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# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## February

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



**KL IAS Academy**



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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 February 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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Topic Wise Current Affairs

## Section 2

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## SECTION 1

# Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short



## 1: Important Days



### Indian Coast Guard Day : 01 February :-

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) will celebrate its 48th Raising Day on February 1, 2024. It is the world's fourth largest Coast Guard and has played an important role in securing India's coasts and enforcing maritime legislation. Currently, Indian Coast Guard has 158 ships and 70 aircraft in its fleet. The Union Cabinet approved the setting up of a 'Coast Guard' in 1977 with two frigates and five patrol boats transferred from the Indian Navy. Therefore, the Indian Coast Guard came into being on 1 February 1977.



### Rheumatoid Arthritis Awareness Day : 02 February :-

Every year, on February 2, Rheumatoid Arthritis Awareness Day is recognized. On this day, the Rheumatoid Patient Foundation launched a campaign to promote awareness of the auto-immune disease that assaults the joints and produces inflammation, among other potentially hazardous disorders. In 1858, Alfred B. Garrod invented the term "rheumatoid arthritis" to describe the ailment. Previously, it was mixed up with osteoarthritis. Garrod clarified the name and distinguished between the two. The foundation established Rheumatoid Awareness Day in 2013 to increase knowledge and dispel myths about the condition.



### World Wetland Day : 02 February :-

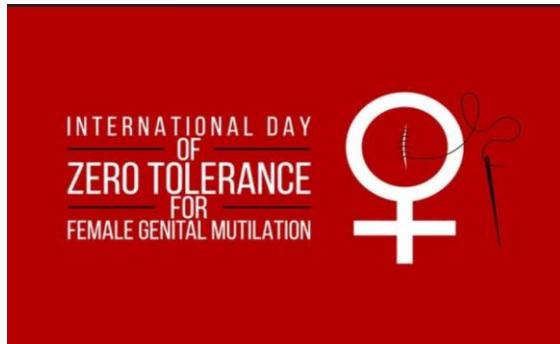
World Wetland Day is observed annually on February 2 to raise awareness of the critical role wetlands provide for people and the environment. The proposal for the Wetlands Convention was first made on February 2, 1971, at Ramsar, Iran. Wetlands are areas of the earth where the soil is covered in water. They sustain both terrestrial and aquatic species. India has the largest network of Ramsar Sites in Asia, making these sites a critical ecological network for conservation of global biological diversity and supporting human well-being. The theme of World Wetlands Day -2024 is 'Wetlands and Human Wellbeing'.



### World Cancer Day : 04 February :-

Every year on February 4, the world celebrates World Cancer Day. It is celebrated to unite the world in the fight against cancer. Cancer is a condition in which a group of normal cells changes in the body, resulting in uncontrolled, abnormal growth and the formation of a lump known as a tumour. The World Health Organization

initiated the first Cancer Day in 1933, which was commemorated in Geneva, Switzerland. The theme for World Cancer day for the last three years - 2022, 2023 and 2024 - is “Close the Care Gap: Everyone Deserves Access To Cancer Care”.



#### **International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation : 06 February :-**

The International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation is commemorated annually on February 6. The day raises awareness and educates people about the ramifications for girls who undergo genital mutilation procedures. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) refers to all treatments that change or harm female genitalia for non-medical purposes. Internationally, it is considered a major violation of human rights. This risks the health and integrity of girls and women across the world. This year, the theme is “Her Voice. Her Future.”



#### **National Deworming Day : 10 February :-**

National Deworming Day is marked on February 10 as part of the Union Health Ministry's initiative to ensure that every child in the country is worm-free. The government introduced National Deworming Day in 2015 to deworm all children aged one to nineteen. Every

year on February 10, all states and union territories commemorate National Deworming Day, which is followed by a mop-up day on February 15. Some states also conduct a bi-annual round on August 10, depending on the worm prevalence in their state.



#### **World Pulses Day : 10 February :-**

World Pulses Day is held annually on February 10. Pulses are a staple food in most countries. They have a great nutritional content and are taken on a daily basis. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations coordinated the first International Year of Pulses celebrations, which successfully raised public awareness about the importance and health advantages of pulses. In 2018, February 10 was declared as World Pulses Day by the United Nations General Assembly. This year, the theme for World Pulses Day is ‘Pulses: nourishing soils and people’.



#### **International Day of Women and Girls in Science : 11 February :-**

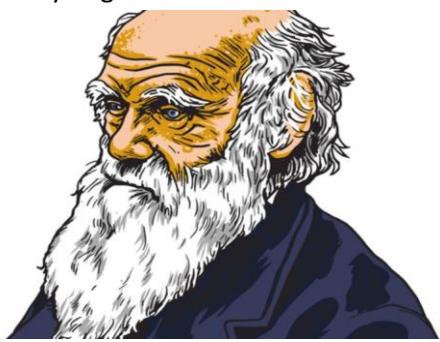
Celebrated every year on February 11, the International Day of Women and Girls in Science is observed by the United Nations to promote the full and equal access and participation of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. The 9th

International Day of Women and Girls in Science Assembly's main theme is: "Women and Girls in Science Leadership, a New Era for Sustainability". Despite significant progress, women and girls remain under-represented in STEM fields. This day highlights the need to address gender disparities and promote equal opportunities for women and girls to pursue STEM careers.



#### National Productivity Day : 12 February :-

National Productivity Day is observed every year in India to commemorate the establishment of the National Productivity Council (NPC). The NPC's mission is to create national awareness of the need for increased productivity. Every year, National Productivity Day is marked on February 12 as part of the Indian Productivity Week, which runs from February 12 to February 18. Every year a specific theme is designated to celebrate the day. This year's theme is "Artificial Intelligence (AI)-Productivity Engine for Economic Growth."



#### Darwin Day : 12 February :-

Every year on February 12, Darwin Day is recognized to commemorate Charles Darwin's birthday. Darwin Day is marked to encourage people all around the world to reflect on the significance of Charles Darwin's scientific

ideas, works, curiosity to discover new things, quest for truth, and so on. According to his theory, the species survived through a process called natural selection, where those are successfully adapted or evolved to meet the changing requirements of their natural habitat but those who failed to evolve and reproduce died.



#### International Epilepsy Day 2024 : 12 February :-

Every year, the second Monday of February is observed as International Epilepsy Day, which this year falls on February 12th. The day raises awareness and educates people about the true nature of epilepsy, as well as the critical need for improved treatment, better care, and increased research funding. Epilepsy is derived from the Greek word which means 'to be seized, to be overwhelmed by surprise'. Suffering from epilepsy means having a tendency to have recurring seizures. People of all ages, genders, and backgrounds can be affected by epilepsy, making it a significant global health concern. The theme for 2024 is 'Milestones on My Epilepsy Journey'.



#### World Radio Day : 13 February :-

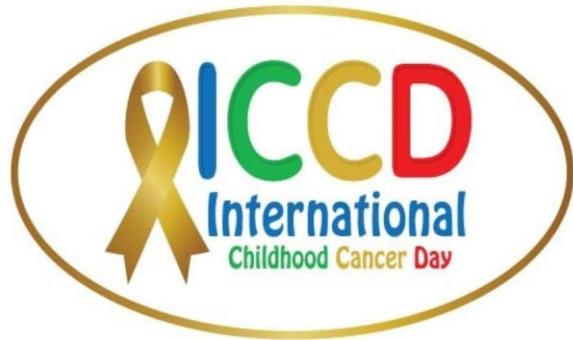
World Radio Day is observed yearly on February 13. Guglielmo Marconi is widely regarded as the first to transmit radio signals in 1895. The radio first appeared commercially in the early 1920s. Radio stations were established over three decades later, and the radio and

broadcasting system had become a global commodity by the 1950s. Nearly 60 years later, in 2011, UNESCO Member States declared February 13 to be World Radio Day. It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2013 as an International event. The theme of World Radio Day 2024 is "Radio: A century informing, entertaining and educating."



#### Sarojini Naidu's Birth Anniversary : 13 February :-

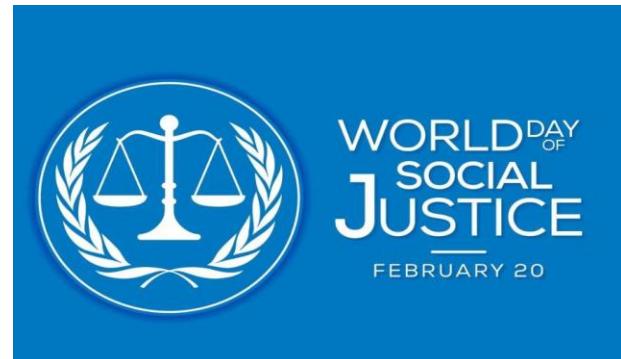
The nation celebrates Sarojini Naidu's birth anniversary on February 13 every year. This year marks the 145th birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu. She was a poet and political activist. Her poetry earned her the nickname 'Nightingale of India'. Born in Hyderabad on February 13, 1879, she was regarded as one of the most popular women of the twentieth century. A disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, she was instrumental in the Indian National Movement, which fought for the country's independence. In 1925, Sarojini Naidu became the first woman to become the President of the Indian National Congress.



#### International Childhood Cancer Day : 15 February :-

International Childhood Cancer Day (ICCD) took place on February 15 to raise awareness of the issues associated with childhood cancer and the need to assist children,

adolescents, and their families in combating this awful disease. Every year, over 4 lakh children worldwide get cancer, but only half of them receive a diagnosis. 70% of low and middle-income countries, and 20% of children in high-income countries are not cured. World Childhood Cancer Awareness Day focusses on raising global awareness about childhood cancer.



#### World Day of Social Justice : 20 February :-

Every year on February 20, the world celebrates World Day of Social Justice. The primary purpose of marking this day is to raise awareness about social injustice and to bring diverse communities together. The day also raises awareness about eradicating poverty, gender, physical inequality, illiteracy, and religious discrimination. In a broader aspect of the day, World Day of Social Justice Day promotes awareness of social injustice and breaking down barriers based on gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, or handicap. The theme of World Day of Social Justice 2024 is "Bridging Gaps, Building Alliances".



INTERNATIONAL  
MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY

#### International Mother Language Day : 21 February :-

Every year on February 21st, International Mother Language Day is celebrated to encourage linguistic and cultural variety, as well as multilingualism. The day was initially declared by the General Conference of the

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in November 1999, and has been commemorated annually since February 2000. Every year, International Mother Language Day is commemorated to promote the preservation and conservation of all languages, particularly endangered ones, as well as to urge individuals to speak and promote their mother tongue. The theme of International Mother Language Day celebration 2024 is "Multilingual education is a pillar of intergenerational learning".



