1, 2025 and ending December 31, 2027 post the central bank nod. Chaudhry, 59, joined Axis Bank as its MD & CEO w.e.f. January 1, 2019 having led HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company (HDFC Life) for over nine years.



Former UGC Chairman Prof. D. P. Singh Appointed TISS Chancellor :-

Prof. Dharendra Pal Singh, also known as D.P. Singh has been appointed as the new Chancellor of Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, Maharashtra. Singh has been appointed as the Chancellor of TISS for a period of 5 years. Prof. Singh is the former Chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi. He was also appointed as the director of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). Singh has been vice-chancellor at Dr Hari Singh Gour University, Banaras Hindu University, and Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya.



Narsingh Yadav Elected Chairman Of WFI Athletes Commission :-

Narsingh Panoram Yadav, a former Commonwealth Games gold medalist, was named chairman of the Wrestling Federation of India's Athletes' Commission, completing a procedure mandated by the sport's global governing organization. The other elected members of the Athletes Commission were Sahil (Delhi), Smitha AS (Kerala), Bharti Bhaghei (UP), Khushboo S Pawar (Gujarat), Nikki (Haryana), and Sweta Dubey (Bengal). United World Wrestling (UWW), the sport's international governing body, claimed that removing the suspension of WFI was contingent on the Sanjay Singh-led national federation forming an athletes' committee to resolve the wrestlers' issues.



Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
Government of India

Sunil Kumar Yadav (IRS) Appointed As Director Of Ministry Of Housing & Urban Affairs :-

Sunil Kumar Yadav (IRS) has been appointed as Director of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. According to an order issued by the Department of Personnel and

Training (DoPT), he has been selected for appointment to the post under the Central Staffing Scheme for a period of five years from the date of taking over charge of the post or until further instructions, whichever comes first. "He may kindly be relieved of his duties immediately with instructions to take up his new assignment in the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA)," the order further said.

4: Awards



Hardik Singh And Salima Tete Honoured At Hockey India Awards 2023 :-

Indian hockey players Hardik Singh and Salima Tete were named men's and women's Player of the Year, respectively, at the Hockey India Awards 2023 in New Delhi. Hardik Singh, vice-captain of the Indian men's hockey team, earned the bronze medal in the Tokyo 2023 Olympics and the Asian Games 2023 gold medal last year. The 25-year-old also received the Midfielder of the Year award. Salima Tete, an Olympian, was in the women's team that won the bronze medal at the Asian Games in Hangzhou last year.



Vineet Jain Honoured With ENBA Lifetime Achievement Award 2023 :-

The exchange4media News Broadcasting Awards (ENBA) jury has given Vineet Jain, Managing Director of The Times Group, the Lifetime Achievement Award 2023 in appreciation of his "immeasurable contributions to the Indian television news landscape." Mr Vineet Jain has been instrumental in transforming a hitherto newspaper and magazine entity into a media conglomerate spanning India's biggest companies across FM radio (Mirchi), Internet (Times Internet Ltd), TV (Times Network), apart from leading presence in Music (Times Music), Films (Junglee Pictures), Events (TSSL), Outdoor media (Times OOH), Magicbricks, and more.



SJVN Awarded For Outstanding Corporate Social Responsibility :-

The Construction Industry Development Council's 15th CIDC Vishwakarma honors 2024 honored SJVN Limited with two outstanding honors. SJVN was honored with the 'Achievement Award for Creating Social Development & Impact' and the 'CIDC Partners in Progress Trophy'. Shri Baljeet Singh, CGM (HR) of SJVN, accepted the accolades on behalf of the organization during a ceremony held at India Habitat Center in New Delhi. A spokesperson for SJVN said that the awards acknowledge the company's commitment to creating positive change through innovative and sustainable CSR initiatives.

REC wins SKOCH ESG Award 2024 in Renewable Energy Financing Category :-

REC Limited, a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Power and a prominent NBFC, has received the SKOCH ESG Award 2024 in the 'Renewable Energy Financing' category. The award recognizes REC's commitment to sustainable financing, setting the path for a brighter future and speeding up the transition to renewable energy. Executive Director of REC Limited, Shri T.S.C. Bosh, received the award in New Delhi. REC has emerged as a significant player in India's clean energy transition, actively contributing to the nation's sustainable future.



GAIL Wins 15th CIDC Vishwakarma Award For Barauni – Guwahati Pipeline :-

GAIL (India) Limited received the prestigious 15th CIDC Vishwakarma Award in the 'Achievement Award for Best Construction Projects' category for its Barauni-Guwahati Natural Gas Pipeline project (BGPL). The BGPL project, which is part of the Jagdishpur-Haldia and Bokaro-Dhamra Pipeline project, has connected North-East India to the National Gas Grid for the first time. The 718 km long pipeline will act as the gateway for access of environmental-friendly fuel Natural Gas for entire North-East through Indradhanush Gas Grid Limited (IGGL).





Aleksei Navalny And Yulia Navalnaya To Be Honoured With Freedom Prize :-

This year, a prestigious German conference will give the "Freedom Prize of the Media" to the late Russian dissident Alexei Navalny and his wife Yulia. Yulia Navalnaya is scheduled to accept the honor in person. The award is given away annually at the Ludwig Erhard Summit, which has the name of the former chancellor who led the conservative party during the 1960s. It is awarded to public figures who have made a special commitment to freedom of expression, dialogue and democracy. Russian politician and former chess grandmaster Garry Kasparov received the award in 2023.



ISRO's Chandrayaan-3 Mission Awarded The Prestigious John L. "Jack" Swigert, Jr. Award For Space Exploration :-

India's Chandrayaan-3 mission team had been honored with the prestigious 2024 John L. 'Jack' Swigert Jr. Award for Space Exploration, recognizing their efforts to raise the bar for space exploration. With the successful Chandrayaan-3 mission in August of last year, India became the first country to land on the moon's south pole. The award was accepted by India's Consul General in Houston, D C Manjunath, on behalf of the Isro at the inaugural event of the annual Space Symposium in Colorado.



Prestigious John Dirks Gairdner Global Health Award For Dr. Gagandeep Kang :-

Dr. Gagandeep Kang, Director of Global Health at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, was recently chosen for the renowned John Dirks Award in global health. It is the most well acknowledged global health award. She is the first Indian woman to get this award, and she considers it an honor for all that she and her colleagues accomplished while at Christian Medical College in Vellore. The focus of Dr Kang's work has been on childhood diarrhoea disease and comprehensive studies, including the work on vaccines.



Studio Ghibli To Be Awarded With Honorary Palme d'Or at Cannes Film Festival 2024 :-

Studio Ghibli, the legendary animation powerhouse known for timeless classics like Spirited Away and, most recently, the Academy Award-winning The Boy and the Heron, will receive an Honorary Palme d'Or at the 77th Cannes Film Festival. This historic acknowledgment is the first time the award has been given to a group. Based in Tokyo, Studio Ghibli has produced a remarkable array of masterpieces under Miyazaki's guidance, including Princess Mononoke, My Neighbour Totoro and Howl's Moving Castle.

Jain Acharya Lokesh Muni Honored With American President's Volunteer Award 2024 :-

Jain Acharya Lokesh Muni became the first Indian monk to receive the American President's Gold Volunteer Service Award. The award honors Acharya Lokesh Muni's contributions to the public good and humanity. The American President's Volunteer Service Award was created in 2003, during George Bush's presidency. The award is given to individuals who have provided at least 500 hours of voluntary service in the United States and whose work has positively impacted communities and inspired those around them.



GMR Hyderabad International Airport Receives Skytrax Award For 'Best Airport Staff' :-

GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (GHIAL) has earned Skytrax's 'Best Airport Staff in India & South Asia 2024' award. Hyderabad Airport ranked first among all participating airports in India and South Asia. The award is the outcome of extensive audits and reviews that include a variety of variables. These include the combined quality of staff service (attitude, friendliness, efficiency) delivered across front-line positions at an airport. Skytrax is a global air transport rating organisation, having evaluated airports and airlines worldwide since 1989.





Amitabh Bachchan To Be Honoured With The Prestigious Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award :-

Amitabh Bachchan, a Bollywood legend, will get the coveted third Lata Dinanath Mangeshkar award for his outstanding contributions to the nation, its people, and society, the Mangeshkar family confirmed. Past recipients of this prestigious honor include Prime Minister Narendra Modi and famous singer Asha Bhosale. On February 6, 2022, the Deenanath Mangeshkar Smriti Pratishthan established the Lata Dinanath Mangeshkar award in memory of the late Bharat Ratna awardee and legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar. The award was also given to several other individuals for their outstanding contributions to their respective fields.



Ratan Tata Receives Prestigious KISS Humanitarian Award 2021:-

Industrialist Ratan Tata, the chairman emeritus of the Tata Group and a philanthropist, was presented with the esteemed KISS Humanitarian Award 2021. “The ceremony was attended by Tata Group chairman N. Chandrasekaran and three-time Grammy Award winner Ricky Kej, among others. The award was presented by the Founder of KIIT and KISS Achyuta Samanta. Due to health reasons, Tata has been avoiding public appearances, leading to the private arrangement of the ceremony at his home,” said a release issued by KISS (Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences).



Reuters' Mohammed Salem wins 2024 World Press Photo of the Year award :-

Mohammed Salem, a Reuters photographer, earned the prestigious 2024 World Press Photo of the Year award for his image of a Palestinian woman cradling her five-year-old niece's body in the Gaza Strip. The photograph was shot on October 17, 2023, at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, southern Gaza, as families were looking for relatives murdered during Israeli bombing of the Palestinian territory. Salem's winning image portrays Inas Abu Maamar, 36, sobbing while holding Saly's sheet-clad body in the hospital morgue.



Randeep Hooda Honoured With Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award :-

Randeep Hooda has received the Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award for his achievements to Indian cinema and his most recent film, Swatantrya Veer Savarkar. The biopic, directed by Randeep Hooda, who also stars as Savarkar, tells the story of India's armed revolution for independence. The ceremony also presented Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan with the Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award for his outstanding contributions to Indian cinema. Starring Randeep Hooda, Ankita Lokhande, and Amit Sial was released on March 22 in two languages - Hindi and Marathi.



Sharjah Teacher Gina Justus Wins Regional Cambridge Dedicated Teacher Award :-

Gina Justus, a teacher from Our Own English High School, Sharjah Girls' Branch, was awarded the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regional winner in the 2024 Cambridge Dedicated Teacher Awards. Justus, hailing from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, is currently working in the UAE since 2005 and has been recognized for her exceptional mentoring and charitable activities. This year's competition saw a record-breaking number of nominations, with over 14,840 submissions from 141 countries.

5: Banking



HDFC Bank looking to sell its 100% stake in HDFC Education and Development Services :-

HDFC Bank has chosen to sell its whole stake in HDFC Education and Development Services Private Limited. The transaction would be carried out via the Swiss challenge technique, according to HDFC Bank's regulatory filing. HDFC Bank will finalise the purchaser once the Swiss challenge procedure is completed, it said, adding that the bank and the selected bidder will then

enter into definitive documentation for the purposes. HDFC Education is engaged in providing services to three education schools, it said.



J&K Bank Introduces Virtual ATM Facility In Collaboration With Paymart India :-

J&K Bank has established a cooperation with Paymart India Pvt Ltd to launch a Virtual ATM (VATM) facility. The cooperation intends to provide cardless cash withdrawals to the Bank's customers through local retailers. The collaboration's purpose is to improve banking convenience for its customers across its activities, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The move is to leverage technology to enhance banking accessibility and convenience for the bank customers.



RBI Imposes Penalties On IDFC First Bank And LIC Housing Finance :-

The Reserve Bank announced that it has imposed a penalty of Rs 1 crore on IDFC First Bank and Rs 49.70 lakh on LIC Housing Finance for violating certain regulations. The penalty was imposed on IDFC First Bank for failing to comply with specified guidelines on 'Loans and Advances - Statutory and Other Restrictions', according to the central bank's statement. In another statement, it said the penalty on LIC Housing Finance has been levied for non-compliance with certain provisions of the 'Non-Banking Financial Company - Housing Finance Company (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2021' issued by RBI.



Singapore Tourism Board, PhonePe sign MoU to boost UPI for Indian tourists :-

In an effort to encourage UPI transactions for Indian tourists visiting Singapore, the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and leading fintech company PhonePe have signed a two-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The partnership between the Bengaluru-based company and the tourism board expands upon the current Unified Payments Interface (UPI) connection between Singapore and India. It allows customers to instantly make cross-border transactions between the two countries directly from their existing Indian bank accounts.



SBI billed govt Rs 10.68 crore as 'commission' for electoral bonds :-

A national daily reported that the State Bank of India (SBI) charged the Finance Ministry a total of Rs 10.68 crore as "commission" for the sale and redemption of electoral bonds between 2018 and 2024. The story cited communication between the two organizations to reach this point. This amount was charged across 30 phases of the electoral bond scheme, with fees ranging from Rs 1.82 lakh for the fourth phase to Rs 1.25 crore for the ninth phase before the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.



SIDBI Partners With KarmaLife To Offer Micro Loans For Gig Workers :-

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has signed an agreement with fintech Union Life Private Limited to leverage the latter's technology platform KarmaLife in a pilot program to provide micro loans to gig workers. This is expected to improve gig workers' access

to formal institutional finance. KarmaLife will allow gig workers receive micro loans via a smartphone app, eliminating the need for significant paperwork or physical documentation. This streamlined process will make it easier for gig workers to manage the liquidity needs of their enterprise activities.



Mudra Loans Surge Past ₹5 Lakh Crore Mark In FY24 :-

According to the most recent government data, small business loans under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) saw record increase in disbursements in FY24 and also passed the ₹5 lakh crore milestone. The amount of loans approved in the most recent fiscal year was ₹5.28 lakh crore. In the fiscal year that concluded in March 2024, the total disbursements were ₹5.20 lakh crore, compared to ₹4.40 lakh crore in the preceding fiscal year. Nearly 70 per cent of the beneficiaries of these loans are women. Mudra loans are extended in three categories — Shishu (up to ₹50,000), Kishor (above ₹50,000 and up to ₹5 lakh) and Tarun (above ₹5 lakh and up to ₹10 lakh).



ICICI Lombard Partners With Policybazaar To Expand Insurance Distribution :-

ICICI Lombard, a private general insurance firm, and Policybazaar, an insurance marketplace, have formed a strategic relationship. The alliance would combine ICICI Lombard's product portfolio with Policybazaar's reach to provide accessible insurance solutions to nearly one crore clients, the companies said in a joint statement. The integration will extend across multiple business lines of the Policybazaar platform, including retail audiences, corporates, and channel partners, the companies said.



Neobank Revolut India Receives In-Principle Approval For PPI License From RBI :-

Tiger Global and Softbank backed neobank Revolut India has got in-principle approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to begin issuing Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPI), such as prepaid cards and wallets, according to CEO Paroma Chatterjee's LinkedIn post. This license expands on Revolut India's existing RBI licences, letting it to operate as a Category-II Authorised Money Exchange Dealer (AD II) for issuing multi-currency forex cards and providing cross-border remittance services. The RBI nod is expected to strengthen Revolut's position as a key player in that space.



HDFC Bank Becomes First Private Bank To Open Branch In Lakshadweep :-

HDFC Bank, a commercial lender, has built a branch on Kavaratti Island in Lakshadweep, becoming the only private sector bank to do so in the union territory. This branch aims to improve the Union Territory's financial infrastructure by providing a diverse range of services, with a focus on personal banking and digital banking, which includes bespoke digital solutions for retailers, such as QR-based transactions. HDFC Bank has branches in the cold climes of Kashmir, the southern tip of Kanyakumari and now the island of Lakshadweep - a prominent tourist place.



MUFG To Acquire 20% Stake In HDB Financial Services :-

According to reports, Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ (MUFG) is buying a 20% share in HDB Financial Services, a non-banking subsidiary of HDFC Bank, for \$9-10 billion ahead of its anticipated IPO. The acquisition is expected to be completed for 5 times the book value, and once revealed, it will be one of the largest transactions in India's shadow banking market. A non-deposit-taking lender, HDB Financial could fetch a valuation in the range of \$9 billion to \$12 billion (₹75,000 crore to ₹1 lakh crore) during the IPO, contingent upon prevailing market conditions.



RBI’s Ban On Bank Of Baroda World App :-

The Finance Ministry is apparently proposing more stringent measures to safeguard citizens from online fraud. This follows a spike in occurrences, including the recent Bank of Baroda World app scam. These measures are reportedly part of a larger national effort to tackle cybercrime. In 2023 alone, India's National Crime Records Bureau reported over 1.1 million cyber fraud cases worth a staggering Rs 7,488.63 crore (\$8.9 billion). To address this growing threat, the Ministry of Home Affairs established the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C).



RBI turns down two small finance banks' applications after finding them not suitable :-

The Reserve Bank of India has rejected two additional applications to establish small financing banks, Dvara Kshetriya Gramin Financial Services and Tally Solutions Private, the central bank announced in a statement. Dvara Kshetriya Gramin Financial Services applied for a small bank licence in April 2021, while Tally Solutions applied in August 2021. “Based on the assessment of the applications, they were not found suitable for granting of in-principle approval to set up a small finance bank,” the RBI said, adding that the remaining two applications are under examination.



RBI Penalizes Five Co-Operative Banks With Rs 60.3 Lakh Fine :-

The Reserve Bank levied penalties of Rs 60.3 lakh on five cooperative banks for violating various regulatory norms.

Rajkot Nagarik Sahakari Bank faces a penalty of Rs 43.30 lakh for failing to comply with RBI guidelines. The central bank has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs 5 lakh each on The Kangra Co-operative Bank (New Delhi), Rajdhani Nagar Sahkari Bank (Lucknow), and Zila Sahakari Bank, Garhwal (Kotdwar, Uttarakhand). Besides, a penalty of Rs 2 lakh has been imposed on District Co-operative Bank (Dehradun).



Aegon Life Insurance rebranded as Bandhan Life :-

Bandhan Financial Holdings has formally acquired Aegon Life Insurance, which will now be renamed Bandhan Life. Bandhan Life will hire 1,000 new staff as part of its immediate "aggressive growth strategy," strengthening its commitment to expanding its customer base and providing excellent service, according to the company. The updated product names, such as Bandhan Life iTerm Prime, reflect this new direction, inviting customers to explore the company's enhanced offerings on its website, said the company.



CRED Secures In-Principle Approval For Payment Aggregator License :-

According to persons familiar with the matter, fintech firm Cred has acquired in-principle approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for its payment aggregation (PA) business. Once final clearance is received, the Peak XV-backed Bengaluru-based startup, which primarily operates a credit card bill payment platform for creditworthy consumers, will be able to expand into the merchant payments market, joining Razorpay and Cashfree. It usually takes about six months after the in-principle nod for a company to get the final approval from the RBI.



**Kotak Mahindra Bank Share Plunges 10%
On RBI Action :-**

Shares of Kotak Mahindra Bank fell 10% on April 25, a day after the Reserve Bank of India prohibited the private sector lender from onboarding clients through online channels and issuing credit cards. Analysts believe that the central bank's action may have an impact on Kotak's retail operations and stock price sentiment. The bank has seen a significant number of savings accounts opened using its 811 digital platform, and the majority of unsecured products processed digitally. The digital segments have shown an impressive growth of 40 percent on-year, outpacing the overall growth rate of 18 percent.



**BharatPe Introduces BharatPe One:
Revolutionizing Payment Solutions :-**

BharatPe has introduced a payment device that integrates POS, QR code, and speaker functionality. The payments firm will launch BharatPe One in 100 cities and grow to another 450 in six months. BharatPe One will simplify transactions for merchants by providing flexible payment acceptance choices like as dynamic and static QR codes, POS, and speaker capabilities, according to the company. The device is part of BharatPe's suite of simple, easy-to-use, and secure fintech products, which includes payments and business loans for its merchant partners.



**Razorpay And Airtel Payments Bank
Introduce UPI Switch: Revolutionizing
Payment Infrastructure :-**

Razorpay, a digital payments platform, has partnered with Airtel Payments Bank to build its own Unified Payments Interface (UPI) infrastructure, known as UPI switch. According to Razorpay, the infrastructure has been built to process up to 10,000 transactions per second at any given time, allowing businesses to use UPI advances five times faster. This UPI switch will serve as a platform driving UPI innovations while supporting existing solutions like Turbo UPI and third-party payment solutions, it said.



PayU Receives RBI’s In-Principle Approval As Payment Aggregator :-

PayU, a Prosus-backed fintech, has gained in-principle approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to function as a payment aggregator. The company stated that with the in-principle clearance, it may begin onboarding new merchants on its network. “This licence is pivotal in our mission to establish a globally renowned digital payment infrastructure rooted in India. Aligned with the government’s Digital India initiative and the RBI’s forward-thinking regulations, we are dedicated to driving digitisation and financial inclusion, particularly for small merchants,” said Anirban Mukherjee, chief executive officer (CEO), PayU.

“SBI Card MILES is our endeavour to offer our customers the best of all travel benefits.”



RBI lays out a roadmap for the transition of SFBs to universal banks:-

The Reserve Bank of India has laid out a roadmap for the voluntary transition of small finance banks (SFBs). To be eligible for conversion into a universal bank, the RBI stipulates that only listed SFBs will qualify. Those intending to convert must have a minimum net worth of Rs 1,000 crore. Also, the SFBs must have a scheduled status and a satisfactory track record of at least five years with a gross non-performing asset (NPA) of 3 per cent or less and a net NPA of 1 per cent or less in the past two financial years.



SBI Card MILES Launches Three Travel-Focused Credit Card Variants :-

With the travel season in full swing and an increase in spending on travel credit cards, SBI Card has launched three types of its travel-focused credit card, SBI Card MILES. The three options are SBI Card MILES ELITE, SBI Card MILES PRIME, and SBI Card MILES. The card is designed to provide travel perks to travelers of all types, from frequent fliers to travel lovers. At the launch of the card, Abhijit Chakravorty, MD and CEO, SBI Card, said,



Hitachi Payment Services Introduces Upgradable ATMs In India :-

Hitachi Payment Services, a prominent provider of payments and commerce solutions, announced the debut of the "country's first upgradable ATM." The manufacturer claims that the upgradeable ATM can be

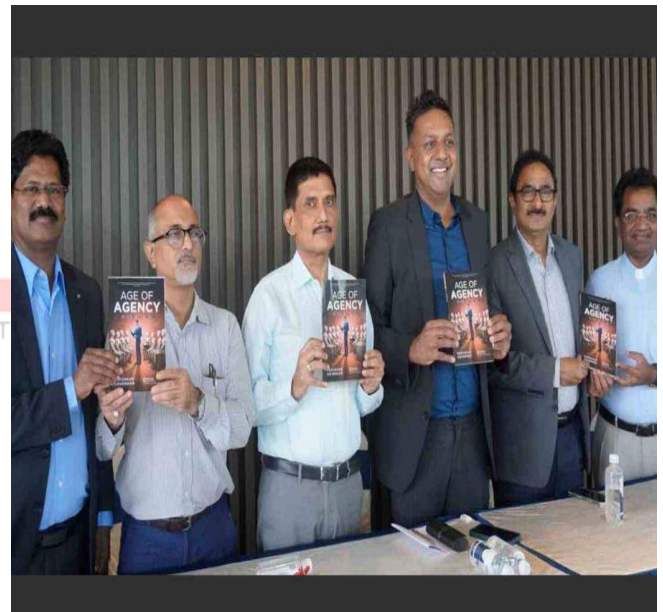
converted into a high-performance cash recycling machine (CRM) at any moment. "Manufactured under the Make in India initiative, these new upgradable ATMs provide more flexibility and efficiency to banks," according to a press statement. Hitachi Payment Services predicts a potential market of approximately 1,00,000 upgradeable ATMs over the next eight years.

6: Books and Author



Chiranjeevi Honors Legendary Actress Savitri with Book Launch :-

Her daughter Vijaya Chamundeswari has compiled a book called 'Savitri Classics,' which highlights the famous parts played by the legendary actress. The book was launched by Megastar Chiranjeevi and his wife Surekha. Speaking at this event, Chiranjeevi said, "I consider it my fortune to have acted alongside Savitri Garu in the movie 'Punadirallu'. I still remember her applauding me for my dance and encouraging me that I would make it big someday." "I often watch Savitri Garu's movies. I am overwhelmed and at a loss for words to speak about Savitri Garu, who is like a mother to me," he added.



Ex-Microsoft executive launched his book in Hyderabad :-

The book 'Age of Agency', written by Indian-origin South African and former Microsoft executive Kerushan Govender, was launched in Hyderabad. Bharani Kumar Aroll, President and CEO of TechTriad Inc and Past President of the Hyderabad Software Enterprises Association (HYSEA), introduced the book. The Age of Agency offers insights into how to use AI's capabilities to boost productivity and performance. The author was once upon a time an employee of Cura GRC Pvt Ltd in Hyderabad. He is now as a consultant to the company.



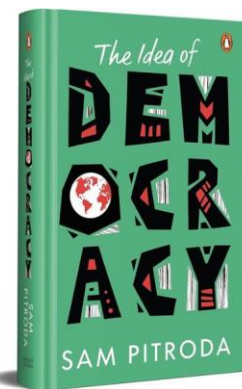
Vocalist Nagamani Srinath’s book “Antaraalada Alaapane” to be released on April 7 :-

Nagamani Srinath, a vocalist, may now add author to her long list of accomplishments, which includes being awarded the Panchakshari Gavai Rashtreeya Prashasti by the Karnataka government in 2024. On her 74th birthday, April 7, Nagamani will publish her autobiography, Antaraalada Alaapane (Song of the Soul). The book, published by the Jnana Deepika Educational Trust in Bengaluru, chronicles the earliest phase of her musical career. Amongst the most notable awards to her credit are the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Karnataka Rajyothsava Award, Chandana National Award, Karnataka Ganakala Bhushana, Academy of Music’s Chowdiah National award, Gayana Samaja’s Gana Kalashri and the Best Teacher Award from the Karnataka Government.



Two Books By Advocate M.S. Saji Released :-

High Court Judge Kauser Edappagath and actor Salim Kumar launched advocate turned writer M.S. Saji's books Niyama Bhashanangal and Nigoodhathayile Kolapathakangal respectively at Kozhikode. The first book is a collection of interviews with luminaries in the area of justice such as Ram Jethmalani, Prashanth Bhooshan, Kemal Pasha, and Manjeri Sundar Raj, while the second is a retelling of notable murder cases by lawyers who represented the accused in court. M.G. Asokan, president of the Calicut Bar Association, presided over the event.



Sam Pitroda’s New Book ‘The Idea Of Democracy’ :-

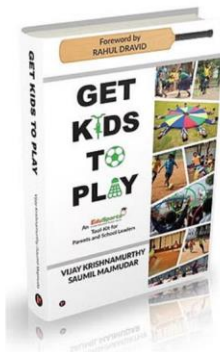
Sam Pitroda, a renowned author, has authored a new book titled 'The Idea of Democracy', which examines the current state of democracy and future obstacles in nations such as India and the United States. Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal and other prominent literary figures attended the book launch ceremony. It gives a thorough examination of the essence of democracy, its workings, the principles it must embody, and the forces and safeguards that can help to maintain liberal democracy. The book aims to stimulate conversations, particularly among the youth, on the meaning of democracy and the

role they can play in its survival and thriving in the coming era.



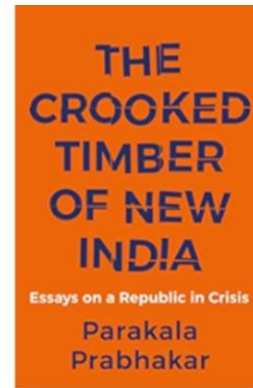
CEPT University Press Launched Book 'Planning for India's Urbanisation' By Vidyadhar K. Phatak :-

'Planning for India's Urbanisation' by Vidyadhar K. Phatak was released by CEPT University Press. Phatak is one of the top urban planners and practitioners in the nation. The book is an anthology of articles he wrote over a two-decade period, drawing on his more than fifty years of experience in education, consulting, and public service. Having spent a large part of his career in an operational position in the planning of Mumbai Metropolitan area, and subsequently, as a researcher and an academic, the essays carry comparative advantage of deeper insights.



Highly Anticipated Book "Get Kids To Play" Released :-

In a world where technology frequently competes for children's attention, Saumil Majmudar, Co-founder, CEO, and MD of Sportz Village, and Vijay Krishnamurthy, a Sports Research Scholar and Executive Coach, have released their highly anticipated book, "Get Kids To Play - An EduSports Toolkit for Parents & School Leaders." This incisive work dives into the critical parts of promoting and improving children's play experiences, providing practical advice for parents, schools, and communities. This book is now available in leading bookstores across India.



Parakala Prabhakar's book translated into Kannada launched in Bengaluru :-

Noted economist and social commentator Parakala Prabhakar's series of articles "The Crooked Timber of New India" is now available in Kannada as "Henavaguttiruva Ganarajya". Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah delivered R K Hudugi's Kannada translation, popularly known by his pen name Rahu, at Gandhi Bhavan. The book is a timely reminder of how the major events after 2014 — the year which Narendra Modi sworn in as the Prime Minister of the country — have transformed India into a broken democracy, explained Prof Rajappa Dalavayi.



NASA releases free e-book on Hubble space mysteries :-

Since 1990, the Hubble Space Telescope has given scientists an extraordinary picture of the cosmos. It has generated well over a million observations. NASA has now released "Hubble Focus: The Dark Universe," a free e-book that delves into what the Hubble mission has taught scientists about dark matter and dark energy, as well as how those lessons are challenging long-held views. We can't see it, but dark matter is thought to make up most of the mass of the universe. The massive instruments aboard the Hubble Space Telescope, which has orbited Earth for decades, detect objects the human eye can't see.

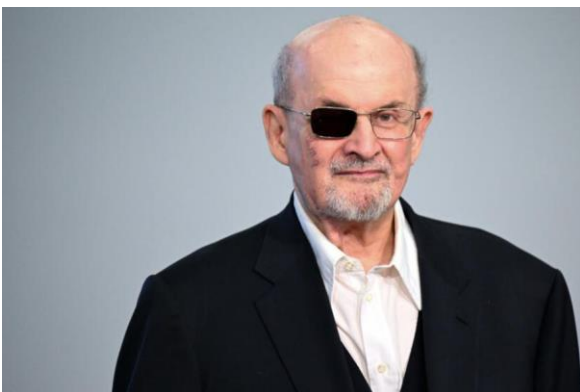
Salman Rushdie to release 'Knife' memoir recounting stabbing on April 16 :-

Salman Rushdie, a British-American novelist, will issue his memoir "Knife" on April 16, chronicling his terrible experience of being stabbed at a public event in 2022 and how he survived the near-fatal ordeal. Rushdie lost sight in one eye after being attacked by a knife-wielding assailant who jumped on stage at an arts event in New York. Rushdie, who was born in Mumbai but relocated to England as a child, rose to prominence with his second novel "Midnight's Children" in 1981. The book won Britain's prestigious Booker Prize for its portrayal of post-independence India.

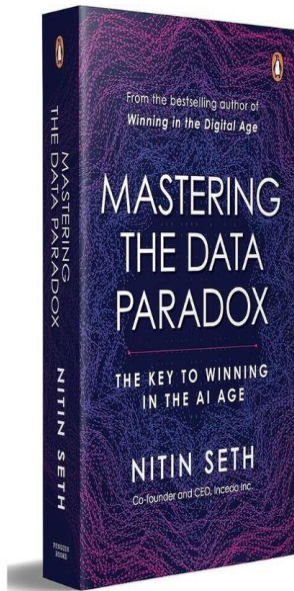


Book on India's road to renaissance launched in Hyderabad :-

Bhimeswara Challa, a retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer and former UN official, released his latest book "India—the Road to Renaissance: A Vision and an Agenda" during an event at the Administrative Staff College of India's (ASCI) Bella Vista campus. Mr. Challa provided a thorough summary of the work, highlighting its important ideas. "The book acts as a stark mirror, revealing the moral decay, institutional

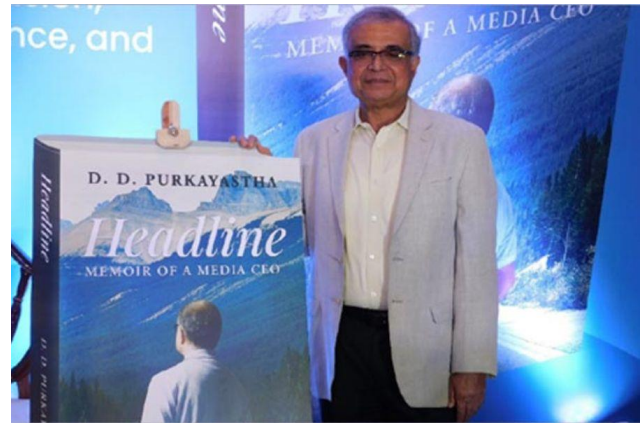


stagnation and societal challenges facing the Indian Republic," he said. The launch also featured a panel of experts and retired bureaucrats, including Jaya Prakash Narayana.



Renowned tech entrepreneur Nitin Seth launches new book 'Mastering the Data Paradox' :-

Nitin Seth, Incedo's co-founder and CEO, released his latest book, "Mastering the Data Paradox," which was published by Penguin Random House India. The inaugural event was attended by prominent industry personalities such as Raman Roy, CP Gurnani, Pramath Sinha, Vikash Daga, and Muk Mehta. With a career spanning three decades, Seth has held key positions in well-known businesses such as Flipkart, Fidelity International, and McKinsey. He is also celebrated for his previous bestseller, "Winning in the Digital Age," which received global recognition.



DD Purkayastha's maiden book to be launched in New Delhi on April 24 :-

On April 24, DD Purkayastha's memoir and debut book 'Headline: Memoir of a Media CEO' will be released in New Delhi. 'Headline' tells the story of a small-town guy from a rural hamlet who rises to the top of a glamorous media corporation. The plot revolves around Mr Purkayastha's life and the media. The first leg of the book launch was held in Kolkata on April 18. DD Purkayastha, the former long-standing CEO of ABP Group, is one of the most respected CEOs in the Indian media landscape.



Book on Odisha's 'drink from tap' mission released at IIT-Madras :-

A book documenting Odisha's 'drink from tap' ambition to supply potable water to the urban poor was launched at the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) in

Chennai. The book "People First: How Odisha's Drink from Tap Mission Quenched Every Thirst at IIT-M", authored by G. Mathi Vathanan, Additional Chief Secretary, Housing and Urban Development, Odisha,

details the difficulties the bureaucrat faced in engaging people and overcoming the discouragement from senior bureaucrats elsewhere.

7: Defence



Defence major Israel Aerospace Industries opens Indian subsidiary in Delhi :-

An official announcement states that Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), a corporation specializing in aerospace and defense, has established its Indian subsidiary in New Delhi. The launch of AeroSpace Services India (ASI) aligns with the 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' policies of the Indian government, it stated. "This also shows the commitment to a strong partnership between IAI and DRDO in developing and supporting advanced systems for the Indian armed forces," the statement said. IAI boasts a workforce of approximately 50 employees, with 97 per cent being Indian nationals.

"Indian Defence Exports crossed Rs 21,000 crore mark for the first time", says Defence Minister Rajnath Singh :-

Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on social media that the country's defence exports have reached historic heights, surpassing Rs 21,000 crore for the first time in Independent India's history. According to a statement released by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, India's defence exports increased to a stunning Rs 21,083 crore in fiscal year 2023-24, a 32.5 percent increase over the previous year. India's defence exports span across 84 countries and regions worldwide.



IAF's 10-Day Mega Exercise 'Gagan Shakti' Being Held From April 1 :-

The Indian Air Force (IAF) began a 10-day Gagan Shakti war training on April 1 to test its capabilities. The Indian Army will provide logistical assistance for the major exercise, which will take place around the country,



notably at the Pokhran Field Firing Range in Jaisalmer. According to an official statement, "The Indian Army has facilitated a comprehensive pan-India movement of approximately 10,000 IAF personnel and ammunition in order to validate the Operational Rail Mobilisation Plan (ORMP) aspects of the IAF."



New generation ballistic missile Agni-Prime successfully flight-tested :-

According to a notice issued by the Ministry of Defence, India successfully tested the new generation ballistic missile Agni-Prime from the APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha. "The test met all the trial objectives validating its reliable performance, as confirmed from the data captured by a number of range sensors deployed at different locations, including two downrange ships placed at the terminal point," it said. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh extended his congratulations to DRDO, SFC, and the Armed Forces for the test's success.



DRDO Initiates Project For Test Centre In West Bengal :-

According to officials, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has begun implementing a project in Junput village, West Bengal, to create a modest test site for the country's armed systems. Junput, like Odisha's Chandipur, known for its Integrated Test Range (ITR), is located on the Bay of Bengal. Since its inception, the DRDO has aimed at designing and developing state-of-the-art sensors, weapon systems, platforms and allied equipment in defence and security domains of land, air, sea, space and cyber, an official said.



Army Inducts Akashteer System :-

To improve its air defense capabilities, the Indian Army has started implementing control and reporting systems under 'Project Akashteer'. This project intends to provide the force with an unprecedented level of situational awareness and control in order to safeguard the safety of friendly aircraft while engaging hostile aircraft in contested airspace. Developed by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) as part of the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative, this project is poised to significantly enhance the operational efficiency and integration of the Army's air defense mechanisms.



Cochin Shipyard becomes US Navy's latest docking station :-

According to a new deal, US military ships will now dock and undergo repairs at Cochin Shipyard as part of a broader naval cooperation framework agreed upon by India and the US during last year's G20 summit. Officials from Cochin Shipyard, a Government of India undertaking, signed a Master Shipyard Repair Agreement (MSRA) with the United States Navy effective from April 5, 2024, as part of a bigger plan for India to support the US' forward naval presence in Asia. Cochin Shipyard is the third port to sign the agreement with the US Navy.



India-Kazakhstan To Enhance Counter-Terror Cooperation In Response To Moscow Attacks :-

India and Kazakhstan, its close Central Asian partner, have reviewed counter-terrorism concerns and discussed cross-border terrorism in South Asia. The conference was significant in light of the recent terror incident in Russia carried out by extremists of Central Asian descent who may have been influenced by Pakistan-based seminaries. The Indian delegation was led by Joint Secretary (CT), Ministry of External Affairs, KD Dewal; while the Kazakh delegation was spearheaded by Talgat Kaliyev, Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.



Indian Army Enhances Air Defence With Igla-S MANPADS :-



The fifth iteration of the India-Uzbekistan Joint Military Exercise Dustlik will begin on April 15 in Uzbekistan's Termez District, according to an Indian Army release. During the exercise, contingents from the Indian Armed Forces and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan will train together. The fourth edition of the joint military exercise between the Indian Army and Uzbekistan Army was held on February 20 last year at the Foreign Training Node, Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand.

Indian Army Conducts Anti-Tank Guided Missile Training Exercise In Sikkim :-

The Indian Army's Trishakti Corps performed an anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) training exercise at a super-high altitude of 17,000 feet in Sikkim. Missile Firing Detachments from Mechanized and Infantry Units across Eastern Command took part in the training exercise, according to a defense ministry statement. "The training exercise encompassed comprehensive continuity training and live firing from different platforms on moving as well as static targets depicting battlefield conditions," the ministry said.



Army carries out field trials of anti-tank guided missile weapon system :-

The Indian Army has successfully conducted field trials of its indigenously built man-portable anti-tank guided missile (MPATGM) weapon system, opening the road for its integration into the force's arsenal. The Defense Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) created and developed the weapon system, according to officials. The MPATGM weapon system has been field evaluated in different flight configurations several times with an objective of proving the technology with high superiority, the defence ministry said.



