

CURRENT AFFAIRS

March

- 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 March 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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Detailed Analysis of Events

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SECTION 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short



1: Important Days



Zero discrimination Day

Zero Discrimination Day : 01 March :-

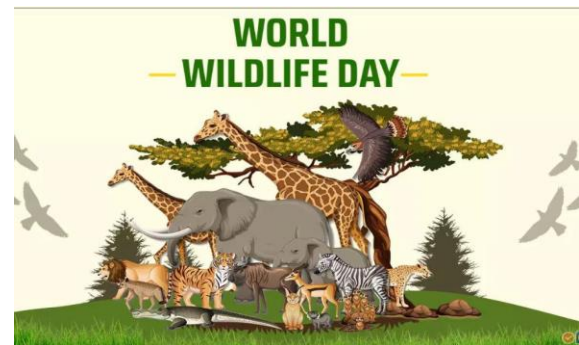
Every year on March 1, Zero Discrimination Day is commemorated to promote inclusion, equality, peace, and raise awareness among people about their rights to live peacefully, as well as discrimination and its impact on individuals, communities, and societies. The day was first observed on March 1, 2014, after UNAIDS, a joint United Nations initiative on HIV and AIDS, started its Zero Discrimination Campaign on 'World AIDS Day' in December 2013. The then-Executive Director of UNAIDS Michel Sidibé launched the day in 2014 with a major event in Beijing. The theme for Zero Discrimination Day 2024 is "To protect everyone's health, protect everyone's rights."



World Civil Defence Day : 01 March :-

World Civil Defence Day is commemorated annually on March 1. This unique day raises awareness about the need of protecting people and their property from unexpected emergencies. It also aids in honoring heroes who constantly display a dedication to saving lives. It also encourages us to be prepared for emergencies. World Civil Defence Day also helps in urging organisations to come together and collaborate in ensuring safeguarding

of people and properties. The Theme of World Civil Defence Day 2024 is "Honour Heroes and Promote Safety Skills".



World Wildlife Day : 03 March :-

World Wildlife Day will be celebrated on 3 March 2024. The history of World Wildlife Day may be traced back to 2013, when Thailand suggested that the United Nations General Assembly designate March 3rd as World Wildlife Day. The day was initially established in 2014, following the passage of a resolution by the General Assembly on December 20, 2013. The importance of World Wildlife Day is clear in the current global context, where biodiversity loss, habitat destruction, and climate change all pose enormous risks to wildlife populations globally. The theme for World Wildlife Day 2024 is "Connecting People and Planet: Exploring Digital Innovation in Wildlife Conservation."



World Hearing Day : 03 March :-

March 3 is observed as World Hearing Day by the World Health Organization (WHO). It aims to increase awareness about how to avoid deafness and hearing loss while also promoting ear and hearing care around the

world. World Hearing Day was first recognized by the WHO in 2007. The day was previously known as International Ear Care Day. Following 2016, WHO changed the name to World Hearing Day. According to the WHO, over 360 million individuals suffer from debilitating hearing loss. The theme for 2024 is "Changing mindsets: Let's make ear and hearing care a reality for all".

weight, seek appropriate treatment, and reverse the obesity epidemic. The World Health Organization estimates that more than 1.9 billion adults aged 18 and over were overweight in 2016. Of these over 650 million were obese. In 2019, an estimated 38.2 million children under the age of 5 years were overweight or obese. This year's campaign theme is 'Let's Talk About Obesity And...!'.



National Safety Day : 04 March :-

World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development : 04 March :-

National Safety Day is observed annually on March 4. It is celebrated to strive for a secure and advanced country. The primary purpose of commemorating this day is to call attention to the need of safety precautions and ensure that people are aware of and adhere to them. This day stresses the need of reducing workplace accidents as well as the issues that remain unresolved by safety rules. The National Safety Council of India (NSC) was established on March 4, 1966, by the Indian government's Ministry of Labour. This year, National Safety Week, celebrated from March 4 to March 10, focuses on "Safety Leadership for ESG Excellence."

Engineering has always played an important role in growth and human happiness. It is vital to ensure that future generations of engineers and scientists are capable of designing solutions to local and global concerns. During its 40th session in November 2019, UNESCO's General Conference declared March 4th as World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development to raise awareness of engineering's role in modern life, which is critical to mitigating the impact of climate change and advancing sustainable development, particularly in Africa and small island developing states (SIDS). The theme of World Engineering Day for Sustainable Development 2024 is "Engineering solutions for a sustainable world".



World Obesity Day : 04 March :-

International Women's Day : 08 March :-

WORLD Obesity Day is marked every year on March 4th around the world. World Obesity Day promotes practical solutions to help people attain and maintain a healthy

International Women's Day, observed annually on March 8th, is a global occasion to praise women's achievements, recognize their contributions to society, and fight for gender equality. International Women's Day is a significant day for promoting gender equality and women's rights. It provides a venue for raising awareness about women's social, economic, cultural, and political achievements around the world. This year, the theme of International Women's Day 2024 will focus on 'Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress,' targeting economic disempowerment. However, the campaign theme for the same year is 'Inspire Inclusion.'



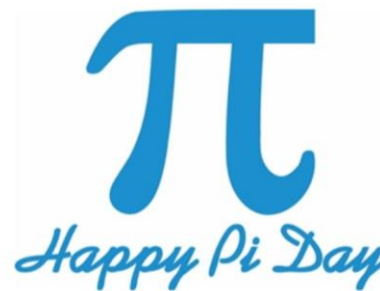
CISF Raising Day : 10 March :-

Every year, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Raising Day is observed on March 10. There was an increased demand for specialised security teams in industries and other important areas. The Central Industrial Security Force was founded by the CISF Act of 1968 to meet expanding needs. They contribute to the security of government infrastructure projects, industrial facilities, and public-sector operations. This day is observed to acknowledge and honour the efforts and sacrifices made by the CISF personnel in safeguarding the vital assets of the nation.



No Smoking Day : 13 March (Second Wednesday of March) :-

Every second Wednesday of the year, No Smoking Day is marked to assist smokers who wish to quit smoking as well as to promote awareness about the health consequences of smoking in everyday life. This year, it falls on March 13th. Every year, more women die of lung cancer than breast cancer. Smoking also accounts for approximately 80% of deaths (or eight out of ten) from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). As a result, both men and women are more likely to die from any cause when they smoke cigarettes. No Smoking Day awareness movement was first started in 1984 in the United Kingdom on the day of Ash Wednesday and since then it has been an annual celebration event.



Pi Day : 14 March :-

Pi is a key symbol in mathematics, statistics, and physics. It is the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter. The ratio is a constant of 3.14 pi. Most calculations in Mathematics, Physics, and Statistics rely heavily on the value of Pi. Pi Day is held annually to commemorate Pi's constant value and how it simplifies computations for humans. Archimedes of Syracuse was the first mathematician to calculate the constant value of pi. In 1737, Leonhard Euler used the symbol of Pi, and hence it got accepted in the scientific community. In the year 1988, American physicist Larry Shaw celebrated the first Pi Day.



International Day of Action for Rivers : 14 March :-

14 March is designated as a 'International Day of Action for Rivers' to safeguard water rights, which are far more than a basic necessity. It is a day of solidarity in which various communities around the world speak with one voice to proclaim that rivers matter. The day also emphasizes the role of rivers in biodiversity. The First International Meeting of People Affected by Dams, held in March 1997 in Curitiba, Brazil, established the International Day of Action Against Dams and For Rivers, Water, and Life. 20 countries' representatives had decided that the International Day of Action would take place on 14 March Brazil's Day of Action Against Large Dams. The International Day Of Action For Rivers 2024 theme is 'Water for All'.



National Vaccination Day : 16 March :-

National Vaccination Day is observed annually on March 16. The World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Polio Eradication Initiative was launched in 1988 as the first step toward eradicating the disease worldwide. On the same day in 1995, the Indian government launched the pulse polio immunisation programme, the country's first attempt to eradicate the disease. Since then, March 16 has been celebrated as National Vaccination Day. The theme for National Vaccination Day 2024 is 'Vaccines Work For All' and emphasises that safe and effective vaccination is necessary for all.



World Consumer Rights Day : 15 March :-

World Consumer Rights Day is commemorated annually on March 15. On March 15, 1962, President John F. Kennedy spoke to the United States Congress about consumer rights. This incident marked the first time a world leader mentioned consumer rights. World Consumer Rights Day was first recognized in 1983. Since then, the United Nations has recognized this particular day. On this day, people come together to raise awareness about consumer rights that exist to protect them from discrimination, unfair practices, and exploitation. This year, Consumers International has selected 'Fair and responsible AI for consumers' as the theme for World Consumer Rights Day 2024.



Ordnance Factories Day (India) : 18 March :-

Every year on March 18, India observes Ordnance Factory Day to honor the establishment of the country's first Ordnance Factory in 1801, which was located in Cossipore, close to Kolkata. This day commemorates the contribution of Indian Ordnance Factories (IOFs) to strengthening India's defence capabilities. The IOFs are a group of 41 manufacturing units located across the country, which are responsible for the production of arms, ammunition, and other equipment for the Indian Armed Forces.



Global Recycling Day : 18 March :-

Global Recycling Day is commemorated annually on March 18th. It is a day to encourage recycling and conservation by informing people about the state of critical resources. The Global Recycling Foundation was founded in 2018 to encourage global recycling and conservation efforts. They began commemorating Global Recycling Day. We should celebrate Global Recycling Day to raise awareness and encourage people to recycle. It can help to combat various problems like pollution and save resources and money. The theme of the Global Recycling Day 2024 is #RecyclingHeroes.



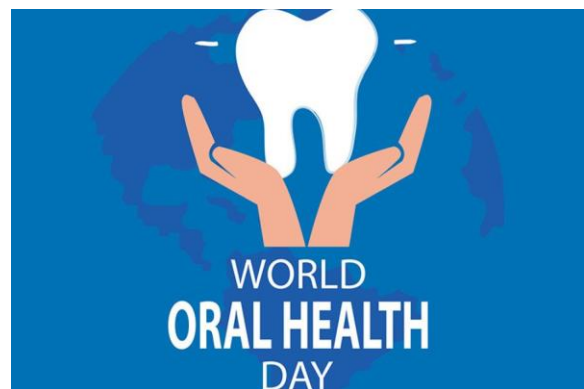
World Sparrow Day : 20 March :-

Every year on March 20, people commemorate World Sparrow Day. It is intended to raise awareness about sparrow conservation and protection, as their numbers are dwindling worldwide. The first observance of the day took place in 2010. The purpose of the day is to raise awareness about the importance of sparrows in the ecology, including their role in pollination and pest management. Sparrows are known to be an indicator of a region’s environmental health, and their decreasing numbers are cause for concern.



International Day of Happiness : 20 March :-

The International Day of Happiness is observed annually on March 20. The United Nations General Assembly named July 12, 2012, as the day to strengthen the appropriate policies and effect change through education, awareness, employment, and multidimensional development procedures. UNESCO launched the 'Happy Schools Project' in 2014 and release a learning toolbox in 2022 to promote the peaceful and lifelong process of learning. These initiatives support the goal of a better inclusive future with fewer economic gaps and more social inclusivity.



World Oral Health Day : 20 March :-

Every year on March 20, the world celebrates World dental Health Day to promote awareness about the importance of dental health and its impact on overall well-being. Oral health disorders can have a negative impact on quality of life, are more common in older persons, and are not caused by aging. Recent research indicates that there is a strong correlation between the impacts of oral illnesses and overall health. Treatment for oral health conditions is expensive and usually not a part of universal health coverage (UHC). The theme of

World Oral Health Day 2024 is 'A Happy Mouth is A Happy Body'.



International Day of Forests : 21 March :-

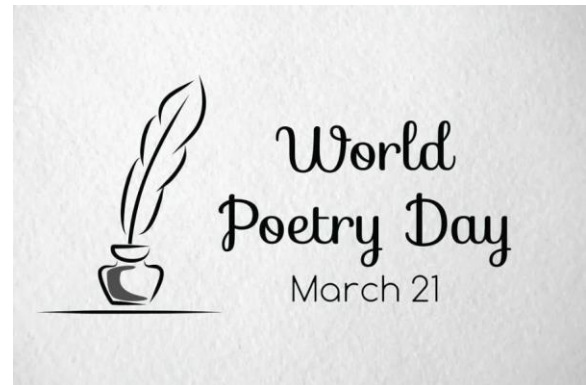
International Day of Forests or World Forestry Day is held on March 21st around the world to raise awareness about the importance of forests, woodlands, and trees in our lives. It is critical to comprehend the worth, relevance, and contributions of forests to the balance of life on Earth. According to the UN, forests account for over 80% of terrestrial biodiversity worldwide, with over 60,000 tree species. Approximately 1.6 billion people depend directly on forests for food, shelter, energy, medicine, and income. The theme for International Day of Forests 2024 is “Forests and Innovation: New Solutions for a Better World”.



World Down Syndrome Day : 21 March :-

Every year on March 21, the world celebrates World Down Syndrome Day (WDS). The day is dedicated to raise awareness and understanding about Down Syndrome, a neurodevelopmental disease that impairs communication and social interaction. The United Nations formally created this worldwide awareness day in 2012. The date of World Down Syndrome Day, 21

March, was chosen to highlight the uniqueness of the 21st chromosome, which causes Down syndrome. This year, the theme of 13th World Down Syndrome Day 2024 is "End the Stereotypes."



World Poetry Day : 21 March :-

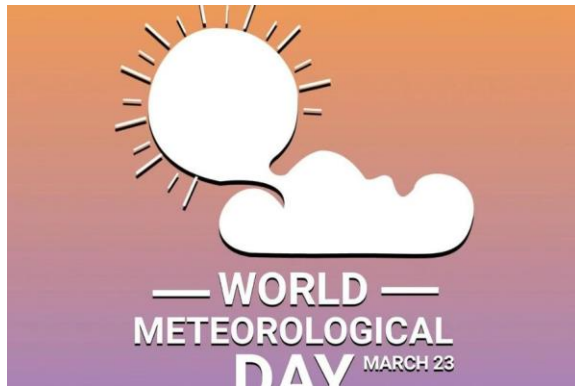
UNESCO established World Poetry Day in 1999 during its 30th General Conference in Paris. Every year on March 21, it is recognized. Poetry is a form of literature that praises the abstraction and beauty of language. The poem's objective is to analyze human problems via the use of imagery and metaphor. It has become an underlying source of relief for many of humanity's existential concerns, internal concepts, and so on. The day honours the poets who continue the tradition in newer generations. The theme for World Poetry Day 2024 is "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants."



World Water Day : 22 March :-

World Water Day is held annually on March 22. The United Nations General Assembly declared in 1993 that a day would be set aside to raise public awareness of the importance of fresh water conservation and its role in our daily lives. Since 1993, March 22 has been

designated as World Water Day. Water is highly crucial in our daily life. Water is an essential natural resource in our daily lives, used for drinking, cooking, and bathing. Most of the water that we use for day-to-day activities comes from groundwater. The theme of World Water Day 2024 is 'Water for Peace'.



World Meteorological Day : 23 March :-

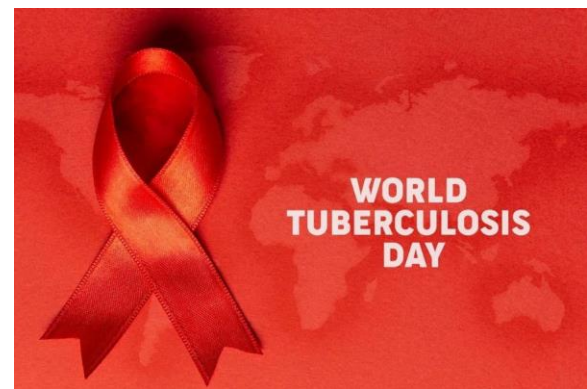
World Meteorological Day is commemorated annually on March 23. The World Meteorological Organization was created on March 23, 1950, to predict weather and climate change. A year after its inception, the World Meteorological Organisation established World Meteorological Day. The theme for this year's World Meteorological Day is - "At the Frontline of Climate Action." The day aims to create awareness about the significance of predicting weather changes and climate change mitigation.



Martyr's Day : 23 March :-

Martyr's Day is held on a variety of dates throughout India. Martyrs' Day is held on January 30th in commemoration of Mahatma Gandhi. March 23 is also remembered as the day the British executed three heroic independence fighters, Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru,

and Sukhdev Thapar. Bhagat Singh was born September 28, 1907, in Lyallpur, Punjab. Bhagat Singh, together with his companions Rajguru, Sukhdev, Azad, and Gopal, fought for the assassination of Lala Lajpat Rai. On March 23rd, 1931, in the Lahore Jail, they were hanged. Their bodies were cremated on the banks of the Sutlej River.



World Tuberculosis Day : 24 March :-

World Tuberculosis (TB) Day is observed on March 24 each year to raise awareness about the terrible illness. Tuberculosis, an infectious disease that mostly affects the lungs, is one of the biggest killer diseases, accounting for 1.3 million fatalities in 2022. The disease is caused by a bacteria called Mycobacterium tuberculosis and spreads via the air when infected persons cough, sneeze, or spit. March 24, 1882 is considered a significant date in the battle against tuberculosis as it is on this day that Dr Robert Koch discovered the bacteria that causes TB. The theme of the World Tuberculosis (TB) Day 2024 is "Yes! We can end TB".



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE UNBORN CHILD

International Day of the Unborn Child : 25 March :-

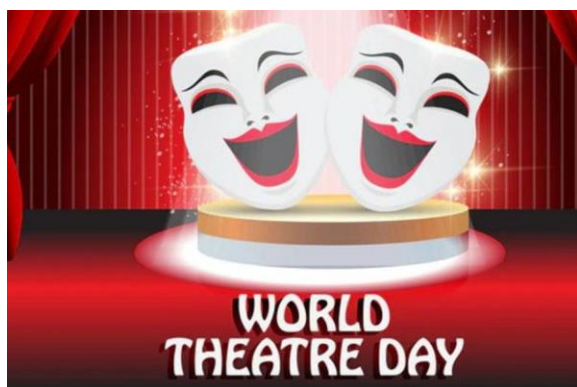
International Day of the Unborn Child is observed on March 25 every year by various governments and organizations around the world. The goal of this day is to

raise awareness about the value and importance of unborn children, as well as to advocate for the protection of their rights by condemning abortion. The International Day of the Unborn Child was established in 1999 by the late Pope John Paul II, who dedicated the day to promoting the sanctity of human life and raising awareness about the rights of the unborn child.



Purple Day of Epilepsy : 26 March:-

Purple Day, also known as Epilepsy Awareness Day, is held annually on March 26 to promote awareness of the fear and stigma associated with epilepsy. Epilepsy is a neurological ailment and the most frequent chronic brain disease affecting people of all ages. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 50 million individuals worldwide have epilepsy. Epilepsy Awareness Day was first observed on March 26, 2008, through an event organised by Cassidy Megan from Nova Scotia, Canada.



World Theatre Day : 27 March :-

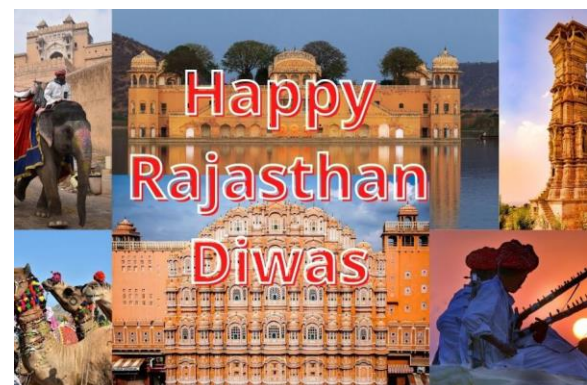
Every year on March 27th, we commemorate World Theatre Day. This day honors the art form of theatre and its relevance in society. The day is commemorated to raise awareness about the importance of theatre in our

lives and to encourage its development. The first World Theatre Day was held in 1962, marking the beginning of its existence. Since its beginnings, World theatrical Day has gained traction and is now observed by governments, lawmakers, institutions, and theatrical practitioners all around the world. "Theatre and a Culture of Peace" this theme was set by the International Theatre Institute and remains constant every year.



International Day of Zero Waste : 30 March :-

On March 30, 2023, the world celebrated the inaugural International Day of Zero Waste, encouraging everyone to prevent and reduce waste while also pushing a societal change towards a circular economy. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) established the day in response to the growing negative effects of garbage on human health, the economy, and the environment. The day calls upon all stakeholders — including governments, civil society, businesses, academia, communities, women and youth — to engage in activities that raise awareness of zero-waste initiatives.



Rajasthan Day : 30 March :-

It is located in the country's northwest and boasts a diverse cultural landscape. The state of Rajasthan was founded on March 30, 1949, when Rajputana was integrated into the Dominion of India. Jaipur, the state's largest city, was declared its capital. Rajasthan Diwas is commemorated annually on March 30th to

commemorate the state's establishment. Rajasthan Diwas 2024 is being celebrated as the 75th foundation day of the state. Rajasthan is divided into 9 regions; Ajmer State, Hadoti, Dhundhar, Gorwar, Shekhawati, Mewar, Marwar, Vagad and Mewat. These regions are equally rich in heritage and artistic contribution.

2: Agreements



RIL Signs Deal With Disney To Merge Viacom18 And Star India :-

Reliance Industries and global media giant Walt Disney have agreed to merge their media operations in India in a \$8.5 billion merger, forming a behemoth with 120 TV channels and two digital OTT platforms. RIL-owned Viacom18 will merge with Walt Disney's local unit Star India, bolstering Reliance's dominance in the country's \$28 billion media and entertainment industry. Reliance, along with Viacom18, will own 63% in the merged entity, while Disney will hold the remaining 37%.



MoSPI Signs MoU With ISRO On Urban Frame Survey Using Bhuvan :-

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has signed an initial agreement with the National Remote Sensing Centre of ISRO to digitize the Urban Frame Survey utilizing the Bhuvan Platform. This collaboration aims to convert the Urban Frame Survey (UFS) from analogue to digital mode, assisting MoSPI in meeting its goal of updating the urban frame on a regular and timely basis, according to an official statement. UFS is conducted in five-year phases to prepare and maintain a frame of compact urban geographical units, which serve as sampling frame in urban sector, mainly for NSSO large scale Socio-Economic Surveys.



C-DOT And Qualcomm Sign MoU To Boost Make In India Vision :-

At the recently concluded Mobile World Congress 2024 in Barcelona, Spain, the government of India's publicly funded Center for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), a research institution focused on telecom technology, announced plans to work with Qualcomm Technologies Inc., a subsidiary of Qualcomm Incorporated, to establish a strategic partnership that will foster innovation in India

and support Indian developers and start-ups working on cutting-edge products and use cases. Centre for Development of Telematics, C-DOT, an R&D center of the Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Communications, Govt. of India has been widely known for its monumental role in ushering in the indigenous Telecom revolution in the nation.



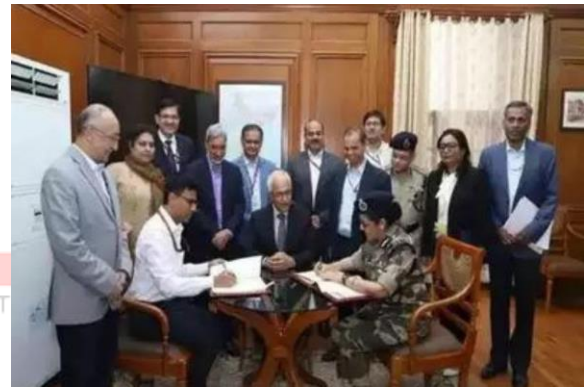
Tech Mahindra and Pegatron sign MoU to offer AI-enabled private 5G to enterprises :-

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed, according to an announcement from Tech Mahindra and Pegatron. The two businesses will create customized 5G solutions for international businesses. The partnership, which was revealed at the most recent MWC2024 trade show, will use Tech Mahindra's demonstrated experience with large-scale 5G transformations in conjunction with a purpose-built private 5G product portfolio sold under the Pegatron 5G business unit to provide end-to-end 5G for Enterprise (5G4E) solutions for manufacturing customers and international businesses.



Atal Innovation Mission, NITI And Meta Collaborate To Establish Frontier Technology Labs In Schools :-

NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and Meta have announced a collaboration to develop Frontier Technology Labs (FTLs) in strategically important schools, with the goal of democratising future technology. According to an official statement, FTL is an advanced version of Atal Tinkering Lab equipped with cutting-edge infrastructure, including all Tinkering Lab components, to empower students to innovate using technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Augmented and Virtual Reality, Blockchain, Cybersecurity, Robotics, 3D Printing, and the Internet of Things.



CAPFIMS signs MoU with AIIMS to run institute :-

The Central Armed Police Forces Institute of Medical Sciences (CAPFIMS) has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with AIIMS Delhi to establish a 970-bed super-specialty and tertiary care hospital on the latter's campus. The institute at South Delhi's Maidangarhi will now operate as an extension of AIIMS Delhi, with doctors assigned from the campus to the CAPF Institute. The Union Cabinet approved a budgetary support of Rs 2207.5 crore in the 15th Finance Commission cycle for the Institute.



India-EFTA Trade And Economic Partnership Agreement :-

India has inked a substantial trade and economic partnership deal with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which includes Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland. The pact aims to increase trade and investment between the two economies. This deal is expected to provide numerous benefits to Indian consumers and the economy. One of the major benefits of this trade pact is the phased-out custom duties on imported goods, which will enable domestic consumers to access high-quality Swiss products such as watches, chocolates, biscuits, and clocks at lower prices.



Power Grid Corporation Signs MoU with Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Prasaran Nigam for Joint Venture :-

Power Grid Corporation of India has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Prasaran Nigam (RRVPNL) to form a joint venture company to create an intra-state transmission system in Rajasthan. The proposed joint venture company will tackle projects costing up to Rs 10,000 crore in phases. The corporation will own 74% of the joint venture, with RRVPNL holding the remaining 24%. Power Grid Corporation of India (PGCIL), a Public Sector Undertaking is India's principal electric power transmission company.



NIELIT And ITI Egypt Sign MoU To Improve Skills, Jobs, And Global Collaboration :-

The National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), an autonomous scientific society under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of the Republic of India, and the Information Technology Institute (ITI), affiliated with the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt, have signed a memorandum of understanding. The aim of the MoU is to foster mutual collaboration for improving workforce skills, promoting employment opportunities, addressing skills gaps, and fostering international cooperation.



Tripartite MoU Signed Among USOF, Prasar Bharati And ONDC :-

The Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has inked a tripartite MoU with Prasar Bharati and the Open Network for Digital Commerce to promote inexpensive and accessible digital services across the country. The MoU's goal is to package broadband services with OTT and an e-commerce platform for rural India, which would be built on BharatNet infrastructure under USOF. This MoU will enable the bundled Prasar Bharati OTT as a service, including linear channels, Live TV and on-demand content, among the end consumers while USOF will ensure efficient and high-speed broadband services in rural and remote areas.



Tamil Nadu government to sign MoU with Centre to establish PM SHRI Schools in the state :-

The Tamil Nadu government has opted to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Education to execute the PM SHRI Scheme, according to a tweet from the Ministry. “In this regard, a state level committee headed by the School Education Secretary has been constituted. Based on the recommendations of the committee, the MoU for establishing PM (SHRI) Schools will be signed by the state before the beginning of the next academic year 2024-25,” read the notification from Tamil Nadu’s School Education Department.



Axis Mutual Fund Partners With Enparadigm For AI-Generated Learning Program :-

To improve the performance and productivity of its frontline, mid, and, to some extent, senior employees, Axis Mutual Fund, a massive asset management company with its headquarters located in Mumbai, has partnered with Enparadigm, an AI-driven experiential learning and talent intelligence solutions company, for exclusive learning journeys. Being one of India’s largest fund houses, with assets under management roughly worth INR 2.6 Lakh Cr, the company has been committed

to providing cutting-edge learning solutions for its workforce.



CBI, Europol Sign Working Arrangement For Cooperative Relations :-

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) have signed a Working Arrangement, which establishes cooperation between India's law enforcement institutions and Europol. Europol Executive Director Catherine De Bolle and CBI Director Praveen Sood signed the Working Arrangement during a virtual ceremony in front of senior CBI and Europol officials. “This arrangement promotes direct cooperation between both organisations to build on their respective mandates, strategies and to explore the potential for synergies,” said the agency.



Mahindra & Mahindra, Adani Total Energies sign MoU to set up EV charging stations :-

Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Adani Total Energies E-Mobility Limited (ATEL) to accelerate

the adoption of electric vehicles (EV) in India. According to a media statement, the MoU lays out a strategy for developing a nationwide EV charging infrastructure. ATEL executive director & CEO Suresh P Manglani said the collaboration with Mahindra & Mahindra for the charging infrastructure will bolster the confidence of customers to embrace EV technology as part of the energy transition.



NTPC signs pact with Japanese agency for USD 200 mIn finance:-

NTPC has signed a pact with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) to secure a foreign currency loan of USD 200 million (JPY 30 billion or around Rs 1,650 crore). The agreements have been signed for a JPY 15 billion loan each for NTPC and NTPC Renewable Energy (NREL). The facility has been extended under

JBIC's initiative entitled 'Global Action for Reconciling Economic Growth and Environment Preservation' (GREEN) for projects, which lead to the conservation of the global environment.



IIM Mumbai And Starburst Collaborate To Boost ASD Startups :-

European Starburst has established a strategic partnership with the Indian Institute of Management-Mumbai to promote aerospace, new space, and defense (ASD) businesses in India. The collaboration aims to cultivate an ASD ecosystem centered on the famed B-School in India's financial capital, providing critical support and resources to ASD businesses across the country. "This strategic collaboration signifies a crucial step towards nurturing and empowering the burgeoning ASD startup ecosystem in India," IIM Mumbai Director Manoj K Tiwari said.

3: Appointments



PayU names Renu Sud Karnad as chairperson and independent director:-

PayU Payments Private Ltd (PayU), the fintech branch of Global Consumer Internet Group Prosus, has hired Renu Sud Karnad, a director at HDFC Bank, as chairman and independent director of the firm. This digital financial services business has also added four new board members, bringing the total number of board members to seven, including PayU's CEO, Anirban Mukherjee, and Chief Finance Officer PayU, Arvind Agarwal. All the five new directors have joined the board.



IPS Officer Daljit Singh Chaudhary Named NSG's New Director General :-

Daljit Singh Chaudhary, a 1990 batch IPS officer, has been appointed as the National Security Guard's (NSG) director general (DG). Chaudhary, who is now the DG of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), has been assigned the additional responsibility of leading the NSG. It is a government counterterrorism and anti-hijacking unit. The force is trained to deal with specific situations and used only in exceptional circumstances as deemed by the government. NSG was extensively used during the 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai.



Anurag Agarwal Appointed As Head Of Parliament Security :-

Anurag Agarwal, an IPS officer, has been appointed as the chief of Parliament security, according to an official order. Currently an inspector general in the CRPF, the 1998-batch officer from the Assam-Meghalaya cadre has been named joint secretary (security) for three years. Mr. Agarwal will take over his new assignment at a time when the security of the Parliament House complex is being overhauled after two men jumped into the Lok

Sabha chamber on December 13 from the visitors' gallery and opened a can of yellow smoke.



RBI Appoints S. Ravindran As Part-Time Chairman Of Tamilnad Mercantile Bank :-

The RBI has accepted S Ravindran's appointment as the part-time chairman of Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (TMB). In a regulatory filing, the bank stated that the RBI authorized his appointment from February 29, 2024 to August 2, 2026. The clearance is dependent on Ravindran stepping down from his directorships in Shriram Finance Limited and Bandhan AMC Limited before taking over as the bank's part-time chairman. Ravindran, 61, has an extensive work experience of 29 years at the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).



Brajesh Mehrotra Appointed As New Chief Secretary Of Bihar :-

Brajesh Mehrotra, a 1989-batch IAS official, has been chosen as Bihar's next chief secretary, succeeding Amir Subhani (1987-batch), who has opted for voluntary retirement from the government to facilitate his appointment as chairperson of a state-level commission. According to government sources, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has approved Subhani's request for voluntary

retirement. Subhani, who is considered a very upright officer, may be appointed as the chairperson of either the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) or the Bihar Electricity Regulatory Commission (BERC).



SAP appoints Manish Prasad as President, MD for Indian Subcontinent :-

SAP has appointed Manish Prasad as President and Managing Director of SAP Indian Subcontinent. He succeeds Kulmeet Bawa, who will play a global role in driving the growth and acceptance of SAP Business Technology Platform (SAP BTP) for customers, according to a corporate release. Prasad will report to Paul Marriott, President of SAP Asia Pacific Japan, from his base in Bengaluru. Prasad has experience building and managing global and regional businesses across multiple geographies including North America, Middle East, Asia, and Australia.



Devendra Jhajharia Becomes New President Of Paralympic Committee Of India :-

Devendra Jhajharia, a two-time Paralympic gold medalist, was chosen unopposed as the president of the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI), succeeding another notable para athlete, Deepa Malik. The 42-year-old javelin thrower was the only candidate for the top position, having won gold medals in the F46 disability

category at the 2004 Athens and 2016 Rio Paralympics. The PCI elections were held for the posts of president, two vice-presidents, secretary general, treasurer, two joint secretaries and five executive committee members.



AS Rajeev Appointed As Vigilance Commissioner In The Central Vigilance Commission :-

AS Rajeev, former Chief Executive of the Bank of Maharashtra, was sworn in as Vigilance Commissioner of the Central Vigilance Commission. He is a career banker with more than 38 years of experience in Syndicate Bank, Indian Bank, Vijaya Bank, and Bank of Maharashtra. As the MD & CEO of Bank of Maharashtra for the last 5 years, Bank of Maharashtra successfully emerged from the RBI's Prompt Corrective Action and traversed to the next orbit of banking from a small-sized bank to a robust midsized bank.



ISMA Appoints Deepak Ballani As New Director General :-

The Indian Sugar and Bio-energy Manufacturers Association (ISMA) has named Deepak Ballani as its new Director General. Ballani, according to an official statement, has over 25 years of experience in public policy, government affairs, and organizational management. Prior to joining ISMA, Ballani was the

Director General of the All India Plastics Manufacturers Association. ISMA said that Ballani's appointment comes at a pivotal moment when government is emphasizing on achieving energy security of the country with a target of reducing import dependence by adopting biofuels as one of the measures.



Sanjay Kumar Singh Nominated As Next Director (Projects) Of NHPC Limited :-

Sanjay Kumar Singh is set to take over as Director (Projects) at NHPC Limited after receiving a commendation from the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) panel. Singh, who is currently the Chief General Manager of SJVN Limited, is the recommended candidate out of the group of twelve. Singh will join NHPC's Board of Directors and report directly to the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD). Tasked with overseeing project planning, execution, and contracting, he will play a pivotal role in ensuring the efficient administrative and technical control of projects, prioritizing their timely completion.



Gyanesh Kumar, Sukhbir Sandhu Appointed As New Election Commissioners :-

The government has appointed ex-bureaucrats Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu as election commissioners, hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's high-powered committee met to fill the two vacancies in the Election Commission of India (ECI),

which previously only had Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar. The appointments were made in response to Arun Goel's abrupt departure from the ECI on March 9. Goel's resignation came at a time when the poll body was gearing up to announce the schedule of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.



B Sairam Is The New Chairman And Managing Director Of NCL :-

Shri B. Sairam has been appointed Chairman and Managing Director of Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL), Coal India Limited's flagship subsidiary situated in Singrauli. Shri Sairam has a wealth of expertise and experience gained through 33 years of continuous service in the coal sector. Shri Sairam, a notable graduate mining engineer from NIT Raipur, has worked in a variety of coal sector roles, including mine operations, planning, logistics, and regulatory affairs. Before he was appointed as CMD of NCL, he was serving as Director (Technical) in Ranchi-based Central Coalfields Limited.



Poonawalla Fincorp Appoints Arvind Kapil As MD & CEO :-

Poonawalla Fincorp, a non-banking financial enterprise based in Pune, has chosen Arvind Kapil, a senior executive at HDFC Bank, as its CEO. Kapil is presently the group head of the bank's mortgage banking division,

which comprises home loans, loans against property (LAP), and the sales business of the former Housing Development Finance Corp (HDFC), which amalgamated with the bank last year. The current CEO Abhay Bhutada has been elevated to the group level for a strategic and larger role at the Cyrus Poonawalla Group, the company said.



Kiren Rijiju Gets Additional Charge After Pashupati Kumar Paras Resigns From Union Cabinet :-

Droupadi Murmu, the President of India, has accepted the resignation of former Union Minister Pashupati Kumar Paras, who resigned from the Union Cabinet, and has given Minister of Earth Sciences Kiren Rijiju the additional charge of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, which Paras previously held. Paras, the president of the Rashtriya Lok Janshakti Party (RLJP), an ally of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), resigned from the Union Cabinet a day after his party was not assigned a single seat in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) seat-sharing deal in Bihar for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.



M V Rao Elected As New Chairman Of Indian Banks Association :-

MV Rao, the managing director and CEO of the Central Bank of India, was chosen Chairman of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA). The IBA's managing committee took the decision on March 21, 2024, according to a Central Bank of India release. Three Deputy Chairmen for IBA would be Dinesh Kumar Khara, Chairman, State Bank of India (SBI); S L Jain, MD and CEO , Indian Bank and N Kamakodi, Managing Director and CEO, City Union Bank. Madhav Nair, Country Head and CEO, Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait, would be Honorary Secretary of the Association.



Mariam Mammen Mathew Appointed As DNPA Chairperson :-

Mariam Mammen Mathew, Manorama Online's Chief Executive Officer (CEO), has been appointed chairman of the Digital News Publishers' Association (DNPA) for a two-year term beginning April 1, 2024. She will succeed Tanmay Maheshwari, the Managing Director (MD) of Amar Ujala. Mathew served as vice-chairperson under Maheshwari's chairmanship. DNPA serves as a vital umbrella organisation for digital media businesses, including print and broadcasting, and comprises 18 prominent media organisations.



Govind Dholakia Appointed New Chairman Of Surat Diamond Bourse :-

Diamond Baron Govind Dholakia has been named as the new chairman of Surat Diamond Bourse (SDB), India's second diamond trade hub, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated three months ago. The decision to pick a new head of SDB was made after Vallabh Lakhani resigned earlier. Meanwhile, the newly appointed chairman of SDB, Dholakia is the founder chairman of Shree Ramkrishna Exports (SRK) and was also recently nominated by the BJP as a Rajya Sabha MP from the state.



Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi sworn in as new judicial member of Lokpal of India :-

Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi sworn in as judicial member, Lokpal. The oath was administered by Justice A. M. Khanwilkar, Chairperson, Lokpal of India. Shri Pankaj Kumar and Shri Ajay Tirkey took oath as member, Lokpal. The new appointments took place as two existing Judicial Members namely Justice P. K. Mohanty and Justice Abhilasha Kumari Singh have completed their tenure in Lokpal on 26th March 2024. Shri Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi was serving as the Chairperson of 22nd Law Commission of India. Before that, he was Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court.



Nidhu Saxena appointed MD & CEO of Bank of Maharashtra:-

The Ministry of Finance on March 27, appointed Nidhu Saxena as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Bank of Maharashtra. Saxena is currently Executive Director of Union Bank of India, he will be replacing AS Rajeev upon his selection as Vigilance Commissioner in CVC. The appointment will be in effect for a term of three years with effect from the date of assumption of office on 27 March 2024 or until further orders, whichever is earlier. Bank of Maharashtra is a public sector bank in India. The Government of India held 86.46% stake in the bank as of 30 September 2023.



UN names Kamal Kishore as assistant secretary-general, special rep for disaster risk reduction :-

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has appointed Kamal Kishore as the Assistant Secretary-General and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction at the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR). Kishore replaces Mami Mizutori of Japan. UN Secretary-General Guterres thanked Mizutori for his devotion and contribution to the organization, and praised Paola Albrito, the current UNDRR Director, who will continue to serve as Acting Special Representative until Kishore takes up his new position.



Arnab Banerjee Elected As New ATMA Chairman :-

Arnab Banerjee, Ceat's Managing Director and CEO, has been elected as the new Chairman of the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA), India's national automotive tyre industry association. He will succeed Anshuman Singhania, MD of JK Tyre and Industries, who was named Chairman last year. Banerjee joined CEAT in 2005 as VP – Sales and Marketing, and has held several responsibilities including Chief Operating Officer at CEAT since 2018 prior to taking over his current role. He is an alumnus of the Harvard Business School, IIM Kolkata and IIT Kharagpur.



Pavan Davuluri Appointed To Lead Microsoft's Windows And Surface Teams :-

According to media sources, Pavan Davuluri has been selected as the next head of Microsoft's Windows and Surface Divisions. Following Panos Panay's sudden departure to Amazon last year, Microsoft reorganized its

teams, appointing separate executives to the Windows and Surface businesses. Davuluri was initially in charge of Surface silicon and devices, while Mikhail Parakhin oversaw a newly formed team focused on Windows and web experiences. However, with Parakhin opting to explore other opportunities, Davuluri will now oversee both Windows and Surface operations.



PR Sreejesh And Camila Caram Appointed Co-Chairs Of FIH Athletes Committee :-

PR Sreejesh, the Indian team's standout goalie, and defender Camila Caram of Chile's women's squad have been named co-chairs of the International Hockey Federation's new FIH Athlete Committee. The duo will make direct contributions to the FIH 'Empowerment and Engagement' strategy's 'Athletes First' approach. The FIH Athletes Committee serves as a consultative body and makes recommendations to the FIH Executive Board, FIH Committees, Advisory Panels and other bodies.

4: Awards



Acharya Lokesh Muni Honored As 'Global Jain Peace Ambassador' :-

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar named Acharya Lokesh Muni, the founder of Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti and the World Peace Center, the 'Global Jain Peace Ambassador' at an event in Karnataka. The Jain pilgrim center, Navagraha Tirtha Kshetra, near Hubli Varur, Karnataka, organised the event. The recognition is a tribute to Acharya Lokesh's efforts in promoting global peace and harmony, as well as his contributions to enhancing India and Jainism's reputation internationally. As part of the program, the foundation stone for Padmavati Mata Shaktipeeth was laid.



Sunil Bharti Mittal Awarded Honorary Knighthood

:-
Sunil Bharti Mittal, founder and chairman of Bharti Enterprises, has been awarded an honorary Knighthood by King Charles III of the United Kingdom "for services to UK and India business relations". Mittal was awarded a KBE under the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, one of the highest honours bestowed by a British monarch, according to a list of honorary British awards released by the UK Cabinet Office. The 66-year-old entrepreneur said in a statement that he was "deeply humbled" by the gracious recognition from King Charles.



Tiger Woods Honored With USGA’s Prestigious Bob Jones Award :-

Tiger Woods has been selected to receive the USGA's highest accolade, the Bob Jones Award, which celebrates his dedication to sportsmanship and respect for golf's traditions. Woods is primarily recognized for his on-course performances, having won 15 majors out of 82 career PGA Tour titles. Woods is a nine-time USGA champion, winning three straight U.S. Junior Amateurs, followed by three straight U.S. Amateurs, and then the

U.S. Open at Pebble Beach (2000), Bethpage Black (2002) and Torrey Pines (2008).



Yatin Bhaskar Duggal Wins First Prize In National Youth Parliament Festival 2024 :-

Yatin Bhaskar Duggal of Haryana earned first prize in the 2024 National Youth Parliament Festival, followed by Vaishna Pitchai of Tamil Nadu and Kanishka Sharma of Rajasthan. Addressing the last session of the National Youth Parliament Festival in New Delhi, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla stated that youth's thinking capacity, ability to invent, and eagerness to work will be critical in creating India a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047. He said that India will not only be a Viksit Bharat but will also show the path to the entire world. He further added that India today is moving towards modernisation and at the same time is keeping its heritage intact.



India Receives ‘Measles And Rubella Champion’ Award :-

India has received the renowned measles and rubella champion award for its outstanding efforts in eliminating these infections. The award was accepted by Ambassador Sripriya Ranganathan on behalf of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare at the American Red Cross headquarters in Washington. The Health Ministry in a statement said, this accolade celebrates the

country's unwavering commitment to public health and its outstanding leadership in curbing the spread of these infectious diseases among children.



PM Narendra Modi Presents National Creators Award :-

PM Modi presented the National Creators Award at Bharat Mandapam to acknowledge young talent and encouraged digital content creators to create content about the country, highlighting its history and legacy. The award recognizes twenty categories, including Best Storyteller, Disruptor of the Year, Celebrity Creator of the Year, Green Champion, Best Creator for Social Change, Most Impactful Agri Creator, Cultural Ambassador of the Year, and International Creator. Over 1,50,000 nominations were received across 20 categories, with approximately 1 million votes cast in the voting phase for digital creators in various award categories.