#### World Scout Day : 22 February :-

World Scout Day is observed on February 22 to mark the birth anniversary of Lord Robert Baden-Powell, the founder of the Boy Scout movement. Born on February 22, 1857, in Paddington, London, he was instrumental in developing the global scouting movement. National Scout Organisations around the world celebrate this day with a variety of activities such as fundraising, food drives, and other forms of community service. The Theme for World Scout Day 2024 is "Scouts for a Better World."



#### World Thinking Day : 22 February :-

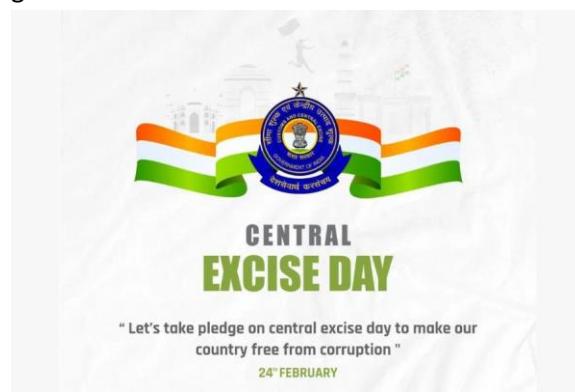
World Thinking Day is observed annually on February 22 by the World Organization of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

(WAGGGS). Although it aims to raise funds for the 10 million girl scouts and guides in over 150 countries, this day also honors sisterhood, solidarity, and women's empowerment. At the 4th World Conference in 1926, participants determined that February 22nd would be recognized as a special day for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts worldwide. The theme of this year's World Thinking Day is - Our World, Our Thriving Future.



#### World peace and understanding day : 23 February :-

World Peace and Understanding Day is commemorated annually on February 23. Actually, this day commemorates Rotary International's initial convention. This gathering of businesspeople was supposed to be a location where their backgrounds did not matter, which sparked a chain of events that culminated in the formation of Rotary International. Rotary International was founded in Chicago, Illinois, and is an organization devoted to humanitarian service, world peace, and goodwill.



#### Central Excise Day : 24 February :-

Every year on February 24, India celebrates Central Excise Day, which commemorates the establishment of the Central Excise and Salt Act of 1944. The act was

designed to govern the manufacture and production of salt, as well as the imposition of excise duties on other items produced or made in India. The Central Board of Excise and Customs, which is in charge of managing indirect taxes in India, commemorates this day by hosting a variety of events and programs to raise awareness about the necessity of paying taxes and the excise department's role in the economy.



#### World Protein Day – 27 February:-

Each year on February 27, World Protein Day is commemorated. The purpose of this day is to highlight the significance of protein in our diets and to raise awareness about its health benefits, aiming to enhance global nutritional security. Protein can be obtained from various sources. The inception of World Protein Day traces back to an initiative by the US Soybean Export Council (USSEC). Its primary objective is to enlighten individuals about the crucial role of sufficient protein intake in fostering improved nutrition and health.



#### National Science Day : 28 February :-

National Science Day commemorates the discovery of the Raman Effect. Every year on February 28, the government observes National Science Day to commemorate and appreciate scientists' contributions to India's progress. On February 28, 1928, CV Raman revealed the discovery of the Raman Effect, for which he received the Nobel Prize in 1930. The theme for this year's National Science Day celebration is "Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat." The government of India designated February 28 as National Science Day in 1986.



#### Rare Disease Day 2024 : 29 February :-

Rare Disease Day is observed annually on February 28. However, as 2024 is a leap year, Rare Disease Day will be marked on February 29. Rare Disease Day strives to increase awareness of rare diseases and how they affect people's lives. It serves as a reminder to campaign for access to diagnosis, treatment, and care for persons suffering from these often-overlooked medical diseases. The day originated in 2008 and it was conceived by the European Organisation for Rare Diseases (EURORDIS) as a response to the lack of visibility and support for people affected by rare diseases. The theme for Rare Disease Day 2024 is "Share Your Colours".

## 2: Agreements



### NTPC Green Energy Inks Rs 80,000 Cr MoU With Maharashtra Govt For Green Hydrogen :-

NTPC Green Energy Ltd (NGEL) announced that it has inked an MoU with the Maharashtra government to develop green hydrogen projects and derivatives in Maharashtra. The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was inked as part of the state government's Green Investment Plan for the next five years, with a potential investment of Rs 80,000 crore, NGEL said in a statement. NGEL is a wholly-owned subsidiary of NTPC with an operational capacity of over 3.4 GW and 26 GW in pipeline, including 7 GW under implementation.



### Telangana State Aviation Academy enters into MoU with ISRO's NSRC to train drone pilots :-

Telangana State Aviation Academy has inked a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with ISRO's National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) to provide advanced drone pilot training. The deal includes training

in drone piloting, drone data management, and data analysis. The academy will host a 15-day data analysis, processing, and mapping training session for NRSC scientists and drone pilots. Meanwhile, officials from the aviation academy requested Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy to allocate land to develop an exclusive facility for training drone pilots in Hyderabad.



### India-Russia Sign Protocol On Nuclear Reactors Agreement :-

India and Russia have signed a protocol amending the 2008 intergovernmental agreement on collaboration in the construction of additional nuclear reactors at the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project site, as well as the development of Russian-designed nuclear power plants at new Indian sites. Alexey Likhachev, Director General of Rosatom State Corporation, and Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Chairman of Atomic Energy Commission of India, Secretary of Department for Atomic Energy of the Government of India, signed in the agreement.



### ADB And Government Of India Sign \$200 Million Loan For Brahmaputra River Project :-

The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed a \$200 million loan to strengthen flood and riverbank erosion risk management along the 650 kilometres long main stem of the Brahmaputra river in the state of Assam. The project builds on the success and lessons from the ADB-financed Assam Integrated Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Investment Programme implemented during 2010–2020, and similar investments in Bangladesh and will continue to tackle recurrent flooding and continual riverbank erosion of the Brahmaputra river, the Ministry of Finance said in a statement.



### Prama India & C-DAC Forge Partnership For Thermal Camera Technology :-

Prama India has formed a relationship with the Indian government's Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) to promote local manufacturing and innovation. This collaboration, which is being facilitated by a Transfer of Technology (ToT) agreement, will focus on Thermal Camera production, marketing, and support. The relationship was officially announced during the Digital India FutureLabs Summit, which highlighted India's advancements in next-generation electronics. The partnership aligns with the vision of Viksit Bharat and Surakshit Bharat, contributing to the nation's self-reliance and security objectives.



### India signs MoU to interlink UPI with UAE's instant payment platform AANI :-

In the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, India and the UAE issued many memorandum of understanding, including one on the interlinking of instant payment networks UPI and UAE's AANI. This will allow for seamless cross-border transactions between the two nations. The MoUs covered multiple areas, ranging from investment treaty, digital infrastructure projects and the interlinking of debit cards, credit cards and the online payment platforms.



### RBI And Nepal Rastra Bank Sign Pact For UPI-NPI Linkage :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced that it and Nepal Rastra Bank have reached an agreement to integrate the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) of India with the National Payments Interface (NPI) of Nepal for cross-border remittances. "The integration of Indian and Nepalese fast payment systems is aimed at facilitating cross-border remittances between the two countries by enabling users of the two systems to make instant, low-cost fund transfers," RBI said in its press release. Post-implementation, users of these applications will be able

to conduct instant transactions at a lesser cost between the countries.



#### India And Colombia Sign MoU On Digital Cooperation :-

India and Colombia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on the sharing of successful digital solutions deployed at the population level for digital transformation. Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Union Minister of State for Electronics and IT, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, signed the Memorandum of Understanding with Colombian Minister of Information Technologies and Communications, Mauricio Lizcano. India is keen on partnering with Colombia by building upon development partnership on digital transformation leading to a smooth adoption of Digital Public Infrastructure in Colombia.



#### Tata Steel Partners With IIT Bhubaneswar REP To Drive Innovation :-

Tata Steel recently inked an MoU with IIT Bhubaneswar Research and Entrepreneurship Park (REP) to promote innovation, research, and entrepreneurship in mutually beneficial ventures. According to the agreement, Tata Steel and IIT Bhubaneswar REP, a company promoted by IIT Bhubaneswar, have joined hands to explore collaboration in different areas including materials

processing and modelling, energy and environment, and low carbon steel production and circular economy, Tata Steel said in a statement.



#### CIAL, BPCL To Establish 1st Green Hydrogen Plant At Cochin Airport :-

Cochin International Airport, the world's first airport powered entirely by solar energy, has signed an agreement with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) to establish a green hydrogen plant on airport grounds, making Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL), as it claims, the first airport operator in the world to have a hydrogen power generation facility on its premises. The agreement for the green hydrogen plant was exchanged at the Assembly complex in Thiruvananthapuram in the presence of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and the Chairman, CIAL.



#### Fisheries Department Signed MoU With ONDC For Improved Fisherman Market Access:-

Union Minister of Fisheries Parshottam Rupala attended the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Department of Fisheries and the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) in New Delhi. In a release, Fisheries Ministry said that the collaboration between Department of Fisheries and ONDC will facilitate the implementation of technology-driven

solutions, improve efficiency, collectivisation and competitiveness of the small scale producers and marketers.



#### **IRED A And PNB Collaborate On Renewable Energy Projects :-**

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) and Punjab National Bank (PNB) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to accelerate renewable energy activities across the country. The agreement lays the path for collaborative efforts in co-lending and loan syndication across a wide range of renewable energy projects. It covers joint lending, loan syndication and underwriting, management of Trust and Retention Account (TRA) for IREDA borrowers, and working towards competitive terms of sanction, including pricing on IREDA borrowings.



#### **CleanMax And Bangalore International Airport Forge Long-Term Partnership For Renewable Power :-**

CleanMax, a renewable power solutions provider, and Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) have inked a 25-year long-term power purchase deal to generate and provide renewable energy. According to a news release, the electricity will be sourced from a 45.9 MW Solar-wind Captive Power Project owned by Clean Max BIAL Renewable electricity Private Limited, a special purpose corporation. The captive power project set up in a solar-wind farm located in Jagaluru, Karnataka, owned and operated by CleanMax, will have a 36 MW solar power plant and 9.9 MW wind power plant.