India-Uzbekistan Joint Military Exercise DUSTLIK 2024 :-



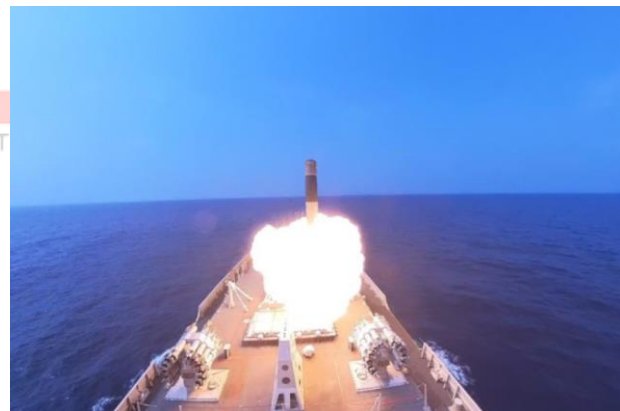
DRDO Successfully Test Fires Indigenous Technology Cruise Missile :-

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) reported an adequate flight test of a "long range subsonic indigenously developed cruise missile" from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha. "The missile followed the desired path using waypoint navigation and demonstrated very low altitude sea-skimming flight. During the test, all subsystems performed as per expectation," DRDO said in a statement. The details or the specifications of the missile were not mentioned but the missile looked a lot similar to the Nirbhay subsonic cruise missile that has been tested several times.

Vice Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi Appointed As Next Chief Of The Naval Staff

:-

Vice Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi has been named the new Chief of the Naval Staff. He will take over the role on April 30, after Admiral R Hari Kumar retires from duty. Vice Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, born on May 15, 1964, joined the Indian Navy's Executive Branch on July 1, 1985. He has been in the service for about 39 years and specializes in communication and electronic warfare. The most senior officer in the Indian Navy has served in various positions, including most recently as Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command.



Indian Navy conducted Exercise Poorvi Lehar on East Coast:-

Indian Navy conducted Exercise Poorvi Lehar on East Coast under the Operational Control of The Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command. The exercise aimed at validation of procedures towards assessment of Indian Navy's preparedness to meet Maritime Security challenges in the region. The Exercise offered valuable lessons to participating forces operating under realistic conditions, thereby enhancing their readiness to respond effectively to maritime challenges in the region.





Army developing missile systems to counter threats along China, Pakistan borders :-

In an effort to strengthen the country's defense capabilities against threats from enemy drones and fighter jets, the Indian Army is working on two critical programs to build indigenous shoulder-fired air defense missiles. These programs aim to improve the armed forces' readiness to counter potential threats along China and Pakistan's borders by delivering 350 launchers and around 2,000 missiles to Army and Air Force troops. The first project focuses on the development of a highly effective laser beam riding Very Short Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS).

IAF holds investiture ceremony at National War Memorial:-

The Air Force Investiture Ceremony was held on 26 April 2024 near the Param Yodha Sthal, which is a part of the National War Memorial (NWM) complex in New Delhi. The ceremony began with the awardees paying homage to the fallen heroes of the country by laying a wreath at the Amar Chakra of the NWM. This solemn ceremony was followed by the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari, conferring Presidential awards to 51 air warriors. This is the first time that any service conducted its Investiture Ceremony in the NWM complex.

8: Economy



SBI Foundation signs MoU with ICAR-IIRR :-

An agreement has been reached between the Indian Council of Agriculture Research–Indian Institute of Rice Research (ICAR–IIRR), Hyderabad, and SBI Foundation, the CSR arm of State Bank of India, regarding the promotion of direct seeded rice (DSR). As an alternative to the conventional technique of raising seedlings in a

nursery before moving them into flooded fields, direct seeding involves planting rice seeds straight into the field. The shift from transplanted rice to the DSR will result in multiple savings, including irrigation water, as well as reduce cost of cultivation and crop duration.



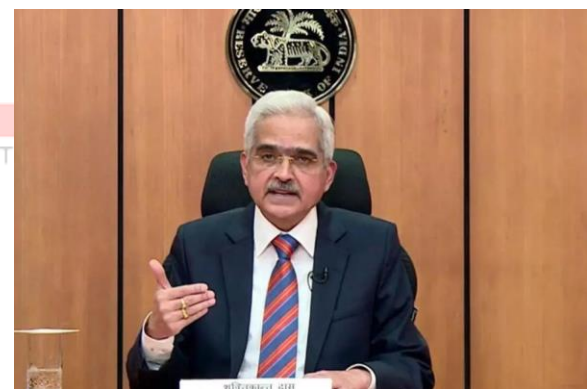
Indian Oil And Panasonic Partner For Lithium-Ion Cell Manufacturing In India :-

Indian Oil said that it has signed a binding term sheet with Panasonic Energy Co. to establish a framework for forming a joint venture to manufacture cylindrical lithium-ion cells in India. The agreement was reached in anticipation of rising demand for batteries for two- and three-wheel vehicles, as well as energy storage systems, in Indian markets. Both the companies are engaged in feasibility study regarding the utilization of battery technology to facilitate the transition to clean energy in India, with the aim of finalizing details of their collaboration by the summer of this year.



Adani Green Energy Ltd Surpasses 10,000 MW Operating Portfolio :-

Adani Green Energy Ltd said that it has commissioned 2,000 MW of solar power at the massive Khavda solar park in Gujarat, making it India's first company with more than 10,000 MW of renewable energy capacity. The company presently has India's largest operating portfolio, totaling 10,934 MW. According to a corporate statement, it brought 2,848 MW of renewables capacity on stream in fiscal year 24. AGEL's operational portfolio consists of 7,393 MW solar, 1,401 MW wind and 2,140 MW wind-solar hybrid capacity. The firm is aiming for 45 GW renewable energy by 2030.



RBI Monetary Policy, Repo Rate To Remain Steady For Seventh Time :-

Governor Shaktikanta Das said on April 5 that the RBI Monetary Policy Committee has agreed by a 5:1 majority to leave policy rates unchanged. He also stated that core inflation had steadily fallen. It is the first bi-monthly monetary policy for 2024-25. The Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) also indicated that the MSF and bank rates will remain at 6.75%. The Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has left the policy rate unchanged at 6.5%. As RBI has held key policy rates steady, the EMIs on home and auto loans are likely to remain stable for some more time. The central bank has kept interest rates unchanged since February, 2023.



RBI Postpones Implementation Of New Rules For Exchange-Traded Forex Derivatives :-

The RBI has delayed the implementation of new restrictions on exchange-traded currency derivatives by one month, leaving traders scurrying to square off their positions. The RBI's circular, which was set to go into effect on April 5, stated that only traders with underlying forex exposure could trade currency derivatives. Companies can use exchange-traded currency derivatives, such as futures contracts, to hedge against currency risk. The circular, issued on Jan 5, retained most of the earlier regulations, including a requirement that trades over \$100 million would require proof of exposure.



Ashneer Grover Ventures Into Fintech With ZeroPe Medical Loan App :-

Ashneer Grover, co-founder of BharatPe and previous managing director, is gearing up for a new venture in the fintech space with ZeroPe, a medical lending app. According to its Google Play store listing, Third Unicorn developed ZeroPe, which is now in the testing phase. In conjunction with Mukut Finvest, a Delhi-based non-banking financial company (NBFC), the ZeroPe app will offer quick pre-approved medical loans of up to Rs 500,000. The service is exclusively available at partnered hospitals, as mentioned on the ZeroPe app website.



India's retail inflation eases to 10-month low of 4.85 per cent in March :-

India's retail inflation fell to 4.85 percent on an annual basis in March, down from 5.09 percent the previous month, according to the ET department. A Reuters survey predicted that the figure would fall to 4.91 percent. The figure has maintained within the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) tolerance range of 2 to 6 percent. The inflation in the food basket was at 8.52 per cent in March, down from 8.66 per cent in February, reported PTI, citing the National Statistical Office (NSO). The official data is yet to be released by the government.



Government Sets Coal Production Target At 170 Million Tonnes For FY25 :-

The government has set a target of 170 million tons of coal from captive and commercial coal blocks in the country for the current fiscal year. In FY24, captive and commercial coal blocks produced 147.12 million tonnes (MT) of dry fuel, a 26% increase from 116 MT generated throughout FY23. Out of the total output of 147.2 MT in FY24, power sector captive mines produced around 121.3 MT, captive mines of the non-power sector produced 8.4 MT while commercial mines generated 17.5 MT of fuel.



Adani family infuses Rs 20,000 crore in Ambuja Cements, raises stake to 70.3% :-

Billionaire Gautam Adani's family invested an additional Rs 8,339 crore in Ambuja Cements, increasing its ownership to 70.3%, to boost the cement maker's manufacturing capacity. The Adani family had earlier invested Rs 5,000 crore in the company on October 18, 2022 and Rs 6,661 crore on March 28, 2024. The additional investment brings the company's projected infusion of Rs 20,000 crore to completion, according to a statement. The fund infusion will help Ambuja accelerate its growth ambitions to almost double its existing capacity to 140 million tonnes per annum by 2028 from 76.1 million tonnes as of December 31.



LIC Increases Equity Stake In Hindustan Unilever By Over 5% :-

The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) announced that its shareholding in FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) has surpassed 5%. The Corporation boosted its stake in Hindustan Unilever Limited from 11,74,63,555 to 11,77,18,555 equity shares, representing 4.99 percent to 5.01 percent of the company's paid-up capital, according to a regulatory filing. According to the Corporation, it purchased extra shares on the open market as part of its normal business operations. Holding in the company touched 5 per cent and the acquisition of shares was done on April 12 at an average cost of Rs 2,248.59 per unit.



Net Direct Tax collections for Financial Year 2023-24 exceed Union Budget Estimates:-

The provisional figures of Direct Tax collections for the Financial Year (FY) 2023-24 show that Net collections are at Rs. 19.58 lakh crore, compared to Rs. 16.64 lakh crore in the preceding Financial Year i.e. FY 2022-23, representing an increase of 17.70%. The Budget Estimates (BE) for Direct Tax revenue in the Union Budget for FY 2023- 24 were fixed at Rs. 18.23 lakh crore which were revised and the Revised Estimates (RE) were fixed at Rs. 19.45 lakh crore. The provisional Direct Tax collections (net of the refunds) have exceeded the BE by 7.40% and RE by 0.67%.



Target is to achieve \$1 trillion goods exports by 2030: Commerce Ministry :-

The Commerce Ministry has launched an exercise to figure out the necessary building needs, potential sectors, and clusters that will help the country meet its \$1 trillion merchandise export target by 2030, but sustainability will be a major concern in the future, according to senior government officials. This comes a day after the European Parliament voted for a new law that will require larger companies operating in the bloc to check if their supply chains use forced labour or cause environmental damage and act to take action if they do.



Karnataka And Gujarat Lead India’s Clean Energy Transition: Report :-

According to a new assessment, while Karnataka and Gujarat remain at the forefront of the clean energy transition, states such as Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh must speed up their efforts. The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) and renewable energy think tank Ember collaborated on a paper that assesses subnational clean electricity transition preparation. The report's authors said Karnataka and Gujarat continue their strong performance across dimensions, effectively integrating renewable energy sources into their power sectors, making strong strides in decarbonisation.



China's share in India's industrial goods imports jump to 30% from 21% in last 15 years :-

With India's growing reliance on Chinese industrial goods such as communications, equipment, and electronics, Beijing's share of New Delhi's imports of such goods increased to 30% from 21% in the previous 15 years, according to a research. According to a paper released by the economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative

(GTRI), the expanding trade deficit with China is cause for alarm, and the strategic ramifications of this dependency are far-reaching, affecting not just economic but also national security dimensions. In 2023-24, India's total merchandise imports amounted to USD 677.2 billion, with USD 101.8 billion of that coming from China.

9: International



Romania And Bulgaria Partially Join Schengen Travel Zone :-

Romania and Bulgaria have partially joined Europe's ID-check-free travel zone, marking a new step in the two nations' integration into the EU. After years of discussions to join the so-called Schengen area, travelers coming by air or water can finally enter freely. Land border checks will continue in place, owing to opposition, particularly from Austria, which has long resisted their request because to fears over illicit migration. After years of negotiations to join the so-called Schengen area, there is now free access for travellers arriving by air or sea.



Congo Appoints First Female Prime Minister Amid Eastern Violence :-

President Felix Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of Congo has named the country's first female Prime Minister, fulfilling a campaign pledge and taking a key step toward forming a new cabinet after being reelected late last year. Former Planning Minister Judith Suminwa Tuluka will take up the position at a time of rising instability in the country's mineral-rich east, which borders Rwanda. The long-running conflict has displaced more than 7 million people according to the United Nations, making it one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.



Zimbabwe Declares State Of Disaster Over Devastating Drought :-

Zimbabwe has declared a state of calamity in response to the severe drought that is affecting a large portion of southern Africa, along with Zambia and Malawi. President Emmerson Mnangagwa issued the emergency

declaration in a speech, requesting two billion dollars (£1.6 billion) in humanitarian relief. He said more than 80% of the country had received "below-normal rainfall" due to an "El Nino-induced drought". El Nino is a naturally occurring climatic phenomenon that warms parts of the Pacific Ocean every two to seven years.



Bilquis becomes first Indian woman appointed as jury for Paris Olympics :-

Bilquis Mir of Jammu and Kashmir is set to make history as the first Indian woman to serve on a jury at the forthcoming Summer Olympics in Paris, which will take place from July 26 to August 11 of this year. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) notified the Jammu and Kashmir administration of her appointment as a jury member for the Paris Games in a letter. Expressing her gratitude after being appointed as a jury member for the prestigious Summer Olympics, Bilquis said it is a dream come true, as the Olympics represents the ultimate destination for athletes and sports promoters like herself.



Peter Pellegrini Wins Slovakia Presidential Elections :-

Peter Pellegrini, a government supporter renowned for his skepticism toward Ukraine, won the Slovakia presidential election, defeating pro-Western diplomat Ivan Korcok. Korcok received 47% of the vote to former Prime Minister Pellegrini's 53%. The election was dominated by opposing viewpoints on the Ukraine situation, with Russia's invasion playing a large role, with Pellegrini pressing for peace talks in contrast to the dividing views within Slovak politics. Mr. Pellegrini becomes Slovakia's sixth President since the country gained independence after the split of Czechoslovakia in 1993.



Simon Harris Becomes Ireland's Youngest Prime Minister :-

Simon Harris became Ireland's new prime minister, succeeding Leo Varadkar, who abruptly resigned last month for personal and political reasons. The Irish parliament voted 88 to 69 in favor of Mr. Harris, 37. He was officially installed later in a ceremony alongside President Michael D. Higgins, becoming the country's youngest prime minister. Mr. Varadkar, who was in his second stint as prime minister and at 45 was one of Europe's youngest leaders, said last month that he felt he was no longer the "best person" to lead the country.



Israel Deploys C-Dome Defense System Against Aerial Threat Near Eilat :-

Israel used its ship-mounted defense system, known as the C-Dome, for the first time to intercept a "suspicious" target that entered the country's airspace near the southern city of Eilat, according to the military. The C-Dome is a naval version of the Iron Dome air defense system, designed to protect against rocket and missile attacks. Earlier, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reported an alert in the area of Eilat, which was targeted in February by intercepted ballistic missile fire from Yemen's Houthi rebels, allies of Palestinian militants Hamas.



UK's First Woman High Commissioner To India: Lindy Cameron :-

Lindy Cameron has been appointed as the first woman from United Kingdom to serve as High Commissioner to

India. She is anticipated to join later this month. "Lindy Cameron CB OBE has been appointed British High Commissioner to the Republic of India in succession to Alex Ellis CMG who will be transferring to another diplomatic service appointment," a British government statement said. While Cameron is UK's first woman envoy to India, Delhi has had three women envoys in London since the 1950s.



Russia's Successful Angara-A5 Rocket Test Launch :-

Russia successfully test-launched its Angara-A5 space rocket from the Vostochny Cosmodrome in the Far East, placing a test load into low orbit as part of an effort to create a new post-Soviet launch vehicle. The test launch of Russia's first post-Soviet space rocket, the Angara-A5, was intended to highlight Moscow's aspirations to be a major space power, as well as the growing importance of Vostochny, located in the woods of Russia's Far East. The defence ministry is also involved in the project.



India Donates Ambulances And School Buses To Nepal :-

India has contributed 35 ambulances and 66 school buses to various Nepalese NGOs, therefore improving local health and education facilities. Naveen Srivastava, the Indian Ambassador to Nepal, handed off the vehicles to Nepalese officials during a ceremony attended by Finance Minister Barshaman Pun. Out of 101 vehicles, two ambulances were handed over on location in the earthquake-affected Jajarkot and West Rukum districts by the representative of the Embassy of India in the presence of district officials and local residents.



Kuwait Names Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah As New Prime Minister:-

Kuwait's Emir has nominated Ahmad Abdullah al-Ahmad al-Sabah as Prime Minister. Former Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah resigned in April, barely a few months after being appointed to form a government. His resignation was a procedural act, as a new parliament was elected that month, the fourth since December 2020. The OPEC producer, which bans political parties, has one of the most open political systems in the Gulf, though the emir has the final say in state matters.



Kristalina Georgieva Re-Appointed As IMF Managing Director:-

The IMF executive board confirmed Kristalina Georgieva's reappointment to lead the international financial agency for a second five-year term. After her current term ends on September 30, 2024, Ms. Georgieva, who was the only contender to manage the International Monetary Fund, will remain in office as a result of the decision. The decision was taken by consensus, the IMF said in a statement confirming the board's decision. Ms. Georgieva, a 70-year-old Bulgarian, has run the IMF since 2019.



General Manoj Pande Inaugurates High-Tech IT Lab At Academy Of Armed Forces In Uzbekistan :-

During his recent visit to Uzbekistan, Indian Army Chief Gen. Manoj Pande opened a state-of-the-art IT

laboratory facility at the Uzbek Academy of Armed Forces, which also includes a cutting-edge cybersecurity lab, sources said. The development marks a watershed moment in bilateral defence cooperation, after a commitment made at the Defence Ministers' meeting in September 2018, according to Indian Army sources. The establishment of the IT lab is expected to enrich the training resources available to the Uzbek armed forces.



India delivers first batch of BrahMos to Philippines :-

India delivered the first batch of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to Philippines on 19 April 2024. In January 2022, Philippines concluded a \$375-million deal with India for three batteries of shore-based, anti-ship variant of the BrahMos becoming the first export customer for the joint venture missile between India and Russia. Specifics of the delivery made were not immediately available. Philippines is acquiring the systems under the Horizon 2 of the Revised Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernization Programme.



North Korea Tests New Missiles: Increasing Tensions :-

North Korea announced it launched a "super-large" cruise missile warhead and a new anti-aircraft missile in a western coastal area as it increases its military capabilities amid rising tensions with the United States and South Korea. North Korean official media reported that the country's missile agency conducted a "power test" for the warhead built for the Hwasal-1 Ra-3 strategic cruise missile, as well as a test launch of the Pyoljji-1-2 anti-aircraft missile. It said the tests attained an unspecified "certain goal." Photos released by the North's official Korean Central News Agency showed at least two missiles being fired off launcher trucks at a runway.



Google fires over 20 more employees over protest against contract with Israeli govt, Project Nimbus :-

According to The Verge, Google has dismissed more than 20 employees as a result of sit-in protests at its offices in California and New York. This comes after the firm removed 28 employees, raising the total number of employees fired for protesting to almost 50. The protests were against Google's \$1.2 billion Project Nimbus, a cloud computing collaboration with the Israeli government. Google's CEO, Sundar Pichai, has reminded employees that while the company encourages open debate and discussion, there are limits to this.



India-Kuwait Relations Strengthened With Inaugural Hindi Radio Broadcast :-

The Indian Embassy in Kuwait announced that the first Hindi radio transmission has begun in Kuwait. The Indian Embassy in Kuwait praised Kuwait's Ministry of Information for launching a Hindi programming on Kuwait Radio on FM 93.3 and AM 96.3 every Sunday. This measure will boost the two countries' relations even more. The Indian community with a strength of around 1 million is the largest expatriate community in Kuwait and is regarded as the community of first preference among the expatriate communities, according to Indian Embassy in Kuwait.

A municipal council in Brighton, south-east England, has approved plans for an annual multi-faith event to honor the role of Indian soldiers in the two World Wars at the town's India Gate memorial beginning in October. It was unveiled on October 26, 1921, by the Maharaja of Patiala, Bhupinder Singh, and is located at the southern entrance of the Royal Pavilion, one of three buildings in Brighton that served as a base hospital for these undivided Indian soldiers wounded on the Western Front. These included soldiers from the modern-day countries of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and Bhutan.



Prabowo Subianto Declared Indonesia's President-Elect Amid Controversy :-

Indonesia's electoral commission declared Prabowo Subianto president-elect in a ceremony after the country's top court dismissed challenges to his overwhelming victory filed by two losing presidential contenders. Mr. Subianto, who is presently the defense minister, won the election with 58.6% of the vote, or more than 96 million ballots, more than doubling the total received by the other two contenders. But his rivals alleged that his victory had depended on large-scale fraud and widespread state interference.



UK's India Gate To Honour Role Of Indian Soldiers Who Fought In Two World Wars :-



U.S. Places India On Priority Watch List For IP Protection :-

The US administration's 2024 Special 301 Report has placed India on the Priority Watch List because it continues to be "one of the world's most challenging" big economies in terms of intellectual property (IP) protection and enforcement. According to a Business Standard study, India continues to face a number of long-standing issues, including insufficient IP enforcement, high rates of online piracy, a large trademark opposition backlog, and insufficient legal mechanisms to safeguard trade secrets.



Iran unveils new 'kamikaze' drone:-

The Iranian military on April 28 presented a new attack drone designed to fly into targets and explode, like the kind used by Russia in the war in Ukraine. This new Iranian drone is similar to the Russian Zala Lancet drone,

which was first produced in 2020. Iranian Shahed drones have been used by Russian forces in air attacks in Ukraine. After Iran's recent air attack on Israel, the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada imposed new sanctions on Tehran targeting the production and export of drones.



Dubai to build world's largest airport with 400 terminal gates :-

Dubai's ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum on 28 April announced that his government has approved the designs for the new passenger terminals at Al Maktoum International Airport worth \$34.85 billion. The Al Maktoum International Airport will be the largest in the world having a capacity of handling up to 260 million passengers. It will be five times the size of the current Dubai International Airport. With five parallel runways, the airport will accommodate 400 terminal gates.



20 Soldiers Killed In Explosion At Army Base In Cambodia :-

Prime Minister Hun Manet announced that twenty Cambodian troops were killed in an ammunition explosion at an army facility in the country's west. The

explosion, which also injured multiple soldiers, occurred in the afternoon at an army post in Kampong Speu province, Hun Manet said in a Facebook statement, without providing any other information. "I am deeply shocked to receive the news of the ammunition explosion incident," Hun Manet said, expressing his "deepest condolences" to the families of those killed.

10: Miscellaneous

EC Ropes In Ayushmann Khurrana To Urge Youth To Vote :-

The Election Commission of India teamed up with actor Ayushmann Khurrana to encourage young people to vote in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. The 39-year-old actor appears in the ECI's campaign video, which encourages young people to vote in the next elections. Khurrana, known for critically praised films such as "Andhadhun," "Dream Girl," "Bareilly Ki Barfi," and "Dum Laga Ke Haisha," believes it is vital that young people engage in selecting the country's future. "Every vote counts and every vote is important. Voting is a symbol of empowerment in a democratic nation like ours," Khurrana said in a statement.



Isro launches 'START' training program for space science enthusiasts :-

In an effort to interest young people in the subject of space science and technology, Isro has launched a new introductory-level online training program called "Space Science and Technology Awareness Training (START)." Students pursuing physical sciences and technology at the graduate and final year undergraduate levels are the target in particular. The START 2024 program will be carried out by the space agency in April and May. The training will also focus on the cross-disciplinary nature of space science, giving students insights into how their individual acumen can be applied to the field.



Archaeological excavation reveals 5,200-year-old Harappan settlement in Kachchh, Gujarat :-

The Indus Valley civilisation, often regarded as one of the earliest cradles of civilization, has captivated both academics and history buffs. Excavations at many sites where the ancient city of Harappa existed centuries ago are still revealing the civilization's secrets. Archaeologists from Kerala University, who had previously conducted numerous successful expeditions to discover an Early Harappan necropolis Juna Khatiya in Gujarat in 2019, have discovered additional important findings from a 5,200-year-old Harappan settlement at Padta Bet, approximately 1.5 kilometers away, near Khatiya village in Kachchh district.



Gopi Thotakura: First Indian Pilot To Embark On Space Tourism With Blue Origin :-

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Gopi Thotakura, an entrepreneur and pilot, will become the first Indian to travel to space as a tourist on Amazon founder Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin's NS-25 mission. Thotakura was chosen as one of the mission's six crew members, becoming the first Indian space tourist and the second Indian to travel into space after Indian Army Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma in 1984. This mission will be the seventh human flight for the New Shepard programme and the 25th in its history. The flight date is yet to be announced, the aerospace company said.



GUJCOST Designated As Nodal Centre For ISRO's START Programme :-

The Gujarat Council on Science and Technology (GUJCOST) has been appointed as the nodal centre for Isro's Space Science and Technology AwaReness Training (START) initiative. This effort seeks to foster a greater understanding of space science and technology among postgraduate and final-year undergraduate students in physical sciences and technology. The registration for the inaugural online programme, Exploration of Solar System, ends on April 19, said officials. The event will take place from April 24 to May 10.



SPACE India Named Sanjana Sanghi As Its Brand Ambassador :-

SPACE India, founded in 2001, has inspired over 1.5 million children and helped 1,000 schools throughout

India integrate Astronomy and Space Science into their educational programs, developing a new generation of space enthusiasts and scholars. It has played a significant influence in dispelling myths about rocket science. Sanjana Sanghi is a budding Bollywood star and the UNDP Youth Champion. Her commitment to social activism and advocacy for education make her the ideal fit for this role at SPACE India and SPACE Arcade.



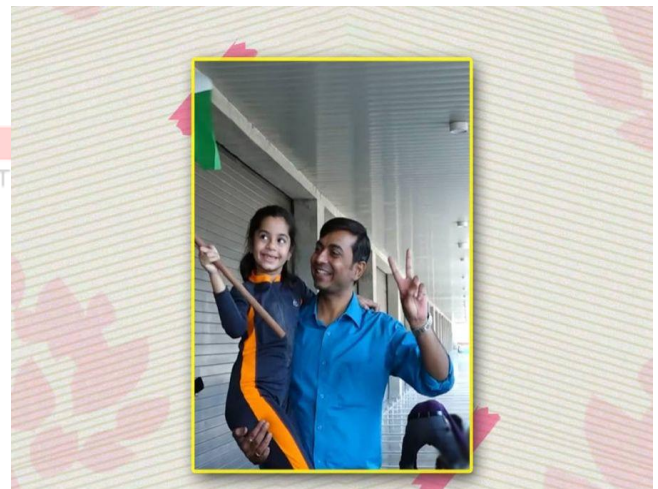
Dharamsala To Get India’s First ‘Hybrid Pitch’ :-

The scenic Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) stadium has become the first BCCI-accredited site to build a cutting-edge 'hybrid pitch', which will be used for future international and IPL matches. The first hybrid pitch installation will be carried out by 'SISGrass', a company of the SIS Pitches group based in the Netherlands. According to a press release, "this cutting-edge technology will transform the game by providing a more durable, consistent, and high-performing playing surface."



Indian Girls Shine At 13th European Girls’ Mathematical Olympiad 2024 :-

A four-member Indian girls' team educated at Chennai Mathematical Institute (CMI) won two silver and two bronze medals at the 13th European Girls' Mathematical Olympiad (EGMO) in 2024. This is the second time all four members of the Indian squad have won medals at EGMO since the country's debut in 2015. The students are Gunjan Aggarwal (17) from Gurugram, Sanjana Philo Chacko (15) from Thiruvananthapuram, Larissa (16) from Hisar, and Sae Vitthal Patil (17) from Pune.



Takshvi Vaghani Sets New World Record For The Lowest Limbo Skating Over 25 Metres :-

Takshvi Vaghani holds the record for the lowest 25-meter limbo skate. Guinness World Records (GWR) confirmed the story. The record keeper also uploaded a video of the six-year-old child from Ahmedabad, Gujarat, completing the task with ease. She achieved a new world record on March 10, last year. While GWR's official website notes that Takshvi had attempted the record for personal achievement, the video instantly went viral on social media after it was posted on social media on the official handle of Guinness World Records on April 10.



PM inaugurates 2550th Bhagwan Mahaveer Nirvan Mahotsav :-

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the 2550th Bhagwan Mahavir Nirvan Mahotsav on the auspicious occasion of Mahavir Jayanti at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on 21st April. Shri Modi paid tributes with rice and flower petals to Bhagwan Mahavir's Murti and witnessed a dance drama presentation by school children on Bhagwan Mahavir Swami titled "Vartaman mein Vardhaman". The Prime Minister also released a commemorative stamp and coin on the occasion.



Citroen India Ropes In MS Dhoni As Brand Ambassador :-

Citroen, a Stellantis company, has appointed Indian cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni as its brand ambassador. According to sources familiar with the situation, the business made an initial payment of INR 7 crore. Citroen got into the Indian passenger vehicle market in April 2021 with the debut of the C5 Aircross. It currently sells three more models: C3, eC3, and C3 Aircross. Since its market entry, the company has recorded wholesales of about 17,000 units for its four products. The maker of C3 models rolls out its vehicles from the PCA Motor plant in Thiruvallur, Tamil Nadu.



SEBI Approval For CRISIL's ESG Ratings Unit :-

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has designated Crisil ESG Ratings & Analytics as a Category 1 provider of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) ratings. Crisil ESG Ratings, a Crisil subsidiary, was established after Sebi revised the SEBI (Credit Rating Agencies) Regulations, 1999, to include provisions for ESG Rating Providers (ERPs) last year. The rating provider launched its ESG scoring business in 2021 and now tracks over 1,000 companies across 65 sectors. The company said this business will now be transferred to the subsidiary Crisil ESG Ratings.

11: National



Union home ministry extends validity of FCRA registered NGOs till June 30 :-

To the comfort of those whose applications for renewal are still pending, the Ministry of Home Affairs has extended until June 30 the validity of all FCRA registered NGOs whose licences are expiring on March 31. Additionally, all NGOs whose five-year validity is about to expire between April 1, 2024, and June 30, 2024 have been granted till June 30 by the government. According to the law, all NGOs receiving foreign contributions have to be registered under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act. There are 16,301 NGOs in the country with valid FCRA licences as of July 17, 2023.



Indian government raises \$1.98 billion by selling stakes in companies in 2023/24 :-

The Indian government raised 165 billion rupees (\$1.98 billion) in 2023/24 by selling shares in approximately ten state-run enterprises, according to official figures, 9% less than its internal aim of 180 billion rupees. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's aim to privatize state-owned enterprises has taken a back seat due to the upcoming general elections on April 19. Only twice in the last decade has Modi's government met its aim for privatisation and minority stake sales. His government has not set a target for the current financial year, which starts on April 1, in a break from usual practice.



India aims for 1st strategic petroleum reserve with pvt company by 2029-30 :-

According to the CEO of Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd (ISPRL), India intends to construct its first privately managed strategic petroleum reserve (SPR) by 2029–2030, giving the operator the ability to exchange all of the stored oil. Enabling a fully commercial SPR is similar to the approach taken by nations like South Korea and Japan, which permit private lessees—mostly oil majors—to exchange crude. So far, India has allowed only partial commercialisation for its three existing SPRs in southern India, which have a combined capacity of 36.7 million barrels.



Ahead Of Heatwave, Health Ministry Issues Guidelines :-

With temperatures rising and summer quickly approaching, the Union Ministry of Health has issued a list of measures to help prevent heat-related ailments. Health Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya stated that “continuous efforts towards generating awareness for people for better management of heatwaves is necessary as effective address leads to effective management.” This comes days after the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a caution for heat waves and "extreme heat conditions" in the country from April to June.



India to stop importing urea by 2025 end: Mansukh Mandaviya :-

India will stop importing urea by the end of 2025, according to Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, as a big push for domestic manufacturing has helped bridge the supply-demand gap. The minister stated that the availability of fertilisers is critical for Indian agriculture. He said the country has been using chemical fertilisers for the last 60-65 years to enhance crop production. Now, Mandaviya said, the government is making efforts to promote alternate fertilisers like nano liquid urea and nano liquid di-ammonium phosphate (DAP).



Justice Aniruddha Bose Appointed Director Of National Judicial Academy :-

Justice Aniruddha Bose retired after serving as a Supreme Court justice for five years. Given Justice Bose's intellectual capacity, CJI Chandrachud stated that “we have decided, and he has graciously accepted the assignment to head the National Judicial Academy at Bhopal to train judges”. CJI Chandrachud bids Justice Bose farewell as he joins the National Judicial Academy (NJA) in Bhopal, recognizing Bose's contributions to the legal landscape and efforts to modernize the judiciary. The NJA, established in 1993, operates under the guidance of the Supreme Court and aims to enhance the skills of judges and facilitate court administration.



India's Trade Deficit Narrows To 11-Month Low :-

India's trade deficit fell to \$15.6 billion in March, marking an 11-month low, mainly to a substantial drop in item imports. The deficit totaled \$18.96 billion in March 2023 and \$18.71 billion in February 2024. Even while the trade deficit narrowed in March, exports declined by 0.3 percent from the previous year to \$41.68 billion, while imports plummeted by a considerably larger 5.98 percent to \$57.28 billion, according to the commerce ministry. The steep drop in imports in March 2024 were led by lower gold imports which more than halved on a year-on-year basis.



India starts working on indigenous bullet train with speeds exceeding 250 km/h :-

According to an English daily newspaper, India has begun development of an indigenous bullet train capable of reaching speeds of more than 250 km/hour. The designs are being created at the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) of Indian Railways in Chennai. To put things in perspective, high-speed trains like the French TGV and the Japanese Shinkansen reach speeds more than 250 km per hour. India is relying on Japanese technology to power bullet trains that will run on newly built track from Ahmedabad to Mumbai.



Permanent Education Number (PEN) Required For Students Starting Academic Year 2024-25 :-

The State's School Education Department has made the use of Permanent Education Number (PEN) mandatory beginning with the academic year 2024-25. PEN is a unique identifying number granted to each student by the Union Ministry of Education via the UDISE+ (Unified District Information System for Education Plus) site, which serves over 14.89 lakh schools, 95 lakh teachers, and 26.5 crore students. Commissioner, Andhra Pradesh School Education, S. Suresh Kumar said that implementation of PEN would pave the way for streamlining and simplifying the process of the students' transition from one school to the other in the new academic year.



National Fertilizers Limited gets Navratna status:-

National Fertilizers Ltd has achieved “Navratna” status in April 2024 by the Department of Public Enterprise. This designation is reserved for top-performing Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and grants them enhanced autonomy and financial powers. The granting of this status underscores the company’s outstanding performance and its contribution to the national economy. Despite this notable achievement, National Fertilizers Ltd reported a substantial 73% drop in its consolidated net profit for the December quarter, amounting to ₹150.9 crore.



Health ministry asks states, UTs to act strictly against hospitals involved in illegal organ transplant :-

The Union Health Ministry has instructed all states and union territories to investigate any infractions and take appropriate action, including registration suspension, against hospitals that perform illicit organ transplants, according to officials. In a letter to all states and union territories, Dr. Atul Goel, Director General of Health Services (DGHS), Government of India, urged all states and union territories to ensure monthly collection and exchange of data on all transplant cases, including those of foreigners, with the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO).



RBI Releases New Guidelines For ARCs Effective April 24, 2024 :-

On April 24, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued a master direction for asset reconstruction companies (ARCs). The RBI has upped the minimum capital requirement for ARCs to begin securitization to Rs 300 crore, up from Rs 100 crore on October 11, 2022. The new guidelines take effect immediately. According to the directions, the RBI has provided a glide path to ARCs to achieve the minimum required net owned fund (NOF) of Rs 300 crore. As the minimum NOF was Rs 100 crore as on October 11, 2022, ARCs now have to increase it to Rs 200 crore by March 31, 2024, and to Rs 300 crore by March 31, 2026.



Gem And Jewellery Sector Granted AEO Status By Indian Government :-

The finance ministry has granted the nation's gem and jewelry industry Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) status, which will speed up the processing of customs, central excise, and service tax cases, reduce bank guarantee requirements by 50% when compared to non-AEO entities, and enable faster export and import of gem and jewelry. The sector has received this status following the efforts by the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) to take up the matter with the finance ministry.

Centre okays export of 99,150 tonnes onion to six countries :-

The government has approved exports of 99,150 tonnes of onion to six countries since the ban on the shipment was imposed in December last year to ensure adequate domestic availability against the backdrop of estimated lower Kharif and Rabi crops in 2023-24. The total quota for onion shipment approved is Bangladesh (50,000 tonne), UAE (34,400 tonne), Sri Lanka (10,000 tonne), Bahrain (3000 tonne), Mauritius (1200 tonne) and Bhutan (550 tonne). The onion is sourced from Maharashtra and shipped through the National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL).

12: Obituaries



Actor Chance Perdomo Passed Away Aged 27:-

Actor Chance Perdomo, a British-American, died in a motorbike accident. He rose to stardom in TV shows including "Gen V" and "Chilling Adventures of Sabrina." His age was 27. Variety was notified of the actor's passing by the star's representative, who also verified that no other individuals were there during the incident. Perdomo was reared in Southampton, Britain, after

being born in Los Angeles, California, on October 19, 1996. He became more mainstream after he became a regular in the American horror series 'Chilling Adventures of Sabrina' which also starred Kiernan Shipka, Ross Lynch and Jaz Sinclair.



Veteran Actress Barbara Rush Passes Away At 97 :-

Barbara Rush, a veteran actress, is no more. She was 97. Barbara Rush's daughter, Fox News Channel senior correspondent Claudia Cowan, confirmed her loving mother's death to Fox News Digital. Barbara Rush received a Golden Globe for best promising newcomer in "It Came From Outer Space" and went on to star in "Peyton Place" as well as numerous other films and television shows. Barbara Rush gained further prominence after starring in the critically acclaimed 1956 drama "Bigger Than Life" opposite James Mason.



Papua New Guinea's Legendary All-rounder Kaia Arua Dies, Aged 33 :-

The International Cricket Council (ICC) revealed that Kaia Arua, a great Papua New Guinea (PNG) all-rounder, died at the age of 33. Arua made her debut for the national squad in the East Asia-Pacific Trophy in 2010, and she has since become a fixture in various East-Asia Pacific route competitions and Pacific Games cricket. She was eventually picked to the PNG squad for the 2018 Women's Cricket World Cup Qualifier. While her first captaincy experience came at the 2018 T20 World Cup Qualifier where she led the team against Ireland, she was named as the ICC Women's Global Development Squad in the same year.



Telugu's first news anchor on Doordarshan Shanti Swaroop passes away :-

Shanti Swaroop, a news presenter for Doordarshan Telugu in the 1980s and 1990s, died in Hyderabad. Mamidi Somaiah, president of the Telangana Working Journalists Federation, recalled that Shanti Swaroop had worked as a Doordarshan news reader since 1983. He presented news on Doordarshan until 2011. Chief minister A Revanth Reddy has condoled the death of Shanti Swaroop. Former chief minister of Andhra Pradesh N Chandrababu Naidu also condoled the death of Shanti Swaroop.



Former Judge Justice Ramalingeswara Rao Passed Away :-

Justice A Ramalingeswara Rao, who served in the Hyderabad High Court (the common HC for AP and T) from 2013 to 2018, died after a major heart attack in Germany. Justice Rao, known for his pro-people orientation as a lawyer and judge, authored various books on law and the Telugu language. As a lawyer he fought several cases including the historic Samata case wherein the Supreme Court restrained the governments from doling out land in agency areas to non-tribals through mineral development corporation and other govt agencies.



Gangu Ramsay, veteran filmmaker, producer, cinematographer of Ramsay Brothers fame, passes away SPORTS:-

Gangu Ramsay, a veteran filmmaker, producer, and cinematographer, passed away lately. He was 83 and has been battling medical issues for the past month. The Ramsay Brothers were known for filming horror films in Hindi. Gangu Ramsay's successful career lasted decades and left an indelible effect on the Indian cinema industry. He lent his creative vision to over 50 films under the banner of Ramsay Brothers, including classics like "Veerana", "Purana Mandir", and "Bandh Darwaza", "Do Gaz Zameen Ke Niche", "Samri", "Tehkhana", "Purani Haveli", and "Khoj" with Rishi Kapoor.