Oscars 2024 : Oppenheimer sweeps the 96th Academy Awards :-

Cillian Murphy became the first Irish-born recipient of the Best Actor Oscar, as Oppenheimer swept the awards. The film dominated the awards, taking best picture, best director for Christopher Nolan, and best supporting actor

for Robert Downey Jr. Murphy was named best main actor for his famous performance as theoretical scientist J Robert Oppenheimer. The ceremony saw Oppenheimer win seven prizes overall, while Poor Things took four - including best actress for Emma Stone - and The Zone of Interest scored two.



GMR Hyderabad Airport Receives ASQ Award For Best Airport In Asia-Pacific Region For 2023 :-

GMR Hyderabad International Airport has once again been recognized in the annual Airports Council International (ACI) Airport Service Quality (ASQ) study. Hyderabad Airport has won the coveted Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Award for the 'Best Airport' in the 15 to 25 Million Passengers Per Annum (MPPA) category in the Asia-Pacific region, according to a news statement from GMR. The airport has consistently secured its position among the Top 3 Global Airports for nine consecutive years, from 2009 to 2017.



Smt. Droupadi Murmu Conferred Honorary Doctorate By University Of Mauritius :-

The University of Mauritius awarded President Droupadi Murmu an honorary doctorate in civil law, demonstrating the depth of bilateral ties. President Murmu urged Mauritian youngsters to maintain ties with

India in order to nurture their proud heritage and invest in their bright future, according to the statement. Murmu stated that the power of education resonates powerfully with her on a personal level because it has been the single most important tool in transforming her life. She conveyed best wishes from the people of India on Mauritius' National Day.



Manjula Ramaswamy conferred with the Sangeet Natak Akademi award :-

Manjula Ramaswamy, a veteran Bharatanatyam master, has received the Sangeet Natak Akademi award for 2022-23 for her contributions to the dance form. President Droupadi Murmu honored the 66-year-old dancer and director of Hyderabad's dance academy Sri Rama Nataka Niketan at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi. Manjula rose to prominence in inventive choreography after learning from and supporting her father, the late VS Ramamoorthy, who had mentored a large number of followers. Her students have won competitions and participated in TV reality shows, showcasing the pure Bharatanatyam form.



Chameli Devi Jain Award 2024 For Outstanding Woman Media Person :-

Greeshma Kuthar, an independent journalist, and Ritika Chopra of the Indian Express were jointly awarded the Chameli Devi Jain Award 2024 for Outstanding Woman Media Person of the Year. According to The Media Foundation, an independent jury comprising senior journalist and columnist Radhika Ramaseshan (Chair), award-winning journalist and author Mariyam Alavi, and Down to Earth managing editor Richard Mahapatra, selected the winners from more than 65 entries of women journalists.



Ratan Tata Awarded PV Narasimha Rao Memorial Award For Philanthropy Work :-

Ratan Tata, the former chairman of Tata Sons, received the renowned PV Narasimha Rao Memorial Award for his extraordinary philanthropic achievements. Ratan Tata, a well-known businessman, has been honored for his extraordinary and tireless contributions to philanthropy. His contributions have benefited many communities around the country. Ratan Tata, who has donated more than half of his income to charity, has given generous donations at an individual level as well as under Tata Trusts.



Prabha Varma Bags Saraswati Samman For ‘Roudra Sathwikam’ :-

Prabha Varma's Malayalam poem 'Roudra Sathwikam' has been selected for the prestigious Saraswati Samman award. The prize, established by the K K Birla Foundation, included a purse of Rs 15 lakh, a citation, and a plaque. Varma's 'Roudra Sathwikam' is a poetic novel published in 2022. Every year, the Saraswati Samman is awarded to a great literary work written in any Indian language listed in Schedule VIII of the Indian Constitution by an Indian citizen and published within the previous ten years of the selected Samman year.



PM Modi Honoured With Bhutan’s ‘Order Of The Druk Gyalpo’ Award :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi became the first foreign head of government to receive Bhutan's highest civilian decoration, the "Order of the Druk Gyalpo." The award has been conferred to Prime Minister Modi in recognition of "his outstanding contribution to the

growth of India-Bhutan relations and for his distinguished service to the Bhutanese nation and people." "Honoured to be conferred with 'Order of the Druk Gyalpo' Award by Bhutan. I dedicate it to 140 crore Indians," PM Modi posted on X soon after.



Aviation Week Laureates Award Was Given To ISRO For Chandrayaan-3 :-

The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) has received the prestigious Aviation Week Laureates Award for their contributions with the historic Chandrayaan-3 mission. The award was accepted on behalf of Isro by Sripriya Ranganathan, Deputy Ambassador at the Indian Embassy in the United States. The Aviation Week Laureates Award is renowned for recognising extraordinary accomplishments within the aerospace industry, and this year, it celebrated Isro's groundbreaking mission, Chandrayaan-3, which cost a modest \$75 million.

5: Banking



Amazon Pay Receives Final RBI Approval As Payment Aggregator :-

Amazon Pay, the fintech branch of e-commerce giant Amazon India, has been granted a payment aggregator license by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the firm announced. The fintech firm has recently joined a list of organizations authorized by the central bank to function as payment aggregators (PA). In February 2024, two fintech startups, Decentro and Juspay, and enterprise software-as-a-service (SaaS) firm Zoho have received final authorisation from the RBI for payment aggregator (PA) licences. Food delivery major Zomato, and fintech

firms Stripe and Tata Pay were among the companies to have bagged the licence in January.



Financial Intelligence Unit Imposes ₹5.49 Crore Fine On Paytm Payments Bank :-

The Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND) issued a ₹5.49 crore penalty on beleaguered Paytm Payments Bank Ltd for violating the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. According to a statement issued by the Finance Ministry, the agency initiated a review of Paytm Payments Bank Ltd after receiving specific information from law enforcement agencies regarding a few entities and their network of businesses engaged in a number of illegal acts, including organising and facilitating online gambling.



Flipkart Introduces Its Digital Payments Solution, Flipkart UPI :-

Launching its Unified Payments Interface (UPI) handle, e-commerce giant Flipkart hopes to improve digital payment options for all customers, including its 500+ million customers. Users can now create their own UPI handle for both online and offline merchant transactions both inside and outside of the Flipkart marketplace thanks to Flipkart UPI. For a distinctive customer

experience, loyalty features such as Supercoins, Cashback, Brand Vouchers, Milestone benefits and more will be offered post the UPI launch.



RBI bans IIFL Finance from giving gold loans due to serious deviations :-

According to a statement made by the Reserve Bank of India, IIFL Finance, which is listed on the stock exchange, will no longer be able to sanction and disburse new gold loans. The RBI has issued a strongly worded statement ordering IIFL Finance to 'stop and desist with immediate effect from sanctioning and disbursing gold loans or assigning, securitising, or selling any of its gold loans.' The RBI said that the decision was taken following an inspection of the company undertaken by them for the year ending March 31, 2023.



RBI Streamlines Net Banking With Interoperable Merchant Payments :-

Governor Shaktikanta Das announced that the Reserve Bank of India has approved the National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) Bharat BillPay Ltd's implementation of an interoperable payment system for internet banking transactions. "We expect the launch of this interoperable payment system for internet banking

during the current calendar year. The new system will facilitate quicker settlement of funds for merchants,” Das said at an RBI-organised digital payments awareness event. Currently, transactions processed through payment aggregators (PA) required banks to interface independently with each PA of multiple online merchants.



Kotak Life Introduces Non-Linked Participating Product Kotak G.A.I.N :-

Kotak Life Insurance, a private sector life insurer, has launched Kotak G.A.I.N, a non-linked participating product that provides long-term savings or income opportunities. The minimum annual premium required to use the product is Rs 50,000. The policyholder's minimum age upon purchasing the policy should be 90 days, and the policy's maturity age should be between 40 and 85 years. We believe G.A.I.N will play a significant role in helping individuals achieve their financial goals with confidence and peace of mind, Mahesh Balasubramanian, managing director, Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company, said.



NPCI and Fonepay Collaborate for Cross-Border UPI Transactions between India and Nepal :-

The NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL), the international arm of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), and Fonepay Payment Service Ltd, Nepal's payment network, have announced that UPI is now available for cross-border transactions between India and Nepal, marking an important milestone in the expansion of the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) service in foreign countries. This means that Indians visiting Nepal will be able to make QR-code-based payments with the UPI apps on their smartphones. The collaboration was announced at Global Fintech Fest 2023 in India in September.

IndusInd Bank

IndusInd Bank Launches Indus PayWear, An All-In-One Tokenisable Wearable :-

IndusInd Bank has launched 'Indus PayWear,' which, in cooperation with Mastercard, claims to be the country's first all-in-one tokenizable wearables for debit and credit cards. Indus PayWear enables tap-and-pay transactions at any contactless Point of Sale (PoS) terminal worldwide, removing the need for physical cards or payment apps. Users can make purchases securely and easily. This wearable is powered by a dedicated mobile application. Users can set up their cards on the wearable device and easily switch between cards using the app.



Sidbi Gets \$24.5 Million From GCF For 'Avaana' Fund :-

Small Industries Development Bank of India (Sidbi) obtained \$24.5 million from the Green Climate Fund

(GCF) for its first anchoring project, the 'Avaana Sustainability Fund (ASF),' which is valued at \$120 million. The GCF, a key component of the historic Paris Agreement, is the world's largest climate fund. GCF accepted Sidbi's idea and committed to the investment during its 38th board meeting on March 5 in Rwanda. The primary aim of the ASF project is to invest in early-stage companies harnessing technology-led innovation to spur climate solutions and sustainability in India.



RBI Directs Federal Bank And South Indian Bank To Stop Issuing New Co-Branded Credit Cards :-

According to exchange filings, private sector lenders Federal Bank and South Indian Bank ceased offering co-branded credit cards to new clients due to regulatory inadequacies, as instructed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). According to South Indian Bank, until it complies fully with the RBI Master Direction on Credit Card and Debit Card issuance, it would not onboard new clients on its co-branded credit cards. However, the lender added that it will continue to service the existing customers who hold co-branded credit cards.



Airtel Payments Bank Unveils A New Way To Pay With Smart Watch :-

Airtel Payments Bank, Noise, and Mastercard have collaborated to launch a novel payment method using a smartwatch. So customers will no longer have to take out phone to make a payment. Customers can simply use the

Airtel Payments Bank Smart Watch. This smart watch, created by Noise and powered by Airtel Payments Bank, allows users to make payment simply by tapping on their wrist. Customers can get this smart watch for Rs 2,999. Existing Airtel Payments Bank customers can buy the watch from the Airtel Thanks App.



RBI Imposes Penalties On Tamilnad Mercantile Bank And DCB Bank :-

The Reserve Bank of India has imposed penalties on DCB Bank and Tamilnad Mercantile Bank for failing to comply with specific guidelines regarding 'interest rate on advances'. DCB Bank has been fined Rs 63.6 lakh, the RBI announced in a statement. In a separate release, the central bank 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'.



SBI Cards And Payment Services Ltd, In Collaboration With Titan Company Ltd, Presented Titan SBI Card :-

SBI Card, the country's largest pure play credit card issuer, has teamed with Titan Company Ltd (Titan) to introduce the 'Titan SBI Card'. This one-of-a-kind retail credit card is created to meet users' aspirational purchasing desires. According to SBI Card, Card offers cardholders special incentives worth over ₹2,00,000 annually, including cashbacks, Titan gift vouchers, and Reward Points. Cardholders are eligible for 5 per cent cashback when they shop using Titan SBI Card from Mia, Caratlane, and Zoya across their offline and online stores.



Federal Bank Launches 'Flash Pay' In Partnership With NPCI For Contactless Payments :-

Federal Bank has introduced 'Flash Pay', a RuPay smart key chain for contactless NCMC (National Common Mobility Card) purchases at enabled metro stations and PoS terminals. Customers can pay up to ₹5,000 without a PIN, however payments above ₹5,000 require PIN confirmation. The daily limit at PoS terminals has been set at ₹1 lakh. Through the 'Flash Pay' device, users can make payments at millions of merchants, with built-in security features such as tokenisation and encryption to ensure that transactions are safe and secure.



Kotak Mahindra Bank acquires 100% stake in Sonata Finance :-

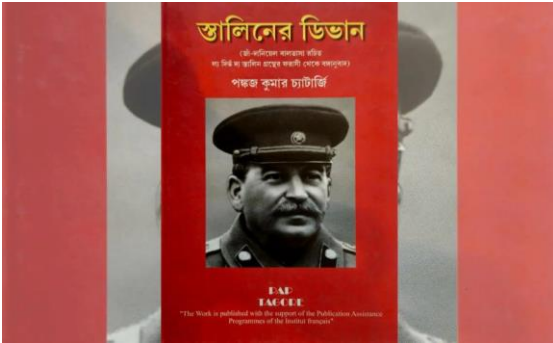
Kotak Mahindra Bank on 29 March, informed exchanges that it had acquired a 100 per cent stake in Sonata Finance Private Limite for Rs 537 crore. With this acquisition, Sonata has become a wholly-owned subsidiary of the bank. Sonata Finance is a microfinance Institution that operates in 10 states through 549 branches and has assets under management worth Rs 2,620 crore as of December 31, 2023. In an exchange filing last year, the bank had said that the acquisition of Sonata would allow it to deepen its presence in some of the semi-urban and rural pockets of north India.



Income Tax Department Imposes ₹564.44 Crore Penalty On Bank Of India :-

The Bank of India (BoI) has received an order from the Income Tax Department's Assessment Unit for AY 2018-19, imposing a penalty of ₹564.44 crore on various disallowances. In an exchange filing, the public sector bank stated that it is in the process of filing an appeal before the Commissioner of Income Tax, National Faceless Appeal Centre (NFAC), against the aforementioned order (issued under Section 270A of the Income Tax Act, 1961) within the statutory timelines. Looking to the precedence/orders of appellate authorities, the bank believes that it has adequate factual and legal grounds to reasonably substantiate its position in the matter, it added.

6: Books and Author



Bengali Translation Wins Prestigious Romain Rolland Book Prize 2024 :-

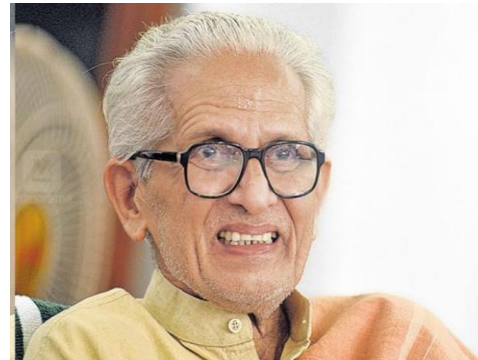
The Romain Rolland Book Prize went to Pankaj Kumar Chatterjee's Bengali translation of 'Staliner Divan'. The Romain Rolland Book Prize is a prestigious literary award that recognizes and encourages great works of fiction that foster cross-cultural understanding and empathy. Named after the renowned French writer and Nobel Prize laureate Romain Rolland, this prize aims to celebrate literature that raises borders and languages and helps create a dialogue between people of diverse backgrounds.



Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik releases Sportstar's coffee table book on Hockey World Cup :-

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has unveiled a coffee table book named 'FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023,' published by Sportstar, The Hindu Group's sports magazine. Sportstar meticulously documented every on-field and off-field moment of the 15th edition of the FIH Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup 2023, highlighting the sport's big celebration in Odisha. The captivating coffee table book preserved the

memories of the World Cup for eternity. The State had successfully organised the Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 at two venues - Bhubaneswar and Rourkela.



Book by Vishnu Narayanan Namboothiri released:-

According to author George Onakkoor, Vishnu Narayanan Namboothiri was a poet of truth, love, morality, and humanity. He was giving a speech at the posthumous publication of Kumaranasan Vairagiyile Anuragi, the late litterateur's book on the life and ideas of the renowned poet Kumaranasan. At a celebration held at Government LP School in Thycaud, Onakkoor gave writer and journalist Sarita Varma a copy of the book, so releasing it. Sreevalli Publications, established in memory of Vishnu Narayanan Namboothiri, brought out the book in connection with the 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Kumaranasan.



Chhattisgarh CM launches 'Tribes of Bastar' coffee table book promoting tribal culture, tourism in Bastar :-

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai launched the "Tribes of Bastar" coffee table book, which was published by

Chhattisgarh's forest department. The chief minister was attending the Chitrakote Mahotsav, which is taking place in Bastar. Dhammashil Ganvir, director of Kanger Valley National Park, stated that this book depicts the unique connection of Bastar's tribal community with their forests, their ancient knowledge system, traditional medicine, unique art, forest-based culture, local music and dance, and so on.



Book launched to honour C. Rangarajan :-

A book titled "India's Contemporary Macroeconomic Themes-Looking Beyond 2020" was launched during an event held at the Madras School of Economics in Chennai. The book was released to commemorate C. Rangarajan, former Chairman of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council and former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, on the occasion of his 90th birthday. The book was released by Laveesh Bhandari, president and senior fellow, Centre for Economic Progress, New Delhi. The book published by Springer Publisher contains a foreword by eminent economist and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.



Justice Prathiba M Singh to Launch Groundbreaking Book On Patent Law :-

Justice Prathiba M Singh, who is currently a judge at the Delhi High Court, is planning to publish a thorough two-

volume book on patent law. The unveiling ceremony is slated on March 9 in Delhi, with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in attending. Justice Prathiba M Singh began writing the book in 2013, when she was appointed Senior Advocate. Former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and Senior Advocate Harish Salve played key roles in encouraging Justice Singh to undertake this monumental task.



Education ministry launches 52 textbooks in non-scheduled Indian languages :-

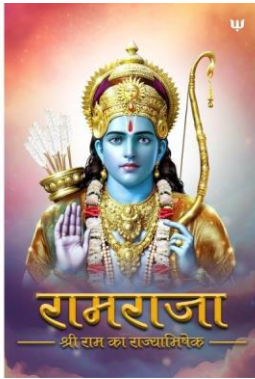
Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Education Minister, inaugurated the primers, a short book created by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in partnership with the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) in Mysuru. The term "Non-Scheduled Languages" refers to all languages spoken in India but not officially recognized. The initiative is in line with the government's efforts to promote Indian languages in education at all levels in line with the NEP 2020.



Al Pacino to publish his memoir 'Sonny Boy' on October 8 :-

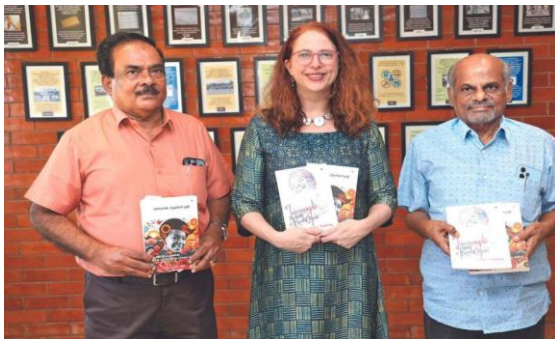
Hollywood legend Al Pacino says his upcoming memoir "Sonny Boy," which will be released in the United States

on October 8, is a deeply intimate and honest account of what he has "seen and been through" in life. Penguin Random House has announced that the Godfather star's memoir would be released in the United States in print, audio, and ebook formats. Pacino, 83, made his debut as a leading man in 1971 with 'The Panic in Needle Park', and in just four years, he established himself as a great talent by starring in The Godfather, The Godfather Part II, Serpico and Dog Day Afternoon.



Mahagatha Launched the Spiritual Book “Ramraja” written by P Narahari and Rishikesh Pandey :-

Mahagatha, a famous literary and film production house, has announced the release of the spiritual book 'Ramraja - Shri Ram Ka Rajyabhishek', which is based on the tale of the Shri Ramraja temple in Orchha. Dr. Mohan Yadav, Madhya Pradesh's Chief Minister, publicly unveiled the book. 'Ramraja' is a joint work written by the renowned P Narahari IAS and Filmmaker Rishikesh Pandey, with a book edited by Akansha Dubey. The book delves into the history, spiritual significance, and architectural marvels of the Ramraja temple in Orchha, a renowned Hindu pilgrimage site.



Tamil translations of two of Maya Angelou’s books released :-

The United States (U.S.) Consulate General in Chennai has published two of American poet and civil rights activist Maya Angelou's literary works in Tamil. The embassy had worked with Kalachuvadu Publications to plan the event, which took place in the American Center auditorium. Ms. Angelou’s 1969 landmark memoir “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”, which was the first non-fiction bestseller by an African-American woman was translated by Bernard Chandra and her “And Still I Rise”, a collection of 32 poems, was translated by R. Sivakumar.



Book on Surat Singh Majithia released at Khalsa College :-

Satyajit Singh Majithia, head of the Khalsa College Governing Council, has published a book about the life of Sardar Surat Singh Majithia, a distinguished Sikh military officer. Harbhajan Singh Cheema wrote the book 'Sardar Surat Singh Majithia and the Second Anglo-Sikh War'. Surat Singh Majithia played a key role in the events that led to the Sikh national uprising against the British in 1848. Cheema said that the publication of the book based on Surat Singh Majithia’s life was a long-awaited wish.



E-book on Cashew Fruit Recipes Released by Sowkhya Mohan at ICAR- Directorate of Cashew Research :-

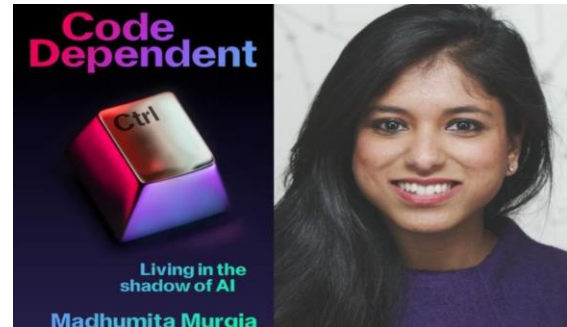
During the cashew day celebration at the ICAR-Directate of Cashew Research, Puttur, Mangaluru, an e-book featuring recipes for cashew fruit was published by Sowkhya Mohan. There are twenty-five recipes in this book with eleven language documentation. Though many people love cashew kernels, very few would have ever tasted the fruit, which is almost ten times bigger than the nut. Across the country, cashew fruit remains underutilized. With this in mind, Sowkhya Mohan Talakalukoppa worked on the book.



Animal Husbandry Minister J. Chinchurani released a book titled "A Compendium on Non-Native Organisms of India" :-

J. Chinchurani, Animal Husbandry Minister, recently published a book named "A Compendium on Non-Native Organisms of India" at a celebration held at T.K. Madhava Memorial (TKMM) College in Nangiarkulangara near

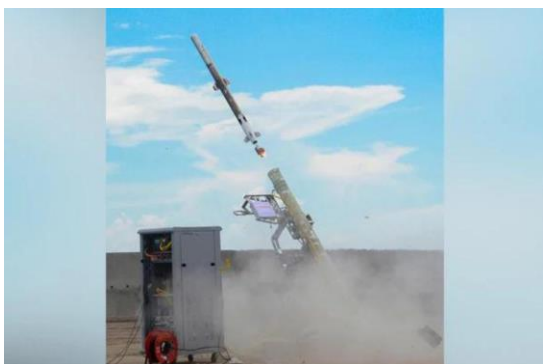
Haripad, Kerala. The book, which contains information about invasive species identified from various parts of Alappuzha, the challenges they pose, and measures to control their spread, was co-authored by K.V. Jayachandran, honorary professor of Kerala University Aquatic Biology and Fisheries, and TKMM College faculty members Sheela S., Jasmin Anand, and Vinod Haridas.



Indian-British Writer's Book On AI Shortlisted For Women's Prize :-

Madhumita Murgia's book, which examines the impact of AI on human society, has been shortlisted for the inaugural Women's Prize for Nonfiction in 2024. The six books in the shortlist are Murgia's "Code Dependent: Living in the Shadow of AI", "Thunderclap: A Memoir of Art and Life and Sudden Death" by Laura Cumming, "Doppelganger: A Trip Into the Mirror World" by Naomi Klein, "A Flat Place" by Noreen Masud, "All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack", "a Black Family Keepsake" by Tiya Miles, and "How to Say Babylon: A Jamaican Memoir" by Safiya Sinclair.

7: Defence



DRDO Successfully Tests Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS):-

On February 28th and 29th, 2024, the DRDO conducted two successful flight tests of the Very Short-Range Air Defence System (VSHORADS) missile from a ground-based portable launcher off the coast of Odisha at the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur. These experiments were conducted against high-speed unmanned aerial targets using various interception circumstances. VSHORADS is a Man Portable Air Defence System

(MANPAD) designed and developed indigenously by Research Centre Imarat (RCI) in collaboration with other DRDO laboratories and Indian Industry Partners.



Exercise Samudra Laksamana: Strengthening Indo-Malaysian Maritime Cooperation :-

Exercise Samudra Laksamana, an important bilateral maritime exercise between India and Malaysia, took place off the coast of Visakhapatnam on February 28 and March 2, 2024. This is the third iteration of the partnership, which includes the Indian Naval Ship Kiltan and the Royal Malaysian Ship KD Lekir. It aims to strengthen connections and improve interoperability between the Indian and Royal Malaysian Navies. The primary aim of Exercise Samudra Laksamana is to bolster the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two naval forces.



Indian Navy To Commission New Base INS Jatayu On Minicoy Island :-

On March 6, the Indian Navy is set to open INS Jatayu, a new base situated on Minicoy Island, with the aim of gradually enhancing the security infrastructure at the strategically significant Lakshadweep Islands. The Indian Navy stated that Minicoy, the southernmost island of Lakshadweep, lies on the crucial Sea Lines of

Communications (SLOCs). Admiral R. Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff, will be present for the commissioning of the Naval Detachment Minicoy as INS Jatayu. It's learned that the base will be expanded over a period of time into a larger base capable of operating aircraft carriers.



DefConnect 2024: Rajnath Singh Launches ADITI Scheme To Boost Defence Innovation :-

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has allocated ₹750 crore for the Acing Development of Innovative Technologies with iDEX (ADITI) project. The project, announced by military Minister Rajnath Singh at DefConnect 2024 in New Delhi, intends to foster innovation in essential and strategic military technologies. He stated that the idea behind the schemes/initiatives such as ADITI, iDEX, iDEX Prime is to also transform India into a knowledge society. Start-ups under the ADITI scheme are eligible to receive a grant-in-aid of up to ₹25 crore for their research, development, and innovation endeavors in defence technology, said in an official statement.



Sub-Inspector Suman Kumari Makes History As BSF's First Female Sniper :-

Sub-Inspector Suman Kumari made history by becoming the Border Security Force's (BSF) first female sniper. She completed an eight-week sniper training course at the

Central School of Weapons and Tactics (CSWT) in Indore, where she earned the prestigious "instructor grade." Suman's path to becoming a sniper began with her direct knowledge of the dangers posed by cross-border sniper attacks while commanding a platoon in Punjab. Recognising her determination and strong character, her superiors approved her participation in the rigorous sniper training course.



Raksha Mantri Inaugurates 'Chola' Building At Naval War College, Goa :-

Rajnath Singh, Raksha Mantri, inaugurated the Naval War College building 'Chola' at INS Mandvi in Verem, Goa. On the occasion, he stated that the Indian Navy's capabilities in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific region are expanding. He noted that improved capabilities and war-fighting readiness are measures toward establishing peace in the Indo-Pacific region. He said that the country is preparing to become self-reliant in the navy, air force and army. The process of building fighter aircraft as well as boats using indigenous technology has begun.



Centre Approves 34 New Dhruv Helicopters For Army, Indian Coast Guard :-

The Cabinet Committee on Security has approved a request for 34 new Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Dhruv choppers, nine of which will be recruited into the

Indian Coast Guard and 25 of which will be assigned to the Indian Army. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited will build the helicopters. According to sources, the Indian Coast Guard's choppers will replace the outdated light utility choppers, while the Indian Army will use the choppers for a variety of purposes. Both projects are expected to be worth over ₹ 8,000 crore and give a boost to indigenization.



Sea Defenders-2024: India-US joint exercise in Port Blair to strengthen maritime alliances :-

The landing of the US Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf at Port Blair marks the beginning of 'Sea Defenders-2024,' a joint exercise between the USCG and the Indian Coast Guard (ICG). This drill, set for March 9-10, 2024, highlights the two countries' growing strategic ties and aims to improve marine safety and maintain a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific area. Through diverse exercises, 'Sea Defenders-2024' aims to elevate readiness levels and operational synergy between the USCG and ICG, ensuring effective collaboration in confronting maritime challenges.



BBBS Secures Biggest Anti-Drone Tech Order Under IDEX :-

Big Bang Boom Solutions Pvt. Ltd. (BBBS), a military sector start-up, has received an order worth more than

Rs 200 crore from the Indian Air Force and Army for its cutting-edge anti-drone technology. “The focus of the iDEX programme is to foster an ecosystem of innovation and technology development in defense. It is our constant endeavor to engage with young innovators who can bring technologically advanced solutions for modernising the Indian military,” said Vivek Virmani, COO, iDex MOD.



DRDO Successfully Tests Agni-5 Missile With MIRV Technology, Mission Divyastra :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) scientists on successfully conducting the maiden flight test of the indigenously developed Agni-5 missile, dubbed Mission Divyastra, which uses Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology. MIRV technology enables the warhead to split into several re-entry vehicles, allowing for a precise and targeted attack. A single missile would, therefore, be capable of delivering multiple warheads.



India Tops Global Arms Imports, SIPRI Report :-

India remains the world's largest arms importer, despite continued efforts to strengthen its defense-industrial

base. From 2019 to 2023, the country accounted for 9.8% of total global arms purchases, indicating a strategic vulnerability in its defense procurement. Recent data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) show that India's weaponry imports increased by 4.7% between 2014-18 and 2019-23. This growth is partially attributed to emergency procurements made in response to the prolonged military standoff with China.



Launch Of ‘Agray’ And ‘Akshay’ Fifth And Sixth Ship Of ASW SWC (GRSE) Project :-

Two ships, "Agray" and "Akshay," were launched to strengthen the Indian Navy's anti-submarine operations, almost five years after the Ministry of Defence and Kolkata-based PSU GRSE inked a contract for the building of eight ASW Shallow Water Crafts (SWCs). Agray and Akshay – named after erstwhile Abhay Class Corvettes Agray and Akshay of Indian Navy – are the 5th and 6th ships in the SWC project series. In the last one year, 3 indigenously built warships/ submarine for Indian Navy have been delivered and a total of 9 warships were launched.



Indian Army contingent participating in the joint military exercise “Exercise Lamitiye – 2024” :-

Indian Army contingent has reached Seychelles to participate in the Tenth edition of Joint Military Exercise “LAMITIYE-2024” between the Indian Army and Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF). The Joint Exercise will be conducted at Seychelles from 18-27 March 2024. ‘LAMITIYE’ meaning ‘Friendship’ in the Creole language is a biennial training event and has been conducted in Seychelles since 2001. 45 personnel each from the GORKHA RIFLES of the Indian Army and Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF) will participate in the exercise.



India Participating With Mozambique And Tanzania For TRILAT-2024 Maritime Exercise :-

Two Indian naval vessels, INS Tir and INS Sujata, are participating in the India Mozambique Tanzania (IMT) Tri Lateral (TRILAT) Exercise. Scheduled from March 21 to March 29, 2024, this joint maritime exercise aims to strengthen cooperation between India, Mozambique, and Tanzania. The first edition of IMT TRILAT exercise was conducted on Oct 2022, which saw participation of INS Tarkash with the Tanzania and Mozambique Navies. The current edition of the exercise is divided into two phases - The harbor phase and the sea phase.



Navy deploys 11 subs and 35 warships amidst growing military activities in Indian Ocean :-

The Indian Navy has undertaken one of its largest deployments, with 11 submarines and 35 warships at sea not only to secure the western seaboard for economic commerce, but also to carry out other particular objectives in the face of a growing Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean. While 10 warships have been deployed in the northern Arabian Sea, Red Sea, and Gulf of Aden and eastern coast of Somalia for anti-piracy missions and responses to vessels hit by the missiles and drones, others are operating in the Bay of Bengal and southern Indian Ocean.



LCA Tejas Mark 1A fighter aircraft completes first flight in Bengaluru:-

The first aircraft LA5033 of the Tejas Mk1A series successfully soared in the sky after taking off from the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) facility in Bengaluru on 28 March 2024. The Tejas Mk1A aircraft did a successful sortie with a flying time of 18 minutes. The plane was piloted by Chief Test Pilot Group Captain K K Venugopal (Retired). HAL achieved this significant production milestone with concurrent design and development amid major supply chain challenges in the global geopolitical environment, after the contract signature in February 2021.

8: Economy



Traffic Situation Improved At Mumbai Airport; Delay In Flight Arrival Reduced: Aviation Ministry :-

The civil aviation ministry stated the air traffic situation at the Mumbai airport has improved, and flight arrival delays have been decreased, nearly two months after orders, including a flight reduction, were issued to alleviate congestion. The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) in the city is one of the country's busiest. Giving a comparison of the air traffic trends based on flight arrivals between the time periods November 11-December 10, 2023, and February 16-24, 2024, the ministry said its initiatives are yielding results and that the situation is also being closely monitored.



IIT Madras Introduces 'Investor Information & Analytics Platform' for Startups :-

Union Minister of State for Electronics and IT, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and Jal Shakti Rajeev Chandrasekhar unveiled the 'Investor Information and Analytics Platform' built by IIT Madras. This portal will serve as a one-stop shop for companies,

allowing them to easily access Venture Capitalists (VCs) and Investor networks, government initiatives, and a variety of other aspects of the startup ecosystem. This platform has been developed by the Researchers at the Centre for Research on Start-ups and Risk Financing (CREST) of IIT Madras.



Index Of Eight Core Industries Increase By 3.6 Percent In January 2024 :-

According to preliminary data, the index of eight core industries (ICI) increased by 3.6 percent in January 2024 compared to January 2023, owing to strong growth in sectors such as coal, steel, cement, natural gas, electricity, and crude oil. "The combined performance of these core industries is crucial as they account for 40.27 percent of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP)," the government stated. This growth reflects the ongoing recovery and expansion across these key sectors of the economy.



India's GST Collection Surges 12.5% To Rs 1.68 Lakh Crore In February 2024 :-

India collected Rs 1.68 lakh crore in goods and services tax (GST) in February, up 12.5% over the previous year, indicating strong economic growth. According to a press release from the government, this growth was driven by a 13.9% increase in GST from domestic transactions and an 8.5% increase in GST on imported items. GST revenue net of refunds for February 2024 stood at Rs 1.51 lakh crore registering a growth of 13.6 per cent over that for the same period last year.



Aviation Ministry Introduces Helicopter Emergency Medical Services In India :-

In an innovative step, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) in India is leading the way in a healthcare revolution with the launch of Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS). This project seeks to reevaluate medical outreach by providing emergency medical care in the critical first hour after potentially fatal situations. The MoCA's intervention kicked off with the initiation of a pilot project, marking the introduction of the utilisation of helicopters in Emergency Medical Services (EMS) roles.



RBI Approves Merger Of Fincare SFB With AU Small Finance Bank :-

The Reserve Bank approved the \$530 million all-stock merger between AU Small Finance Bank and Fincare Small Finance Bank. The merging will take effect on April

1 of this year, and all Fincare SFB branches will become AU SFB branches as of that day, according to the apex bank. The merger scheme, one of the first such moves in the relatively new SFB space, has been sanctioned in the exercise of the powers contained in sub-section (4) of Section 44A of the Banking Regulation Act of 1949, the central bank said.



Tata Motors Unveils Next-Generation Green-Fuel Powered Fleet To Tata Steel :-

Tata Motors, India's top commercial vehicle maker, has unveiled its next generation of green-fuel-powered commercial vehicles. The fleet, which comprises Prima tractors, tippers, and the Ultra EV bus, runs on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and battery electric technologies. The new fleet is outfitted with numerous safety measures, including an Advanced Driver Assistance System (ADAS), Electronic Stability Control, Active Traction Control, and a Driver Monitoring System. The vehicles have been handed over to Tata Steel's delivery partners for transporting steel products and raw materials.



Government Of India And ADB Sign \$23 Million Loan Agreement To Strengthen Fintech Ecosystem In India :-

The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) inked a \$23 million financing deal to improve

access to excellent fintech education, research, and innovation at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT-City). GIFT City is a joint endeavor of the Indian government and the Gujarat state government to strengthen India's financial services and fintech ecosystem. The project is expected to establish an International Fintech Institute (IFI) to strengthen fintech education, boost start-up success rates, and drive fintech research and innovation.



Max India’s Subsidiary Partners With IIT Delhi For Senior Citizen Care :-

Max India Ltd announced that its wholly owned subsidiary, Antara Assisted Care Services Limited, an integrated service provider for elder care needs, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IIT Delhi). This collaboration intends to create offerings customized exclusively to the elderly demographic. The company reported, in response to India’s growing elderly population and the accompanying challenges of mobility-related disabilities, the company with IIT Delhi will conduct research and design solutions aimed at enhancing the quality of life for seniors.



India’s first integrated Oil Palm Processing Unit by 3F Oil Palm starts commercial operations :-

3F Oil Palm, India's first integrated oil palm processing unit, began commercial operations. The factory, located in Roing in Arunachal Pradesh's lower Dibang Valley, continues Mission Palm Oil, which is a critical step in India's march to self-reliance in edible oils, accelerated by the National Mission on Edible Oils - Oil Palm (NMEOP). This integrated Oil Palm project will include a cutting-edge oil palm factory (Palm Oil Processing and Refinery), a zero-discharge effluent plant, a palm waste-based power plant, and additional structures and go-downs for support purposes.



Axis Bank Commits ₹100 Crore To Enhance Cancer Care Through National Cancer Grid :-

Axis Bank has donated Rs 100 crore to the National Cancer Grid (NCG), which is a pan-India network of 300 cancer centres coordinated by Tata Memorial Centre. The five-year cooperation signed by the premier cancer care institution and the private bank will focus on enhancing cancer care access, encouraging cancer research, and digitising healthcare. The National Tumour Biobank, a repository of tumour tissues, blood, radiology and pathology images from all over the country, will receive a part of the funding.



Tata Sons Announces Sale Of 0.6% Stake In TCS For Over ₹9,300 Crore :-

Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata Group, will sell 2.34 crore shares, or 0.65% equity, of Tata Consultancy Services in a block offer for ₹9,362.3 crore (\$1.13 billion). Holding companies and promoter organizations typically sell holdings in group companies to raise funds to pay down debt and stabilize balance sheets. Tata Sons had a net debt of ₹20,642.47 crore as of March-end 2023, while its FY23 revenue was ₹35,058.47 crore. The market capitalisation of the Tata Group crossed ₹30-lakh crore last month from ₹20.7-lakh crore at the end of March last year.



India's direct tax collection grows 20% to Rs 18.90 lakh crore till March 17 :-

India's direct tax collections for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24 have increased significantly, with net collections totaling Rs 18.90 lakh crore as of March 17, representing a 19.88 percent rise over the previous fiscal year. "The Net Direct Tax collection of Rs 18,90,259 crore (as on 17.03.2024) includes Corporation Tax (CIT) at Rs 9,14,469 crore (net of refund) and Personal Income Tax (PIT) including Securities Transaction Tax (STT) at Rs 9,72,224 crore (net of refund)," the Ministry of Finance said in a statement.



Insurance Sector Attracts Massive Rs 54,000 Crore FDI In 9 Years :-

According to Financial Services Secretary Vivek Joshi, the insurance sector has attracted about Rs 54,000 crore in foreign direct investment (FDI) during the last nine years as a result of the government's increased relaxation of overseas capital flow restrictions. The administration raised the allowable FDI ceiling from 26% in 2014 to 49% in 2015 and 74% in 2021, he said. However, he said, the permissible FDI limit for insurance intermediaries was increased to 100 per cent in 2019. As a result, Rs 53,900 crore of FDI was received in insurance companies between December 2014 and January 2024, he said.



Naveen Jindal Takes Over As President Of Indian Steel Association :-

Naveen Jindal, chairman of Jindal Steel and Power, was recently appointed president of the Indian Steel Association (ISA), the industry's peak body. According to a statement from the association, Naveen Jindal has been unanimously chosen president of ISA by the apex committee, the organization's governing body. He succeeds Dilip Oommen, the CEO of ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India. Jindal said that for India to realise its development goals, steel along with its upstream and downstream manufacturing value chains have to grow in tandem.

TECH mahindra

Tech Mahindra, IBM Collaborate To Drive Digital Adoption :-

Tech Mahindra, an IT services and consulting company, has announced a collaboration with American technology major IBM to establish a 'Synergy Lounge' on its Singapore campus to help enterprises operationalize and derive value from next-generation technologies. Built on the Hex-I concept, the Lounge will feature different experience zones focusing on various technologies that will help enterprises solve complex business problems, improve customer experiences, reduce operational costs, and enhance workforce efficiency, a company statement said.



India, Bhutan ink several MoUs, including establishment of rail links :-

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day visit, India and Bhutan signed many Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), including the creation of rail lines between the two countries. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the MoU outlines the establishment of two proposed rail linkages between India and Bhutan, the Kokrajhar-Gelephu rail link and the Banarhat-Samtse rail link, as well as the implementation methods. Among several ones signed, an MoU on general supply of Petroleum, Oil, Lubricants (POL) and related products from India to Bhutan was also inked.



HPCL And Tata Join Forces To Build Nationwide EV Charging Network:-

Tata Passenger Electric Mobility said it has partnered with Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd to install 5,000 public charging stations across the country by the end of the year. The collaboration will use Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd's (HPCL) fuel station network and the company's insights from over 1.2 lakh Tata EVs on Indian roads to install chargers in areas frequented by Tata EV owners, according to a statement from Tata Passenger Electric Mobility (TPEM), a Tata Motors unit. Both entities have inked an MoU in this regard, it added.



Government E Marketplace (GeM) Achieves ₹4 Lakh Crore GMV :-

Government e Marketplace (GeM), the government's online public procurement platform, has doubled its Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) to ₹4 lakh crore in fiscal year 2023-24, compared to the previous year. GeM includes more than 1.5 lakh government buyers and 21 lakh vendors and service providers. According to the government, the procurement ecosystem now includes 89,421 panchayats and over 760 co-operatives. Doubling of GeM procurement to ₹4-lakh crore has been also possible because of a 205 per cent surge in procurement of services in FY24.

9: International



South Korea's Fertility Rate Hits New Low In 2023:-

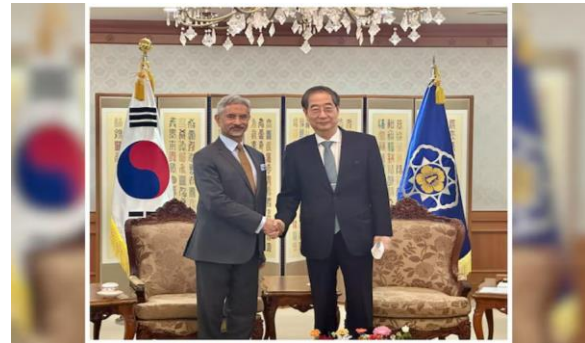
South Korea's birth rate, which was already the lowest in the world, fell to a new low in 2023, despite the country's billions of dollars invested to reverse the trend as the population declined for the fourth consecutive year. The average number of expected babies for a South Korean woman during her reproductive life declined to 0.72 from 0.78 in 2022, according to Statistics Korea statistics. Since 2018, South Korea has been the only member of the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) to have a rate below 1.



India-Nepal Financial Cooperation Strengthened, Digital Payment To Be Launched Soon :-

Shankar Sharma, Nepal's Ambassador to India, welcomed the Reserve Bank of India's new guidelines, which allow for a variety of financial services between Indian and Nepali citizens. He stated that Nepali citizens can now pay Rs 2 lakh per transaction to Nepal, while walk-in clients can send Rs 50,000 every transaction. The Nepal envoy also said that Unified Payment Interface-Nepal Clearing House Ltd (UPI/NCHL) which is to be

inaugurated soon, will further eliminate any inconvenience of carrying cash.



India And South Korea To Boost Cooperation In New Tech And Semiconductors:-

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar stated that India seeks to expand its strategic cooperation with South Korea into new areas such as essential and emerging technologies, semiconductors, and green hydrogen in order to modernize bilateral ties. Jaishankar remarked this while co-chairing the 10th India-South Korea Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) in Seoul with his counterpart Cho Tae-yul. He said the two sides held a comprehensive and productive discussion on cooperation in the fields of defence, science and technology and trade.



Sweden Joins NATO, Ends Decades Neutral Stance

Sweden has formally joined NATO as the 32nd member of the transatlantic military organization, bringing an end to decades of post-World War II neutrality as fears of Russian aggression in Europe have grown following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson handed over the final documents

to the US government, marking the end of a lengthy process to win all countries' support for joining the military alliance. For NATO, the accessions of Sweden and Finland – which shares a 1,340-km (830-mile) border with Russia – are the most significant additions in decades.