#### **Nokia And IISc Partner For 6G Research And Development In Bengaluru :-**

Nokia, a Finnish handset company, has announced a collaboration with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) to conduct joint research on 6G technologies and their applications, which will have a direct societal impact in India. According to a corporate statement, they will collaborate with IISc at the telecom company's recently opened 6G Lab in Bengaluru to research 6G radio technologies, 6G architecture, and the application of machine learning to the 6G air interface. The collaboration will help develop reference architectures, software frameworks and algorithms, with the goal of contributing their joint research to 6G technology and standards.



**Kalyani Steels signs MoU with Odisha govt to set up manufacturing unit :-**

Kalyani Steel Ltd has signed an MoU with the Odisha government to establish a manufacturing facility with an investment of Rs 11,750 crore. The business claimed in a statement that the project in Gajamara, Dhenkanal district, will create 10,000 jobs by manufacturing titanium metal, aerospace and automotive components, and advanced specialty steel. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said the collaboration will harness opportunities for the state to emerge as a high-skill job creator. Patnaik also said the project is a "perfect match for our aspirations for creating an ecosystem conducive to new-age industries".



**SSB inks MoU with Bengaluru institute to provide high-class education for wards of its troops:-**

The Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bengaluru-based United World Academy to provide world-class, affordable education for the children of its current and retired staff. The MoU was signed by Pradeep Kumar Gupta, Inspector General of the SSB, and KC Vijaya Kumar, President of the United World Academy in Bangalore. The objective of the agreement is to provide high-quality education to the wards of martyrs and serving or retired SSB personnel.



**Tamil Nadu State Police Department signs MoU with CUTN :-**

The Tamil Nadu Police has inked a memorandum of understanding with the Central University of Tamil Nadu (CUTN) Tiruvarur to implement a comprehensive Psychological Support Management Programme for police officers in the Central Zone. As part of the MoU, awareness campaigns, seminars, workshops, and other educational activities will be held to educate both police officers and the general public about psychosocial issues, mental health concerns, and the negative impacts of drug, alcohol, and substance abuse addiction.

### 3: Appointments



#### **Shri Pawan Kumar Assumes Charge As Chief Adviser (Cost) In Ministry Of Finance :-**

Shri Pawan Kumar, ICoAS, has taken charge as Chief Adviser (Cost), Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, following approval by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC). Shri Kumar is a 1992-batch Indian Cost Accounts Service official with the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance. Shri Kumar is a qualified Cost Accountant and possesses a diverse work experience in various capacities at different Ministries/Departments and autonomous bodies like Tariff Commission, Delhi Development Authority, Director General of Trade Remedies, Department of Economic Affairs, Department of Public Enterprises etc.



#### **Anil Kumar Lahoti Appointed Chairman Of TRAI :-**

Anil Kumar Lahoti, former Chief of the Railway Board, has been appointed Chairman of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), filling a position that had been vacant for four months. Former chief PD Vaghela left the

position in November 2023, after his two-year term expired. Lahoti will succeed TRAI member Meenakshi Gupta, who was temporarily assigned the top position. Before working in the Railway Board, Lahoti served under various capacities in Northern, Central, North Central, Western and West Central Railways.



#### **Apurva Chandra appointed Health Secretary :-**

The Appointment Committee of the Union Cabinet has approved the appointment of many senior officers to new posts in several Ministries. Apurva Chandra has been named Secretary of the Department of Health and Family Welfare. Mr. Chandra is currently the Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Sanjay Jaju will become the new Information and Broadcasting Secretary. Raj Kumar Goyal has been appointed as the Secretary, Department of Border Management in the Ministry of Home Affairs.



#### **Justice Ritu Bahri Becomes First Woman Chief Justice Of Uttarakhand High Court :-**

Justice Ritu Bahri, a prominent member of the Punjab and Haryana High Court (HC), has officially assumed the role of Chief Justice (CJ) of the Uttarakhand High Court. This appointment was made following the collegium's endorsement and subsequent approval from the Union Law Ministry. Notably, she is the first woman to hold such a senior position in the hill state's judicial history. Justice Bahri, born in Jalandhar in 1962, completed her schooling in Chandigarh and earned a law degree from Punjab University in 1985.



#### **Hon'ble Justice U.U. Lalit Joins K.R. Mangalam University As Distinguished Professor :-**

In a historic move, K.R. Mangalam University welcomes the renowned former Chief Justice of India, Hon'ble Justice U.U. Lalit, as Eminent Jurist and recognized Professor at The School of Legal Studies. This notable addition comes as the university is ranked second in Haryana by the BW Legal World Law School Rankings 2022, demonstrating its dedication to quality in legal education. As an Eminent Jurist and Distinguished Professor, Justice U.U. Lalit brings extensive legal expertise, unwavering integrity, and dedication to justice.



#### **Naveen Tahilyani Appointed Tata Digital's New CEO & MD :-**

A big top-deck modification, Tata Digital has appointed Naveen Tahilyani as CEO and Managing Director of the Tata Group's Ecommerce Unit, succeeding Pratik Pal. Tahilyani, the present CEO and MD of Tata AIA Life Insurance, will take up his new post on February 19. Sources said Tahilyani was handpicked by Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran after having demonstrated good execution in the insurance, banking and asset management business of the group.



#### **Ajay Kumar Choudhary Appointed Non-Executive Chairman Of NPCI:-**

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has announced the nomination of Ajay Kumar Choudhary as Non-Executive Chairman of the Board 2024. Ajay Kumar Choudhary is a renowned central banker with over three decades of experience in the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). In October 2023, he completed his dedicated service to the institution as Executive Director. Choudhary has a proven track record and accomplishments in the domain of Banking Regulation, Supervision and FinTech areas in various capacities.



CA. Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal  
President, ICAI (2024-25)

CA. Charanjot Singh Nanda  
Vice President, ICAI (2024-25)

**ICAI Elects New President, Vice President :-**

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has elected Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal as its next president. Aniket S. Talati has given the baton to CA Ranjeet. He has taken over as the 72nd President of ICAI. Agarwal, a Calcutta University graduate, has been practicing as a Chartered Accountant for the past 24 years. Additionally, Charanjot Singh Nanda has been elected as Vice President for the Year 2024-25. He passed BCom from M L N College in 1987 and was placed in Kurukshetra University merit list during all three years.

**SBICAPS Appoints Virendra Bansal As The New MD And CEO :-**

SBI Capital Markets (SBICAPS), the wholly-owned subsidiary and investment banking arm of State Bank of India (SBI), has chosen Virendra Bansal as its new Managing Director and CEO. He succeeds Rajay Kumar Sinha, who has been appointed Whole Time Member (Finance and Investment) of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) for a three-year term beginning January 2024. Prior to his appointment as SBICAPS' chief, Bansal was the Country Head for SBI's US Operations.

**Mr. Sanjay Kumar Jain Assumes The Charge As CMD Of IRCTC :-**

Sanjay Kumar Jain, a 1990-batch Indian Railway Traffic Services (IRTS) Officer, was recently appointed Chairman and Managing Director of the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd (IRCTC). Jain, a trained Chartered Accountant (CA), has held leadership positions in policymaking, commercial initiatives, and development enterprises for the Government of India and PSUs. He brings with himself more than three decades of extensive experience of handling important portfolios in the Ministry of Railways, PSUs and Department of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Finance.

**Pradeep Kumar Sinha Appointed As Non-Executive Part-Time Chairman Of ICICI Bank :-**

Former Cabinet Secretary Pradeep Kumar Sinha will succeed G. C. Chaturvedi as Non-Executive Part-time

Chairman of ICICI Bank after his tenure expires on June 30, 2024. In preparation for the aforementioned nomination, the Bank's Board authorized Sinha's appointment as an Additional (Independent) Director for a five-year term, effective immediately, subject to shareholder approval. Sinha served as the Cabinet Secretary (from June 2015) for more than four years before moving to the Prime Minister's Office. He retired from there in March 2021.



#### KVS Manian Appointed As Kotak Mahindra Bank's New

JMD :-

Kotak Mahindra Bank has made changes to the company's senior management. In an exchange filing, the business reported that KVS Manian has been redesignated as the new Joint MD, effective March 1, 2024. Manian was the bank's full-time director and senior managerial people. Shanti Ekambaram, who is now a full-time Director, has been named as the Deputy MD, effective March 1, 2024. The bank has appointed Milind Nagnur as the Chief Operating Officer of the Bank, with effect from April 1, 2024.



#### Government Appoints A S Rajeev, Former MD And CEO Of Bank Of Maharashtra, As Vigilance Commissioner :-

President Droupadi Murmu has appointed A S Rajeev as Vigilance Commissioner of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC). Prior to this appointment, A S Rajeev was the Managing Director and CEO of Bank of Maharashtra, a public sector bank. Previously, Rajeev voluntarily retired from his position as Managing Director and CEO of Bank of Maharashtra. According to a letter from the Department of Financial Services, the responsible body has accepted his request. Under the CVC Act, the Central Vigilance Commission became a three-member body, with the Central Vigilance Commissioner and two Vigilance Commissioners.



#### Justice A M Khanwilkar Appointed Lokpal Chairperson

:-

Justice Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar, a former Supreme Court judge, has been appointed head of the Lokpal. In July 2022, he retired from the Supreme Court. According to Rashtrapati Bhawan's statement, Justices Lingappa Narayana Swamy, Sanjay Yadav, and Ritu Raj Awasthi have been appointed as judicial members. The members other than the judicial members include Sushil Chandra, Pankaj Kumar and Ajay Tirkey. Justice Pradip Kumar Mohanty, a judicial member of the Lokpal, is currently the acting chairperson.

## 4: Awards



### WHO Honors Countries For The First Time For Eliminating Industrially Produced Trans Fats :-

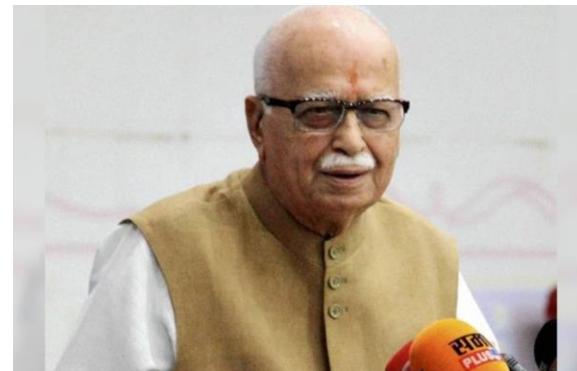
In a historic milestone, the World Health Organization (WHO) presented its first-ever certificates recognizing progress in reducing trans fatty acids (TFA), both industrially produced and naturally occurring. Five countries—Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand—have been recognized for their pioneering efforts in implementing effective policies and comprehensive monitoring and enforcement systems in TFA eradication programs. Despite the hurdles, WHO's global drive to remove TFA has made significant progress.