R.M. Veerappan, The Most Trusted Lieutenant Of Late MGR, Passes Away :-

R.M. Veerappan, one of the key Ministers in the Cabinet led by late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran in the 1980s and a close acquaintance of the matinee idol turned politician, died in Chennai on April 9 at the age of 97. Veerappan previously served as a minister in the Cabinets of former Chief Minister M G Ramachandran and late Chief Ministers Janaki Ramachandran and J Jayalalithaa. This Dravidian leader born on September 9, 1926, enjoyed good ties with DMK stalwart and former Chief Minister M Karunanidhi too. He launched the MGR Kazhagam party after quitting the AIADMK.



Telangana: Senior IPS officer Rajiv Ratan passes away due to cardiac arrest :-

Rajiv Ratan, a senior IPS officer, died after a heart arrest at a private hospital, according to government sources. Ratan, a 1991 batch IPS officer aged around 60, was the Director General of Telangana Vigilance and Enforcement. Ratan led the state government-appointed vigilance and enforcement inquiry into the Medigadda (Laxmi) barrage of the Kaleshwaram project. During his stint, the IPS officer worked as Karimnagar Superintendent of Police, Director General of State Fire Services, Inspector General to Hyderabad Region, and Police Housing Corporation MD.



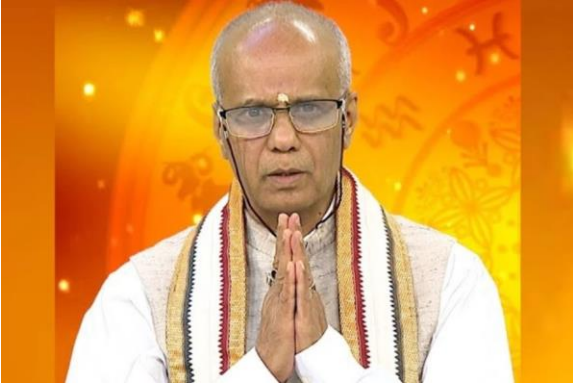
Nobel Laureate Physicist Peter Higgs Passed Away :-

British physicist Peter Higgs, whose theory of a mass-giving particle known as the Higgs boson earned him a joint Nobel Prize in Physics, has died at the age of 94, according to the University of Edinburgh. The 2013 physics Nobel Prize was awarded to him and Belgian physicist Francois Englert for their 1964 theory of a mass-giving particle known as the Higgs boson or the "God particle". Its existence was predicted in the 1960s, but it was found only in 2012 through elaborate experiments carried out at the Large Hadron Collider, located on the border of France and Switzerland.



K-Pop singer Park Bo Ram passes away at 30 :-

Park Bo Ram, a well-known K pop singer, died at the age of 30, according to Xanadu Entertainment. The police are investigating the cause of death. Park Bo Ram was a well-known figure in the Korean pop business. She debuted as a singer at the age of 17 by competing in the singing competition 'Super Star K2' (2010). She made her official music debut in 2014 with her single 'Beautiful'. The song was a hit, and she went on to win the Artist of the Year award at the 2014 Gaon Chart Music Awards. The following year, in 2015, Park Bo Ram released 'Celepretty'.



Noted astrologer SK Jain passes away at 66

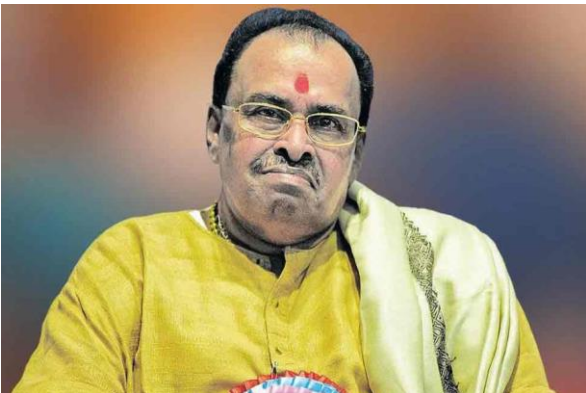
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Dr. Surendra Kumar Jain, a well-known astrologer, died on April 14 evening from pulmonary problems. International celebrities, like the world-famous Canadian musician, singer, songwriter, and record producer Bryan Adams, had also visited Jain at his home for astrological consultations. Jain has become a household name through his show, which aired on a Kannada channel for over 20 years. Recently, the Karnataka government had conferred the Rajyotsava Award on him for his contributions in various fields.



BJP MP, ex-Union Minister Sreenivasa Prasad passes away at age of 76 :-

V Sreenivasa Prasad, 76, a former Union minister and BJP MP, died on April 29. The lawmaker, who represented the Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha constituency in Karnataka, had been battling illness and was being treated at a private hospital until his death in the early hours of the day. Prasad had a successful political career spanning five decades, serving as an MP six times from Chamarajanagar and MLA for Nanjangud in Mysuru district for two terms. In a significant milestone earlier this year, on March 18, he announced his retirement from electoral politics, marking 50 years of dedicated service to the public.



Carnatic musician KG Jayan passes away :-

13: Ranks & Reports



UP Leads With Most GI-Tagged Products :-

The inclusion of 15 Uttar Pradesh items to the list of Geographical Indication (GI) certified goods has moved the state to the top spot in India. Uttar Pradesh has 69 GI-tagged products, surpassing Tamil Nadu's 58. Varanasi has become a leader in GI-tagged goods manufacture, with 30 certified products—the most from a single geographical area. GI certification signifies that these products are unique representations of a specific culture, society, or craft. Varanasi secures Geographical Indication for Banaras Thandai and other regional products, expanding to 30 GI-tagged items.



UPI Ends FY24 With Record Transactions Worth ₹199 Lakh Crore :-

The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) closed FY24 on a high note, hitting new records for both the volume and value of transactions completed in March 2024. This was despite a modest decrease in transactions in February 2024 due to the shorter number of days in the month and greater investment activity ahead of the fiscal year's end. In FY24, the UPI platform completed 13,115 transactions worth ₹199.29 lakh crore, up from 8,376 crore worth ₹139 lakh crore the previous year. The value of transactions was 40 per cent higher, compared to that in March 2023.



Paradip Port Emerges As India's Top Cargo-Handling Port In 2023-24 :-

The state-owned Paradip Port in Odisha has surpassed Gujarat's Deendayal Port Authority as India's largest significant port in terms of cargo volumes, with 145.38 million tonnes throughput in FY24. For the first time in its 56-year history, Paradip Port has eclipsed Deendayal Port's records, according to a statement from the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways. According to the statement, during FY24, the port achieved the highest-ever coastal shipping traffic of 59.19 million metric tonnes, with a growth of 0.76 million metric tonnes -- 1.30 per cent over the previous year.



UPI Transactions Surge By 56% In India: Worldline Report :-

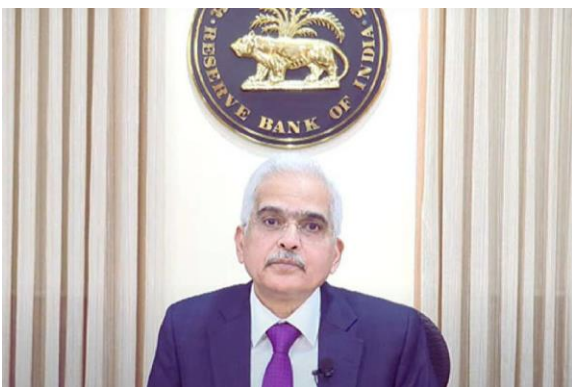
According to a research by payment service provider Worldline, UPI transactions in India increased by 56% year on year (YoY) in the second half (H2) of 2023, while card transactions increased by only 6%. The amount of UPI transactions increased to 65.77 billion from 42.09 billion in the second half of 2023, according to the research. In addition, transaction value increased by 44%, rising from Rs 69.36 trillion to Rs 99.68 trillion within the same period. The report also highlights the enhancement of payment acceptance infrastructure across the country, with the use of use Point of Sale (PoS) terminals rising by 26% to 8.56 million.

India's central bank left its inflation projection for this fiscal year unchanged at 4.5%, implying that the inflation target is within reach, even as the country braces for a sweltering summer despite a surge in crude oil prices and ongoing supply chain concerns caused by the Red Sea issue. According to Shaktikanta Das, CPI inflation is expected to fall to 3.8% in Q2FY25 before rising again to roughly 4.5% by the end of the fiscal year. Das pointed out that inflation has come down significantly but remains above the 4% target. Food inflation continues to exhibit considerable volatility, which is impeding the ongoing disinflation process.

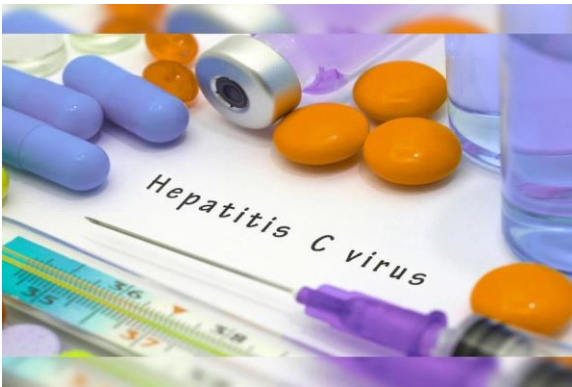


111-Year-Old John Alfred Tinniswood Becomes World's Oldest Man :-

Guinness World Records (GWR) has announced the world's oldest living man, 111-year-old John Alfred Tinniswood, from England. Born in Merseyside, Northern England, in 1912, Tinniswood has experienced two world wars. Although Tinniswood's accomplishment is certainly noteworthy, it is important to remember that he is not the oldest person in history. Jiroemon Kimura, a Japanese man who lived to be 116 years and 54 days old, was the oldest man in history. Maria Branyas Morera of Spain, who is currently 117 years old and the oldest living woman, is the oldest living person overall.



RBI Projects CPI Inflation At 4.5% For FY25 :-



India Ranks Second In Hepatitis B And C Cases Worldwide :-

According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) 2024 Global Hepatitis Report, India accounted for 11.6% of all hepatitis cases globally in 2022. This corresponds to an alarming number of approximately 35.3 million hepatitis infections in the country, including 29.8 million hepatitis B and 5.5 million hepatitis C cases. The country ranked second after China, accounting for 27.5 percent of the global total with 83.8 million cases in 2022. Hepatitis is the second leading infectious cause of death globally after tuberculosis.

6.7% before, citing strong public and private sector investment and rising consumer demand. According to the ADB's April edition of the Asian Development Outlook, India would remain "a major growth engine" in Asia and the Pacific. For the 2025-26 fiscal, ADB has projected India's growth at 7.2 per cent. The economy grew robustly in fiscal 2023 with strong momentum in manufacturing and services, the Bank stated.

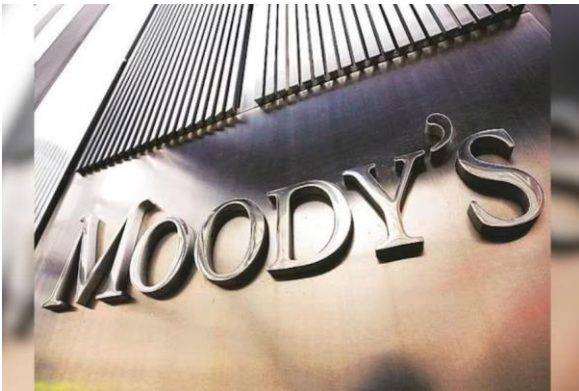


Asian Development Bank Raises India's GDP Growth Forecast :-

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) upped India's GDP growth prediction for the current fiscal year to 7% from

India Overtakes China In Digital Services Exports: WTO Report :-

India is now the world's fourth-largest exporter of digitally delivered services, accounting for more than a fifth of global commerce in services. According to the World Trade Organization's (WTO) most recent Global Trade Outlook and Statistics report, India's exports of digitally delivered services were total \$257 billion in 2023, up 17 percent from the previous year. The country's performance was much better than Germany and China, which registered a growth of 4 percent each. Unlike trade in goods, which fell in 2023 globally and in all regions, exports of digitally delivered services continued to thrive.



Moody's Analytics Forecasts India's Economy To Grow By 6.1% In 2024 :-

Moody's Analytics expects India's economy to grow by 6.1 percent in 2024, down from 7.7 percent in 2023. "Economies in South and Southeast Asia will see some of the strongest output gains this year, but their performance is flattered by a delayed post-pandemic rebound. We expect India's GDP to grow 6.1 per cent in 2024 after 7.7 per cent last year," Moody's Analytics said. In its report titled 'APAC Outlook: Listening Through the Noise', Moody's Analytics said the region overall is doing better than other parts of the world.

According to a new World Cybercrime Index produced by academics, the vast majority of cybercriminals originate in a few countries. Cybercrime is forecast to cost the globe \$9.22 trillion in 2024, with a projected increase to \$13.82 trillion in 2028. This survey was conducted by 92 of the world's leading cybercrime experts. This seemed to suggest that cybercriminal threats seem to originate from a small number of countries — China, Russia, Ukraine, the United States, Romania, and Nigeria ranked in the top 10 for each of the selected five categories.



India's wholesale inflation rises to three-month high of 0.53% in March :-

The headline wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation rate increased to a three-month high of 0.53 percent in March, up from 0.2 percent in February. It therefore remained in positive area for the fifth consecutive month, after being in deflationary zone for the majority of fiscal year 2023-24 (FY24). Data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry showed that the uptick in factory gate inflation during March was driven by increase in prices of food articles, electricity, crude petroleum and natural gas, among others.

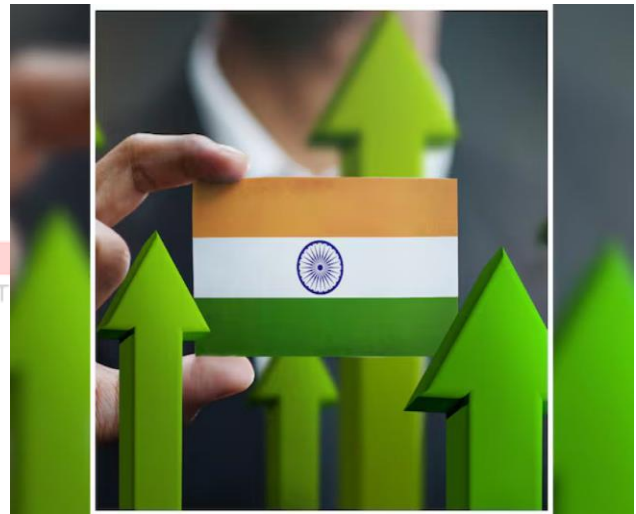


World Cybercrime Index : Russia And Ukraine Top List :-



Delhi's IGI Airport Ranks Among Top 10 Busiest Airports Globally :-

The Airports Council International (ACI) World, a global body that tests and analyzes airport standards, has classified Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport as the world's tenth busiest airport in 2023. Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, IGI Airport was ranked 9th in 2022, 13th in 2021, and 17th busiest in 2019. Data shared by the ACI showed that the IGI airport in the capital handled 7.22 crore passengers annually. The Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in the United States held the top rank with 10.46 crore passengers.



Indian economy projected to grow 6.5 per cent in 2024: UNCTAD :-

According to a UN estimate, India's economy is expected to grow by 6.5% in 2024, with multinationals expanding their manufacturing operations into the country to diversify their supply chains benefiting Indian exports. According to the UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report, India grew by 6.7% in 2023 and is anticipated to increase by 6.5% in 2024, maintaining its position as the world's fastest-growing major economy. The UNCTAD report said the Reserve Bank of India is expected to keep interest rates constant in the near term.



Alia Bhatt in TIME's 100 most influential people of 2024 list :-



India's population estimated at 1.4 bn, 24% in 0-14 age bracket: UNFPA :-

According to a recent UNFPA research, India's population is predicted to be 1.44 billion people, with 24 percent of them aged 0 to 14. According to the United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) State of World Population - 2024 report -- "Interwoven Lives, Threads of Hope: Ending Inequalities in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights" study, India's population is expected to double in 77 years. India leads globally with an estimated population of 1.44 billion, followed by China at 1.425 billion, according to the report.



India Ranks Fourth In Global Military Spending In 2023:-

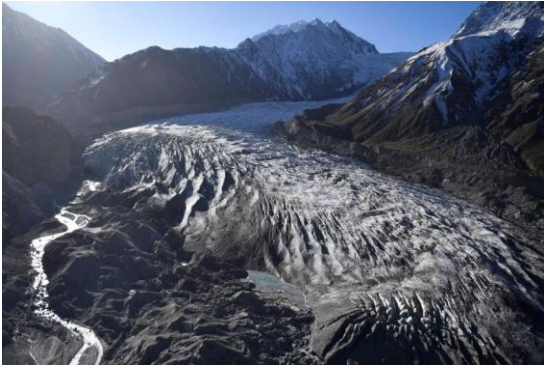
India was the world's fourth-largest military spender in 2023, spending \$83.6 billion to modernize a variety of weapons and combat systems, according to a research. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) reported that the top three spenders were the United States (US), China, and Russia in that order. India's military spending increased by 4.2 percent compared to 2022. This growth reflects India's strategic focus on enhancing its defence capabilities and bolstering military infrastructure, particularly along the China border following the Ladakh standoff that began in May 2020.



Plain Gold Jewellery Exports Up Nearly 62% In Fy23-24 :-

Exports of simple gold jewellery increased by about 62% to \$6,792.24 million in the just completed fiscal year 2023-24, up from just under \$4,200 million in FY 2022-23. According to data from the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC), total gold jewellery (plain and studded), which fell 10.5% between April 2023 and September 2023, rebounded substantially in the second half of the year, growing by nearly 47%. Gross export of total gold jewellery (both plain & studded) for FY2023-24 grew by nearly 17% to \$11,230 million over the

comparative figure of \$9,619 million for the previous year.



Satellite Insights: Expansion Of Glacial Lakes In The Indian Himalayas :-

The Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) long-term satellite photography covering the catchments of Indian Himalayan river basins from 1984 to 2023 revealed major changes in glacier lakes. According to the ISRO, 676 glacial lakes out of 2,431 larger than 10 hectares observed in 2016-17 have significantly increased since 1984. According to the ISRO, elevation-based analysis suggests that 314 lakes are located between 4,000 and 5,000 meters, with 296 lakes above 5,000 meters. The glacial lakes are categorised based on their formation process into four broad categories.



Passport Affordability Rankings: Indian Passport Second Cheapest, UAE Tops :-

A recent survey undertaken by the Australian organization Compare the Market AU showed surprising findings about global passport affordability and accessibility. According to the survey, the Indian passport is the second cheapest in the world, with the UAE passport being the most affordable. In terms of cost per year of validity, the Indian passport is the most cheap option, costing only \$1.81 per year. This places India ahead of countries like South Africa and Kenya, offering passport holders significant savings over time.



Reliance Jio becomes world's largest mobile operator in data traffic :-

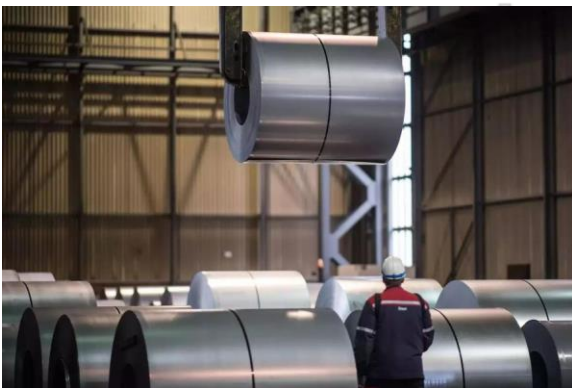
Reliance Jio, India's leading telecom operator, has overtaken China Mobile as the world's largest consumer of mobile data traffic. Tefficient, a worldwide analytics business, reported that Jio's network handled 40.9 exabytes of data in the first quarter of 2024, compared to China Mobile's 38 exabytes. Jio has the world's second-largest 5G subscriber base, with 108 million users. However, Jio's rapid subscriber growth, driven by its JioBharat value plans and promotional unlimited 5G offers, has impacted its average revenue per user (ARPU).



NIPFP Forecasts India’s FY25 GDP Growth At 7.1% :-

The National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP), an economic think tank, predicted India's GDP growth for the current fiscal year at 7.1% using high-frequency models. In a number of tweets, the NIPFP stated that the Centre is on a fiscal consolidation path due to increased tax collection and reduced revenue expenditure. While the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Fitch Ratings have estimated India's growth at 7 per cent, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), S&P Global Ratings and Morgan Stanley projected a 6.8 per cent growth rate for FY25.

14: Schemes & Committees



Government Forms 14th Task Force To Explore Use Of Biochar In Steel Production :-

The government has established a task force to investigate the use of biochar in steel manufacturing as part of its efforts to reduce carbon emissions in the steel industry. According to government figures, the domestic steel sector is responsible for 12% of India's greenhouse gas emissions, with an emission intensity of 2.55 tonnes CO2 per tonne of crude steel, compared to the global average of 1.9 tonnes CO2. In March 2023, Union Steel Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia approved the formation of



13 task forces to identify action points for each aspect of green steel production and the adoption of sustainable manufacturing processes.



Meta Expands Fact-Checking Program With PTI In India :-

Meta, the parent company of Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, has announced that it will expand its third-party fact-checking initiative in India to include the Press Trust of India (PTI) as a dedicated fact-checking section within the newswire's editorial department. The agreement will allow PTI to discover, assess, and grade content as false across Meta platforms. Globally, the

company has built one of the largest independent fact-checking networks, with nearly 100 partners around the world to review and rate viral misinformation in more than 60 languages.



RuPay Launches ‘Link It, Forget It’ Campaign At IPL 2024 To Promote Credit Card On UPI :-

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has launched a campaign called "Link it, Forget it" to create awareness about RuPay Credit cards, which can be effortlessly linked to a UPI ID for secure and convenient payments. The marketing campaign was started during the current season of the Indian Premier League (IPL). The campaign, created by DDB Mudra Group, promotes the use of RuPay credit cards with UPI for a seamless and touch-free payment experience. The campaign 'Link It, Forget It' with Shankar Mahadevan stresses on how unnecessary it is to carry your wallet when you have a RuPay Credit Card.



ISKCON And NSDC Collaborate For Tribal Skill Development :-

The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) will give vocational training to tribal and underprivileged youngsters across several states in an effort to uplift marginalised populations. The strategic alliance will first focus on training individuals from tribal and marginalized communities in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh, with plans to expand to more regions in the future. Through jointly conducted short-term courses, participants will receive industry-recognized certifications via the Skill India Digital Hub platform, enhancing their employability prospects.



RBI Introduces FEMA Regulations For Direct Listing On International Exchanges :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued restrictions under Foreign Exchange Management (FEMA) that pushed Indian companies to list on overseas stock exchanges. Experts believe that new norms will help businesses use foreign exchange more effectively. Regulations have been made public via two notifications. First set of regulations deals with mode of payment and reporting of non-debt instruments. Further, the sale proceeds (net of taxes) of the equity shares may be remitted outside India

or may be credited to the bank account of the permissible holder.



Reading initiative at Salem Central Prison completes 25 weeks :-

Valluvar Vasagar Vattam (reading circle), an effort for the rehabilitation of prisoners at Salem Central Prison in Tamil Nadu, has finished its 25th week. The jail administration has launched a number of initiatives aimed at rehabilitation of prisoners. The Valluvar Vasagam Vattam (reading circle) was formed six months ago, in September 2023, at Salem Central Prison. G. Vinoth, the Superintendent (in-charge) of Salem Central Prison, stated that the primary objective of this initiative is to rehabilitate prisoners and alter their negative perceptions of society.



Former Judge Najmi Waziri To Head Committee For Delhi Forest Protection :-

Justice Najmi Waziri, a former judge of the Delhi High Court, has been nominated as the head of an internal departmental committee of city officials in charge of forest protection in the national capital. Justice Tushar Rao Gedela stated that, while Forest Department officials work to safeguard the city's woodlands, land-owning departments are "not serious enough" in providing support to the committee. The court said it expected all the departments to cooperate with the committee and asked the Delhi government to provide secretarial facilities and assistance to Justice Waziri.



Centre Appoints Manoj Panda As New Finance Commission Member :-

According to an announcement from the finance ministry, Manoj Panda, a former director of the Institute of Economic Growth, has been named by the government as a full-time member of the 16th Finance Commission. Panda conducts research on a variety of topics, including growth and distribution-focused fiscal policy, alternative trade, and macroeconomic trends and predictions. Previously, Panda served as Director of the Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS), Hyderabad and as a Professor and Associate Professor at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR), Mumbai.



NTPC Limited

(A Government of India Enterprise)



NTPC Limited To Launch New Edition Of Girl Child Empowerment Mission (GEM) :-

NTPC, India's largest integrated power PSU, is preparing to launch the latest edition of the Girl Empowerment Mission (GEM), its flagship Corporate Social Responsibility initiative. The program is aligned with the Government of India's Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao policy, which aims to combat gender inequity by cultivating girls' imaginations and encouraging them to explore opportunities. GEM does this through a 1-month workshop for young girls during summer holidays, by offering them a platform for their all-round upliftment and development.

Former Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj To Head US-India Tax Forum :-

The US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF) has selected Tarun Bajaj, a former Revenue Secretary and Secretary of Economic Affairs, as the head of the US-India Tax Forum. Bajaj, 61, joined the USISPF as an advisor to the Board of Directors in January and will now lead the US-India Tax Forum, according to an official announcement. A 1988-batch Haryana Cadre IAS officer, Bajaj served as Revenue Secretary. During his tenure with the Indian government, he played a pivotal role in shaping fiscal policies and promoting economic growth.

15: Science & Technology



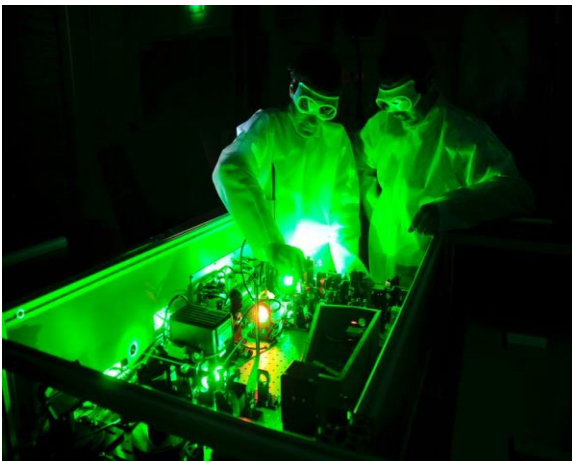
Microsoft And OpenAI Unveil \$100 Billion 'Stargate' AI Supercomputer :-

In a ground-breaking cooperation, tech titans Microsoft and OpenAI have revealed plans to build a breakthrough supercomputer called "Stargate," signifying a substantial advancement in artificial intelligence (AI) technology. This ambitious project, which is expected to cost a stunning \$100 billion, highlights the growing demand for powerful data centers capable of supporting cutting-edge AI applications, ushering in a new age of AI development. The venture, as disclosed by sources to The Information, is anticipated to be primarily financed by Microsoft, eclipsing existing data centre costs by over 100-fold.



India's Oldest Solar Observatory celebrates 125 years :-

The Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), commemorated the 125th anniversary of the iconic Kodaikanal Solar Observatory (KSO) on April 1, 2024, to remember its history, felicitate its scientists, and honour its legacy, which was a watershed moment in Indian astronomy. The KSO houses a digital repository of 1.2 lakh digitised solar images and thousands of other images of the Sun recorded every day since the start of the 20th century.



Romania Unveils World's Most Powerful Laser :-

A Romanian research institute has shown the world's most powerful laser, which is based on the groundbreaking ideas of Nobel Physics Prize winners Gerard Mourou and Donna Strickland. The laser, operated by the French company Thales, has revolutionary uses ranging from healthcare to space exploration. Mourou and Strickland created the Chirped-Pulse Amplification (CPA) technique, which is at the heart of this breakthrough laser. This technique enables the amplification of laser power while maintaining safe intensity levels.



Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL) Launches India's First Privately-Built Sub-Metre Resolution Surveillance Satellite :-

The TSAT-1A, India's first sub-meter resolution earth observation satellite, has been successfully launched into orbit by Tata Group's Tata Advanced Systems Limited, marking a significant milestone. This is the first of its kind in India, invented by the private sector and constructed in collaboration with Satellogic. A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket carrying the payload launched the rocket from Florida's Kennedy Space Center. TSAT-1A promises to revolutionize satellite imaging with its high-resolution capabilities and swift data delivery.



Garuda Aerospace Receives Its First Order From ISRO:-

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is in the process of acquiring Garuda Aerospace's cutting-edge Quadcopter drone. The collaboration between Garuda Aerospace and ISRO symbolizes the firm's entry into the space-tech area, paving the way for future space-related advancements, according to the company. Garuda Aerospace's quadcopter drones are equipped with machine learning and artificial intelligence. The use of these drones is expected to enhance efficiency across various ISRO operations.



ISRO set to launch an ESA satellite capable of generating solar eclipses at will :-

India is scheduled to launch the European Space Agency's (ESA) pioneering Proba-3 mission in September

2024. This ambitious endeavor is the world's first precision formation flying mission, with two satellites planned to operate in tandem as a 'large stiff structure' in the expanse of space. The two spacecraft will align to form a 144-meter-long solar coronagraph, allowing scientists to examine the Sun's secretive corona in unprecedented detail. This region of the Sun, known for its ghostly glow, has been challenging to observe due to the blinding brightness of the solar disk. However, Proba-3 aims to change that by mimicking an artificial eclipse in space, providing a continuous view of the corona closer to the solar rim than ever before.



US, Japan Announce Plans To Send Japanese Astronaut To Moon :-

NASA and Japan's space agency have unveiled a historic partnership that would transform Moon exploration, dubbed a 'great leap forward for all of humanity.' President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Kishida have announced that the two countries will collaborate to construct a pressurized rover and send two Japanese astronauts to the Moon. The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) is one of five organizations taking part in the construction of a new space station that is slated to be in operation by 2028.



Adani Green Energy Builds World’s Largest Renewable Energy Park In Khavda, Gujarat :-

:-

Gautam Adani's business has created the world's largest renewable energy park in Gujarat's Khavda district, in a remote area bordering Pakistan, with a gigantic 45 GW capacity to generate electricity primarily from solar energy. Adani Green Energy Ltd, India's largest renewable energy business, will invest approximately Rs 1.5 lakh crore to generate 30 megawatts of clean electricity in Khavda, Gujarat's Kutch, according to Managing Director Vneet Jaain. "We have just now commissioned 2,000 MW (2 GW) of capacity at Khavda and plan to add 4 GW in the current fiscal (financial year ending March 2025) and 5 GW every year thereafter," he said.

SPACE, a premier testing & evaluation hub for sonar systems for Indian Navy, inaugurated in Kerala :-

Chairman of DRDO and Secretary of the Department of Defence, Samir V Kamat, launched a cutting-edge Submersible Platform for Acoustic Characterization and Evaluation (SPACE) at the Underwater Acoustic Research Facility, Kulamavu in Idukki, Kerala. The SPACE, established by the DRDO's Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory, is intended to serve as a premier testing and evaluation facility for sonar systems intended for use by the Indian Navy on diverse platforms such as ships, submarines, and helicopters. The SPACE marks a milestone in naval technology advancement.



Cancer-Causing Chemical in Indian Spice Brands :-

The Centre for Food Safety, Hong Kong’s food and environmental regulatory body collected samples of four products under its routine food surveillance programme and found the presence of pesticide ethylene oxide. Following this, Singapore has recalled Everest fish curry masala imported from India. The agency said that although there is no immediate risk to consumption of food contaminated with low levels of ethylene oxide,



long term exposure to the same may lead to health issues and raise the risk of breast cancer and lymphoma



Rashtriya Raksha University signs MoU with French Starburst Aerospace :-

Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU) in Gandhinagar and France's Starburst Aerospace have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to develop aerospace, defense, and homeland security innovation. The MoU involves the establishment of a 100 million euro venture capital fund for aerospace, defense, and security technology, as well as export promotion assistance for Indian start-ups seeking to enter foreign markets, according to an RRU announcement. The partnership between Starburst and RRU is a reflection of the progress in the India-France Strategic Partnership in defence and space, it said.



India's Largest Climate Clock Unveiled At CSIR HQ For Earth Day Celebration :-

As part of the Earth Day celebrations, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) built and activated India's largest climate clock on the CSIR Headquarters Building at Rafi Marg in New Delhi. The event represents CSIR's efforts to raise awareness about climate change and its negative consequences. Speaking on the occasion, Prof Chetan Singh Solanki of IIT Bombay and Founder of Energy Swaraj Foundation stated that every person of the country must be energy literate. He said every citizen must take steps to avoid or minimise energy usage as much as possible.



Indian Students Shine At NASA's Human Exploration Rover Challenge :-

India demonstrates its growing significance in the effort to explore the moon by winning two prestigious honors in NASA's 30th Human Exploration Rover Challenge (HERC). Teams from Kanakia International School in Mumbai (high school) and KIET Group of Institutions in Delhi-NCR (college/university) won first place in two categories. KIET Group of Institutions team earned recognition for its outstanding performance in the 'Crash and Burn' category, while Kanakia International School emerged victorious as the 'Rookie of the Year'.



Indian Air Force ushers in Digital Transformation with DigiLocker Integration

:-

Indian Air Force (IAF) embarked on a transformative digital journey by integrating with the DigiLocker platform on April 26, 2024. In a ceremonial event held at Air Headquarters, Vayu Bhawan, the IAF and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to leverage DigiLocker’s secure and accessible document repository services. This pioneering integration will revolutionize the way critical service documents of IAF personnel, both serving and retired, are issued, accessed, and verified digitally.

16: Sports



Sharfuddoula Becomes Bangladesh’s First ICC Elite Umpire :-

Sharfuddoula Ibne Shahid, an umpire from Bangladesh, was the first person from his nation to be included in the Emirates ICC Elite Panel of Umpires. After the yearly review and selection procedure conducted by the International Cricket Council, Sharfuddoula's appointment was officially announced. The decision to elevate him from the Emirates ICC International Panel of Umpires was taken by a selection panel comprising of ICC General Manager – Cricket, Wasim Khan (Chair), former player and commentator Sanjay Manjrekar, retired New Zealand umpire Tony Hill, and consultant officiating expert Mike Riley.



MS Dhoni Scripts History In T20 Cricket :-

Mahendra Singh Dhoni continues to write history, as the famous wicketkeeper batter set a new record during an Indian Premier League match between the Delhi Capitals and Chennai Super Kings. Dhoni, who stepped down as CSK captain this season, has done an excellent job behind the stumps. The renowned wicketkeeper reached the enormous milestone with a brilliant catch during the Delhi Capitals match. It was the fourth ball of the eleventh over for DC starter Prithvi Shaw. With the catch, Dhoni became the first wicketkeeper to execute 300 dismissals in the T20Is.



Rohan Bopanna And Matt Ebden Triumph At Miami Open :-

Rohan Bopanna and his Australian partner Matthew Ebden won the Miami Open doubles title, claiming victory in the second of two famous Sunshine tournaments held in Florida. Bopanna and Ebden overcame second-seeded Ivan Dodig and Austin Krajicek in a tense one-hour and 42-minute fight in Miami. The Indo-Australian couple rallied from behind to win the deciding tie-breaker and their second title of the year. Rohan Bopanna and Matthew Ebden won the Australian Open crown earlier in the year, scripting history in Melbourne.



Novak Djokovic Becomes The Oldest World No. 1 In ATP Rankings History :-

Novak Djokovic, the 24-time Grand Slam champion, continued to set records on the ATP Tour as he began week 419 as World No.1, extending his incredible record. He is also likely to become the oldest World No.1 ever on

April 7. On April 7, the Serbian will become the oldest No. 1 in ATP Rankings history, surpassing Roger Federer's record of 36 years and 321 days. Djokovic, one of the greatest players of all time, has proven near-unrivalled longevity at the pinnacle of his sport even as he enters his fourth decade.



Chess: India Has A New No. 1 As Arjun Erigaisi Climbs To No. 9 In The World :-

Arjun Erigaisi was the top-ranked Indian in the most recent FIDE rankings, released by the world chess governing body. Erigaisi has a standard rating of 2756 and is ranked ninth in the world. Viswanathan Anand, five-time world champion and the second-ranked Indian on the FIDE rankings, comes next. Erigaisi, 21, scored eight points in the fifth Shengzhen Chess Masters and Bundesliga, propelling him to ninth place on the list. This is his debut in the top 10 in the Open standard list. Anand is on 11th spot in the ratings with a rating of 2751.



Max Verstappen Of Red Bull Dominated The Japanese Grand Prix :-

Red Bull's triple world champion Max Verstappen dominated the Japanese Grand Prix, guiding his team to a one-two finish with teammate Sergio Perez. Verstappen dominated the race after starting from pole position, earning his third win in the first four races of the 2024 season. Carlos Sainz of Ferrari finished third, ahead of his teammate Charles Leclerc, who started seventh on the grid. McLaren's Lando Norris finished fifth, while Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso was sixth. Verstappen's dominant victory has allowed him to take an early stranglehold on the world championship.



Olympic Champion Valerie Adams Named Ambassador For TCS World 10K Bengaluru 2024 :-

Dame Valerie Adams, the renowned shot putter who has won four World Championships and two Olympic medals, has been selected the International Event Ambassador for the 16th edition of the Tata Consultancy Services World 10K Bengaluru, which will take place on April 28. The 39-year-old from New Zealand is often regarded as the most accomplished female shot putter in history. In her five Olympic appearances, she has won two gold medals (in 2008 and 2012), a silver (in 2016), and a bronze medal (2020). Among her other accolades, the New Zealander is only the third woman to win world championships at youth, junior, and senior levels.



India Tops WADA's Doping Offenders List In 2022 :-

According to the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) 2022 testing results, India now has the greatest percentage of doping offenders. According to the report, 127 of the 4,064 samples gathered from Indian athletes (including urine, blood, and athlete biological passports) tested positive for banned substances, accounting for 3.26 percent of the sample size. WADA report also found a 6.4 per cent increase in the total number of samples analysed and reported in its Anti-Doping Administration and Management System (ADAMS) in 2022, compared to the previous year.



Sri Lankan Star Kamindu Mendis And England's Maia Bouchier Crowned ICC Players Of The Month:-

Kamindu Mendis, a batting all-rounder from Sri Lanka, won the ICC Men's Player of the Month title to cap off a fantastic month in March. Mendis began the month with a modest T20I series against Bangladesh. Mendis rebounded with a record Test series, scoring century in both innings of the first game in Sylhet. He almost reached three tons in a row, scoring 92* in the opening innings of the second Test in Chattogram. England's Maia Bouchier enjoyed a remarkable run in the T20Is against New Zealand. The 25-year-old scored 223 runs at an average of 55.75 in five T20I games, helping England complete a 4-1 series win.



Asian Wrestling Championship: Udit Bags Silver, Abhimanyu And Vicky Claim Bronze Each :-

Rising Indian wrestler Udit finished second in the men's freestyle 57kg final at the senior Asian Championship, losing 4-5 to Japan's Kento Yumiya. Abhimanyu and Vicky both won bronze medals for India in their respective categories. Abhimanyu defeated Uzbekistan's Begijon Kuldashev 6-5 in the men's 70kg freestyle, while Vicky overcame home favourite Andrey Romanovitch Aronov 10-1 in the men's 97kg to win India's third medal of the day. However, there was heartbreak for Rohit Kumar (65kg), who had defeated Bajrang Punia in the trials, as he lost to Masanosuke Ono of Japan 3-5 in his bronze medal match.



Sumit Nagal Makes History At Monte Carlo Masters :-

Sumit Nagal has once again etched his place in Indian tennis history with an outstanding exhibition of ability and dedication. Nagal became the first Indian man to win a Masters 1000 tournament on clay, demonstrating his rising status in the tennis world. Nagal shown his resilience and court prowess when he faced Matteo Arnaldi of Italy at the Monte Carlo Masters. The unseeded 95th-ranked player found himself in a tough battle, dropping the first set 6-7. However, undeterred by the setback, Nagal mounted an impressive comeback, claiming the next two sets 6-2, 6-4.