Miss World 2024, Krystyna Pyszkova From Czech Republic Wins The Crown :-

Krystyna Pyszkova of the Czech Republic was crowned Miss World 2024 during a lavish ceremony at Mumbai's Jio World Cinema. The reigning Miss World, Karolina Bielawska of Poland, crowned her successor at the star-studded event. In addition to her titles, Krystyna got the Best Fashion Designer Award - Europe. She beat contestants including India's Sini Shetty, Trinidad and Tobago's Aché Abrahams, and Botswana's Lesego Chombo. The first runner-up was Yasmina Zaytoun from Lebanon.



India And Singapore Sign Memorandum Of Understanding On Law And Dispute Resolution :-

India and Singapore have signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate on legal and dispute resolution issues. According to a statement from the Ministry of Law and Justice, this agreement would

strengthen bilateral collaboration in areas of shared interest, such as international business dispute settlement. The agreement was signed in a virtual meeting of the Minister of State for Law and Justice Arjun Ram Meghwal and Singapore Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Mr. Edwin Tong.



Vladimir Putin Secures Another Six-Year Term In Russian Election :-

After winning by a landslide in the Russian presidential elections, ex-intelligence officer Vladimir Putin extended his power for another six-year term. The 71-year-old former KGB lieutenant colonel received 87.8 percent of the vote in an election overshadowed by claims of a handpicked, weak opposition, paving the way for an easy victory for the incumbent President. The three-day election was marked by a surge in bombing Ukraine and vandalism at ballot sites. Putin will now spend a six-year term as Russian president. If he completes his tenure, he will overtake Catherine 'the Great' as the longest-serving Russian leader.



Guyana Inks Deal To Purchase Indian-Made Dornier Aircraft :-

The Indian defence industry is expanding into the Caribbean, with the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) planning to acquire two new aircraft from New Delhi

with a \$23.27 million loan from the Export-Import Bank of India. An agreement in this regard was signed by the Guyanese Finance Minister and the Deputy GM of EXIM Bank. Guyana, which has a sizable Indian population, intends to purchase two HAL (Dornier) 228 aircraft from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. The HAL 228 planes are said to be ideal for Short Take-Off and Landing (STOL) for Guyana's terrain.



Vinay Kumar Appointed As New Indian Ambassador To Russia :-

Vinay Kumar, an Indian Foreign Service officer from the 1992 batch, has been chosen India's next ambassador to Russia. Kumar is currently the Ambassador of India to Myanmar. According to a statement from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), he is anticipated to begin his new position soon. Russia, where recent elections were conducted, has been a longtime partner of India, with diplomatic relations acting as a cornerstone of the country's foreign policy. Following Russian President Vladimir Putin's victory in the polls, PM Modi congratulated him in a post on X.



New Zealand Bans Disposable E-Cigarettes And Vapes :-

New Zealand has announced that disposable e-cigarettes, or vapes, will be banned, and those who sell

such items to minors will face increased financial penalties. The action comes less than a month after the administration revoked a one-of-a-kind regulation implemented by the previous left-leaning government to phase out tobacco smoking by prohibiting young people from purchasing cigarettes for life. New Zealand's Associate Health Minister Casey Costello said that e-cigarettes remain a key smoking cessation device and the new regulations will help prevent minors from taking up the habit.



India Elected Co-Chair Of ITU's Digital Innovation Board :-

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has elected India as co-chair of its Digital Innovation Board, according to the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). Dr. Neeraj Mittal, Secretary of the DoT, was unanimously elected co-chair of the ITU's Digital Innovation Board, which was established under the auspices of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Alliance for Digital Development. It comprises Ministers and Vice Ministers of Telecom/ICT of 23 member countries of ITU, spanning Asia, Europe, Africa, and North and South America.



Microsoft hires DeepMind co-founder to lead new AI division :-

Mustafa Suleyman, a co-founder of DeepMind, has been named president of Microsoft's new consumer AI business, which will oversee products such as Copilot, Bing, and Edge. Aside from Suleyman, the tech titan has hired other people from his business, Inflection AI, including Karen Simonyan, who will serve as chief scientist for the consumer AI group. Suleyman will serve as CEO of the unit, Microsoft AI, the company said, while reporting directly to company CEO Satya Nadella. In 2010, Suleyman had co-founded AI lab DeepMind, which was acquired by Google in 2014.



AUKUS Partnership To Build Australia’s SSN-AUKUS Submarines :-

The United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia have signed a new deal to build Australia's SSN-AUKUS submarines, describing it as a key milestone in the pursuit of defense cooperation. Australia's ASC and UK-based BAE Systems will develop the SSN-AUKUS submarines for the Royal Australian Navy as part of a new trilateral security relationship. The SSN-AUKUS will be equipped for intelligence, surveillance, undersea warfare and strike missions, and will provide maximum interoperability among AUKUS partners.



US Surgeons Perform First Pig-To-Human Kidney Transplant:-

A 62-year-old man with end-stage renal illness has become the first human to undergo a kidney transplant from a genetically modified pig, according to specialists at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. The four-hour procedure on March 16 "marks a major milestone in the quest to provide more readily available organs to patients," according to a statement from the hospital. The patient, Richard Slayman of Weymouth, Massachusetts, is recovering well and expected to be discharged soon, the hospital said.



UN Adopts First Global Resolution on Artificial Intelligence :-

The United Nations General Assembly unanimously passed the first global resolution on artificial intelligence, encouraging countries to protect human rights, personal data, and monitor AI for potential hazards. The resolution is the latest in a series of measures - few of which have teeth - by governments around the world to regulate AI's growth, amid concerns that technology could be used to disrupt democratic processes, accelerate fraud, or result in severe job losses, among other things. The nonbinding resolution, proposed by the United States and co-sponsored by China and over 120 other nations, also advocates the strengthening of privacy policies.



Biden signs \$1.2 trillion funding package, averting US government shutdown :-

President Joe Biden signed a \$1.2 trillion spending plan into law, ensuring that the United States government is funded for the fiscal year that started six months ago. Biden praised the package, which was overwhelmingly enacted by Congress, as one that invests in Americans while also bolstering the economy and national security. The Democratic president asked Congress to move on with other bills that are blocked in the legislative chambers. "The House must pass the bipartisan national security supplemental to advance our national security interests," Biden said in a statement.



Vietnamese President Vo Van Thuong resigns one year after his election :-

Vietnamese President Vo Van Thuong resigned after a little more than a year in office, according to the Communist Party, becoming the latest high-ranking official to resign after being suspected of involvement in an aggressive anti-corruption drive. The party announced that it had accepted his resignation, stating that "violations by Vo Van Thuong have left a bad mark on the reputation of the Communist party." He violated rules on "what party members are not allowed to do". Mr. Thuong is the second president to resign in two years amid an anti-corruption crackdown.



Iconic Indian Brand Amul Launches Fresh Milk In The US :-

Amul fresh milk will be offered outside of India for the first time, according to the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), which plans to launch four milk variations in the US market within a week. GCMMF MD Jayen Mehta told news agency PTI, "We have been exporting dairy products for many decades. This is the first time we are launching fresh milk outside India. The GCMMF has tied up with 108-year old cooperative organisation Michigan Milk Producers Association (MMPA) to launch fresh milk in the US market."



PM Modi Inaugurates State-Of-The-Art Medical Facility In Thimphu :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently inaugurated a ₹140-crore hospital for women and children built in Thimphu with Indian aid, as part of a two-day visit to strengthen bilateral ties and cooperation in many fields. Modi received Bhutan's highest honor, the Order of Druk Gyalpo, and promised a doubling of India's aid to the neighboring country's five-year plan from ₹5,000 crore to ₹10,000 crore. The move came against the backdrop of concerted efforts by China to settle a border dispute and establish diplomatic ties with Bhutan.



Bassirou Diomaye Faye becomes Senegal's new president :-

Opposition presidential candidate Bassirou Diomaye Faye has become Senegal's next president. Faye had won 53.68% of the vote, whereas the ruling coalition candidate Amadou Ba won 36.2% of the vote. Faye and Ba were the top presidential contenders. At 44, Faye is also on course to be the youngest president of the country. Senegal has stood apart in a region where the military has seized power from civilian governments in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. The election is the nation's fourth democratic transfer of power since it gained independence from France in 1960.



Saudi Arabia to participate in Miss Universe pageant for first time :-

Rumy Alqahtani will be the Saudi Arabia's first-ever entrant in the Miss Universe competition's 73-year history, which this year's contest to take place in Mexico in late September. Alqahtani belongs from Saudi capital Riyadh. She has already been named Miss Arab Peace and Miss Woman SA. Saudi Arabia, which was relatively closed off for decades, has in recent years relaxed strict social codes, such as segregating men and women in public places and requiring women to wear all-covering black robes, or abayas.



Thailand lawmakers pass landmark LGBTQ marriage equality bill :-

Lawmakers in Thailand's lower house of Parliament overwhelmingly approved a marriage equality bill on 27 March, that would make the country the first in Southeast Asia to legalize equal rights for marriage partners of any gender. The bill amends the Civil and Commercial Code to change the words "men and women" and "husband and wife" to "individuals" and "marriage partners." Once implemented, this would make Thailand the first country or region in Southeast Asia to pass such a law and the third in Asia, after Taiwan and Nepal.



Xiaomi Enters the Electric Vehicle Market with SU7

Xiaomi just launched sales of its electric car, with the Chinese smartphone maker pricing the SU7 from 215,900 to 299,900 yuan (USD 29,870-USD 41,493) as it enters a highly competitive local market. The company's base SU7 EV model will cost 215,900 yuan, while the Pro and Max variants would cost 245,900 and 299,900 yuan, respectively. Deliveries for the Standard and Max models will commence from late April, and the Pro models will follow by the end of May. All SU7 models will only be sold for now in China, the world's biggest auto market.



Allu Arjun’s wax statue at Madame Tussauds Dubai unveiled :-

Allu Arjun, a prominent Telugu actor, has reached a new milestone in his career. He has been honored with a wax statue at the prestigious Madame Tussauds Museum in Dubai. The unveiling ceremony for Allu Arjun's wax

statue occurred recently, and the actor shared photos from the event on social media. In the photos, he is pictured with his wax figure, his children, wife Sneha Reddy, relatives, and team mates. On the work front, Allu Arjun is currently gearing up for the release of Pushpa 2: The Rule, which is expected to be one of the biggest films of 2024.

10: Miscellaneous



DGCA Penalizes Air India ₹30 Lakh For 80-Year-Old Passenger’s Demise :-

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has fined Air India Rs 30 lakh over the recent death of an 80-year-old passenger. On February 12, an 80-year-old US citizen of Indian ancestry and his wife flew from New York to Mumbai on an Air India flight. Both had reserved the wheelchair facility, however due to a lack of wheelchairs, only one was brought for the pair. An advisory has also been issued to all airlines to ensure that an adequate number of wheelchairs are available for passengers who require assistance.



Sarbananda Sonowal Inaugurates First Made-In-India ASTDS Tug :-

Union Minister of MoPSW & AYUSH Sarbananda Sonowal virtually launched the Medical Mobile Unit (MMU) and Ocean Grace, a 60T bollard pull tug. Cochin Shipyard Limited's first Made-in-India ASTDS tug, the Ocean Grace, was created under MoPSW. The first ASTDS tug is powered by NIGATA main engines and a Power Z-Peller ZP Propulsion engine, this tug is meticulously designed for optimal efficiency and reliability, guaranteeing seamless navigation and proficient vessel assistance, especially for large vessels like VLCCs and ULCCs.



Slice Appoints Nayanthara As Brand Ambassador :-

Slice, a beverage company, has announced the selection of actor Nayanthara as its latest brand ambassador. With Nayanthara on board, Slice hopes to increase its position among audiences as the favored beverage for mango lovers. According to a media announcement, Slice has solidified its spot in families across the country as the best and closest approximation to satisfying consumers' mango desires. Nayanthara, often known as 'Lady

Superstar', has established herself as one of the most critically praised actresses in Indian film.



Sudha Murty Nominated To Rajya Sabha :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on social media that President Droupadi Murmu had nominated Sudha Murty to the Rajya Sabha. Sudha Murty was born on August 19, 1950, in Shiggaon, Karnataka, and began her career as a computer scientist and engineer before becoming the first female engineer employed by Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company (Telco). Murty is the wife of Infosys co-founder NR Narayana Murthy, is also the chairperson of the Murty Trust, and the author of several books. Her son-in-law is the Prime Minister of the UK and her daughter Akshata Murty is a businesswoman, fashion designer, and venture capitalist.



North India's First Government Homeopathic College To Be Established In Kathua, J&K:-

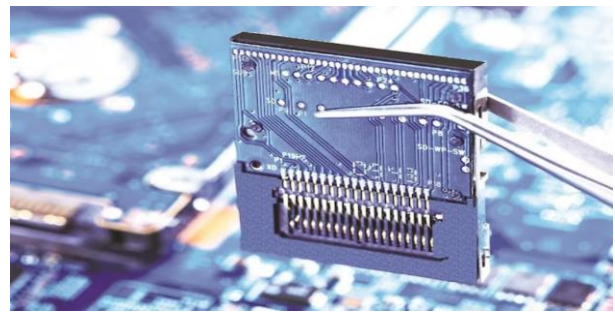
Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, announced the foundation of North India's first Government Homeopathic College in the Jasrota area of Kathua

district, Jammu and Kashmir. The centrally financed initiative, worth Rs 80 crore, represents a big step forward in the region's healthcare and education infrastructure development. Dr Jitendra Singh highlighted the progress in medical infrastructure in Kathua, including the establishment of a government medical college and a cancer treatment facility.



Union Minister Inaugurates India's 1st FutureLABS At C-DAC Thiruvananthapuram :-

Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Union Minister of State for Electronics and IT, Skill Development, Entrepreneurship, and Jal Shakti, has inaugurated India's first FutureLABS center at C-DAC Thiruvananthapuram. The "Centre for Semiconductor Chips & Systems for Strategic Electronics" will play a critical role in stimulating an ecosystem for next-generation chip design, manufacture, and research. The ambition for FutureLABS as a key catalyst for converting Thiruvananthapuram into India's next innovation hub, exploiting its rich talent pool and supportive ecosystem, was emphasized.



PM Modi Lays Foundation Stone Of Three Semiconductor Facilities Worth 1.25 Lakh Crore :-

In Gujrat and Assam, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has virtually laid the groundwork for three semiconductor

facilities valued at Rs 1.25 lakh crore. The projects include facilities for Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) and the Dholera Special Investment Region (DSIR). Thousands of new work opportunities are anticipated to be created in the nation by these units. Approximately 80,000 jobs are expected to be created by the project, of which 20,000 direct positions in advanced technology and 60,000 indirect ones could be created.



DEPwD And COA Join Forces To Support Persons With Disabilities :-

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) has launched a ground-breaking partnership with the Council of Architecture (COA) to promote inclusivity and accessibility for people with disabilities (PwDs) in public spaces and buildings. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between DEPwD and COA represents a shared commitment to conducting workshops, seminars, and training programs. These initiatives will include the incorporation of mandatory course modules in the Bachelor of Architecture curriculum, fostering awareness about creating accessible environments for PwDs.



Australian Wicketkeeper-Batter Matthew Wade Retires From Red-Ball Cricket :-

Matthew Wade, a former Australian Test wicketkeeper, has retired from red-ball cricket but will continue to play shorter formats. The 36-year-old made the announcement ahead of his native Tasmania's Sheffield Shield final against Western Australia, which will be his 166th and final first-class match. Wade, who played 36 Tests as both a wicketkeeper and specialist batter between 2012 and 2021, will continue to be available for one-day and T20 cricket. Wade has delayed his arrival at the Indian Premier League to play in the Shield final.



ECI Names Para Archer Sheetal Devi as National PwD Icon :-

The Election Commission of India (ECI), in collaboration with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), hosted an Exhibition Cricket Match between the Indian Deaf Cricket Association (IDCA) Team and the Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA) Team to promote voter education and inclusivity. The match took place at Karnail Singh Stadium in New Delhi. Ms. Sheetal Devi, a prominent Para-archer and Arjuna Awardee, was named the National Icon in the PwD category. The event was graced by Chief Election Commissioner Shri Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioners Shri Gyanesh Kumar and Shri Sukhbir Singh Sandhu who felicitated the winning team.



Election Commission Launches ‘Know Your Candidate’ App :-

The Election Commission of India, led by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, has announced the launch of a new mobile app called Know Your Candidate (KYC). This app enables voters to determine whether any candidates running for office in their constituency have a criminal background. The app is available for download on both Android and iOS devices. The KYC app provides voters with the ability to access information about candidates with criminal antecedents. Candidates are required to disclose their criminal records in newspapers and on television three times.



GRID-INDIA Achieves Miniratna Status :-

Grid Controller of India Limited (GRID-INDIA) has been classified as a Miniratna Category-I central public sector business by the Ministry of Power, acknowledging its critical role in the power industry. Established in 2009, GRID-INDIA has the critical mandate of overseeing the Indian Power System's seamless and uninterrupted operation, ensuring the efficient transfer of electric power within and across regions, and facilitating

transnational power exchanges with a focus on reliability, economy, and sustainability.



India’s First Battery Storage Gigafactory To Start Operations In J&K :-

GoodEnough Energy has announced desires to open India's first battery energy storage gigafactory in Jammu & Kashmir in October. The project seeks to cut carbon emissions by more than 5 million tons per year, contributing to India's objective of reaching net zero by 2070. This reduction corresponds to the Indian Railways' yearly carbon reduction objective of 4 million tonnes. With an initial investment of \$18.07 million, the 7 GWH plant will see a further 3 billion rupees injected by 2027 to scale up to 20 GWH, Reuters quoted the founder Akash Kaushik as saying.



Isro's Nisar mission launch delayed :-

In a setback for the highly anticipated NISAR (NASA ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) project, the joint venture between NASA and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has hit a problem, pushing back the launch date to late April. The Earth-observing satellite, which is set to launch from the Satish Dhawan Space

Centre on India's southeastern coast, is nearing completion. Nisar signifies the first hardware collaboration between NASA and ISRO in the realm of Earth observation missions.



Collection of paintings titled 'Sri Venkateswara Chitrarchana' released :-

K. Brahmanandam, a film actor and painter, presents the book 'Sri Venkateswara Chitrarchana', a collection of portraits of Lord Venkateswara, in Tirupati. As many as 200 artists paid homage to Lord Sri Venkateswara of Tirumala via their artwork. The collection of 200 paintings by prominent artistes, titled 'Sri Venkateswara Chitrarchana', was solemnly released by film comedian and painter K. Brahmanandam. out by 'Sri Kalakshetra',

the book carries images of the Lord of the Seven Hills in different forms and shapes.



900-Year-Old Chalukyan Inscription Found In Neglected State At Gangapuram :-

A 900-year-old Kannada inscription from the Kalyana Chalukya dynasty was discovered in absolute neglect at Gangapuram, a temple town in Jadcherla mandal, Mahabubnagar district. E. Sivanagi Reddy, archaeologist and CEO of Pleach India Foundation, claimed he spotted this while visiting the surrounds of the Chowdamma temple on the outskirts of Gangapuram as part of the 'Preserve Heritage for Posterity' initiative. The inscription was lying uncared on a tank bund nearby, he said. A retired engineer, Gangapuram Kesava Prasad, also participated in the programme.

11: National



PM Modi Launches India's First Hydrogen Fuel Cell Ferry :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has virtually launched India's first hydrogen fuel cell ferry, which was developed and built indigenously by Cochin Shipyard. He launched the inland waterway vessel from Thoothukudi as part of the Harit Nauka initiative, a trial project that aims to showcase marine technologies. In line with the Government of India's green vision, Cochin Shipyard took up the ambitious project to design, develop and construct India's first fully indigenously hydrogen fuel cell catamaran ferry vessel to demonstrate the technology for the maritime sector.



PM Modi Inaugurates Rs 7,200 Crore Projects In West Bengal :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and set the groundwork for a number of development projects totaling Rs 7,200 crore at Arambagh, located in West Bengal's Hooghly district. Rail, ports, oil pipelines, LPG supplies, and wastewater treatment are among the industries represented in the projects. Highlighting the significance of the inaugurated projects, valued at over Rs 7,000 crore, PM Modi stressed their role in accelerating West Bengal's development across multiple fronts including rail infrastructure, ports, petroleum, and water resources.



Haj Suvidha App Launched And Haj Guide Released For Haj-2024 By Union Minister Smriti Irani :-

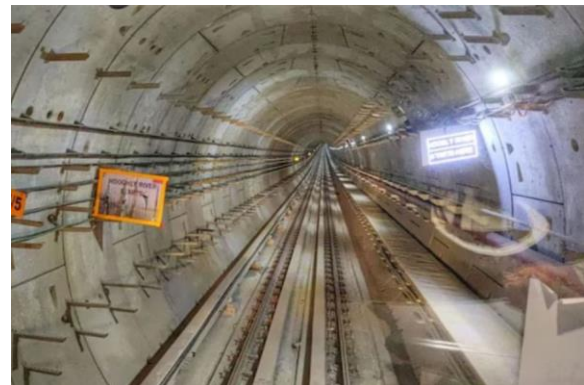
Union Minority Affairs Minister Smriti Zubin Irani has unveiled the Haj Suvidha App, which would provide pilgrims with vital information and direct access to important services such as training modules, flight details, and housing. The Haj Suvidha App, developed by BISAG-N under the able leadership of the Union Minister for Minority Affairs, will be a "game changer" in the pilgrimage experience, according to the announcement.

Irani also inaugurated a two-day Training of Trainers Programme as part of preparations for Haj 2024 at the Vigyan Bhavan.



Steel Minister Unveils India's First Green Hydrogen Plant In Stainless Steel Sector :-

Union Steel Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has virtually launched India's first green hydrogen plant in the stainless steel sector, Jindal Stainless Limited in Hisar, Haryana. This will be the world's first off-grid Green Hydrogen factory for the stainless steel sector, as well as the first Green Hydrogen plant to use rooftop and floating solar. This project will reduce carbon emissions by around two thousand 700 Metric Tonnes per annum and 54 thousand tons of carbon dioxide emissions over the next two decades.



India's First Underwater Metro Train Service Launched In Kolkata By PM Modi :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched various metro projects across India, including the country's first underwater metro line in Kolkata, West Bengal. He also launched many critical metro and rapid transit projects across the country, taking a huge step toward improving urban mobility and connectivity. The Kolkata Metro

extension, featuring the Howrah Maidan-Esplanade Metro section, includes the first transportation tunnel in India to pass under a major river, representing a critical milestone in the country's infrastructure development.



Cabinet Approves India AI Mission With Rs. 10,372 Crore Budget :-

The Union Cabinet has approved a Rs 10,371.92-crore artificial intelligence (AI) plan aiming at developing computer infrastructure through public-private partnerships. Under the India AI program, which was approved by the Cabinet, the government would assist in the creation and deployment of indigenous big multimodal models, as well as promote AI applications in important areas. Additionally, under the India AI program, support will also be given to accelerate deeptech AI startups.



Centre tweaks Prime Minister's Rooftop Solar 'free electricity' scheme :-

The Prime Minister's Rooftop Solar: Free Electricity Scheme, worth ₹75,000 crore, has been modified by the Centre. From an early plan to fully fund the installation of 1-3 KW solar systems in one crore households through partnerships with renewable energy service firms, the

project will now only cover up to 60% of the cost. Households interested in availing the scheme's benefits will have to fork out the balance amount and pay a minimum of ₹20,000 depending on the power capacity of the installed system though this could be defrayed by a low-interest, collateral-free loan.



PM Modi inaugurates Dwarka Expressway in Haryana :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the Haryana section of India's inaugural 8-lane segment of the Dwarka Expressway, which spans 19 kilometers and cost ₹4,100 crore. It attempts to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion on NH-48 between Delhi and Gurugram. This route includes a 10.2 km stretch from the Delhi-Haryana Border to Basai Rail-over-Bridge (ROB) and an 8.7 km portion from Basai ROB to Kherki Daula. The road will connect directly between the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport in Delhi and the Gurugram Bypass.



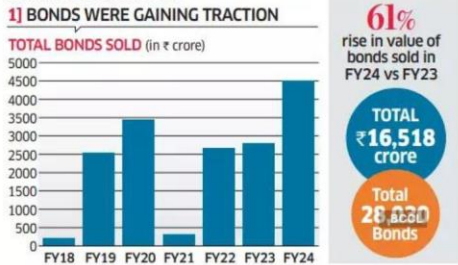
Prime Minister Narendra Modi Virtually Inaugurates Sela Tunnel :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has dedicated the Sela Tunnel project to the country virtually from Itanagar. The

project will give all-weather access to Arunachal Pradesh's strategically crucial Tawang area. According to a statement from the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), the Sela tunnel was built at a height of 13,000 feet for a total cost of Rs 825 crore. "Sela Tunnel will not only boost defence preparedness of Indian Armed Forces in Tawang Sector but will also augment socioeconomic development of this border region," it said.

Bond Loses Licence To Thrill

Electoral bonds amounting to ₹16,518 cr have been sold ever since the scheme was introduced in March 2018. The ruling BJP, the main beneficiary, received a total of ₹6,566 cr till FY23. Ishaan Gera takes a look:



Electoral Bonds: BJP Tops The List With Highest Receipt :-

According to latest data given by the Election Commission, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has emerged as the biggest beneficiary of electoral bonds, encashing bonds worth Rs 6,060.5 crore between April 12, 2019, and January 24, 2024. This figure is the highest among all political parties. All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) took second place, getting Rs 1,609.50 crore in electoral bonds. Congress ranked third, receiving Rs 1,421.9 crore through this way. The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), Biju Janata Dal (BJD), and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) also encashed electoral bonds worth more than Rs 500 crore each during the specified period.



NIXI And MeitY launched BhashaNet Portal For Digital Inclusion Across The Nation :-

NIXI (National Internet Exchange of India) the launched BhashaNet portal on the Universal Acceptance (UA) Day, held on March 21, 2024, at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi, India. This was the second event hosted between NIXI and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), underscoring their joint commitment to promoting Universal Acceptance (UA) and advancing digital inclusion across the nation. The theme of the event, "BhashaNet: Impetus Towards Universal Acceptance," highlights NIXI's dedication to ensuring that individuals, regardless of language or script, can fully participate in the digital world.



EC Tells IT Ministry to Immediately Stop Sending 'Viksit Bharat' Messages on WhatsApp :-

The Election Commission asked the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) to immediately cease sending 'Viksit Bharat' messages on WhatsApp while the Model Code of Conduct is in effect. "The Commission has received complaints that such messages are still being delivered on citizens' phones. Since the MCC is now in force, you are hereby directed to ensure forthwith that no further delivery of WhatsApp messages takes place during the MCC period," EC Senior Principal Secretary Narendra N Butolia told the Secretary, MeitY.



Arun Govil, who played Lord Ram in Ramayan, gets BJP ticket from Meerut :-

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has filed Arun Govil, a veteran actor best known for his portrayal as Lord Ram in the iconic TV serial Ramayan, as its Lok Sabha candidate from his birthplace of Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. Arun Govil, one of 111 candidates chosen on the BJP's fifth list, will take over the Meerut seat from three-time MP Rajendra Agarwal, who has held it since 2004. Arun Govil may have become popular in every house with the serial 'Ramayana', but he debuted on the big screen long ago with the 1977 film 'Paheli'.



Election Commission launches Saksham app :-

The Commission has established the Saksham App to make voting easier for people with disabilities and to provide services at polling stations. It is also advocating for permanent Assured Minimum Facilities (AMF) in schools as a benefit of the election process for students. Drinking water, toilets, signage, a ramp or wheelchair, a help desk, a voter facilitation center, enough lighting, and a shed are among the guaranteed minimum facilities. There will also be Polling Stations managed by

Persons with Disabilities, Polling Stations exclusively managed by women and Model Polling Stations.



Modi Government Allocates Rs 6212.03 Crore For Strengthening Regional Rural Banks :-

As of March 6, the Modi government had allocated Rs 6212.03 crore to regional rural banks as part of the recapitalization initiative. Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) are commercial banks controlled by the Indian government that operate at the regional level across multiple states. RRBs were formed in 1975 to provide basic banking and financial services to rural communities, primarily to small and marginal farmers, agricultural laborers, craftsmen, and small business owners. The performance of RRBs has improved significantly, with a consolidated CRAR (Capital to Risk-weighted Assets Ratio) at an all-time high of 13.83 per cent as of December 31, 2023.



Adani Group acquires Lanco Amarkantak Power Limited Ports & Gopalpur Port :-

Adani group company received a nod from Competition Commission of India (CCI) to acquire 100% stake in Lanco Amarkantak Power Limited. The target company, a part of the Lanco Group, is engaged in the business of thermal power generation in India. Also, India's largest port

operator Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) has bought 95 per cent stakes in Odisha's Gopalpur Port Ltd (GPL) at an enterprise value of Rs 3,080 crore. Gopalpur Port is an all-weather deep-water berthing port with a capacity of 20 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) situated in Ganjam district of Odisha



Govt plans to borrow Rs 7.5 lakh crore from the market in the first half of FY25:-

The Centre is planning to raise Rs 7.5 lakh crore through market borrowing in the April-September period of 2024-25 to fund the revenue gap to push economic growth. Out of gross market borrowing of Rs 14.13 lakh crore estimated for 2024-25, Rs 7.5 lakh crore, or 53 per cent, is planned to be borrowed in the first half (H1). Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the interim Budget proposed to borrow Rs 14.13 lakh crore by issuing dated securities to meet revenue shortfall in the next financial year.



Ambani and Adani join hands for 1st time, Reliance picks stake in Adani's firm:-

In the first collaboration between billionaires, Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries has picked up a 26 per cent stake in a Madhya Pradesh power project of Gautam Adani, and signed a pact to use the plants' 500 MW of electricity for captive use. Reliance will pick up 5 crore equity shares in Mahan Energen Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Adani Power Ltd, With Ambani's interests spanning oil and gas to retail and telecom and Adani's focus on infrastructure spanning seaports to airports, coal and mining, they rarely crossed each other's path except in the clean energy business.



AFSPA extended in parts of Arunachal, Nagaland for six more months:-

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, under which an area is declared as "disturbed" for the convenience of security forces, has been extended in three districts of Arunachal Pradesh, eight districts of Nagaland and some other areas for six more months after a review of the law and order situation in these two northeastern states. The AFSPA gives armed forces personnel, operating in disturbed areas, sweeping powers to search, arrest and open fire if they deem it necessary for "the maintenance of public order".

12: Obituaries



Senior journalist Manohar Prasad passes away in Mangaluru :-

Senior journalist Manohar Prasad, 65, died on March 1 at a Mangaluru hospital after working for Udayavani (Kannada daily) for almost three decades. Mr. Prasad, a resident of Karvalu village in Karkala taluk, Udupi district, began his journalism career with the Kannada publication "Navabharata". He then started working as a correspondent for Udayavani in Mangaluru. He worked for Udayavani for 36 years, including as Chief of Bureau in Mangaluru. He retired as Assistant Editor of the paper. Mr. Prasad keenly followed cricket and wrote extensively on sportspersons from the coastal region.



Veteran Congress Leader And Former UP Governor Aziz Qureshi Passes Away :-

Former Uttar Pradesh Governor and senior Congress leader Aziz Qureshi passed away at a hospital after a prolonged illness, a family member said. Qureshi was 83. Qureshi had served as the governor of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Mizoram. Qureshi was appointed the President of Madhya Pradesh Urdu Academy by the then Kamal Nath government of Madhya Pradesh on 24

January 2020. He was first elected as an MLA in 1972 from Sehore seat in Madhya Pradesh and became a Lok Sabha member in 1984.



Dragon Ball Creator Akira Toriyama Passes Away at 68 :-

Akira Toriyama, the creator of Japan's highly successful and influential Dragon Ball comics and anime cartoons, died at the age of 68, his production team announced. Dragon Ball, which began serialization in 1984, is one of the best-selling manga franchises of all time, having inspired several anime series, films, and computer games. Toriyama died on March 1 because of an "acute subdural haematoma" — a blood clot on the brain — a statement posted to the official "Dragon Ball" account on X, said. Toriyama was already famous for his comedy manga Dr Slump in the early 1980s when he created Dragon Ball, which he said was inspired by Chinese-style kung fu movies.



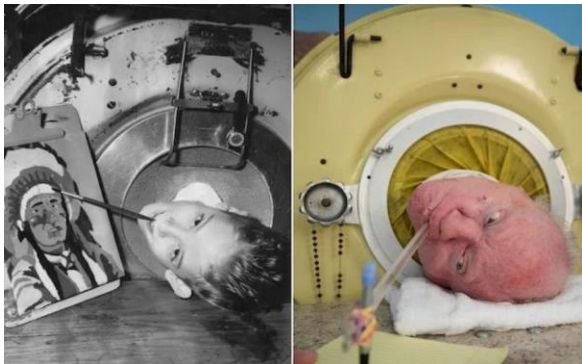
Dolly Sohi Passes Away Due To Cervical Cancer At The Age Of 47, Hours After Sister, Amardeep's Death :-

Dolly Sohi, widely known for the TV programs "Jhanak" and "Bhabhi," died of cervical cancer in a Navi Mumbai hospital, just hours after her younger sister Amandeep Sohi, also an actor, died of jaundice. Dolly (47) was diagnosed with cervical cancer about six months ago and was receiving therapy for it. Dolly's other significant performances include the TV programs "Kkusum", "Meri Aashiqui Tum Se Hi", "Kumkum Bhagya", and "Parineetii". In her last Instagram post, Dolly had appealed to fans and followers to pray for her.



Surya Kiran, Telugu Film Director, Passes Away At 48 :-

Surya Kiran, a Telugu director known for films such as 'Satyam' and 'Dhana 51', died in his Chennai home. He was 48. Kiran began his acting career as a child and has appeared in over 200 films, including 'Mauna Geethangal' and 'Padukathavan'. Surya made his directorial debut with 'Satyam' in 2003. Sumanth Akkineni and Genelia D'Souza played the film's lead parts. "Satyam" brought him quick fame and prosperity. In 2005, he made 'Dhana 51' with Sumanth. He also directed films like 'Brahmastram' (2006), 'Raju Bhai' (2007) and 'Chapter 6' (2010).



Paul Alexander, 'Polio Paul,' passes away at 78 after spending 70 years in iron lung :-

Paul Alexander, popularly known as "Polio Paul," died at the age of 78 after spending an incredible 70 years in an iron lung due to polio paralysis. Alexander contracted polio when he was six years old, paralyzing him from the neck down. For seven decades, he lived within the confines of a 600-pound iron lung, relying on mechanical assistance for each breath. Born in 1946, Alexander encountered myriad obstacles, navigating through one of the most severe polio outbreaks in US history, which afflicted nearly 58,000 individuals, predominantly children.



Renowned Artisan And Padma Awardee Kapildev Prasad Passes Away :-

Kapildev Prasad, a renowned artisan and Padma Shri recipient for his contributions to the handloom industry and the rebirth of Bababuti sarees, died in Basavanbigha village, Bihar Sharif. Kapildev Prasad was born in Basavan Bigha village and has dedicated his life to conserving and developing the art of handloom and Bababuti sarees, a traditional weaving craft passed down via his forefathers. Bawan Booti, which literally translates to "52 motifs," is a unique weaving technique that involves intricate hand embroidery on cotton or tasar cloth. The sarees created through this method are adorned with 52 similar motifs, each representing symbols from Buddhist religion and culture.



Admiral L Ramdas, former Chief of Naval Staff, passes away at 90 in Secunderabad :-

Former Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Laxminarayana Ramdas died at Secunderabad, Hyderabad. He was ninety. He was born on September 5, 1933, in Matunga, Bombay, and enrolled at the Joint Services Wing of the Armed Forces Academy in Clement Town, Dehradun, in 1949. He was commissioned into the Indian Navy in September 1953 and served as Chief of Naval Staff from 1990 to 1993. He succeeded Admiral Jayant Ganpat Nadkarni as the 13th CNS on 30 November 1990. He was awarded the Vir Chakra, the third-highest gallantry award.



Renowned Rabindra Sangeet Singer Sadi Mohammad Passes Away At 70 :-

Sadi Mohammad, the great Rabindra Sangeet vocalist from Bangladesh, died lately. Shibli Mohammad, the deceased's younger brother and a noted dancer, reported the death to the media in Dhaka. He was seventy. Sadi Mohammad earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in Rabindra Sangeet from Visva-Bharati University in India, and he is the son of Liberation War martyr Salimullah and Jebunnesa Salim Ullah. Sadi served

as the director of the cultural organisation Rabi Raag. His death has cast a grim shadow in Bangladesh's cultural sphere.



Veteran Journalist Zafar Agha Passes Away :-

Zafar Agha, the former editor-in-chief of the National Herald, died after a brief illness in a south Delhi hospital. He was seventy. Agha started his career as a journalist with Link Magazine in 1979. Throughout his 45-year career, he has worked for The Patriot, Business and Political Observer, India Today, ETV, and Inquilab Daily. His final job as a journalist was with the National Herald group, where he served as editor of the Urdu daily Qaumi Awaz and later as editor-in-chief of National Herald. Agha also served as member and then officiating chairperson of The National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions till 2017.



Senior Biju Janata Dal leader and former Odisha Minister Damodar Rout passes away :-

Damodar Rout, a veteran Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leader and former minister, died recently in a private hospital in Bhubaneswar. He was 81. Rout, a seven-time MLA, suffered from severe kidney disease. In the 1970s, the popular leader left his position as a veterinary doctor to

pursue a political career. Biju Patnaik, the legendary former chief minister, mentored him and other significant personalities. He was one of the founding members of BJD that was formed after the demise of Patnaik in 1997.



Nobel prize-winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman dies at 90 :-

Daniel Kahneman, professor of psychology and public affairs, whose groundbreaking behavioural science research changed our understanding of how people think and make decisions, died on March 27. He was 90. Kahneman, who wrote the bestselling book Thinking, Fast and Slow, argued against the notion that people’s behaviour is rooted in a rational decision-making process, rather than that it is often based on instinct. In 2002, Kahneman was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize

in Economic Sciences in recognition of his research in the fields of psychology and economics.



Tamil actor Daniel Balaji passes away due to heart attack :-

Daniel Balaji, a well-known actor in Tamil and Malayalam films, died on March 29 in Chennai of cardiac arrest at the age of 48. He was admitted to the hospital after complaining of chest trouble, and he died while receiving treatment. Daniel Balaji began his career in the film industry by working behind the scenes on Kamal Haasan's unreleased film Marudhanayagam. He first became known as an actor on the television series Chithi, where he played a character also named Daniel. Because of his impressive performance, he was renamed Daniel Balaji in his next TV series, Alaigal.

13: Ranks & Reports



Bhupender Yadav Releases Report On Status Of Leopards In India :-

Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav has issued a report on the state of leopards in the country. According to the research, India's leopard population is constant at 13,874, compared to 12,852 in 2018. The research is based on the fifth cycle of leopard population estimation carried out by the National Tiger Conservation Authority and the Wildlife Institute of India. The report revealed that the leopard population is estimated to be stable or slightly growing in Central India at 8,820 individuals compared to 8,071 in 2018, indicating a 1.5% annual growth rate.



Moody's Upgrades India's GDP Growth Forecast To 6.8% For 2024 :-

Moody's, a global rating agency, has upped India's GDP growth prediction for the calendar year 2024 to 6.8%, up from 6.1% previously. According to PTI, the improvement in forecast was due to India's strong economic performance in 2023 and lessening global economic challenges, as stated by Moody's. India's GDP expanded by 8.4% in the October-December quarter, exceeding economists' projections of 6.6%. Moody's attributed this strong growth to the government's capital spending and vigorous manufacturing activity.



Crisil Predicts India's Economy To Expand By 6.8% In FY25 :-

According to latest data from the National Statistical Office (NSO), the country's GDP is anticipated to increase by 7.6 percent in 2023–24. After growing by 7.6% in the current fiscal year, the country's real GDP growth is expected to slow to 6.8% in fiscal 2025 as higher interest rates and a weaker fiscal stimulus dampen domestic demand, according to Crisil Ratings. The economic growth in the next fiscal will also moderate due to normalization of the net tax impact on GDP seen in

FY2024 and as uneven growth in key trade partners will restrict healthy export recovery.



India's Unemployment Rate Drops To 3.1% In 2023 :-

The unemployment rate in India fell to 3.1% in 2023 from 3.6% the previous year, indicating sustained improvement in labor markets, according to the National Statistical Office's (NSO) most recent employment-unemployment indicators report. During the calendar year 2023 (CY23), the unemployment rate in both rural and urban areas fell to 2.4% and 5.2%, respectively, down from 2.8% and 5.9% in 2022. The unemployment rate for rural women (1.9 per cent) was lower than for rural men (2.7 per cent) in 2023.



Retail Inflation Steadies At 5.09% In February 2024

The headline retail inflation rate in India remained practically steady at 5.09 percent in February, according to figures issued by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. While CPI inflation has remained within the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) tolerance range of 2 percent to 6 percent for the sixth consecutive month, it has now spent 53 months in a row above the medium-term target of 4%. The latest inflation

data comes weeks before the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meets again on April 3-5. On February 8, the rate-setting panel left the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.5 percent for the sixth meeting in a row.



Fitch Raises India's GDP Forecast For FY25 To 7% :-

Fitch Ratings, a global rating agency, upped India's growth forecast for the upcoming fiscal year (FY25) to 7% from 6.5% previously predicted, citing strong domestic demand and continued improvement in business and consumer confidence. It also forecasts growth in the current fiscal year to be 7.8%, slightly higher than the government's own prediction of 7.6%. For China, Fitch trimmed its 2024 forecast to 4.5 per cent from the 4.6 per cent estimated earlier, reflecting deterioration in the outlook for the property sector and growing evidence of deflationary pressures.



India ranked 134 out of 193 countries on United Nations Human Development Index for 2022 :-

India's ranking on the United Nations Human Development Index increased by one spot in 2022 to 134 out of 193 nations, up from 135 out of 192 countries in 2021, thanks to a small improvement in its HDI value to 0.644 from 0.633 in 2021. However, the UNDP warned

that India must refocus on women-led development. As per the report, in 2022, India saw improvements across all HDI indicators including life expectancy, education, and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita.



Tamil Nadu Tops Illegal Trade In Shark Body Parts :-

Tamil Nadu contributed to about 65% of the illegal shark body parts trade, according to a new analysis of TRAFFIC and WWF-India seizures from January 2010 to December 2022. TRAFFIC stands for Trade Records Analysis of Flora and Fauna in Commerce. According to the data, over 16,000 kg of shark fins were captured between 2010 and 2022, accounting for nearly 80% of all shark-derived items. The factsheet titled 'Netted in illegal wildlife trade: Sharks of India' said Karnataka, Gujarat, Kerala, and Maharashtra follow Tamil Nadu in that order in illegal shark trade.



India's Forex Reserves Jump To Over Two-Year High Of \$636.1 Bn :-

The country's foreign exchange reserves grew for the third week in a row, reaching a more than two-year high of \$636.1 billion on March 8, according to central bank data. The reserves increased by \$10.5 billion in the

reporting week, the most since the week ending July 14, 2023. They have grown by a total of \$9.5 billion in the previous two weeks, drawing closer to their record high of \$642.5 billion set in September 2021. India's forex reserves reached USD 636.095 billion for the week ended March 8, with the all-time high at USD 645 billion in October 2021.



Begusarai Tops Global List Of Most Polluted Cities :

Begusarai in Bihar topped the list as the "most polluted metropolitan area in 2023," while Delhi was classified as the capital city with the "poorest air quality" among worldwide nations, according to the conclusions of the Swiss group IQAir's World Air Quality Report 2023. India rated third worst among 134 countries in terms of average annual PM2.5 concentration, trailing only Bangladesh and Pakistan, according to the 6th Annual World Air Quality Report, which reveals worrying insights into the world's most polluted countries, territories, and areas.



India's Outward FDI Surges In February 2024 :-

India's outbound foreign direct investment (FDI) pledges increased significantly to \$3.47 billion in February 2024, from more than \$2.82 billion in February 2023. Sequentially, FDI commitments increased from \$2.18

billion in January 2024, according to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data. Outbound FDI is expressed as a financial commitment with three components: equity, loans, and guarantees. The equity commitments declined to \$502.13 million in February 2024 from \$776.79 million in February 2023. It was also lower than the \$764.29 million recorded in January 2024.