### Maha Gaurav 2024 Award Presented To Nikhil Wagh By Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar :-

Shri Ajit Pawar, Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra, recently presented Nikhil Mukund Wagh, PRO of Goa Shipyard Limited, with the "Maha Gaurav 2024" award on behalf of the Digital Media Editor Journalist Association Maharashtra in Mumbai. This special award

was given in recognition of his remarkable contribution to the public relations field. Wagh, currently serving as the Public Relations Officer at Goa Shipyard Limited under the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, has had a remarkable career.



### LK Advani To Be Honoured With Bharat Ratna :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that BJP veteran Lal Krishna Advani will receive the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award. Mr Advani was the Deputy Prime Minister in Atal Bihari Vajpayee's cabinet, and he also headed many departments. He was a member of both Houses of Parliament from 1970 until 2019. He will be the 50th recipient of the highest civilian award since its foundation, and the 7th under the Modi administration. The Prime Minister said it is a very emotional moment for him that the Bharat Ratna has been conferred on the stalwart leader.



### PT Usha Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award by SJFI and DSJA :-

PT Usha, the legendary sprinter and president of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), received the 'Lifetime Achievement' award from the Sports Journalists Federation of India (SJFI) and the Delhi Sports Journalists Association (DSJA) at the National Sports Club of India. To commemorate her outstanding athletic career, Usha was awarded with a medallion, a citation, and a souvenir. The ceremony was graced by Guest of Honours, Rajeev Shukla, Member of Parliament - Rajya Sabha and vice president, BCCI and Indian shooting great Jaspal Rana.



#### Grammy Awards 2024 : Zakir Hussain wins Best Global Music Performance award for his contribution to 'Pashto' :-

The 66th Annual Grammy Awards was place at the Crypto.com Arena in Los Angeles. Trevor Noah, a US comedian and actor, hosted this year's event for the fourth year in a row. Zakir Hussain, a musician, earned the Grammy for Best Global Music Performance for his work in "Pashto" with Bela Fleck and Edgar Meyer, which also featured Rakesh Chaurasia. Miley Cyrus' "Flowers" wins Record Of The Year award beating competition from the likes of Taylor Swift's Anti-Hero", Billie Eilish's "What Was I Made For?" from Barbie and Jon Batiste's "Worship" among others.



#### Picture Of Polar Bear Falling Asleep On Iceberg Wins Top Photography Prize :-

A breathtaking photograph of a sleeping polar bear has received the prestigious Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award. According to the BBC, Nima Sarikhani, a British amateur photographer, captured the portrait dubbed 'Ice Bed'. His photo was crowned champion after a record-breaking 75,000 people voted. Notably, Mr Sarikhani captured the image after three days of searching for polar bears off the coast of Norway. The image he took shows a male polar bear having a peaceful night's sleep.



#### Neeraj Chopra Honoured At Jungfraujoch's Ice Palace In Switzerland :-

Neeraj Chopra, India's Olympic and world champion javelin thrower, has been honored with a plaque at the iconic Ice Palace at Jungfraujoch, often known as the 'Top of Europe' in Switzerland. Jungfraujoch invited Chopra to unveil the memorial plaque, recognizing his amazing accomplishments, according to a release from Switzerland Tourism. Chopra gave one of his javelins to the tourist attraction, which was displayed alongside the plaque. He joins stars such as Roger Federer and golfer Rory McIlroy, who also have commemorative plaques at the Ice Palace.



### Govt Introduces National Creator's Awards For Modern Influencers :-

According to official sources, the government plans to announce national creators awards to recognize new-age influencers and creators. They announced that the first-of-its-kind awards would be granted in approximately 20 categories. According to the sources, social media influencers on YouTube and Instagram will also compete for the awards. One of the categories will honor those who have contributed to the international spread of the country's soft power and culture, they noted. Other categories may include "green champions", "swachhta ambassadors", "agro creators" and "tech creators", the sources said.



### K.P.P. Nambiar Award For ISRO Chairman S. Somanath

S Somanath, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), received the KPP Nambiar Award for 2024 from the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) Kerala Section at an event in Thiruvananthapuram. The prize is named after KPP Nambiar, a doyen of the electronics sector and the founding chair of the IEEE Kerala Section. The prize committee cited Somanath's vital contribution in leading Chandrayaan-3, ISRO's lunar exploration effort. In his acceptance speech, Somanath stressed on the importance of learning from mistakes and acknowledged a supportive environment at the premier organisations.



### India Wins The 9th GovTech Prize For AI-Powered Road Safety Initiative :-

India received the coveted 9th GovTech Prize for its pioneering efforts in AI-powered government services at the World Government Summit 2024. The UAE government established the yearly prize, which is granted to government agencies, both central and local, around the world in recognition of creative and innovative ideas. India won in the area of 'AI-Powered Government Services'. The award recognizes the remarkable efforts of the Ministry for Road Transport & Highways, Government of India, for its transformative project known as iRASTE.



### Gulzar And Jagadguru Rambhadracharya Awarded Prestigious Jnanpith Award 2023 :-

The Jnanpith selection committee declared that renowned Urdu poet Gulzar and Sanskrit scholar Jagadguru Rambhadracharya will receive the 58th Jnanpith Award. Sampooran Singh Kalra, also known as Gulzar, is renowned for his contributions to Hindi film and is regarded as one of the greatest Urdu poets of this time. Rambhadracharya, the founder and head of Tulsi Peeth in Chitrakoot, is a renowned Hindu spiritual leader, educator and writer of more than 240 books and texts, including four epics.



**Shashi Tharoor Honoured With France's Highest Civilian Award :-**

Shashi Tharoor, a senior Congress leader, received France's highest civilian accolade, the Chevalier de la Legion d' Honneur France, during an intimate ceremony at the French embassy in the national capital. Mr. Tharoor received the honor in August 2022, but the actual presentation took place on February 20. The Congress leader said that his relationship with France began during his stint in the United Nations and that he has always "nurtured a sense or profound respect for French democracy" as the land where "the people" first replaced "the king" as the nucleus of the nation.

## 5: Banking



**ESAF Small Finance Bank And Edelweiss Tokio Life Insurance Partner To Offer Life Insurance :-**

ESAF Small Finance Bank has formally announced a bancassurance partnership with Edelweiss Tokio Life Insurance, a significant step toward expanding the range of financial products available to consumers. The relationship is critical to ESAF Small Finance Bank's aim of broadening its product offerings and demonstrating its commitment to delivering financial stability to a larger segment of the unbanked and underbanked population. The aim of this partnership is to widen the accessibility of innovative life insurance products, capitalizing on ESAF Small Finance Bank's strong presence across rural markets in India.



**HDFC Bank Receives RBI Approval For Stake Acquisition In Six Banks :-**

HDFC Bank has received RBI approval to raise its interest in six banks, namely Axis, Suryoday Small Finance, ICICI, Bandhan, IndusInd, and Yes Bank. The private lender and its related organizations, which include HDFC Mutual Fund, HDFC Life Insurance, and HDFC Ergo General Insurance, are able to buy up to 9.5% of the six banks' share capital or voting rights. These approvals stem from applications submitted by HDFC Bank, acting as a promoter/sponsor of the group, to RBI on Dec 18, 2023.



## RBI Grants Payment Aggregator Licences To Juspay, Zoho, And Decentro :-

Even as the Reserve Bank of India tightens controls on the fintech industry, fintech businesses are receiving regulatory approval to function as payment aggregators. On February 6, two fintech businesses, Juspay and Decentro, acquired the final licence to operate as payment aggregators. Zoho, a software as a service business, also received a payment aggregator license on February 2. Zoho is the first enterprise Saas player to get the payment aggregator nod from the RBI. The RBI had released the first guidelines on payment aggregator licences in March 2020.



**RBI To Introduce Offline Capability For E-Rupee Transactions :-**

In December 2022, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) launched a trial run of the retail CBDC, with the goal of accomplishing 10 lakh transactions per day by December 2023. Currently, the RBI has announced intentions to allow Digital Rupee users to perform transactions in areas with limited internet connection. Governor Shaktikanta Das announced the addition of offline capability to the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) pilot project. It is important to note that other payment platforms, like the popular Unified Payments Interface (UPI), already offer offline services.



## EPFO Raises Interest Rate On PF Deposits To 8.25%, A Three Year High :-

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has set an 8.25% interest rate on provident fund deposits for 2023-24, the highest in three years, following ratification by its central board of trustees at its meeting. For 2022-23, the retirement fund organization offered 8.15% interest, up from 8.10% in 2021-22. The interest rate for 2023-24 will be officially notified after approval from the finance ministry, following which EPFO will credit the interest to subscribers' accounts at the end of the financial year.



## RBI Directs Visa And Mastercard To Halt Commercial Card Payments: Compliance Concerns :-

The Reserve Bank has asked Visa and Mastercard, two major players in international payments, to cease card-based commercial transactions between small and large firms. This move is motivated by worries about compliance with Know Your Customer (KYC) laws. This move comes after the RBI's recent regulatory actions against Paytm Payments Bank. Sources within the industry suggest that the RBI's directives to Visa and Mastercard are motivated by worries over their failure to adhere to KYC norms.



#### **PayU Partners With NPCI To Introduce Credit Lines On UPI For Merchants :-**

PayU, a payments solution provider, has announced a collaboration with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to launch the 'Credit Lines on UPI' feature on its platform, which will give merchants with additional financial protection and growth opportunities. As part of the integration, PayU will share information on the relevant identifiers associated with the type of credit the consumer has obtained, such as pay-later, personal loans, and so on. This information will enable the merchants to form strategic growth strategies and further create relevant, customised products for better customer experience.



#### **South Indian Bank Wins Best Technology Bank Of The Year Award :-**

South Indian Bank received the Best Technology Bank of the Year Award at the 19th IBA Annual Banking Technology Conference, Expo, and Citations. Six renowned prizes were presented to the bank in recognition of its remarkable achievement. The bank won three categories, finished second in one, and received special mentions in another two. The awards were presented to PR Seshadri, MD & CEO of South

Indian Bank, by T Rabi Sankar, Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India.



#### **SBI Launches Digital Enrolment For PMJJBY And PMSBY Schemes:-**

The State Bank of India, the country's largest public sector bank, has announced that consumers can enroll in the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) programs through the self-subscription approach. PMJJBY provides death coverage of Rs 2,00,000 to the policy's beneficiary in the event of the insured's untimely death. Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) is an accident insurance scheme offering accidental death and disability cover for death or disability on account of an accident.