Sunrisers Hyderabad Shatter IPL Record With Mammoth 287-Run Total Against RCB :-

The thrilling Indian Premier League encounter between Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Sunrisers Hyderabad made history at M Chinnaswamy Stadium. The visiting

team batted first, and because to Travis Head's century and Heinrich Klaasen's fifty, they posted the greatest total in Indian Premier League history: 287/3 in 20 overs. However, it was not the only record which got broken as RCB put up a solid fight in front of a mammoth task and 6 teams accumulated the highest aggregate score in a T20 match - 549 runs.



Rohit Sharma Achieves Historic Milestone, Becomes First Indian To Hit 500 T20 Sixes:-

Rohit Sharma's ability to consistently knock sixes makes him one of the most efficient hitters in modern cricket. And the Indian captain now holds the record for being the first batsman from his country to hit 500 sixes in T20 cricket. Rohit reached the milestone during the IPL 2024 match against Chennai Super Kings at Wankhede Stadium by hitting Ravindra Jadeja for a slog sweep. The list is led by West Indies legend Chris Gayle, who had smashed 1056 sixes in 463 matches. Kieron Pollard is second with 860 maximums in 625 matches.



Pat Cummins And Sciver-Brunt Named Wisden's Top Cricketers :-

In the 2024 edition of Wisden Cricketers' Almanack, Australian captain Pat Cummins and England all-rounder Nat Sciver-Brunt have been crowned the world's leading cricketers. According to ESPN, the Australian pace spearhead and Test and ODI captain led his team to victory over India in their maiden ICC World Test Championship in June, followed by their sixth ICC Cricket World Cup trophy in Ahmedabad in November. Sciver Brunt has been recognised as the top women's cricketer because of her role in the women's Ashes.



Rohit Sharma Becomes 2nd Player After MS Dhoni To Play 250 Matches In IPL :-

MI opener Rohit Sharma became only the second player in Indian Premier League history to play 250 games. Sharma replicated MS Dhoni's exceptional feat when he was chosen to play for MI in their encounter against PBKS on Thursday, April 18 at the Mullanpur Stadium. Rohit has been nearing his destructive best in the IPL 2024, having already scored a century. Sharma is closely followed by Dinesh Karthik in the list of most matches played in the IPL. In fact, Karthik and Rohit, known as close friends outside of the field, were tied at 249 matches before this game.



D Gukesh wins the Candidates Chess tournament in Toronto:-

India's 17-year-old Grandmaster Gukesh Dommaraju scripted history by winning the Candidates Chess Tournament in Toronto to become the youngest-ever challenger to the world title. He will take on the reigning world champion, China's Ding Liren, for the crown later this year. Gukesh accumulated nine out of a possible 14 points here after drawing his final-round game against American Hikaru Nakamura. He became only the second Indian after the great Viswanathan Anand to win the Candidates. Five-time world champion Anand's triumph came in 2014.



Karnataka's Nandini to sponsor Scotland and Ireland cricket teams for T20 World Cup :-

Prepare to see the Nandini logo on Scotland and Ireland cricketers' jerseys during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, which begins in June. The Karnataka Milk Federation, a

dairy cooperative in the state that sells various dairy products under the brand name Nandini, will sponsor the two teams in the competition. Sources estimate that each team will receive around ₹2.5 crore in sponsorship. The KMF had previously sponsored Bengaluru Bulls who play in the Pro Kabaddi League. The Nandini logo was imprinted on the shoulders of the jerseys.



Saurav Ghosal Bids Farewell To Professional Squash :-

Saurav Ghosal, a two-time Asian Games gold medalist, has opted to end his professional career. Saurav Ghosal's retirement symbolizes the end of an era in the sport, as he was the only Indian male player to ever reach the top ten in the world rankings. Saurav Ghosal played almost 500 professional matches during his career. He has ten PSA Tour victories and 13 national men's singles titles in India. His recent triumphs at the Asian Games 2022 in Hangzhou, where he clinched gold in the team squash event and silver in the individual category, added yet another feather to his decorated cap.



Yuvraj Singh Named ICC Men’s T20 World Cup 2024 Ambassador :-

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has named famous Indian all-rounder Yuvraj Singh as its brand ambassador for the Men's T20 World Cup 2024, which

will be co-hosted by the West Indies and the United States of America. The tournament is scheduled to start on June 1. In the inaugural edition of the T20 World Cup in 2007, Yuvraj set the tournament alight by smashing six maximums in an over. India managed to win the trophy under the leadership of the legendary MS Dhoni.

17: State



Tripura: Matabari Pera Prasad, Rignai Pachara textiles get GI Tag :-

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha has announced that two commodities from the state have received the famous Geographical Indication (GI) label. The two things to earn the tag are Matabari Pera, a dairy-based confectionery delicacy traditionally provided as prasad at the Tripurasundari temple in Gomati district, and Pachra, a handwoven textile utilized by the state's Indigenous groups. The Matabari Mahila Cluster Level Bahumukhi Samabaya Samity Limited had applied for the GI tag for Matabari Pera while the Dewanbari Mahila Cluster Bahumukhi Samabaya Samity Limited had made a similar application for Pachra or Rignai textile in March last year.



Bundelkhand Wheat Variety Gets GI Tag :-

The Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh has obtained its first Geographical Indication (GI) tag for agricultural produce. According to the authorities, the indigenous farm produce wheat, also known as Kathiya Gehu (wheat), has been granted the prized Geographical Indication (GI) status. Bhupesh Pal, the Assistant General Manager, NABARD Jhansi, said an application for the GI certification was filed by a local FPO, Khatiya Wheat Bangra Producer Company Limited with the support of NABARD and technical guidance by director, Human Welfare Organisation, Varanasi Padma Shri Rajnikant Rai in January 2022.



Miraj’s Sitar And Tanpuras Awarded Geographical Indication Tags :-

The sitars and tanpuras of Miraj, a small town in Maharashtra's Sangli district noted for its musical instrument manufacture, have been granted the coveted

Geographical Indication (GI) designation. The makers claim that these Miraj-made instruments are in high demand among some of the most well-known artists, including those in classical music and the film industry. The GI tag denotes the product comes from a particular geographical area, and often enhances its commercial value.



Mahindra Group To Invest Rs 1,200 Crore For Hybrid Project In Maharashtra :-

Mahindra Susten plans to invest ₹1,200 crore in a 150-megawatt solar wind energy project in Maharashtra. According to a statement from Mahindra Group, the project will comprise the installation of 101 megawatts (MW) of wind and 52 megawatts of solar capacity. The project is planned to create 460 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of clean energy, which will offset 420,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions. The company aims to commission the project within the next two years. It will have more than 80 per cent locally manufactured components.



J&K High Court Upholds Rule Of Law, Quashes Detention Under Public Safety Act :-

The Jammu and Kashmir High Court ruled against the imprisonment of a Kashmir citizen under the Public Safety Act (PSA), stating that supporting this “would be to concede to the scenario that India is a police state, which it is not”. The court emphasized that in a democratic society like India, “which is governed by the rule of law”, police and magistrates cannot arrest and interrogate a person unless a case has been registered against him. The petitioner, Jaffar Ahmad Parray, a resident of south Kashmir’s Shopian, was booked under the PSA last year and had challenged his detention in court.



Banaras Tirangi Barfi And Dhalua Murti Metal Casting Craft Receive GI Tag :-

Nearly eight decades after India's independence, the "Tirangi Barfi" of Kashi, a sweet treat described as the "sweet weapon" of freedom fighters during the Quit India Movement, has been granted the renowned

Geographical Indication (GI) status. The GI Registry certified not just the Banaras Tirangi Barfi, but also five other Uttar Pradesh items. These include Banaras Metal Casting Craft, Lakhimpur Kheri Tharu Embroidery, Bareilly Cane and Bamboo craft, Bareilly Zardozi Craft, and Pilkhuwa Hand Block Print Textile.



In a first, Nagaland’s ‘elite’ cops deployed in state :-

For the first time, a Nagaland police squad trained in counter-insurgency operations and coping with large-scale unrest has been deployed to Kerala's left-wing extremism (LWE)-affected areas to provide security during the elections. The contingent consists of 11 companies of the Nagaland armed police force, totaling 800 armed troops, and has been deployed to LWE-affected areas in Kasaragod, Kannur city, rural, and Kozhikode rural police districts. The team travelled from Madurai to the state after completing poll duty in Tamil Nadu.



Three new archaeological sites discovered in Telangana :-

Archaeologists in Telangana have discovered three amazing sites, each with unique insights into the region's ancient history. Among these findings are over 200 megalithic monuments concealed amid deep woodlands, a remarkable Iron Age megalithic site with distinctive architectural forms, and two rock art sites showing ancient artistic expressions. A breakthrough discovery in the Mulugu district has uncovered an Iron Age megalithic complex at Ooragutta, near Bandala village. This site showcases previously unseen monument types, hinting at a distinct architectural tradition and cultural identity. The team also discovered two new rock art sites at Damaratogu in Gundala mandal of Bhadradi Kothagudem district.



Take action against those obstructing bike taxi services: Karnataka HC to state :-

The Karnataka High Court has ordered the state government to protect bike taxi operators by taking tough measures against any individuals or companies caught illegally impeding bike taxi riders from using their services. The Bike Taxi Welfare Association, one of the petitioners, stated that the measure will help them fight harassment, physical violence, vehicle damage, and obstruction suffered by bike taxi riders from some auto unions and their members in Bangalore.



India’s First Multi-Purpose Green Hydrogen Pilot Project Inaugurated In Himachal Pradesh :-

Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) officials recently inaugurated India's first multi-purpose green hydrogen pilot project at the 1,500 MW Nathpa Jhakri Hydro Power Station (NJHPS) in Himachal Pradesh's Jhakri. According to a release, SJVN Chairman and Managing Director Geeta Kapur inaugurated a green hydrogen pilot project

with a capacity of 25kW fuel cell and 20Nm³/hr electrolyzer. The project is the nation's first multi-purpose (combined heat and power) green hydrogen generation plant with the capability to cater to the high-velocity oxygen fuel (HVOF) coating facility of NJHPS to meet its combustion fuel requirements, in addition to generating electricity through its 25kW capacity fuel cell.



Tamil Nadu Conducting Nilgiri Tahr Survey with IUCN Observer :-

With the goal of removing the Nilgiri Tahr (Nilgiritragus hylocrius) from the endangered list, the Tamil Nadu government launched a coordinated survey of the state wildlife on April 29. The three-day effort aims to assess the Tahrs' population, which once roamed the Anamalai and Nilgiris landscapes. The animal is listed as an endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and protected under Schedule-I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

18: Summits & Conferences



Meghalaya to hold Strawberry Festival from April 5:-

From April 5 to April 13, Meghalaya will celebrate the Strawberry Festival, which aims to increase the state's strawberry's popularity. It is being coordinated by the state departments of agriculture, tourism, and farmers' welfare. Programs will be held during "Strawberry Mahotsav" to encourage farmers to start growing strawberries. It is noteworthy that under numerous federal and state initiatives, the Directorate of Horticulture has extensively planted strawberry plants in Meghalaya. On the other hand, the strawberry harvest season has also started in the state.



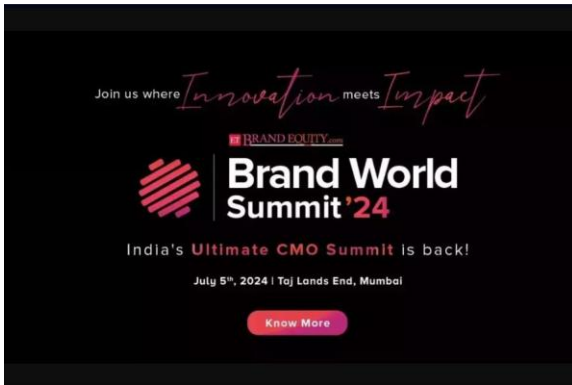
RBI Celebrated 90 Years Of Service On April 1, 2024 :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the country's primary financial institution, celebrates its 90th anniversary on April 1st, 2024. To commemorate this historic anniversary, Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the event at Mumbai's National Centre for the Performing Arts. The RBI was created on April 1, 1934, in response to the Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance's recommendations for maintaining monetary stability in the country. Its operations commenced on April 1, 1935, with Sir Osborne Smith as the first Governor.



US plans trilateral summit with Japan, South Korea in July :-

According to Japanese media reports, the US administration intends to have a summit in July between President Joe Biden and his Japanese and South Korean counterparts on the margins of a NATO conference in Washington. According to the Kyodo news agency, Biden, Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol are likely to discuss issues such as reinforcing deterrence against China, North Korea's nuclear threat, and the country's developing military relations with Russia.



Brand World Summit 2024 : 05 July :-

The Economic Times reported that the sixth edition of the Brand World Summit (BWS) will be held on July 5th at Mumbai's iconic Taj Lands End. This premier conference, hosted by ETBrandEquity.com, brings together leading experts in the brand world to chart the future of advertising and marketing. The Brand World Summit provides an important opportunity for present and future leaders to engage in informed debates about the changing branding landscape. The country's advertising spending is projected to reach Rs 1,55,386 crore in 2024, indicating promising growth prospects.



Ajit Doval Lead Indian Delegation At SCO Security Council Meeting :-

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval recently led the Indian delegation to the Secretaries of the Security Councils of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member countries in Kazakhstan, where he addressed

the threat of terrorism and discussed various ways to improve the nations' security situation. According to an official statement, Doval strongly condemned the terrorist attack on Crocus City Hall in Moscow on March 22, which killed 144 people, and expressed his condolences and India's solidarity with the Russian government and citizens in addressing the threat of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.



UAE's Masdar To Host World Future Energy Summit :-

Abu Dhabi Future Energy Company PJSC - Masdar, the UAE's sustainable energy powerhouse, is preparing to host the World Future Energy Summit (WFES). WFES, held from April 16 to 18 at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC), is the world's biggest business event for future energy, clean technology, and sustainability, including a jam-packed schedule of events, activations, talks, and forums. The Innovation Zone, hosted by Masdar, will feature a series of industry panels with innovators and experts, focusing on the latest climate solutions.



Ministry of Defence holds first tri-service conference 'Parivartan Chintan' :-

Parivartan Chintan, a landmark Tri-Service Conference aimed at creating new and creative ideas, initiatives, and reforms to drive Jointness and Integration activities, was held in New Delhi on April 8, 2024. General Anil Chauhan, Chief of Defence Staff, chaired a day-long discussion. The 'Chintan' is the first-ever conference of the heads of all Tri-Service Institutions, the Department of Military Affairs, Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff, and the three Services, with officers from various service brackets recommending measures to achieve the desired "Joint and Integrated" end state with celerity.



India On Ukraine Peace Summit In Switzerland That Russia Will Skip :-

The Swiss government has declared that it will hold a high-level peace summit in June to end the Russia-Ukraine conflict. It hopes that Russia will attend, even if not on the first day. India has welcomed the effort, saying, "We are open to all such initiatives for peace. You know our position in the Russia-Ukraine war." Swiss President Viola Amherd will host the meeting, which will be held on June 15-16 at the luxury Burgenstock resort near the central city of Luzern. "This is a first step in a process towards a lasting peace," she said.



In Warning to China, Biden Hosts Summit With Leaders of Japan and Philippines :-

US President Joe Biden, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on 11 April was in Washington for their first-ever trilateral defense summit. The meeting, held after a bilateral meeting between Biden and Marcos, comes as Chinese and Philippines coast guard vessels in the disputed South China Sea regularly become involved in skirmishes, with China increasingly asserting its territorial claims in the region. Ahead of the meeting, Philippines President Marcos said a main focus of talks would be ways of avoiding conflict in the South China Sea.



ECI holds video-conference with over 250 observers for Phase II of poll :-

The Election Commission of India had a virtual conference with more than 250 observers appointed for

the upcoming Phase 2 polls on April 26th. This meeting, presided over by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, underlined the significance of maintaining a seamless, free, and fair electoral process in 88 parliamentary constituencies spanning 12 states and union territories. One of the primary directives issued during the conference was to guarantee that all polling stations are equipped with essential amenities.



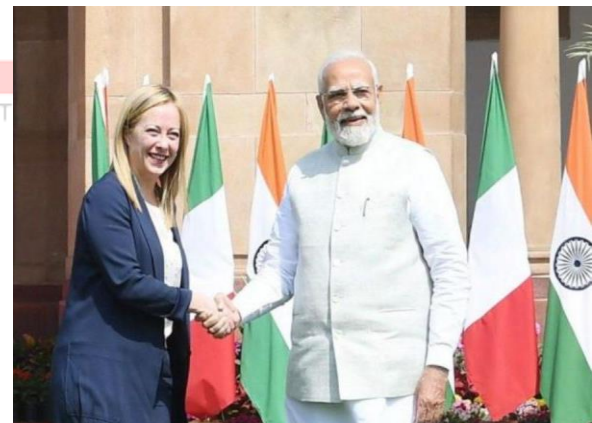
Nepal leads inaugural Rainbow Tourism Conference, pledges safe destination for all :-

The first International Rainbow Tourism Conference opened here on 20th April 2024, with Nepal offering itself as a safe and respectful destination in South Asia for the sexual minority community. The single-day international conference was organised by Mayako Pahichan Nepal, a non-governmental organisation. “This pioneer event organised by Mayako Pahichan Nepal in collaboration with Nepal Tourism Board marks a significant milestone in promoting diversity and inclusivity within the tourism industry.



India's Justice Ministry holds conference on the implementation of new criminal laws :-

The Ministry of Law and Justice of India held a conference in New Delhi titled 'India's Progressive Path in the Administration of the Criminal Justice System'. This conference brought together a variety of stakeholders, including judges from several High Courts, the President, and the Vice President of India. The conference was organised by the Department of Legal Affairs of Ministry of Law and Justice with the backdrop of the enactment of three criminal laws of India namely Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam 2023 which will come into effect on 1 July 2024.



Italian PM Meloni invites Indian PM Modi to attend G7 Summit in June :-

The Italian PM Meloni graciously invited PM Modi to the G7 Summit Outreach Session in June, emphasizing advancing India's G20 outcomes at the G7 under Italy's leadership. Modi expressed gratitude and discussed deepening their strategic partnership, aligning on regional and global interests. The invitation reflects confidence in India's government. The G7 Summit, scheduled for June 13-15 in Puglia, follows the Lok Sabha election results. Both leaders affirmed their commitment to strengthening ties and enhancing cooperation.



खान मंत्रालय MINISTRY OF MINES

The mines ministry in collaboration with Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), and Indian Institute of Sustainable Development (IISD) is hosting the "Critical Minerals Summit: Enhancing Beneficiation and Processing Capabilities" on April 29-30, 2024, at the India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Estate, New Delhi. The summit aims to bolster India's beneficiation and processing capabilities in critical minerals, vital for the country's economic growth and its ambitious clean energy targets.

Ministry of Mines hosting Critical Minerals Summit in New Delhi :-





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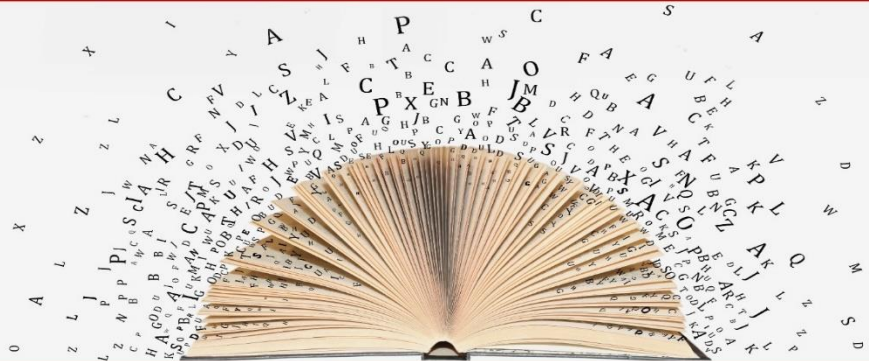
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SECTION 2

Practice Questions with Answers



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. _____ has been awarded the status of Miniratna Category-I Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) by the Ministry of Power.

- A) Antrix Corporation Limited
- A) GAIL India Limited
- B) Grid Controller of India Limited
- C) RITES Limited

2. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with which of the following IIT on Artificial Intelligence?

- A) IIT Delhi
- A) IIT Kanpur
- B) IIT Kharagpur
- C) IIT Roorkee

3. Which of the following bank announced a lending commitment of USD 250 million for new-age start-ups in India?

- A) CSB Bank India
- A) DBS Bank India
- B) HSBC India
- C) Standard Chartered Bank India

4. RBI imposed Rs _____ crore penalty on Tamilnad Mercantile Bank for non-compliance with interest rate directions.

- A) 1.21 crore
- A) 1.31 crore
- B) 1.75 crore
- C) 1.95 crore

5. Prabowo Subianto was elected as president of which of the following country?

- A) Nepal
- A) Indonesia
- B) Cambodia
- C) Brunei

6. In March 2024, which edition of India-Mozambique-Tanzania Trilateral Exercise (IMT TRILAT) was conducted?

- A) 7th Edition
- A) 4th Edition
- B) 3rd Edition
- C) 2nd Edition

7. _____ became the 1st Indian state to launch the State Water Resources Information Systems dashboard to forecast drought and to enable better water management based on water availability.

- A) Punjab
- A) Jharkhand
- B) Haryana
- C) Rajasthan

8. The Indian government has launched which of the following operation to evacuate its citizens stranded in war-torn Haiti?

- A) Operation Randori Behak
- A) Operation Rakshak
- B) Operation Indravati
- C) Operation Ganga

9. Indian economy will grow _____ per cent in fiscal year 2024-2025, S&P Global Ratings said.

- A) 7%
- A) 6.8%
- B) 9%
- C) 10.11%

10. ISRO successfully conducted the second landing test of its Pushpak Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV) at _____.

- A) Chitradurga, Karnataka
- A) Mahendragiri, Odisha
- B) Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
- C) Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu

11. Who among the following was unanimously elected as the Co-Chair of the Digital Innovation Board of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)?

- A) Aprajita Sharrma
- A) Doreen Bogdan-Martin
- B) Neeraj Mittal
- C) NK Goyal

12. In 2022 the world generated how much e-waste as per UN Global E-waste Monitor (GEM) 2024 report?

- A) 86 Million Tonnes
- A) 62 Million Tonnes
- B) 53 Million Tonnes
- C) 24 Million Tonnes

13. The United Nations General Assembly has unanimously adopted the first global resolution on artificial intelligence proposed by which of the following country?

- A) United States of America
- A) Russia
- B) France
- C) China

14. In collaboration with National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) which of the following Bank has launched a Rupay Smart Key Chain – ‘FlashPay’ for contactless payments?

- A) Federal Bank
- A) HDFC Bank
- B) Kotak Mahindra Bank
- C) RBL Bank

15. What is India’s expected GDP growth in 2024-25 as per a report by the UBS India?

- A) 7.3%
- A) 7.2%
- B) 7%
- C) 6.9%

16. What is the rank of Mukesh Ambani in the "Hurun Global Rich List 2024"?

- A) 5th
- A) 6th
- B) 7th
- C) 10th

17. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has asked the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) to direct fund houses to stop accepting money from _____.

- A) 01 April 2024
- A) 01 May 2024
- B) 01 June 2024
- C) 01 July 2024

18. Eveready Industries India (EIL), a prominent battery brand, has appointed who among the following as the brand ambassador?

- A) Chirag Shetty
- A) Neeraj Chopra

- B) Rohit Sharma
- C) Satwiksairaj Rankireddy

19. Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata Group, sold 2.34 crore shares or _____ per cent equity of Tata Consultancy Services.

- A) 2%
- A) 1.9%
- B) 1%
- C) 0.65%

20. Who among the following clinched the women's singles title at the WTT Feeder Beirut II 2024 in Beirut, Lebanon?

- A) Bhavina Hasmukhbhai Patel
- A) Manika Batra
- B) Poulomi Ghatak
- C) Sreeja Akula

21. In 2022, India's youth accounted for _____ percent of the country's total unemployed population, according to the India Employment Report 2024.

- A) 83%
- A) 74%
- B) 72%
- C) 62%

22. Which of the following bank has introduced digital opening of US Dollar Fixed Deposits for NRI customers at GIFT City through its mobile application?

- A) Axis Bank
- A) HDFC Bank
- B) ICICI Bank
- C) RBL Bank

23. NTPC Limited, the state-owned power giant, has signed a pact with _____

for sourcing foreign currency loans totaling USD 200 million.

- A) African Development Bank
- A) Asian Development Bank
- B) International Monetary Fund
- C) Japan Bank for International Cooperation

24. Which of the following payment company has launched a first-of-its-kind Downpayment EMI solution for Online Retail?

- A) Easebuzz Private Ltd
- A) Paytm Mobile Solution Private Ltd
- B) PayU Ltd
- C) Razorpay Software Ltd

25. India's current account deficit (CAD) decreased in the October-December quarter of fiscal year 2023/24 to _____ as per a report by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

- A) \$9.5 billion
- A) \$8.6 billion
- B) \$11.7 billion
- C) \$10.5 billion

26. Which of the following country's aerospace and defence company has opened its Indian subsidiary in New Delhi recently?

- A) United States of America
- A) Russia
- B) Japan
- C) Israel

27. According to the latest UN Environment Programme's "Food Waste Index Report", the world wasted an estimated _____ per cent of the food produced globally in 2022.

- A) 22%
- A) 19%



- B) 15%
- C) 12%

28. _____ retained Domestic Systemically Important Insurers (D-SIIs) status and hence subjected to enhanced regulatory supervision, according to insurance regulator IRDAI.

- A) New India Assurance
- A) Life Insurance Corporation of India
- B) General Insurance Corporation of India Limited
- C) All of the above

29. India has released the second tranche of Rs 500 crore to which of the following country for the development of infrastructure related to the GyalSung Project?

- A) Bangladesh
- A) Myanmar
- B) Nepal
- C) Bhutan

30. Who among the following was sworn in as new judicial member of Lokpal of India?

- A) Ajay Tirkey
- A) Pankaj Kumar
- B) Purva Garg
- C) Ritu Raj Awasthi

31. India installed _____ GW of solar modules and 3.2 GW of cell manufacturing capacity in 2023, according to a report by Mercom Capital.

- A) 30 GW
- A) 26 GW
- B) 24 GW
- C) 20 GW

32. Along with the ETS India which of the following organization has signed a

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance India's workforce employability?

- A) Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry
- A) Confederation of Indian Industry
- B) Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry
- C) Quality Council of India

33. Recently, the UNESCO's Executive Board has endorsed the addition of _____ sites to the UNESCO Global Geoparks network.

- A) 22
- A) 18
- B) 15
- C) 14

34. The central government's fiscal deficit widened to Rs _____ lakh crore in April 2023-February 2024, data released by the Controller General of Accounts showed.

- A) 12.12 lakh crore
- A) 13.0 lakh crore
- B) 15.01 lakh crore
- C) 16.9 lakh crore

35. Who among the following was appointed as the MD & CEO of the Bank of Maharashtra?

- A) Rohit Rishi
- A) Rakesh Kumar
- B) Asheesh Pandey
- C) Nidhu Saxena

36. India has recently extended the agreement for electricity export to which of the following neighbouring country for three months?

- A) Bangladesh
- A) Bhutan
- B) Myanmar
- C) Nepal

37. Which of the following bank emerged as the leader in credit card issuances, with 20.40 million cards in circulation in February 2024?

- A) Axis Bank
- A) HDFC Bank
- B) ICICI Bank
- C) State Bank of India

38. Pension regulator PFRDA has mandated 2-Factor Aadhaar Authentication for access to the Central Recordkeeping Agency (CRA) system from _____.

- A) 01 April 2024
- A) 01 May 2024
- B) 01 June 2024
- C) 01 July 2024

39. Which duo won the Miami Open doubles crown?

- A) Andy Murray- Matt Ebden
- A) Andy Murray- Novak Djokovic
- B) Matthew Ebden- Rohan Bopanna
- C) Rohan Bopanna-Novak Djokovic

40. Which of the following company became first Indian company to receive the Aluminium Stewardship Initiative (ASI) Performance Standard V3 Certification?

- A) Bharat Aluminium Company Limited
- A) Hindalco Industries Limited
- B) India Foils Limited
- C) National Aluminium Company Limited

41. Adani Enterprises Limited commissioned the first unit of its greenfield copper refinery project at which of the following city?

- A) Vadodara
- A) Surat
- B) Mundra

C) Ahmedabad

42. Along with UNICEF India which of the following IIT has launched 'Digital Health Enterprise Planning Course' recently?

- A) IIT Delhi
- A) IIT Kanpur
- B) IIT Bombay
- C) IIT Madras

43. Which of the following company has received a financial commitment of 25 million euros from OeEB, the Development Bank of Austria?

- A) Suzlon Energy Limited
- A) Reliance Power Limited
- B) AMPIN Energy
- C) Adani Green Energy Limited

44. L&T Finance Holdings Ltd. (LTFH) has announced that it had received approval from the Registrar of Companies (ROC) to change its name to _____.

- A) L&T Finance Limited
- A) L&T Finance Corporation Limited
- B) L&T Capital Limited
- C) L&T Capital Financial Services Limited

45. In which of the following country a joint venture of state-owned RVNL and private steel player Salasar Techno Engineering has bagged a transmission project worth around Rs 60 crore?

- A) Angola
- A) Egypt
- B) Nigeria
- C) Rwanda



46. Which of the following state has received 19 prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tags recently?

- A) Tripura
- A) Nagaland
- B) Meghalaya
- C) Assam

47. The centre has re-imposed ALMM order on solar photovoltaic (PV) modules from _____.

- A) 01 July 2024
- A) 01 June 2024
- B) 01 May 2024
- C) 01 April 2024

48. Along with the National Power Training Institute (NPTI) which of the following company has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Research & Development in the energy domain?

- A) THDC India Limited
- A) SJVN Limited
- B) NHPC Limited
- C) PTC Limited

49. Along with the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited which of the following company has inked a contract to supply tools for Next Generation Missile Vessel (NGMV) project of the Indian Navy?

- A) Cochin Shipyard Limited
- A) Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers
- B) Goa Shipyard Limited
- C) Hindustan Shipyard Limited

50. ISRO has launched a new introductory-level online training programme called _____ aimed at post-graduate and final-year undergraduate students of physical sciences and technology.

- A) BAL SCIENTIST
- A) START
- B) YOUNGSTER
- C) YUVIKA

51. For the first time in the history of Independent India, defence exports touched a record Rs _____ crore in the financial year 2023-24.

- A) Rs 23,053 crore
- A) Rs 21,083 crore
- B) Rs 20,066 crore
- C) Rs 19,094 crore

52. A 10-day 'Gagan Shakti-2024' exercise organized by the Indian Air Force was held in which of the following state?

- A) Arunachal Pradesh
- A) Gujarat
- B) Maharashtra
- C) Rajasthan

53. _____ has signed a multi-year contract worth USD 100 million with Airbus Atlantic for the manufacturing and delivery of metallic components for the entire Airbus commercial aircraft family.

- A) BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited
- A) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
- B) Mahindra Aerostructures Limited
- C) Tata Advanced Systems Limited

54. The Indian government has raised _____ in 2023/24 by selling its stakes in about 10 state-run companies.

- A) Rs. 25,879 crores
- A) Rs. 20,800 crores
- B) Rs. 18,987 crores
- C) Rs. 16,500 crores

55. Recently the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has tested which of the following ballistic missile successfully?

- A) Trishul
- A) Prahar
- B) Nag
- C) Agni-Prime

56. Along with the Quality Council of India (QCI) which of the following the Organisation has inked an agreement to boost awareness and participation in the 'MSME Competitive Lean Scheme'?

- A) Allied Council for Commerce and Logistics
- A) Laghu Udyog Bharati
- B) National Commerce Olympiad Foundation
- C) United Way India

57. Which of the following tech giant has expanded its third-party fact-checking initiative in India by collaborating with Press Trust of India (PTI)?

- A) Apple Inc.
- A) Google
- B) Meta
- C) Microsoft Corporation

58. The Municipal Corporation of _____ has extended the last date for geo-tagging properties to June 30.

- A) Pondicherry
- A) Karnataka
- B) Delhi
- C) Bihar

59. HP India has partnered with which of the following Institute to upskill professionals on Environmental Social Governance (ESG) framework?

- A) Nansen Environmental Research Centre India
- A) Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research
- B) Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research
- C) Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs

60. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to keep the repo rate unchanged at ____ per cent.

- A) 6.7
- A) 6.5
- B) 6.2
- C) 6.0

61. Which of the following Indian Institute of Management (IIM) has prepared a report on energy transitions to achieve India's net-zero targets?

- A) IIM Ahmedabad
- A) IIM Bangalore
- B) IIM Mumbai
- C) IIM Visakhapatnam

62. What is rank of the Mukesh Ambani in the 'Forbes World's Billionaires list 2024'?

- A) 8th
- A) 9th
- B) 10th
- C) 5th

63. A special ₹90 commemorative coin was unveiled by the finance ministry to celebrate _____ years of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

- A) 100 years
- A) 60 years
- B) 75 years
- C) 90 years

64. India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions grew by _____ per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) in second half (H2) of 2023 to 65.77 billion said Worldline India Digital Payments Report.

- A) 38%
- A) 44%
- B) 56%
- C) 77%

65. 'Heal' a healthcare loan product was launched by which of the following bank to meet shortfall of hospital expenditure?

- A) Punjab National Bank
- A) Canara Bank
- B) Bank of Baroda
- C) Bank of Maharashtra

66. Where did a two-day coastal security exercise 'Sagar Kavach' was conducted?

- A) Andaman and Nicobar Island
- A) Gujarat
- B) Lakshadweep
- C) Pondicherry

67. According to a report by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) what is the rank of India

in most improved business destination in the world?

- A) 77
- A) 65
- B) 03
- C) 51

68. Which Organisation has released a report title "Small Island Digital States: How Digital Can Catalyse SIDS Development"?

- A) Asian Development Bank
- A) Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
- B) United Nations Development Programme
- C) World Bank

69. The World Bank Group has appointed _____ as the member of the Economic Advisory Panel.

- A) Amit Patel
- A) Bindyarani Chandran
- B) Rakesh Mohan
- C) Shaktikanta Das

70. Which of the following country's 'artificial sun' sets new record in nuclear fusion research?

- A) China
- A) France
- B) Japan
- C) South Korea

71. Along with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) which of the following company has entered into a partnership to develop indigenous train control management system?

- A) Rail Vikas Nigam Limited
- A) Indian Railway Finance Corporation Limited
- B) Chittaranjan Locomotive Works
- C) Bharat Earth Movers Limited



72. Sitar, tanpuras made in which of the following state's Miraj town was awarded GI tags recently?

- A) Bihar
- A) Maharashtra
- B) Uttar Pradesh
- C) Uttarakhand

73. Along with SJVN Limited which of the following institute inked an agreement to improve tunneling project performance using advanced geological models?

- A) IIT Delhi
- A) IIT Kanpur
- B) IIT Kharagpur
- C) IIT Patna

74. The Reserve Bank said it has imposed a penalty of Rs 1 crore on _____ bank for rule violations.

- A) Tamilnad Mercantile Bank
- A) RBL Bank
- B) IDFC First Bank
- C) HDFC Bank

75. Which of the following bank raised USD 500 million fund arranged by Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), Dubai Branch?

- A) Andhra Bank
- A) Union Bank of India
- B) Canara Bank
- C) Karnataka Bank

76. By which of the following year India aims to produce 100 GW nuclear power?

- A) 2030
- A) 2040
- B) 2045

C) 2047

77. The Government is set to develop plant for recycling lithium-ion batteries, e-waste in which of the following state?

- A) Uttar Pradesh
- A) West Bengal
- B) Karnataka
- C) Uttarakhand

78. _____ has unveiled its official brand-new logo and tagline: "Fuelling Sustainable Growth."

- A) NLC India Limited
- A) Northern Coalfields Limited
- B) Central Coalfields Limited
- C) Western Coalfields Limited

79. Zimbabwe, the Southern African country is replacing its collapsing Zimbabwean dollar with which of the following new currency?

- A) Zimbabwe Bond
- A) Zimbabwe Dinar
- B) Zimbabwe Gold
- C) Zimbabwe Reserve

80. Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has partnered with which of the following company to provide small enterprise loans to gig workers?

- A) Chargebee Private Limited
- A) Instamajo Technologies Private Limited
- B) Lendingkart Technologies Private Limited
- C) Onion life Private Limited

81. Telecom Secretary Dr Neeraj Mittal has virtually launched one of the "Experimental



Licence module for 100 5G Labs" at which of the following IIT?

- A) IIT Delhi
- A) IIT Kanpur
- B) IIT Kharagpur
- C) IIT Madras

82. The Ministry of External Affairs has approved India Ports Global (IPGL) 's proposal to take over the entire operation of the Sittwe port in which of the following country?

- A) Bangladesh
- A) Bhutan
- B) Myanmar
- C) Nepal

83. What is the rank of India in the "Global Unicorn Index 2024" by Hurun Institute?

- A) 2nd
- A) 3rd
- B) 5th
- C) 6th

84. The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) unanimously appointed which of the following country to chair its 69th session in 2025?

- A) Saudi Arabia
- A) Singapore
- B) India
- C) France

85. _____ and Standard Chartered Bank India conducted a Credit Default Swap (CDS) trade valued at ₹25 crore.

- A) State Bank of India
- A) Canara Bank
- B) Bank of Maharashtra
- C) Bank of Baroda

86. ISRO team was honored with the prestigious 2024 John L 'Jack' Swigert Jr Award for which of the following mission?

- A) Mangalyaan Mission
- A) Gaganyaan Mission
- B) Chandrayaan-3 mission
- C) Aditya L1 Mission

87. India plans to build its first privately managed strategic petroleum reserve (SPR) by 2029-30. What is the projected cost of building the Padur SPR?

- A) \$800 million
- A) \$720 million
- B) \$659 million
- C) \$550 million

88. Air India has appointed who among the following as the head of its global airport operations?

- A) Abhinav Gupta
- A) Jayaraj Shanmugam
- B) Nandkishore Kalra
- C) Ravichandran Nagarajan

89. In 2022-23, the total import of Urea was 75.8 lakh tonnes, which is around _____ percent of the domestic demand.

- A) 50%
- A) 40%
- B) 30%
- C) 20%

90. Which of the following country tops the list of doping offenders in the 2022 World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) report?

- A) China
- A) India
- B) Russia
- C) South Africa

91. Along with India which of the following organisation launched an Expression of Interest (Eoi) for startups working in Battery Recycling Technologies for Electric Vehicles (EVs) for a matchmaking event?

- A) United Nations Environment Programme
- A) International Organization for Standardization
- B) International Energy Agency
- C) European Union

92. In 2023-24, Road Transport and Highways Ministry constructed how much kilometers of national highways?

- A) 12,349
- A) 13,450
- B) 17,786
- C) 18, 756

93. Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with _____ for Technical & Knowledge cooperation for Critical Minerals.

- A) Tech Mahindra
- A) Tata Group
- B) Reliance Industries
- C) CSIR-IMMT

94. Who among the following was awarded the Sagar Samman Varun Award at 61st National Maritime Day Gala?

- A) Dhirendra Kumar Sanyal
- A) Kamal Kant Choudhary
- B) OM Dutta
- C) Subir Saha

95. Admiral R. Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff, awarded 'On the Spot Unit Citation' to

which of the following Indian Naval Ships (INS) recently?

- A) INS Sharda
- A) INS Sujata
- B) INS Sukanya
- C) INS Sumitra

96. Along with India which of the following country has signed a protocol to amend the double taxation avoidance agreement (DTAA)?

- A) France
- A) Ireland
- B) Mauritius
- C) Sweden

97. The World Trade Organization (WTO) has lowered its forecast for growth in 2024 of world merchandise trade volumes to _____ per cent.

- A) 2.6%
- A) 4.3%
- B) 3.4%
- C) 5.1%

98. Which of the following payment bank has introduced a new Aadhaar ATM (AePS) service, allowing individuals to withdraw cash from their homes?

- A) Paytm Payment Bank
- A) NSDL Payment Bank
- B) India Post Payments Bank
- C) Airtel Payment Bank

99. Which of the following insurance company has entered into a strategic partnership with Policybazaar to offer products on the platform of the Policybazaar?

- A) Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance Company Limited
- A) ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company Limited



- B) Kotak Mahindra General Insurance Company Limited
- C) TATA AIG General Insurance Company Limited

100. Which of the following payment company has partnered with e-Sewa and the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) Pokhara to popularize UPI on the Fonepay Network in Nepal?