Hurun Research Institute Report: Mumbai Surpasses Beijing As Asia's Billionaire Capital :-

Mumbai has eclipsed Beijing as Asia's new billionaire capital, while India has overcome Germany to become the world's third-richest country, with 271 billionaires, according to the most recent Hurun Research Institute report. "Mumbai was the fastest-growing billionaire capital in the world, adding 26 in the year and taking it to third in the world and Asia's billionaire capital. New Delhi broke into the Top 10 for the first time," the report states. India's economic prowess was further underscored by the remarkable surge in its billionaire population.



Elon Musk once tops list of world's richest people

Elon Musk, the head of Tesla and SpaceX, has topped the Hurun's list of the world's richest people. Hurun Business magazine is the Chinese equivalent of "Forbes. According

to Hurun, the billionaire's wealth grew by 47% over the year, reaching \$235 billion. Coming in second place is Amazon owner and CEO Jeff Bezos with a fortune of \$187 billion. In third place is Bernard Arnault, Chairman of Louis Vuitton, with around \$177 billion. According to the publication, there are currently 3,279 dollar billionaires in the world, 167 more than last year.



Morgan Stanley raises India's GDP growth forecast for FY25 to 6.8% :-

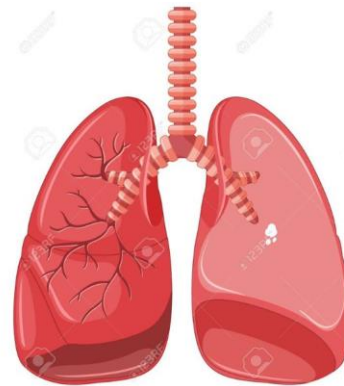
Global brokerage firm Morgan Stanley has revised India's gross domestic product (GDP) growth forecast for the financial year 2024-25 (FY25) to 6.8 per cent, up from the previous estimate of 6.5 per cent. The firm also revised its growth forecast for the ongoing financial year (FY24) to 7.9 per cent. Morgan Stanley expects India's GDP growth to remain robust, with an anticipated growth rate of around seven per cent in the fourth quarter of FY24 (quarter ending in March 2024). This growth momentum is expected to be widespread, with converging gaps.



India Attracts Highest Foreign Funds In Asia, Domestic Buying At 4-Year High :-

India outperformed the rest of Asia's markets by drawing the most foreign funds in March. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) injected \$3.63 billion into Indian equities,

their largest purchasing spree since December 2023. Domestic institutions continued to be net purchasers, investing over 52,467 crore rupees in the market, setting a four-year high. The achievement defies geopolitical crises and concerns that the higher interest rate regime will continue for some more time. Experts attributed the net FII figures to purchases of stocks through block deals and index rebalancing in March.



India registers 16% decline in TB incidence: Annual India TB report :-

Since 2015, India's efforts to ensure early tuberculosis identification and treatment initiation, combined with a slew of community involvement initiatives, have resulted in a 16% decrease in TB incidence (new cases arising each year) and an 18% drop in TB death. The incidence rate in India has decreased from 237 per lakh population in 2015 to 199 per lakh population in 2022, while the mortality rate has decreased from 28 per lakh population in 2015 to 23 per lakh population in 2022, according to the India TB report 2024 released by the Union Health Ministry on March 27.



India's Foreign Exchange Reserves Reach Record High :-

India's foreign exchange reserves increased for the fifth consecutive week, reaching a record high of \$642.63 billion on March 22, according to central bank data. The reserves rose by \$139 million during the reporting week. Changes in foreign currency assets, stated in dollars, include the impact of the appreciation or depreciation of

other currencies held in the reserves. Foreign exchange reserves include India's Reserve Tranche position in the International Monetary Fund. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) intervenes in the foreign exchange market to curb excess volatility in the rupee.

14: Schemes & Committees



Government clears setting up of International Big Cat Alliance :-

The Union Cabinet approved the establishment of the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), a coalition of 96 large cat range countries and others, with headquarters in India, and provided a one-time budgetary support of Rs 150 crore for this purpose over a five-year period from 2023-24 to 2027-28. It'll serve as a common platform and a centralized repository of successful practices for conservation of seven big cats namely tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, cheetah, jaguar and puma. Five of these - tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard and cheetah - are found in India.

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE), the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and Bajaj Finserv Ltd. initiated Project Odiserv, the first skill development program, at Gangadhar Meher University (GMU) in Sambalpur, Odisha. Dharmendra Pradhan, the Union Minister of Education, Skill Development, and Entrepreneurship, unveiled the project. Pradhan said that Project ODISERV will empower the youth of the country, make them more employable and fulfil their aspirations.



Dharmendra Pradhan Launches Project ODISERV For Odisha's Graduates :-

Telangana Government Announces Launch Of Indiramma Housing Scheme :-

The state government plans to launch the Indiramma housing initiative on March 11. During the first phase of implementation, financial support will be provided for the construction of 3,500 dwellings in each Assembly section. Speaking at a review meeting in Hyderabad, Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy urged authorities to make the required arrangements for the commencement of the Indiramma program, one of the six assurances given by the Congress ahead of the Assembly elections.



CM Yogi Rolls Out 'MYUVA Scheme' For Young Entrepreneurs In UP :-

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is preparing to launch the "Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan (MYUVA)" project in Uttar Pradesh, which aims to encourage entrepreneurship among the state's youth. This ambitious effort underscores the government's commitment to empowering young entrepreneurs and cultivating a culture of innovation and enterprise. Through MYUVA, aspiring youth will receive support and resources to kickstart their entrepreneurial ventures, thereby contributing to the economic growth and development of Uttar Pradesh.



PM Modi virtually launches 'Mahatari Vandan Yojana' in Chhattisgarh :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the BJP's flagship initiative, the 'Mahatari Vandan Yojana', in Chhattisgarh, under which married women in the state will receive a monthly cash aid of Rs 1,000. PM Modi participated in the programme virtually and talked with the beneficiaries. While addressing the nation on the scheme's debut, the Prime Minister stated that

recipients will receive their money without any problem. The main programme was held in the capital Raipur, where Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai was present.



Amit Shah Inaugurates Dilli Gramodaya Abhiyan Projects :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has launched a PNG facility in 41 villages and development projects in 178 others in Delhi as part of the Dilli Gramodaya Abhiyan, according to officials. Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, and VK Saxena, Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, attended the ceremony. Along with this, development work for 178 villages totaling Rs 383 crore is being initiated. A total Rs 900 crore had been allocated for the development of infrastructure and improving the standards of living in villages of Delhi but the money was not being utilised, he claimed.



Prime Minister Modi Launches PM-SURAJ Portal To Empower Marginalized Communities :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the 'Pradhan Mantri Samajik Utthan and Rozgar Adharit Jankalyan' (PM-SURAJ) national portal at an event hosted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The

inaugural ceremony, which was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the Chief Guest, underscored the government's commitment to providing credit support to one lakh entrepreneurs from disadvantaged communities. The PM-SURAJ portal symbolizes the ministry's dedication to placing the underprivileged at the forefront of development initiatives.



AI advisory: IT ministry removes requirement for govt permission :-

The ministry of electronics and information technology updated its March 1 advisory to the country's largest social media companies on the use of artificial intelligence (AI), changing a provision that required intermediaries and platforms to obtain government permission before deploying "under-tested" or "unreliable" AI models and tools in the country. In its new form, the intermediaries are no longer required to submit an action taken-cum-status report either but are still required to comply with immediate effect.



Meta's Plan To Combat Misinformation In 2024 Lok Sabha Elections:-

As the world's biggest democracy prepares for the 18th General Elections, Meta (formerly Facebook) says it will continue to control misinformation, eliminate voter tampering, and improve transparency and accountability on its platforms to support free and fair elections. The business further stated that it is "closely engaged with the Election Commission of India via the Voluntary Code of Ethics" that it joined in 2019, giving the Commission a high priority avenue to report illegal information to Meta.



Supreme Court Appoints Committee For Great Indian Bustard Preservation :-

The Supreme Court recently appointed an expert committee to look into the preservation of the Great Indian Bustard, which is "non-negotiable" and "need for sustainable development in the context of meeting the country's international commitments towards promoting renewable sources of energy". A panel led by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, JB Pardiwala, and Manoj Misra issued the ruling while dealing with a dispute concerning the protection of the Great Indian Bustard (GIB). The court has sought a report from the committee by July and listed the matter for the second week of August 2024.

15: Science & Technology



Indian Scientists Create Eco Wound Dressings With Banana Fibers :-

In a groundbreaking accomplishment, scientists from Assam's Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST) developed a sustainable and cost-effective wound dressing material based on banana fibers. The study, led by Prof. Devasish Chowdhury and Prof. (Retd) Rajlakshmi Devi, took use of the often-discarded banana pseudostems that remain abundant after harvest. By ingeniously blending these fibres with biopolymers such as chitosan and guar gum, they devised a versatile patch boasting exceptional mechanical strength and antioxidant attributes.



L&T Commissions First Indigenously Manufactured Hydrogen Electrolyser At Hazira :-

According to a regulatory statement from the firm, engineering major Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has commissioned its first electrolyzer made in the country at the green hydrogen facility at the A M Naik Heavy Engineering Complex in Hazira, Gujarat. The electrolyzer

can produce 200 Nm³/Hr (normal meter cubed per hour), a unit used to quantify gas flow rate. It has a rated power capability of 1 MW (expandable to 2 MW). It is equipped with two stacks and an Electrolyser Processing Unit (EPU) ML-400, which is indigenously manufactured and assembled.



New Species Of Amazon Anaconda Discovered: Eunectes Akiyama :-

Researchers in Ecuador's rainforest discovered a new species of anaconda, *Eunectes Akiyama*, that diverged from its closest relatives 10 million years ago. Despite their genetic differences, these anacondas look identical to the previously known species, *Eunectes murinus*. A team led by Dutch researcher Freek Vonk made the discovery after encountering huge 20-foot-long specimens in the Amazon. The new species, dubbed the "northern green anaconda," weighs up to 200 kilograms (441 pounds) and showcases significant genetic divergence from its counterpart.



India’s IN-SPACe Inaugurates Satellite & Payload Technical Centre In Ahmedabad :-

Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, inaugurated a first-of-its-kind technical center built by the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) in Ahmedabad to provide the private sector with "unrivalled opportunities" to rigorously test and validate their space technologies. "This centre is primarily focussed on satellites and payloads, while the simulation facility that we have is for launch vehicles and mission planning," Pawan Goenka, Chairman IN-SPACe said on the sidelines of the inauguration.



NPCI And IISc Partner For Deep Tech Research :-

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has established a long-term cooperation with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bangalore to do joint research on blockchain and artificial intelligence (AI) technology. The collaboration will also drive additional innovation by establishing the 'NPCI-IISc Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Deep Tech Research & Development'. The partnership will focus on scalable blockchain platforms and multi-modal analytics over fintech data, NPCI said in a statement.



Indian Oil To Produce Formula 1 Fuel In India :-

Within the next three months, the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) plans to begin manufacturing fuel particularly

tailored for Formula One F1 cars. This specialty fuel will be manufactured at the Paradip refinery in Odisha. SM Vaidya, Chairman of IOC, announced a relationship with Two Wheels Motor Racing as the "Official Fuel Partner" for the coveted FIM Asia Road Racing Championship (ARRC) from 2024 to 2026. As part of this collaboration, IOC will produce fuel for Formula One cars at the Paradip refinery.



Bengaluru To Get India’s First Driverless Metro Train :-

Last month, the Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) got its first set of six train carriages as part of the Communication-based Train Control (CBTC) system for its under-construction yellow line. It is currently scheduled to go through further safety testing. The 18.8-kilometer-long line linking RV Road and Bommasandra will be the first to include a driverless train. The route connects south of Bengaluru to the city’s tech hub, which has offices of companies such as Infosys, Wipro and Tata Consultancy Services.



India To Construct A 10,000-GPU Supercomputer For Self-Sufficient AI Advancement :-

The Indian government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved a new \$1.24 billion investment in the

IndiaAI project, a "national-level" initiative to build an all-Indian AI ecosystem from scratch. According to India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, the IndiaAI's supercomputer will have 10,000 "or more" GPUs as AI accelerators and will be constructed through a public-private cooperation. While no additional technical specifications are provided, the high-performance computing (HPC) system is intended to support startup companies and research organizations within India's emerging AI ecosystem.



ISRO's Chandrayaan-4 to bring back Moon rocks and soil to Earth, use dual-rocket system :-

In a first, Isro will launch two rockets to finish a single mission: the country's fourth moon mission Chandrayaan-4, which will return moon rocks and soil (regolith) to Earth. Two independent rockets, the heavy-lifter LVM-3 and Isro's workhorse PSLV, will carry different payloads for the same moon mission and launch on different days. If successful, Chandrayaan-4, which is slated to be launched not before 2028, will make India fourth nation with capability to bring back samples from the lunar surface.



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw launches India's fastest router in Bengaluru :-

In an important step toward technological independence and innovation, Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister for

Communications, Electronics and Information Technology, and Railways, introduced India's fastest and indigenously designed IP/MPLS (Multiprotocol Label Switching) router in Bengaluru. MPLS is a routing mechanism in telecommunications networks that routes data from one node to the next using labels rather than network addresses. The project is spearheaded by the collaboration of the government's Department of Telecom, CDOT and Nivetti.



India's first-ever AI teacher robot named 'Iris' launched in Kerala school :-

A school in Kerala has introduced India's first AI teaching robot, dubbed 'Iris'. This robot was created in conjunction with Makerlabs Edutech. It strives to bring about new educational advances by providing students with a personalized learning experience. The AI instructor has been assigned to KTCT Higher Secondary School, Thiruvananthapuram. Built under the Atal Tinkering Lab (ATL) project initiated by NITI Aayog, this AI teacher robot, Iris, boasts a range of features aimed at revolutionising traditional teaching methods.



New Scorpion Species With 8 Eyes And Legs Found In Thailand :-

During a wildlife expedition in Thailand's Kaeng Krachan National Park, a team of researchers discovered a

previously undiscovered scorpion species. This major discovery, documented in a ZooKeys paper, was made when researchers were camping near the Tenasserim Mountain Range and came across a new type of scorpion species hidden beneath a rock. This new species belongs to the subgenus Euscopiops and has been named Euscorpions Krachan after the national park in Thailand, where it was discovered.



ISRO’s Pushpak: India’s space agency gears up for second reusable launch vehicle test :-

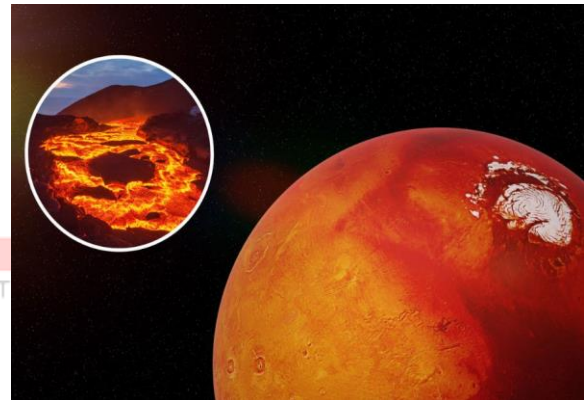
The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is preparing for the second landing test of its Reusable Launch Vehicle, now known as Pushpak, as part of its efforts to develop critical technologies for low-cost space access. ISRO seeks to develop fundamental capabilities for a completely reusable launch vehicle, in line with its ambitious plan to build a space station by 2035, strengthening India’s space exploration efforts. Sources within ISRO indicate that the upcoming landing test of Pushpak is likely to take place by the end of the current month.



NASA To Carry ‘Message In Bottle’ To Europa, One Of Jupiter’s Moon In October :-

NASA will send a message in a bottle to Europa, one of Jupiter’s moons, in October this year. The Europa Clipper

expedition will look for indications of life, since scientists forecast a saline lake beneath the frozen cover. The Europa Clipper spacecraft will carry a triangular metal plate with an engraving of US Poet Laureate Ada Limón’s handwritten "In Praise of Mystery: A Poem for Europa," as well as a silicon microchip stenciled with over 2.6 million public submitted names. But that is not all, it has an Indian connection as well. The other, outward-facing side of metal plate will sport etchings of 103 waveforms, a visual representation of the sound wave produced by saying the word “water” in 103 different languages – including Hindi.



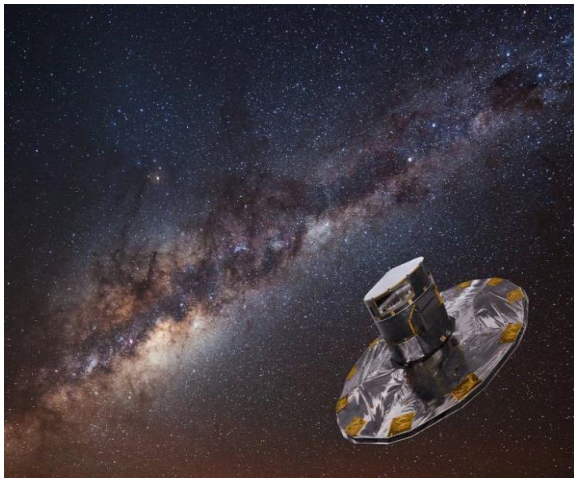
Scientists Discover A ‘Gigantic’ Volcano On Mars :-

Scientists have discovered the 'Noctis Volcano,' a massive volcano on Mars that is 29,600 feet tall and spans 450 kilometers. Using data from many missions, its presence was previously unknown due to erosion and Martian landscape problems. This discovery provides insights into Mars’ geology and probable biological history, with implications for astrobiology. Future exploration of this region could unveil more secrets about Mars’ past and the possibility of life beyond Earth.



ISRO reaches new milestone, successfully lands Pushpak reusable launch vehicle :-

On March 22, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully executed the Pushpak Reusable Landing Vehicle (RLV) LEX 02 experiment at the Aeronautical Test Range in Chitradurga, Karnataka. This is the second landing in ISRO's series of experiments. Building upon the success of the previous mission, RLV-LEX-02 showcased the autonomous landing capabilities of the RLV from challenging initial conditions post-release from a helicopter. Pushpak was hoisted by an Indian Air Force Chinook helicopter and released at an altitude of 4.5 km.



Gaia Telescope Discovers Two Ancient Streams Of Stars Shiva & Shakti :-

Astronomers have discovered two ancient streams of stars named after the Hindu deities Shakti and Shiva that appear to be among the Milky Way's earliest construction components, providing fresh information about how our galaxy formed long ago. These structures, discovered using images from the European Space Agency's Gaia space telescope, could represent remnants of two separate galaxies that merged approximately 12 billion years ago with the Milky Way's primordial parts during the galaxy's infancy, according to the scientists. Shakti and Shiva are comprised of stars with similar chemical compositions that formed 12-13 billion years ago.



Indian Scientist Prof Jayant Murthy Honoured With Asteroid Name :-

The International Astronomical Union (IAU) has named an asteroid after India's Professor Jayant Murthy, who retired from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) in 2021 and is now an Honorary Professor. Murthy served as the institute's acting Director from July 2018 to October 2019. The asteroid, previously known as 2005 EX296, has been formally named (215884) Jayantmurthy. This honour was announced by the IAU's Working Group on Small Bodies Nomenclature, the authority responsible for naming small objects in the Solar System.



New species of deep-sea isopod discovered off Kollam named after ISRO :-

A new deep-sea isopod species discovered off the coast of Kollam has been named after the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). The tiny fish-parasitic crustacean, which belongs to the genus *Brucethoa*, was found at the base of the gill chamber of the Spinyjaw greeneye, a marine fish. The new species has been named *Brucethoa isro* in honour of the Indian space agency's "successful space missions, including the recent successful lunar mission titled Chandrayaan-3," a paper on the finding published in the journal *Systematic Parasitology*.



US and UK unveil sanctions against Chinese state-backed hackers:-

Hackers backed by China’s government spy agency have been accused by the US and UK of conducting a years-long cyber-attack campaign, targeting politicians, journalists and businesses. Two individuals and a front company linked to the cyber-espionage group APT31, which is associated with the Chinese Ministry of State Security, have been hit with sanctions by the UK. The US Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control stated that it sanctioned Wuhan Xiaoruizhi Science and Technology Company Ltd, which it calls a front for the Chinese Ministry of State Security.



IIT Guwahati completes technology transfer to combat swine fever virus:-

In a bid to fight swine fever virus in pigs and wild boars, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati has successfully transferred a 'pioneering' vaccine technology to a manufacturing company specialising in high-quality vaccines. This vaccine marks the first recombinant virus-based solution for classical swine fever developed in India, offering a swift and cost-effective method for pig vaccination. Although the swine fever does not affect humans, it is a highly contagious disease among pigs, and poses a severe threat with a very high mortality rate.

16: Sports



Juventus Midfielder Paul Pogba Banned For 4 Years For Doping :-

Italy's anti-doping court imposed a four-year suspension on France's Paul Pogba after the World Cup winner tested positive for testosterone, according to Juventus. Pogba's positive test was announced in September, following an examination conducted after Juventus' game at Udinese on August 20. Pogba did not play in the

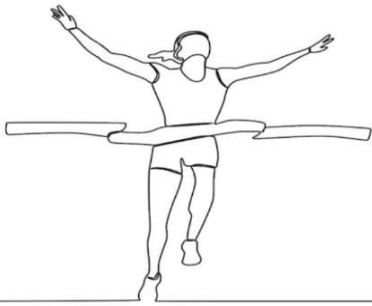
Serie A match but was on Juve’s bench. Pogba opted not to make a plea bargain with Italy’s anti-doping agency and so the case was tried before the country’s anti-doping court.



Himachal Pradesh Hosts Asian River Rafting Championship, Aims to Boost Adventure Tourism :-

In a big move to boost adventure tourism, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu launched

the Asian River Rafting Championship in Basantpur, near the Sutlej River. The event, which features teams from Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Iran, Iraq, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Indonesia, has garnered international attention, demonstrating the global appeal of river rafting as a sport and Himachal Pradesh as a top adventure tourism destination. The event not only highlights the state's natural beauty but also aims to create self-employment opportunities and foster job creation within the local community, as emphasized by Chief Minister Sukhu.



Indian Army Launches Army Girls Sports Companies to Empower Young Female Athletes :-

In a groundbreaking initiative aimed at fostering talent and empowerment among young girls, the Indian Army has unveiled plans to establish Army Girls Sports Companies (AGSC) at two prestigious centers of excellence: the Army Marksmanship Unit (AMU) in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh and the Army Sports Institute (ASI) in Pune, Maharashtra. The AGSCs are part of the national vision for women's empowerment and the demonstration of Nari Shakti, reflecting India's commitment to providing equal opportunities in the sporting arena.



England's James Anderson Joins Elite 700 Test Wickets Club :-

In the fifth Test against India in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh, veteran England seamer James Anderson became the first pacer and third overall to reach 700 Test wickets. Anderson added another famous chapter to his incredible career as he eliminated Kuldeep Yadav on day three, marking a momentous moment. It is worth noting that Anderson, 41, attained this milestone in his 187th Test match. Sri Lankan spin wizard Muttiah Muralidaran holds the record for the most Test wickets with 800, followed by the late Shane Warne with 708.



In historic move, BCCI announces Test cricket incentive of upto Rs 45 lakh per match :-

The Indian cricket body (BCCI) launched a historic initiative to encourage players to prioritise Test cricket and reward consistent performances in the game's longest format. The "Test Cricket Incentive Scheme" promised increased match fees for senior men's team players who put in the hard yards in whites. Players who play more than 75 percent of the Tests in a season for India are set to receive Rs 45 lakh additional fee per Test match. Each Test cricketer is paid Rs 15 lakh match fee at the moment by the BCCI.



Satwik-Chirag Win BWF French Open Men's Doubles Title :-

Star Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty of India won the French Open men's doubles final in straight games over Chinese Taipei's Lee Jhe-Huei and Yang Po-Hsuan. Satwik-Chirag won their second French Open Super 750 title after a dominating performance. The world's number one Indian duo placed second at the French Open in 2019 before winning the title in 2022. The Asian Games champions outwitted Lee and Yang 21-11 21-17 in 37 minutes to regain the Super 750 tournament title.



Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) Programme Launched :-

Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur launched the one-of-a-kind Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) project at Chandigarh's Sector 7 sports complex to great fanfare. The national initiative, aimed at schoolchildren aged nine to 18, will have two major goals: to find talent from all over the country, and to use athletics as a weapon to combat addiction to drugs and other technological distractions. KIRTI made a solid launch across 50 centres in India.



Mumbai Wins Ranji Trophy 2024 After Beating Vidarbha :-

On Thursday, March 14, Mumbai won the Ranji Trophy 2024 by defeating Vidarbha by 169 runs at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. It also marked Mumbai's

42nd title, demonstrating why they are regarded as a dominant force in Indian domestic cricket. Mumbai also broke their eight-year championship drought, having last won the title in the 2015-16 season. Vidarbha won both their Ranji finals earlier, but this time around, they bowed down in front of Ajinkya Rahane's men.



RCB conquer Delhi Capitals by 8 wickets, clinch maiden WPL Final :-

Royal Challengers Bangalore defeated Delhi Capitals in the final of the 2024 Women's Premier League, ending their 16-year trophy drought. RCB defeated DC by eight wickets to win the WPL trophy in New Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium. RCB cruised to their first WPL title after scoring 114 runs against DC. RCB's spin-attack had an outstanding first innings performance, helping them win their first trophy as a club. Sophie Molinoux and Shreyanka Patil broke DC's back with some spell-binding display of spin bowling in New Delhi.



Rajasthan Kings win Legend Cricket Trophy 2024 :-

Ashley Nurse's all-round performance and disciplined bowling effort helped Rajasthan Kings defeat New York Superstar Strikers by 20 runs in the highly anticipated grand finale at Pallekele International Cricket Stadium, allowing them to win the first-ever 90-ball format - Legends Cricket Trophy 2024. In the 90-ball per side game, Ashley Nurse top-scored 97 for Rajasthan Kings

and the West Indies star also picked up a wicket at a crucial juncture and bagged the player of the match award in the final.



Sathiyam Gnanasekaran makes history in Beirut, wins first-ever WTT Feeder title :-

Star table tennis player Sathiyam Gnanasekaran made history by being the first Indian to win a men's singles title at a WTT Feeder Series event in Beirut, Lebanon. In an exciting final, he defeated fellow Indian Manav Thakkar 3-1 (6-11 11-7 11-7 11-4). Despite being seeded 11th, Gnanasekaran played exceptionally well throughout the tournament in the Lebanese capital. The result marks Gnanasekaran's first men's singles success at a WTT event, and his first singles title at an international ranking event since ITTF Czech International Open 2021.



Sharath Kamal To Be Indian Flagbearer At Paris Olympics 2024 :-

Sharath Kamal, a veteran table tennis player and CWG winner, will be India's flag bearer at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games, while famed boxer MC Mary Kom has been designated chef de mission of the country's team. The 41-year-old table tennis player represents “the unity and spirit of our contingent as they compete on the

Olympic stage”, according to a statement released by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA). Mary Kom, a six-time World Champion and bronze medalist at the 2012 London Olympics, will be assisted by luger Shiva Keshavan, who has been chosen deputy chef de mission.



NFL owners vote to ban ‘hip-drop tackle:-

NFL owners officially voted to ban the ‘hip-drop tackle’ from the sport after an annual league meeting in Florida. The tackle has long been a topic of debate and was cited as the reason behind multiple injuries in the NFL. According to the NFL, the hip-drop tackle in question involves a swivel technique in which a player “grabs the runner with both hands or wraps the runner with both arms” and “unweights himself by swiveling and dropping his hips and/or lower body, landing on and trapping the runner’s leg(s) at or below the knee.”



Haryana crowned champion at boxing Sub Junior National Championship :-

Haryana clinched the team titles in both the boys and girls categories with an impressive combined haul of 19 medals at the boxing Sub Junior National Championship. In the girls category, Haryana successfully defended their title after finishing on top of the table with 64 points. They won 10 medals. Delhi and Maharashtra finished

second and third with 34 and 31 points respectively. Haryana boxers showcased their might in the boys category as well, winning nine medals to secure the first position with 62 points. Uttarakhand finished second with 34 followed by Uttar Pradesh.



IIT Madras hosting 6th Shaastra rapid FIDE rated chess tournament on March 30-31 :-

IIT Madras is hosting the prestigious '6th Shaastra Rapid FIDE Rated Chess Tournament' on March 30 and 31, 2024. The event, sanctioned by the International Chess Federation (FIDE), will feature renowned players from throughout the world, including Grandmasters, International Masters, and Women Grandmasters. Six Grandmasters, sixteen International Masters, three Women Grandmasters, and one Women International Master will all display their talents at the event. The event draws players of all ages, from 6 to 72, exhibiting chess's international appeal.

17: State



Nagaland Assembly Adopts Resolution On FMR; Asks Centre To Reconsider Decision :-

According to persons with knowledge of the situation, the Nagaland legislative assembly has overwhelmingly passed a resolution opposing the recent decision by the central government to fence the Indo-Myanmar border and revoke the Free Movement Regime (FMR) agreement with the neighboring country. By voice voting, the 60-member legislature approved the resolution. As a result, Nagaland has followed Mizoram as the second state to approve a resolution of this kind. India shares a 1,643 km border with Myanmar, running through four of its northeastern states, of which 215 km is within Nagaland.



India's 1st Dolphin Research Centre Inaugurated In Patna :-

Nitish Kumar, the Chief Minister (CM), inaugurated the National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC) at an event held at Patna's Gyan Bhawan. On October 5, 2009, the central government declared the dolphin a national aquatic animal. The Mammals can be found in Bihar at the confluence of the Ganga and Saryu rivers at Doriganj in Saran district, the confluence of the Ganga and Gandak at Sonapur in the same district, the confluence of the Ganga and Kosi near Kursela in Katihar district, and in parts of Patna and Bhagalpur.



Govt inked 5 MoUs to make Rajasthan self-reliant in energy :-

In an effort to make Rajasthan self-sufficient in the energy sector, the Rajasthan government signed 5 MOUs totaling Rs 1.60 lakh crore to increase energy production, upgrade the state's energy transmission system, and build new projects for thermal and renewable energy generation. Under these agreements, an MoU will be signed between Rajasthan Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (RVUN) along with Coal India Limited, the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) and NLC India for thermal based projects of 3325 MW capacity.



Nayab Singh Saini Succeeds Manohar Lal Khattar As Haryana's New Chief Minister :-

Manohar Lal Khattar, Haryana's chief minister from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), resigned on March 12 amid allegations of rising tensions among coalition partner Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) ahead of the Lok Sabha elections 2024. Making the announcement after a meeting of the BJP legislators in Chandigarh, Haryana BJP MLA Krishan Lal Middha says, "Nayab Singh Saini to be next CM of Haryana. All people are now going to meet

the Governor." In the 90-member Haryana Assembly, the BJP has 41 MLAs.



Odisha Extends Support To Women Employees With Extra Casual Leave :-

In a significant step aimed at increasing support for women in the workplace, the Odisha government, led by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, has announced the extension of 10 additional days of casual leave for women employed in different departments of the government. This decision attempts to recognize women's varied range of obligations and give them more flexibility to maintain a good work-life balance. Previously, all government personnel in Odisha were entitled to 15 days of casual leave (CL) annually.



Adani Green Energy Operationalises 126 MW Wind Power Plant In Gujarat :-

Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL), ports-to-power conglomerate Adani Group's renewable energy business, has operationalized 126 MW of wind power generating capacity in Gujarat, the firm reported. This marks the completion of the 300-MW project, with 174 MW earlier operational. The 300 MW wind farm will generate 1,091 million units of electricity, avoiding about 0.8

million tons of CO2 emissions each year. With the operationalization of the project, AGEL continues to strengthen its market leadership. The company has the country's largest renewable energy portfolio of 9,604 MW.



Maharashtra Cabinet Renames Ahmednagar As 'Ahilyanagar' :-

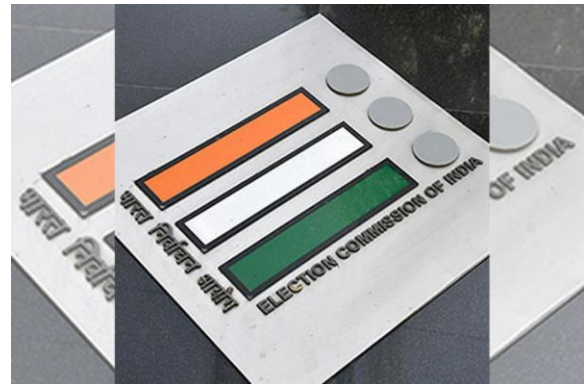
Maharashtra's 'Ahmednagar' will be renamed 'Ahilyanagar' in honor of the 18th-century Maratha queen Ahilyabai Holkar. The Maharashtra Cabinet has approved the proposal to rename the city. Ahmednagar city was named after Ahmed Nizamshah, who established the Nizamshahi dynasty and Ahmednagar town in the 15th century. In 2022, Aurangabad and Osmanabad were renamed Sambhaji Nagar and Dharashiv, respectively. Aurangabad and Osmanabad were named after Mughal emperors Aurangzeb and Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan.



Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan Resigns :-

Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan, the governor of Telangana, has submitted a letter of resignation to President Droupadi Murmu. According to sources, she is probably

going to run in the Puducherry or Tamil Nadu Lok Sabha elections. Sixty-two year old Dr. Tamilisai became the second Governor of new state of Telangana and the first woman Governor of Telangana. She took charge on September 8, 2019 and had a few months back held a programme to commemorate completion of four years in office.



Election Commission Launches 'Mission 414' Campaign In Himachal Pradesh To Boost Voter Turnout :-

The Election Commission (EC) of India has initiated a special campaign in Himachal Pradesh to increase voter turnout in 414 polling stations that received fewer than 60% of votes in the previous Lok Sabha elections. Bypolls for six Assembly seats that became vacant following the disqualification of Congress MLAs would be contested concurrently with four Lok Sabha seats in Himachal Pradesh in the final round on June 1. "The main focus of the campaign — "Mission 414" — is increasing the vote percentage in 414 identified polling stations which registered less than 60% voting in the last Lok Sabha polls," Chief Electoral Officer, Himachal Pradesh, Maneesh Garg told.



CP Radhakrishnan Gets Additional Charge As Telangana Governor :-

In place of Tamilisai Soundararajan, Jharkhand Governor CP Radhakrishnan was appointed as Telangana's in-charge governor. According to a Rashtrapati Bhavan communiqué, Tamilisai's resignation was accepted with immediate effect, and Radhakrishnan was appointed as Telangana's additional charge. He will also take on the additional responsibilities of Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry, a position previously held by Tamilisai until her resignation. Radhakrishnan, a two-time Member of Parliament (MP) from Coimbatore as a BJP candidate, assumed the governorship of Jharkhand in 2023.



Tata Cummins starts new facility for hydrogen-based engines in Jamshedpur :-

Tata Cummins Private Limited (TCPL) has opened a factory in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand, that will manufacture hydrogen-powered internal combustion engines for medium and large commercial vehicles. The factory, which covers approximately seven acres, opened within

a year of signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Jharkhand government. Apart from the engines, the factory will also manufacture low to zero-emission technology products. TCPL is a joint venture of Tata Motors Limited and Cummins Inc. USA.



Adani's Mega Copper Plant Begins Operations In Gujarat :-

The billionaire Gautam Adani-led firm has announced the launch of the first phase of the world's largest single-location copper manufacturing factory in Mundra, Gujarat, which will help India reduce its reliance on imports and aid in the energy transition. Kutch Copper, a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises Ltd, has "commissioned the first phase" of its USD 1.2 billion "greenfield copper refinery by dispatching the maiden batch of cathodes to customers," according to a company release. The first phase of the facility that will produce 0.5 million tonnes a year of refined copper has started operations and full-scale 1 million tonnes capacity is expected by FY29 (March 2029).

18: Summits & Conferences



Ministry Of Women And Child Development Organizes 'Poshan Utsav: Celebrating Nutrition' To Promote Good Nutrition Behavior:-

The Ministry of Women and Child Development hosted the Poshan Utsav on February 29, 2024, at The Oberoi. The event aims to encourage healthy nutrition habits while also highlighting India's continuous efforts to combat malnutrition through good nutrition practices. The ceremony was attended by Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani,

Union Minister for Women and Child Development and Minority Affairs, and Mr. Bill Gates, Co-Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). The event featured the release of 'Poshan Utsav Book' and announced the launch of the Cartoon Coalition.



Nirmala Sitharaman Inaugurated Conference On Combating GST Evasion:-

On March 4, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched the National Conference of Enforcement Chiefs of State and Central GST bodies in New Delhi. The Department of Revenue has organized the one-day conference. The conference schedule includes in-depth discussions about preventing GST evasion and fraudulent invoicing, as well as exchanging best practices. It will serve as a valuable platform for both Centre and State GST Enforcement authorities to share best practices, foster mutual learning, and collectively strengthen the GST administration.

release, the AIRSS 2024 is being organized by the Research Affairs Council of IIT Madras and will bring together scholars from many fields around India. A primary agenda behind the AIRSS 2024 is to explore the latest advancements in various research domains presented through oral presentations, poster sessions, and product/prototype showcases.



The First Bharat Steam Boiler Expo 2024 Held In Guwahati :-

The first Bharat Steam Boiler Expo 2024 was held at Veterinary College Field in Guwahati's Khanapara. The event spread over a duration of three days, started on March 4 and concluded on March 7. The expo was inaugurated by Sanjoy Kishan, Assam Minister of Welfare of Tea Tribes, Labour and Employment; and B Kalyan Chakravarthy, Principal Secretary, Skill, Employment and Entrepreneurship Department, Government of Assam. The Expo saw active participation from leading manufacturers, esteemed experts, and industry users from across the nation.



IIT Madras: Four-day long All India Research Scholars' Summit 2024 till March 7, 2024 :-

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras is hosting the All India Research Scholars' Summit (AIRSS) 2024 from March 4 to March 7, 2024. According to a news



Poshan Pakhwada 2024 From 9th To 23rd March :-

Poshan Pakhwada 2024 began on March 9th and will continue until March 23rd. During the Pakhwada, mass sensitization and community events will be held around

many topics, including Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi, dietary habits aimed at raising awareness about nutrition and pregnant women's health. According to the Ministry of Women and Child Development, in addition to these themes, States and partner Ministries and Departments can also organise additional sensitisation activities around other important areas.



World's largest literary festival-'Sahityotsav' to be held from March 11-16 :-

Sahitya Akademi's 'Sahityotsav', the world's greatest literary festival, will take place from March 11th to 16th. More than a hundred prominent writers and intellectuals will attend the festival to commemorate Sahitya Akademi's 70th anniversary. The festival's centerpiece will be the presentation ceremony for the Sahitya Akademi Awards 2023, which will take place on March 12th at New Delhi's Kamani Auditorium. The Chief Guest of the Awards Presentation Ceremony will be Pratibha Rai, the distinguished Odia writer.



National Dairy Mela And Agricultural Exhibition In Jharkhand :-

Inaugurated by Minister of Tribal Affairs, Agriculture, and Farmers Welfare Arjun Munda the 3-day National Dairy Mela and Agricultural Exhibition is being held at Chaibasa

in West Singhbhum district in Jharkhand from 09 March. According to a release from the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Dairy Mela is a platform where efforts have been made to bring the latest technologies in dairy science to the farmers. In his address, Munda said that this event is being organised on the land of Kolhan with the aim of promoting agriculture.



Aquabiz summit by Central Institute of Fisheries Technology in Kochi : March 20 :-

On March 20, the Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) will convene an aquabiz meeting in Kochi. The program is being organized under the auspices of the Zonal Technology Management, Agribusiness Incubation Centre, to boost entrepreneurial potential in the fishing sector. The press announcement stated that admission to the business meeting is free. Technology developed by various fisheries institutes under ICAR will be on display during the business summit. Kerala Startup Mission, MSMEs, funding agencies will also participate.



Startup Mahakumbh 2024 Commenced at New Delhi's Bharat Mandapam :-

The three-day Startup Mahakumbh, one of the largest events highlighting the startup ecosystem, began on March 18 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. This startup event intends to link entrepreneurs with a diverse group

of inventors, including venture capitalists, investors, and possible corporate partners. Speaking at the event, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, DPIIT Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh said, there are over one lakh Startups in the country as of now, which were only 300 when the Startup India initiative was launched in 2016.



US to host trilateral summit with Philippines, Japan on April 11:-

The leaders of the United States, Japan, and the Philippines will meet at the White House on April 11 for their first-ever trilateral summit, where they will discuss cooperation to promote inclusive economic growth and emerging technologies, as well as further peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region in the face of China's aggressive actions. US President Joe Biden will host his Filipino counterpart Ferdinand R Marcos Jr and Prime Minister Kishida Fumio of Japan at the White House for the maiden trilateral summit, White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said.



Japan PM Fumio Kishida Has Requested Summit With Kim Jong Un: North Korea :-

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's influential sister has indicated that Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has requested a summit with her brother, adding any meeting was unlikely without a policy shift by Tokyo. "Kishida recently conveyed his wish to meet with the Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the earliest date possible," Kim Yo Jong said in a statement released by the official Korean Central News Agency. Last month, Kim Yo Jong, one of the regime's senior spokespeople, hinted at a potential invitation for the Japanese leader to visit North Korea.



G20's Brasilia Meeting for Promoting Inclusive Growth & Gender Equality:-

The second Employment Working Group (EWG) of the G20 has commenced in Brasilia, Brazil. The meeting, which is being co-chaired by India, Brazil, and South Africa, is focused on promoting decent work and inclusive growth. The EWG discussed a number of key issues, including gender equality and diversity in the workplace. The Indian delegation has stressed the need for promoting inclusive environments in the workplace by ensuring equal representation and empowerment for all workers.

SECTION 2

Practice Questions with Answers



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following state has launched 'Asha Kirana Eye Care at Your Doorstep' under the aegis of National Programme for Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment?

- A) Andhra Pradesh
- B) Karnataka
- C) Odisha
- D) Telangana

2. The government has increased the authorised capital of state-run Food Corporation of India (FCI) to Rs _____ from Rs 10,000 crore.

- A) Rs 15,000 crore
- B) Rs 18,000 crore
- C) Rs 21,000 crore
- D) Rs 25,000 crore

3. Along with Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) which of the following bank has collaborated to enhance financing for renewable energy projects in India?

- A) Bank of Baroda
- B) Bank of Maharashtra
- C) Indian Overseas Bank
- D) Punjab National Bank

4. Which of the following payment company has received the payment aggregator (PA) license by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)?

- A) Capillary Technologies Limited
- B) Compuage Infocom Limited
- C) Indianic Infotech Limited
- D) Mswipe Technologies Private Limited

5. Along with the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) which of the following bank has inked an MoU to spread awareness on investment and fraudulent schemes?

- A) Axis Bank
- B) DBS Bank
- C) HSBC India
- D) ICICI Bank

6. The 12th Multilateral Naval Exercise-2024 "MILAN24" was held in which of the following city?

- A) Bhubaneswar, Odisha
- B) Digha, West Bengal
- C) Mumbai, Maharashtra
- D) Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

7. The first Skill India Centre (SIC) of the country was inaugurated in which of the following state?

- A) Jharkhand
- B) Odisha
- C) Telangana
- D) West Bengal

8. What is the rank of India in the Henley Passport Index 2024?

- A) 83
- B) 84
- C) 85
- D) 87

9. India has contributed _____ US Dollars to the Poverty and Hunger Alleviation Fund established by India, Brazil, and South Africa (IBSA Fund).

- A) \$1 million
- B) \$3 million
- C) \$4 million
- D) \$5 million

10. Credit growth in India is expected to moderate to _____ per cent in FY25 as per a S&P Global Ratings report.

- A) 10%
- B) 14%
- C) 16%
- D) 20%

11. India has welcomed which of the following country as the 119th country to join International Solar Alliance (ISA)?

- A) Algeria
- B) Malta
- C) Rwanda
- D) Tunisia

12. Global banking group Morgan Stanley has said India's economic growth is expected to slow down to _____ in the financial year (FY) 2025.

- A) 6.2%
- B) 6.5%
- C) 6.6%
- D) 6.9%

13. K.V.S. Manian was re-appointed as the joint Managing Director (MD) of which of the following bank?

- A) Axis Bank
- B) HDFC Bank
- C) ICICI Bank
- D) Kotak Mahindra Bank

14. Prabowo Subianto Djojohadikusumo was elected as the 8th President of which of the following country?

- A) Philippines
- B) Maldives
- C) Madagascar
- D) Indonesia

15. Which of the following payment company has launched made-in-India 'Indus Appstore' to take on Google, Apple?

- A) BharatPe
- B) Freecharge
- C) Paytm
- D) PhonePe

16. World Bank has collaborated with which of the following state government to launch innovative blended finance facility for climate resilience?