#### **LIC Launches A Non-Participating Product 'Amritbaal' For Children :-**

The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has announced the launch of a non-participating product called 'Amritbaal'. The instrument that was created for children, is available on February 17, 2024. It's a non-linked, non-participating individual savings and life insurance plan. The plan is intended to address the child's further education and other needs. It facilitates

the accumulation of a corpus through Guaranteed additions at the rate of Rs 80 per thousand basic sum assured at the end of each policy year from the inception till the end of the Policy term, provided the policy is in force.



#### IEPFA And DBS Bank Collaborate To Enhance Investor Awareness :-

In New Delhi, the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA), which is part of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with DBS Bank, a significant financial institution with a substantial presence in Asia and Southeast Asia. DBS Bank intends to help the IEPFA's investor awareness operations by communicating safety messages through its different digital platforms. Leveraging DBS Bank's extensive network of branches and ATMs in 19 Indian states, as well as its digital infrastructure, IEPFA will significantly increase the reach of investor awareness and protection messages to the end users.



#### RBI Grants Payment Aggregator License To Mswoipe Technologies :-

Mswoipe Technologies, a merchant-led digital payment provider, announced that the Reserve Bank of India has granted it a payment aggregator (PA) licence. The central bank had granted the company an in-principle approval to function as a payment aggregator in August 2022. According to information available on the RBI's website, 16 firms had previously been granted payment aggregator licences. Among them are merchant payment solutions providers Juspay and Razorpay, fintech Stripe, search behemoth Google, neo-bank Open, software major Zoho and food-delivery company Zomato.



#### Vijay Shekhar Sharma resigns as chairman of Paytm Payments Bank; board reconstituted:-

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. PPBL has also reconstituted its Board of Directors with the appointment of Ex-Central Bank of India Chairman Srinivasan Sridhar, retired IAS officers Debendranath Sarangi and Rajni Sekhri Sibal, former Executive Director of Bank of Baroda Ashok Kumar Garg. Sharma owns a 51% stake in Paytm Payments Bank, while One 97 Communications, as Paytm is formally known, owns the rest.

## 6: Books and Author



### "An Eye for Journalism-A guide for Beginners" launched by Principal KCA :-

"An Eye for Journalism-A guide for Beginners" Dr. Mehal Singh, Principal of the Khalsa College Amritsar (KCA), Dean of Arts Prof Jaspreet Kaur, and Dr. Marwaha, Head PG Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, jointly released a textbook authored by Dr Sania Marwaha, Assistant Professor on the college premises. Dr. Marwaha said that the book meets the highest standards of publishing, including concerning design and layout, and has been successful in highlighting the essential topics of media technology.



### Javaid Rahi's book on Gandhi Ji released :-

Sonal Parikh, Mahatma Gandhi's fourth-generation daughter, launched Dr. Javaid Rahi's book 'Mahatma Gandhi Gi Kahani-Tasweraan Gi Zabani', a Gojri adaptation of Sarla Manjumdar's original Gujarati book 'Chitarkatha', at the Kanoria Art Centre in Ahmedabad. The Gandhi Chitarkatha Privar, Gujarat, organized the event, which brought together renowned people such as Gujarati writers, painters, and intellectuals. Speaking on the occasion Rahi expressed gratitude for the

opportunity to contribute to a book series already available in 18 languages across India.



### Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar releases book on 9 years of Haryana Government :-

With Haryana elections due for later this year, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar has released a book titled '9 Incredible Years of Haryana Government: Emergence of a New and Vibrant Haryana' at Surajkund in Faridabad. The BJP has been in control in the state for nine years, having first taken office in October 2014. Dhankhar commended the state as a role model for the country, emphasizing its achievements in system change and good administration. Haryana's progress in various fields, including agriculture and defense, was commended.



### Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri Attends His Wife's Book Launch at Jaipur Literature Fest :-

Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, whose book was previously presented at the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF), came here this time to launch his wife Lakshmi Puri's debut novel, 'The Swallowing Sun'. The Union Minister stated that today is a memorable

occasion because his wife's debut novel was released. He stated that the novel's characters are from pre-independence India between 1920 and 1930, as well as after independence. Lakshmi Puri's book 'The Swallowing Sun' was launched in the Darbar Hall of Jaipur Literature Festival.



#### Odisha CM releases coffee-table book 'Shree Jagannatha, Lord Of The Universe' :-

At the conclusion of the three-day, first-ever "World Odia Language Conference" in Bhubaneswar, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched Shree Jagannatha, Lord Of The Universe, a coffee-table book published by The Hindu Group. The book, which depicts traditions and rituals associated with the sibling deities of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Devi Subhadra in Puri, one of Hinduism's four sacred dhams, was unveiled in the presence of Raghuvir Srinivasan, Editor of The Hindu BusinessLine and editor of Shree Jagannatha, Lord of the Universe.



#### A book on former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu titled "Maha Swaapnikudu" launched :-

In Vijayawada, former Supreme Court judge V. Gopala Gowda published the book 'Maha Swaapnikudu' (A Great Visionary) about former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. It was published by Koduri Venkat, an NRI, and

written by journalist P. Vikram. On the occasion, Mr. Gowda stated that Mr. Naidu had made a name for himself in politics since his days as a Youth Congress leader in the late 1970s, followed by an exciting tenure in the TDP founded by his father-in-law and former Chief Minister N.T. Rama Rao.



#### Actress Tisca Chopra launches an inspirational book about a blood cancer survivor's journey :-

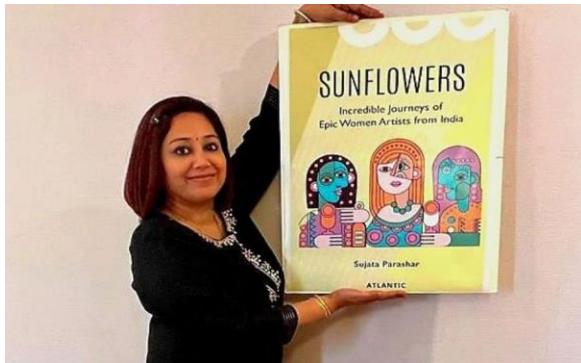
On February 13, 2024, Bollywood actress Tisca Chopra presented latest book, 'Mandeep Meets Mandeep', at an event in Delhi. The book 'Mandeep Meets Mandeep' is based on the true tale of a patient named Mandeep who beat blood cancer after his namesake Mandeep stepped forward as the perfect match for a stem cell transfusion. Dr. Sona Sharma, a medical expert and writer, wrote the novel 'Mandeep Meets Mandeep'. The story weaves through sacrifice, community support, and the delicate balance of life, connecting two individuals destined for an extraordinary encounter.



#### Kozhikode school brings out book on English language and its impact on society :-

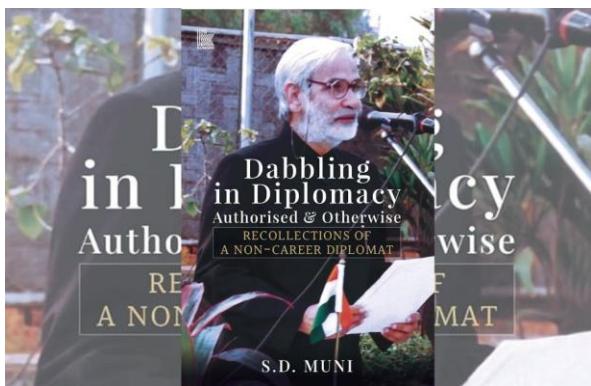
A book 'Anglii', a collection of 61 articles which shed light on the various aspects of English language and its impact on society was released by the English club of St. Joseph's Boys' Higher Secondary School, Kozhikode recently. E.P.

Mathew, Provincial of Kerala Jesuits, released the book by delivering a copy to Bindu Amat, former Head of the Department of English at Providence Women's College in Kozhikode. The book would be distributed among select public libraries and those attached to schools and colleges, the club functionaries added.



**Sujata Parashar's latest book, 'Sunflowers: Incredible Journeys of Epic Women Artists from India,' was launched :-**

Sujata Parashar's latest book, 'Sunflowers: Incredible Journeys of Epic Women Artists from India,' debuted at the Delhi World Book Fair in Pragati Maidan. 'Sunflowers' delves into the essence of what it means to pursue art with passion and perseverance. Readers will discover a common thread of dedication and an unwavering desire for artistic expression that binds these ladies together as full details of their travels are revealed. Anyone who aspires to a life of art and creativity will find inspiration in this book.



**Book Titled "Dabbling In Diplomacy" By Prof. S.D. Muni released :-**

Professor S.D. Muni's riveting article, "Dabbling in Diplomacy: Authorised & Otherwise, Recollections of a Non-Career Diplomat," provides an unprecedented view

into the intricate web of South Asian geopolitics via the lens of a professor thoroughly immersed in the region's affairs. The book follows Prof. Muni's extended career at major universities such as Jawaharlal Nehru University and the National University of Singapore. With a focus on International Relations and South Asian Studies, his narrative is enriched by firsthand experiences and interactions with key political figures across Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, and Laos.



**Book on Sankara Nethralaya and the hospital founder S.S. Badrinath released :-**

The Tamil book 'Vizhikalil Olyettrum Sankara Nethralaya', which covers the institution's history and the pioneering work of the hospital's founder S.S. Badrinath, was released at Sankara Nethralaya in Chennai. The book was written by T.S. Surendran, Chairman of Sankara Nethralaya, and A.P. Irungovil, manager of medical sociology. Sivasankari, a writer and activist, described the book as thought-provoking, full of interesting anecdotes and inspiring situations concerning the hospital's dedicated services. Lauding the lucid style of the book, she said it also talked about the simplicity and humaneness of Badrinath.



**Coffee table book about Greater Chennai Corporation launched :-**

During the event to launch the Nemmeli desalination plant, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin released a coffee table book about the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) titled Caring for Chennai, which was attended by novelist and historian V. Sriram. The first summary of the GCC's

actions was published in 1940, while S. Satyamurti was Mayor. Since then, the civic body has released similar compilations in 1950 (Mayor Dr. P.V. Cherian), 1952 (Mayor T. Chengalvaroyan), and 1972 (Mayor Kamakshi Jayaraman).

## 7: Defence



### Indian Navy Declares 2024 As 'Year Of Naval Civilians' :-

The Indian Navy has designated 2024 the 'Year of Naval Civilians' with the goal of improving the administration, efficiency, and well-being of Naval Civilians by addressing all aspects of Civilian HR Management in a timely manner. According to an official press release from the Indian Navy, major focus areas for 2024 include increasing administrative efficiency, digital efforts, generic and specific training courses, and welfare activities. The Naval Civilian Personnel constitute about a third of the Indian Navy's total workforce and contribute significantly to its operational effectiveness across all domains.