- A) Freecharge
- A) PhonePe
- B) Paytm
- C) Razorpay

101. Which of the following company launched the 2024 edition of the Girl Empowerment Mission (GEM), aligned with the Government's Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao initiative?

- A) GAIL (India) Limited
- A) NHPC Limited
- B) NTPC Limited
- C) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited

102. Which of the following company received the authorisation by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as an online payment aggregator in April 2024?

- A) Cashfree Payments
- A) Computer Age Management Services Limited
- B) Razorpay Software Private Limited
- C) Tata Pay

103. Who among the following was awarded the 2024 John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award for her achievements in global health research?

- A) Anuradha Chowdhary
- A) Gagandeep Kang
- B) Indrani Karunasagar
- C) Vidya A. Arankalle

104. Who among the following was named as recipient of the 2023 ACM A.M. Turing Award for foundational contributions to the theory of computation?

- A) Sylvia Serfaty
- A) Michel Talagrand
- B) Luis Caffarelli
- C) Avi Wigderson

105. The Asian Wrestling Championship 2024 was held in which of the following country?

- A) China
- A) India
- B) Iran
- C) Kyrgyzstan

106. Entrepreneur and pilot Gopi Thotakura is set to become the first Indian to venture into space as a tourist on the NS-25 mission of which of the following company?

- A) Blue Origin
- A) NASA
- B) SpaceX
- C) Virgin Galactic

107. What is the rank of India in the World Cybercrime Index rankings?

- A) 40
- A) 30
- B) 20
- C) 10

108. Moody's Analytics expects India's GDP to grow by _____ per cent in 2024, slower than the 7.7 per cent growth in 2023.

- A) 7.0%
- A) 6.5%
- B) 6.1%
- C) 5.5%

109. Which of the following country became the world's fourth-largest exporter of digitally delivered services, constituting over a fifth of global trade in services?

- A) China
- A) Germany
- B) India
- C) United States

110. When the World Art Day was observed?

- A) 15 April
- A) 14 April
- B) 13 April
- C) 12 April

111. Who became the youngest ever to win the FIDE Candidates Chess Tournament?

- A) Viswanathan Anand
- B) Garry Kasparov
- C) Hikaru Nakamura
- D) Dommaraju Gukesh

112. Which day is celebrated as World Earth Day?

- A) 21 August
- B) 22 April
- C) 21 December
- D) 22 May

113. What was the theme of World Earth Day 2024?

- A) End Plastic Pollution
- B) Ecosystem Restoration
- C) Time for Nature
- D) Planet vs. Plastics

114. Which party secured a landslide win in the Maldives parliamentary elections held on April 21, 2024?

- A) Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP)

- B) People's National Congress (PNC)
- C) Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM)
- D) Maldives Reform Movement (MRM)

115. Which technology did OpenAI recently use to create realistic talking videos?

- A) Predicting weather changes
- B) Simulating car racing games
- C) Turning images into lifelike talking videos
- D) Generating music from text

116. Since 2000, India has lost _____ hectares of tree cover, which is a six percent decrease, according to data from the Global Forest Watch monitoring project.

- A) 2.33 million
- A) 3.17 million
- B) 4.21 million
- C) 5.09 million

117. The government has introduced a new platform called _____ for disbursing subsidies to horticulture farmers under the Cluster Development Programme (CDP).

- A) AGRIVI
- A) AGvisorPRO
- B) CDP-KRUSHI MITRA
- C) CDP-SURAKSHA

118. India has emerged as one of the twelve countries accountable for _____ percent of the world's mismanaged plastic waste as per "Plastic Overshoot Day" report by Swiss non-profit EA Earth Action.

- A) 60%
- A) 55%
- B) 40%
- C) 35%



119. Along with the top online payment solutions provider PayU, which of the following company has teamed up to improve cross-border payments for Indian businesses?

- A) PayPal
- A) eBay
- B) Coinbase
- C) CapitalOne

120. Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) has awarded which of the following Indian Naval Ship (INS) the CNS Trophy for Best Green Practices 2023?

- A) INS Khanderi
- A) INS Sharda
- B) INS Valsura
- C) INS Vikrant

121. Which of the following space organization is set to establish a time standard for the Moon, named Coordinated Lunar Time (LTC) by the end of 2026?

- A) NASA
- A) JAXA
- B) ISRO
- C) CNSA

122. Along with Canara Bank which of the following IIT has signed an MoU to provide financial support to startups?

- A) IIT Bombay
- A) IIT Delhi
- B) IIT Kanpur
- C) IIT Madras

123. Indian-origin expert _____ joined Britain's research team on dementia.

- A) Ashvini Keshavan
- A) Chaand Nagpaul

- B) Kailash Chand
- C) Kamlesh Khunti

124. Which of the following institute was ranked 45th in QS World University Rankings for Engineering & Technology?

- A) IIT Roorkee
- A) IIT Madras
- B) IIT Kanpur
- C) IIT Bombay

125. Which of the following private lender has opened a branch in Lakshadweep, making it the only private sector bank to have a branch in the Union Territory?

- A) YES bank
- A) ICICI bank
- B) HDFC bank
- C) Axis bank

126. SANY India launched the first locally manufactured, full electric opencast mining truck _____ in India.

- A) SKT125B
- A) SKT115C
- B) SKT105E
- C) SKT100A

127. Which of the following airport secured the top position in the 'Top 10 Busiest Airports Worldwide for 2023' by the Airports Council International (ACI) World?

- A) Dubai International Airport
- A) Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport
- B) London Heathrow
- C) Tokyo Haneda International Airport

128. Which company has formed a 50:50 joint venture with the investment company



BlackRock for setting up of a wealth management company and broking business?

- A) Larsen & Toubro Finance
- A) Jio Financial Services
- B) Bajaj Finance Limited
- C) Aditya Birla Finance

129. Deposits of senior citizens soared about _____ percent to ₹34 lakh crore in 5 years said a report by SBI.

- A) 30%
- A) 136%
- B) 124%
- C) 115%

130. Which of the following life Insurance company recently launched IdeationX, an initiative that aims to engage and courage future leaders from B-Schools?

- A) Aditya Birla Sun life Insurance
- A) Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance
- B) Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance
- C) SBI Life Insurance

131. Which of the following country successfully launched the Angara-A5 rocket recently?

- A) China
- A) India
- B) Japan
- C) Russia

132. Bjarni Benediktsson was elected as which of the following country's prime minister?

- A) Poland
- A) Malaysia
- B) Ireland
- C) Iceland

133. ISRO has made a declaration to achieve debris-free space missions by _____.

- A) 2035
- A) 2030
- B) 2027
- C) 2025

134. Who among the following won the women's final of the 51st National carrom championship?

- A) Kajal Kumari
- A) N. Nirmala
- B) Rashmi Kumari
- C) Sharmila Singh

135. Which of the following state has taken lead in implementing the Centre's Green Credit Programme (GCP)?

- A) Bihar
- A) Madhya Pradesh
- B) Odisha
- C) Uttar Pradesh

136. 1st international workshop on 'Emerging Technologies & Challenges for Exoskeleton' was organised by DRDO in _____.

- A) Bengaluru
- A) Bombay
- B) Chennai
- C) Hyderabad

137. When the World Heritage Day was observed?

- A) 17 April
- A) 18 April
- B) 19 April
- C) 20 April

138. The Indian Navy recently inaugurated a state-of-the-art Submersible Platform for Acoustic Characterization and Evaluation (SPACE) in which of the following state?

- A) Kerala
- A) Maharashtra
- B) Odisha
- C) Tamil Nadu

139. Recently, scientists discovered that the Leaf Litter Frog generates ultrasonic sounds that are inaudible to humans but can drive away predators. Which forest does the Leaf Litter Frog typically reside in?

- A) Brazilian Atlantic Rainforest
- A) Kukrail Reserve Forest
- B) Norway spruce forests
- C) White River National Forest

140. In which of the following state the 34th Seng Kihlang festival was held?

- A) Sikkim
- A) Nagaland
- B) Mizoram
- C) Meghalaya

141. Which of the following IIT has launched nation's first medical devices calibration facility on wheels?

- A) IIT Delhi
- A) IIT Kanpur
- B) IIT Kharagpur
- C) IIT Madras

142. Trishakti Corps, Indian Army, conducted a training exercise on Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM) firing at a Super High-Altitude Area of 17,000 Feet in _____.

- A) Andhra Pradesh
- A) Odisha
- B) Sikkim
- C) West Bengal

143. Which of the following bank has collaborated with Shoppers Stop to launch their latest co-branded credit card?

- A) Axis Bank
- A) Canara Bank
- B) Federal Bank
- C) HDFC bank

144. UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in its report said that Indian economy expected to expand by _____ percent in 2024.

- A) 6.5%
- A) 6.8%
- B) 6.9%
- C) 7.1%

145. Who among the following scripted history as the first bowler to take 200 IPL wickets in franchise tournament?

- A) Jasprit Bumrah
- A) Mitchell Starc
- B) Pat Cummins
- C) Yuzvendra Chahal

146. Which country recently awarded a joint venture between Indian and Russian firms the management of Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport (MRIA) in Hambantota?

- A) India
- B) Russia
- C) Sri Lanka
- D) Bangladesh

147. Which international organization's Defence Minister's meeting was recently held in Asthana, Kazakhstan?

- A) ASEAN
- B) SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation)
- C) NATO



D)EU

148. Which country leads the Global Competitiveness Index 2023?

- A) Denmark
- B) Ireland
- C) Switzerland
- D) All of the above

149. What is the latest technological achievement by NASA as of April 2024?

- A) Mars Rover Sample Return Mission

- B) Launch of the James Webb Space Telescope
- C) Introduction of the Advanced Composite Solar Sail System (ACS3)
- D) Discovery of Exoplanets

150. Which Indian Air Force equipment was used to extinguish forest fires in Nainital district, Uttarakhand?

- A) MI-17 Helicopters
- B) Bambi Bucket
- C) C-130J Super Hercules
- D) Drone Surveillance System

ANSWERS

1. Correct Answer: C

Grid Controller of India Limited (GRID-INDIA) achieved a significant milestone by being conferred with the status of Miniratna Category-I Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE). This recognition, bestowed upon by the Ministry of Power, Government of India, underscores GRID-INDIA's pivotal role in the nation's power landscape.

2. Correct Answer: A

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India on March 20 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi on Artificial Intelligence. The MoU was signed and exchanged between Additional Deputy CAG A. M. Bajaj and IIT Delhi Director, Prof. Rangan Banerjee, in the presence of CAG Girish Chandra Murmu.

3. Correct Answer: B

DBS Bank India announced a lending commitment of \$250 million for new-age startups. The initiative is part of the bank's focus on fostering innovation and entrepreneurship within the country's thriving startup ecosystem.

4. Correct Answer: B

The Reserve Bank of India informed that a penalty of Rs 1.31 crore has been imposed on Tamilnad Mercantile Bank for non-compliance with certain directions issued by it on 'Interest Rate on Advances' and 'Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC) - Revision in Reporting'.

5. Correct Answer: B

Indonesia's Prabowo Subianto has been elected as president of the world's third-biggest democracy, the elections commission said, decisively beating two rivals who have vowed to file a legal complaint about the vote.

6. Correct Answer: D

The second edition of the India, Mozambique, and Tanzania (IMT) Trilateral (TRILAT) Exercise was held from March 21 to 29, 2024. This year, it was held at Tanzanian ports of Zanzibar and Mozambique's Maputo. India was represented by INS Tir and INS Sujata in the IMT Trilateral (TRILAT) exercise.

7. Correct Answer: D

To forecast drought and to enable better water management based on water availability, water resources department (WRD) minister Suresh Singh Rawat inaugurated the State Water Resources Information System Dashboard at Sinchai Bhawan. Rajasthan is the first state in the country to launch this portal.

8. Correct Answer: C

India has started Operation Indravati to evacuate its nationals from Haiti to the Dominican Republic, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said and asserted that it was "fully committed" to the security and well-being of Indians abroad.

9. Correct Answer: B

With the government showing optimism on the growth scenario, S&P Global has upped India's growth forecast by 40 basis points to 6.8 per cent during Fiscal Year 2024-25. However, it is still lower than the 7.6 per cent growth forecast for the current fiscal.

10. Correct Answer: A

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said it successfully conducted the landing experiment of Pushpak Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV) at Aeronautical Test Range in Chitradurga district in Karnataka. The winged vehicle called Pushpak landed precisely on the runway after being released from 4.5 km altitude.

11. Correct Answer: C

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has unanimously elected India's telecom secretary Neeraj Mittal as the Co-Chair of its Digital Innovation Board. The

Board is under the aegis of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development.

12. Correct Answer: B

The world's electronic waste generation is increasing five times faster than documented e-waste recycling, according to the United Nation's fourth Global E-waste Monitor (GEM) report. According to the report from the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the 62 million tonnes of e-waste produced in 2022.

13. Correct Answer: A

The General Assembly has approved the first United Nations resolution on artificial intelligence recently. The resolution, sponsored by the United States and co-sponsored by 123 countries, including China, was adopted with the support of all 193 U.N. member nations.

14. Correct Answer: A

Federal Bank has launched a RuPay smart key chain called 'Flash Pay' for contactless NCMC (National Common Mobility Card) payments at enabled metro stations and PoS terminals. Customers can make payments up to ₹5,000 without a PIN, whereas those over ₹5,000 will require PIN authentication.

15. Correct Answer: C

India's GDP growth is expected to moderate to 7 per cent in 2024-25 from the estimated 7.6 per cent this fiscal even as the country will likely remain as one of the fastest growing economies in the world, the Swiss Wealth Management major UBS has said.

16. Correct Answer: D

Mukesh Ambani, chairman & managing director of Reliance Industries, is the only Indian to make it into the top 10 of the Hurun Global Rich List 2024, a ranking of billionaires based on US dollar terms. Despite a 40 per cent increase in his wealth to \$115 billion, Ambani, 66, dropped one rank to 10th place on the global list.

17. Correct Answer: A

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has issued a directive to fund houses through the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI), citing a near breach of the \$1 billion ETF investment limit, said MF executives. The directive comes into force from April 1, 2024.

18. Correct Answer: B

Eveready Industries India (EIL), India's battery brand, has announced its collaboration with Neeraj Chopra, the Olympic gold medallist as its new brand ambassador. This collaboration marks a significant milestone for Eveready as it seeks to strengthen its commitment towards excellence and innovation via the launch of the new Ultima Alkaline battery series.

19. Correct Answer: D

Tata Group holding company Tata Sons sold around 2.34 crore shares or 0.65% equity in Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in a block deal. The deal is reported to be worth around Rs 9,000 crore at an average share price of Rs 4,043 per share.

20. Correct Answer: D

India's Sreeja Akula won the women's singles title at the WTT Feeder Beirut II 2024 table tennis tournament at the Al Kawthar Secondary School in Lebanon. Akula, the world No. 47, beat Luxembourg's Sarah De Nutte 3-1 (6-

11, 12-10, 11-5, 11-9) to win what was her second WTT singles career title.

21. Correct Answer: A

India's youth continue to grapple with soaring unemployment rates, with nearly 83 percent of the jobless population belonging to this demographic, as per the India Employment Report 2024 jointly published by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Institute of Human Development (IHD).

22. Correct Answer: A

Axis Bank has announced the introduction of digital US dollar fixed deposit (FD) for NRI customers at the IFSC Banking Unit (IBU) at GIFT City, Gujarat. With this introduction, Axis Bank becomes the first bank to offer a digital journey for GIFT City Deposits, the bank said in a statement.

23. Correct Answer: D

State-owned power giant NTPC said it has inked a pact with a Japanese agency for sourcing foreign currency loans of USD 200 million (JPY 30 billion or around Rs 1,650 crore). Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), a government policy-based financial institution, will provide 60 per cent of the facility amount and the balance amount will be provided by other commercial banks under JBIC guarantee.

24. Correct Answer: C

PayU, one of India's leading digital financial services providers, has announced the launch of a first-of-its-kind Downpayment EMI solution that enables customers to make a partial payment upfront while remaining can be converted into easy EMIs, making high-ticket purchases more affordable & accessible.

25. Correct Answer: D

India's current account deficit (CAD) narrowed in the third quarter (Q3FY24) with a rise in services exports and secondary income offsetting the marginally higher merchandise trade gap. CAD narrowed to \$10.5 billion (1.2 per cent of GDP) in Q3 (October-December) FY24, lower than \$11.4 billion (1.3 per cent of GDP) in the preceding quarter.

26. Correct Answer: D

Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), has opened AeroSpace Services India (ASI), its Indian subsidiary in New Delhi. The opening of ASI is a strong demonstration of IAI's strong collaboration with the Indian government's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'- MAKE IN INDIA vision.

27. Correct Answer: B

Recently, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) released its 'Food Waste Index Report 2024', which tracks countries' progress toward halving food waste by 2030. According to the report, the world has wasted an estimated 19% of global food production in 2022, or approximately 1.05 billion metric tons. This equates to 132 kilos per person, or about one-fifth of total available food.

28. Correct Answer: D

The public sector insurance companies – Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re) and the New India Assurance Company continue to be identified as Domestic Systemically Important Insurers (D-SIIs) by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).

29. Correct Answer: D

India has released the second tranche of Rs 500 crore to Bhutan for the development of infrastructure related to the GyalSung Project. This comes less than a week after Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 23 concluded a fruitful two-day state visit to Bhutan during which he assured Thimphu of New Delhi's firm support in its quest for development and agreed to provide Rs 10,000 crore to the Himalayan nation over the next five years.

30. Correct Answer: D

Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi was sworn in as judicial member of Lokpal. The oath was administered by Justice AM Khanwilkar, Chairperson, Lokpal of India. Pankaj Kumar and Ajay Tirkey took oath as members of Lokpal. The oath ceremony was organised at Lokpal of India office in New Delhi.

31. Correct Answer: D

In calendar year (CY) 2023, the country added 20.8 gigawatts (GW) of solar modules and 3.2 GW of solar cell capacity, said the Mercom India research titled 'State of Solar PV Manufacturing in India 2024'. It added that solar module manufacturing capacity is projected to surpass 150 GW, and cell capacity is expected to reach over 75 GW by 2026.

32. Correct Answer: B

ETS India, a subsidiary of the US-based Educational Testing Service (ETS), and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) have joined hands through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), in a stride towards enhancing India's workforce readiness for the global market.

33. Correct Answer: B

UNESCO's Executive Board has endorsed the addition of 18 sites to the UNESCO Global Geoparks network. This

brings the total number of geoparks to 213 in 48 countries. The new geoparks are situated in Brazil, China, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Portugal and Spain.

34. Correct Answer: C

The Centre's fiscal deficit widened in April 2023-February 2024 to ₹15.01 lakh crore, which is about 86.5 per cent of Revised Estimate of ₹17.35-lakh crore, official data showed. The fiscal deficit in the same period a year ago stood at ₹14.53-lakh crore, which was 82.8 per cent of revised estimate.

35. Correct Answer: D

The central government approved the appointment of Nidhu Saxena as the managing director & chief executive officer (MD & CEO) of the Bank of Maharashtra for a period of three years effective from 27 March 2024. Prior to joining Bank of Maharashtra, he was the Executive Director of Union Bank of India.

36. Correct Answer: D

At a time when Nepal is facing a power crisis, India has renewed the agreement to export electricity to Nepal for the next three months. Under the agreement, which was to expire on March 31, Nepal can import a total of 554 MW electricity from India between 6 am and 6 pm.

37. Correct Answer: B

According to the latest data released by the Reserve Bank of India, HDFC Bank emerged as the leader in credit card issuances, with 20.40 million cards in circulation in February 2024. Other major players in the market included SBI Card with 18.75 million cards, ICICI Bank with 16.84 million, and Axis Bank with 13.90 million.

38. Correct Answer: A

The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has strengthened the security of the National Pension System (NPS) by introducing a new security layer, two-factor Aadhaar-based authentication, which will be mandatory for all password-based users logging into the CRA system starting on April 1, 2024.

39. Correct Answer: C

Rohan Bopanna and his Australian partner Matthew Ebden came out on top in a historic victory in the men's doubles final of the Miami Open. The Indo-Australian pair defeated Croatia's Ivan Dodic and American Austin Krajicek 6-7 6-3 10-16 to clinch the title.

40. Correct Answer: A

Chhattisgarh-based Bharat Aluminium Company Limited (BALCO), a unit of Vedanta Aluminium, has emerged as the first Indian company to achieve the Aluminium Stewardship Initiative (ASI) Performance Standard V3 Certification for the manufacture and supply of a wide range of primary aluminium products at its facility in Korba.

41. Correct Answer: C

Adani Enterprises has commissioned the first unit of its copper refinery at Mundra in Gujarat, marking its debut in the metals space through subsidiary Kutch Copper. Copper demand in India is likely to be driven by renewable energy, electric vehicles, charging infrastructure, and the development of power transmission and distribution networks, Adani Enterprises said in a statement.

42. Correct Answer: C

UNICEF India, the International Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR) Delhi and the Indian

Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay) jointly launched a 10-week “Digital Health Enterprise Planning Course” that aims to bridge tech knowledge gaps among healthcare professionals.

43. Correct Answer: C

AMPIN Energy Transition said it has received 25-million-euro investment from OeEB, the Development Bank of Austria, in long-term financing to support the company’s renewable energy expansion plans and establishing a local 1-GW solar cell and module production facility in Odisha.

44. Correct Answer: A

The name of L&T Finance Holdings (LTFH) has been changed to L&T Finance Ltd following approval from the Registrar of Companies (RoC). Mumbai-headquartered L&T Finance, formerly known as L&T Finance Holdings, is a leading non-banking financial company (NBFC), offering a range of financial products and services.

45. Correct Answer: D

A joint venture of state-owned RVNL and private steel player Salasar Techno Engineering has bagged a transmission project worth around Rs 60 crore in central African nation Rwanda. The order has been secured from Energy Development Corporation Limited (EDCL) and to be executed in 18 months.

46. Correct Answer: D

As many as 19 traditional products and crafts of Assam, including 'Bihu Dhol', 'Jaapi' and several items of the Bodo community, have been accorded the geographical indication (GI) tag, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. Thirteen of these products are specifically linked to the Bodos, who form the largest tribal group in the state.

47. Correct Answer: D

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has re-imposed the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) order for solar photovoltaic (PV) modules from April 1. This will boost domestic solar equipment manufacturing and India's pursuit to achieve self-sufficiency in the sector.

48. Correct Answer: D

The National Power Training Institute (NPTI) and Power Trading Corporation of India Limited (PTC) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to establish a Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Research and Development (R&D). This collaboration aims to address pressing challenges in the energy domain while aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

49. Correct Answer: A

Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) said it has inked a contract with Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi for supply of 6 sets of LM2500 gas turbines (GT) and GT Auxiliaries (GTAE), spares, tools for Indian Navy Next Generation Missile Vessel (NGMV) Project.

50. Correct Answer: B

ISRO has unveiled a new introductory-level online training programme called ‘Space Science and Technology Awareness Training (START)’ which is aimed to attract youngsters to the field of space science and technology. It is particularly targeted at postgraduate and final-year undergraduate students who are pursuing physical sciences and technology.

51. Correct Answer: B

India's defence exports have soared to a record-breaking Rs 21,083 crore (approximately \$2.63 billion) in the financial year 2023-24, marking a significant growth of 32.5% over the previous year's figure of Rs 15,920 crore, according to the ministry of defence.

52. Correct Answer: D

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has conducted a 10-day exercise from 01 April to test its capabilities and preparedness for high-intensity operations. The exercise known as 'Gagan Shakti-2024,' was conducted at various locations across the country, including the Pokhran Field Firing Range in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

53. Correct Answer: C

The Bengaluru-based Mahindra Aerostructures has signed a \$100-million multi-year contract with an Airbus group entity. Under the contract, Mahindra Aerostructures will supply close to 2,300 varieties of metallic components to Airbus Atlantic in France from its manufacturing base in India.

54. Correct Answer: D

The Indian government has raised Rs 16,500 crore (\$1.98 billion) in 2023/24 by selling its stakes in about 10 state-run companies, official data showed, about 9 per cent lower than its internal target of Rs 18,000 crore. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambition of privatising state-run firms has taken a back seat due to general elections that start on April 19.

55. Correct Answer: D

The new generation ballistic missile Agni-Prime was successfully flight-tested by the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) along with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha.

56. Correct Answer: B

The Quality Council of India (QCI) and Laghu Udyog Bharati (LUB) have collaborated to enhance awareness and participation in the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Competitive Lean Scheme (MCLS) of the Ministry of MSME among the members of Laghu Udyog Bharati (LUB), typically MSMEs.

57. Correct Answer: C

Meta has joined hands with the Press Trust of India (PTI) to mitigate viral misinformation on its platforms including Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Threads. As part of the collaboration, PTI will become an independent fact-checker for the company and help in identifying, reviewing, and rating misinformation.

58. Correct Answer: C

Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has extended the deadline for geotagging of properties on its portal till June 30. The move is aimed at giving an opportunity to taxpayers to submit all specifications of their properties.

59. Correct Answer: D

The Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) has joined hands with HP India to introduce 'HP Future Impact Leaders - IICA Certified Environmental Social Governance (ESG) Professional Programme'. Under this programme, HP India in collaboration with IICA will offer 100 per cent scholarships to 75 candidates, enabling them to pursue advanced education in ESG without financial barriers.



60. Correct Answer: B

The Reserve Bank of India-led Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has decided to keep the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent for the seventh consecutive time, said RBI governor Shaktikanta Das while announcing the decisions of the bimonthly policy meet.

61. Correct Answer: A

In a meeting held in New Delhi, on April 3, 2024, the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India (GoI) sanctioned the release of a report titled 'Synchronizing Energy Transitions Toward Possible Net Zero for India: Affordable and Clean Energy for All', which was prepared by IIM-A (Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad), Gujarat. It was introduced by Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood, the Government of India's Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA).

62. Correct Answer: B

American business magazine Forbes released its "Forbes World's Billionaires List 2024: The Top 200", which features 200 Indians, up from 169 last year. According to a report, Mukesh Ambani, chairman of Reliance Industries, is at the top of the list in India and retained his position as the ninth richest person in the world.

63. Correct Answer: D

A special ₹90 denomination coin was unveiled by the finance ministry to celebrate 90 years of central bank. Crafted with 99.99% pure silver, the unique commemorative coin weighs approximately 40 grams. The coin serves as a symbol of the RBI's extensive history and achievements over the course of nine decades.

64. Correct Answer: C

UPI transactions in India surged by 56% year-on-year (YoY) in the second half (H2) of 2023, while card transactions saw a modest growth of 6%, according to a report by payment service provider Worldline. The volume of UPI transactions surged to 65.77 billion from 42.09 billion in H2 2023, the report reveals.

65. Correct Answer: B

Canara Bank has launched a healthcare-focused loan product, Canara Heal, designed to meet the deficit in hospitalization expenses while settling through TPA healthcare insurance claims. Additionally, it has launched a customized savings account for women, Canara Angel, with unique features like a Cancer Care policy, pre-approved personal loan Canara ReadyCash, and an online loan against term deposit product, Canara MyMoney.

66. Correct Answer: C

A two-day exercise 'Sagar Kavach 01/24' involving all maritime security agencies of the country was conducted off the Lakshadweep Islands from April 1-2. During the exercise, validation of the effectiveness of coastal security mechanisms while dealing with asymmetric threats emanating from the sea was undertaken.

67. Correct Answer: C

Greece, Qatar and India have improved the most globally in providing the best environment to businesses in the past one year, according to a report by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). India came third on the list of most improved countries as a result of its youthful demographic, which promises strong demand and availability of good labour, the report said.

68. Correct Answer: C

The report "Small Island Digital States: How Digital Can Catalyse SIDS Development," which was recently released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), highlights the transformative potential of digital for Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

69. Correct Answer: C

The World Bank Group has appointed former Reserve Bank of India deputy governor Rakesh Mohan member of the Economic Advisory Panel, according to a statement released by New Delhi-based think tank Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP).

70. Correct Answer: D

Scientists in South Korea have announced a new world record for the length of time they sustained temperatures of 100 million degrees Celsius — seven times hotter than the sun's core — during a nuclear fusion experiment, in what they say is an important step forward for this futuristic energy technology.

71. Correct Answer: D

Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) said they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly develop an indigenous Train Control Management System (i-TCMS), aimed at what they called "revolutionising" rail communication technology in the country.

72. Correct Answer: B

The sitars and tanpuras of Miraj, a small town in Maharashtra's Sangli district known for its craftsmanship in making musical instruments, have been awarded the

coveted Geographical Indication (GI) tags. These instruments made in Miraj are much in demand among some of the prominent artistes, including those renowned in the field of classical music as well as film industry, the makers claim.

73. Correct Answer: D

SJVN Limited has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology Patna (IIT Patna) to use advanced geological models in SJVN's tunnelling projects, thus significantly reducing time and cost overruns.

74. Correct Answer: C

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on April 5 said it has imposed Rs 1-crore monetary penalty on IDFC First Bank for rule violations. The bank has not complied with certain directions issued by RBI on 'Loans and Advances – Statutory and Other Restrictions', according to a press release from the central bank.

75. Correct Answer: B

State-owned Union Bank of India said it has raised USD 500 million (about Rs 4,200 crore) from foreign markets to fund overseas business growth. The fund was arranged by Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), Dubai Branch, Union Bank of India said in a regulatory filing.

76. Correct Answer: D

India aims to produce 100,000 MW of nuclear power by 2047, a massive increase from the current production of over 8,000 MW, Atomic Energy Commission Chairman A K Mohanty said. Mohanty said a vision document for 'Amrit Kaal' was being prepared by the Department of Atomic Energy which envisages reaching a nuclear capacity of about 100 GW by 2047.

77. Correct Answer: D

The Technology Development Board (TDB) has entered into an agreement with M/s Remine India Private Limited, for "Setting up a commercial plant for recycling of Li Battery and E-Waste using Indigenous Technology" at Eldeco, SIIDCUL Industrial Area in Sitarganj (District Udham Singh Nagar), Uttarakhand.

78. Correct Answer: C

Coal India's Arm, Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) recently unveiled its official brand-new logo with tagline: "Fuelling Sustainable Growth." On the occasion the company said, "Let's embark on this ecofriendly journey to fulfill the energy demands through sustainable mining."

79. Correct Answer: C

Zimbabwe's central bank has launched a new "structured currency" backed by gold, as it seeks to tackle sky-high inflation and stabilise the country's long-floundering economy. The new currency – called Zim Gold (ZiG) – will be backed by foreign currencies, gold and precious minerals.

80. Correct Answer: D

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has entered into an agreement with a fintech Onion Life Private Limited to use the latter's technology platform KarmaLife for a pilot to provide micro loans to gig workers. This is expected to support the gig workers' financial inclusion to formal institutional credit.

81. Correct Answer: D

Telecom Secretary Dr. Neeraj Mittal has virtually launched an experimental licence module for 100 5G

Labs during a workshop at IIT Madras, an official statement said. The Department of Telecom (DoT) has granted around 1,500 experimental licences for 5G labs since the launch of the programme for carrying out trials and testing use cases for 5G services, the statement said.

82. Correct Answer: C

After Chabahar, India has gained the rights to operate a second overseas port, Sittwe, in Myanmar. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has approved a proposal for India Ports Global (IPGL) to take over the operations of the entire port located on the Kaladan River.

83. Correct Answer: B

Despite India's stock market highs, the number of unicorns, or startups with a valuation of over \$1 billion, has declined for the first time in four years, according to the Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2024. With 67 unicorns, India maintains its position as the third-largest unicorn hub globally.

84. Correct Answer: A

The UN's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) unanimously appointed Saudi Arabia to chair its 69th session in 2025, according to the Saudi Arabia Mission to the UN. Saudi ambassador to the UN, Abdulaziz Alwasil, was elected as chair.

85. Correct Answer: A

Marking the first such transaction after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued fresh guidelines for the instrument, State Bank of India and Standard Chartered Bank India has carried out a Credit Default Swap (CDS) trade worth ₹25 crore. Credit default swaps are derivative instruments that provide a form of insurance against the risk of default of the issuer of a bond.

86. Correct Answer: C

India's Chandrayaan-3 mission team was presented with the prestigious 2024 John L. 'Jack' Swigert Jr. Award for Space Exploration in recognition of it raising the bar for space exploration. The award was received by India's Consul General in Houston D C Manjunath on behalf of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

87. Correct Answer: C

India plans to build its first privately managed strategic petroleum reserve (SPR) by 2029-30, granting the operator the freedom to trade all of the stored oil. Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd (ISPRL) estimates the Padur SPR and linked pipeline and oil import facility would cost about 55 billion rupees (\$659 million).

88. Correct Answer: B

Air India has announced the appointment of Jayaraj Shanmugam as the Head of Global Airport Operations. Shanmugam joins Air India from Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), where he served as the Chief Operating Officer.

89. Correct Answer: C

India will by the end of 2025 stop importing urea as a massive push for domestic manufacturing has helped bridge the gap between supply and demand, Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said. India, the top importer of the crop nutrient, currently meets 30% of its demand for urea through imports from countries such as Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

90. Correct Answer: B

India has emerged as the country with the highest percentage of doping offenders, according to the 2022 testing figures released by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). The report revealed that out of 4,064 samples collected from Indian athletes (including urine, blood, and athlete biological passports), 127 individuals tested positive for banned substances, constituting 3.26 per cent of the sample size.

91. Correct Answer: D

The European Union (EU) and India launched an Expression of Interest (Eoi) for startups working in Battery Recycling Technologies for Electric Vehicles (EVs) for a matchmaking event. The matchmaking aims to enhance the cooperation between European and Indian Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and startups in the clean and green technologies sector.

92. Correct Answer: A

The Road Transport and Highways Ministry constructed 12,349 km of national highways in 2023-24, the second highest in its history, a senior government official said. Previously, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) had constructed a record 13,327 kilometers of national highways in 2020-21.

93. Correct Answer: D

In a significant move towards bolstering India's capabilities in critical minerals, Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL) has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research - Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (CSIR-IMMT). The collaboration is aimed at enhancing technical and knowledge cooperation in the domain of critical minerals, crucial for the nation's mining industry and its growth.

94. Correct Answer: A

The grand finale of the 61st National Maritime Day, centered around the theme "Sustainable Shipping: Opportunities and Challenges," unfolded at the prestigious Yashwantrao Chavan Centre in Nariman Point, Mumbai on 5 April. The Recipient of the Sagar Samman Varuna Award was the Dhirendra Kumar Sanyal for his outstanding and sustained contributions to the Indian maritime sector.

95. Correct Answer: A

Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff, during his visit to Southern Naval Command, Kochi, awarded 'On the Spot Unit Citation' to INS Sharda for successful conduct of anti-piracy operations. The ship was involved in the safe release of all 19 crew members (11 Iranian & 08 Pakistani) of Iranian fishing vessel Omari which was held hostage by pirates off East coast of Somalia.

96. Correct Answer: C

India and Mauritius have signed a protocol to amend the double taxation avoidance agreement (DTAA), which included a principal purpose test (PPT) to decide whether a foreign investor is eligible to claim treaty benefits. The amended protocol was signed on March 7 and made public now.

97. Correct Answer: A

The WTO has projected that the world merchandise trade volume will grow by 2.6 per cent in 2024 and 3.3 per cent in 2025. In merchandise trade, where exports are concerned, India ranked 17th globally, with a 1.8 per cent share in world trade, amounting to USD 432 billion, a 5 per cent decrease from 2022.

98. Correct Answer: C

The Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS) service offered by India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) enables cash withdrawals from the comfort of your home. Through the AePS facility, a bank customer can employ their Aadhaar number as an identity verification tool to access their Aadhaar-enabled bank account.

99. Correct Answer: B

ICICI Lombard has announced its partnership with Policybazaar to offer insurance products to the latter's platform, which has access to almost 10 million customers. The private insurer will offer a comprehensive range of products, including motor, health, travel, home, and business insurance.

100. Correct Answer: B

PhonePe has announced its partnership with e-Sewa and the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) Pokhara to popularise UPI on the Fonepay Network (a digital payment network in Nepal). This is a part of the Fewa New Year Festival, which was held from April 11–14th.

101. Correct Answer: C

NTPC Limited, India's largest integrated power company, has launched the latest edition of Girl Empowerment Mission (GEM), its flagship Corporate Social Responsibility initiative. The program aligns with the Government of India's Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao initiative and aims to tackle gender inequality by nurturing girls' imaginations and fostering their ability to explore opportunities.

102. Correct Answer: B

Computer Age Management Services Ltd said the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has granted authorisation to

the company to operate as an online payment aggregator. The company received an in-principle authorisation from RBI in February 2023, according to a statement.

103. Correct Answer: B

Dr Gagandeep Kang, Director of Global Health at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, has been selected for the prestigious John Dirks Award in global health. She is the first Indian woman to get this award and says it is a huge honour for all the work that she and her colleagues did while at Christian Medical College, Vellore.

104. Correct Answer: D

ACM, the Association for Computing Machinery, has named Avi Wigderson as recipient of the 2023 ACM A.M. Turing Award for foundational contributions to the theory of computation, including reshaping our understanding of the role of randomness in computation, and for his decades of intellectual leadership in theoretical computer science.

105. Correct Answer: D

The Asian Wrestling Championship 2024 was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. In this event, India's Udit won the silver medal in men's freestyle 57 kg. Abhimanyu got India's second medal in the 70 kg category. Anju and Harshita settled for silver. India's Olympic quota for Paris 2024 was secured by Antim Panghal in 2023.

106. Correct Answer: A

Gopi Thotakura, an entrepreneur and a pilot, is set to become the first Indian to venture into space as a tourist on Amazon founder Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin's NS-25 mission. Mr. Thotakura was selected as one of the six crew members for the mission, making him the first Indian space tourist and the second Indian to venture

into space after the Indian Army's Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma in 1984.

107. Correct Answer: D

India ranked number 10 in cybercrime, with frauds involving people to make advance fee payment being the most common type, according to new research that surveyed cybercrime experts around the world. Russia topped the list, and was followed by Ukraine, China, the US, Nigeria and Romania.

108. Correct Answer: C

Moody's Analytics on April 12 projected India's economy to expand 6.1% in 2024, lower than 7.7% growth clocked in 2023. It said output in India remains 4% lower than it would have been without the COVID pandemic and its various aftershocks — from supply snags to military conflicts abroad.

109. Correct Answer: C

India has secured its place as the world's fourth-largest exporter of digitally delivered services, contributing more than a fifth to the global trade in services. As per the recent "Global Trade Outlook and Statistics" report by the World Trade Organisation (WTO), India's exports of digitally delivered services reached \$257 billion in 2023, marking a 17% increase compared to the previous year.

110. Correct Answer: A

Every year, on April 15, people come together to celebrate World Art Day. It is a special occasion dedicated to honouring the contributions of artists and highlighting the importance of art in our lives. Interestingly, the date coincides with the birthday of the legendary artist Leonardo da Vinci.

111. Correct Answer: D

Dommaraju Gukesh, surpassing previous records, became the youngest winner in the history of the FIDE Candidates Chess Tournament. His victory is notable not just for his age but for the intense competition and high level of skill displayed, setting a new benchmark in the chess world.

112. Correct Answer: B

World Earth Day is celebrated on April 22 each year. This day is dedicated to raising awareness about environmental protection and sustainability. It engages communities worldwide through various events and initiatives aimed at promoting ecological and conservation efforts.

113. Correct Answer: D

The theme for World Earth Day 2024, "Planet vs. Plastics," underscores the urgent need to address plastic pollution, which poses a significant threat to wildlife and ecosystems. This theme encourages action against the proliferation of plastic waste and promotes alternatives to reduce the environmental footprint of plastics.

114. Correct Answer: B

The People's National Congress (PNC) achieved a significant victory in the Maldives parliamentary elections. This win highlights the shifting political dynamics in the Maldives and represents a major gain for the party, impacting the country's future legislative and governance direction.

115. Correct Answer: C

OpenAI's recent advancements include technology that transforms static images into lifelike talking videos. This

technology utilizes artificial intelligence to animate photographs in a realistic manner, creating dynamic video content from still images, which has implications for entertainment, media, and communication technologies.