- A) Goa
- B) Karnataka
- C) Maharashtra
- D) West Bengal

17. Which payment company has partnered with 5 Indian Banks to Introduce India's 1st 'Virtual ATM'?

- A) MoneyTap
- B) Paymart India
- C) Pine Labs
- D) Policybazaar

18. Which organisation has approved a USD 23 million loan to enhance access to quality fintech education, research, and innovation at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) in India?

- A) Asian Development Bank
- B) International Monetary Fund
- C) UNDP
- D) World Bank

19. India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) projected a GDP growth of _____ for FY25, a modest decrease from the previous fiscal year's 7.3%.

- A) 6.0%
- B) 6.3%
- C) 6.4%
- D) 6.5%

20. Pratham, the world's first user-friendly video analytics platform was launched by which of the following company?

- A) Agawane Technologies
- B) Assert AI
- C) Dahua Technology
- D) Pulse Technologies

21. Along with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology which of the following company has partnered to launch the 'IMPEL-AI' program to boost AI startups in India?

- A) IBM
- B) iCreate
- C) Microsoft
- D) Both B & C

22. Which company has signed the land lease agreement with Andhra Pradesh to set up a green hydrogen hub in the state?

- A) Adani Green Energy Limited
- B) NTPC Green Energy Limited
- C) Suzlon Energy Limited
- D) Tata Power Limited

23. Which of the following country has conducted trilateral coast guard exercise 'Dosti-16'?

- A) Sri Lanka
- B) Maldives
- C) India
- D) All of the above

24. Along with the Central Economic Intelligence Bureau (CEIB) which of the following bank has collaborated to launch portal for antecedent

verification of prospective borrowers, non-performing assets (NPAs)?

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

25. Which company has signed an MoU with Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) to explore an integration with the network to expand the range of mobility offerings on the its app?

- A) Ather Energy
- B) Uber
- C) Ola Cabs
- D) Rapido

26. The credit rating agency India Ratings and Research in its report said that the India's projected headline retail inflation for FY25 is _____.

- A) 5.1%
- B) 4.8%
- C) 4.2%
- D) 3.5%

27. Who among the following was appointed as the chairman of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)?

- A) Samir Shah
- B) Nikesh Arora
- C) Neal Mohan
- D) Ajaypal Singh

28. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has exonerated the Independent Sugar Corporation (INSCO), in the case concerning its acquisition of which of the following company?

- A) Asahi India Glass Limited
- B) Eagle Glass Deco Limited
- C) Hindusthan National Glass & Industries Limited
- D) Piramal Glass Limited

29. Indian team secures how many medals at the BWF Para Badminton World Championships 2024?

- A) 20
- B) 18
- C) 15
- D) 12

30. Mobile World Congress 2024 was organized in which of the following country?

- A) France
- B) India
- C) Italy
- D) Spain

31. Mineral Production in the Country has grown by _____ percent in December 2023 as compared to the level in the month of December 2022.

- A) 6.4%
- B) 5.1%
- C) 3.8%
- D) 2.5%

32. In February 2024 what was the HSBC Composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for India?

- A) 62
- B) 61.5
- C) 60.4
- D) 59.7

33. For the fiscal year ending December 2023 how much total profit was generated by HSBC in India?

- A) \$774 million
- B) \$398 million
- C) \$1.5 billion
- D) \$1.2 billion

34. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved how much loan to enhance access to quality fintech education, research, and innovation at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) in India?

- A) \$27 million
- B) \$25 million
- C) \$23 million
- D) \$20 million

35. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the Shri Kalki Dham Temple in _____.

- A) Agra
- B) Lucknow
- C) Sambhal
- D) Varanasi

36. Along with Ministry of Ayush which of the following ministry has collaborated for Nutritional Improvement in adolescent girls through Ayurveda interventions?



- A) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- B) Ministry of Home Affairs
- C) Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
- D) Ministry of Women and Child Development

37. The Ministry of Finance has officially notified which of the following airline as a 'designated Indian carrier'?

- A) Akasa Air
- B) Go First
- C) IndiGo
- D) Vistara

38. For regulatory breaches the RBI imposed fines of over Rs _____ on the SBI, Canara Bank, City Union Bank Limited and Ocean Capital Market Limited.

- A) Rs 5 crore
- B) Rs 4 crore
- C) Rs 3 crore
- D) Rs 2 crore

39. Vijay Shekhar Sharma has resigned from his position as part-time non-executive chairman and board member of which of the following payments bank?

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

40. India won how many medals at Archery Asia Cup 2024 held in Baghdad, Iraq?

- A) 20
- B) 16
- C) 14
- D) 10

41. Which of the following defence manufacturing company has inaugurated South Asia's largest ammunition and missile complex in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh spanning 500 acres?

- A) Mahindra Defence Systems Limited
- B) ICOMM Tele Limited
- C) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
- D) Adani Defence and Aerospace

42. Along with the Ministry of AYUSH which of the following research institute has signed a Memorandum of Understanding to improve the Ayush Service Sector?

- A) Research and Information System for Developing Countries
- B) Raman Research Institute
- C) National Research Center on Plant Biotechnology
- D) Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine

43. Along with Innoviti Technologies Pvt. Ltd. which of the following bank has collaborated to set up a true omnichannel payments platform for progressive retailers?

- A) HDFC Bank
- B) ICICI Bank
- C) IndusInd Bank
- D) RBL Bank

44. How much stake in ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company was acquired by the ICICI Bank?

- A) 1.4%
- B) 2.3%
- C) 3.1%
- D) 3.6%

45. A decommissioned Indian Naval aircraft Tu-142, which has been launched in a museum, was inaugurated in which of the following state?

- A) Andhra Pradesh
- B) Gujarat
- C) Karnataka
- D) Maharashtra

46. Who among the following launched a platform, Bharat Startup Ecosystem Registry, to create a comprehensive database?

- A) Dharmendra Pradhan
- B) Giriraj Singh
- C) Narayan Rane
- D) Piyush Goyal

47. _____ and NABARD has inked an MoU to benefit women SHGs of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)?

- A) Small Industries Development Bank of India
- B) Reserve Bank of India
- C) NITI Aayog
- D) Ministry of Rural Development



48. What is the theme of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s Financial Literacy Week (FLW) observed from 26th February to 1st March 2024?

- A) Encode Digital Economy
- B) Go Digital, Go Secure
- C) Good Financial Behavior- Your Saviour
- D) Make a Right Start – Become Financially Smart

49. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) made a significant financial move in February 2024 by pricing a USD _____ 5-year global bond.

- A) 2.1 billion
- B) 3.5 billion
- C) 4.2 billion
- D) 5.0 billion

50. Which company has signed a Joint Venture Agreement (JVA) with Maharashtra State Power Generation Company Limited (MAHAGENCO), for development of Renewable Energy Parks in the state of Maharashtra?

- A) Adani Green Energy Limited
- B) NTPC Green Energy Limited
- C) Suzlon Energy Limited
- D) Tata Power Limited

51. What is the rank of India in the 12th International Intellectual Property (IP) Index (2024) released by the United States (US) Chamber of Commerce?

- A) 52
- B) 42
- C) 29
- D) 39

52. India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate in the quarter ended December 2023 (Q3FY24) was _____ per cent, according to the data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

- A) 7.6%
- B) 7.9%
- C) 8.0%
- D) 8.4%

53. Who among the following became the first Indian to be awarded an Honorary Knighthood from King Charles III?

- A) Shravin Mittal

- B) Rakesh Bharti Mittal
- C) Rajan Mittal
- D) Sunil Bharti Mittal

54. Ajay Kanwal has been re-appointed as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of which of the following small finance bank recently?

- A) AU Small Finance Bank
- B) Equitas Small Finance Bank
- C) Jana Small Finance Bank
- D) Ujjivan Small Finance Bank

55. Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL) has announced the appointment of _____ as the Managing Director (MD).

- A) Arun Kumar Singh
- B) Dheeraj Kumar Ojha
- C) Mundkur Shyamprasad Kamath
- D) S Bharathan

56. National Workshop on Logistics Efficiency Enhancement has been jointly organized by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and _____ in New Delhi.

- A) Asian Development Bank
- B) International Monetary Fund
- C) United Nations Development Programme
- D) World Bank

57. Reliance Industries and Reliance Foundation launched which a programme for rescue, treatment, care and rehabilitation of injured, abused and threatened animals, both in India and abroad?

- A) Dharamsala
- B) Pragatti
- C) SAFI
- D) Vantara

58. The GDP growth for the current financial year could be within striking distance of _____ per cent, a 'Ecowrap' report by the State Bank of India (SBI) said.

- A) 8%
- B) 8.2%
- C) 8.4%
- D) 8.5%

59. Who among the following was approved as the part-time chairman of Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (TMB) by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)?

- A) Chiranjeeviraj
- B) Ezhil Jothi
- C) S Ravindran
- D) Niranjana Sankar

60. Which country has successfully deployed the "Parsif" remote sensing and imaging satellite into orbit with the assistance of the Russian Soyuz-2.1b launcher?

- A) Türkiye
- B) South Korea
- C) Iran
- D) Indonesia

61. The US Consulate, in collaboration with the _____ launched the first-ever US-India Cyber Security Initiative to strengthen IT connections between the two countries.

- A) Arcon TechSolution
- B) BluSapphire Cyber Systems Pvt Ltd
- C) InstaSafe Technologies Pvt. Ltd.
- D) Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture

62. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated an Airstrip and a Saint James Jetty in which of the following country?

- A) Fiji
- B) Mauritius
- C) Maldives
- D) Seychelles

63. In February 2024, which of the following country was inducted as the member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO)?

- A) Democratic Republic of Timor–Leste
- B) São Tomé and Príncipe
- C) Comoros
- D) Both A & C

64. REC Limited has successfully listed two bonds worth Rs _____ on the exchanges- the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and the National Stock Exchange (NSE).

- A) Rs 5,375 crore
- B) Rs 4,120 crore

- C) Rs 3,910 crore
- D) Rs 2,870 crore

65. Along with the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) which of the following company has joined forces to boost innovation in India?

- A) Qualcomm Technologies Inc.
- B) Kforce Limited
- C) Deloitte Consulting LLP
- D) Cisco Systems, Inc.

66. For indigenous development of Advanced Fuelling & Control System for Engines for heavy duty applications, along with the Ministry of Defence which of the following company has inked an MoU?

- A) BEML Limited
- B) Bharat Electronics Limited
- C) Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited
- D) All of the above

67. NLC India Green Energy Limited (NIGEL) has signed a power purchase agreement with which of the following company for 600 MW Solar Power Project in Gujarat?

- A) Tata Power
- B) Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Limited
- C) Adani Green
- D) None of the above

68. Which of the following company has received final authorisation from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as a Payment Aggregator?

- A) Worldline ePayments India
- B) Phi Commerce Private Limited
- C) Paysharp Private Limited
- D) Infibeam Avenues Limited

69. Who has taken over the additional charge of the post of Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of NHPC Limited, India's premier hydropower company?

- A) Santosh Kumar
- B) Rajendra Prasad Goyal
- C) Raj Kumar Chaudhary
- D) Deepak Saigal

70. When the National Safety Day (India) was observed?

- A) 05 March

- B) 04 March
- C) 03 March
- D) 02 March

71. Which among the following has entered into a partnership to bolster innovation in India and provide support to local developers and startups?

- A) Airtel and Samsung
- B) BSNL and Ericsson
- C) C-DOT and Huawei
- D) C-DOT and Qualcomm

72. As per Environment Ministry report, which of the following state has the largest population of leopards in the country?

- A) Karnataka
- B) Madhya Pradesh
- C) Maharashtra
- D) Tamil Nadu

73. India's goods and services tax (GST) collection for February 2024 reached Rs 1.68 lakh crore, marking a _____ per cent increase from the previous year.

- A) 15%
- B) 12.5%
- C) 10%
- D) 8%

74. Among eight core industries which sector registered the highest growth rate in January 2024?

- A) Coal
- B) Electricity
- C) Petroleum Refinery Products
- D) Steel

75. Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND) has imposed how much penalty on Paytm Payments Bank Ltd with reference to violations of its obligations under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act?

- A) Rs 8.02 crore
- B) Rs 7.18 crore
- C) Rs 5.49 crore
- D) Rs 4.75 crore

76. Rating agency Moody's has raised its forecast for India's GDP growth in FY24 to _____ from 6.6%.

- A) 7.8%
- B) 7.5%

- C) 6.8%
- D) 9.2%

77. In February 2024, what was India's Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index?

- A) 58.9
- B) 57.9
- C) 56.9
- D) 55.9

78. In February 2024, what was the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for India's services sector?

- A) 63.2
- B) 61.8
- C) 60.6
- D) 59.5

79. Who among the following was elected as Hungary's new president?

- A) Viktor Sulyok
- B) Viktor Orban
- C) Tamas Sulyok
- D) Tamas Orban

80. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has received an interim dividend cheque of Rs _____ crore from LIC Chairman Siddhartha Mohanty.

- A) Rs 3,000.00 crore
- B) Rs 2,441.44 crore
- C) Rs 2,000.00 crore
- D) Rs 1,831.00 crore

81. Which of the following country was inducted in NATO as its 32nd member?

- A) Sweden
- B) Hungary
- C) Turkey
- D) Ukraine

82. Which of the following ministry is organizing the 'Poshan Pakhwada' campaign?

- A) Ministry of Education
- B) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- C) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- D) Ministry of Women and Child Development

83. Which of the following ministry has launched the 'e-Kisan Upaj Nidhi' of Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA)?



- A) Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
- B) Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution
- C) Ministry of Finance
- D) Ministry of Rural Development

84. To curb cybercrimes, financial frauds a 'Digital Intelligence Portal' and 'Chakshu' facility was launched by which of the following department?

- A) Department of Financial Services
- B) Department of Home
- C) Department of Pension & Pensioners Welfare
- D) Department of Telecommunications

85. What is the rank of India in 2024 Women, Business and Law Index by World Bank?

- A) 120
- B) 113
- C) 108
- D) 100

86. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) enrolment increased by _____ in current year so far.

- A) 30%
- B) 27%
- C) 25%
- D) 12%

87. Which of the following bank has partnered with online travel tech platform EaseMyTrip to launch a co-branded travel credit card?

- A) Bank of Maharashtra
- B) Indian Bank
- C) Punjab National Bank
- D) State Bank of India

88. SBI has partnered with which of the following company for its cash management & transaction banking platform 'iCashpro+'?

- A) Rogerpay
- B) Aurionpro
- C) Meta
- D) Google

89. Ring Plus Aqua Limited's proposed acquisition of a _____ per cent stake in Maini Precision Products

Ltd was approved by the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

- A) 59.25%
- B) 49.02%
- C) 42.10%
- D) 38.34%

90. The Navy has commissioned its new naval base, _____ on Lakshadweep's Minicoy Island.

- A) INS Trinkat
- B) INS Nishank
- C) INS Kumbhir
- D) INS Jatayu

91. Along with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation which of the following organisation has announced nearly \$600M funding for efforts to treat and prevent cervical cancer?

- A) World Health Organization
- B) World Bank
- C) UNICEF
- D) Both B & C

92. Along with the Reserve Bank of India which of the following country's central bank has signed an MoU to promote the use of local currencies for cross-border transactions?

- A) Bangladesh Bank
- B) Bank Indonesia
- C) Bank of Japan
- D) Reserve Bank of Australia

93. Fairfax India, backed by Indian-Canadian billionaire Prem Watsa, announced its commitment to provide up to \$_____ million in liquidity support to IIFL Finance.

- A) 100 million
- B) 200 million
- C) 300 million
- D) 400 million

94. Along with Sri Lanka-based Elephant House which of the following company has entered into a partnership to manufacture, market, distribute, and retail beverages under the Elephant House brand in India?

- A) Dabur Ltd
- B) Hindustan Unilever Ltd



C) ITC Ltd

D) Reliance Consumer Products Ltd

95. Who among the following was declared the winner of the prestigious 2024 Pritzker Architecture Prize?

A) Anne Lacaton

B) David Chipperfield

C) Jean-Philippe Vassal

D) Riken Yamamoto

96. India's Vadodara Municipal Corporation has raised _____ rupees by issuing Asia's first certified green municipal bond.

A) Rs 100 crore

B) Rs 200 crore

C) Rs 300 crore

D) Rs 400 crore

97. India's first government-owned OTT platform 'CSpace' was launched by which of the following state government recently?

A) Gujarat

B) Kerala

C) Madhya Pradesh

D) Maharashtra

98. Along with the Indian Coast Guard which of the following country's coast guard has conducted the 'Sea Defenders-2024' maritime security exercise at Port Blair recently?

A) Australia

B) Indonesia

C) Japan

D) US

99. The Railway Protection Force (RPF) currently boasts the largest share of women personnel with _____ percent among Central Paramilitary Forces in India.

A) 14%

B) 12%

C) 9%

D) 6%

100. India's GDP growth likely to moderate to _____ percent in FY25, Crisil said in a recent report.

A) 6.0%

B) 6.2%

C) 6.5%

D) 6.8%

101. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has inaugurated the I-Hub Foundation, an incubation centre, at which of the following Indian Institute of Management (IIM)?

A) IIM Ahmedabad

B) IIM Calcutta

C) IIM Indore

D) IIM Sambalpur

102. India has signed a _____ free trade agreement with a four-member European bloc and will lift most import tariffs on industrial products from these countries in return for the investment over 15 years.

A) \$ 500 billion

B) \$ 400 billion

C) \$ 300 billion

D) \$ 100 billion

103. State-owned National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has signed an agreement with which of the following company for incident management system?

A) Omega Healthcare Limited

B) Max Healthcare Limited

C) HLL Lifecare Limited

D) Fortis Healthcare Limited

104. President of India Droupadi Murmu awarded the President's Standard and President's Colours to how many units of the Indian Air Force (IAF)?

A) 6 Units

B) 5 Units

C) 4 Units

D) 2 Units

105. India has completed the first flight test of a home-grown missile with multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle (MIRV) technology under which of the following mission?

A) Mission Rustom

B) Mission Nishant

C) Mission Lakshya

D) Mission Divyastra

106. The Ministry of Defence has signed a Rs _____ crore contract with Big Bang Boom



Solutions Private Limited (BBBS) for anti-drone systems under the iDEX initiative.

- A) Rs 150 crore
- B) Rs 200 crore
- C) Rs 350 crore
- D) Rs 400 crore

107. The International Solar Alliance (ISA) has inducted Panama as the _____ member nation.

- A) 97
- B) 90
- C) 86
- D) 80

108. India's first contactless payment wearable device was launched by which of the following bank?

- A) YES Bank
- B) ICICI Bank
- C) IndusInd Bank
- D) Axis Bank

109. SIDBI has secured how much fund from GCF for its maiden sustainability and climate tech focused fund Avaana Sustainability Fund (ASF)?

- A) \$ 24.5 million
- B) \$ 20 million
- C) \$ 18 million
- D) \$ 12 million

110. Which of the following Indian pair has defeated Lee Jhe Huei and Yang Po Hsuan from Chinese Taipei to win the French Open 2024?

- A) Chirag Shetty and Lakshya Sen
- B) Lakshya Sen and Srikanth Kidambi
- C) Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty
- D) Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Srikanth Kidambi

111. One97 Communications, the parent company of Paytm, is poised to collaborate with which of the following bank for settling Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions?

- A) Bank of Baroda
- B) Bank of India
- C) Punjab National Bank
- D) State Bank of India

112. Who among the following was elected as the president of the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI)?

- A) Devendra Jhajharia
- B) Gursharan Singh
- C) J.P. Singh
- D) V.K. Dabas

113. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the merger of Garagepreneurs Internet Private Limited (GIPL) with which of the following small finance bank?

- A) Capital Small Finance Bank
- B) Equitas Small Finance Bank
- C) North East Small Finance Bank
- D) Utkarsh Small Finance Bank

114. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved acquisition of stake in which company by TPG Growth V SF Markets Pte. Ltd. and Waverly Pte. Ltd. through Asia Healthcare Holdings Pte. Ltd.?

- A) Asian Institute of Nephrology and Urology Pvt Ltd
- B) Ikon Remedies Pvt Ltd
- C) Smotec Pharmaceuticals Pvt Ltd
- D) Steris Healthcare Pvt Ltd

115. The Boards of Aditya Birla Capital Limited (ABCL) and which of the following company accepted the Scheme of Amalgamation (Scheme) of the two firms, which would further establish a huge unified operational NBFC?

- A) Aditya Birla Renewables Limited
- B) Aditya Birla Insulators Limited
- C) Aditya Birla Finance Limited
- D) Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail

116. Along with Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) which of the following has signed an MoU to proliferate affordable and accessible digital services across the country?

- A) Doordarshan
- B) Prasar Bharati
- C) Universal Service Obligation Fund
- D) Both B & C

117. Union Minister of Science & Technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh has inaugurated the first-of-its-kind "National Speed Breeding Crop Facility" in which of the following city?

- A) Dibrugarh, Assam



- B) Mohali, Punjab
- C) Roorkee, Uttarakhand
- D) Rourkela, Odisha

118. The Ministry of Home Affairs has designated which of the following date as the Hyderabad Liberation Day?

- A) 17 September
- B) 16 August
- C) 15 May
- D) 17 March

119. The Ministry of Rural Development has signed an MoU with the _____ to formalize their partnership in applications of geospatial technology and artificial intelligence.

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

120. L&T Finance Holdings has signed a financing pact with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for \$ _____ million to support financing in rural and peri-urban areas in India.

- A) 130 million
- B) 125 million
- C) 110 million
- D) 100 million

121. Along with which of the following IIT the ministry of heavy industries (MHI) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to foster innovation in the automotive and electric vehicle (EV) sector?

- A) IIT Guwahati
- B) IIT Kanpur
- C) IIT Madras
- D) IIT Roorkee

122. Along with the government of India which of the following organisation has signed a \$181 million loan to build quality infrastructure and services in Ahmedabad?

- A) Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
- B) International Monetary Fund
- C) Asian Development Bank
- D) World Bank

123. Ratings agency Fitch has upgraded its forecast for India's GDP growth in FY25 from 6.5% to _____.

- A) 6.7%
- B) 6.8%
- C) 6.9%
- D) 7%

124. Which of the following author received the prestigious Golden Book Award 2024 for the book titled "Breaking Free Embracing me"?

- A) Anuja Chauhan
- B) Rakhi Kapoor
- C) Preeti Shenoy
- D) Sudha Murthy

125. The President has appointed who among the following as new Election Commissioner?

- A) Sukhbir Singh Sandhu
- B) Nagendra Singh
- C) Gyanesh Kumar
- D) Both A & C

126. Centre has approved the transfer of iconic Air India building at Mumbai's Nariman Point to which of the following state government for Rs 1,601 crore.

- A) Gujarat
- B) Madhya Pradesh
- C) Maharashtra
- D) West Bengal

127. Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has signed a contract with _____ for the supply of 14 communication and electronic warfare (EW) sensors and systems worth about Rs 847 crore.

- A) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
- B) Larsen & Toubro Limited
- C) Mahindra Aerospace Limited
- D) Tata Advanced Systems Limited

128. The Ministry of Defence has inked Rs 2,890-cr contract with _____ for upgrade of 25 Dornier aircraft of the Indian Navy.

- A) Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
- B) Defence Research and Development Organisation
- C) Bharat Electronics Limited
- D) Bharat Dynamics Limited

129. The center has formed a 16-member committee headed by _____ to look into Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) implementation.

- A) Deepti Gaur Mukerjee
- B) Indu Bhushan
- C) Rakesh Kumar
- D) VK Paul

130. Who among the following was roped in as National Icon in PwD category by Election Commission of India for Lok Sabha Elections?

- A) Gowtham Akil
- B) Manasi Joshi
- C) Palak Kohli
- D) Sheetal Devi

131. Tri-service military exercise 'Bharat Shakti' was held in which of the following state?

- A) Chhattisgarh
- B) Maharashtra
- C) Punjab
- D) Rajasthan

132. Which of the following Indian Naval Ship (INS) has participated in Exercise Cutlass Express – 24 (CE-24) held in Port Victoria, Seychelles from 26 February to 08 March 2024?

- A) INS Jalashwa
- B) INS Kesari
- C) INS Sindhuraj
- D) INS Tir

133. The Reserve Bank of India has inducted who among the following as a member of the Committee of Advisors of Abhyudaya Cooperative Bank Limited?

- A) Venkatesan Duraiswamy
- B) Rajesh B. Paralkar
- C) Krishna Kumar
- D) Devendra Kumar

134. Which of the following company became India's second unicorn of 2024?

- A) Buxfer
- B) Miquido
- C) Perfios
- D) Uncat

135. Who among the following was awarded the Chameli Devi Jain Award 2024 for Outstanding Woman Media Person of the Year?

- A) Anuradha Bhasin and Mayanti Langer
- B) Greeshma Kuthar and Ritika Chopra
- C) Nidhi Razdan and Shaili Chopra
- D) Rana Ayyub and Sheren Bhan

136. India's first Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) powered bus was inaugurated in which of the following states?

- A) Assam
- B) Madhya Pradesh
- C) Maharashtra
- D) Punjab

137. Which edition of the joint military exercise 'LAMITIYE-2024', between Indian Army and Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF) was held in Seychelles?

- A) 5th
- B) 3rd
- C) 12th
- D) 10th

138. What is the rank of India in the 2024 global happiness index?

- A) 156
- B) 142
- C) 132
- D) 126

139. _____ and REC Power Development and Consultancy Limited (RECPDCL) have signed an MoU to collaboratively develop utility-scale renewable energy projects across India.

- A) Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
- B) Power Grid Corporation of India
- C) Power System Operation Corporation Limited
- D) THDC India Limited

140. Who among the following has been selected for the 2024 Sangita Kalanidhi award?

- A) Vinod Kumar Dwivedi
- B) T.M. Krishna
- C) Prabhakar Karekar
- D) Kalapini Komkali



141. What is the significance of the T+0 Trading Settlement Cycle introduced by the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and the National Stock Exchange (NSE)?

- A) It allows for same-day settlement of trades
- B) It extends the settlement cycle to two days
- C) It restricts trading activities on certain days
- D) It applies only to futures trading

142. What is the focus of Multiple Myeloma Awareness Month observed annually in March?

- A) Raising awareness about a rare blood cancer
- B) Promoting general cancer awareness
- C) Highlighting advancements in cancer treatment
- D) Advocating for cancer research funding

143. What crop does the indigenous variety "Mushk Budiji" belong to?

- A) Rice
- B) Wheat
- C) Maize
- D) Jowar

144. Which company has recently entered the electric vehicle market with its launch of the SU7?

- A) Huawei
- B) Xiaomi
- C) Apple
- D) Samsung

145. According to the Annual India TB report, what percentage decline in tuberculosis (TB) incidence has India witnessed from 2015 to 2022?

- A) 10%
- B) 16%
- C) 20%

D) 25%

146. Where was the world's first Om-shaped temple inaugurated?

- A) Rajasthan
- B) Gujarat
- C) Uttarakhand
- D) Uttar Pradesh

147. Tantalum, a rare metal, was recently discovered in which river?

- A) Gomti
- B) Sutlej
- C) Kaveri
- D) Godavari

148. What are 'Cicadas', recently seen in the news?

- A) Sound producing insects
- B) Ancient irrigation technique
- C) Newly discovered species of spider
- D) Invasive plant

149. Which organization has launched a new network for coronaviruses, CoViNet?

- A) World Bank
- B) WHO
- C) WTO
- D) UNICEF

150. Which space company has successfully test-fired the 'Kalam-250' at the propulsion testbed of the ISRO?

- A) Bellatrix Aerospace
- B) AgniKul Cosmos
- C) Skyroot Aerospace
- D) Kawa Space

ANSWERS

1. Correct Answer: B

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has launched the 'Asha Kirana - Eye Care at Your Doorstep' scheme to provide eye care accessibility for families across Karnataka free of cost. Under the Asha Kirana program, comprehensive eye care services, including doorstep eye check-ups, diagnosis, and treatment including distribution of spectacles, and cataracts surgeries will be provided to families free of cost.

2. Correct Answer: C

The government has increased the authorised capital of state-run Food Corporation of India (FCI) from Rs 10,000 crore to Rs 21,000 crore to enhance the operational capabilities and fulfill its mandate effectively, the Food Ministry said. The increase in the authorised capital will reduce the interest burden, decrease the economic cost and ultimately affecting the government subsidy positively.

3. Correct Answer: D

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) and Punjab National Bank (PNB) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at advancing renewable energy initiatives across the nation. The agreement, signed at IREDA's registered office in New Delhi, paves the way for joint efforts in co-lending and loan syndication for a diverse spectrum of renewable energy projects.

4. Correct Answer: D

Merchant-led digital payments provider Mswipe Technologies said it has been granted a payment aggregator (PA) licence by the Reserve Bank of India. The company had received an in-principle nod from the central bank to operate as a payment aggregator in August 2022.

5. Correct Answer: B

Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) and Singapore-headquartered DBS Bank signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to spread awareness on investment and fraudulent schemes. Under the MoU, DBS Bank aims to support IEPFA's investor awareness activities by disseminating safety messages via its various digital platforms.

6. Correct Answer: D

The 12th edition of the Multilateral Naval Exercise-2024 "MILAN24", hosted by India, was organised in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. The exercise was conducted from 19th to 27th February 2024 by the Eastern Naval Command of the Indian Navy.

7. Correct Answer: B

Union Minister of Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Dharmendra Pradhan, inaugurated the first Skill India Centre (SIC) of the country in Sambalpur, Odisha. The centre aims to provide quality education and skills training, empower the youth, and create a competent workforce for the 21st century. Similar centres will be inaugurated in other locations in Odisha.

8. Correct Answer: C

India has fallen one position from last year in the recently released Henley Passport Index for 2024. The Indian

passport ranks 85th on the list while France has got the top position. The Henley Passport Index ranks countries on the basis of the strength of their passports.

9. Correct Answer: A

India has contributed \$1 million to IBSA Fund which undertake projects aimed at alleviating poverty and hunger. India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj handed over the cheque of \$1 million as a contribution towards the India, Brazil and South Africa Facility for Poverty and Hunger Alleviation Fund (IBSA Fund) to the Director of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) Dima Al-Khatib.

10. Correct Answer: B

Credit growth in India is expected to moderate to 14 per cent in FY25 from the existing 16 per cent as deposit growth is unable to keep pace with loans, S&P Global Ratings said in a report. As per the report, system-level credit growth to moderate to 14 per cent in 2024-25 from about 16 per cent year-on-year growth in the first three quarters of FY24.

11. Correct Answer: B

Malta became the 119th country to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA), the Ministry of External Affairs said. The ISA is an alliance of more than 120 signatory countries that aims to reduce the dependence on non-renewable sources of energy like fossil fuels.

12. Correct Answer: B

Morgan Stanley Research said that it expects India's GDP growth for FY25 to moderate to 6.5 per cent from 6.9 per cent projected for FY24. ICRA, meanwhile, has projected the year-on-year (Y-o-Y) GDP growth to moderate sequentially to 6 per cent in Q3 FY24 from 7.6 per cent, led by agriculture and industry sectors.

13. Correct Answer: D

Private sector lender Kotak Mahindra Bank announced major changes in its senior management team. Kotak Mahindra Bank has re-designated KVS Manian as the Joint Managing Director and a key managerial personnel of the bank, with effect from March 1, 2024.

14. Correct Answer: D

Prabowo Subianto Djojohadikusumo, the Defence Minister of the Republic of Indonesia, will be sworn in as

the 8th President of Indonesia on October 20, 2024. He will succeed Joko Widodo (Jokowi), a member of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) who has held the position since 2014 for two consecutive terms (2014-19 and 2019-24).

15. Correct Answer: D

Walmart-owned payments company PhonePe formally launched its mobile app marketplace, Indus Appstore, in an attempt to rival the Google Play store and Apple's App Store. The Indus Appstore looks to differentiate itself from the Google and Apple platforms by not charging developers any platform fee or commission for in-app payments.

16. Correct Answer: A

The Goa government announced setting up of a blended finance facility in partnership with the World Bank that will enable the coastal state to access and mobilise concessional finance to implement low-carbon and climate-resilient investments. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant in presence of the World Bank officials and other institutions announced the setting up of the facility.

17. Correct Answer: B

Fintech startup Paymart said that it has partnered with five Indian banks to offer its innovative virtual, cardless, and hardware-less cash withdrawal service. Paymart has partnered with five prominent banks, including IDBI Bank, Indian Bank, Jammu & Kashmir Bank, and Karur Vyasa Bank, to roll out this service nationwide.

18. Correct Answer: A

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) said it has approved a USD 23 million loan to enhance access to quality fintech education, research, and innovation at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) in India. GIFT is a state-owned enterprise established to promote and cultivate fintech ecosystems and financial services in India.

19. Correct Answer: D

India's economic growth is likely to slow to 6.5 per cent in 2024-25 from the projected expansion of 7.3 per cent in the current financial year dragged by slowdown in industrial sector growth amid muted consumption demand, India Ratings & Research (Ind-Ra) said.

20. Correct Answer: B

Assert AI announced the launch of Pratham, a groundbreaking platform that is patented for its innovative approach to democratizing computer vision and artificial intelligence. With Pratham, users can unlock the potential of Vision AI technology without the need for coding or AI expertise, marking a significant milestone in the field of computer vision technology.

21. Correct Answer: D

Microsoft India, iCreate, and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) have announced the launch of a joint artificial intelligence innovation programme 'Impel-AI'. The Impel-AI programme will select and scale 100 startups across India to build with Azure OpenAI, and the top 25 will receive go-to-market support from Microsoft's Global Network to develop advanced products.

22. Correct Answer: B

State-run power giant, NTPC said it has signed a land lease agreement with Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC) for development of an integrated green hydrogen hub on 1,200 acres of land near Pudimadaka village of Atchutapuram Mandal, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

23. Correct Answer: D

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG), Sri Lankan Navy (SLN), and Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) has conducted the 16th edition of 'Dosti-16', a biannual trilateral Coast Guard exercise, from February 22-25, 2024 at Male, Maldives. Bangladeshi observers also participated in the trilateral joint exercise.

24. Correct Answer: A

The Central Economic Intelligence Bureau (CEIB) has launched an "Automated Search Portal" to help public sector banks (PSBs) with antecedent verification of prospective borrowers and non-performing assets (NPAs). The portal, which has been developed by the Bureau in collaboration with the State Bank of India (SBI), will help PSBs obtain mandatory intelligence clearance from CEIB in a prompt manner, which in turn will facilitate timely disbursement of funds.

25. Correct Answer: B

Uber, one of India's leading ridesharing platforms, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) to explore integration with the network to expand the range of mobility offerings on the Uber app.

26. Correct Answer: B

India's GDP is expected to grow by 6.5 percent in 2024-25, according to India Ratings and Research. For 2024-25 as a whole, India Ratings' forecast for headline retail inflation is 4.8 percent, 30 basis points higher than the Indian central bank's projection of 4.5 percent.

27. Correct Answer: A

India-born media executive Dr Samir Shah was confirmed as the new BBC chairman. Mr Shah, who has worked in UK broadcasting for over 40 years, was picked as the government's preferred candidate in December last year and went on to be quizzed by cross-party MPs of the House of Commons Media Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee for his pre-appointment scrutiny.

28. Correct Answer: C

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has given a clean chit to Independent Sugar Corporation (INSCO), a Madhvani Group company based in Africa, for green channel approval for the proposed acquisition of Hindusthan National Glass & Industries Limited (HNGIL). The Commission had initiated an investigation following a complaint filed by AGI Greenpac.

29. Correct Answer: B

Indian shuttlers bagged 18 medals, including three gold, four silver and 11 bronze, at the BWF Para Badminton World Championships 2024, which was held in Pattaya, Thailand. Tokyo 2020 Paralympics silver medallist Suhas Yathiraj headlined the event for India, winning gold in the men's singles SL 4 category by beating Indonesia's Fredy Setiawan 21-18, 21-8.

30. Correct Answer: D

MWC, also known as Mobile World Congress was held from February 26 to February 29, 2024 at the Fira Gran Via in Barcelona, Spain. It serves as a platform where companies unveil their latest products and advancements.

31. Correct Answer: B

India's mineral output increased by 5.1 percent in December as compared to the year-ago period, the government said. The index of mineral production of mining and quarrying sector for the month of December, 2023 at 139.4 is 5.1 percent higher as compared to the level witnessed in the corresponding month of 2022, the mines ministry said in a statement.

32. Correct Answer: B

With better performance in both manufacturing and services, the HSBC Composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to a seven-month high of 61.5 in February, up from 61.2 in January. The flash PMI is prepared by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to survey panels of around 400 manufacturers and 400 service providers. The panels are stratified by detailed sector and company workforce size, based on contributions to GDP.

33. Correct Answer: C

HSBC Group posted a 25 per cent increase in profit from India operations to \$1.5 billion for the financial year ended December 2023. The bank, which follows the calendar year as its fiscal, had earned a profit of \$1.2 billion in 2022, HSBC said in its annual report for 2023.

34. Correct Answer: C

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) said it has approved a USD 23 million loan to enhance access to quality fintech education, research, and innovation at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) in India. GIFT is a state-owned enterprise established to promote and cultivate fintech ecosystems and financial services in India.

35. Correct Answer: C

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the Kalki Dham Temple in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal district. He was invited to the event by Acharya Pramod Krishnam, who was expelled from the Congress for a period of six years for his anti-party remarks.

36. Correct Answer: D

To provide nutritional help to adolescent girls suffering from anaemia, the women and child development (WCD) ministry as well as the ministry of AYUSH has announced that they will be providing interventions such as

ayurveda, yoga and nutritional help of natural foods in five districts where the nutritional parameter are low.

37. Correct Answer: A

The finance ministry has recognised Akasa Air as a 'designated Indian carrier', bolstering the airline's international flight ambition. This makes the budget carrier the first Indian airline to take to global skies within 19 months of commencing its operations. The carrier operated its first flight on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad route on August 7, 2022.

38. Correct Answer: C

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said it has imposed penalties amounting to almost Rs 3 crore on State Bank of India, Canara Bank, Ocean Capital Market Ltd and City Union Bank for violation of regulatory norms. In a statement, the RBI said a penalty of Rs 2 crore has been imposed on the State Bank of India (SBI) for contravention of certain norms related to the Depositor Education Awareness Fund Scheme, 2014.

39. Correct Answer: A

Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma has resigned as part-time non-executive Chairman of Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL) ahead of the March 15 deadline to wind down its business. Sharma owns a 51% stake in Paytm Payments Bank, while One 97 Communications, as Paytm is formally known, owns the rest.

40. Correct Answer: C

India finished the Archery Asia Cup 2024 with 14 medals, including nine golds, four silvers and one bronze in Baghdad, Iraq. India swept the top podiums in all the individual events, clinching top positions in both the men's and women's compound events.

41. Correct Answer: D

In a first in the private sector, two facilities for the manufacture of ammunition and missiles were opened by Adani Defence and Aerospace in Kanpur on February 26. The twin-facility complex, spread over 500 acres, was inaugurated by Army Chief Gen. Manoj Pande and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

42. Correct Answer: A

The Ministry of Ayush and Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) signed a

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in New Delhi. The Ministry said that the MoU will bring forth the overview of Ayush Service sector and will serve the continuation of academic cooperation and collaboration with RIS, which is a Policy Research autonomous institute of Ministry of External Affairs.

43. Correct Answer: D

RBL Bank and Innoviti Technologies Pvt. Ltd. have set up a truly state-of-the-art omnichannel payments platform, called Omnium, for progressive merchants. The platform aims to unlock value lying hidden in a retailer's data and business processes, helping them grow faster and with lesser efforts than possible otherwise.

44. Correct Answer: A

ICICI Bank has acquired an additional 1.4% stake in ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company through the open market for Rs 1,164 crore. The lender bought 69,82,852 shares through multiple block deals on the stock exchanges at Rs 1,666.35 a share.

45. Correct Answer: A

On February 26, 2024, India's third aircraft museum, showcasing the Indian Navy (IN)'s decommissioned TU-142M aircraft, was launched at Kakinada Beach Park in Andhra Pradesh's East Godavari district. Geetha Viswanath Vanga, Member of Parliament (MP) of the Lok Sabha (Kakinada, AP), opened the aviation museum.

46. Correct Answer: D

The government said it has launched a platform, Bharat Startup Ecosystem Registry, to create a comprehensive database with details about all the startup ecosystem stakeholders under one roof across different categories. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal became the first person to register on the platform, signifying the government's commitment to nurturing India's burgeoning startup ecosystem.

47. Correct Answer: D

The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support services for leveraging the schemes of NABARD to benefit women SHGs of

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).

48. Correct Answer: D

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has conducted its week-long financial awareness campaign from February 26 to March 1, 2024. This year's theme is "Make a Right Start—Become Financially Smart", primarily targeting young adults. One of the campaign's highlights this year is the "Financial Literacy Ideathon" contest, with a prize of up to Rs 1 lakh for students.

49. Correct Answer: B

In February 2024 the Asian Development Bank (ADB) priced a \$3.5 billion 5-year global bond, proceeds of which will become part of ADB's ordinary capital resources. The largest orderbook was achieved in 2021 for a \$5 billion global benchmark bond.

50. Correct Answer: B

NTPC said that its fully owned subsidiary NTPC Green Energy had signed a joint venture agreement (JVA) with the Maharashtra State Power Generation Company (MAHAGENCO) for the development of Renewable Energy Parks in the state of Maharashtra.

51. Correct Answer: B

The US Chamber of Commerce has released the 12th edition of its International Intellectual Property (IP) Index. India ranked at 42 out of the 55 countries in the index with an overall score of 38.64 per cent. The United States emerged at the top of the list followed by the United Kingdom and France.

52. Correct Answer: D

The Indian economy grew 8.4 per cent during the October-December quarter of the current financial year 2023-24 (Q3FY24), remaining the fastest-growing major economy in the world, according to gross domestic product (GDP) data released by the Statistics Ministry on February 29.

53. Correct Answer: D

Bharti Enterprises founder and chairman, Sunil Bharti Mittal has become the first Indian citizen to receive an Honorary Knighthood from United Kingdom's King Charles III. The award grants Mr. Mittal the title of Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British

Empire, recognising his contributions to fostering stronger business ties between India and the UK.

54. Correct Answer: C

Jana Small Finance Bank has got approval from the Reserve Bank of India to re-appoint Ajay Kanwal as its managing director and chief executive officer for three years from March 21, 2024. His tenure will be till March 20, 2027.

55. Correct Answer: C

Mundkur Shyamprasad Kamath took charge as the Managing Director (MD) of Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL). A media statement said Kamath has a professional career spanning over 30 years in the downstream hydrocarbon industry.

56. Correct Answer: D

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with the World Bank Group organised a National Workshop on Logistics Efficiency Enhancement, on February 27, 2024, in New Delhi that brought together the logistics sector community to brainstorm and identify factors affecting logistics performance and areas of improvement.

57. Correct Answer: D

Reliance Industries and Reliance Foundation has unveiled Vantara, an initiative for animal welfare in Gujarat. This project focuses on the rescue, treatment, and rehabilitation of injured and abused animals across India and abroad.

58. Correct Answer: A

The GDP growth for the current financial year could be within striking distance of 8 per cent, a study by the State Bank of India (SBI) said. It noted that defying all estimates, the economy grew 8.4 per cent in the third quarter of 2023-24 after exhibiting more than 8 per cent growth in the preceding two quarters.

59. Correct Answer: C

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved the appointment of S Ravindran as the part-time chairman of Tuticorin-based Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (TMB). The approval is subject to Ravindran, stepping down from his directorships in Shriram Finance and Bandhan AMC,

before assuming charge as the part-time chairman of the bank.

60. Correct Answer: C

Russia has launched into space Pars 1, an Iranian imaging satellite, which has the capability of sending high-resolution images of surface locations from its orbit 500 km above Earth, Russian state media reported. The rocket also carried a Russian weather satellite and 17 Russian small satellites.

61. Correct Answer: D

The US Consulate, in collaboration with the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture (MCCIA), launched the first-ever US-India Cyber Security Initiative to strengthen IT connections between the two countries. The initiative will lead the Pune into a mentorship model in cyberspace and will also foster people-to-people ties in cyberspace.

62. Correct Answer: B

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth jointly inaugurated an airstrip and a jetty in Agalega Island. Apart from the airstrip and St James Jetty at Agalega Island, six other projects, implemented with financial assistance from India, were also inaugurated by both leaders virtually.

63. Correct Answer: D

On February 26, 2024, the Comoros and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste formally joined the World Trade Organization (WTO). The signing ceremony took place at the WTO's 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13), arranged by the UAE in Abu Dhabi.

64. Correct Answer: A

REC Limited has successfully listed two bonds worth Rs 5375 on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). One bond is worth Rs 2,500 crores of 10-year maturity, with a redemption date of February 28, 2034 and yield of 7.47%. The other one is worth Rs 2,875 crores with a maturity period of 3 years, 2 months, with a redemption date of April 30, 2027 and a yield of 7.64%.