### IAF To Conduct Exercise Vayu Shakti-2024 :-

Vice Chief of Air Force Air Marshal A.P. Singh announced that the Indian Air Force (IAF) will demonstrate its complete range of combat and fire capabilities at Exercise Vayu Shakti-2024 at the Pokhran firing range in Rajasthan in a "near-realistic scenario" on February 17. He stated that Rafale fighter jets, as well as Prachand and Apache attack helicopters, will participate in the exercise for the first time. The exercise will be for 2 hours and 15 minutes during the day, at dusk and night, he said. The last edition of exercise Vayu Shakti was held on February 16, 2019.



### Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi Appointed Army Vice Chief :-

Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi has been appointed as the next Army Vice Chief effective February 15. He would be replacing Lt Gen MV Suchindra Kumar, who would be his successor at the Northern Army Command in Udhampur. Lt. Gen. Dwivedi previously served as the Army Headquarters' Deputy Chief and Director General of Infantry. He served for two years in the operationally active Northern Command during India and China's armed standoff. Lt Gen. Kumar has been the Vice Chief for around a year after he was promoted to the rank of Army Commander.



### India To Fence Indo-Myanmar Border For Enhanced Security :-

Amit Shah, Union Home Minister, announced that the Centre decided to build a barrier along the whole 1,643-kilometer Indo-Myanmar border. He also stated that a patrol track near the border would be paved to allow for better surveillance. A 10-kilometre portion of the border in Moreh, Manipur, has already been walled. The fencing announcement comes after months of ethnic violence in Manipur, which has a roughly 400-kilometer border with Myanmar. In September last year, the Manipur Chief Minister urged the Union Home Ministry to cancel the free movement regime along the India-Myanmar border and complete its fencing.



### IAF's Vayushakti-2024 to be held on Feb 17 :-

The Indian Air Force is fully prepared for the Vayu Shakti-24, which is slated for February 17. The Vayu Shakti-24 Exercise will take place in the Pokhran Air to Ground Range, near Jaisalmer, Rajasthan. The last round of the exercise took place in February 2019. Over 130 planes, including 77 fighters, will take part in the massive IAF exercise Vayu Shakti-2024. The drill would also include made-in-India LCA Tejas, Prachand assault helicopters,

and ALH Dhruv. IAF will showcase its capability to carry out accurate bombing on targets in the Vayu Shakti-24 exercise.



### Mahindra, Embraer tie up for medium transport aircraft in India :-

Brazil's Embraer Defense & Security and the Mahindra group have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to examine the possibility of turning India into a regional hub for the medium transport aircraft C-390. They are also considering a deal with the Indian Air Force for medium transport aircraft. Embraer and Mahindra will engage with the Indian Air Force to identify the next steps of the MTA program, as well as contact the local aerospace industry in India to start developing the industrialization plan for the project.



### IIT Madras To Spearhead Development Of India's First Indigenous 155mm Smart Ammunition :-

The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) has partnered with Munitions India Limited, a major participant in defence production, to develop the country's first domestically developed 155 Smart Ammunition. This collaboration intends to improve precision and lethality in defense operations,

representing a significant step toward self-reliance in defense production. IIT Madras and Munitions India Limited, under the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, have embarked on a two-year initiative to develop advanced smart ammunition.



#### **Underwater Harbour Defence And Surveillance System Inaugurated In Andaman And Nicobar Command :-**

Admiral R. Hari Kumar, Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), launched a Precision Approach Radar (PAR) at INS Utkrosh in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which will provide "highly accurate horizontal and vertical guidance to land an aircraft safely in low visibility conditions, such as heavy rain and fog." According to the Navy, he also inaugurated the IUHDSS (Integrated Underwater Harbour Defence and Surveillance System) at Naval Jetty in Port Blair. During his visit, Adm. Kumar also interacted with the personnel posted in various units and establishments across the Command.



#### **UPI, RuPay payment services launched in Sri Lanka and Mauritius :-**

On February 12, India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) services were launched in Sri Lanka and Mauritius, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi calling it as a link between traditional relationships and current digital technologies. India's RuPay card services were also inaugurated in Mauritius with a virtual ceremony attended by Prime Minister Modi, his Mauritian counterpart Pravind

Jugnauth, and Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe. The Prime Minister said digital public infrastructure has brought about a revolutionary change in India.



#### **India To Replace Military Personnel With Technical Staff In Maldives :-**

Days after India and the Maldives held their second high-level meeting, New Delhi affirmed that the current personnel on the island republic will be replaced by "competent Indian technical personnel". However, the Ministry of External Affairs failed to expand on what the phrase actually implies. Following conflicting reports on India's assistance allocation for the Maldives in this year's Budget, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that the new sum could be changed and India remained "an important development partner" of the island nation..



#### **Havildar Varinder Singh Awarded Vishisht Seva Medal For Developing Multipurpose Octocopter :-**

According to an official, President Droupadi Murmu gave the Vishisht Seva Medal to Havildar Varinder Singh of the Sikh Regiment in the Indian Army for developing a'multipurpose octocopter'. Singh's 'multipurpose

'octocopter' is a multifunctional drone capable of not just surveillance missions but also grenade dropping, aerial target engagement with weaponry such as the AK-47, and logistics operations. Meanwhile, Singh added that the 'multipurpose octocopter' will prove to be a boon for the Indian Army.



#### Visakhapatnam To Host 12th Edition Of MILAN Naval Exercise :-

The 12th iteration of the MILAN naval exercise will take place in Visakhapatnam from February 19 to 27, with participation from more than 50 countries. The exercise, themed "Forging Naval Alliances for a Secure Maritime Future," aims to provide a key forum for participating navies to engage and brainstorm ideas for improving maritime security. The fundamental goal is to ensure the safety of marine trade for the benefit of everyone involved. By boosting confidence and readiness to tackle common challenges together, this exercise aims to pave the way for future collaborative missions.



#### Indian Army's Rs 57,000 Crore Project To Replace Aging T-72 Tank Fleet :-

In reaction to accounts of tank deaths, the Indian Army, which has a strength of 12 lakhs, is prepared to significantly modernize its present tanks and introduce new-generation tanks for future fights. According to a report, senior officers indicated that the widespread damage of Russian tanks during the continuing Ukraine conflict, particularly in the early days, was attributable to "poor tactics" rather than anything else. The Army intends to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) this year for a mega project worth an estimated Rs 57,000 crores. The project aims to produce 1,770 Future Ready Combat Vehicles (FRCVs) in India to replace the old Russian-origin T-72 tanks starting from 2030.



#### HAL, DRDO To Begin Rs 60,000 Crore Sukhoi Fighter Jet Fleet Upgrade :-

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), with help from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), will participate in the Rs 60,000 crore modernization of the Su-30MKI fighter aircraft fleet. The defense ministry has approved the project, which intends to improve the aircraft's capabilities by installing new radars, mission control systems, electronic warfare capabilities, and integrating new armament systems. HAL Chairman and Managing Director CB Ananthakrishnan confirmed that there would be significant private sector involvement, positioning HAL as the lead integrator for the upgrade.



**Adani Defence Opens South Asia's Largest Ammunition, Missile Complex In UP:-**

Adani Defence & Aerospace, on 26 February, inaugurated two facilities to manufacture ammunition and missiles in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur. The facilities, inaugurated by UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath are the first of their kind in the private sector in India and are expected to provide a significant impetus to India's self-reliance and technological advancement in defence. Spread over 500 acres, the facility in Kanpur will produce high-quality small, medium and large-calibre ammunition. Chief of Army Staff, Gen Manoj Pande was also present on the occasion.

## 8: Economy



**Government Cuts Import Duty On Phone Components Cut To 10% From 15% :-**

The government has reduced import charges on a number of mobile phone components from 15% to 10% in an effort to increase smartphone export competitiveness and eliminate interpretation challenges caused by a complex duty structure. The duty reduction on mechanical parts such as battery covers, front covers, antennas, SIM sockets, and screws, as well as die-cut parts such as conductive cloth and LCD conductive foam, among others, is expected to alleviate cost pressures for ecosystem vendors and boost the country's growing mobile phone exports.

**Finance Ministry Issues 'Indian Economy – A Review' Report Instead Of Economic Survey :-**

The economic survey was not presented on January 31 due to the ongoing disruption of the entire budget process caused by elections. Instead, the Centre has issued a study titled 'Indian Economy-A Review' that examines the country's progress over the last decade. The report also provided peeks into the economic picture for the following years. The Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran's office prepared the report. It was mentioned in the report that it is not the Economic Survey of India. The survey will be presented after the general elections before the presentation of the full-fledged Budget.



**Budget 2024: Three New Economic Railway Corridors Announced :-**

The Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, mentioned three significant railway economic corridors while discussing steps that would be implemented to increase India's railway network. These include an energy, mineral, and cement corridor; a port connectivity corridor; and a high traffic density corridor. Sitharaman stated that railway projects have been identified under the PM Gati Shakti Yojana to facilitate multimodal connectivity. These will "improve logistics efficiency and reduce costs," she said. Sitharaman emphasised that these corridors, along with dedicated freight corridors, will "accelerate our GDP and reduce logistic costs."



**Budget 2024: Govt announces Rs 1 lakh crore corpus for interest free loan to bolster research and innovation :-**

Tejasvi Surya, a member of parliament for Bengaluru South, has praised Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's plan for an interim budget that would create a corpus for innovation and research. As part of her "Viksit Bharat Budget," Sitharaman had promised the creation of a corpus of Rs 1 lakh crore with 50-year interest-free loans to increase research, innovation, and entrepreneurship in India. The MP also said the scheme will provide impetus to institutions like the IISc, IIM-B,

and IIT to invest in research and innovate in diverse domains.



**Government Boosts Sovereign Gold Bond Issuance To 3,500 Crore In Fiscal Year 2024-25 :-**

Instead of reducing physical gold demand and limiting imports to keep the current account deficit under control, the RBI's Sovereign Gold Bond has proven to be a more popular investment option. The Budget increased SGB issuance to ₹3,500 crore for the upcoming fiscal year, up from ₹1,500 crore in the previous fiscal year ended March 31, 2023. It has also retained the Budget estimate for this fiscal at ₹1,500 crore against ₹402 crore raised last fiscal. Incidentally, gold imports have jumped 20 per cent to 781 tonnes last year even as the run-away prices have suppressed demand, according to the World Gold Council data.