116. Correct Answer: A

The Global Forest Watch, which tracks forest changes in near real-time using satellite data and other sources, said India has lost 2.33 million hectares of tree cover since 2000, equivalent to a six per cent decrease in tree cover during this period.

117. Correct Answer: D

The BJP-led government has come up with a new platform to disburse subsidies to horticulture farmers under the Cluster Development Programme (CDP) — the Centre's initiative to promote horticulture crops. The platform is known as CDP-SURAKSHA.

118. Correct Answer: A

India is among the twelve countries responsible for 60 percent of the planet's mismanaged plastic waste though the fast-developing South Asian nation's per capita plastic waste production is among the lowest in the world, according to a new report.

119. Correct Answer: A

Leading online payment solutions provider PayU has announced its partnership with the US-based fintech company PayPal to enhance the cross-border payment experience for Indian merchants. Through this partnership, the company will leverage the PayPal ISU 2.0 Checkout to offer customers a more personalised and inclusive payment experience.

120. Correct Answer: C

Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), presented Gallantry and Distinguished Service awards to Naval personnel on behalf of the Hon'ble President of India. The CNS Trophy for Best Green Practices 2023 was awarded to Naval Dockyard, Mumbai and INS Valsura in the industrial and non-industrial categories respectively.

121. Correct Answer: A

The White House directive instructs NASA to establish a 'Coordinated Lunar Time' (LTC) by 2026, essential for synchronizing activities on the Moon. LTC will standardize timekeeping for secure data transfers and communication, addressing challenges posed by the Moon's unique rotation and gravity.

122. Correct Answer: A

Canara Bank and SINE (Society for Innovation & Entrepreneurship), IIT Bombay have joined hands to empower Start-ups nationwide. Under the Canara Start-Up Scheme, financial assistance at attractive ROI will be provided for establishment, promotion, and modernization.

123. Correct Answer: A

Dr Ashvini Keshavan, Senior Clinical Research and Honorary Consultant Neurologist Fellow at University College London (UCL), is part of the team that will focus on the most promising biomarker for Alzheimer's disease called p-tau217. A second team made up of researchers from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge will test various proteins to detect a variety of dementia-causing diseases.

124. Correct Answer: D

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay has secured the 45th rank in Engineering and Technology in

the QS World University Rankings by Subject for 2024. With an overall score of 79.1 out of 100, the institute has improved on its 2023 performance in the same subject by two places.

125. Correct Answer: C

Private lender HDFC Bank opened a branch at Kavaratti Island in Lakshadweep, making it the only private sector bank to have a branch in the Union Territory. "This reaffirms our commitment to serving customers wherever they in an extremely convenient fashion," said S Sampathkumar, Group Head- Retail Branch Banking, HDFC Bank.

126. Correct Answer: C

Sany India, a leading global manufacturer of construction and mining equipment, has unveiled SKT105E electric dump truck, the first of its kind to be locally manufactured in India. The e-truck combines local expertise with global innovation.

127. Correct Answer: B

The Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport has once again claimed the title of the world's busiest airport, with 104.65 million passengers in 2023 – a 12% jump from 2022. Yet, it is still 5% below 2019 levels, marking a slow recovery from the pandemic. The Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi has secured 10th position.

128. Correct Answer: B

Jio Financial Services announced an agreement with BlackRock Inc. and BlackRock Advisors Singapore Pte. Ltd. to establish a 50:50 joint venture. The aim is to launch wealth management and broking services, as disclosed by the company in its filing to the exchanges.

129. Correct Answer: A

The share of senior citizen term deposits has doubled in the last five years to 30 per cent in fiscal year 24 as many have locked in their savings at higher interest rates before the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) starts cutting rates, said a research report by State Bank of India. The report estimates a staggering 74 million senior citizen term deposit accounts in India, holding a combined value of Rs 34 lakh crore.

130. Correct Answer: D

SBI Life Insurance, one of the most trusted private life insurance companies in the country, recently launched the 1st edition of 'IdeationX', a pioneering initiative that promises to revolutionize the future of the insurance industry.

131. Correct Answer: D

The Russian space agency Roscosmos conducted a successful orbital test launch of its new Angara A5 heavy-lift rocket, helping to open a new chapter of spaceflight for the nation. The Angara A5 lifted off April 11 on its fourth orbital test launch, and its first from the Vostochny Cosmodrome in Russia's far east.

132. Correct Answer: D

Iceland has appointed Bjarni Benediktsson to replace Katrín Jakobsdóttir as prime minister after she resigned to run in the country's upcoming presidential election. Benediktsson, who was previously the Nordic country's foreign minister, officially took over from Jakobsdóttir after she stood down following more than six years in office.

133. Correct Answer: B

Making India's intention clear to join global efforts to remove debris from space, ISRO chairman S Somanath has announced that the country aims to achieve debris-free space missions by 2030. Of late, ISRO had brought several old satellites and fourth stage of PSLV rockets back to the Earth through the deorbiting process as part of its zero orbital debris mission and to minimise any accidental break-up risks.

134. Correct Answer: C

Three-time World Champion Rashmi Kumari beat K Nagajothi 25-8, 14-20, 25-20 in the women's final of the 51st National carrom championship organised by the Madhya Pradesh Carrom Association. It was a record 12th national women's singles title for Rashmi, employed as the Chief Manager at the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC).

135. Correct Answer: B

Madhya Pradesh has taken lead in implementing the Centre's Green Credit Programme (GCP) which got over 500 land parcels spanning 4,980 hectares across 10 states approved for tree plantation in the past two months. These states, along with three others, have together identified more than 10,000 hectares of land for the programme.

136. Correct Answer: A

The first international workshop on 'Emerging Technologies & Challenges for Exoskeleton' was held in Bengaluru on April 16-17, 2024. The workshop was organised by the Defence Bio-Engineering & Electromedical Laboratory of Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO).

137. Correct Answer: B

Every year, April 18 is observed as World Heritage Day to raise awareness about conserving our cultural diversity. The day is also known as the International Day for Monuments and Sites, and in various countries, it is observed as World Heritage Day. The theme for World Heritage Day 2024 is 'Discover and Experience Diversity'.

138. Correct Answer: A

A state-of-the-art Submersible Platform for Acoustic Characterisation and Evaluation (SPACE) was inaugurated by Secretary, Department of Defence (R&D) and Chairman DRDO Dr Samir V Kamat at Underwater Acoustic Research Facility, Kulamavu in Idukki, Kerala on April 17, 2024.

139. Correct Answer: A

A new study claims to have documented the "first" case of an ultrasonic 'distress call' made by a Brazilian frog species' for self-defence. The research team studied the screams of leaf litter frog (*Haddadus binotatus*), a species endemic to the Brazilian Atlantic Rainforest.

140. Correct Answer: D

The 34th Seng Kihlang festival was held in Wahiajer, Meghalaya. It is hosted by Seng Khasi Sein Raij and brings together members of the Khasi Indigenous Faith. A highlight is the exchange of the Monolith, which represents oneness. This year, Wahiajer had received it from Seng Khasi Shaid Shaid.

141. Correct Answer: D

Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) has launched India's First "medical devices calibration facility on wheels". This facility has been developed by IIT Madras under its 'Anaivarukkum IITM' (IITM for all) Initiatives. Prof. V. Kamakoti, Director, IIT Madras, launched this facility.

142. Correct Answer: C

Trishakti Corps of the Indian Army conducted a training exercise, involving the firing of anti-tank guided missiles. The exercise was conducted at a super high-altitude area of 17,000 feet in Sikkim on April 12. "The training exercise encompassed comprehensive continuity training and live firing from different platforms on moving as well as static targets depicting battlefield conditions," defence ministry said.

143. Correct Answer: A

Shoppers Stop and Axis Bank have partnered to launch a co-branded credit card – the Axis Bank Shoppers Stop Credit Card. The credit card offers benefits and features ranging from welcome benefits to accelerated rewards on shopping, coupled with the convenience of fuel surcharge waivers, dining privileges and many more.

144. Correct Answer: A

Indian economy is likely to carry forward the momentum in 2024, growing 6.5% compared with 6.7% in the previous year, United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) noted in its latest report, revising India's growth forecast by 0.3 percentage points.

145. Correct Answer: D

Rajasthan Royals leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal has created history, becoming the first bowler ever to take 200 wickets in the Indian Premier League. Chahal got to the landmark in the game against Mumbai Indians at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur.

146. Correct Answer: C

The management of Sri Lanka's strategic airport, MRIA in Hambantota, was awarded to a joint venture between an

Indian and a Russian firm, highlighting the continuing international interest and collaboration in Sri Lanka's infrastructure.

147. Correct Answer: B

The Defence Minister's meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) took place in Asthana, Kazakhstan, reflecting ongoing defense and security collaborations among member states.

148. Correct Answer: D

Denmark, Ireland, and Switzerland all featured prominently in the top rankings of the 2023 Global Competitiveness Index, demonstrating their strong economic performance and competitive environments.

149. Correct Answer: C

NASA recently achieved a significant technological milestone with the launch of its Advanced Composite Solar Sail System (ACS3), which is expected to test new types of solar propulsion technologies.

150. Correct Answer: B

The Indian Air Force deployed helicopters equipped with Bambi Buckets to combat the severe forest fires in the Nainital district, showcasing an effective use of aerial firefighting technology.



SECTION 3

Detailed Analysis of Important Events



Economics

Section 120B of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)



Why in the news?

- The Supreme Court has rejected review petitions challenging its ruling on the initiation of proceedings under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).
- The judgment clarified that Section 120B of the Indian Penal Code cannot be invoked for PMLA proceedings unless the alleged conspiracy pertains to a scheduled offence.

What is Article 120 of Indian Penal Code (IPC)?

- Section 120 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) deals with the **concept of “Conspiracy to commit an offense”**.
- It states that **when two or more persons agree** to do, or cause to be done, an illegal act, or an act which is not illegal by illegal means, such an agreement is designated a criminal conspiracy.
- **Section 120A** defines “**criminal conspiracy**” as when two or more persons agree to do, or cause to be done, an illegal act or an act which is not illegal by illegal means.
- **Section 120B** prescribes the **punishment for criminal conspiracy**, with death, imprisonment for life, or rigorous imprisonment for a term of two years or upwards, shall be punished in the same manner as if he had abetted such offense.

Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002

- The PMLA was enacted in 2002 with the aim of **preventing money laundering** and providing for confiscation of property derived from money laundering.
- It **applies to all financial institutions, banks (including the RBI)**, mutual funds, insurance companies, and their financial intermediaries.
- The Act **empowers government authorities to confiscate property** and/or assets earned from illegal sources and through money laundering.
- It has been **amended three times**, in 2005, 2009, and 2012.
- Under the PMLA, the **burden of proof lies with the accused**, who must demonstrate that the suspect property/assets have not been obtained through proceeds of crime.

Penalties under PMLA:

- **Freezing or Seizure of property and records**, and/or attachment of property obtained through crime proceeds.
- **Rigorous imprisonment** for a minimum of 3 years and a maximum of 7 years. In cases where money laundering is linked with the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, the punishment can extend up to 10 years, along with a fine.
- **Fine** imposition.

Authorities for investigation under PMLA:

1. **Enforcement Directorate (ED)**: It is responsible for investigating offenses under the PMLA.
2. **Financial Intelligence Unit – India (FIU-IND)**: It is the national agency tasked with receiving, processing, analyzing, and disseminating information related to suspect financial transactions.

Punishment for Criminal Conspiracy

- **Nature of Conspiracy:** IPC 120B categorizes conspiracy based on the gravity of the offense and prescribes punishments accordingly.
- **Serious Offenses:** Conspiracy to commit serious crimes punishable by death, life imprisonment, or rigorous imprisonment for 2 years or more warrants severe punishment equivalent to the offense committed.
- **Other Offenses:** Conspiracy for illegal acts not falling under the serious category incurs imprisonment for up to six months, a fine, or both, as per Section 120B.

Which of the following has/have been accorded 'Geographical Indication' status? (2015)

1. Banaras Brocades and Sarees
2. Rajasthani Daal-Bati-Churma
3. Tirupathi Laddu

Recently Awarded GI Tags



Paradip Port: India's Leading Major Port in Cargo Handling



Why in the news?

- Over 60 products from various regions received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag simultaneously, marking the largest batch of GI tags ever granted.

What is a GI Tag?

- A GI is a sign used on products that have a **specific geographical origin** and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- Nodal Agency: **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999** w.e.f. September 2003.
- GIs have been defined under **Article 22 (1) of the WTO Agreement** on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement.
- The tag stands valid for **10 years** and can be renewed.

Why in the news?

Paradip Port in Odisha has made history by becoming India's largest major port in terms of cargo volumes, surpassing Deendayal Port Authority in Gujarat during FY24.

About Paradip Port

- Paradip Port is situated at the **confluence of the Mahanadi River** and the Bay of Bengal in the Jagatsinghpur district of Odisha.
- It has a **natural deep-water harbor**, allowing it to accommodate large vessels and handle bulk cargo efficiently.
- The port was **commissioned in 1966** to serve as a *gateway for the maritime trade of eastern India*.
- **Paradip Port Trust**, a statutory body under the **Major Port Trusts Act, 1963**, manages and operates the port.

Key Features of the Port

- **Infrastructure:** It is equipped with modern facilities for handling a variety of cargo, including

dry bulk, liquid bulk, containerized cargo, and general cargo.

- **Deep-Draft Port:** The port has extensive berthing facilities and cargo-handling equipment capable of handling millions of tonnes of cargo annually.
- **Strategic Importance:** Paradip Port serves as a vital link for the export and import trade of eastern and central India, contributing significantly to the region's economic development.
- **Connectivity:** The port is well-connected to major cities and industrial centers in Odisha and neighbouring states through road and rail networks.

Key Feats Achieved

- **Cargo Throughput:** Paradip Port achieved a record-breaking cargo throughput of 145.38 million metric tonnes (MMT) in FY2023-24, surpassing Deendayal Port.
- **Coastal Shipping Traffic:** The port recorded the highest-ever coastal shipping traffic of 59.19 million metric tonnes, showcasing a growth of 1.30% over the previous year.
- **Thermal Coal Handling:** Thermal coal shipping reached 43.97 million metric tonnes, marking a growth of 4.02% over the previous year.
- **Revenue Growth:** Operating revenue crossed Rs 2,300 crore in FY24, reflecting a notable increase of 14.30% compared to the previous fiscal.

Driving Factors of this Success

- **Enhanced Operational Efficiency:** Mechanised coal handling plant operations were optimized, resulting in the highest handling of thermal coal at 27.12 million tonnes.
- **Productivity Improvement:** Paradip Port improved berth productivity to 33,014 MT, the highest among all ports, showcasing a growth of 6.33% over the previous financial year.
- **Rake Handling and Ship Movements:** The port handled 21,665 rakes and 2,710 ships during FY24, registering significant year-on-year growth in both metrics.

Future Prospects

- **Capacity Expansion:** With a current capacity of 289 million tonnes, Paradip Port is poised to exceed 300 million tonnes capacity in the next 3 years with the commissioning of the Western Dock project.
- **Strategic Location:** Located near a mineral-rich hinterland, Paradip Port remains a strategic asset for India's maritime trade and economic growth.

PYQ:

2017:

What is the importance of developing Chabahar Port by India?

- (a) India's trade with African countries will enormously increase.
- (b) India's relations with oil-producing Arab countries will be strengthened.
- (c) India will not depend on Pakistan for access to Afghanistan and Central Asia.
- (d) Pakistan will facilitate and protect the installation of a gas pipeline between Iraq and India.

Practice MCQ:

It is situated at the confluence of the Mahanadi River and the Bay of Bengal. It has a natural deep-water harbor, allowing it to accommodate large vessels and handle bulk cargo efficiently.

Which sea port in Odisha is being talked about by the above description?

- (a) Haldia
- (b) Gopalpur
- (c) Belikeri
- (d) Paradip

90 years of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)



Why in the news?

Recently, the RBI celebrated its 90th year in Mumbai, marking a significant milestone.

Dr. Ambedkar's Role in the Establishment of RBI:

- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's contributions were particularly notable during the Hilton Young Commission discussions in 1926, where he presented his recommendations based on his book "**The Problem of the Rupee – Its Origin and Its Solution.**"
- These discussions laid the foundation for the establishment of the RBI on April 1, 1935.

About Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

- The RBI is the central bank and monetary authority of India.
- It was established on April 1, 1935, under the **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934**.
- Its idea was incepted from the recommendations of the **Hilton Young Commission**.
- **Sir Osborne Arkell Smith**, an **Australian**, served as the inaugural Governor.
- He was **succeeded by Sir C D Deshmukh**, the **first Indian** to hold the position.
- It is a centralized institution for India to effectively regulate its monetary and credit policies.
- RBI had its **initial headquarters in Kolkata**, later moving permanently to **Mumbai in 1937**.
- Initially, the RBI operated as a **privately owned entity** until its full **nationalization in 1949**.

Functions and Initiatives:

- **Monetary Authority:** The RBI controls the supply of money in the economy to stabilize exchange rates, maintain a healthy balance of payment, and control inflation.
- **Issuer of Currency:** Sole authority to issue currency and combat circulation of counterfeit notes.
- **Banker to the Government:** Acts as a banker to both the Central and State governments, providing short-term credit and financial advisory services.
- **Lender of Last Resort:** Provides emergency liquidity assistance to banks during crises.
- **Custodian of Foreign Exchange Reserves:** Manages foreign exchange reserves and administers the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA).
- **Regulator and Supervisor of Payment and Settlement Systems:** Oversees payment and settlement systems in the country, ensuring efficiency and security.
- **Credit Control and Developmental Role:** Promotes credit availability to productive sectors and fosters financial infrastructure development.

Transformative Reforms initiated by the RBI

- **Green Revolution (1960s-1970s):** Supported agricultural growth through credit facilities and rural credit accessibility enhancements.
- **Banks Nationalization (1969):** Aimed at aligning banking sector objectives with national policy goals.
- **Priority Sector Lending (1972):** Ensures timely credit flow to key sectors of the economy.
- **Economic Liberalization (1991):** Opened up the economy to global markets, fostering market-oriented growth.
- **Unified Payment Interface (UPI), 2016:** Enabled seamless and instant transactions across India.
- **Inflation Targeting Framework, 2016:** Set inflation targets to guide monetary policy decisions.
- **Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS), 2019:** Launched an integrated bill payment system for customer convenience.

PYQ:

2012:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) acts as a bankers' bank. This would imply which of the following?

1. Banks retain their deposits with the RBI.
2. The RBI lends funds to the commercial banks in times of need.
3. The RBI advises the commercial banks on monetary matters.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

2013: Consider the following statements:

1. The Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is appointed by the Central Government.
2. Certain provisions in the Constitution of India give the Central Government the right to issue directions to the RBI in public interest.
3. The Governor of the RBI draws his power from the RBI Act.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

- **Aadhar-based eKYC (2019):** Streamlined customer authentication processes for financial institutions.
- **Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS), 2020:** Provided credit assistance to SMEs affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Central Bank Digital Currency (2022):** RBI is actively exploring the issuance of a CBDC known as e₹ (digital Rupee).
- **Cryptocurrency Regulation (2022):** RBI has maintained a consistent stance against cryptocurrencies, advocating for an outright ban on them (after China and El Salvador imposed the complete ban). In 2020, the Supreme Court of India removed the ban on cryptocurrencies imposed by RBI.
- **Payment Vision 2025 Document (2023):** The goals and vision of the RBI, are categorised in the Payments Vision 2025 documents into five anchor goalposts – Integrity, Inclusion, Innovation, Institutionalisation and Internationalisation.

Digital India Trust Agency (DIGITA) to check Illegal Lending Apps



Why in the news?

To address the rising threat of cyber fraud, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** is planning to establish a **Digital India Trust Agency (DIGITA)**.

•

PYQ:

2016:

Regarding 'DigiLocker', sometimes seen in the news, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is a digital locker system offered by the Government under Digital India Programme.
2. It allows you to access your e-documents irrespective of your physical location.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Practice MCQ:

Consider the following statements about RBI led Digital India Trust Agency (DIGITA):

1. It aims to tackle the proliferation of illegal lending apps.
2. Apps lacking the 'verified' signature from DIGITA will be deemed unauthorized.

Which of the given statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

About Digital India Trust Agency (DIGITA)

DIGITA aims to tackle the proliferation of illegal lending apps by verifying and maintaining a register of authenticated digital lending platforms.

Role of DIGITA:

1. **Public Register:** It will maintain a public register of verified apps, providing transparency and aiding law enforcement agencies in identifying unauthorised platforms.
2. **Verification Hub:** It will serve as a central agency for vetting digital lending apps, ensuring their authenticity and compliance with regulations.

Regulatory Implications

- Apps lacking the 'verified' signature from DIGITA will be deemed unauthorized, enhancing law enforcement efforts against financial crimes in the digital domain.
- Verification processes will promote transparency and accountability within the digital lending sector, curbing fraudulent activities.

Progress made so far

- The RBI has shared a list of **442 digital lending apps** with the IT Ministry for whitelisting with Google.

Google has removed over **2,200 digital lending apps** from its PlayStore, aligning with RBI and DFS directives to only allow apps from regulated entities or their partners.

15th CIDC Vishwakarma Awards 2024



Why in the news?

- SJVN Limited has won two prestigious awards at the 15th Construction Industry Development Council (CIDC) Vishwakarma Awards 2024, for their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

About CIDC Vishwakarma Awards

- The CIDC Vishwakarma Awards is one of the most esteemed recognitions within the **construction sector**.
- It was launched in the year **2005**.
- The awards are **named after Vishwakarma**, the divine architect and engineer in Hindu mythology, symbolizing craftsmanship, creativity, and skill in construction.

Key details about the Award

- **Organizer:** The awards are organized by the **Construction Industry Development Council (CIDC)**, which is a **body established by the GoI** to promote the construction industry's development and growth.
- **Categories:** The awards cover a wide spectrum of categories, including:

1. **Construction Projects:** Recognizing outstanding projects across different sectors such as residential, commercial, infrastructure, and industrial construction.
2. **Construction Technologies:** Honoring innovative technologies and techniques that enhance construction processes, efficiency, and sustainability.
3. **Construction Equipment:** Acknowledging advancements in construction machinery, tools, and equipment.
4. **Health, Safety, and Environment:** Recognizing initiatives and practices that prioritize worker safety, environmental protection, and sustainability in construction.
5. **Individual Achievements:** Celebrating the contributions of professionals and

leaders who have made significant impacts in the construction industry.

6. **Others:** Additional categories may include awards for sustainability, CSR initiatives, and emerging trends in construction.

PYQ:

2020:

In rural road construction the use of which of the following is preferred for ensuring environmental sustainability or to reduce carbon footprint?

1. Copper slag
2. Cold mix asphalt technology
3. Geotextiles
4. Hot mix asphalt technology
5. Portland cement

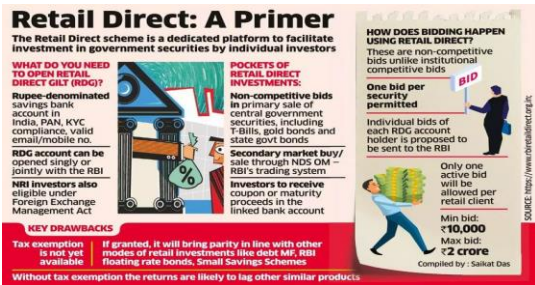
Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 4 and 5 only
- (d) 1 and 5 only

RBI to launch Mobile App for Retail Direct scheme

Why in the news?

The RBI has decided to introduce a Mobile App of its RBI Retail Direct scheme aimed at facilitating seamless investment in government securities by retail investors.



What is Retail Direct Scheme?

- Retail Direct Scheme was **rolled out in November 2021**, giving access to individual investors to **maintain gilt accounts** with RBI and invest in government securities.
- Using this app, **investors can buy central and state government bonds as well as Treasury bills.**
- It enables investors to **buy securities in primary auctions** as well as **buy/sell securities** through the Negotiated Dealing System-Order Matching system (NDS-OM) platform.
- A **Gilt Account** can be compared with a bank account, except that the **account is debited or credited with treasury bills or government securities** instead of money.

Treasury Bills:

- They are promissory notes **issued by the RBI on behalf of the government** as a short term liability and sold to banks and to the public.
- The maturity period ranges from **14 to 364 days**.
- They are the **negotiable instruments**, i.e. they are freely **transferable**.
- No interest is paid on such bills but they are **issued at a discount** on their face value.

How does it work?

- Under the scheme, small investors can buy or sell government securities (G-Secs), or bonds, **directly without an intermediary** like a mutual fund.
- However, the **same tax rules apply** to income from G-Secs.
- The **minimum amount** for a bid is **₹10,000** and in multiples of ₹10,000 thereafter.
- Payments may be made through **Net banking or the UPI**
-

PYQ:

2018:

Consider the following statements:

1. The Reserve Bank of India manages and services Government of India Securities but not any State Government Securities.
2. Treasury bills are issued by the Government of India and there are no treasury bills issued by the State Governments.
3. Treasury bills offer are issued at a discount from the par value.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Practice MCQ:

With reference to the Retail Direct Scheme of the RBI, consider the following statements:

1. Under this, investors can buy central and state government bonds as well as Treasury bills.
2. The minimum amount for a bid is ₹1,00,000.
3. Earnings through this scheme is exempted from any income tax liabilities.

How many of the given statements is/are correct?

- (a) One
- (b) Two
- (c) Three
- (d) None

Benefits of RDS

- With the government being the borrower, there is a **sovereign guarantee** for the funds and hence zero risk of default.
- Also, government securities may offer **better interest rates** than bank fixed deposits, depending on prevailing interest rate trends.

How can individuals access G-Sec offerings?

- Investors wishing to open a **Retail Direct Gilt account directly with the RBI** can do so through an online portal set up for the purpose of the scheme.

Once the account is activated with the aid of a password sent to the user’s mobile phone, investors will be permitted to buy securities **either in the primary market or in the secondary market.**

Imposition of Anti-Dumping Duty on Sodium Cyanide



Why in the news?

The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) has recently recommended the imposition of anti-dumping duty on sodium cyanide (NaCN) imported from China, the European Union, Japan, and Korea.

Sodium Cyanide and Its Applications

- Sodium cyanide is a **deadly toxic, white, crystalline** compound with the chemical formula NaCN.
- It is a **water-soluble solid**, mainly used in gold mining, electroplating, and in the synthesis of organic chemicals.
- It is **hygroscopic**. it quickly absorbs water from the air.

- In **gold mining**, sodium cyanide is used to dissolve and separate gold from its ores.
- It plays a pivotal role in various industrial processes, electroplating, metal heat treatment, and the **production of insecticides, dyes, pigments, and pharmaceuticals.**

What is Anti-Dumping Duty?

- An anti-dumping duty is a **protectionist tariff** that a domestic government imposes on foreign imports that it believes are priced below the price at which it is sold in the exporters’ domestic market.
- This is imposed with the rationale that these products have the potential to **undercut local businesses** and the local economy.
- The **World Trade Organization (WTO)** operates a set of international trade rules for the regulation of anti-dumping measures.
- In general, the WTO agreement **permits governments to act against dumping** “if it causes or threatens material injury to an established industry in the territory of a contracting party.

Anti-Dumping Mechanism in India:

- The Anti-Dumping mechanism in India is administered by the **Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD)** under the Ministry of Finance.
- The anti-dumping law in India is covered under the **Customs Tariff Act, 1975**, and the Customs Tariff Rules, 1995.
- The **DGAD conducts anti-dumping investigations** to determine if the domestic industry has been hurt by a surge in below-cost imports.

How is Anti-Dumping Duty calculated?

- The anti-dumping duty is calculated as the **difference** between the normal value and the export value of the product.
- The normal value is the market value of the product in the domestic market, while the export value is the price at which the product is exported to India.
- The anti-dumping duty is **imposed to offset the price difference** and prevent the domestic industry from being harmed by cheap imports.

PYQ:

[2015] In India, the steel production industry requires the import of-

- (a) Saltpetre
- (b) Rock phosphate
- (c) Coking coal
- (d) All of the above

- It was **started in 2015** with surveys in 13 major cities.
- The survey is conducted **across various cities** and measures consumer confidence on parameters such as the economy, employment, price, income, and spending.
- The survey consists of **questions regarding consumers' sentiments** over various factors in the current situation and future.

Here are a few parameters that help aggregate overall confidence:

1. **Spending:** The consumer is asked about the willingness to spend on major consumer durables, purchasing vehicles, or real estate. This measures the overall spending scenario on necessities as well as luxuries for the next quarter.
2. **Employment:** The consumer is asked about current and future ideas on employment situations, joblessness, job security, which reflects the sentiments of the current or expected employment in the country.
3. **Inflation:** The consumer is asked about interest rates and levels of prices of all goods, tracking the price expected by consumers and their spending on basic necessities.

Components of CCS:

1. **Current Situation Index (CSI):** It measures overall consumer sentiment regarding the present economic situation.
2. **Future Expectations Index (FEI):** It analyses consumer sentiment for the next 12 months.

CSI and FEI are calculated based on people's views about the economy, their income, spending, job opportunities, and **prices compared to the previous year** and **expectations for the year ahead**.

Key Highlights of the recent report

- **Future Expectations Index (FEI)** has climbed by 2.1 points to reach 125.2, marking its highest level since mid-2019, indicating heightened optimism among consumers for the year ahead.
- **Current Situation Index (CSI)** has surged by 3.4 points to reach 98.5, marking its highest level since mid-2019.

What is Consumer Confidence Survey?



Why in the news?

- The latest **Consumer Confidence Survey** conducted by the Reserve Bank of India in March 2024 reveals a significant boost in consumer confidence, particularly regarding future expectations.
- It says consumer confidence has hit **highest level in nearly 5 years**.

What is Consumer Confidence Survey (CCS)?

- The **RBI conducts a bi-monthly** Consumer Confidence Survey to measure consumers' perceptions of the prevailing economic situation.

PYQ:

[2018] As per the NSSO 70th Round “Situation Assessment Survey of Agricultural Households”, consider the following statements-

1. Rajasthan has the highest percentage share of agricultural households among its rural households.
2. Out of the total agricultural households in the country, a little over 60 percent belong to OBCs.
3. In Kerala, a little over 60 percent of agricultural households reported to have received maximum income from sources other than agricultural activities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 2 and 3 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

- Ashwagandha exports have surged by 8 times in the past six years, penetrating markets like the United States, Czech Republic, and Canada.
- The Ayurvedic industry in India has been growing at a **Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 17%**, with the industry size increasing from \$3 billion in 2014 to \$24 billion today.
- **Gujarat**, with about 850 Ayurvedic manufacturing units, ranks fourth in the country after Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, and Maharashtra.
- India leads in Ashwagandha production and export, with states like **Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh** emerging as key producers.
- The herb is exported primarily as extracts and has gained significant traction in the United States, where it competes with **Chinese Ginseng**.

What is Ashwagandha?

- Also known as **Indian Ginseng or Withania somnifera**, Ashwagandha belongs to a group of herbs known as ‘**adaptogens**’ (best **rejuvenating agent**).
- It is available in various forms such as **extracts, powder, and raw herbs**, catering to domestic and international markets.

Medicinal Properties and Usage:

- In treatment of *rheumatic pain, inflammation of joints, nervous disorders and epilepsy*.
- Used as a tonic for *hiccup, cold, cough, female disorders, as a sedative, in care of senile debility, ulcers, etc.*
- **Leaves** are applied for carbuncles, inflammation and swellings. Leaf juice is useful in conjunctivitis.
- **Bark decoction** is taken for asthma and applied locally to bed sores.
- Ashwagandha and its **extracts** are used in the preparation of herbal tea, powders, tablets, and syrups.

Cultivation of Ashwagandha

- **Ashwagandha-growing states:** Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

Growth in Ashwagandha Exports



Why in the news?

- Being a **hardy and drought-tolerant crop**, Ashwagandha requires a **relatively dry season** throughout its growing period.
- It is grown as late **rainy season (kharif) crop** between 600-1200 m altitudes.
- It grows well in sandy loam or light red soil having **pH 7.5 to 8.0** (alkaloid) with good drainage.
- **Black soil** or such heavy soil is suitable for cultivation.

- The Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in Bengaluru has been honored as the **Best Regional Airport in India and South Asia** at the esteemed 2024 Skytrax World Airport Awards.
- Since its inauguration in 2023, KIA Terminal-2 has garnered multiple accolades, including the **UNESCO Prix Versailles World’s Most Beautiful Airport**

About Skytrax World Airport Awards

- The Skytrax World Airport Awards are **annual awards, established in 1999** presented by Skytrax, a **UK-based consultancy** specializing in airline and airport research.
- Since then, it has become a **globally recognized authority in airline and airport research**, known for its comprehensive passenger surveys and prestigious awards.
- These awards are considered one of the most prestigious recognitions in the aviation industry and are often referred to as the **“Oscars of the aviation industry.”**
 - **Various categories of Award:** Best Airport, Best Regional Airport, Best Airport Terminal, and Best Airport Staff, among others.

Evaluation Criteria:

- **Rigorous evaluations** of various aspects, including check-in procedures, arrivals, transfers, shopping facilities, security, immigration processes, and departures.
- **Feedback from airport customers** of over 100 nationalities across 550 airports worldwide during a seven-month survey period contributed to the assessment.

Winners of the 2024 Awards

- **Doha’s Hamad International Airport** clinched the top spot, dethroning **Singapore Changi Airport**, which had held the title for 12 consecutive years.
- Hamad International Airport is praised for its architectural significance and luxurious amenities, covering an area equivalent to 75 football fields.

PYQ:

[2010] Consider the following statements:

1. The Taxus tree is naturally found in the Himalayas
2. The Taxus tree is listed in the Red Data Book.
3. A drug called “taxol” is obtained from Taxus tree is effective against Parkinson’s disease

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 1 and 2 only

(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 3 only

Bengaluru Airport bags 2024 Skytrax World Airport Awards



Why in the news?

- **Seoul Incheon Airport** secured third place overall and was recognized as the most family-friendly airport.

Performance of key Indian Airports:

- **Delhi Airport** retained its position at **36th place** in the overall rankings.
- **Mumbai Airport** saw a slight decline, dropping to **95th place** from its previous rank of 84.

- **Bengaluru Airport** experienced a notable improvement, climbing 10 ranks to **59th place** compared to last year’s 69th position.
- **Hyderabad Airport** also showed improvement, rising to **61st place** from its previous rank of 65th.
- **Goa’s Manohar International Airport** secured the **92nd spot** in the overall rankings.

Environment & Diversity

Taiwan’s Earthquake and the Pacific Ring of Fire



Why in the news?

- Taiwan was struck by its **most powerful earthquake** in at least 25 years.
- Its susceptibility to earthquakes is attributed to its **location along the Pacific “Ring of Fire”** where a majority of the world’s seismic activity occurs.
- Taiwan is primarily influenced by the collision of the **Philippine Sea Plate** and the **Eurasian Plate**.

What is the Pacific ‘Ring of Fire’?

- The Pacific ‘Ring of Fire’ or **Pacific Rim**, or the **Circum-Pacific Belt**, is an area along the Pacific Ocean that is characterized by **active volcanoes and frequent earthquakes**.
- **Volcanic arcs and oceanic trenches** partly encircling the Pacific Basin form the so-called Ring of Fire.
- It is home to about **75 per cent of the world’s volcanoes** – more than **450 volcanoes**.

- Also, about 90 per cent of the world’s earthquakes occur here.

Its spread

- Its length is over 40,000 kilometres and traces from New Zealand clockwise in an almost circular arc covering **Tonga, Kermadec Islands, Indonesia.**
- It is moving up to the **Philippines, Japan, and stretching eastward to the Aleutian Islands**, then southward along the western coast of North America and South America.

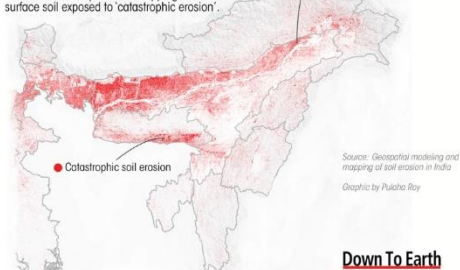
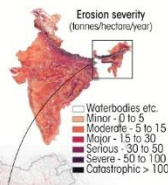
Seismic activity of the region

- The area is along several tectonic plates including the **Pacific plate, Philippine Plate, Juan de Fuca plate, Cocos plate, Nazca plate, and North American plate.**
- The movement of these plates or **tectonic activity** makes the area witness abundant earthquakes and tsunamis every year.
- Along much of the Ring, tectonic plates move towards each other creating **subduction zones**.
- One plate gets pushed down or is subducted by the other plate.
- This is a very slow process – a movement of just one or two inches per year.
- As this subduction happens, rocks melt, become magma and move to Earth’s surface and cause volcanic activity.

India’s Soil Erosion Trends: Insights from a New Study

FACTSHEET: SOIL EROSION

In a first, a study conducted by a group of researchers, has come out with pan-India data on surface soil erosion. While soil erosion is a natural phenomenon, increase in land use and land cover — which can be attributed to anthropogenic intervention like deforestation and rigorous farming practice over the years — has led to large swathes of land exposed to water erosion. In a damning observation, a little over 3% of the total surface soil in India has reported ‘catastrophic erosion’ or where erosion has been over 100 tonnes per hectare per year. Assam — and in particular the Brahmaputra valley — being one of the major hotspots for erosion, has reported a whopping 31% of its total surface soil exposed to ‘catastrophic erosion’.



threats to biodiversity and environmental stability.

Causes of Soil Erosion

- Anthropogenic Causes:** Soil erosion in India is primarily caused by human activities including deforestation, overgrazing, improper land use practices, and construction activities.
- Natural Causes:** The monsoon season, characterized by heavy rainfall, exacerbates soil erosion, especially in regions with steep slopes and poor vegetation cover.

Impact of Soil Erosion

- Topsoil, essential for agriculture due to its nutrient-rich composition, is crucial for sustaining crop growth.
- Erosion diminishes soil fertility, leading to reduced crop yields and agricultural productivity.

Why in the news?

- Titled “Geospatial modelling and mapping of soil erosion in India,” the report marks the first attempt to classify soil erosion on a pan-India basis.
- The study categorizes soil erosion into six classifications, ranging from “minor” to “catastrophic,” based on the amount of soil eroded per hectare over a year.

Soil Erosion in India

- Soil erosion is the process by which soil is removed or displaced from its original location, often due to the action of wind, water, or human activities.
- It is a natural geological process accelerated by various factors such as deforestation, overgrazing, improper agricultural practices, urbanization, and climate change.

Key trends in India

- Nearly **30% of the country’s landmass is experiencing “minor” soil erosion.**
- Critical **3% (approx. 1500 sq km)** faces “catastrophic” topsoil loss.
- The **Brahmaputra Valley in Assam emerged as the most significant hotspot** for soil erosion, with close to 300 square kilometers or 31% of its surface soil lost to “catastrophic” erosion.
- The lower Himalayan region, extending from Kashmir to Uttarakhand and beyond, and Odisha also face severe erosion challenges, posing

PYQ:

[2014] In India, the problem of soil erosion is associated with which of the following?

1. Terrace cultivation
2. Deforestation
3. Tropical climate’

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

NGT Intervention to prevent Stubble Burning



Why in the news?

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Punjab government to devise a comprehensive strategy for managing the estimated 19.52 million tonnes of paddy stubble in the state.

NGT intervention in Punjab

- The ban and action against people burning crop residue are **regulated under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.**
- Punjab is **required to provide details on the steps taken** to utilize paddy straw in the previous year, including the mode and manner of removal, transportation, and utilization in various units.
- Punjab estimated an increase in paddy straw generation to **52 million tonnes in 2024**, with a projected utilization of 18.66 million tonnes.
- Notably, the **off-site utilization** is expected to see a significant 60% increase, with 5.96 million tonnes being utilized in industrial and energy plants.