65. Correct Answer: A

Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), a government funded research institution focused on

telecom technology, announced its plans to collaborate with Qualcomm Technologies Inc. to establish a strategic partnership that will foster innovation in India and support indigenous developers and start-ups working on innovative products and use cases.

66. Correct Answer: D

Ministry of Defence has signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with BEML Limited, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited (MIDHANI) for indigenous development of Advanced Fuelling and Control System for Engines for heavy duty applications.

67. Correct Answer: B

NLC India Green Energy Limited (NIGEL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) NLC India Ltd (NLCIL), has signed a power purchase agreement with Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Limited (GUVNL) for the supply of 600 MW of power from the Khavda Solar Park in Bhuj district in Gujarat.

68. Correct Answer: D

Infibeam Avenues has received final authorisation from Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as a Payment Aggregator under the Payment Settlements Act, 2007 for its payment gateway brand – CCAvenue. In October 2022, Infibeam Avenues received “in-principle” approval from the RBI to operate as a Payment Aggregator (PA).

69. Correct Answer: B

Rajendra Prasad Goyal has assumed the additional charge of Chairman and Managing Director of NHPC Limited. Goyal, who has been serving NHPC since November 18, 1988, brings over three decades of experience within the organization to his new role.

70. Correct Answer: B

National Safety Day in India is observed every year on March 4. This day focuses on making safety and precautionary measures a top priority of any sector. Every year, National Safety Day is observed to highlight safety measures and explore ways to make the office a safer place for people.

71. Correct Answer: D

Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT) at just concluded Mobile World Congress 2024 at Barcelona in

Spain, announced plans to collaborate with Qualcomm Technologies Inc, a subsidiary of Qualcomm Incorporated, to establish a strategic partnership that will foster innovation in India and support India based developers and start-ups working on innovative products and use cases.

72. Correct Answer: B

State-wise, Madhya Pradesh houses the largest population (3907) of leopards in the country followed by Maharashtra (1985), Karnataka (1,879), Tamil Nadu (1,070) and Chhattisgarh (722). Uttarakhand, on the other hand, reported the highest decline - from 839 in 2018 to 652 in 2022.

73. Correct Answer: B

Gross GST collection in February 2024 jumped 12.5 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to Rs 1.68 lakh crore. GST revenue net of refunds for February 2024 stood at Rs 1.51 lakh crore, which is a 13.6 per cent growth over that for the same period last year.

74. Correct Answer: A

The coal industry registered a growth rate of 10.2% in January 2024, the highest among the eight core sectors, according to the index of eight core industries (ICI) data released by the ministry of commerce & industries. With a base year of 2011-12, the ICI for coal reached 218.9 points in January, up from 198.6 points during the same month in the previous year.

75. Correct Answer: C

The finance ministry's Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND) has imposed a fine of Rs 5.49 crore on Paytm Payments Bank for "violating its obligations" under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. On January 31, the RBI directed Paytm Payments Bank to stop accepting deposits or top-ups in any customer accounts, wallets, FASTags, and other instruments after February 29.

76. Correct Answer: C

Global rating agency Moody's has raised India's growth forecast for 2024 calendar year to 6.8 per cent from 6.1 per cent estimated earlier on the back of strong economic data. Moody's Investors Service said that capital spending by the government and strong

manufacturing activity have meaningfully contributed to the robust growth outcomes in 2023.

77. Correct Answer: C

The HSBC final India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index, compiled by S&P Global, rose to 56.9 in February from January's 56.5, beating a preliminary estimate of 56.7. India's manufacturing PMI has been above the 50-mark that separates growth from contraction for 32 months.

78. Correct Answer: C

The services sector Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) moderated to 60.6 in February, down from 61.8 in January, according to the seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services Business Activity Index. The moderation in growth comes on the back of softer expansions in business activity, sales and jobs.

79. Correct Answer: C

Hungary's parliament elected Constitutional Court chief Tamas Sulyok as the country's next president, after the unexpected resignation of Katalin Novak. Novak, a close ally of conservative Prime Minister Viktor Orban, resigned from the largely ceremonial role as president after she came under mounting pressure for pardoning a man convicted of helping to cover up sexual abuse in a children's home.

80. Correct Answer: B

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) handed a dividend cheque of Rs 2,441.44 crore to the Finance Minister of India, Nirmala Sitharaman. The cheque was presented by the Chairperson of LIC, Siddharth Mohanty.

81. Correct Answer: A

Sweden has formally joined NATO as the 32nd member of the transatlantic military alliance, ending decades of post-World War II neutrality and centuries of broader non-alignment with major powers as security concerns in Europe have spiked following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

82. Correct Answer: D

The Ministry of Women and Child Development is organizing Poshan Pakhwada, a 15-day national celebration that raises awareness about nutrition, dietary practices, and women's health from 09 March till

23 March, 2024. So far, through 5 Poshan Pakhwada and 6 Poshan Maah, more than 90 crore sensitization activities have been reported by the States/ UTs, and partner Ministries/ Departments.

83. Correct Answer: B

Union Minister Piyush Goyal of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution has launched 'e-Kisan Upaj Nidhi', an online portal created by the Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA) to help farmers finance post-harvest activities. Farmers can get collateral-free loans from banks against their farm produce held in the WDRA-registered warehouse.

84. Correct Answer: D

Union Minister for Communications Ashwini Vaishnaw has launched 'Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP)' of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for coordination among the stakeholders to curb misuse of telecom resources in cyber-crime and financial frauds, and 'Chakshu' facility on Sanchar Saathi portal, a pioneering initiative empowering citizens to proactively report suspected fraud communication.

85. Correct Answer: B

India's ranked improved to 113 out of 190 countries in the World Bank's Women, Business and Law index, according to the 10th edition of the report. The index indicates the gap between legal rights enjoyed by men and women. Indian women enjoyed 60% of the legal rights given to men, lower than the global average of 64.2%, as per the 2024 index report.

86. Correct Answer: B

The enrollment of farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) has crossed a record 40 million in 2023-24, an increase of 27% from the 31.5 million enrolled in FY23, an agriculture ministry official said. The official said that 42% of farmers who would enroll under the crop insurance are those who had not availed loans from the banks.

87. Correct Answer: C

State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) has announced a partnership with online travel tech platform EaseMyTrip to launch a co-branded credit card. This power-packed co-branded travel credit card is aimed at

mass to premium customer segments and has been meticulously designed to offer a variety of rewards for Indian travellers, a joint statement said.

88. Correct Answer: B

Mumbai-based tech company Aurionpro Solutions has secured a Rs 100-crore contract from State Bank of India for the licence, implementation and support of its transaction banking platform, iCashpro+. The company will have to deliver the licence and implementation in phases over 12 months, along with maintenance and support for six years.

89. Correct Answer: A

Fair trade regulator CCI said it has granted approval to Ring Plus Aqua Ltd's proposed acquisition of a 59.25 per cent stake in Maini Precision Products Ltd. Maini Precision Products Ltd (MPPL) is engaged in the manufacturing of precision products for different industries and manufacturers.

90. Correct Answer: D

INS Jatayu was commissioned by Admiral R Hari Kumar, the Chief of Naval Staff at Minicoy, the southernmost island in Lakshadweep, strengthening the Indian Navy's foothold and extending operational reach in the region needed, with China increasingly exercising influence over Maldives.

91. Correct Answer: D

The first ever global forum towards combating cervical cancer saw donors pledging nearly \$600 million in funding on March 5, 2024. The funding includes \$400 million from the World Bank over three years, \$180 million from American Charitable organisation Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and \$10 million from UNICEF.

92. Correct Answer: B

The Reserve Bank of India and the Bank Indonesia has signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing a framework to promote the use of local currencies for cross-border transactions. The framework will enable exporters and importers to invoice and pay in their respective domestic currencies – the Indian rupee and the Indonesian rupiah.

93. Correct Answer: B

IIFL Finance said stakeholder Fairfax India Holdings Corporation has agreed to give it liquidity support of \$200 million after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) barred the non-banking financial company from giving gold loans. Fairfax India has a 15.1 per cent stake in IIFL Finance.

94. Correct Answer: D

Reliance Consumer Products has entered into a partnership with Sri Lanka-based beverage maker Elephant House, to manufacture, market, distribute and sell beverages under the Elephant House brand across India. Elephant House is owned by Ceylon Cold Stores PLC, a subsidiary of John Keells Holdings PLC, Sri Lanka's largest listed conglomerate.

95. Correct Answer: D

Riken Yamamoto, a Japanese architect, was recently named the winner of the renowned 2024 Pritzker Architecture Prize, sometimes known as the "Architecture Nobel". This is the most prestigious international prize in the field. Yamamoto is Japan's eighth laureate.

96. Correct Answer: A

The Vadodara Municipal Corporation has achieved a significant milestone by becoming the first municipal corporation in Asia to raise Rs 100 crore through certified green municipal bonds. This landmark initiative underscores Gujarat's commitment to sustainable urban development and environmental stewardship.

97. Correct Answer: B

Kerala has launched the first government-owned OTT platform 'CSpace' with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan describing it as a decisive step in the onward journey of Malayalam Cinema. Inaugurating CSpace, managed by the Kerala State Film Development Corporation (KSFDC), the Chief Minister said this is a pioneering initiative that gives prominence to films with artistic and cultural value without hurting the mainstream film industry.

98. Correct Answer: D

The comprehensive maritime security exercise 'Sea Defenders-2024' between the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and United States Coast Guard (USCG) successfully concluded at Port Blair on March 9. The exercise aimed

at enhancing maritime cooperation and interoperability between the two forces, showcasing their expertise in various scenarios.

99. Correct Answer: C

The Indian Railways has revealed that the Railway Protection Force (RPF) boasts the highest proportion of female personnel, standing at 9%, surpassing other Central Paramilitary Forces in India. The RPF has implemented several initiatives to empower women and address the needs of women personnel while performing their duties.

100. Correct Answer: D

The Indian economy is set to witness significant growth, with projections indicating a GDP expansion of 6.8 per cent in the next fiscal year. This growth trajectory positions India to attain upper middle-income status by 2031, with the economy expected to double to USD 7 trillion, said ratings agency Crisil.

101. Correct Answer: D

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has inaugurated the I-Hub Foundation, an incubation centre, at IIM Sambalpur. The foundation will play a pivotal role in nurturing and supporting innovative ventures across diverse sectors, including textiles, art and culture, agriculture, healthcare, financial and digital inclusivity, tribal entrepreneurship, and sustainability.

102. Correct Answer: D

On March 10, 2024, India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) signed a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) that commits an investment of USD 100 billion over 15 years. The TEPA commits EFTA to promoting investments in order to boost India's stock of foreign direct investments (FDI).

103. Correct Answer: C

The National Highways Authority of India has entered into a five-year agreement with HLL Lifecare to strengthen its incident management systems and assist accident victims on the national highways, a move aimed at reducing the number of fatalities from road accidents on highways.

104. Correct Answer: C

President Droupadi Murmu on March 8 presented the President's Standard's to 45 Squadron and 221 Squadron and President's Colours to 11 Base Repair Depot (BRD) and 509 Signal Unit (SU) of the Indian Air Force (IAF). This is the first time in the history of the service that four units have been awarded the President's Standard and Colours together in a single ceremony.

105. Correct Answer: D

India joined an elite club of nations on March 11 with the first successful flight test of an Agni-5 ballistic missile armed with multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs). Named Mission Divyastra, the flight test of India's MIRV technology was carried out by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha.

106. Correct Answer: B

The Ministry of Defence has signed a Rs 200 crore contract for anti-drone systems for the Indian Army and Indian Air Force (IAF) with Big Bang Boom Solutions Private Limited (BBBS). This is the largest contract signed by the MoD under the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) initiative, according to the company.

107. Correct Answer: A

Panama has officially joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA), making it as the 97th member nation. ISA was conceived as a joint effort by India and France. Currently, 116 countries are signatories to the ISA Framework Agreement.

108. Correct Answer: C

IndusInd Bank on March 11 announced the launch of its contactless payments wearable 'Indus PayWear', touted to be India's first all-in-one tokenizable wearable for both debit and credit cards. The offering will be exclusively available for Mastercard holders now, but will soon be extended to other card networks as well, the private sector lender said.

109. Correct Answer: A

Small Industries Development Bank of India (Sidbi) has received \$24.5 million from Green Climate Fund (GCF) for its maiden anchored project 'Avaana Sustainability Fund (ASF)' valued at \$120 million. GCF, a pivotal component

of the historic Paris Agreement, is the world's largest climate fund.

110. Correct Answer: C

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty clinched the French Open 2024 badminton men's doubles title with a win over Chinese Taipei's Lee Jhe-Huei and Yang Po-Hsuan in the final. This was the first title of the 2024 badminton season for Chirag-Satwik and the duo's second French Open title. The Indian pair won the French Open in 2022 and were runners-up in 2019.

111. Correct Answer: D

The National Payments Corporation of India's (NPCI) has granted approval of One97 Communications Limited (OCL) to engage as a Third-Party Application Provider. Under this arrangement, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, State Bank of India, and YES Bank are designated as Payment System Provider (PSP) banks to OCL.

112. Correct Answer: A

Two-time Paralympics gold medallist Devendra Jhajharia was elected unopposed as the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) president, succeeding another celebrated para-athlete Deepa Malik. The 42-year-old javelin thrower, who had won a gold medal each in the 2004 Athens and 2016 Rio Paralympics in the F46 disability category, was the only candidate in the fray for the top post.

113. Correct Answer: C

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the merger of a financial technology company, Garagepreneurs Internet Private Limited (GIPL) with the North East Small Finance Bank. GIPL operates under the brand name "slice" and focuses on facilitating payments and credit products through digital means in India.

114. Correct Answer: A

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved acquisition of stake in Asian Institute of Nephrology and Urology Private Limited by TPG Growth V SF Markets Pte. Ltd. and Waverly Pte. Ltd. through Asia Healthcare Holdings Pte. Ltd.

115. Correct Answer: C

The Board of Directors of Aditya Birla Capital Limited on March 11 approved amalgamation of Aditya Birla

Finance Ltd., its wholly-owned subsidiary with itself to "create a large unified operating NBFC". The amalgamation is subject to regulatory approvals, the company said in an exchange notification.

116. Correct Answer: D

Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) signed a tripartite MoU with Prasar Bharati and Open Network for Digital Commerce to proliferate affordable and accessible digital services across the country. The objective of the MoU is to bundle broadband services with OTT and e-commerce platform for the rural India riding on BharatNet infrastructure under the USOF.

117. Correct Answer: B

Union Minister of Science & Technology Dr Jitendra Singh has inaugurated the first-of-its-kind "National Speed Breeding Crop Facility" at the premier National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute (NABI) in Mohali. Singh said, "Biotechnology speedy seeds facility will cater to all the states of India but it will especially be useful for the north Indian states like Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and the UT of J&K".

118. Correct Answer: A

Ministry of Home Affairs has notified that 'Hyderabad Liberation Day' will be marked every year on 17th September. In an official notification, the Ministry has said that the decision has been taken in order to remember martyrs who liberated Hyderabad and to infuse the flame of patriotism in the minds of the youth.

119. Correct Answer: B

The rural development ministry has joined hands with IIT-Delhi for leveraging the use of geospatial technology and artificial intelligence to monitor assets under the MGNREGA. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Amit Kataria, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) and Manabendra Saharia of IIT Delhi.

120. Correct Answer: B

L&T Finance Holdings Ltd (LTFH) has signed a financing pact with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for \$125 million to support financing in rural and peri-urban areas in India, particularly women borrowers. At least 40 per cent of the proceeds will be allocated for

women borrowers, while the rest will be allocated to support farmers, MSMEs, as well as loans to purchase new two-wheeler vehicles including electric two-wheelers.

121. Correct Answer: D

The ministry of heavy industries (MHI) and the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee (IIT Roorkee) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to foster innovation in the automotive and electric vehicle (EV) sector, with a combined investment of ₹24.6645 crore.

122. Correct Answer: C

India has signed a 181 million dollars loan with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to improve urban livability and mobility in Ahmedabad. The loan will fund development in areas transitioning from rural to urban, called Peri-urban areas.

123. Correct Answer: D

Rating agency Fitch has revised India's FY25 growth forecast upward to 7% from the 6.5% projected earlier. The rating agency also expects the RBI to go for a 50 bps rate cut from July to September, adding that it sees the country's CPI declining by 4% by end of 2024.

124. Correct Answer: B

Author Rakhi Kapoor won her second Golden Book Award for her twenty-sixth book titled "Breaking Free Embracing Me: Healing from Childhood Abuse and Toxic Conditioning". The awards were conferred at a ceremony on the 17th of February 2024.

125. Correct Answer: D

Retired IAS officers Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu were appointed as new Election Commissioners. Their appointment fills the vacancies created by the retirement of Anup Chandra Pandey in February and the surprise resignation of Arun Goel in march.

126. Correct Answer: C

The Maharashtra government has become the owner of iconic Air India building, Mumbai of AI Assets Holding Company Ltd (AIAHL) with the Union government approving transfer of the asset. The Maharashtra government bought the Air India building at Nariman Point in Mumbai for Rs 1,601 crore.

127. Correct Answer: B

Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) said it entered into a contract valued at Rs 847.7 crore with Larsen & Toubro Limited (L&T) for the supply of 14 cutting-edge communication and electronic warfare (EW) sensors and systems for the Navy.

128. Correct Answer: A

The Ministry of Defence has signed a contract with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) on March 15, for Mid Life Upgrade (MLU) of 25 Dornier Aircraft along with associated equipment for the Indian Navy at a cost of Rs 2,890 crore.

129. Correct Answer: D

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has announced the formation of an expert committee to review the implementation of Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY). The 16-member committee, chaired by Dr. VK Paul, Member (Health) at NITI Aayog, will oversee the progress of AB-PMJAY in terms of beneficiary identification, hospitalisation, and modes of implementation.

130. Correct Answer: D

Ms. Sheetal Devi, a distinguished Para-archer, and Arjuna Awardee has been announced as the National Icon in the PwD category. The Election Commission of India remains confident that such initiatives will significantly enhance voter participation, particularly among youth and persons with disabilities, in the upcoming general elections.

131. Correct Answer: D

During PM Modi's visit to Rajasthan on March 12, 2024, a 50-minute synergised exhibition of indigenous defence capabilities in the form of a Tri-Services Exercise 'Bharat Shakti' took place in Pokhran. The exercise highlighted the firepower capabilities of indigenous weaponry as well as the operational readiness of the three defense forces: the Indian Army (IA), Indian Navy (IN), and Indian Air Force (IAF).

132. Correct Answer: D

INS Tir, the lead ship of First Training Squadron (1TS) participated in Exercise Cutlass Express - 24 (CE – 24) held at Port Victoria, Seychelles from 26 Feb – 08 Mar 24. The exercise was inaugurated by the President of Seychelles

in attendance of dignitaries from India, USA and African countries.

133. Correct Answer: D

The Reserve Bank of India has reconstituted the three-member Committee of Advisors of Abhyudaya Cooperative Bank Ltd, inducting Devendra Kumar (former Chief General Manager, State Bank of India) in place of Mahendra Chhajed (Chartered Accountant), who resigned.

134. Correct Answer: C

Fintech-focussed software-as-a-service firm Perfios said it has secured \$80 million in funding from Teachers' Venture Growth (TVG), a late-stage venture and growth investment arm of Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan. With the fresh investment, the company's new valuation will cross the \$1 billion mark, said sources, which makes Perfios the second unicorn of 2024.

135. Correct Answer: B

Chameli Devi Jain Award 2024 for Outstanding Woman Media Person of the Year has been given jointly to independent journalist Greeshma Kuthar, and Ritika Chopra of the Indian Express. Ms. Kuthar is an independent multimedia journalist who has been engaged in deeply-researched long-form investigative reporting from conflict areas such as Manipur. Her reports have appeared in The Caravan, Al Jazeera, etc.

136. Correct Answer: C

Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has inaugurated India's first Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) powered bus, which will be operated by Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation. MSRTC, which ferries around 60 lakh passengers every day, will set up LNG distribution facilities at 90 depots across the state.

137. Correct Answer: D

In Seychelles, Indian Army contingent participated in the Tenth edition of Joint Military Exercise "LAMITIYE-2024" between the Indian Army and Seychelles Defence Forces (SDF). The Joint Exercise was conducted at Seychelles from 18-27 March 2024.

138. Correct Answer: D

India was ranked 126th out of 143 nations in a 2024 global happiness index. Finland emerged as the happiest

country in the world, topping the World Happiness Report 2024, the seventh successive year that the country has occupied the top spot on the list.

139. Correct Answer: A

REC Power Development and Consultancy Limited (RECPDCL), a wholly owned subsidiary of REC Limited, has signed an MoU with Bharat Heavy Electrical Limited (BHEL), for joint development of utility scale Renewable Energy Projects across the country. The MoU thus aims to contribute to the clean energy targets of the nation, through a dedicated Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).

140. Correct Answer: B

Noted carnatic vocalist and Magsaysay award winner T.M. Krishna has been selected for the Sangita Kalanidhi award of the Music Academy for 2024. The Executive Committee of the Music Academy, at its meeting on March 17, 2024, decided to confer the award on him.

141. Correct Answer: A

The T+0 trading settlement cycle introduced by BSE and NSE facilitates same-day settlement of trades in the equity segment. This means that investors can now execute and settle trades on the same day, potentially increasing liquidity and efficiency in the market.

142. Correct Answer: A

Multiple Myeloma Awareness Month, observed annually in March, aims to raise awareness about multiple myeloma, a rare type of blood cancer that affects the bones and other parts of the body. The initiative aims to educate the public about the symptoms, risk factors, and treatment options for this disease.

143. Correct Answer: A

"Mushk Budijji" is an indigenous variety of rice recently in the news for its unique aroma. Studies have been conducted to understand the characteristics of this variety, contributing to agricultural research and development efforts.

144. Correct Answer: B

Xiaomi, a Chinese consumer tech giant, has ventured into the electric vehicle market with the launch of its first electric vehicle, the SU7. This move marks Xiaomi's entry into the competitive electric vehicle sector in China.

145. Correct Answer: B

India has experienced a significant decline of 16% in tuberculosis (TB) incidence from 2015 to 2022, surpassing the global decline rate of 9%. This achievement reflects the effectiveness of efforts undertaken as part of the National TB Elimination Programme.

146. Correct Answer: A

The world's first Om-shaped temple, 'Om Aakar', was inaugurated in Jadan, Rajasthan's Pali district. It spans 250 acres and features a Nagara style with intricate designs that honor North India's heritage. Housing 1,008 idols of Lord Mahadev and 12 Jyotirlingas, it stands at 135 ft with 2,000 pillars and 108 rooms. The temple's top boasts a shivling made of rhinestone from Dholpur, while a 2 lakh tonne tank enhances its grandeur, visible even from space.

147. Correct Answer: B

Traces of tantalum, a rare metal crucial in electronics, were discovered in the Sutlej river by researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology, Punjab. Tantalum is essential for capacitors and resistors in devices like smartphones and laptops. This discovery hints at untapped mineral wealth beneath the riverbed, sparking interest in further exploration to assess the extent of the deposits.

148. Correct Answer: A

'Cicadas' are insects belonging to the Cicadidae family, recently in the news due to the discovery of a new species called "Butterfly Cicadas" in Meghalaya. These insects, ranging from 2 to 5 cm, are known for their loud noises produced by males via vibrating membranes. Cicadas have two pairs of wings, compound eyes, and ocelli, and females typically lay eggs in woody plants.

149. Correct Answer: B

The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched CoViNet, a global network of laboratories specializing in human, animal, and environmental coronavirus surveillance. This initiative aims to detect and monitor emerging coronaviruses, including potential novel strains, to enhance risk assessment and inform WHO policies, especially in low- and middle-income countries.

150. Correct Answer: C

Skyroot Aerospace successfully test-fired the 'Kalam-250' at ISRO's Satish Dhawan Space Centre. This rocket motor, part of the second stage of the Vikram-1 space launch vehicle, features a carbon composite structure, EPDM

thermal protection, and precision thrust vector control. Developed by Skyroot Aerospace, it plays a crucial role in propelling the launch vehicle from the atmosphere into outer space.



SECTION 3

Detailed Analysis of Important Events



Economics

India's First Hydrogen Fuel Cell Ferry: A Technological Marvel



In the news

- Prime Minister unveiled India's maiden indigenous hydrogen fuel cell ferry, a groundbreaking achievement in the country's maritime sector.

Hydrogen Fuel Cell Ferry: Key Features

- Design: Made of premium fiberglass reinforced plastic, the 24-meter-long catamaran ferry has air conditioning and can hold up to 50 passengers in its air-conditioned section.
- Production: Constructed by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), the ship will transform maritime transportation and support India's eco-friendly mobility programs.
- Propulsion: With a 50-kW Proton-Exchange Membrane (PEM) fuel cell and Lithium-Ion Phosphate batteries powering it, the ship runs extremely quiet and emits no emissions while providing improved energy efficiency.
- Energy Source: The propulsion system of the ship is powered by hydrogen fuel, which is kept on board in five cylinders. A 3-kW solar panel is included for further energy production.

Operational Mechanism

- Hydrogen Fuel Cells: The ship uses hydrogen fuel cells to use the chemical energy of hydrogen to create electricity, with the only byproduct being pure water.

- Continuous Operation: Since hydrogen fuel cells don't need to be recharged like traditional batteries do, they can run continuously and supply oxygen and fuel without interruption.

Indigenous Development

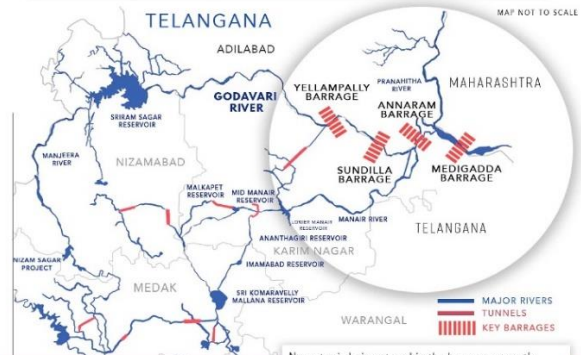
- Together, KPIT Technologies and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Labs created indigenous hydrogen fuel cell technologies, which were included into the construction of the vessel, which was led by Cochin Shipyard Limited.
- Benefit: India's hydrogen fuel cell ferry is a trailblazing example of the country's dedication to environmentally friendly technology and establishes it as a leader in marine sustainability.

NDSA expert panel to examine Kaleshwaram Project

KALESHWARAM PROJECT

Commissioned in 2019, the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation project comprises three barrages constructed across Godavari river. The first barrage is at Medigadda near Kaleshwaram (on the confluence of Pranahita river, a tributary of Godavari). Two more barrages are located at Annaram and Sundilla villages between Medigadda and Sripada Yellampally irrigation project.

ORIGINAL COST	Rs 80,000 crore:	TOTAL DIVERSION	180 TMC OF WATER	AREA THAT WILL BE IRRIGATED	18.25 LAKH ACRES
NOW INFLATED TO	Rs 1.05 lakh crore:		13 BENEFICIARY DISTRICTS		



WHAT HAPPENED IN MEDIGADDA

No water is being stored in the barrage presently. The barrage gates have been opened to let water flow.

On the evening of 21 October, six of the 89 piers of the Medigadda barrage in one of the blocks had sunk. The raft on which the piers were standing had also settled.

THE BARRAGE UNDER THE PRESENT CONDITION HAD BEEN RENDERED USELESS UNTIL FULLY REHABILITATED.

The CWC said there are deficiencies in the project planning and design. The report also says the Annaram and Sundilla barrages are prone to similar failure modes as the designs and construction are similar.

ARTIST'S IMPRESSION

ThePrint

In the news

- Concerns about the piers at the Medigadda barrage collapsing have brought the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP) under investigation.
- The project will be thoroughly examined by the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) in order to address these concerns.

What is Kaleshwaram Project?

	Details
Location	Kaleshwaram village, Telangana, India Earlier called as Pranahita-Chevella Lift Irrigation Project
Confluence Point	Pranhita-Godavari River confluence
Project Size	Claimed to be the world’s largest multi-stage and multi-purpose lift irrigation project
Key Features	Series of underground and surface water pumping stations, stretching over 300 km
Purpose	Supply water to 45 lakh acres in Telangana
Commencement	Started in 2016, utilizing approximately 283 TMC of water from the Godavari River
Components	Divided into 7 links and 28 packages through 13 districts Aims to source a total of 240 TMC of water Construction of barrage at Medigadda, with water reverse-pumped into the Godavari River
Major Pumping Facilities	Ramadugu (largest), Medaram, Annaram, and Sundilla

About National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA): Ensuring Dam Safety in India

The NDSA plays a crucial role in maintaining the safety standards of dams across the country.

- Constitutional Basis: Article 246 of the Constitution grants the Union government the

power to pass laws pertaining to dam safety, even if water management is under the State List. (The Parliament may enact legislation for any area of India not covered by a State, regardless of whether the topic is on the State List.)

- The Dam Safety Act, 2021, was established by Parliament in order to provide an institutional framework that will guarantee dam safety in India.

Objectives and Functions

- Institutional Mechanism: The NDSA is responsible for upholding safety standards for dams, averting catastrophes connected to dams, and resolving interstate dam-related issues.
- Surveillance and Inspection: To avert tragedies linked to dam failure, special measures are in place for the surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of all major dams in the nation.
- punitive Provisions: To ensure compliance, the Dam Safety Act contains punitive provisions as well as a list of violations and their accompanying punishments.

Organizational Setup

- Headquarters: The National Capital Region (NCR) is home to the NDSA's headquarters.
- Four regional offices are strategically located throughout the nation to support the authority and enable effective oversight and management of dam safety.

Recently awarded GI Tags



In the news

- Recently, many Geographical Indications (GI) Tags were awarded across the states of India.

About GI Tag

- A Geographical Indication (GI) is a label applied to goods that are known for coming from a particular place and having characteristics or a certain reputation as a result.
- Nodal Agency: Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, effective September 2003, was passed by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India. India is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- The WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement defines GIs in Article 22 (1).
- The tag is good for ten years.

Recently Awarded GI Tags

[1] Narasapur Crochet Lace Craft:

	Details
Technique	Handcrafted crochet lace-making using fine threads
Design	Intricate patterns and motifs inspired by nature and traditional motifs
Uniqueness	Known for delicate and intricate designs, used in sarees, dress materials, and home decor
Economic Impact	Provides livelihood to local artisans, enhances market value, protects against imitation
Recognition	GI tag promotes cultural heritage, supports economic empowerment of artisans

[2] Mukha Shilpa of Majuli:

	Details
Origin	Majuli, Assam, the world’s largest river island

Artform	Traditional mask-making, also known as Mukha Shilpa
Material	Made from eco-friendly materials like bamboo, clay, and cloth
Uniqueness	Masks depict mythological characters, deities, and animals, preserving Assamese culture
Cultural Significance	Used in traditional Sattriya dance forms, rituals, and festivals
Economic Impact	GI tag promotes tourism, empowers local artisans, supports conservation efforts
Conservation Efforts	Recognition boosts efforts to preserve and promote this ancient art form

[3] Traditional Tribal Attire ‘Risa’:

	Details
Origin	Tripura, northeastern state known for rich tribal culture
Attire	Traditional attire worn by Tripuri tribal women
Fabric	Handwoven cotton fabric with vibrant colors and intricate designs
Uniqueness	Unique weaving techniques and motifs representing tribal identity
Cultural Heritage	Integral part of Tripuri culture, worn during festivals and ceremonies
Economic Impact	GI tag enhances market visibility, supports livelihoods of weavers
Preservation Efforts	Recognition promotes preservation and revival of traditional weaving techniques

[4] Riyawan Garlic (Madhya Pradesh):

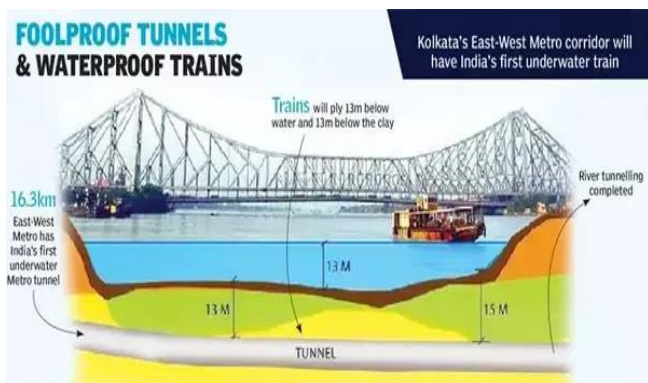
	Details
Origin	Riyawan village in Ratlam district, Madhya Pradesh
Variety	Special type of garlic known for unique taste, aroma, and medicinal properties
Cultivation	Grown organically in fertile soil and favorable climate
Uniqueness	Distinct flavor and pungency, popular in culinary uses and Ayurvedic medicine

Health Benefits	Rich in antioxidants, believed to have medicinal properties for various ailments
Economic Impact	GI tag boosts local agriculture, provides economic opportunities to farmers
Quality Assurance	Recognition ensures authenticity and quality, protects against imitation

[5] 'Chandi Tarakasi' or Silver Filigree:

	Details
Origin	Cuttack, Odisha, renowned for centuries-old silver filigree craftsmanship
Craftsmanship	Intricate art of twisting and curling thin silver wires to create delicate patterns and designs
Utility	Used in jewelry, utensils, decorative items, and souvenirs
Uniqueness	Unique designs reflecting Odia culture and heritage, passed down through generations
Artistic Value	Prized for craftsmanship and artistic appeal
Economic Impact	GI tag enhances market value, supports local artisans, promotes preservation of cultural heritage
Cultural Heritage	Recognition promotes preservation and continuation of traditional art form

India's First Underwater Metro Line in Kolkata



In the news

- Prime Minister inaugurated India's first underwater metro tunnel in Kolkata, marking a

significant milestone in infrastructure development.

Kolkata Underwater Metro Tunnel

- Kolkata-Howrah Link: A portion of the Kolkata Metro's East-West line that runs from Howrah Maidan to the Esplanade.
- Range and Velocity: Crosses the Hooghly River 8 km below the surface in 45 seconds for a 520-meter section.
- Station Configuration: To improve accessibility and convenience, three of the six stations will be subterranean.
- Trains will run 16 meters below the riverbed and 26 meters below the river's surface during submerged train operation.

About Kolkata Metro: India's First Rapid Transit System

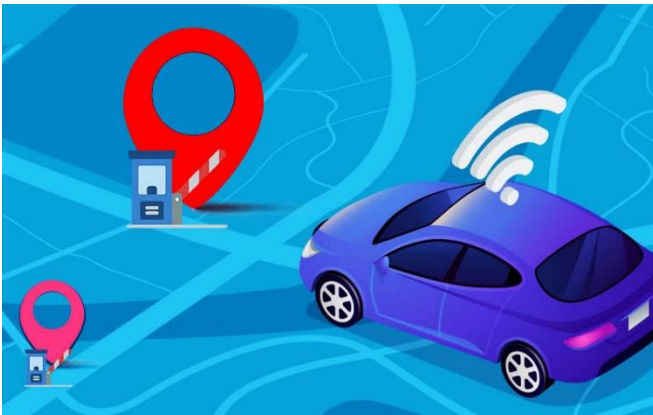
- Overview: Kolkata Metro, which serves Kolkata and its metropolitan area, was founded in 1984 and is India's first operational rapid transit system.
- Network Length: There are four lines that are now in operation, totaling 59.38 kilometers and 48 stations, while three more lines are being built.
- Broad-gauge and standard-gauge railroads are used in conjunction with elevated, at-grade, and subterranean stations to provide the infrastructure mix.
- Control and Management: Under the direction of Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation and Metro Railway, Kolkata.
- Project Finance: A loan from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) provided funding of Rs 4,965 crore.

About Hooghly River

- In West Bengal, India, the Hooghly River—also referred to as the Bhagirathi-Hooghly—is a distributary of the Ganges River.
- The river starts at Tribeni, where it diverges from the Ganges' main course.
- The Hooghly River is a notable body of water in the area, spanning over 260 km (162 miles).

- It promoted trade and cross-cultural interchange throughout the colonial era by acting as a vital trading route.
- Kolkata's cultural landscape is enhanced by the famous buildings that line its banks, such as the Victoria Memorial and the Howrah Bridge.

GPS-based Highway Toll Collection: The New Proposed System



In the news

- Before the 2024 election model code of conduct takes effect, the government intends to establish a new highway toll collection system based on the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS).
- We examine the specifics of the suggested system, its difficulties, privacy protections, and its connection to the current FASTag system in this article.

New Proposed Highway Tolling System

- **GNSS Utilization:** To ensure precise location mapping, the system will make use of an On-Board Unit (OBU) or tracking device installed within cars, which will utilize the Indian satellite navigation system, GAGAN.
- **ANPR Technology:** Tolls will be deducted based on the distance driven by a vehicle using an automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) system that uses cameras placed on highways.
- **Digital Image Processing:** National highway coordinates will be digitally recorded, and toll amounts will be taken out of a wallet connected

to the OBU based on the distance driven by a vehicle.

- **Enforcement Mechanisms:** CCTV camera-mounted gantries will watch over highways, taking pictures of high-security license plates to stop people from evading and make sure the toll system is followed.

Challenges in Implementation

- **Recovering Unpaid Tolls:** It might be difficult to get toll amounts back from users who are not following the rules, particularly if their digital wallets connected to OBUs are empty.
- **Evasion and Non-Compliance:** It is difficult to enforce laws when vehicles intentionally turn off their OBUs, drive without them, or utilize them improperly to avoid paying the full toll.
- **Legal Amendments and Infrastructure:** Establishing ANPR-based systems and modifying toll collecting policies are necessary for the new system to be implemented successfully.

Privacy Safeguards

- **Use of GAGAN:** Data security within the nation is ensured by using the native GAGAN system rather than GPS, answering privacy issues.
- **Legal Framework:** While there are worries about heightened state surveillance, the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 attempts to protect privacy.

Co-Existence with FASTags

- **Complementary Systems:** FASTags and the new tolling system will coexist; an OBU mandate for all cars has not yet been decided.
- **Operational Efficiency:** The GNSS-based system delivers cheaper operational expenses and streamlines toll collecting procedures, even though FASTags have achieved strong compliance.

Key Statistics

- **FASTag Compliance:** A significant percentage of vehicles—98.9%—that traversed toll plazas along national highways by December 2023 were

FASTag compliant, indicating the widespread implementation of the system.

- Growth in Toll Collection: At National Highway charge plazas, toll collection grew 1.5 times between 2016 and 2017 (totaling ₹17,942 crore) and 2020 and 2021 (totaling ₹27,744 crore), demonstrating the efficiency of the current procedures.

Conclusion

- With its promise of increased accuracy, efficiency, and compliance, the proposed GNSS-based toll collection system marks a paradigm leap in highway tolling processes.
- For implementation to be successful, though, issues like recovering outstanding tolls and infrastructural requirements must be resolved.
- With sufficient privacy protections and compatibility with FASTags, the new method might completely transform highway toll collection in India.

India ranks 134th in global human development index, says UNDP report



Why in the news?

Recently, India’s progress in the global Human Development Index (HDI), as reported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Context:

India ranked 134 out of 193 nations on the UN Human Development Index (HDI) in 2022, up from 135 out of 191 countries in 2021. This represents a one-position improvement. Switzerland is at the top of the list.

The Human Development Index (HDI)-

The Human Development Index (HDI), initially introduced by the UNDP in 1990, is a statistical composite index. It measures a country’s average achievement across three fundamental dimensions:

- Health: The life expectancy at birth is a representation of this attribute. It represents the population's general health and well-being as well as their accessibility to medical care.
- Education: This dimension comprises markers like the mean number of years that adults have attended school and the anticipated number of years that children will attend school. It evaluates a nation's educational attainment as well as the availability of educational opportunities.
- Standard of Living: The Gross National Income (GNI) per capita is used to quantify this dimension after being corrected for purchasing power parity (PPP). It represents the population's economic well-being and standard of living, including their income distribution and availability of needs.

Background

- Indian economist Amartya Sen and Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq created the Human Development Index (HDI). As part of the Human Development Report, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) uses it to evaluate a nation's level of development.
- The Human Development Report (HDR), which is presented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in addition to the Human Development Index (HDI), presents:
 1. Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI),
 2. Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI),
 3. Gender Inequality Index(GII) since 2010 and
 4. Gender Development Index (GDI) since 2014

Key Points as per Report-

- **India’s Rank on the HDI:** India moved up one rank on the Human Development Index (HDI) from 135 in 2021 to 134 in 2022, with slight

improvements in life expectancy and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita.

- **Comparison with Neighbors:** India ranks below its southern neighbour Sri Lanka (ranked 78) and China (ranked 75) in the High Human Development category, and below Bhutan (ranked 125) and Bangladesh (ranked 129) in the Medium Human Development category.
- **Reducing inequalities:** The report highlights a reverse trend in reducing inequalities between wealthy and poor nations. Despite interconnected global societies, collective action on climate change, digitalization, poverty, and inequality is lacking, leading to a widening human development gap.
- **Challenges in Democracy:** While nine in 10 people worldwide endorse democracy, over half express support for leaders who may undermine it. Political polarization and limited control over government decisions are prevalent, leading to protectionist or inward-turning policy approaches.

Action Plans as per report-

- **Multilateral Cooperation:** To handle global concerns collectively, governments, NGOs, enterprises, and other stakeholders should strengthen their international cooperation and partnership. This could entail encouraging communication, collaboration, and agreements that support shared objectives and accountability.
- **Policy Coordination:** To guarantee that policies fully address interconnected concerns, improve coherence and coordination in policymaking at the national and international levels. This could entail combining various points of view, coordinating tactics across industries, and effectively using available resources.
- **Investment in Sustainable Development:** Raise funds for projects aimed at promoting economic growth, social justice, and environmental preservation. This could involve providing

money for initiatives aimed at reducing poverty, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and renewable energy.

- **Empowering Communities:** Give local communities and grassroots organizations the tools they need to solve problems and take part in decision-making processes. This could entail offering tools, assistance with developing capacity, and venues for public participation.
- **Encouragement of Communication and Understanding:** To lessen polarization and strengthen social cohesiveness, encourage communication, empathy, and understanding amongst varied cultures. This could entail supporting media literacy, cultural exchange projects, education, and campaigns that uphold human rights and tolerance.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** To regain the confidence and trust of the public, governance structures and institutions should be strengthened in terms of transparency, accountability, and integrity. This could entail making sure inclusive and participatory decision-making processes are in place, encouraging open government efforts, and bolstering anti-corruption measures.
- **Investing in Education and knowledge:** To raise knowledge of global issues, their links, and the significance of group action, funds should be allocated to educational initiatives, public awareness campaigns, and media literacy initiatives. This could encourage a feeling of shared accountability and rally the public behind cooperative solutions.
- **Promotion of Inclusive Economic Growth:** Encourage inclusive economic growth that lowers inequality, helps all societal sectors, and gives marginalized people chances. This can entail putting in place laws that encourage business, the development of jobs, social protection, and access to necessary services.

- **Building Resilience:** Investing in readiness, adaptation, and mitigation methods will help you become more resilient to global issues including economic crises, pandemics, and climate change. This could entail bolstering social safety nets, disaster risk reduction strategies, and healthcare systems.
- **Advocacy and Leadership:** Promote political commitment and leadership at all levels to give priority to group efforts and successfully handle common issues. This could entail influencing lawmakers, enlisting their support, and holding leaders responsible for their deeds.

Conclusion

- To effectively address global challenges and promote a sustainable future, it is imperative to fortify multilateral cooperation, policy coordination, investment in sustainable development, empowerment of communities, dialogue, transparency, education, resilience building, and advocacy for leadership.

NABARD to launch ₹1000-crore Blended Fund for Agri-Startups



What is the news –

- A ₹1,000-crore fund will be launched by the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD) to support technology-driven agri-startups and rural businesses.
- To help startups in this area, NABARD has already set up a ₹750-crore fund, which will be followed by another ₹1,000 crore.

What are Agri-Startups?

- Agri-startups are for-profit businesses whose goal is to innovate and transform many facets of agriculture and related industries.
- In order to solve issues in the agricultural value chain and advance sustainable farming methods, these firms make use of technology, data, and contemporary farming techniques.
- They provide a large array of goods and services with the goal of helping farmers become more productive, efficient, and profitable while simultaneously improving the quality and safety of food for customers.