**Adani Group's \$1.2 Billion Copper Plant Boosts India's Metal Independence For Energy Transition :-**

Billionaire Gautam Adani's business is creating the world's largest single-location copper manufacturing factory in Mundra, Gujarat. The project will help India reduce its reliance on imports and facilitate the energy transition. The 1.2 billion-dollar facility will begin operations in its first phase by the end of March. It will reach its full capacity of one million tons by 2029. The country's biggest copper smelter is currently operated by

Hindalco Industries Ltd, which also has a capacity of 0.5 million tonnes. Copper is the third most used industrial metal after steel and aluminium.



#### Banking System Liquidity Deficit Shrinks To ₹1.40 Lakh Crore: RBI Data Analysis :-

According to RBI data, the liquidity shortfall in the banking sector decreased to approximately ₹1.40 lakh crore on February 4 from a recent peak of ₹3.46 lakh crore on January 24th due to increased government spending. The reducing liquidity shortfall also had a positive impact on overnight money market rates, with the weighted average rate falling to 6.33 percent from about 6.50 to 6.75 percent last month. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, in his December 2023 monetary policy statement, noted that the evolution of liquidity conditions has been in alignment with the monetary policy stance.



#### India's Foreign Exchange Reserves Reach One-Month High To \$622.47 Billion :-

India's foreign exchange reserves grew for the second week in a row, reaching a one-month high of \$622.47 billion on February 2, according to central bank data. The reserves increased by \$5.74 billion during the reporting week, the most in over two months. Reserves had

increased by \$590 million in the previous week. Foreign exchange reserves also include India's reserve tranche position at the International Monetary Fund. In the week that the foreign exchange data pertains, the rupee rose 0.2% against the dollar and traded in a range of 82.8225 and 83.1525.



#### Paytm E-Commerce Rebrands As Pai Platforms, Acquires Bitsila:-

Paytm E-commerce has rebranded as Pai Platforms, indicating a transformation in its corporate identity. The move follows the acquisition of Bitsila, a well-known seller platform that operates inside the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC). This strategy decision demonstrates Pai Platforms' desire to assert its presence and gain a stronger foothold in the fiercely competitive world of online shopping. Elevation Capital, a prominent stakeholder in Paytm E-commerce, stands as the largest shareholder in the newly christened Pai Platforms.



#### India's Retail Inflation Is At 3-Mth Low To 5.1% In Jan, IIP Witnessed 3.8% Growth In Dec :-

Retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) fell to a three-month low of 5.1% in January, aided by lower food costs and a positive base impact. Another high-frequency economic indicator, industrial growth based on the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), rose to

3.8% in December. Retail inflation was 5.7 per cent in December, while industrial growth rate was 2.4 per cent in November. Based on the trend in inflation number, experts expect rate cut cycle to start during July-September quarter of FY 2024-25.



#### Reliance Industries Hits ₹20-Lakh Crore Market Cap Milestone :-

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) became India's first firm to surpass a market value of Rs 20 lakh crore. The company took 12 years to reach Rs 10 lakh crore in 2017, up from Rs 1 lakh crore in 2005, and another five years to double to Rs 20 lakh crore. RIL doubled its market capitalization to Rs 2 lakh crore in 418 days, up from Rs 1 lakh crore in August 2005. It then doubled again to Rs 4 lakh crore within approximately six months by October 2007. Another milestone was reached a decade later when its market cap hit Rs 5 lakh crore in July 2017.



#### India's Outward FDI In January 2024 Rises 25.7% To \$2.1 Billion :-

India's outbound foreign direct investment (FDI) pledges increased by 25.7 percent year on year (Y-o-Y) to \$2.09 billion in January 2024, from more than \$1.66 billion in January 2023. They fell sequentially from \$2.5 billion in December 2023, according to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data. Outbound FDI, expressed as a financial commitment, comprises three components – equity,

loans, and guarantees. The equity commitments rose to \$760.9 million in January 2024 from \$597.4 million in January 2023.



#### India Opens Space Sector To 100% Foreign Investment :

The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has recently approved a series of critical measures, including modifications to the existing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy on the space sector. "Under the amended FDI policy, 100% FDI is allowed in space sector. The liberalised entry routes under the amended policy are aimed to attract potential investors to invest in Indian companies in space," said Union Minister Anurag Thakur. To date, FDI is permitted to establish and operate satellites only through the government's approval route.



#### India's Mineral Output Rises By 5.1% In December 2023

:-

According to provisional data from the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM), India's mining and quarrying sector's mineral output index increased by 5.1% in December 2023 compared to the same month the previous year. The mining and quarrying sector's mineral output index for December 2023 is at 139.4, 5.1% higher than the level seen in the same month in 2022, according to a statement from the mines ministry. The cumulative growth from April to December for the fiscal year 2023-

24 has been reported at 8.5% over the corresponding period of the previous year.



#### **SJVN commissions 50 MW Gujrai Solar Power Station in Uttar Pradesh :-**

SJVN Limited, a CPSU under the Ministry of Power, Government of India, has announced the start of commercial operations at its 50-MW Gujrai Solar Power Station in Kanpur Dehat, Uttar Pradesh. This acquisition boosts SJVN's total installed power capacity to 2,277 MW, with ten operational power plants. SJVN Green Energy Limited (SGEL), SJVN's renewable business, built the 50 MW Gujrai Solar Power Station for Rs 281 crores. It is anticipated to generate an annual revenue of approximately Rs 32 crores and produce 107 million units in the first year.



#### **Finance Ministry asks depts to surrender unspent Budgetary allocation by March 8 :-**

The Finance Ministry has requested other ministries and departments to return unspent budgetary allocations for 2023-24 by March 8. The deadline for accepting the Surrender of Savings envisaged in the grants for 2023-24 has been set at March 8, 2024, according to an office memorandum published by the Department of Economic Affairs. It is requested that the details of surrender of savings under each unit of appropriation may be sent to the Budget Division, Ministry of Finance by the said date in a specified format, it said.

## **9: International**



#### **Sultan Ibrahim Of Johor State Installed As Malaysia's 17th King :-**

Malaysia's Sultan Ibrahim, from the southern state of Johor, was sworn in as the country's 17th king during a ceremony at the national palace in Kuala Lumpur. The monarchy is primarily ceremonial in Malaysia, but its

importance has expanded in recent years, causing the king to exercise rarely utilized discretionary powers to quiet political unrest. Under a unique system of monarchy, the heads of Malaysia's nine royal families take turns to be the King, known as the "Yang di-Pertuan Agong" every five years.



### Military Regimes Of Niger, Mali, And Burkina Faso Withdraw From ECOWAS :-

The military governments of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger have declared their immediate withdrawal from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The leaders of the three Sahel states issued a statement stating that leaving the Economic Community of West African States was a "sovereign decision" that should be implemented "without delay." Struggling with jihadist violence and poverty, the regimes have had tense ties with ECOWAS since coups took place in Niger last July, Burkina Faso in 2022 and Mali in 2020.



### India Launches UPI Payments At Eiffel Tower In Paris :-

India has launched the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) at the Eiffel Tower, a crucial step toward Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goal of globalizing UPI. Indian visitors can use their UPI-enabled app to pay by scanning a QR code on the Eiffel Tower website. The UPI, an instant payment system established by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in 2016, integrates multiple bank accounts into a single mobile app, streamlining various banking functions, seamless fund routing, and merchant payments.



### France becomes first EU country To Offer Digital Visas :-

France will be the first European country to issue digital Schengen visas to travelers attending the 2016 Paris Olympics. France has announced plans to completely migrate to online procedures for 70,000 French Schengen Visas, in line with the EU's digitization objectives. France began operating the "Olympic Consulate" system on January 1, 2024, which is specialized to processing visa applications for the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The "Olympic Consulate" is expected to handle applications from 15,000 international athletes, 9,000 journalists, and delegations from foreign countries participating in the upcoming sporting events.



### Yemen Appoints Ahmed Awad Bin Mubarak As New Prime Minister :-

In an unexpected decision, Yemen's foreign minister, Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak, has been selected as the country's new Prime Minister. Yemen, an Arabian Peninsula country, is facing rising tensions as a result of a series of Red Sea attacks on ships by Houthi rebels, which has prompted retaliatory strikes by the United States and the United Kingdom recently. Bin Mubarak has notably replaced Maeen Abdulmalik Saeed amid the escalation of tensions in the Red Sea. The former prime minister was given the position of presidential adviser.



**Iran Abolishes Visa Requirements For Indian Tourists From Feb 4, 2024 :-**

Iran has removed visa requirements for Indian citizens. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has authorized the removal of visas for Indian citizens, beginning February 4, 2024. Individuals with ordinary passports will now be able to enter Iran without a visa, subject to certain conditions. This privilege is valid once every six months, and the maximum stay is 15 days. The 15-day period cannot be extended under this new regulation. The visa abolition is exclusively applicable to individuals entering Iran for tourism.



**Sri Lanka Pursues Free Trade Agreements With India To Boost Economic Growth :-**

Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Ali Sabry stated that the country intends to achieve a free trade agreement with India by the end of 2024. Similar Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) would be negotiated with Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and China before the end of the year, Sabry informed reporters. These agreements will provide new markets for cash-strapped Sri Lankan enterprises, thereby contributing to the country's economic progress. Sri Lanka and India resumed talks on the Economic and Technology Cooperation Agreement in Colombo at the 12th round in October last year.



**UAE Awards 'Golden Visa' To Super 30 Founder Anand Kumar :-**

Super 30 creator Anand Kumar has joined a select group of Indian celebrities, including Bollywood actors Shah Rukh Khan and Sanjay Dutt, who have been granted the 'Golden Visa' by the UAE government. The coveted Golden Visa, established by the UAE in 2019, provides long-term residency, allowing for independent living, working, and studying. The UAE Embassy in India nominated Kumar for the Golden Visa. Kumar, a Mathematics educator, started his Super 30 programme in Patna in 2002, known for coaching underprivileged students for JEE-Main & JEE-Advanced, the entrance examination for the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs).



**China Launches Qinling Station For Antarctic Scientific Study :-**

China's Qinling Station in Antarctica, the country's sixth research station on the continent, has begun operations. The research station is expected to contribute to humanity's scientific understanding of Antarctica, provide a platform for China to collaborate with other countries on scientific expeditions, and promote regional peace and sustainable development, according to a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson. However, some Western media have hyped "intelligence concerns" by claiming that the station is located in an "excellent position" to gather intelligence information about Australia and New Zealand.