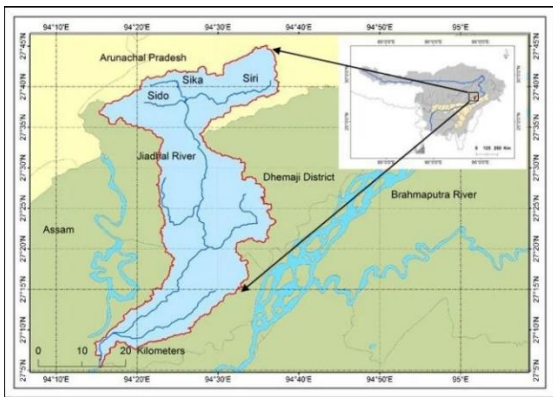
Alternatives used for Stubble Burning

- **In-Situ Treatment:** This involves managing crop residue directly in the field. Examples include using zero-tiller machines and bio-decomposers to break down stubble.
- **Ex-Situ Treatment:** This method involves treating crop residue outside the field. An example is using rice straw as cattle fodder.
- **Turbo Happy Seeder (THS) Technique:** This can uproot stubble and sow seeds while clearing the field. The stubble can then be used as mulch.

About National Green Tribunal (NGT)

	Description
Establishment	Formed in 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act as a statutory body.
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deal with cases related to environmental issues and ensure speedy implementation of decisions. • Responsible for making many prominent decisions aimed at environmental protection, including addressing air pollution in Delhi and cancelling coal block clearances.
Composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headquartered in Delhi, chaired by a retired Supreme Court judge • Included Judicial Members and Expert Panel.
Powers	<p>Empowered to decide on questions related to various environmental laws and hear civil cases concerning environmental issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974; 2. The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977; 3. The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980; 4. The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981; 5. The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; 6. The Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991; 7. The Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
Exceptions	<p>Prohibited to hear any issues which are covered under:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Indian Forest Act, 1927, 2. The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, and 3. Any other laws made by States which are related to protection of trees, forests, etc.
Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal bench in Delhi; • Additional benches in Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata, and Chennai.
Governing Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governed by principles of natural justice, not bound by Indian Evidence Act. • Applies principles of sustainable development, precautionary, and polluter pays.
Review and Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGT orders can be reviewed as per Rule 22 of NGT Rules. • Can be challenged before the Supreme Court within ninety days.

Jiadhal River and Change of its Course



Why in the news?

- Climate Change is disrupting **Jiadhal River's** (Dhemaji district, Assam) tranquil flow, leading to unprecedented shifts in its course and causing upheaval for residents.

About Jiadhal River:

- It flows through the districts of **Darrang, Udalguri, and Baksa** in the northeastern state of Assam.
 - It is also known **Kumotiya River** after flowing from Gogamukh.
- **Origin:** From the Hills of Bhutan, flows through the Assam Himalayas before meandering through the plains of Assam. It is formed by the confluence of several smaller streams.
- **Major tributaries:** *Kolong River* and the *Daokao River*.
- It eventually **joins the Brahmaputra River** near the town of Nalbari.
- It is known as the '**Sorrow of Dhemaji**' for the heavy damage caused by annual floods and erosion.

Factors leading to changes in the Jiadhal River's Course

- **Erosion:** Flowing water gradually wears away the riverbanks and bed, causing the river to meander and change course.
- **Sediment deposition:** Accumulation of sediment can create new channels or alter the flow pattern of the river.

- **Human activities:** Dams, channelization, urbanization, deforestation, and mining can disrupt natural river processes, leading to changes in flow and morphology.
- **Climate change:** Changes in precipitation, temperature, and glacier melt affect river flow patterns and behavior.
- **Tectonic activity:** Uplift, subsidence, and faulting influence river topography and drainage patterns, leading to adjustments in course and behavior.

PYQ:

[2017] With reference to river Teesta, consider the following statements:

1. The source of river Teesta is the same as that of Brahmaputra but it flows through Sikkim.
2. River Rangeet originates in Sikkim and it is a tributary of river Teesta.
3. River Teesta falls into Bay of Bengal at the border of India and Bangladesh.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 3 only
 (b) 2 only
 (c) 2 and 3 only
 (d) 1, 2 and 3

Norms tweaked for Green Credit Programme



Why in the news?

The Union Environment Ministry has rolled out norms for the Green Credit Programme (GCP).

Guidelines and Modifications:

1. The Environment Ministry’s recent guidelines **empower ‘States’ to determine afforestation density** based on local conditions, acknowledging the variability in forest ecosystems.
2. **Indigenous species are prioritized**, and naturally occurring seedlings are retained to foster ecosystem resilience.

What is Green Credit Programme (GCP)?

- The GCP as **notified on October 13, 2023** by the government of India, is an innovative market-based mechanism.
- This program is part of the broader **‘LIFE’ campaign (Lifestyle for Environment)**, and it encourages and rewards voluntary environmentally positive actions.
- It involves **various stakeholders** like- individuals, farmers, communities, private sector industries, and companies.
- The **Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE)**, based in Dehradun, serves as the GCP Administrator, responsible for programme implementation, management, monitoring, and operation.
- **Initially**, the GCP focuses on **water conservation and afforestation**.

What are Green Credits?

- The green credit rules notified under the **Environment (Protection) Act 1986** defines ‘green credit’ as a **single unit of an incentive provided for a specific activity** that delivers a positive impact on the environment.
- **Each tree** planted and evaluated by the ICFRE **after two years could yield one ‘green credit,’** which can be utilized in two ways:
 1. Compliance with forest laws necessitating recompense for forest land diversion.
 2. Reporting under environmental, social, and governance norms or meeting corporate social responsibility requirements.

Activities under GCP

The GCP includes numerous activities, such as:

	Description
Tree Plantation-based Green Credit	Promotes increasing the green cover through tree plantations and related activities.
Water-based Green Credit	Promotes water conservation, harvesting, and efficiency, including wastewater treatment and reuse.
Sustainable Agriculture-based Green Credit	Promotes natural and regenerative agricultural practices, land restoration, and soil health improvement.
Waste Management-based Green Credit	Promotes sustainable waste management practices, including collection, segregation, and treatment.
Air Pollution Reduction-based Green Credit	Promotes measures to reduce air pollution and other pollution abatement activities.
Mangrove Conservation and Restoration-based Green Credit	Promotes conservation and restoration of mangroves, critical ecosystems for coastal protection and biodiversity.
Ecomark-based Green Credit	Encourages manufacturers to obtain Ecomark labels for their goods and services, signifying environmental sustainability.
Sustainable Building and Infrastructure-based Green Credit	Promotes sustainable practices in building and infrastructure development, including energy efficiency, renewable energy use, and eco-friendly construction materials.

Notable Feature: Green Credit Registry

- The ICFRE, alongside experts, is developing the **Green Credit Registry** and **trading platforms** to facilitate the registration, buying, and selling of green credits.
- To obtain green credits, individuals and entities must **register their activities** through the central government’s dedicated app/website (www.moefcc-gcp.in).
- The **administrator verifies activities** through a designated agency, with self-verification for small projects. Once verified, the administrator issues a tradeable green credit certificate.

Future prospects

The programme is currently in a **pilot phase**, with ongoing deliberations on:

1. Quantifying the contributions of **shrubs and grasses** to green credits;
2. Equivalence between **green and carbon credits**;

3. Allocation of **credits for compensatory afforestation.**

PYQ:

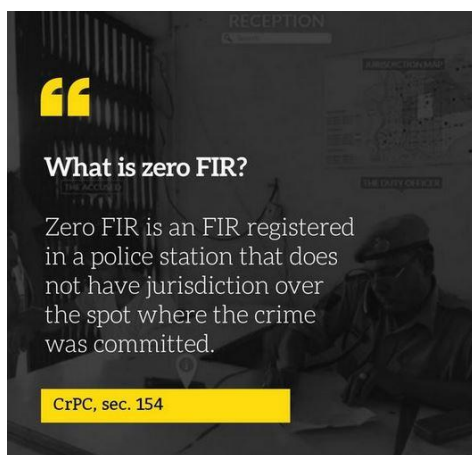
[2011] Regarding “carbon credits”, which one of the following statements is not correct?

- (a) The carbon credit system was ratified in conjunction with the Kyoto Protocol
- (b) Carbon credits are awarded to countries or groups that have reduced greenhouse gases below their emission quota
- (c) The goal of the carbon credit system is to limit the increase of carbon dioxide emission
- (d) Carbon credits are traded at a price fixed from time to time by the United Nations Environment Programme.



Governance

What is Zero FIR?



Why in the news?

- The Hyderabad Police have initiated a zero FIR case against former minister for alleged derogatory remarks against Telangana CM.

First Information Report (FIR)

- An FIR is a written document prepared by the police upon **receiving information about a cognisable offence.**
- It is when an **officer can arrest a suspect without a court’s warrant** if/she has “reason to believe” that the person committed the offence and arrest is necessary based on certain factors.
- It serves as the first step towards **initiating the investigation process** and subsequent police actions.
- **Section 154(1) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC)** empowers the police to register an FIR for cognizable offences.
- **Section 166A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC)** provides punishment for public servants failing to record information related to a cognizable offence, with imprisonment of up to two years and a fine.

What is Zero FIR?

- **Provision and Purpose:** Zero FIR allows any police station to register an FIR for a cognisable offence without assigning a regular FIR number initially.
- **No diary:** Whereas FIRs have serial numbers assigned to them, zero FIRs are assigned the number '0'. Hence the name.

Features of a Zero FIR:

1. **Swift Action:** The relevant police station subsequently registers a fresh FIR and commences the investigation.
2. **Focus on Victims:** It is designed to expedite complaint lodging, particularly for serious crimes involving women and children, without the need to approach multiple police stations.
3. **Preserving Evidence:** Early registration helps prevent the loss or tampering of crucial evidence and witnesses.
4. **Transferred Jurisdiction:** The Zero FIR is later transferred to the relevant police station where the offence occurred or where the investigation should be conducted.

How does it work?

- After a police station registers a zero FIR, it has to transfer the complaint to a police station that has the jurisdiction to investigate the alleged offence.
- Once a zero FIR is transferred, the police station with the appropriate jurisdiction assigns it a serial number, thereby converting it into a regular FIR.

Legal Provisions for Zero FIR

The provision of Zero FIR finds support in various judgments and recommendations:

1. **Satvinder Kaur vs. State (1999):** The Delhi High Court held that a woman has the right to lodge her complaint from any place other than where the incident occurred.
2. **Justice Verma Committee (2012):** The introduction of Zero FIR was based on the recommendation of the Justice Verma Committee, which was formed in response to the 2012 Nirbhaya gangrape case.

3. **Lalita Kumari vs. Govt. of UP (2014):** The Supreme Court ruled that registration of an FIR is mandatory when information discloses the commission of a cognizable offence.

PYQ:

2021: With reference to India, consider the following statements:

1. Judicial custody means an accused is in the custody of the concerned magistrate and such accused is locked-up in police station, not in jail.
2. During judicial custody, the police officer in charge of the case is not allowed to interrogate the suspect without the approval of the court.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Practice MCQ:

Regarding the Zero FIR, consider the following statements:

1. Zero FIR allows any police station to register an FIR for a cognizable offence without assigning a regular FIR number initially.
2. Whereas FIRs have serial numbers assigned to them, zero FIRs are assigned the number '0'.

Which of the given statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Patanjali Misleading Advertisement Case



Patanjali Misleading Ads Case: What Supreme Court Said

- "We will rip you apart": Top Court to Uttarakhand government
- "Uttarakhand Government is hand in glove with Patanjali"
- "You are deliberately keeping your eyes shut": Top Court to Uttarakhand government
- "You are acting like a post office for them": Top Court to Uttarakhand government
- "What about the faceless people who consumed the medicines?": Top Court to Patanjali

NDTV



Why in the news?

- The Supreme Court ruling refusing to accept Patanjali's MD's unconditional apologies underscores the gravity of intentionally misleading advertisements and their repercussions.
- Despite apologies, Patanjali's breach of its commitment **not to disseminate false claims** about curing various illnesses led to this decision.

Misconceptions spread by Allopathy

Save yourself and the country from the misconceptions spread by pharma and medical industry. Let's make India disease free.



The life of the people taking medicines for years to control diseases like the B.P., Sugar, Thyroid, Asthma, and cholesterol etc. has become hell due to the side effects of these medicines and prolonged diseases. With scientific research on the knowledge obtained from great sages like Charaka, Sushruta, Dhanvantari and Patanjali, we have succeeded in making all the disease and making scores of people completely free from all diseases.

Diabetes
People requiring taking prescribed medicines for years, people suffering from B.P. are facing further complications like heart or brain stroke, kidney failure, arthritis and macular etc.

Diabetes
However we have successfully cured scores of patients with the help of regular Pranayam, Yoga, Shirodhara, massages and medicines such as gourd juice, Bilwari and Maltavali. Our therapies have brought them B.P. levels in normal range along with other complications completely resolved.

Diabetes
People taking allopathic medicine for years, people suffering from diabetes are facing further complications like heart or brain stroke, kidney failure, arthritis and macular etc.

Diabetes
With Integrated Treatment, Shirodhara, Basti, Medicatedoil, Cucumber, Bitter Gourd, Tomato, Amla along with Aloe Vera juice, Glycerin and a balanced diet, we have saved people from diabetes and its complications. Also, for the first time in the world, we have succeeded in completely curing type-1 diabetes to make patients completely non-diabetic.

Diabetes
Patients are becoming overweight and underweight and suffering from depression and depression etc. in spite of taking allopathic medicines.

Diabetes
We have freed people from thyroid and its complications by treating them with the Thyrogl, carotene water and Kapalbhati, Ujjayi etc. completely cured.

Diabetes
Allopathy has no cure for vision impairment, glaucoma, macular degeneration etc.

Diabetes
Yoga practice along with medicines like Eyegrit, Amla Syrup, Gargi and Kampana etc. we have given people freedom from eye and ear diseases.

Diabetes
Allopathy has no permanent cure for Fatty liver, Liver cirrhosis and Hepatitis (A, B, C & D).

Diabetes
On the other hand, we have cured people of fatty liver, liver cirrhosis, hepatitis and made their digestive system completely healthy with regular Yoga practices such as Basti and medicines like Sarsaparilla, Kewra, Punarnava juice, Livogrit and Livogrit etc.

Diabetes
Demeroloids have no permanent cure for Leucoderma, Eczema, Psoriasis, Medicines used in such cases contain steroids and different types of chemicals which ultimately make the patient suffer from further complications.

Diabetes
Yoga, Ayurveda, Integriyuty, Panchakarma, Shirodhara, Gourd Amla + Room Charvati and Panch Mahabada therapy as well as Kapalbhati, Dhanu, Pranayam, purify the body to give people permanent freedom from skin diseases.

Diabetes
Allopathy has made people's life hell by giving pain killers, steroids and biological drugs for arthritis. These cause weakness of bones and digestive system, also such medicines often result in inflicting the patients with diabetes and blindness etc.

Diabetes
Through Integrated Yoga Practices, Prasad Gold with Prasad gels, Shirogri, Shirodhara and Shirodhara, the Vajrasana, Anandrasana, Anaprasana, Anaprasana, Leach Therapy, Chiropractic, Medical Yoga, Valerian Bath and Balaia Basti etc. we have freed people from Arthritis, Cervical, Spondylitis etc. Joint diseases.

Diabetes
In allopathy, there is no medicine for it, inhalers and steroids used to treat such situations give temporary relief and patients lungs get affected for life.

Diabetes
We have successfully cured Asthma and Lung Diseases etc. with Shirodhara, Kapalbhati, Anandrasana, Pranayam and Bhujangasana, Leucoderma etc. Yoga practices along with medicines such as Sarsaparilla, Valerian, Gourd and Gourd Gold etc. In fact we have permanently cured demeroloids.

Diabetes
Allopathy has no authentic and permanent cure for diseases like heart blockage, SLE, MS, AIDS, HIV, HAREZ, Auto Immune Disease, Infertility, UTI and Stroke etc.

Diabetes
We have cured thousands of patients suffering from such chronic and life-threatening diseases. We have scientific evidence for this and anyone can visit our website www.patanjaliwellness.com to see them.

1. **False Claims:** Advertisements with untrue statements about a product's features or benefits.
2. **Exaggerated Claims:** Ads that overstate a product's benefits beyond reason.
3. **Omission of Material Information:** Ads that hide important details consumers need to know.
4. **Comparative Advertising:** Ads unfairly attacking competitors' products.
5. **Endorsements and Testimonials:** Ads using fake endorsements or testimonials.
6. **Health and Safety Claims:** Ads with unproven health or safety benefits.

Bait-and-Switch Tactics: Ads luring with false promises and switching to different offers.

The Concept of Obiter Dicta Lexicon:

- In the context of the criticism directed towards the Hon'ble Supreme Court Bench's statement in the Patanjali case, the concept of "obiter dicta lexicon" may find relevance.
- "Obiter dicta" is a Latin term that translates to "things said by the way" and refers to statements made by a judge in passing, which are **not essential to the decision of the case at hand**.
- It refers to the use of language or expressions that are not directly relevant to the legal reasoning or decision-making process in a court judgment or opinion.

SC Bench Statement on Patanjali's Apology:

- The statement "**we will rip you apart**" is being criticized for being overly aggressive and potentially inappropriate for a judicial setting.
- Therefore, in this case, the use of language that **deviated from the core legal issues** at hand and instead conveyed a sense of aggression or hostility could be viewed as part of the "obiter dicta lexicon."

Regulatory Authorities dealing with the Issue:

1. **Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI):** Ensures fairness and compliance with the ASCI Code in Indian commercials.
2. **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA):** Regulates consumer rights violations,

Understanding Misleading Advertisements:

- The **Consumer Protection Act, 2019** prohibits unfair trade practices, including misleading advertisements, and provides mechanisms for consumers to seek redressal for grievances related to misleading advertising.

Following are the types of Misleading Ads:

unfair trade practices, and misleading marketing detrimental to public interests. It has issued the Guidelines for the Prevention and Endorsement of Misleading Advertisements, 2022.

Key Legislation dealing with Misleading Ads:

1. Bureau of Indian Standards (Certification) Regulations, 1988
2. Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006
3. The Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act of 1955 (DOMA)
4. The Drug and Cosmetics Act of 1940
5. The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act of 2003

About the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act of 1955 (DOMA):

- The Magic Remedies Act encompasses the **definition of “drug”**.
- It extends to include articles like ***talismans, mantras, and charms*** purportedly possessing miraculous healing powers.

Here are the key provisions of the Act:

1. **Prohibition of Certain Advertisements:** The Act prohibits advertisements that claim to prevent or cure certain diseases or ailments listed in Schedule J of the Act through drugs or remedies. These diseases include conditions like cancer, tuberculosis, diabetes, and epilepsy.

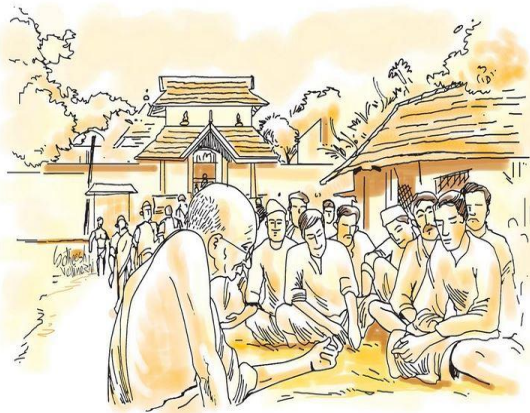
2. **Prohibition of Misleading Advertisements:** The Act prohibits advertisements that are false or misleading in any material particular regarding the nature, substance, quality, or potency of any drug or remedy.
3. **Cognizance of Offences:** No court shall take cognizance of any offence under the Act except on a complaint made by the government or by a person authorized by the government.
4. **Exemptions:** The Act provides exemptions for advertisements of drugs or remedies containing certain substances or preparations listed in Schedule J if the advertisement conforms to the conditions specified in the Schedule.

Violations made by Patanjali Ayurveda

1. **Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act of 1954 (DOMA):** By disseminating deceptive advertisements, Patanjali breached Section 4 of the DOMA, which prohibits the publication of false drug ads.
2. **Consumer Protection Act of 2019 (CPA):** Patanjali made false claims in their advertisements about curing different illnesses, contravening Section 2(28) of the CPA, which defines “misleading advertisement”.
3. **Violation of MoU between Ministry of AYUSH and ASCI:** Patanjali’s actions breached the memorandum signed between the Ministry of AYUSH and the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), indicating non-compliance with agreed-upon standards for advertising practices.

History

100 Years of Vaikom Satyagraha



Why in the news?

This year April 1st marks 100 years of the Vaikom Satyagraha, in Kottayam, Kerala.

About Vaikom Satyagraha

- Vaikom was the epicentre of the Vaikom Satyagraha, which began in 1924.
- This movement aimed to **challenge the ban imposed on marginalized communities** from entering the vicinity of the **Vaikom Mahadevar Temple** in the princely state of Travancore.

- It sparked similar **temple entry movements across India**, advocating for the rights of untouchables and backward castes.
- It introduced **nonviolent public protest** as a method of resistance in Kerala.

A Precursor to the Vaikom Satyagraha

1. Social and Political Developments

- **Backdrop of Social Injustice:** Travancore, characterized by feudal and caste-based governance, imposed stringent restrictions on lower castes, denying them entry to temples and public spaces.
- **Emergence of Social Consciousness:** By the late 19th century, progressive reforms and missionary activities led to increased awareness and education among lower castes, particularly the Ezhavas.
- **Rise of Educated Elite:** Educated individuals from diverse backgrounds, including lower castes, began to challenge social norms and demand equality in opportunities and rights.

2. Beginning of Agitation

- **Advocacy for Change:** Ezhava leader T K Madhavan spearheaded efforts to challenge temple entry restrictions, advocating for direct action to confront discriminatory practices.
- **Influence of Gandhi's Ideals:** Inspired by Gandhi's principles of non-cooperation, Madhavan sought support from the Indian National Congress (INC) to mobilize a mass movement against untouchability.

Actual Course of Events

1. Agitation

- Leaders such as **T.K. Madhavan, K.P. Kesava Menon, and George Joseph** spearheaded the agitation.

- Despite facing resistance and arrests by the police, the Satyagrahis persisted in their protest for over a year, resulting in numerous arrests and jails.

- Notable figures like **Mahatma Gandhi, Chattampi Swamikal, and Sree Narayana Guru** extended their support to the movement, which gained nationwide recognition.

- The **involvement of women** and support from various regions, including Punjab, highlighted the widespread impact of the Satyagraha.

2. Suspension:

- Initially **suspended in April 1924 at Gandhi's suggestion**, the movement resumed when attempts to resolve the issue with caste Hindu leaders failed.
- The absence of leaders like **T.K. Madhavan and K.P. Kesava Menon, who were arrested**, posed challenges to the movement.
- V. Ramaswamy Naicker (**Periyar**) lent **support** from Tamil Nadu before also being arrested.

- The resolution for the **right to temple entry** faced resistance in the Assembly, thwarted by traditionalist support and government pressure.

3. Aftermath

- On October 1, 1924, a **procession of Savarnas (forward castes)** submitted a **petition** to the Regent Maharani Sethu Lakshmi Bai of Travancore, **signed by around 25,000 individuals**, urging for the temple's open entry.
- Gandhi's meeting with the Regent Maharani and the **procession led by Mannath Padmanabhan Nair** underscored the growing support for the cause.
- Eventually, on November 23, 1925, **all temple gates were opened to Hindus** except the eastern gate, marking a significant victory.

- The Vaikom Satyagraha laid the groundwork for the **temple entry proclamation of Kerala in 1936** and inspired similar movements' nationwide, promoting social justice and equality.

Rakhigarhi findings to be mentioned in NCERT books

'NO TRACE OF STEPPE PASTORALISTS, IRANIAN FARMERS'

► 'An Ancient Harappan Genome Lacks Ancestry from Steppe Pastoralists or Iranian Farmers' is the first study of a genome from a Harappan site

► The study reports an ancient genome from the Indus Valley Civilisation where one individual has been sequenced by the report's authors

► It speaks of who the Harappans were

► The report argues that the sampled ancient genomes from the Iranian plateau and Indus Valley Civilisation **descend from different groups of hunter-gatherers** who began farming without being connected by substantial movement



of people. In effect, the Harappan genome lacks Iranian farmers' ancestry

► This also appears to imply that **farming began independently in India**, since the migrants who built the

Harappan civilisation were not farmers when they came to India

► The DNA sequencing shows a mixture of people related to ancient Iranians (the largest component) and southeast Asian hunter-gatherers

► When the Harappan civilisation – comprising early Indians and West Asians – was built, the **steppe pastoralists, understood to have brought the Indo-Aryan languages to India, were not present** in the region. It also, in effect, challenges the Aryan invasion theory

► Report suggests that individual profile had little, if any, Steppe pastoral-derived ancestry

Why in the news?

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has proposed to add information about the DNA analysis of skeletal remains found at Rakhigarhi.

DNA Findings of Rakhigarhi

This research was conducted by the *Deccan College Deemed University, Pune*, in collaboration with the *Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad*, and *The Harvard Medical College*.

Their key findings include-

- Debunking of the **Aryan Invasion Theory**.
- The genetic roots of the Harappans **date back to 10,000 BCE**.
- DNA of the Harappans has **continued to exist among the majority** of the South Asian population.
- The study indicates **genetic continuity** without large-scale immigration.

- People from bordering areas and distant regions were **absorbed into Indian society**.
- Ancestry was **closely linked to Iranian ancestry** and not at all to Steppe ancestry.
- **Farming skills have been developed indigenously** contrary to prevalent theories that these came with migrants from the Steppes and Anatolian farmers.



About Rakhigarhi

- The ancient site of **Rakhi-Khas and Rakhi-Shahpur** are collectively known as Rakhigarhi, located on the right bank of the now dried up **Palaeo-channel of Drishadvati**.
- It is located in the **Ghaggar-Hakra River** plain in the Hissar district of Haryana.
- Total **seven mounds** are located here.
- The site has yielded **various stages of Harappan culture** and is by far one of the largest Harappan sites in India.
- The site shows the **sequential development** of the Indus culture in the now dried up Saraswati basin.

PYQ:

2021:

Which one of the following ancient towns is well-known for its elaborate system of water harvesting and management by building a series of dams and channelizing water into connected reservoirs?

- (a) Dholavira
- (b) Kalibangan
- (c) Rakhigarhi
- (d) Ropar

Practice MCQ:

With reference to the Rakhigarhi Archaeological Complex, consider the following statements:

1. It is located on the right bank of the now dried up Palaeo-channel of Drishadvati.
2. It shows the sequential development of the Indus culture.
3. Excavations shows bronze utensils.
4. Precious metals such as gold and silver are totally absent.

How many of the above discussed features is/are correct?

- A) One
- B) Two
- C) Three
- D) Four

Major findings at Rakhi Garhi

- Findings confirm both early and mature Harappan phases and include **4,600-year-old human skeletons**, fortification and bricks.

- Digging so far reveals a well-planned city with **92 m wide roads**, a bit wider than in Kalibangan.
- The **pottery is similar to Kalibangan** and Banawali.
- **Pits surrounded by walls** have been found, which are thought to be for sacrificial or some religious ceremonies.
- There are **brick-lined drains** to handle sewage from the houses.
- **Terracotta statues, weights, bronze artefacts, comb, copper fish hooks**, needles and terracotta seals have also been found.
- A **bronze vessel** has been found which is decorated with **gold and silver**.
- A **granary** belonging to the mature Harappan phase has been found here.

Fire altars structures were revealed in Rakhigarhi.

Anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre



Why in the news?

On April 13, 1919, Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer ordered British troops to open fire on a peaceful

gathering in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, leaving a deep scar on India's collective memory.

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

1. **Background: Protesting the contentious Rowlatt Act**

- The act officially known as the **Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, 1919** was passed in 1919 by the Imperial Legislative Council.
- It had authorized the **British government to arrest anybody** suspected of terrorist activities.
- It also authorized the government to detain such people **arrested for up to 2 years without trial**.
- It empowered the **police to search a place without a warrant**. It also placed severe restrictions on the freedom of the press.
- The primary intention of colonial govt. was **to repress the growing nationalist movement** in the country.
- The British were also **afraid of a Ghadarite Revolution in Punjab** and the rest of the country.

1. **The day**

- The massacre took place on **13 April 1919** when troops of the British Indian Army (**Gurkha and Sikh infantry regiments**) under the command of **Col. Reginald Dyer** fired rifles into a crowd of Indians.
- The civilians had assembled for a peaceful protest to condemn the arrest and deportation of two national leaders, **Satya Pal and Saifuddin Kitchlew**.
- Dyer **without warning ordered his troops to fire** at the unarmed crowd which included children as well.
- The indiscriminate firing went on for about 10 minutes which resulted in the **deaths of at least**

1000 people and injured more than 1500 people.

1. **Aftermath**

- In protest against the massacre, **Rabindranath Tagore gave up his knighthood**.
- **Gandhiji relinquished his title 'Kaiser-e-hind'** bestowed on him by the British for his services during the Boer War in South Africa.
- **Michael O'Dwyer**, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab, who had approved the actions of Dyer, was **assassinated by Udham Singh in London in 1940** as revenge against the massacre.
- The heroic treatment of Dyer's heinous act again set a benchmark of colonial arrogance.

Hunter Commission for Inquiry

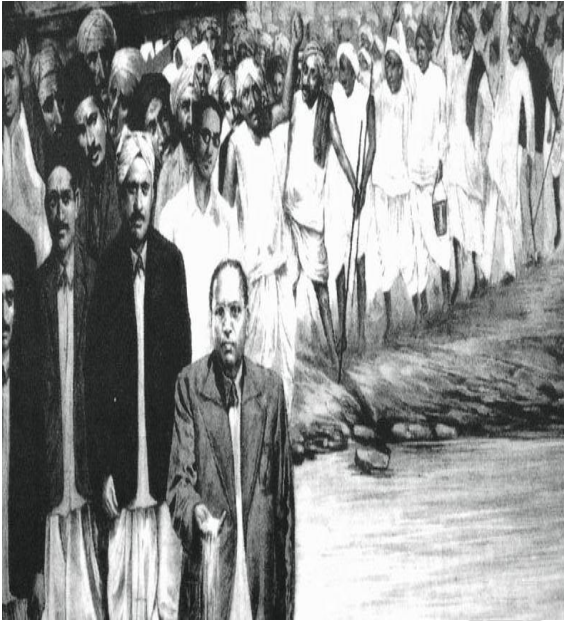
- In October 1919 the Secretary of State for India, **Edwin Montagu**, ordered the formation of a committee of inquiry into the events in Punjab.
- Referred to as the **Disorders Inquiry Committee**, it was later more widely known as the Hunter Commission (**Not to be confused with Hunter Education Commission**).
- The commission inquiry was concluded **without any significant conclusion**.
- Still, there are long-standing demands in India that Britain should apologize for the massacre.

PYQ:

[2012] The Rowlatt Act aimed at:

- A) Compulsory economic support to war efforts
- B) Imprisonment without trial and summary procedures for trial
- C) Suppression of the Khilafat Movement
- D) Imposition of restrictions on freedom of the press

Mahad Satyagraha: A Landmark Event in the Dalit Movement



Why in the news?

The Mahad Satyagraha is hailed as the **foundational event of the Dalit movement**, marking the community's collective rejection of the caste system and assertion of human rights.

About Mahad Satyagraha

- The Mahad Satyagraha, also known as **Chavdar Tale (Lake) Satyagraha**, was led by B. R. Ambedkar on **20 March 1927** in Mahad, Raigad District of Maharashtra.

- Its aim was to assert the **right of untouchables to use water from a public tank**.

1. Background:

- Untouchables (Dalits) were segregated in Indian society and **banned from using public water bodies and roads** used by other Hindu castes.
- In **August 1923**, the **Bombay Legislative Council** passed a resolution **allowing depressed**

classes to use government-maintained places, but it faced opposition from savarna Hindus.

- In **January 1924**, **Mahad** **passed a resolution** in its municipal council to enforce the act but failed to implement it due to protests.

2. Satyagraha:

- In 1927, **Ambedkar launched a satyagraha** to assert untouchables' rights to use water in public places.

- Mahad was chosen for the event due to its **support from 'caste Hindus'**.

- **Surendranath Tipnis**, president of the Mahad municipality, **invited Ambedkar** to hold a meeting there.

- Ambedkar **drank water from the tank**, followed by thousands of untouchables.

- He **encouraged Dalit women to abandon customs of untouchability** and wear saris like high-caste women, which they embraced.

- A riot **erupted over rumors of Ambedkar planning to enter a Hindu temple**, and the tank was purified with cow-urine and cow-dung.

- Ambedkar planned a **second conference in Mahad** in December 1927 but **faced legal obstacles** due to a case filed by caste Hindus.

- On 25 December **1937**, the **Bombay High Court ruled that untouchables have the right to use water** from the tank.

3. Legacy:

- On 19 March 1940, Ambedkar arranged a rally in Mahad to commemorate the Satyagraha as "**Empowerment Day**."

International Relations

India delivers first batch of BrahMos to Philippines

Russian-Indian BrahMos supersonic cruise missile

The BrahMos anti-ship missile was jointly developed by Russia's Engineering Research and Production Association (NPO) and the Indian Defense Ministry's Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO)



Specifications

Lift-off weight: 3,000 kg (sea-launched version), 2,500 kg (air-launched version)
Warhead: Up to 300 kg
Flight altitude: From 5 to 14,000 meters
Maximum speed: Mach 2.8
Diameter: 70 cm
Wingspan: 1.7 meters
Range: 290 km

Designation

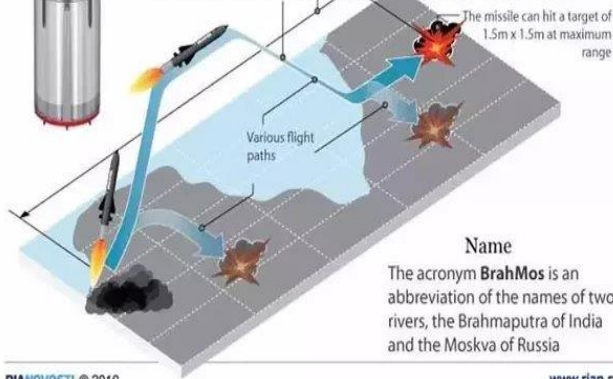
The missile is designed to hit all classes of warships
 The missile is fired from mobile self-contained launchers installed onboard submarines, warships and fixed-wing aircraft

History and prospects

The BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited joint venture was established in 1998 and started working on the project
 Twenty successful tests were conducted
 The Indian Air Force has already adopted the missile
 BrahMos Aerospace is ready to enter the international market. Prospective clients include 14 countries
 The Indian Air Force requires 1,000 BrahMos missiles
 In all, 2,000 BrahMos missiles can be exported
 There are plans to develop the hypersonic BrahMos missile with a speed of Mach 5

The missile rapidly loses altitude while approaching its target and thus evades ship-based air-defense systems

The missile can hit a target of 1.5m x 1.5m at maximum range



Name

The acronym **BrahMos** is an abbreviation of the names of two rivers, the Brahmaputra of India and the Moskva of Russia

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Why in the news?

India has handed over the first batch of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles to the Philippines marking a significant step in bilateral defense cooperation.

India- Philippines Brahmos Deal

- In January 2022, the Philippines inked a \$375-million deal with India for three batteries of the shore-based, anti-ship variant of the BrahMos missile,
- This made it the first export customer for this joint venture between India and Russia.
- Several countries, including Indonesia and Thailand, have expressed interest in procuring BrahMos systems, and discussions are underway.

About BrahMos Missiles

Development:

- BrahMos is a joint venture between the DRDO and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya.
- The name BrahMos comes from the two rivers, the Brahmaputra of India and the Moskva of Russia.
- The first successful test in 2001 was conducted from a specially designed land-based launcher.

Capabilities:

- BrahMos is a medium-range ramjet supersonic cruise missile.
- **Launched from:** Submarine, ships, aircraft, or land.
- It is the fastest supersonic cruise missile in the world.
- It has two stages:
 1. First stage comprising of a solid fuel rocket booster and
 2. Second stage comprising a liquid-fueled ramjet.

Warhead:

- Ship-launched and land-based missiles can carry a 200 kg warhead,
- Aircraft-launched variant (BrahMos A) can carry a 300 kg warhead.

Variants and Range

- The missile travels at speeds of **Mach 2.8 to 3.0**, which is being **upgraded to Mach 5.0**.
- A hypersonic version of the missile, **BrahMos-II**, is also presently under development with a speed of **Mach 7-8** to boost aerial fast strike capability.
- Initially restricted by the **Missile Technology Control Regime** to a range of 290km, the BrahMos missile’s range was **extended to 450km** following India’s entry into the regime in June 2016.
- Ongoing efforts aim further to extend the missile’s range beyond 600km, enhancing its operational reach and effectiveness in various scenarios.

Strategic Implications of the move

- This development comes amidst **escalating tensions in the South China Sea** between the

Philippines and China emphasizing the significance of enhancing defensive preparedness.

- The acquisition of BrahMos missiles under Horizon 2 of the Revised Armed Forces of the **Philippines Modernization Programme** will bolster the defensive capabilities of the Philippines armed forces.

PYQ: [2014] Which reference to Agni-IV Missile, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is a surface-to-surface missile.
2. It is fuelled by liquid propellant only.
3. It can deliver one-tonne nuclear warheads about 7500 km away.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Polity

In news: Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT)



Why in the news?

- The Allahabad High Court **clarified the appellate jurisdiction** concerning orders issued by the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) in contempt proceedings.
- The court ruled that appeals against CAT contempt orders must be filed exclusively before the Supreme Court under Section 19 of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971.

What is Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT)?

- The CAT is a specialized **quasi-judicial body** in India established under **Article 323-A** of the Constitution of India.

- Its primary function is to **adjudicate disputes and complaints** related to recruitment and service conditions of **government employees**.
- CAT was set up to provide a speedy and inexpensive remedy to government employees in matters concerning their service conditions and employment disputes.

Establishment of CAT:

- The Administrative Tribunals Act in 1985 enacted by the Parliament authorizes the central government to establish Central Administrative Tribunal and the State Administrative Tribunals.
- There are **17 Benches** and 21 Circuit Benches in the Central Administrative Tribunal all over India.

Jurisdiction of CAT:

- The Administrative Tribunal is **distinguishable from the ordinary courts** with regard to its jurisdiction and procedure.
- It exercises jurisdiction **only about the service matters** of the parties covered by the Act.
- CAT exercises jurisdiction over **all service matters** concerning the following:
 1. A member of any All-India Service
 2. A person appointed to any civil service of the Union or any civil post under the Union
 3. A civilian appointed to any defence services or a post connected with defence

Services NOT Covered:

The following members are NOT covered under the jurisdiction of CAT:

1. Defence forces, Officers,
2. Staff of the Supreme Court and
3. Secretarial staff of the Parliament.

Procedure:

- The CAT is guided by the principles of **natural justice** in deciding cases and is **NOT bound by the procedure**, prescribed by the Civil Procedure Code.

- It is empowered to **frame its own rules** of procedure and practice.
- Under **Section 17 of the Administrative Tribunal Act, 1985**, the Tribunal has been conferred with the power to exercise the same jurisdiction and authority in respect of contempt of itself as a High Court.

Composition:

- The CAT comprises of a **chairman, vice-chairman and other members** who are **appointed by the President of India**.
- The membership of CAT is filled by members from **judicial and administrative fields**.
- The term of the service is **5 years or until the age of 65 years** for chairman and vice- chairmen; **62 years for members**, whichever is earlier.
- The chairman, vice-chairman or any other member may address his **resignation to the President** in between his term of office.

Candidates have a Right to Privacy from Voters: SC

“ We are not inclined to accept blanket proposition that a candidate is required to lay his life out threadbare... His ‘right to privacy’ would still survive as regards matters which are of no concern to voter... **Non-disclosure of each and every asset... would not amount to a defect** much less...of substantial character — **SC bench**”

Why in the news?

- The Supreme Court affirmed a candidate's right to privacy from voters, stating that candidates **need not divulge every aspect of their personal lives** and possessions to the electorate.
- It held that **Voters Right to Know** about the electors is **NOT ABSOLUTE**.