Key areas of innovation in agri-startups include:

1. **Precision Agriculture:** Precision farming, crop health monitoring, yield optimisation, and soil health monitoring through the use of data-driven technology like drones, satellite images, and the Internet of Things.
2. **Agri-tech Solutions:** Creating cutting-edge instruments and technology for hydroponic farming, greenhouse farming, water management, and pest and disease control.
3. **Digital platforms and mobile applications** for farm administration, crop planning, inventory control, and market research are offered by farm management software.
4. **Agri-Marketing Platforms:** Farm-to-fork programmes, online marketplaces, and e-commerce platforms that allow farmers to communicate directly with buyers, merchants, and consumers.
5. **Supply Chain Management:** Optimising transportation, warehousing, and logistics processes to lower losses after harvest, increase market accessibility, and guarantee supply chain traceability and transparency.
6. **Food processing:** Improving the shelf life, nutritional content, and marketability of agricultural goods through the development of value-added products, food processing technologies, and packaging solutions.

About NABARD

- A parliamentary act created NABARD on July 12, 1982, with the goal of advancing India's agricultural and rural development in a sustainable manner.
- Under the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act, 1934, it functions as a statutory organisation, with its main office situated in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- Its headquarters are in Mumbai, and it was founded on the Sivaraman Committee's recommendation.
- Its main goal is to make financing more easily accessible for the advancement of small-scale and cottage businesses, handicrafts, other rural crafts, and agriculture.
- It is run by a Board of Directors that the Government of India appoints, which is composed of (1) RBI representatives, (2) federal and state government representatives, and (3) specialists in a range of rural development and finance-related sectors.

Functions of NABARD:

1. Support for Refinancing: For agricultural and rural development initiatives, like as crop loans and rural infrastructure projects, NABARD offers banks and financial institutions refinancing options.
2. Direct Lending: It provides institutions with direct loans for certain rural development initiatives, like the construction of rural infrastructure, agri-processing facilities, and agricultural production.
3. Research and Training: NABARD supports technology transfer initiatives, builds capacity among rural stakeholders, and conducts research and development in agriculture.
4. Implementation of Schemes: To finance watershed development initiatives and rural infrastructure projects, the organisation manages government funds and schemes such as the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund

(RIDF) and the Watershed Development Fund (WDF).

5. Credit Planning: To create credit policies and strategies for the agricultural and rural sectors, NABARD works with the RBI, state and federal governments, and other stakeholders.
6. Financial Inclusion: It advances financial inclusion by boosting SHGs, FPOs, and MFIs, providing support for rural communities' access to credit, and extending banking services to these areas.
7. Priority Sector Lending: In accordance with the Reserve Bank of India's priority sector lending rules, NABARD is essential in directing credit towards priority sectors like rural infrastructure, small-scale industries, and agriculture.

About the Blended Fund for Agri-Startups

- Plans for a blended capital fund for "Sunrise Sectors" to support the establishment of new agricultural and rural business ventures were revealed in the FY23 budget.
- The fund's objective is to assist entrepreneurs that are having difficulty growing their businesses because they have restricted access to financing and equity instruments.
- Additionally, it aims to create new, backward-and forward-linking connections within the rural environment.

Other Schemes for Agri-Startups in India

1. The Agriculture Accelerator Fund (2023) is a noteworthy initiative that the Finance Minister proposed in the union budget for 2023–2024. Its goal is to assist young entrepreneurs from rural areas and agritech firms.
2. Programme for Innovation and Agribusiness Development (2018–19): GOI launched this programme in 2007 under the auspices of the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana with the goal of increasing farmers' income. At the idea/pre-seed stage, startups receive financial assistance of Rs. 5.00 lakh, while at the seed stage, they receive Rs. 25 lakh.

Environment & Diversity

Establishment of International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)



In the news

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister, has approved the establishment of the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) with headquarters in India.

About the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

- The primary objective of the IBCA is to lead the charge in preserving and protecting the seven principal big cats, which are the tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, puma, jaguar, and cheetah.
- Funding: For the first five years, the Indian government has committed to providing an initial 150 crore. To expand its corpus, the alliance will also look into contributions from donor agencies, financial institutions, and bilateral and multilateral organizations.
- Membership: The alliance will accept applications from 96 "range" countries, or countries where the seven big cats' natural habitats are found.
- Activities: The alliance will engage in capacity building, advocacy, e-portal knowledge distribution, partnership building, financial resource mobilization, and eco-tourism marketing.

Governance Structure

- Composition: The IBCA is governed by a General Assembly made up of all member nations, an

elected member nations Council, and a Secretariat.

- Appointment: On the Council's suggestion, the General Assembly names the Secretary General of IBCA.
- Framework: The International Steering Committee (ISC) will finalize the alliance's governance framework, which is modeled after the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

India's Role in Big Cat Conservation

- Diversity of Big Cats: Five of the seven primary big cats—the tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, and cheetah—are found in India.
- India has made considerable efforts in conservation, as seen by the rise in the numbers of tigers and lions. For example, nearly 70% of the world's tigers are currently found in India, and the Asiatic lion population in Gir National Park has been steadily increasing.
- Reintroduction of Cheetahs: After going extinct in India in 1952, cheetahs have been brought back into the wild. In November 2022, eight cheetahs were transported from Namibia and released into Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park.

India's Leopard Population rises to 13,874



In the news

- The Union Minister for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, released the report on the Status of Leopards in India at New Delhi.

About Indian Leopard

- The Indian Leopard (*Panthera pardus fusca*) is a leopard subspecies widely distributed on the Indian subcontinent.
- These are the **smallest of the big cats**.
- They are known for their **ability to adapt** to a variety of habitats.
- They are strong and agile predators that **can climb trees** and drag their prey up for safety.
- **Conservation Status:**
 1. IUCN Red List: Vulnerable
 2. CITES: Appendix I
 3. Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I

About the Fifth Cycle of Leopards Estimation

- The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and Wildlife Institute of India (WII), along with State Forest Departments, estimated the leopard population for the fifth cycle.
- It concentrated on roughly 70% of the animals' predicted habitat and encompassed 18 states in India.
- The estimation covered the main areas for tiger conservation—forested habitats—within 18 tiger states. High Himalayan and non-forested areas were not included.
- 85,488 photos of leopards were taken using camera traps at 32,803 places and a thorough foot survey covering 6,41,449 km. These photos offer important information on the distribution and abundance of leopards.

Key Findings

- Population Estimate: 13,874 leopards are thought to exist in India, a stable number when compared to the 2018 estimate. Remarkably, this estimate encompasses 70% of the habitat used by leopards; it does not include locations like the Himalayas or semi-arid areas.

- Regional Trends: The population of Central India is constant or slightly increasing, although areas such as the Shivalik hills and Gangetic plains are declining. The selected areas are growing at a rate of 1.08% annually overall.
- State-wise Distribution: With 3907 (2018: 3421) leopards, Madhya Pradesh has the highest population in the nation. It is followed by Maharashtra (2022: 1985; 2018: 1,690), Karnataka (2022: 1,879; 2018: 1,783), and Tamil Nadu (2022: 1,070; 2018: 868).
- Environment: The tiger reserves or locations with the greatest concentration of leopards are Satpura (AP), Panna (MP), and Nagarajunasagar Srisailem (AP) (AP).
- Declining Trends: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and West Bengal recorded a combined 150% increase to 349 large cats, whereas Uttarakhand reported a 22% fall in big cat numbers, presumably due to poaching and man-animal conflict.

Insights from UNEA-6

In the news

- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEA-6) held its Sixth Assembly session at its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya.
- It was centered on how important multilateralism is to solving the triple global crisis of pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate change.



About United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)

	Details
Purpose	Highest-level decision-making body on environmental matters within the United Nations system.

Establishment	Established in 2012 during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).
Frequency	Typically convenes <u>every two years</u> in Nairobi, Kenya.
Membership	Consists of <u>all 193 UN Member States</u> and representatives from observer countries and organizations.
Decision-Making	Adopts resolutions and decisions on global environmental issues.

UNEA-6: Theme and Focus

- Theme: Multilateral efforts that are efficient, inclusive, and sustainable in addressing pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate change.
- Focus: Organizing multilateralism's role in forming international environmental policy to address the urgent issues confronting the earth.

Key Outcomes

[A] Environmental Multilateralism

- High-Level Dialogues: A day was set aside by UNEA-6 to talk about convergence and collaboration with multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), with a focus on efficient implementation on a national and international scale.
- Importance: MEAs are vital for international environmental governance because they offer vital frameworks for tackling particular environmental concerns at the national, regional, and global levels.

[B] Energy Transition to Renewable Sources

- Rapid Adoption of Renewable Energy: In order to promote a planet that is favorable for both people and nature, the session underlined the need for three times the present capacity of renewable energy by 2030.
- Global Standards Development: To ensure environmental sustainability and responsible mineral sourcing, efforts are being made to create globally recognized standards for renewable energy.

[C] Plastic Pollution

- Call to Action: In order to establish robust reuse rules and harmonize definitions of reuse and circularity, discussions focused on a legally enforceable treaty on plastic pollution.
- Present Situation: Single-use plastics make up more than half of the world's plastic manufacturing, and they release a large amount of pollution into the environment.

[D] Role of Nature-Based Solutions

- Potential: Reforestation and land restoration are two examples of nature-based solutions that present promising paths toward addressing the climate issue and restoring biodiversity.
- Financial Restrictions: Despite their promise, nature-based solutions only receive a small portion of the necessary funds, which emphasizes the need for more funding and creative financing strategies.

Conclusion

- As UNEA-6 unfolds, stakeholders worldwide are poised to collaborate and drive actionable solutions to safeguard our planet for future generations.

India's first National Dolphin Research Centre finally a reality

IN NUMBERS

Built-up area | 4,525 sq metre

Administrative approval ₹30 crore	Agreement ₹23 crore
--------------------------------------	------------------------

Location | Near Patna Law College

Features and facilities

- G+2 building
- Dry and wet archive
- Library
- Academic hall
- Different laboratories
- Director's office
- Office for department head and faculty members

CIVIL WORK DONE SO FAR

- Construction of foundation, plinth and piling work completed
- Brick laying for ground and first floors going on
- Roof work for all the floors completed

In the news

- An important step in the direction of Gangetic Dolphin conservation has been taken with the opening of the National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC) in Patna.

- The goal of the NDRC is to support comprehensive research on a range of topics pertaining to Gangetic dolphins, such as behavior, dietary habits, survival skills, and mortality reasons.
- This innovative institute, headed by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, aims to promote conservation efforts for this iconic species and further scientific understanding.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vikramshila Ganges Dolphin Sanctuary in Bihar • National Ganga River Dolphin Day (5th October)

Illegal Tree Felling at Jim Corbett National Park

Key Facts about Gangetic Dolphin

	Details
Discovery	Platanista gangetica also known as the “Tiger of the Ganges,” was officially discovered in 1801.
Habitat	Historically distributed in major river systems of India, Nepal, and Bangladesh, including the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu.
Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essentially <i>blind</i>, hunts by emitting ultrasonic sounds. • Frequently found alone or in small groups, usually with a calf. • Females larger, give birth once every 2-3 years.
Importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator of river ecosystem health. • Designated National Aquatic Animal (2009) and State Aquatic Animal of Assam.
Major Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unintentional killing in fishing gear. • Poaching for dolphin oil. • Habitat destruction due to development and pollution.
Protection Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IUCN: Endangered • CITES: Appendix I • CMS: Appendix I • Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Schedule I
Government Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Dolphin (2020)



In the news

- The recent decision by the Supreme Court regarding tiger safaris in Jim Corbett National Park, Uttarakhand, has sparked debates about the preservation of wildlife and the growth of the tourism industry.
- The illegal cutting down of more than 6,000 trees to make way for constructions under the pretense of ecotourism has been denounced by the court.

About Jim Corbett National Park

	Details
Establishment	Established on August 8th, 1936 (originally as Hailey National Park)
Location	Uttarakhand State, Nainital region
Renaming	Renamed as Ramganga National Park (1954–1955), Later reverted to Corbett National Park
Total Area	1,318.54 square kilometers (509.09 square miles)

Ecological Zones	Dhikala, Bijrani, Jhirna, Sonanadi, Durgadevi, Dhela
Conservation Programs	Included in <u>Project Tiger (1973)</u> ; Part of World Wide Fund for Nature's <u>Terai Arc Landscape Program</u>
Flagship Species	Focus on Bengal tiger, Asiatic elephant, Great One-horned rhino
Geographical Features	Ridges, streams, plateaus, ravines, grasslands, deciduous woods, pine forests
Importance	Designated as Important Bird Area by Birdlife International; Key role in wildlife conservation efforts

Rajasthan’s Proposal to Classify Orans as Deemed Forests



In the news

- Rajasthani community members are afraid of losing their access to forest products and means of subsistence after receiving a recent notification from the state administration.
- People are worried about the state's plan to designate Oran, Dev-vans, and Rundhs (holy groves) as considered forests, especially those in western Rajasthan.

What are Sacred Groves?

- In India, forest patches of various sizes that are protected by the community and typically hold great religious significance for the society that protects them are known as sacred groves.
- It is typically located close to a permanent water source and has a thick covering of trees, bushes, climbers, and herbs in addition to a local god.
- Sacred groves are seen as representations of the earliest forms of nature worship and are strongly in favor of environmental preservation.
- Legislation for government protection of community-held properties, possibly including holy groves, was established with the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2002, which created the protected area category community reserves.

Historical references

- Sacred groves in India are frequently connected to temples, monasteries, shrines, pilgrimage sites, or cemeteries.

Court’s Decision on Jim Corbett NP

- **Petition against Captive Animal Holding:** In response to a request, the Supreme Court heard arguments against the national park's use of captive animals.
- **Tiger Safaris Allowed:** Subject to certain restrictions, the Court permitted the construction of tiger safaris in buffer and peripheral zones.
- The Court endeavored to uphold a precarious equilibrium between the advancement of tourism and the conservation of fragile ecosystems in Jim Corbett National Park.

Impact of Tourism on Locals & Wildlife

- **Tourism as a Livelihood:** Transportation, tourist safaris, dining establishments, and lodging facilities all play a major role in the locals' income from tourism.
- **Infrastructure and Conservation:** Wildlife corridors are obstructed by tourism infrastructure, which has an adverse effect on conservation efforts. It is considered necessary to phase out the Dhikala tourism complex in order to adhere to legal standards.
- **Animal-Centric Approach:** To assure protection in national parks, the Supreme Court favors policies that prioritize animals above tourists.

- Historically, sacred groves have been mentioned in books written by Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists. For instance, in Buddhism, sacred deer parks are mentioned, while in Hinduism, sacred tree groves are.
- The term "sacred groves" can be used generically to describe any natural area that is shielded for religious reasons.
- Additional historical references to sacred trees may be found in the ancient treatise Vrukshayurveda and in classical works like Kalidasa's Vikramuurvashiiya.
- The creation of green spaces like Nakshatravana has gained popularity.

Regulation of activities in Sacred Grooves

- In these regions, hunting and logging are typically tightly forbidden.
- On a sustainable basis, other forest uses, such as gathering deadwood and honey, are occasionally permitted.
- NGOs collaborate with the nearby locals to safeguard these orchards.
- The community members have historically, and in certain circumstances even now, taken turns guarding the grove.

Threats to such grooves

- Overuse of resources and urbanization are two threats to the groves.
- Even though many of the groves are thought to be the homes of Hindu deities, several of them have recently had some of their space cleared for the construction of temples and shrines.

Total grooves in India

- Around 14,000 sacred groves have been reported from all over India, which act as reservoirs of rare fauna, and more often rare flora, amid rural and even urban settings.
- Experts believe that the total number of sacred groves could be as high as 100,000.
- They are called by different names in different states:

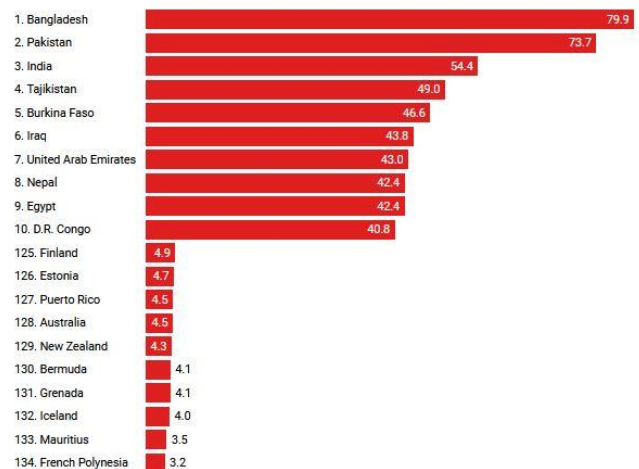
1. **Sarna** in Bihar

- Dev Van** in Himachal Pradesh
- Devarakadu** in Karnataka
- Kavu** in Kerala
- Dev** in Madhya Pradesh
- Devarahati** or **Devarai** in Maharashtra
- Lai Umang** in Maharashtra
- Law Kyntang** or **Asong Khosi** in Meghalaya
- Kovil Kadu** or **Sarpa Kavu** in Tamil Nadu

Highlights of the World Air Quality Report, 2023

The Most and Least Polluted Countries and Territories

A population weighted ranking of 2023 average PM2.5 concentration (µg/m³)



World Health Organization guidelines recommend exposure to no more than an annual mean PM2.5 concentration of five micrograms per cubic meter.

Source: IQAir 2023 World Air Quality Report

TIME

Why in the news-

- According to IQAir's "World Air Quality Report 2023," India is the third most polluted nation in the world, behind Bangladesh and Pakistan.
- Swiss firm IQAir specialises in protecting against airborne pollutants and creates solutions for air quality monitoring and air cleansing.

Comparative Analysis

- Previous Rankings: India showed a slight increase in pollution levels in 2022, ranking eighth among the most polluted nations with an average PM2.5 concentration of 53.3 micrograms per cubic metre.
- Global Rankings: Begusarai, Guwahati, and Delhi were ranked first on the list of the top 50

most polluted cities in the world, which included 42 Indian cities.

Key Highlights

(A) Most Polluted Indian Cities:

- With the exception of Lahore in Pakistan, ten of the top 11 most polluted cities in the world are located in India.
- The PM 2.5 concentration in Begusarai, Bihar, increased significantly between 2022 and 2023, from 19.7 micrograms per cubic metre to 118.9 micrograms.
- Between 2022 and 2023, the concentration of PM2.5 in Guwahati doubled, from 51 to 105.4 micrograms per cubic metre.
- During the same time period, Delhi's PM2.5 concentration increased from 89.1 to 92.7 micrograms per cubic metre.
- More Noida (11), Muzzafarnagar (16), Gurgaon (17), Arrah (18), Dadri (19), Patna (20), Faridabad (25), Noida (26), Meerut (28), Ghaziabad (35) and Rohtak (47) were among the other Indian cities listed in the top 50 most polluted cities in the world list.

(B) Global Insights:

- In 2023, Oceania—which includes New Zealand, Australia, and French Polynesia—continued to have the cleanest air.
- The top five polluted nations in the world—Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Tajikistan, and Burkina Faso—were emphasised in the research.
- The following seven nations met the WHO's annual PM2.5 guideline: Australia, Estonia, Finland, Grenada, Iceland, Mauritius, and New Zealand (annual average of 5 µg/m³ or less).
- China's PM2.5 concentration increased 6.3% in 2023 despite prior drops, indicating a worrying trend.
- Due to issues with regional air quality, Canada was found to be the most polluted country in Northern America for the first time.


- Air quality data is still unavailable to one-third of the population in Africa, making it the continent with the lowest representation.

What are Particulate Matters (PM)?

- A mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets hanging in the air is known as particulate matter, or PM.
- These particles originate from a variety of sources, such as industrial processes, construction, agriculture, wildfires, and natural dust. They are also emitted by vehicles.
- Depending on its aerodynamic diameter, PM can be categorised into several size groups.
- PM10, or particles with a diameter of 10 micrometres or less, and PM2.5, or particles with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres or less, are common size fractions.
- Because PM 2.5 particles are so tiny, there is a major risk to one's health when they enter the bloodstream and deeply infiltrate the respiratory system.
- Extended exposure to high PM2.5 concentrations has been associated with worsening asthma, lowered lung function, and a higher risk of heart attacks and strokes.

Insights from the WMO's State of the Climate Report, 2023

KEY MESSAGES FROM WMO REPORT

<p>> 2023 was the warmest year in the 174-year observational record</p> <p>> Global mean near-surface temperature in 2023 was 1.45 ± 0.12 degree C above the 1850-1900 average</p> <p>> It clearly surpassing the previous joint warmest years, 2016 at 1.29 ± 0.12 degree C above the 1850-1900 average and 2020 at 1.27 ± 0.13 degree C</p> <p>> The past nine years, 2015-2023, were the nine warmest years on record</p>		<p>> The ten-year average 2014-2023 global temperature is 1.20 ± 0.12 degree C above the 1850-1900 average, the warmest 10-year period on record</p> <p>> Concentrations of the three main greenhouse gases - carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide - reached record high observed levels in 2022</p> <p>> Real-time data from specific locations show that levels of the three greenhouse gases continued to increase in 2023</p>
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What is the news-

- The World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) recent State of the Climate report highlights unprecedented climatic shifts, with numerous indicators reaching record levels.

About World Meteorological Organization

- It is an intergovernmental organisation and a UN specialised agency for operational hydrology, associated geophysical sciences, and meteorology (weather and climate).
- With its headquarters located in Geneva, Switzerland, the company was founded in 1950.
- The International Meteorological Organisation (IMO), which was established in 1873, is where it all began.
- Presently, 191 nations are members of it. Moreover, India is a member.

Key Highlights of the State of the Climate Report, 2023**[1] Greenhouse Gases (GHGs)**

- Record-High Concentrations: In 2022, greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide hit all-time highs, which aided in the process of global warming. The most recent year for which consolidated worldwide values are available is 2022, when the concentration of greenhouse gases was detected (1984–2022).
- Long-term Trend: The increase in GHG concentrations highlights the pressing need for coordinated actions to lessen their effects.

[2] Surface Temperature

- Historic Spike: In 2023, global surface temperatures reached an all-time high of 1.45 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. El Nino's arrival in 2023 and growing greenhouse gas concentrations are both blamed for this temperature increase.
- El Nino Influence: El Nino's arrival made temperature extremes worse everywhere, which increased the effects of climate change.

[3] Ocean Heat Content (OHC)

- Unprecedented Heat: In 2023, the ocean's heat content peaked according to observational records. The entire amount of heat that the oceans hold is known as the ocean heat content, or OHC.
- Long-term Trend: The OHC's steady rise highlights the problem of ocean warming and its effects on marine ecosystems.

[4] Marine Heat Waves (MHWs)

- Widespread Occurrence: In 2023, the marine heatwave (MHW) occurrence rate significantly increased over the world's oceans. The average daily coverage of maritime heatwaves reached 32%, breaking previous records that were established in 2016.
- Duration and Intensity: Extended maritime heatwaves (MHWs) jeopardise fisheries, ecosystems, and marine biodiversity, emphasising the need for immediate climate action.

[5] Antarctic Sea-Ice Extent

- Record Low: Since satellite monitoring began in 1979, the Antarctic sea-ice area has never been lower, falling to 1.79 million km² in February 2023. Throughout the year, the extent stayed below average, indicating continued patterns of sea-ice loss in the Antarctic.
- Persistent Decline: The Antarctic sea ice's ongoing reduction highlights how susceptible the Polar Regions are to climate change.

[6] Glacier Mass Balance

- Unprecedented Loss: In 2022–2023, glaciers globally saw the greatest yearly ice loss ever. The yearly mass balance, which calculates how much mass glaciers gain or lose, reached a record low of "-1.2 metre water equivalent."
- Regional Differences: The balance of glacial mass differed between regions, with the glaciers of North America and Europe being most impacted by ice loss.

Significance of the report

- The WMO report's figures highlight the extent to which different Earth systems are impacted by climate change.
- In order to limit temperature extremes, protect marine environments, manage rising GHG emissions, and maintain vital cryospheric areas, immediate action is required.

A turf war with the wild



Why in the news?

- Instances of human-animal conflict are on the rise in Kerala with the summer heat, scarcity of food, and loss of habitat forcing wild animals to stray into human habitations for sustenance.

Context-

- Vulnerability of tribal communities living in such areas. While they have intricate knowledge of the forest and its resources, they lack the protective measures and resources available to more urbanized populations, leaving them more susceptible to the dangers of wildlife encounters.

Human-animal conflict in Kerala-

- Increase in incidences: Due to the state's substantial forest cover and heavily inhabited settlements close to wildlife areas, Kerala has seen a marked increase in incidences involving human-animal conflict in all of its districts.
- Human Casualties: Conflicts between people and wildlife have claimed a significant number of lives; in 2023–2024, 93 deaths were documented. There were 98 human casualties the year before.
- Hotspot District: With 69 recorded deaths between 2011 and 2024, Wayanad stands out as a hotspot for human-animal interactions. A tiger attack and interactions with wild elephants are among the incidents.
- Diverse Wildlife Involved: Elephants, tigers, leopards, bears, wild gaurs, wild boars, and monkeys are just a few of the species that are involved in human-animal conflicts in Kerala. The difficulties of handling disputes across various ecosystems and habitats is highlighted by this diversity.
- Effect on Livelihoods: People's livelihoods are severely impacted by the wars, especially those who depend on farming and agriculture. Farmers are unable to cultivate their property due to wild animal attacks, which causes financial hardship and food shortages.
- Vulnerable Communities: Conflicts between humans and animals disproportionately impact vulnerable communities, such as small-scale farmers and tribal people. As demonstrated in the instance of Abraham Palatt and his family, their vulnerability to wildlife attacks is exacerbated by a lack of infrastructure and resources.

Steps taken by Government to deal these issues –

- State-Specific Disaster: In March, the Kerala government became the first to designate human-animal conflict as a state-specific disaster. This choice demonstrates how serious and urgent the problem is.

- **Change in Responsibilities:** The Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) is now in charge of handling human-animal conflicts. A committee led by the Chief Minister was formed specifically for this purpose.
- **Community Involvement:** To improve surveillance on the edges of forests, the government intends to involve neighbourhood associations in the local community. These organisations will work with elected officials and government organisations to distribute warnings about the presence of wildlife.
- **Recruitment and Equipment:** In order to improve monitoring, the government plans to hire more forest watchers and form fast response teams that are outfitted with drones, rifles, surveillance equipment, tranquillizers, and advance warning systems.
- **Inter-State Collaboration:** To address human-wildlife conflicts collectively, the forest departments of Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu have formed an inter-state coordination council. With a focus on interstate borders, this project seeks to reduce violence by exchanging intelligence and resources.
- **Restoration of native Forest Streams:** By supplying necessary supplies in their native habitat, returning forests' natural water sources is important for wildlife habitat and can help reduce conflict.
- **Removing invasive plant species and replacing them with native ones** can help to restore ecological balance, support native wildlife populations, and lessen the dependence of these species on regions affected by human activity.
- **Using MGNREGS:** By supporting conservation efforts with government programmes such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), job opportunities can be created while also aiding in environmental restoration initiatives.
- **Programmes for Raising Awareness of Responsible Tourism:** By teaching visitors how to behave responsibly near wildlife, human disturbance-induced conflicts between humans and wildlife can be reduced. This involves stressing how crucial it is to keep a safe distance and show consideration for the habitats of wildlife.
- **Effective Institutional Framework:** Coordinated action in controlling conflicts between humans and wildlife depends on the establishment of a strong institutional framework at all levels of government, from local to interstate. Collaboration between various government agencies, wildlife authorities, and local communities is required for this.

Measures to address human-wildlife conflict-

- **Enhancing Forest Quality:** Reducing fragmentation and patchiness in forests can assist improve their quality and foster healthier ecosystems that facilitate a more harmonious cohabitation of people and wildlife.
- The mission of conservation with tribal communities is to guarantee that traditional knowledge is honoured and that tribal groups are involved in conservation initiatives. Initiatives for collaborative conservation can safeguard livelihoods and biodiversity while advancing sustainable practices.

Conclusion-

Human-wildlife conflicts surge in Kerala, endangering lives and livelihoods. Government initiatives, community involvement, and conservation efforts are crucial for mitigating conflicts and fostering coexistence, ensuring a sustainable future for both humans and wildlife.

Governance

Government e Marketplace (GeM)



Why in the news-

- The government’s procurement portal, GeM (Government e-Marketplace), is looking to encourage more and more start-ups and small and micro enterprises to list themselves as sellers.

About Government e-Marketplace (GeM)

- The GeM is a one-stop national public procurement portal designed to make it easier for different government departments, organizations, and PSUs to purchase common use goods and services online.
- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry introduced it in 2016.
- The National e-governance Division (MEITY) provided technical support to the Directorate General of Supplies and Disposals (under MCI) while they created it.

Functions for GeM

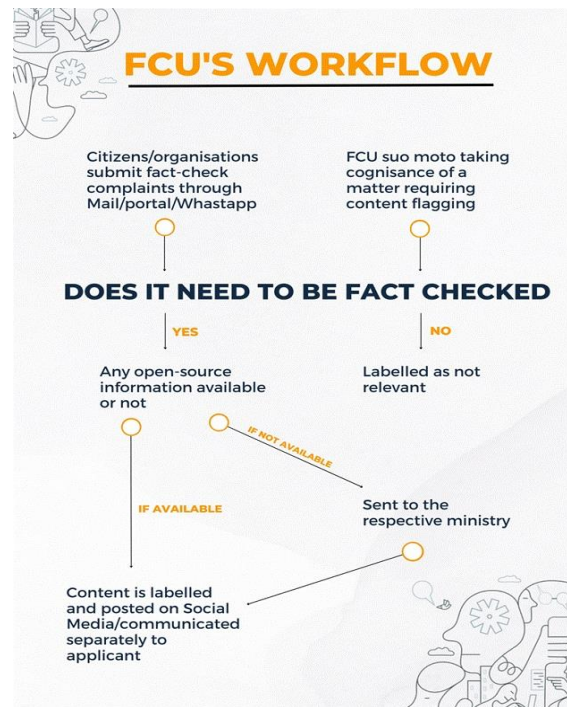
- Improvement of Public Procurement: GeM seeks to improve public procurement procedures' efficiency, speed, and transparency.
- Paperless and Cashless Transactions: It's a fully cashless, paperless, and system-driven online marketplace that makes it easy to buy ordinary goods and services with little to no interaction with people.
- Facilitation of Best Value: To help government users get the most for their money, GeM offers the e-bidding, reverse e-auction, and demand aggregation tools.

- Mandatory Purchases by Government Users: The Ministry of Finance has added new Rule No. 149 to the General Financial Rules, 2017, authorizing and mandating purchases made through GeM by government users.

Key Developments on GeM:

- GeM Outlet Stores: GeM has opened outlet stores for a range of product categories, including Divyangjan, Khadi India, Ajeevika, SARAS, Tribes India, Startup Runway, and India Handloom.
- Bamboo Market Window: GeM has created a special window on its portal for the promotion of bamboo goods in partnership with the National Bamboo Mission.
- Country of Origin Tag: Since 2020, when registering new products, vendors on the GeM portal are required by law to specify the country of origin of their goods.

PIB’s Fact Check Unit: Combating Misinformation in India



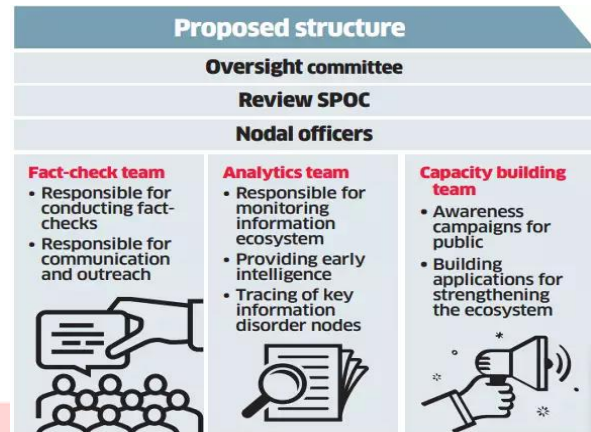
Why in the news-

- The Fact Check Unit (FCU) of the Press Information Bureau was notified by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology on Wednesday, a few weeks before the election, as the official entity responsible for reporting false information regarding Central government agencies on social media.

- One of its mandates is to conduct a thorough fact-checking procedure in order to verify assertions pertaining to government policies, regulations, and announcements.
- The Principal Director General of PIB, who serves as the Government of India's principal spokesperson, is the person to whom the Unit reports.

Why PIB?

- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) is charged with the duty of distributing information regarding government policies, initiatives, and programmes via a variety of communication channels in accordance with the GoI (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961.
- In carrying out its mandate, the Ministry disseminates information on the Government of India's policies, projects, plans, and programmes via books, webinars, press conferences, and other means.
- The Press Information Bureau (PIB) is one of the Ministry's many affiliated and subordinate offices that it uses to perform this vital job.



Fact-Check Mechanism

- Handling of Queries: Through WhatsApp, email, or a web interface, users submit requests that are handled by the Unit as "Queries."
- Verification Process: Using official sources and technology techniques, actionable questions pertinent to the Government of India are thoroughly verified.
- Publication of Fact Checks: For the purpose of raising public awareness, verified material is classified as True, False, or Misleading and posted on the Unit's social media channels.

Categories of Fact-Checked Content

1. Fake: Inaccurate information that is purposefully or inadvertently spread to mislead or influence the public.
2. False: Data that is presented using selective facts, incomplete truths, or distortion in an attempt to deceive the audience.
3. True: After a thorough inquiry, information was found to be factually correct.

What is Fact Check Unit (FCU)?

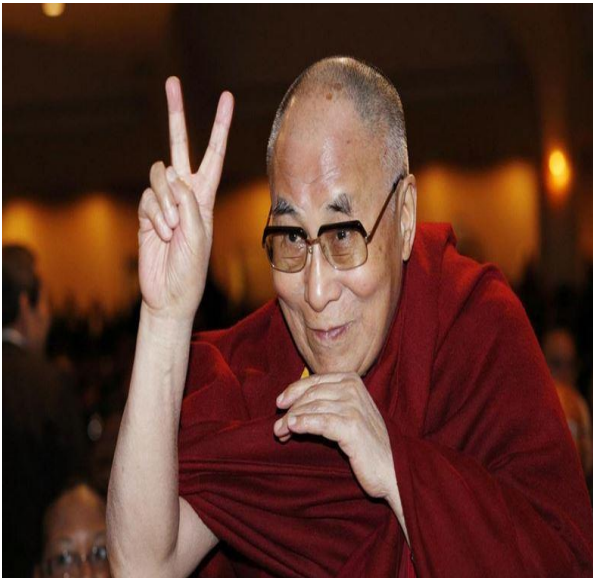
- The mandate of the Fact Check Unit is derived from the IT Rules, 2021, which state that social media companies run the danger of losing their legal liability protections if they do not swiftly rectify misinformation that is reported to them.
- Claims about laws, decrees, proclamations, and other government initiatives are checked by this unit.
- The PIB Fact Check Unit dispels misconceptions, rumours, and false claims through a rigorously structured process and gives the public accurate and trustworthy information.

Operational Framework

- The Principal Director General of PIB oversees the FCU, which is run by a senior DG/ADG level officer of the Indian Information Service (IIS).

History

The Dalai Lama's and His Succession



In the news

- Reincarnation is a topic that is usually considered arcane, but it has important political implications when it comes to finding Tibet's next Dalai Lama.
- The expectation surrounding Tenzin Gyatso's succession is growing as the 88-year-old spiritual leader continues to be in good health, especially in light of current geopolitical and historical challenges.

Who is the Dalai Lama?

- The head of Tibetan Buddhism is referred to as the Dalai Lama.
- He is revered as a significant figure not only in Tibet but also globally, where he is thought to be the reincarnation of the previous Dalai Lama.
- Although the Dalai Lama was formerly Tibet's political and spiritual leader, he was forced into exile in India in 1950 following China's takeover of the region, and he has since acted mostly as a spiritual leader.
- Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, was born in 1935 in Tibet and has lived in exile in India since 1959.

Brief Outline of Tibetan Buddhism

- By the ninth century AD, Tibetan Buddhism had emerged as the dominant religion in Tibet, combining many tantric and shamanic practices with elements of the Mahayana and Vajrayana schools of Buddhism.
- Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug are its four principal educational institutions; Janang School is one of the lesser institutions that developed as a branch of Sakya School.
- The Dalai Lama is associated with the Gelug School, which has dominated Tibetan Buddhism since 1640.

Hierarchy and Reincarnation in Tibetan Buddhism

- One of the major tenets of Buddhism is the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.
- The first records of "formally recognizing the reincarnations of lamas" date to the 13th century, which is also when Tibet's hierarchical structure appears to have developed.
- The Gelug School established a rigid hierarchy and the practice of reincarnation succession, bestowing the title of Dalai Lama to the school's fifth Grand Lama.
- A number of processes and examinations are used to identify Tulkus, or acknowledged reincarnations.

Key Issue: Chinese Interference

- Political intrigue: The announcement of the Dalai Lama's rebirth raises questions about potential Chinese meddling because China wants to control the succession to establish its authority over Tibetan politics and culture.
- International Repercussions: International stakeholders are keenly watching developments to protect Tibetan autonomy and cultural legacy. The Dalai Lama's rebirth is not only a spiritual but also a geopolitical problem.

Story of Usha Mehta and the Secret Congress Radio



Why in the news?

- Recently premiered on an OTT Platform, the film “Ae Watan Mere Watan” delves into the narrative of Usha Mehta and Congress Radio during the Quit India Movement of 1942.

Who was Usha Mehta (1920-2000)?

- Mumbai, India was the place of Usha Mehta's birth on March 25, 1920.
- Usha Mehta was drawn to the peaceful resistance and civil disobedience advocated by Mahatma Gandhi and actively participated in the Indian independence movement at an early age.
- Usha Mehta's participation in the radio network known as "Secret Congress Radio" was one of her most significant contributions to the independence movement.
- In 1998, she received one of India's greatest civilian accolades, the Padma Vibhushan.

The Secret ‘Congress Radio’

- The historic Quit India Resolution was voted on August 8, 1942, in Bombay at the All India Congress Committee meeting.
- To challenge the British-controlled AIR, the concept of an underground radio station was devised in response. It was dubbed the Freedom Radio, the Ghost Radio, or the Congress Radio, among other titles.
- Wilson College master's student Usha Mehta, 22, was chosen to be the Congress Radio's voice.
- Although the radio project was costly, money was raised through a variety of channels, including gifts from Mehta's colleague Babubhai Khakhar.
- The Congress Radio transmission set was built by radio technical specialist Nariman Abarbad Printer.
- They aired for the first time on August 14, 1942.
- "This is the Congress Radio calling on 42.34 from somewhere in India," she said in a friendly tone of voice.
- They used to broadcast in both Hindi and English twice a day. However, they limited it to one evening, from 30 to 8.30 p.m.
- Mehta and other people were taken into custody by the police during a raid on the radio on November 12, 1942, while Vande Mataram was being played.

International Relations

Ensure Pakistan does not divert loans to foot defence bills: India to IMF

Cup of woes

Pakistan's new government's efforts to acquire international funds may come with some strings



■ This week, PM Shehbaz Sharif has mooted immediate talks with the IMF for extended support

■ Following the 2022 floods and external shocks, the economy shrank in 2022-23; forex reserves collapsed

■ The IMF okayed a \$3 billion stand-by arrangement that ends next month; India abstained from vote

■ In loan review this January, India seeks stringent monitoring of IMF money's end-use by Pakistan

Why in the News?

India stresses the need for stringent monitoring during a recent review of the loan to Pakistan when the new *PM Shehbaz Sharif* seeking additional funding support from the IMF.

Background:

- India has taken a firm stand and called for "rigorous monitoring" of any emergency funding that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) provides to Pakistan. It emphasizes that these monies cannot be used to pay off debt from other nations or to pay for defense expenditures.

- India's stance was presented to the IMF executive board during a recent evaluation of a \$3 billion short-term Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) that the Fund has been providing to Pakistan.

About International Monetary Fund (IMF):

- The 190 member nations of the IMF strive for prosperity and sustainable growth.
- In order to boost productivity, job creation, and economic well-being, it achieves this by endorsing economic policies that foster monetary cooperation and financial stability.
- The member nations of the IMF are in charge of and responsible to it.

Aims and Objectives:

- Furthering international monetary cooperation;
- Encouraging the expansion of trade and economic growth;
- Discouraging policies that would harm prosperity.

Functions of IMF:

- Policy Advice: The IMF assesses possible risks and suggests suitable policy adjustments as part of this process, which occurs at the global and regional levels, in order to maintain economic growth and advance financial stability.
- Financial Advice: In order to provide crisis-hit nations breathing room to implement measures to restore economic stability and growth, the IMF offers financial support. In order to help avert catastrophes, it also offers financial precautions. IMF funding is always being improved to accommodate nations' evolving needs. Crises can have external, internal, or both sources.
 - A weak financial system, an exchange rate fixed at an inappropriate level that can undermine competitiveness and result in the loss of official reserves, and inappropriate fiscal and monetary policies are examples of domestic factors. These can result in significant

current account and fiscal deficits as well as high levels of public debt. Crises can also be brought on by weak institutions and political instability.

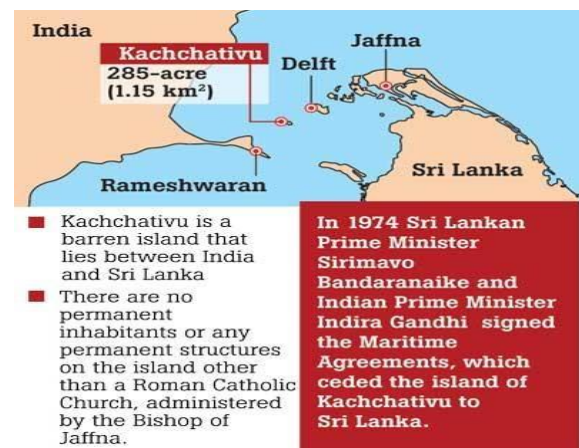
- Shocks ranging from significant fluctuations in commodity prices to natural disasters are examples of external forces. Capital flow volatility may arise from abrupt shifts in market sentiment brought on by globalization. Both are frequent reasons for crises, particularly in low-income nations.

Significance of IMF monitoring:

- Vital for detecting hazards that can call for corrective policy changes.
- In today's globally integrated economy, when the issues or policies of one country can influence many others, international cooperation on these endeavors is essential.
- Focuses on particular nations or bilateral monitoring, as well as the world economy or multilateral monitoring.

Conclusion: There is uncertainty around Pakistan's ability to quickly negotiate a new IMF program after the current one expires in April 2024 remains very high. Pakistan's government liquidity and external vulnerability risks will remain very high until there is clarity on a credible longer-term financing plan.

Tamil Nadu Fishermen's Plight over Katchatheevu Island



In the news

- Tamil Nadu fisherman, who were being disrupted in their daily lives by the ongoing operations of the Sri Lankan authorities, called an indefinite strike on February 17.
- Due to the fishermen's protest, Katchatheevu's annual St. Antony's Church celebration was canceled, an uncommon move that served as an important symbol of the fishermen's right to fish.

Katchatheevu Island: Historical Background

- Colonial Influence: The 285-acre island of Katchatheevu was formed by a volcanic explosion in the fourteenth century. Historically, it was ruled by the Ramnad Zamindari in India and the Jaffna monarchy in Sri Lanka.
- British-Era Claims: In order to draw fishing borders, Katchatheevu was claimed by both Sri Lanka and India in the early 20th century. The British Raj did not end the ownership dispute.

1974 Indo-Sri Lankan Maritime Agreement

- Historic Decision: As part of the 1974 agreement, the government of Indira Gandhi chose to hand over Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka in order to draw maritime borders.
- Political Repercussions: The decision sparked protests in Tamil Nadu over the impact on traditional fishing rights and the lack of engagement with the state assembly.
- Fishing Ambiguity: Although fishing rights remained unclear and gave rise to disputes, the agreement gave Indian fishermen access to Katchatheevu "hitherto."

Sri Lankan Civil War and Beyond

- Dynamics of Civil War: As Sri Lanka's naval forces struggled with internal conflict, attention was diverted from the Katchatheevu issue during the civil war that lasted from 1983 to 2009.
- Post-War Reality: Following the civil war, Sri Lanka strengthened its maritime defenses, which prompted the arrest of Indian fishermen who were fishing in their waters and rekindled calls for the return of Katchatheevu.

Tamil Nadu's Persistent Concerns

- Political Backlash: Citing historical links and the impact on livelihood, politicians from Tamil Nadu's various parties voiced their opposition to Katchatheevu's surrender without the state assembly's approval.
- Legal battles: The AIADMK, led by the late J Jayalalitha, filed cases against the 1974 agreement on the grounds that it infringed upon customary fishing rights. The Union government's position, however, didn't change.
- Position of the Government: In response to strong demands from Tamil lawmakers, the Modi administration insisted that the island's status was decided upon in 1974 and that regaining it would necessitate taking extreme measures.