Right to Privacy in India:

- The Right to Privacy under **Article 21** of the Indian Constitution is interpreted as an intrinsic part of the fundamental *right to life and personal liberty*.
- Article 21 states that "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law."
- In the landmark judgment of **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) v. Union of India (2017)**, the Supreme Court explicitly recognized the Right to Privacy as a fundamental right under Article 21.
- The court held that privacy is an essential aspect of **personal liberty and dignity**, encompassing informational privacy, decisional autonomy, bodily integrity, and spatial privacy.
- This right protects individuals **against unwarranted intrusions** into their private lives by the state or any other entity.
- It includes the **right to keep personal information confidential**, to make decisions about one's life and body without interference, and to maintain physical and spatial autonomy.

A candidate doesn't need to declare every item of movable property, such as clothing, shoes, crockery, stationery, and furniture, unless these items are of such value as to constitute a sizeable asset in itself or reflect upon the candidate's candidature in terms of their lifestyle – Supreme Court.

What are Corrupt Practices under the RPA?

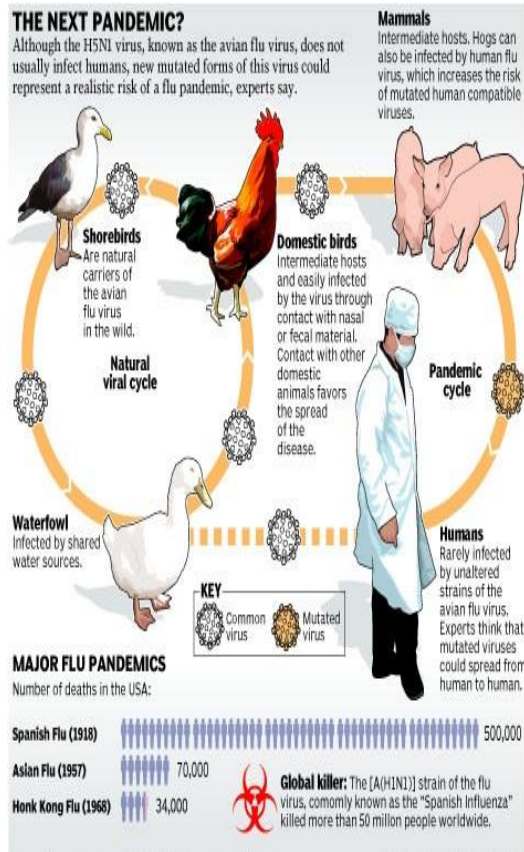
- Section 123 of the Representation of People Act, 1951 defines "**corrupt practices**" to include bribery, undue influence, false information, and promotion of enmity among citizens based on religion, race, caste, etc.
- Section 123(2) deals with "**undue influence**," involving interference with electoral rights through threats or promises.
- Undue influence can manifest in various forms, including threats of physical harm, coercion, intimidation, **promises of reward or benefit**, or exploitation of vulnerabilities.

Supreme Court's Verdict

1. **Emphasis on Candidate's Right to Privacy:**
 - Upholding the appeal, the Supreme Court emphasized the candidate's right to privacy, stating that not every non-disclosure automatically constitutes a defect.
 - The court highlighted that a candidate is not required to disclose every item of movable property unless it reflects upon their candidature or lifestyle.
2. **Case-specific Evaluation:**
 - The court emphasized that each case must be judged on its own merits, without applying a blanket rule.
 - The Court emphasized that **non-disclosure** of certain personal possessions **does not amount to a "defect of a substantial nature"** under Section 36(4) of the 1951 Act.
3. **Example of "High-value" Assets:**
 - Suppression of high-priced assets, indicating a lavish lifestyle, would constitute undue influence.
 - However, ownership of simple, low-value items may not be considered a defect.

Science, Technology, Art & Culture

Global Spread of H5N1 Bird Flu



Why in the news?

- Since 2020, the highly pathogenic H5N1 bird flu has been spreading globally, posing a significant threat to both birds and mammals.

H5N1 Bird Flu: Details

- H5N1 originated from a virus **outbreak on a goose farm in China in 1996** and has since evolved into a highly pathogenic strain.
- The virus quickly spread from Europe to Africa, Asia, North America, and South America, and most recently, it **reached mainland Antarctica**.
- H5N1 is a **subtype of the influenza A virus** that causes severe respiratory disease in birds, known as avian influenza or "bird flu".

- Influenza A viruses are classified by subtypes based on the properties of their surface proteins, with H5N1 being one subtype.

How widespread is it?

- The virus has affected birds in **over 80 countries**, resulting in mass culling of poultry and wild birds.
- Furthermore, it has now begun infecting mammals, including seals, sea lions, and marine mammals.
- While humans rarely contract bird flu, those at risk are typically individuals who have extensive contact with infected birds at poultry farms.
- Bird flu **first broke out in Maharashtra** in 2006.
- The H5N1 virus led to the **culling of millions of poultry** so as to contain the virus. But it has resurfaced from time to time.

Impact on Animals

- **Bird Species Affected:** Numerous bird species, including Great Skuas and Barnacle Geese, have experienced significant mortality rates due to H5N1.
- **Endangered Species Threatened:** Endangered birds like the California condors have been severely affected, with a notable percentage of the population succumbing to the virus.
- **Mammalian Casualties:** H5N1 has crossed species barriers, infecting mammals such as foxes, pumas, skunks, and marine mammals like sea lions and dolphins.
- **Devastating Consequences:** Mass mortalities of marine mammals, particularly elephant seals, have been reported, raising concerns about the long-term ecological impact.

Factors behind Spread

- **Climate Change:** Some scientists attribute the large-scale spread of bird flu to climate change, which alters bird behavior and facilitates the transmission of the virus.
- **Warmer Seas:** Warmer sea temperatures have weakened marine mammal populations, making them more susceptible to disease outbreaks.

2015: H1N1 virus is sometimes mentioned in the news with reference to which one of the following diseases?

- (a) AIDS
- (b) Bird flu
- (c) Dengue
- (d) Swine flu

Practice MCQ:

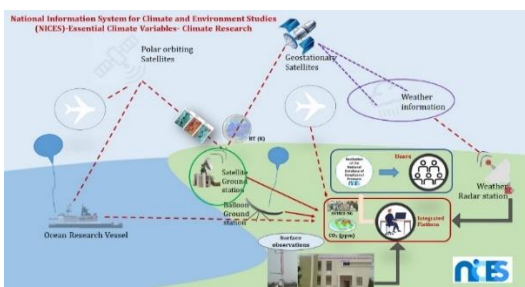
How many of the given statements about H5N1 Virus is/are correct?

1. It is a type of influenza virus causing highly infectious, respiratory disease in birds.
2. It is highly contagious in humans.
3. Seals, sea lions, and other marine mammals are vulnerable to this Virus.

Select the correct codes from below –

- (a) One
- (b) Two
- (c) Three
- (d) None

ISRO's NICES Programme Combatting Climate Change



Why in the news?

The National Information System for Climate and Environment Studies (NICES) Program has extended invitations to Indian researchers to contribute to climate change mitigation efforts.

What is NICES Program?

- The NICES Programme is operated by the **ISRO and the Department of Space**.
- It was launched in **2012**.
- It operates within the framework of the **National Action Plan on Climate Change**.
- NICES aims to enhance the **participation of Indian researchers in addressing climate change-related challenges** through multidisciplinary scientific investigations.
- **Focus Areas:** Potential areas for project submission include Space-based Essential Climate Variables (ECVs) and Climate Indicators, Climate Change Challenges, Weather Extremes, and Climate Services.

Activities held under NICES Program

- NICES invites project proposals from **Indian scientists, academicians, and researchers** affiliated with various governmental organizations, recognized institutions, universities, and departments.
- Project proposals should **address climate change-related challenges**.
- These projects are expected to be **completed within 3 years** from the date of sanction.

Objective and Functionality

- The primary objective of the NICES Programme is to generate and disseminate long-term **Essential Climate Variables (ECVs)** derived from **Indian and other Earth Observation (EO) satellites**.
- These variables, spanning terrestrial, oceanic, and atmospheric domains, are crucial for characterizing Earth's climate and monitoring changes over time.

Achievements and Impact:

- Since its inception in 2012, NICES has **developed over 70 geophysical products** meeting stringent quality standards.
- These products have been instrumental in **documenting climate change and its impacts**, contributing to scientific understanding and evidence-based decision-making.

PYQ:

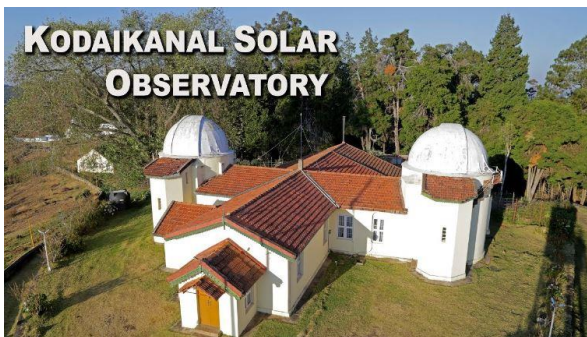
2021: Describe the major outcomes of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). What are the commitments made by India in this conference?

Practice MCQ:

The NICES Program is an initiative of:

(a) Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
 (b) Indian Meteorological Department (IMD)
 (c) Department of Science and Technology (DST)
 (d) None of the above.

125 years of Kodaikanal Solar Observatory



Why in the news?

This year marks 125th Year of the Kodaikanal Solar Observatory (KoSO).

About Kodaikanal Solar Observatory (KoSO)

- The idea for an Indian solar observatory emerged in the late 19th century, with then government sanctioning the establishment of the **Solar Physics Observatory** in Kodaikanal in **August 1893**.
- Kodaikanal in the **Palani hills of Tamil Nadu** was chosen as the site for the observatory due to its favorable atmospheric conditions, following surveys conducted by **Charles Michie Smith**.
- The **foundation stone** for KoSO was **laid by Lord Wenlock**, the then **Governor of Madras**, in **1895**.
- **Systematic observations** at KoSO began on **March 14, 1901**.
- KoSO initially housed instruments for solar observations, including **telescopes for examining sunspots, prominences, and solar radiations**.
- Presently, KoSO houses advanced instruments like the **H-alpha telescope** and the **White light Active Region Monitor (WARM)** for high-resolution solar imaging.



Historical Perspective

- **Ancient Legacy:** Throughout history, seafarers, mathematicians, astronomers, and physicists have meticulously studied the Sun and its celestial phenomena.
- **British Era Initiatives:** In 1792, the British East India Company established the pioneering Madras Observatory, marking a significant milestone in astronomical research in the region.
- **Madras Observatory's Legacy:** The Madras Observatory documented crucial astronomical observations during 1812-1825, laying the groundwork for solar research in India.
- **Shift to Systematic Observations:** Dedicated solar observations commenced in 1878, fostering a deeper understanding of solar phenomena.
- **Advancements in Methodology:** The adoption of systematic observational techniques paved the way for more comprehensive and detailed studies of the Sun's behavior.

Need for such Observatory

- **Great Drought of 1875-1877:** This event triggered by scanty rainfall, propelled the need

for comprehensive solar studies to comprehend its implications on weather patterns.

- **India's Geographical Significance:** India's drought was part of a larger global phenomenon, affecting several countries and leading to widespread famine.
- **Scientific Inquiry:** Scientists recognized the potential role of solar variability in influencing climatic patterns, prompting inquiries into the Sun's behavior and its correlation with environmental phenomena.

Scientific Endeavors of KoSO

- The observatory made significant contributions to solar physics, including the discovery of the radial motion of sunspots, known as the **Evershed Effect**.
- Over time, KoSO expanded its research areas beyond solar physics to include cosmic rays, radio astronomy, ionospheric physics, and stellar physics.
- In April 1971, KoSO was **brought under the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA)**, Bengaluru, as part of the separation of astrophysics from the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Repository of the KoSO

- Between 1904 and 2017, all solar observations were traced onto **photographic films and plates**
- A new telescope mounted with **CCD cameras** has taken over and, since 2017, continued to observe the Sun.
- **Digitization of the records** was initiated in **1984** by **Prof J C Bhattacharyya**, and others continued the effort.
- KoSO is now home to a digital **repository of a whopping 1.48 lakh solar images** adding up to **10 terabyte of data**.
- These include **33,500 white-light images** (showing sunspots), **45,000 images of the Ca II K spectral line** (which reveals plages), and **70,000 H-alpha photographic plates** that show prominences.

Nuclear Fusion: KSTAR reaches a temperature of 100 million Celsius

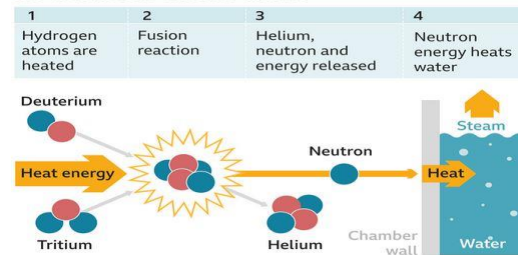


Why in the news?

- South Korean scientists at the Korea Institute of Fusion Energy (KFE) achieved a significant milestone by producing temperatures of **100 million Celsius for 48 seconds** in the Korea Superconducting Tokamak Advanced Research (KSTAR) fusion reactor.
- KSTAR maintained the **high confinement mode (H-mode) for over 100 seconds**, demonstrating stability in plasma conditions crucial for sustained fusion reactions.
- This is a world record.

What is Nuclear Fusion?

How nuclear fusion works



- Nuclear fusion involves **fusion of hydrogen and other light elements** to release massive energy, akin to the process that powers the Sun and stars.
- It is a process where two light atomic nuclei combine to form a heavier nucleus, releasing a **large amount of energy** in the process.
- This occurs under **extremely high temperatures**, typically in the range of tens of millions of degrees Celsius, and pressure, similar to those found in the core of stars.
- In a tokamak reactor, hydrogen variants are heated to extreme temperatures to **create a**

plasma, mimicking conditions found in the Sun's core.

- **1 kg of fusion fuel** contains about **10 million times** as much energy as a **kg of coal, oil or gas.**

Significance of KSTAR's achievements

- Achieving sustained **fusion reactions in laboratory conditions** unlocks the potential for unlimited, zero-carbon electricity generation.
- By extending the duration of high-temperature fusion, scientists aim to **sustain plasma temperatures of 100 million degrees for 300 seconds by 2026**, pushing the boundaries of fusion research.
- Progress in fusion research at KSTAR contributes to international efforts, **supporting projects like the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) in France.**

Benefits offered by Nuclear Fusion Energy

- **Clean Energy:** Fusion reactions produce minimal radioactive waste compared to nuclear fission, which generates long-lived radioactive waste. Fusion also emits no greenhouse gases, making it an environmentally friendly energy source.
- **Safety and Controlled Nature:** Fusion reactions are inherently safer than nuclear fission reactions. Fusion reactors have a lower risk of accidents and do not produce runaway chain reactions like fission reactors.
- **Energy Security:** Fusion provides a reliable and secure source of energy, reducing dependence on fossil fuels and volatile energy markets. It offers a sustainable solution to meet global energy demand.
- **High Energy Density:** Fusion reactions release a vast amount of energy compared to other energy sources. This high energy density makes fusion power compact and efficient, enabling it to meet large-scale energy needs.
- **Scalability:** Fusion reactors can be designed to scale up or down to meet varying energy demands. They can serve as base-load power plants or complement renewable energy sources, providing flexibility in the energy mix.
- **Minimal Environmental Impact:** Fusion power plants have a small footprint and do not require large mining operations or fuel transportation,

reducing their environmental impact. They also produce no air pollution or carbon emissions during operation.

PYQ:

2016:

India is an important member of the 'International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor'. If this experiment succeeds, what is the immediate advantage for India?

- (a) It can use thorium in place of uranium for power generation
- (b) It can attain a global role in satellite navigation
- (c) It can drastically improve the efficiency of its fission reactors in power generation
- (d) It can build fusion reactors for power generation

Practice MCQ:

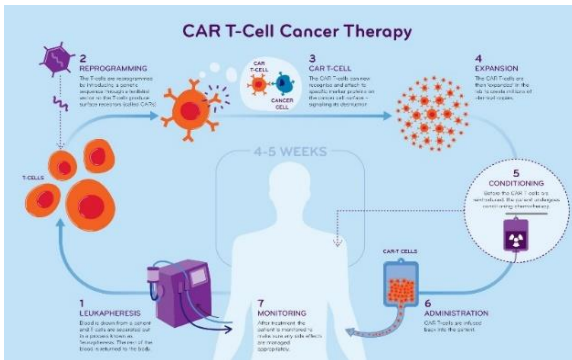
The Korea Superconducting Tokamak Advanced Research (KSTAR) fusion reactor has recently set a world record. In this regard, consider the following statements:

1. It produced a temperatures of 100 million Celsius for 48 seconds.
2. It achieved sustained fusion reactions in laboratory conditions.

Which of the given statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

NexCAR19: India's First Indigenous CAR T-Cell Therapy for Cancer



Why in the news?

- President Droupadi Murmu has unveiled 'NexCAR19' India's first indigenously-developed CAR T-cell therapy for cancer treatment.

NexCAR19: India's Indigenous Developed CAR-T Therapy

- NexCAR19 is designed to target **cancer cells carrying the CD19 protein**, a marker on cancer cells, enhancing precision in treatment.
- It has been **developed jointly** by **IIT Bombay and the Tata Memorial Centre**.
- Initially approved for **patients aged 15 and above** with B-cell lymphomas who did not respond to standard treatments, leading to relapse or recurrence.

Effectiveness and Unique Features

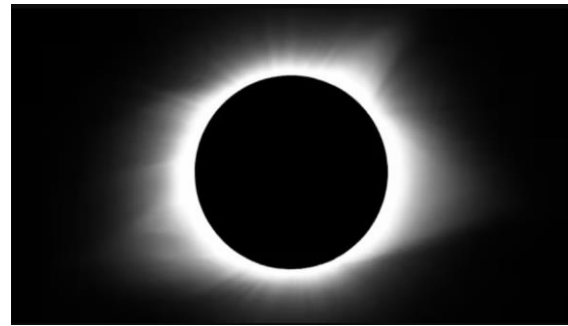
- Approximately **70% of patients respond** to NexCAR19 treatment, with some achieving complete remission.
- Lab and animal studies indicate **lower drug-related toxicities**, including reduced neurotoxicity and Cytokine Release Syndrome (CRS).
- Trials for paediatric patients are underway at Tata Memorial Hospital, ensuring broader applicability.

What is CAR-T Cell Therapy?

<p>What is it?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAR-T cell therapy stands for Chimeric Antigen Receptor T cell therapy. It is a type of cancer immunotherapy that uses the patient's own T cells, genetically modified in a laboratory to enhance their ability to locate and destroy cancer cells.
<p>How does it work?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T cells are white blood cells responsible for identifying and fighting illness and infection. Each T cell has a receptor that can recognize antigens (proteins or molecules recognized by the immune system). Cancer cells may have antigens that the immune system does not recognize as abnormal, allowing cancer to evade the immune response. CAR-T cells are genetically engineered in the lab to express a new receptor that can bind to cancer cells and effectively kill them.
<p>Therapy Process</p>	<p>The process involves several steps, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting T Cells: Blood is drawn from the patient's arm, and T cells are separated from the blood using an apheresis machine. Engineering T Cells: In a laboratory, the T cells are modified by adding a manufactured CAR, and they are allowed to multiply and grow. Infusing CAR-T Cells: Once enough CAR-T cells are prepared, they are injected back into the patient's arm. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chemotherapy may be recommended before CAR-T cell infusion to enhance treatment effectiveness. The process can take place in an outpatient infusion center or a hospital setting.
<p>Cancers Treated</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAR-T cell therapy is effective against certain types of cancer, especially when other treatments are ineffective. It is currently FDA-approved for treating haematological malignancies, including leukemia, lymphoma, and multiple myeloma.

Availability and Affordability

- **ImmunoACT** is in the process of securing licenses and partnering with hospitals, including Tata Memorial, Nanavati, Fortis, and Jaslok, across multiple cities.
- Initially priced at Rs 30-40 lakh, ImmunoACT aims to eventually **reduce the cost to Rs 10-20 lakh**, making the therapy more accessible.



Why in the news?

A rare Total Solar Eclipse was visible across North America on April 8.

What are Eclipses?

- Eclipses are astronomical events that occur when **the sun, moon, and Earth align** in specific ways.
 - There are two primary types of eclipses: solar and lunar.
1. A **solar eclipse** happens when the moon comes between the sun and Earth during a new moon, blocking out the sun’s light.
 2. Conversely, a **lunar eclipse** occurs when the Earth is positioned between the sun and the moon during a full moon, casting a shadow on the moon.

What is a Total Solar Eclipse?

- During a total solar eclipse, the **moon passes between the sun and Earth**, entirely covering the face of the sun along a small path of our planet’s surface.
- This is called the **“path of totality.”**
- The daytime **sky turns dark**, similar to dusk or dawn, and nocturnal animals have been known to wake up, confused into believing night has arrived.

Stages of a Total Solar Eclipse

A total solar eclipse unfolds in several distinct stages.

1. It starts with a **partial eclipse phase** as the moon begins to pass between Earth and the sun, partially blocking it and leaving the sun looking like it has a crescent shape.

PYQ:

2017:

Stem cell therapy is gaining popularity in India to treat a wide variety of medical conditions including leukaemia, Thalassemia, damaged cornea and several burns. Describe briefly what stem cell therapy is and what advantages it has over other treatments?

Practice MCQ:

With reference to the CAR-T Cell Therapy, consider the following statements:

1. T cells are Red Blood Cells responsible for identifying and fighting illness and infection.
2. Each T cell has a receptor that can recognize antigens (proteins or molecules recognized by the immune system).

Which of the given statements is/are correct?

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

In news: Total Solar Eclipse

2. In the subsequent **Baily's Beads phase**, points of light from the sun shine around the moon's edges because of the irregular lunar topography, producing small beads of light.
3. In the **diamond ring phase**, a single bright spot appears along the lunar edge even as the sun's atmosphere leaves a ring of light around the moon. This phenomenon precedes totality.
4. After **totality**, the other phases repeat as the moon keeps moving along its path until the eclipse ends.

Other types of solar eclipses:

1. **Partial Solar Eclipse**

- This happens when the sun, moon and Earth are not exactly lined up.
- The sun appears to have a dark shadow on only a small part of its surface.

2. **Annular Solar Eclipse**

- An annular eclipse happens when the moon is farthest from Earth. Because the moon is farther away from Earth, it seems smaller. It does **not block the entire view of the sun**. The moon in front of the sun looks like a dark disk on top of a larger sun-coloured disk. This creates what looks like a ring around the moon.
- During a solar eclipse, the moon casts two shadows on Earth. The first shadow is called **the Umbra**. This shadow gets smaller as it reaches Earth. It is the dark centre of the moon's shadow.
- The second shadow is called **the Penumbra**. The penumbra gets larger as it reaches Earth. People standing in the penumbra will see a partial eclipse. People standing in the umbra will see a total eclipse.

Why don't solar eclipses happen at every New Moon?

- The reason is that the Moon's orbit tilts 5° to Earth's orbit around the Sun.
- Astronomers call the two intersections of these paths nodes.
- Eclipses only occur when the Sun lies at one node and the Moon is at its New (for solar eclipses) or Full (for lunar eclipses) phase.
- During most (lunar) months, the Sun lies either above or below one of the nodes, and no eclipse happens.

PYQ:

2013:

Consider the following phenomena

1. Size of the sun at dusk
2. Colure of the sun at dawn
3. Moon being visible at dawn
4. Twinkle of stars in the sky
5. Polestar being visible in the sky

Which of the above are optical illusions?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 3, 4 and 5
- (c) 1, 2 and 4
- (d) 2, 3 and 5

Practice MCQ:

Which of the following statements best characterizes a Total Solar Eclipse?

- (a) A total solar eclipse occurs when the Moon partially blocks the Sun, leaving a visible ring of sunlight around the Moon's silhouette.
- (b) During a total solar eclipse, the Moon completely covers the Sun, casting a shadow on a narrow path on the Earth's surface called the umbra.
- (c) Total solar eclipses occur more frequently than partial solar eclipses due to the precise alignment of the Sun, Earth, and Moon.
- (d) Total solar eclipses can only be observed from specific locations on Earth, making them rare and highly sought-after astronomical events.

POEM-3: ISRO's 'Zero Orbital Debris' Milestone



1. It creates **unusable regions** of the orbit due to excessive debris, and
2. Leads to the **'Kessler syndrome'** – creation of more debris due to cascading collisions resulting from one collision.

Various Initiatives to mitigate the Space Debris Issue

	Description
Project NETRA	ISRO initiative for early warning system in space to detect debris and hazards to the Indian satellites. It can spot, track and catalogue objects as small as 10 cm, up to a range of 3,400 km and equal to a space orbit of around 2,000 km.
Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines	Established in 2002 by the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) and endorsed by the United Nations in 2007.
Zero Debris Charter by ESA	Adopted by the European Space Agency (ESA) with the goal of achieving zero space debris by 2030.
NASA's Orbital Debris Program	NASA's initiative since 1979, focusing on reducing orbital debris creation, tracking existing debris, and exploring debris removal technologies.
Space Force Tracking System	Implemented by the U.S. Space Force to monitor space debris and assess collision risks in low Earth orbit (LEO).
Chinese Debris Removal Initiatives	China's efforts include deploying spacecraft for debris removal with innovative technologies like solar sails.
Japanese CRD2 Demonstration	Partnership between Japan's Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and Astroscale to develop debris removal technologies.

Why in the news?

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has said its PSLV-C58/XPoSat mission has practically left zero debris in earth's orbit.

About PSLV Orbital Experimental Module-3 (POEM-3)

- Launched on January 1, 2024, POEM-3 utilized the spent PS4 stage of the **PSLV-C58 vehicle**, which initially launched XPoSat.
- It is a **three-axis-altitude controlled platform** with power generation and tele-command & telemetry capabilities, for supporting Payloads.
- The XPoSat mission **aimed to leave no debris in space**, demonstrating ISRO's commitment to responsible space practices.
- Upon deployment into its **orbit at 650 km**, POEM-3 was maneuvered to a 350 km circular orbit to minimize orbit decay time after the experiment's completion.
- After completing 400 orbits, POEM-3 **re-entered Earth's atmosphere** after 73 days in space.

Significance of this achievement

- With the rise in the number of satellites in orbit around the earth, space debris has become a pressing issue.
- Space debris in the low earth orbit (LEO) mainly comprises pieces of spacecraft, rockets, and defunct satellites, and the fragments of objects that have deteriorated explosively as a result of anti-satellite missile tests.
- This debris often flies around at high speeds of up to 27,000 kilometres per hour.
- Due to their sheer volume and momentum, they pose a risk to several space assets.

Threats posed by Space Debris

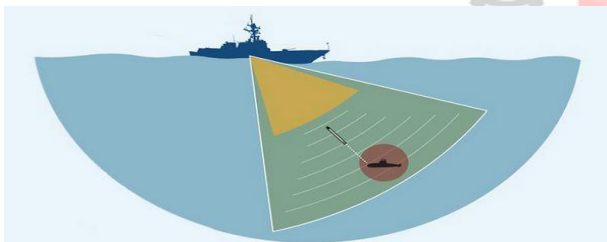
- Space debris also leads to two major risks:

Practice MCQ:

ISRO's PSLV Orbital Experimental Module-3 (POEM-3) recently re-entered Earth's Orbit. What is so significant about this re-entry?

- (a) It practically left zero debris in earth's orbit.
- (b) It facilitated groundbreaking research on the effects of microgravity on biological organisms.
- (c) It paved the way for the development of reusable spacecraft technology, reducing the cost of future space missions.
- (d) None of these.

SPACE Testing & Evaluation hub for Sonar Systems



Why in the news?

A state-of-the-art SPACE testing and evaluation hub for sonar systems, designed for the Indian Navy, was inaugurated by DRDO.

About Submersible Platform for Acoustic Characterisation and Evaluation (SPACE)

- The SPACE is located at the **Underwater Acoustic Research Facility in Kulamavu**, Idukki, Kerala.
- It is developed by the **Naval Physical & Oceanographic Laboratory** of DRDO.
- It is set to become a **premier testing and evaluation hub for sonar systems** deployed on various Indian Navy platforms, including ships, submarines, and helicopters.

Key Features of SPACE:

- SPACE comprises two distinct components:
 1. **Floating Platform** on the water surface and
 2. **Submersible platform** capable of descending to **depths of up to 100 meters** using winch systems.
- After completing operations, the submersible platform can be winched up and docked with the floating platform, ensuring efficient utilization of resources.

Functions and Capabilities:

- The primary function of SPACE is the **evaluation of complete sonar systems**, facilitating rapid deployment and retrieval of scientific packages such as sensors and transducers.
- It will serve for **surveying, sampling, and data collection** of **air, surface, mid-water, and reservoir floor** parameters utilizing modern scientific instrumentation.
- It will address the **data processing and sample analysis** requirements, ushering in a new era of Anti-Submarine Warfare research capabilities.

What is SONAR?

- SONAR stands for "**Sound Navigation and Ranging**."
- It's a technique used for **detecting and locating objects underwater** by transmitting sound waves and analyzing the echoes they produce.

Here's how it works:

1. **Sound Transmission:** A SONAR system sends out pulses of sound waves, typically at frequencies beyond the range of human hearing. These sound waves travel through the water and propagate in all directions.
2. **Object Detection:** When the sound waves encounter an object underwater, such as a submarine, seafloor, or marine life, they reflect off the object and return to the SONAR system as echoes.
3. **Echo Reception:** The SONAR system receives the echoes of the transmitted sound waves and measures the time it takes for them to return. By knowing the speed of sound in water and the time it takes for the echoes to return, the system can calculate the distance to the object.
4. **Data Analysis:** The received echoes are processed and analyzed to create a visual representation of the underwater environment. This information helps operators identify and locate objects of interest, navigate safely, and map the seafloor.

Vasuki Indicus: 50ft Snake Fossil Found in Gujarat

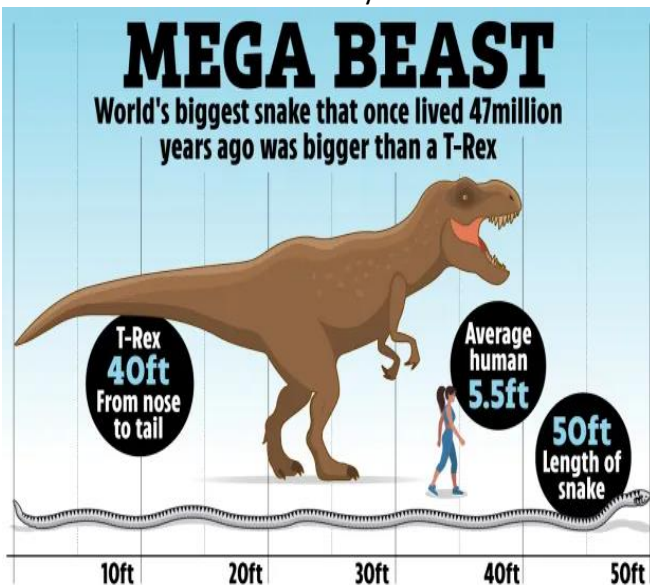


Why in the news?

A fossil unearthed in Gujarat’s Kutch in 2005, initially presumed to belong to a giant crocodile, has been revealed as one of the largest snake ‘Vasuki Indicus’ ever to exist on Earth.

About Vasuki Indicus

- ‘Vasuki Indicus’ is the name given by IIT Roorkee Scientists to the fossil specie.
- The name “Vasuki” derives from the mythological snake depicted often encircling the neck of the Hindu deity Shiva.



Physical characteristics of Vasuki

- It is estimated to measure between 11m (36ft) and **15m (49.22ft) in length**,
- It belonged to the extinct **Madtsiidae** snake family.
 - Its size could potentially surpass the extinct **Titanoboa** in size, with its closest relatives identified as **Titanoboa and Python**.
- The serpent’s large size indicates it was a **slow-moving, ambush predator**, akin to an anaconda, as suggested by researchers.
- - Like contemporary pythons and anacondas, Vasuki Indicus presumably employed **Constriction (suffocation) as its primary method of prey capture**.

Age and Geological Context:

- Recovered from the **Panandhro Lignite Mine in Kutch**, the fossil dates back to the **Middle Eocene period**, approximately **47 million years ago**.
- Analysis of the well-preserved vertebrae indicates the snake’s existence during a **warm geological interval with average temperatures estimated at 28°C**.
- ‘Vasuki’ is believed to represent an **extinct relic lineage** originating in India, with subsequent India-Asia collision facilitating its dispersal from the subcontinent into North Africa through southern Eurasia.
- - Vasuki thrived during a time when the continents of **Africa, India, and South America were amalgamated** into a single landmass.

Significance for India

- This discovery underscores India’s rich biodiversity.
- It holds immense potential in unraveling insights into the evolutionary process, continental shifts, and India’s pivotal role in the origin of various species, particularly reptiles.

Security Issues

What is Project Akashteer?



Why in the news?

- The Indian Army's Corps of Army Air Defense has initiated the induction of control and reporting systems under 'Project Akashteer' to bolster its air defense capabilities.

About Project Akashteer

- The Akashteer Project is an initiative designed to **automate air defence control and reporting** processes by digitising the entire process.
- It is developed by **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)** as part of the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.
- It seeks to induct Akashteer **Command and Control** Systems
- By integrating **radar and communication systems** at all levels into a unified network, 'Akashteer' aims to deliver an unprecedented level of situational awareness and control.
- This will enable swift **engagement of hostile targets**, significantly reduce the risk of fratricide, and ensure the safety of friendly aircraft in contested airspace.

How it will help India's air defence system?

The 'Akashteer Command and Control Systems' will significantly enhance India's air defense capabilities in several ways:

- Efficiency and Integration:** Digitizing Air Defence Control and Reporting processes with 'Akashteer' will improve efficiency and

integration. This enables the Indian Army to respond swiftly to hostile threats while reducing the risk of friendly fire incidents.

- Situational Awareness:** 'Akashteer' integrates radar and communication systems into a unified network, providing the Indian Army with better situational awareness. This enables them to detect and engage hostile targets more effectively, ensuring the safety of friendly aircraft in contested airspace.
- Mobility and Resilience:** The system's vehicle-based and mobile Control Centers are designed for operational capabilities even in challenging communication environments. This ensures that the Indian Army can operate effectively in diverse terrain and adverse conditions.
- Automation:** Deployment of 'Akashteer' represents a move towards complete automation of air defense operations. This enhances the Indian Army's ability to defend its airspace, ensuring a safer and more secure future for the country.

PYQ:

2018:

What is "Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD)", sometimes seen in the news?

- An Israeli radar system
- India's indigenous anti-missile programme
- An American anti-missile system
- A defence collaboration between Japan and South Korea

Practice MCQ:

The 'Project Akashteer' recently seen in news is related to:

- Air defence control and reporting
- Implementation of a nationwide fiber optic network
- Development of fifth generational fighter aircraft
- Indigenization of Drone technology

What is Exoatmospheric Interception?



Why in the news?

Israel successfully intercepted an Iranian missile outside Earth's atmosphere using an Exoatmospheric kill vehicle.

What are Exoatmospheric Missiles?

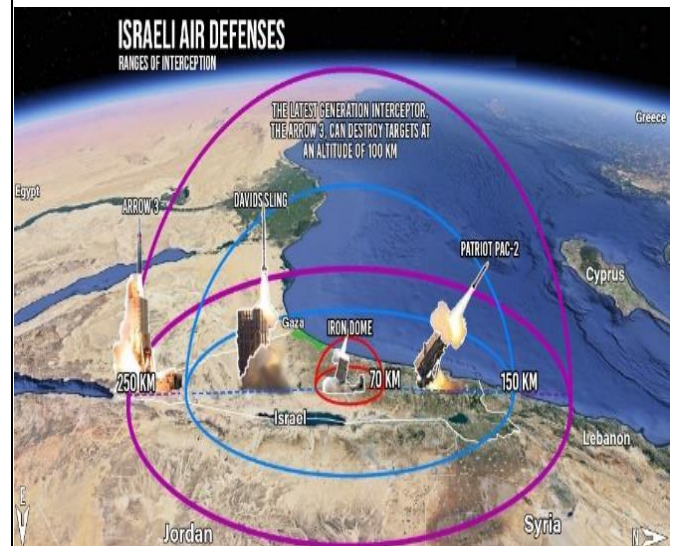
- Exoatmospheric missiles, or anti-ballistic missiles (ABMs), **operate beyond Earth's atmosphere** to intercept incoming ballistic missiles.
- They employ **advanced sensors and guidance systems** to detect, track, and destroy targets in space.
- **Kinetic kill vehicles**, like the Exoatmospheric Kill Vehicle (EKV), rely on high-speed collisions to neutralize threats.
- It travels at **hypersonic speed**.

Working Mechanism of Exoatmospheric Missiles:

- The EKV uses a **solid rocket booster** to propel itself into space.
- **Advanced sensors** and onboard computers identify and track incoming threats.
- **Precise maneuvering** allows the missile to navigate towards the target.

Impact from a **high-speed collision** eliminates the threat without traditional warheads, enhancing speed and accuracy.

Israeli Air-Defence Systems



Israel's multi-layered air defence system, including Iron Dome, The Arrow, and David's Sling, was activated in anticipation of the attack.

1. **IRON DOME:** The short-range Iron Dome air defence system was built to intercept the kind of rockets fired by the Hamas in Gaza. Developed by state-owned Rafael Advanced Defense Systems with US backing, it became operational in 2011. Each truck-towed unit fires radar-guided missiles to blow up short-range threats like rockets, mortars and drones in mid-air.
2. **ARROW:** The long-range Arrow-2 and Arrow-3 system, developed by Israel with an Iranian missile threat in mind, is designed to intercept ballistic missiles outside the earth's atmosphere, using a detachable warhead that collides with the target. It operates at an altitude that allows for the safe dispersal of any non-conventional warheads.
3. **DAVID'S SLING:** This mid-range system is designed to shoot down ballistic missiles fired from 100 km to 200 km away. Developed and manufactured jointly by Israel's state-owned Rafael Advanced Defense Systems and the U.S. Raytheon Co, David's Sling is also designed to intercept aircraft, drones and cruise missiles.

PYQ:

[2018] What is “Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD)”, sometimes seen in the news?

- (a) An Israeli radar system
- (b) India’s indigenous anti-missile programme
- (c) An American anti-missile system
- (d) A defence collaboration between Japan and South Korea



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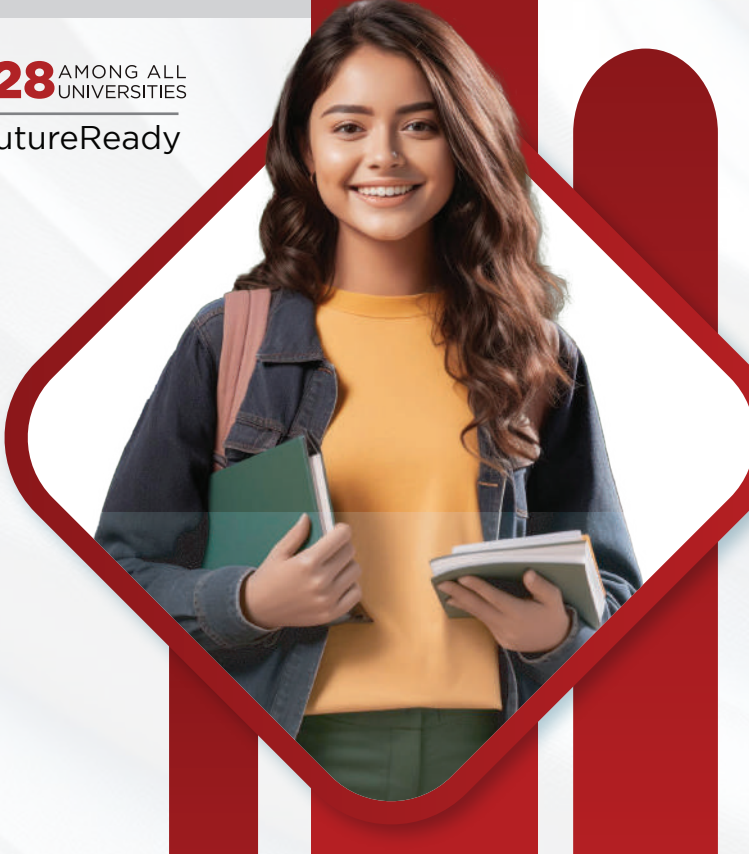
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