Contemporary Implications

- Symbol of Sovereignty: Katchatheevu represents tensions between Tamil Nadu's interests and decisions made by the national government, as well as regional and sovereignty issues.
- Geopolitical Dilemma: In the context of bilateral ties, the case emphasizes the fine balance that must be struck between political sentiments, historical claims, and international accords.

Conclusion

- The island of Katchatheevu, which symbolizes the difficult balancing act between governmental interests, national decisions, and regional aspirations, continues to serve as a reminder of India's historical complexities.
- The long-standing 1974 accord and the ensuing geopolitical realities create a difficult landscape, even as Tamil Nadu's appeals for retrieval reverberate through the political corridors.
- Katchatheevu continues to serve as a symbol of the intricacies of regional emotion and national sovereignty, given how the island's destiny is entwined with larger international relations.

Polity

Appointment of Lokpal chairperson



Why in the News?

Recently, the former SC judge **A.M. Khanwilkar** has been appointed as Lokpal chairperson.

More details on the news:

- The Lokpal has been operating without a regular Chief since May 27, 2022, when Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose's term ended. The acting chairman at the moment is Justice Pradip Kumar Mohanty, a member of the Lokpal's judiciary.
- The judicial members of the Lokpal are former High Court judges Lingappa Narayana Swamy, Sanjay Yadav, and Ritu Raj Awasthi.

About Lokpal:

- The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act of 2013 established the Lokpal to look into claims of corruption against public servants.
- In March 2019, Pinaki Chandra Ghose, a former Supreme Court judge, became the first Lokpal chairperson.
- The United Nations Convention against Corruption is ratified by India. By battling corruption, the government has demonstrated its commitment to transparent and responsive governance through the creation of the Lokpal.

Composition of Lokpal:

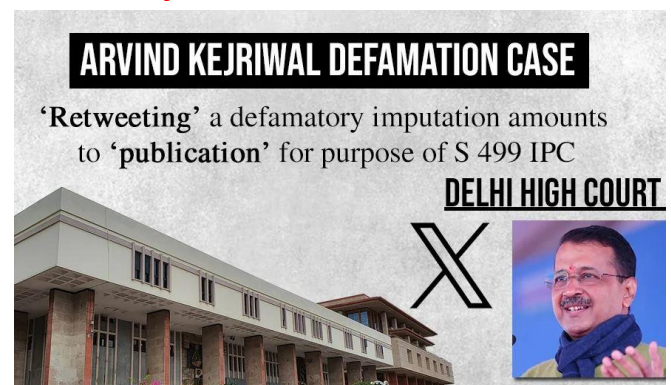
- There is a chairperson and eight members of the Lokpal, four of whom are judges and four of whom are non-judges.
- appointed by the Indian President for a period of five years, or until they become seventy, whichever occurs first.

- Procedure for Appointing Members: The Prime Minister, Speaker of the House of People, Leader of the Opposition in the House of People, Chief Justice of India or a nominated Supreme Court Judge, and a distinguished jurist nominated by the President form the Selection Committee, which makes recommendations to the President who then appoints the Chairperson and Members.

Lokpal's Jurisdiction:

- The Lokpal looks into claims of corruption made against members of Parliament, Union Ministers, Prime Ministers, and officials in Groups A, B, C, and D of the Union Government.
- It covers heads of organizations founded by parliamentary acts or supported by federal, state, or local governments, as well as their officials, directors, and members.
- Societies, trusts, or organizations that receive foreign contributions in excess of ₹10 lakh (about US\$14,300 as of 2019) are included in the jurisdiction.

Defamation in the Digital Age: The Case of Arvind Kejriwal



In the news

- In a recent legal move, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's defamation lawsuit was taken up by the Supreme Court of India.
- This case demonstrates the complex relationship that exists in the digital age between online

communication, legal systems, and freedom of expression.

What is the Right to Free Speech?

- Freedom: All citizens are guaranteed the right to free speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a). It is the first requirement for freedom and has a significant impact on public opinion.
- Limitations: According to Article 19(2), limitations on the right to free speech and expression may be put in place for the following reasons:
 1. Sovereignty and integrity of India,
 2. Security of the state,
 3. Friendly relations with foreign states,
 4. Public order, decency or morality, or
 5. In relation to contempt of court,
 6. Defamation, or
 7. Incitement to an offense
- Online discourse: The spread of social media platforms calls for a sophisticated interpretation of the right to free expression in the digital sphere that strikes a balance between the interests of society and individual liberty.
- Politicians' Immunity: Politicians have the right to free speech, but there are restrictions that apply to them as well. As long as criticism of the government or its policies doesn't encourage violence or hatred, it's usually acceptable.

Legal Conundrum over Digital Defamation

- Background: After retweeting a video posted by YouTuber Dhruv Rathee, Kejriwal was accused of making disparaging remarks against the BJP's IT cell.
- Court Cases: Noting the widespread effect of public personalities retweeting, the Delhi High Court upheld Kejriwal's summons.
- Constitutional Aspects to Take into Account: Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution guarantees the right to free speech; however, reasonable limitations, such as defamation rules under Article 19(2), may be imposed.

- Endorsement vs. Retweeting: The contrast between retweeting and endorsing content is highlighted by the court's involvement. Even if a retweet doesn't always imply endorsement, celebrities are more accountable for their online behavior.
- Laws Concerning Defamation: Reputation-damaging statements are illegal in India, according to Section 499 of the Indian Penal Code. Applying these laws to internet communication presents certain difficulties, though.

Legal Precedents and Interpretations

- In Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015), it was ruled that using "a computer resource or a communication device" to convey "offensive messages" was illegal under Section 66A of the IT Act, 2000. The SC invalidated this clause due to the vague meaning of the word "offensive."
- In Subramanian Swamy v. Union of India (2016), the Supreme Court upheld the legitimacy of criminal defamation legislation, striking a balance between the freedom of speech and the right to one's reputation.
- In the 2017 case of Kaushal Kishore v. Union of India, the court made it clear that further limitations on free speech could not be imposed arbitrarily and had to comply with Article 19(2).

Implications for Online Discourse

- Defamation Scope: By amplifying the spread of purportedly defamatory content, online retweets raise concerns about responsibility and liability.
- Public Figure Responsibilities: Because of their prominence and reach on social media, public figures such as Arvind Kejriwal are subject to increased scrutiny about their online actions.

Conclusion

- The changing nature of communication in the digital era is highlighted by this slander case.
- Finding a balance between legal protections against defamation and freedom of expression is

still a critical issue, as public opinion is still shaped by online discourse.

- The chance to reevaluate current rules and standards controlling online communication is presented by the Supreme Court's intervention, guaranteeing that rights and duties are balanced in the digital sphere.

Resolving Indigenous Issues: Tripartite Agreement in Tripura



In the news

- The Tipraha Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance (TIPRA), the government of Tripura, and the government of India signed a tripartite agreement.
- This is a big start in the right direction towards solving the long-standing problems that Tripura's indigenous people have endured.

Ethno-Political Demands in Tripura: Historical Context

- Significant demographic shifts have occurred in Tripura, as a result of the migration of refugees from East Pakistan, which has led to the marginalization of indigenous tribes.
- Locals' Marginalization: Over time, this demographic change has reduced the socio-political clout and land rights of the indigenous community.
- Ethnic Tensions: Demands for further autonomy and the acknowledgment of tribal rights have resulted from ethnic conflicts and insurgencies that have further heightened tensions between indigenous tribes and non-tribal societies.

- Ethnic nationalism's Resurge: In recent times, there has been a resurgence of ethnic nationalism, mostly due to the demands of Greater Tipraland, an initiative aimed at uniting indigenous tribes under a single identity and standing up for their common interests.

Demand for Greater Tipraland

- Enhanced Autonomy: The main goal of Greater Tipraland is to provide indigenous tribes in Tripura more autonomy so they may run their own affairs and protect their cultural traditions.
- acknowledgment of Tribal Rights: In order to guarantee that the rights of indigenous groups are protected and upheld, TIPRA wants linguistic acknowledgment, economic empowerment, and political representation.
- Geographical Extent: In addition to the Tripura Tribal territories Autonomous District Council (TTAADC), the planned Greater Tipraland also includes tribal communities living outside of officially recognized tribal territories, such as those in Bangladesh and adjacent states.

Constitutional Framework for Such Demands

- Constitutional Provisions: The Indian Constitution's Articles 2 and 3 establish the legal parameters for the formation of new states and the reconfiguration of existing ones. TIPRA wants to use these clauses as leverage to support the creation of Greater Tipraland.
- Regional Representation: TIPRA seeks to get support for its demands in the legislative and executive branches of government at the state and federal levels through political lobbying and grassroots mobilization.
- Opportunities and Difficulties: Greater Tipraland can be pursued constitutionally, but dealing with conflicting interests and political complexity will be difficult. Nonetheless, TIPRA views these obstacles as chances to converse and forge agreement regarding its agenda.

Socio-Political Dynamics

- **Coalition Building:** Since TIPRA became a powerful political movement, alliances and collaborations have emerged in Tripura to further common goals, such as the creation of Greater Tipraland.
- **Opposition Criticism:** Drawing attention to wider ideological divides and electoral dynamics, opposition parties have condemned TIPRA's demands as politically driven. One such party is the Communist Party of India (Marxist).
- **Public Support:** The public is generally in favor of TIPRA's demands, especially the indigenous

populations who saw Greater Tipraland as a means of achieving self-determination and empowerment.

Conclusion

- The ambitions of the indigenous tribes of Tripura for self-governance, cultural preservation, and socioeconomic empowerment are embodied in the desire for Greater Tipraland.
- Even if there are still obstacles to overcome, the endeavor is part of a larger trend in northeastern India towards inclusive governance and the acknowledgement of indigenous rights.

Science, Technology, Art & Culture

Synthesis of Gold Nanoparticles from Roen Olmi Mushroom



In the news

- Researchers in Goa have successfully synthesized gold nanoparticles from a wild mushroom species known as Roen Olmi, which is widely consumed as a delicacy in the coastal state.

About Roen Olmi Mushroom

- Roen Olmi is a member of the Termitomyces genus that grows on termite mounds.
- **Local Name:** Known as "roen olmi" in Goa, this edible wild mushroom is well-liked by the people and is particularly appreciated during the rainy season.

- **Habitat:** Roen Olmi mushrooms are native to the Western Ghats and flourish there due to the area's high humidity and dense forest cover.
- **Ecological Significance:** By transforming half of the decomposing plant matter into nutrient-rich soil, these mushrooms are essential to the health of grassland and forest ecosystems. They also have antibacterial and antioxidant qualities.
- **Cultural and medical relevance:** In indigenous cultures throughout Asia and Africa, rön olmi mushrooms are prized for their ethno-medicinal significance in addition to their nutritional qualities.

Implications and Future Directions

- **Economic Impact:** The discovery has a large economic impact, particularly in the biomedical and biotechnological fields where a growth in the demand for gold nanoparticles is anticipated.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Using Roen Olmi mushrooms provides an environmentally safe way to produce gold nanoparticles in large quantities, in contrast to traditional procedures that involve hazardous chemical agents.
- **Benefits to the Local population:** In line with the Nagoya Protocol, the researchers promote the conservation and sustainable use of this priceless resource, stressing the significance of benefit sharing with the local population.

Harnessing AI to Address India's Water Crisis



In the news

- The use of artificial intelligence (AI) has become increasingly important in solving a number of problems, including India's urgent water situation.
- Even while opinions about AI among the general public are still divided, it has the ability to completely transform water management.

River Inter-Linking

- **Background:** As India grapples with the challenges of climate change and unpredictable weather patterns, the need to mitigate water deficits has become a critical priority for policymakers. One proposed solution is the ambitious river-linking project, aimed at connecting flood-prone rivers with those facing water deficits.
- **Objective:** The goal of the river-linking initiative is to optimize water distribution across regions, ensuring maximum benefits for the most people while minimizing environmental impact and resource depletion.

Assessing River Inter-Linking using AI

- **Computer Modelling:** To analyse the projected Pennar-Palar-Cauvery connection canal, researchers from institutes like IIT-ISM, Dhanbad, and NITs in Tripura and Goa have used AI technologies to create computer models.

- **Multi-objective optimisation:** The AI models use a multi-objective strategy in an effort to accomplish several goals at once. As an illustration, consider increasing crop productivity while reducing water use and environmental effect.
- **Data Utilisation:** These models make use of large datasets, such as crop-sowing patterns, water level monitoring, and economic variables including cost-benefit analyses for farmers and minimum support prices.
- **Predictive analysis:** Researchers can determine the best practices for crop selection and water management, thereby optimising agricultural productivity while preserving water resources, by evaluating historical data and generating forecasts using AI algorithms.

Key Findings and Recommendations

- **Optimising Farm Returns:** According to the AI-based models, it is possible to increase farm returns without wasting water or depleting groundwater by modifying crop choices and water management techniques.
- **Requirement for Detailed Data:** Accurate and detailed data collection would improve the efficacy of AI-based models, allowing for more precise and targeted forecasts for maximising agricultural productivity and water use.

Way Forward

- **Better Data Collection:** By gathering more information, artificial intelligence-based forecasts will be fine-tuned, leading to more targeted and accurate solutions for water management issues.
- **Collaboration:** To fully utilise AI for sustainable water management, cooperation between academic institutions, governmental organisations, and technological specialists is essential.
- **Public Awareness:** Raising awareness among the general public about the advantages of AI-driven

water management technologies will help to get funding and make large-scale adoption easier.

Conclusion

- AI's incorporation into the river-linking project has enormous potential to help India's water scarcity issues.
- Policymakers can improve agricultural output, optimise water distribution, and lessen the effects of climate change on water resources by utilising AI-driven predictive models.
- Using AI technologies will be crucial to attaining sustainable water management practices and guaranteeing water security for future generations as India's growth journey continues.

Venice Biennale: The Olympics of the Art World



In the news

- The Venice Biennale, revered as “the Olympics of the art world,” is set to unveil its 60th edition on April 20.
- Under the theme “Stranieri Ovunque” or “Foreigners Everywhere,” curated by Adriano Pedrosa, the exhibition will feature 333 artists from around the world.

What is the Venice Biennale?

- **Inception:** Proposed by Venice’s city government in 1893, the Biennale aimed to commemorate the silver jubilee of King Umberto I and Queen Margherita of Italy.
- **Early Exhibitions:** The inaugural exhibition in 1895 attracted over two lakh visitors,

showcasing works by foreign and Italian artists without specific thematic constraints.

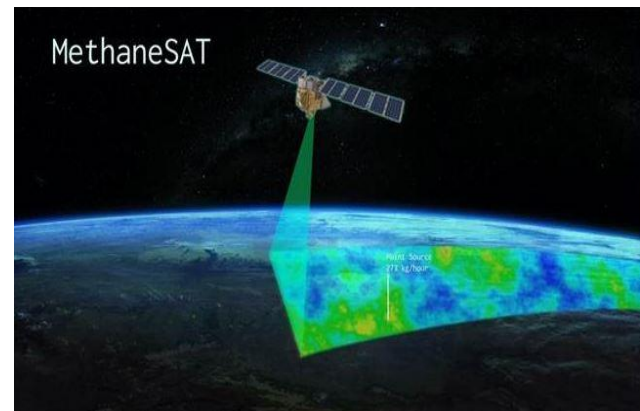
Structure of the Venice Biennale

- **Central Pavilion:** Serving as the focal point, the central pavilion hosts the main exhibition curated by the appointed curator, highlighting selected artworks.
- **National Pavilions:** Representing individual countries, these pavilions feature curated exhibitions managed by respective ministries of culture, with India having participated officially since 1954.
- **Collateral Events:** Independent exhibitions and events across Venice complement the Biennale, enriching the cultural landscape.

India’s Journey at the Venice Biennale

- **Debut in 1954:** India made its inaugural appearance with an exhibition organized by the Embassy of India in Rome, featuring eminent artists like M F Husain and Amrita Sher-Gil.
- **Subsequent Engagements:** Indian artists have participated in various editions, with official pavilions organized in 2011 and 2019, showcasing diverse artistic expressions.
- **Continued Representation:** In 2024, Indian artists will feature prominently in the central exhibition, alongside the Aravani Art Project, symbolizing India’s enduring presence on the global art stage.

MethaneSAT: Revolutionizing Methane Emission Tracking



In the news

- The newest weapon in space technology, MethaneSAT, has the potential to completely transform how methane emissions are measured and tracked around the world.
- This cutting-edge satellite, which will be launched atop a SpaceX Falcon9 rocket, is expected to offer previously unheard-of insights into methane emissions, supporting efforts to combat climate change.

Methane Emissions

- Methane is an organic molecule with four hydrogen atoms and one carbon atom (CH₄).
- Second most powerful human-caused global warming contributor after carbon dioxide, with an 80-fold increase in power.
- The warming generated by substances in relation to carbon dioxide over a century is measured by the Global Warming Potential (GWP).
- GWP100: 28 for methane, 265 for nitrous oxide, and 23,500 for sulphur hexafluoride.
- Unlike carbon dioxide, this short-lived climate pollutant decomposes in a few of years.
- References: Landfills, wastewater treatment, rice farming, and industrial operations are all related to cattle farming.
- Thirty percent of global warming is caused by the principal emitters in the energy, agricultural, and waste sectors.
- Thirty-two percent of emissions created by humans are livestock-related, including manure and gastroenteric discharges.

Global Methane Pledge: Launched at UN COP26 climate conference in Glasgow. Over 90 countries signed, led by United States and European Union (India not signed up).

Unraveling MethaneSAT

- The Environmental Defence Fund (EDF) is working with the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, the New Zealand Space Agency, Harvard University, and others on the MethaneSAT project.

- With its spectrometer and high-resolution infrared sensor, MethaneSAT is able to identify methane concentrations as low as three parts per billion.
- MethaneSAT can address important data gaps by identifying tiny and big emitters with a wide-camera view of approximately 200 km by 200 km.

Key Features

- **Data Accessibility:** MethaneSAT will make its data available in almost real-time and at no cost, enabling regulators and interested parties to act quickly to reduce methane emissions.
- **Cloud Computing and AI:** MethaneSAT's massive data collection will be analysed using Google's cloud computing and AI technology, guaranteeing effective processing and interpretation.

Significance of Methane Emission Monitoring

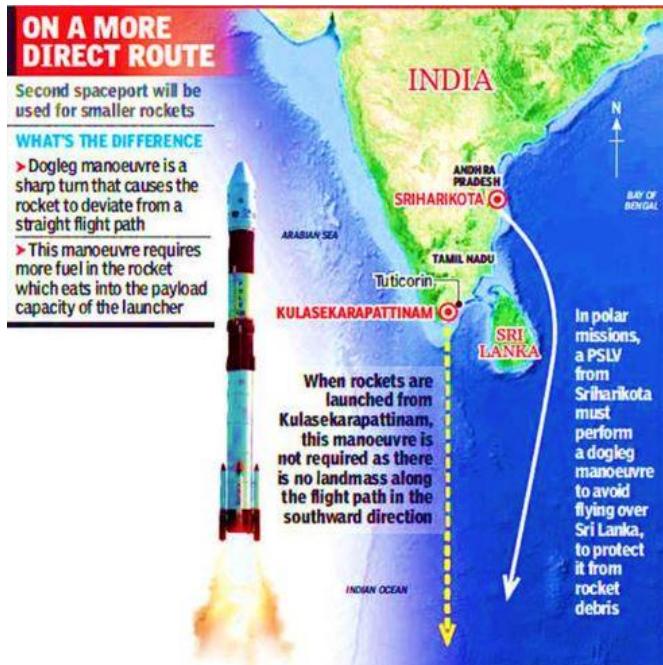
- **Impact of Greenhouse Gases:** Methane, second only to carbon dioxide in terms of contribution to global warming, is a strong greenhouse gas despite being invisible.
- **Health concerns:** Methane emissions cause significant health concerns and untimely death by contributing to the production of ground-level ozone.
- **Fossil Fuel Operations:** Since fossil fuel operations account for the majority of human-caused methane emissions, it is critical to monitor and minimise these emissions.

Implications

- **Impact on the World:** The introduction of MethaneSAT is in line with the increasing global demand for strict methane management regulations.
- **Transparency:** MethaneSAT data that is made available to the public will hold businesses and governments responsible for their pledges to reduce methane emissions.
- **Challenges with Behavioural Change:** Although MethaneSAT data can raise awareness, there is

no guarantee that polluters would alter their behaviour, which emphasises the necessity for further regulatory actions.

Kulasekarapattinam: ISRO’s New Rocket Launchport



In the news

- At Kulasekarapattinam, the Prime Minister recently laid the cornerstone for ISRO's second rocket launchport.
- This strategically placed facility, which cost Rs 986 crore, is in the Thoothukudi region of Tamil Nadu. Its primary purpose going forward is to handle small satellite launches and commercial, on-demand launches.

About Kulasekarapattinam

- It will rank second after the two-launch pad Satish Dhawan Space Centre (Sriharikota Range (SHAR), established in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, in 1971.
- Its main objective will be the commercial launch of Small Satellite Launch Vehicles (SSLVs).
- With a movable launch mechanism, it could put 24 satellites into orbit annually.
- Because of its advantageous location, which allows it to fire rockets directly south across the

Indian Ocean without having to go across landmasses, the port can launch small rockets with less fuel.

Need for such Facility

- **Fuel Saving:** This is not like the current launch site at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, where rockets must travel a curved route to the south in order to avoid Sri Lanka's landmass, adding to the fuel needed for launching into a polar orbit.
- **Reducing the load on Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR in Sriharikota:** The opening of the space sector to private companies requires an increase in commercial launches, which is why ISRO is building a second launchport.
- **Dedicated Launch for Small Payloads:** Kulasekarapattinam launchport will only accommodate smaller payloads, such as those for on-demand launches and commercial uses, while SHAR manages bigger missions.

Geographical Advantages

- **Strategic Location:** Because of its geographic, scientific, and tactical posture, Kulasekarapattinam offers a clear advantage for ISRO's upcoming launches, particularly for the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV).
- **Optimised Trajectory:** Compared to launches from SHAR, which currently have longer trajectories, the launch trajectory from Kulasekarapattinam allows SSLVs to travel directly south, saving fuel.

SSLVs: Purpose and Development

- **Tiny Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV):** Designed to meet the needs of commercial and on-demand launches, the SSLV can send tiny satellites into Low Earth Orbit that weigh between 10 and 500 kg.
- **Mission Successes:** While SSLV-D2's successful launch in February 2023 was a major turning point for ISRO's SSLV programme, SSLV-D1's August 2022 launch failed to reach the planned orbit.

Bengaluru’s First Driverless Metro Train, Aided by AI



In the news

- The launch of driverless trains equipped with advanced technology marks a key milestone for the Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL).
- These trains, the first of their kind in Bengaluru, are a significant advancement in the city's infrastructure for public transit.

About CBTC-Enabled Driverless Metro Train

- The autonomous metro trains are outfitted with Communication-Based Train Control (CBTC) technology, which facilitates smooth communication between the trains and control systems.
- Unattended Train Operations (UTO): The trains are fully automated, with the Operations Control Centre (OCC) providing Enhanced Supervision Capability for activities including train movement and door operations.
- Enhanced Safety Measures: To guarantee passenger welfare and operational effectiveness, the trains are equipped with sophisticated safety processes in addition to automation.

Manufacturing and Design

- Manufacturers: As part of the Made In India Initiative, CRRC Nanjing Puzhen Co Ltd and

Titagarh Rail Systems Ltd. collaborated to manufacture the train coaches.

- Technological Integration: The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in trains for track monitoring and safety improvement is a first for these trains.
- Customisation to Meet Bengaluru's Needs: The production and design processes have been adjusted to meet the unique demands and difficulties of Bengaluru's metropolitan setting.

Special Features

- AI-Powered Track Monitoring: To identify irregularities and guarantee track safety, AI algorithms examine sensor data.
- Advanced Surveillance Systems: Real-time monitoring of passenger activity and improved security measures are made possible by front and rear-view cameras.
- Emergency Egress Device (EED): Outfitted with an intuitive emergency system to guarantee passenger safety in the event of unanticipated events.
- Enhanced Passenger Convenience: The trains are equipped with amenities that are intended to improve passengers' comfort and ease of travel.

Safety Parameters

- Testing Protocol: Signalling, collision detection, and obstacle avoidance are among the static and dynamic testing that the prototype trains go through.
- Statutory Approvals: Safety standard compliance is monitored through trials carried out by regulatory organisations including the Commissioner of Metro Rail Safety (CMRS) and the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO).
- Strict Quality Assurance: To confirm the dependability and functionality of the trains under varied operating circumstances, a thorough set of checks and balances is part of the safety testing procedure.

Operational Considerations

- **Transition Period:** During the first six months of operation, the trains will be run by a human train operator.
- **Gradual Rollout:** After starting with a small number of trains, revenue operations will progressively move to fully autonomous operations.
- **Training and Skill Development:** To guarantee a seamless transition and operational efficiency, the shift to driverless operations will require training programmes and skill development efforts for metro staff.

Children’s Vulnerability to Skincare Products



In the news

- Concerns about the safety of skincare products and their potential long-term effects on children's health have been raised in light of the growing trend of children becoming interested in them.
- Parents are seeking skincare routines for their children, often ignoring potential hazards, due to the influence of social media and marketing.

Risks Associated with Children’s Skincare Products

- **Vulnerability to Harm:** Children are more vulnerable to negative reactions from skincare products since their skin is thinner, more sensitive, and less developed than that of adults.
- **Exposure to Toxicants:** Hand-to-mouth behaviour raises the possibility of consuming dangerous compounds included in skincare

products, which can be hazardous to one's health.

- **Biological Susceptibility:** Children are especially susceptible to the toxicants found in skincare products due to their rapid growth rate, growing tissues, and underdeveloped immune systems.

Insights from Research

- **Usage Patterns:** Research shows that children are frequently exposed to skincare products; in the United States, up to 70% of youngsters have used children's cosmetics and body products.
- **Health Risks:** Research indicates that children's growing physiology and behavioural dispositions may cause negative health impacts from prolonged exposure to makeup and body products.

Toxins in skincare products can pose risks to health due to their potential adverse effects. Some common toxic ingredients found in cosmetics include:

- **Polyacrylamide:** Possible acrylamide contamination.
- **PTFE:** Possible PFOA contamination.
- **Petrolatum:** Possible PAH contamination.
- **Formaldehyde:** A known carcinogen.
- **Paraformaldehyde:** A type of formaldehyde.
- **Methylene glycol:** A form of formaldehyde

Regulatory Imperatives

- **Medical Concerns:** Dermatologists voice concerns about youngsters using cosmeceuticals without supervision, highlighting the possible risks associated with ingredients like hydroquinone and steroids used in cosmetic products.
- **Regulation is Needed:** It is believed that regulations are necessary to limit the distribution of skincare items that contain dangerous substances and to shield kids from unsuitable goods.

Psychological Impact

- **Unrealistic Standards:** The promotion of flawless complexion as an ideal standard perpetuates unrealistic beauty standards among

children, impacting their self-esteem and body image.

Way Forward

- **Prioritising Safety:** When choosing skincare products for their kids, parents are encouraged to put safety, ease of use, and skin health first.
- **Dermatologists recommend a return to basic skincare regimens for children,** which include a nutritious diet, thorough washing, and moisturising.
- **Functional Necessity:** To counteract the effects of makeup and safeguard the skin's integrity, gentle cleaning and hydration are advised for kid performers and those subjected to heavy makeup.

Conclusion

- To protect children's health and wellbeing, it is critical to address the hazards connected with early skincare habits and put regulatory safeguards in place as the market for children's cosmetics grows.
- Parents may help their children navigate the skincare maze and develop a healthy relationship with skincare that prioritises function over beauty by putting safety, simplicity, and skin health first.

IndiaAI Mission launched



In the news

- The recent ratification of the IndiaAI Mission by the Union Cabinet is a critical step in using artificial intelligence (AI) for the advancement of the country.

- This mission, which has a large budget and several goals, intends to improve India's AI capabilities in a number of areas while encouraging innovation and tackling societal issues.

What is IndiaAI Mission?

- **Goals:** The IndiaAI Mission, which was started by the Digital India Corporation (DIC), aims to create a strong AI ecosystem that fosters growth and innovation.
- **Important Initiatives:** The mission comprises a range of efforts targeted at fostering AI-driven solutions, from improving computing infrastructure to pushing AI applications in vital sectors like healthcare and government.
- **Public-Private Partnership:** By utilising a model of public-private partnerships, the mission aims to combine the resources of the public and private sectors, guaranteeing scalability and successful execution.

Core Pillars of IndiaAI Mission

1. **IndiaBuilding** scalable AI computing infrastructure to satisfy the changing needs of AI startups and research projects is known as AI compute capacity.
2. **IndiaAI Innovation Centre:** Leading the charge in the creation and application of native AI models adapted to the requirements of particular industries.
3. **IndiaThe AI Datasets Platform** makes it easier to access top-notch datasets to support AI research and innovation.
4. **IndiaThe goal of the AI Application Development Initiative** is to encourage the use of AI solutions to solve problems in important industries.
5. **IndiaAI FutureSkills:** Developing AI talent at different academic levels through the expansion of training programmes and educational initiatives.
6. **IndiaFinancing for AI firms:** Encouraging innovation by providing deep-tech AI firms with efficient funding methods.

- 7. **Safe & Trusted AI:** Ensuring responsible AI implementation by creating local frameworks and tools.

Strategic Significance

- **National Development Agenda:** The government's goal of using technology to promote equitable growth and development is in line with the IndiaAI Mission.
- **Global Competitiveness:** The goal raises India's profile internationally and makes it more competitive by demonstrating its skills in AI innovation and use.
- **Economic Impetus:** By promoting AI-driven innovation and entrepreneurship, the mission leverages India's demographic dividend to propel economic growth and employment creation.
- **Regulatory Framework:** In order to address ethical and safety concerns, the goal emphasises the need for responsible AI governance and regulatory frameworks, even as it fosters innovation.

Integration with National Policy

- **All-inclusive Strategy:** The IndiaAI Mission supports current national programmes, like the Digital India campaign and attempts to increase the production of electronics.
- **Strategic Alignment:** The mission's emphasis on talent development and AI infrastructure is in line with more general policy goals that are meant to create an environment that is favourable to technology-driven innovation.

- **International Parallels:** Other countries are also prioritising AI development and regulatory frameworks to balance innovation with safety and ethics, which is consistent with the government's stance and a global trend.

Challenges and Regulatory Considerations

- **Regulatory Landscape Navigation:** To ensure ethical AI deployment and protect against possible hazards, policymakers must navigate complicated regulatory landscapes while fostering AI innovation.
- **Finding a balance** between promoting innovation and putting in place regulatory protections is still a major problem for governments throughout the world.
- **International Models Teach Us:** India can create a legislative framework that promotes innovation while maintaining ethical and safety standards by taking cues from global models.

Conclusion

- To sum up, the IndiaAI Mission offers a strategic path to leverage AI's revolutionary potential for social good, thereby ushering in a new era of AI-driven innovation and growth in India.
- This goal highlights India's dedication to being a global leader in AI innovation while navigating regulatory difficulties to ensure responsible and ethical AI deployment. It does this by encouraging collaboration between the public and private sectors and placing a high priority on talent development.

Security Issues

INS Jatayu: India's new Naval Base in Lakshadweep

In the news

- **Transforming from the Naval Detachment Minicoy** into the improved naval base INS Jatayu will signify India's dedication to strengthening security measures in the vital Lakshadweep Islands.

- The Indian Navy's strategic need to strengthen its presence in the area is highlighted by this development.

About INS Jatayu

- **Upgrade to Naval Base:** INS Jatayu will receive the necessary infrastructure, including an airstrip and housing facilities, to become a full-fledged naval base.

- **Strategic Location:** The Lakshadweep Islands are strategically significant because they are a gateway to the Indian Ocean and are located near important Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs).
- **Enhanced operating Capability:** The Navy's operating capabilities in the area have been markedly enhanced with the conversion of Naval Detachment Minicoy into INS Jatayu.
- **Geopolitical Dynamics:** The founding of INS Jatayu takes on more importance in light of the changing geopolitical dynamics, particularly China's growing sway in the Indian Ocean region.



A Strategic Asset: Lakshadweep

- **Geographic Context:** Lakshadweep is a chain of 36 islands that provide a critical link in India's maritime security architecture, situated between the Maldives and the Indian mainland.
- **Marine Routes:** Minicoy, in particular, is positioned strategically along important marine routes, such as the Nine Degree Channel and the Eight Degree Channel.

Future Prospects and Challenges

- **Operational Implications:** By establishing INS Jatayu, the Navy would be able to conduct effective anti-narcotics and anti-piracy operations in the western Arabian Sea by expanding its operational reach and responsiveness.

- **Ecological Considerations:** Careful planning and environmental permissions are required for infrastructure development on the island due to its delicate nature.
- **Operational Expansion:** By enabling operations for a variety of aircraft, the proposed airstrip at INS Jatayu will strengthen the Navy's surveillance capabilities and increase its operational reach.

Sela Tunnel: Enhancing Border Connectivity



In the news

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's opening of the Sela Tunnel is a critical turning point in the development of India's border infrastructure, especially in the vital Tawang area.

About Sela Tunnel Project

	Details
Location	West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh On the Balipara-Chariduar-Tawang (BCT) Road
Feat	World's longest bi-lane tunnel at an altitude above 13,000 feet.
Connectivity	Ensures all-weather connectivity between Guwahati in Assam and Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh.
Highway	Excavated below the Sela Pass on the NH-13 component of the Trans-Arunachal Highway system.
Construction	Built by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) under Project Vartak.

	Construction commenced on April 1, 2019.
Project Details	<p>Tunnel 1: Single-tube tunnel, 980m in length. –</p> <p>Tunnel 2: Bi-lane tunnel, 1555m in length, including one escape tube for emergencies.</p> <p>Roads: Approach to Tunnel 1 (7100m), road between the two tunnels (1340m), approach to Tunnel 2 (340m).</p>

Infrastructure Details

- **Strategic Location:** The Sela Tunnel, which connects Guwahati to the strategically significant Tawang area of Arunachal Pradesh, is strategically located.
- **Military Significance:** By enabling quicker military transportation to Tawang, the Indian Army's IV Corps is based there, guaranteeing prompt deployment and operational preparedness along the border.
- **Operational Benefits:** The tunnel improves logistical efficiency by cutting travel distance and time for convoys by approximately an hour by avoiding snow-covered terrain at Sela Pass and foggy sections at Nechiphu.
- **Technology and Safety:** The Sela Tunnel was built to the highest standards stipulated by the Defence Ministry, utilizing cutting-edge safety measures and the innovative Austrian tunnelling process.

Geopolitical Context

- **Strategic Considerations:** Tawang's location near the Brahmaputra lowlands and its function as an essential route to Tezpur in Assam bolster India's military stance.
- Tawang is strategically valuable due to its historical and cultural significance as the birthplace of the sixth Dalai Lama and a major center of Tibetan Buddhism.
- **Security Implications:** India is on guard, bolstering its military presence and infrastructure to protect its sovereignty in light

of China's territorial claims over Tawang and Arunachal Pradesh.

India's Indigenous Fifth-Gen Fighter Jet AMCA

FUTURE'S FIGHTER

Stealth aircraft are designed to avoid detection by enemy radars and radar-guided weapons. India's Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) Mark-1 will be a fifth-generation stealth aircraft.

LENGTH 17.6m

WINGSPAN 11.13m

MAXIMUM TAKE-OFF WEIGHT 25,000kg

MAXIMUM SPEED 2,600 kmph (Mach 2.15)

COMBAT RANGE 1,620km

SERVICE CEILING 20,000m

PAYLOAD CAPACITY 6,500kg

PERFORMANCE Can achieve superior speed, altitude, maneuverability

COST ₹15,000 crore to develop the first five jets

WINGS The shoulder-mounted, diamond-shaped tapered wings will reduce drag at supersonic speeds; aligned edges for stealth

FUSELAGE Faceted design; radar-absorbent surface

COCKPIT Glass cockpit with single bubble canopy

INTERNAL WEAPONS BAY Under the fuselage

WEAPONS Air to Air: Class Combat Missile; Air to Ground: Joint Direct Attack Munitions; Beyond Visual Range Missile; Precision Guided Munitions

AMCA VARIANTS AMCA Mark-1: 42+ made engines; Fifth-gen technologies; AMCA Mark-2: 42+ made indigenously developed engines; Sixth-gen technologies (expected)

FOURTH-GENERATION F-16: Can switch and swing between air-to-air and air-to-ground roles; first fighter to make regular use of fly-by-wire control system (a fully electronic flight control system); Development: 1960s to late 1980s; Examples: MiG-29, Su-27, F/A-18, F-15, F-16 and Mirage-2000

4.5-GENERATION Rafale: Evolved from fourth-gen aircraft; better avionics and limited stealth characteristics; and reduced visibility compared with fourth-gen aircraft; Development: late 1990s and into the 2010s; Examples: Eurofighter Typhoon, Dassault Rafale, MiG-35, Su-30SM, F/A-18E/F Super Hornet

FIFTH-GENERATION F-22: Advanced stealth characteristics and advanced integrated avionics; improved situational awareness and decision superiority over adversaries; Development: 1980s-present; Examples: F-22, F-35, Su-57 (not inducted yet), Chengdu J-20 (stealth)

Turkey's TF-4 has a similar timeline as the AMCA

BAE Systems Tempest and Future Combat Air System are the European programmes working on next-gen fighters

South Korea's advanced fighter KF-21 aims to be inducted by first flight this year

In the news

- An important step toward developing India's fifth-generation Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) has been taken with the approval of a Rs 15,000 crore project by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS).

About Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)

- The AMCA project is to develop and produce a multirole fighter jet that is stealthy in order to support the combat fleet of the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- It was started for the first time in 2007.
- Under the DRDO, it is overseen by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA).

Features of AMCA

- **Stealth Technology:** With its sophisticated stealth features, the 25-ton twin-engine aircraft will avoid enemy radar detection, matching or even exceeding current stealth fighters of the fifth generation operating worldwide.
- **Capacity for Weapons and Fuel:** The aircraft will include an internal weapons bay that can hold a variety of weaponry, including indigenous

munitions, and a covert 6.5-ton internal fuel tank.

- **Engine Specifications:** The AMCA Mk2 model will be propelled by a more potent 110kN engine that was developed domestically by DRDO's Gas Turbine Research Establishment (GTRE) in cooperation with foreign defense partners, replacing the original GE414 engine.
- **Specialized Design Features:** To maximize engine performance and reduce radar emissions, the AMCA will use cutting-edge design elements like a serpentine air intake duct and a diverterless supersonic inlet.

Significance of the development

- **Indigenous boost:** After India withdrew from its Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft (FGFA) partnership with Russia in 2018, the AMCA project highlights India's pursuit of self-reliance in defense technology.
- **Benefits of Stealth:** The AMCA's low electromagnetic signature as a fifth-generation fighter will increase its lethality and survivability in contemporary combat situations.
- **Enhanced Capabilities:** The AMCA will have a major edge over its fourth-generation equivalents because of its superior sensors and weaponry, which will allow it to detect and engage hostile aircraft while remaining undetected.

Development Timeline and Prospects

- **Flight Schedule:** The ADA hopes to launch the AMCA within four and a half to five years of receiving CCS permission. Its complete development is anticipated to take ten years or more.
- **Manufacturing Partnerships:** HAL will produce airplanes, and it is expected that working with the commercial sector will speed up the manufacturing process.
- **Operational Imperatives:** The IAF's need for seven AMCA squadrons highlights how important it is to bolster India's air combat

capability in the face of a declining number of fighter squadrons.

Global Context and Future Prospects

- **Limited Fifth-Generation Fleet:** India will strengthen its strategic position in the area by joining the AMCA's exclusive list of nations with fifth-generation stealth jets, which already includes the US, China, and Russia.
- **The IAF has to modernize.** While outdated aircraft are being retired, the addition of AMCA squadrons will fill in important operational gaps and guarantee a strong air combat fleet going forward.

Conclusion

- The establishment of AMCA signals the beginning of a new chapter in Indian defense manufacture and demonstrates the country's dedication to both technological innovation and military modernization.
- With its cutting-edge capabilities and covert features, the AMCA is poised to revolutionize aerial combat and solidify India's standing as a powerful player in the world of defense.

Exercise Tiger Triumph-24



Why in the news

- The third edition of the bilateral tri-service 'Exercise Tiger Triumph– 24' between India and the US will be held on the Eastern Seaboard in the US from March 18 to 31.

Exercise Tiger Triumph-24

- Improving communication between the Indian Navy and the US military for the purpose of carrying out humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations is the main goal of this exercise.
- Since 2019, it has been held. In 2022, the second edition took place.
- The goal of the exercise is to improve Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) so that both nations' troops can coordinate quickly and easily during HADR operations.
- Participants include:
 1. Indian Navy: Ships with integral helicopters and landing crafts, navy aircraft, Indian Army personnel and vehicles, Indian Air Force aircraft and helicopters, and the Rapid Action Medical Team (RAMT).
 2. US Military: US Navy ships with embarked troops from the US Marine Corps and US Army.
- Indian and US naval assets, along with troops and equipment, are deployed for the Sea Phase after the harbor phase.

All Major Defence Exercises between India and the US

- Yudh Abhyas: The Indian Army and the US Army participate in this annual bilateral exercise together. Its main objective is to improve coordination and interoperability in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations.
- Malabar Exercise: Japan, India, and the United States participate in this trilateral naval drill.

Enhancing interoperability in disaster response, anti-submarine warfare, and maritime security are its goals.

- Cope India: The Indian Air Force and the US Air Force conduct an air force exercise together. Its main objective is to improve coordination and interoperability in aerial combat tactics, methods, and processes.
- Vajra Prahar: The Indian Army and the US Army are participating in a bilateral Special Forces exercise. It is centered on special operations, hostage rescue, and counterterrorism.
- Red Flag Exercise: The Indian Air Force frequently participates in the US Air Force's Red Flag Exercise, which is hosted at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada, while it is not just a bilateral exercise between India and the US. The advanced aerial combat training and tactics are the main focus of this exercise.

Significance of the Exercise

- Building Bilateral Ties: The exercise helps to fortify India and the United States' strategic alliance and collaboration.
- Preparedness: Both nations seek to improve their capacity to react swiftly and effectively to natural catastrophes and humanitarian emergencies.
- Cooperation: By working together on humanitarian operations, the exercise highlights India and the US's commitment to global peace and security.

Admissions are Open for the 2024-2025 Academic Year

Contact Us

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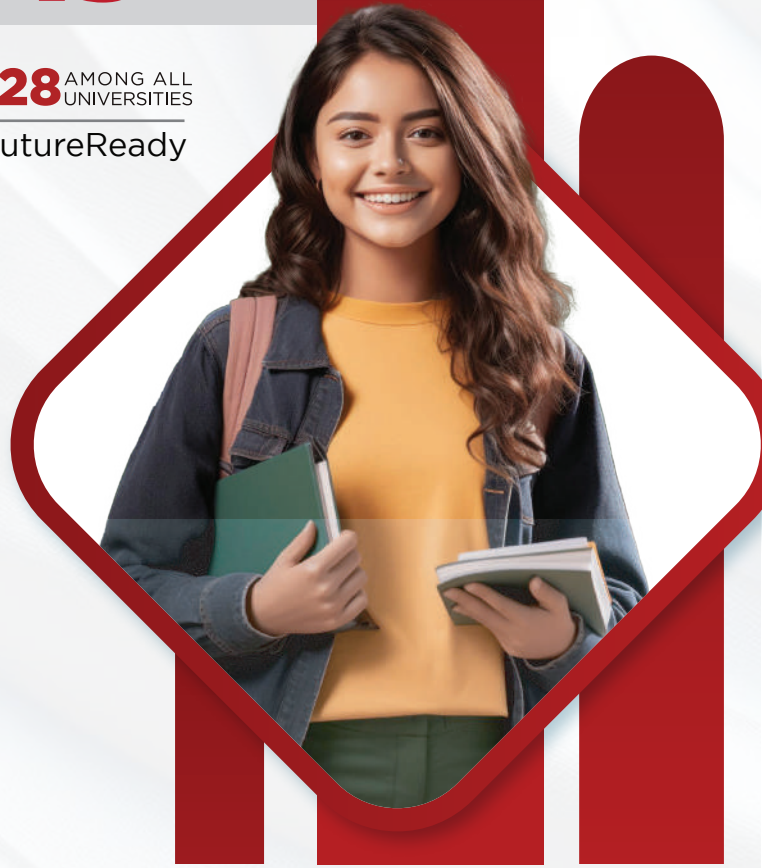
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- ✓ Focus on Communication Skills, Personality Development, and Soft Skills.
- ✓ 1500+ hours of total coaching period to complete the UPSC syllabus three times.
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