### Trinidad And Tobago Declares National Emergency After Offshore Oil Spill :-

Trinidad and Tobago's prime minister declared a "national emergency" after a huge oil spill near the twin-island nation in the eastern Caribbean. Crews tried to contain the oil, which was already coating multiple beaches on Tobago's southwest coast. Prime Minister Keith Rowley said the government has yet to identify the owner of the yacht that overturned near Tobago. It was not immediately clear how much oil had spilled and how much remained in the largely submerged vessel. It was not clear what caused the vessel to overturn.



### Japan Commits To Long-Term Engagement In Ukraine's Reconstruction :-

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida committed his country's long-term involvement in Ukraine's rehabilitation, describing it as a future investment, as Japan reaffirmed its commitment to assisting the war-torn country ahead of the two-year anniversary of Russia's invasion. In his keynote speech at a conference Japan co-organized with the Ukrainian government and business organizations, Kishida said Japanese public and private cooperation will be a long-term partnership based on inclusivity, humanitarianism as well as technology and knowledge.



### U.S. imposes new sanctions on Russia :-

On the second anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the United States imposed sweeping sanctions on over 500 persons and businesses in an effort to intensify pressure on Moscow. The measure intends to make Russia accountable for the war and Navalny's death, US President Joe Biden said in a statement, as Washington seeks to continue to back Ukraine despite acute ammunition shortages and US military funding that has been delayed in Congress for months. "They will ensure Putin pays an even steeper price for his aggression abroad and repression at home," Biden said of the sanctions.



### Algeria Inaugurates World's Third-Largest Mosque :-

Algeria has inaugurated a massive mosque on its Mediterranean coast, following years of political turmoil that turned the project from a symbol of state-sponsored power and devotion to one of delays and cost overruns. The Great Mosque of Algiers, built by a Chinese construction group in the 2010s, has the world's tallest minaret, standing at 265 metres (869 feet). The third-largest mosque in the world, the biggest in Africa, and largest outside Islam's holiest cities, its prayer room accommodates 120,000 people.



#### New Zealand Repealed Anti-Tobacco Law :-

New Zealand reversed a world-first rule prohibiting tobacco sales for future generations, the government

announced, despite warnings from researchers and campaigners that people could die as a result. The harshest anti-tobacco rules in the world, set to go into effect in July, would have outlawed sales to anybody born after January 1, 2009, reduced nicotine content in smoked tobacco products, and reduced the number of tobacco outlets by more than 90%. The new coalition government elected in October confirmed the repeal will happen as a matter of urgency, enabling it to scrap the law without seeking public comment, in line with previously announced plans.

## 10: Miscellaneous



#### Surat Airport Attains International Airport Status :-

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has declared Surat Airport in Gujarat to be an international airport effective immediately. Notably, this statement was made just one month after Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the Rs 353 crore new Surat Airport terminal building. Surat is currently connected to 14 domestic cities -- Delhi, Chennai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Goa, Goa Mopa, Belgaum, Pune, Jaipur, Udaipur, Indore, Diu and Kishangarh and internationally via Sharjah to the rest of the world.



#### Tamil Nadu Govt Imposes Rs 6 Crore Fine On Fertilizer Plant For Ammonia Leak :-

The seven-member technical committee formed by the state government to investigate the Ennore ammonia gas leak on December 26 has concluded that the leak originated from the fertiliser factory Coromandel International Limited's undersea pipeline near the shore. It has directed the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) to initiate legal action and levy a Rs 5.92 crore fine on the factory. On Dec 26, 2023, at 11.45pm, ammonia leaked from a sub-sea 2.5 km-long pipeline connected to the factory in Periyakuppam. Around 52 people were diagnosed with ammonia poisoning.



### Tata Trusts To Inaugurate India's First Small Animal Hospital In Mumbai :-

Tata Trusts is set to open India's first modern Small Animal Hospital in Mahalaxmi, Mumbai. The hospital is the first of its kind, spanning over 98,000 square feet across five levels and accommodating over 200 beds. Inspired by philanthropist and former Tata Group Chairman Ratan Tata's vision for a superspecialty hospital for pets, the facility will provide round-the-clock services through pet-sensitized veterinarians, nurses, and technicians educated to deliver quality treatment with the goal of saving lives.



### Katrina Kaif Joins Chennai Super Kings As Brand Ambassador For IPL 2024 :-

Chennai Super Kings (CSK) has officially announced Katrina Kaif as its brand ambassador for the next Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 season. Kaif's engagement with CSK is intended to broaden the team's popularity and increase its relationship with fans all over the world, given her magnetic appearance and enormous fan base. The announcement of Katrina Kaif as the brand ambassador comes on the heels of CSK's newly inked sponsorship deal with Etihad Airways. This strategic

partnership aligns with the team's vision of expanding its global reach and enhancing its brand image.



### National Film Awards: Indira Gandhi And Nargis Dutt Names Removed From Categories :-

The 70th National Film Awards 2022 Regulations state that the names of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and late performer Nargis Dutt would not be used in the next ceremony. The Indira Gandhi Award for Best Debut Film is simply referred to as Best Debut Film of a Director in the committee's notification, whereas the Nargis Dutt Award for Best Feature Film on National Integration has been renamed Best Feature Film Promoting National, Social, and Environmental Values, combining the categories of social issues and environmental conservation into one.



### Prime Minister Modi to Unveil 125-Foot Statue of Bir Lachit Borphukan in Assam :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to inaugurate the magnificent 125-foot statue of Bir Lachit Borphukan at Lahdoigarh, Holongapar in Jorhat in the first week of March this year. Asaam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma informed that the state government has sent an invitation to the Prime Minister to dedicate and pay tribute to the magnificent statue of Bir Lachit. Prime Minister Modi during his proposed visit to Jorhat will also

lay the foundation of Sivasagar Medical College and Hospital.



#### **MS Dhoni Named Captain Of IPL's Greatest All-Time Team :-**

Mahendra Singh Dhoni, an Indian cricketer, was chosen as the captain of the IPL's all-time greatest team to commemorate the success of the popular T20 competition, which began in 2008. The selection panel included former cricketers Wasim Akram, Matthew Hayden, Tom Moody, and Dale Steyn. About 70 journalists also participated in the selection process. Australia's fiery David Warner and India's batting main stay Virat Kohli were chosen as openers while Chris Gayle was given the number 3 spot in batting order.



#### **Shubman Gill Designated As Punjab 'State Icon' For Lok Sabha Polls :-**

The Punjab Chief Electoral Officer's office has named Indian cricketer Shubman Gill a "state icon" for the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. In a statement, Chief Electoral Officer Sibin C stated that Gill will engage in various voter outreach initiatives to secure a 70% turnout. The survey panel has set an aim of "Is Vaar 70 Paar". Punjab had a voting turnout of 65.96 in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections for 13 seats. The CEO said Punjab-

resident Gill, popular among sports enthusiasts, especially the youth, has been appointed as a "state icon" for the polls.



#### **Faiz Fazal Retires From Professional Cricket :-**

Faiz Fazal, a left-handed hitter, is likely to retire from professional cricket following Vidarbha's upcoming Ranji Trophy match against Haryana at the VCA Stadium in Nagpur. The 38-year-old ended his career as Vidarbha's leading run scorer in both first-class and List A cricket. In 138 first-class matches, Fazal scored 9184 runs at an average of 41, with 24 hundreds and 39 fifties to his credit. The veteran scored 3641 runs from 113 List A matches with 10 centuries and 22 half-centuries.



#### **PhonePe Launches Indus Appstore To Challenge Google And Apple :-**

PhonePe, a major fintech business, developed Indus Appstore, an Android software store in India, to compete with Google Play and Apple software Store. Based on Indus OS technology, the app store enables Indian consumers to download over 2 lakh mobile apps and games from 45 categories, including Flipkart, Myntra, Spotify, and Paytm. Users would be able to find these apps easily in 12 Indian languages, providing to 95% of

Indians' linguistic choices. The app store also offers a brand new short-video-based discovery feature, to make new app discovery more engaging for consumers.



#### 12,000-13,000 Kilometers Of Highway Construction Targeted For FY24: Road Secy :-

According to a senior official at the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), the country's total highway construction will be between 12,000 and 13,000 kilometers by the conclusion of current fiscal year (FY24). Anurag Jain, secretary MoRTH, stated that while overall construction is lower than expected at the start of the fiscal year, capacity augmentation and widening of existing roadways to four lanes would set a new record.

The ministry had set a target of 13,800 km of road construction for 2023-24.



#### Anurag Singh Thakur announces Film Certification Facilitation Office in Chandigarh:-

Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur on 25 February announced to set up of a regional facilitation office of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) in Chandigarh. Aimed to promote ease of doing business for filmmakers of the region, the decision was announced by him on the concluding day of the Chitra Bharati Film Festival. The minister also spoke about the initiative being taken by the govt to make cinema halls more accessible for specially-abled viewers.

## 11: National



#### Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya Inaugurates AIIMS Bhubaneswar's New Facilities :-

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya virtually inaugurated expanded facilities at AIIMS Bhubaneswar in Odisha, including a Dharmasala, a new Trauma Centre, and a High Energy Linear Accelerator (HELA) Machine. According to a government statement, the minister

stated that these improvements will significantly improve hospital infrastructure and service quality. AIIMS Bhubaneswar Executive Director Ashutosh Biswas expressed appreciation during the event, conveying heartfelt thanks to Mandaviya for his dedication and foresight in advancing healthcare.



### Cabinet Approves Telecom Spectrum Auctions: Reserve Price Set At Rs 96,317.65 Crore :-

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved auctions in eight spectrum bands for mobile phone services at a base price of Rs 96,317.65 crore to increase telecom service quality and consumer coverage. The Ministry of Communication has announced auctions for spectrum in 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2500 MHz, 3300 MHz and 26 GHz frequency bands. The Ministry said in a statement that spectrum will be offered with a validity period of 20 years.



### NITI Aayog's Economic Transformation Plans For Mumbai, Surat, Varanasi, And Vizag :-

According to NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam, the organization has established a plan to enable Mumbai, Surat, Varanasi, and Vizag achieve economic development by 2047. He also stated that the Aayog intends to draft economic plans for 20-25 more cities, as they are the hubs of economic activity. A vision document is being prepared by NITI Aayog for India to become a developed economy of USD 30 trillion by 2047, and it will be released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



### PM Modi To Inaugurate Fourth Terminal At Cherlapally :-

Union Minister for Tourism, Culture, and Development of the Northeast Region, G. Kishan Reddy, indicated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will open the impending fourth terminal at Cherlapally by the end of the month or first week of March. He also added that the MMTS Phase-II suburban railway services would be finished in all aspects within the next few days, with the final segment between Sanathnagar and Moula Ali expected to be ready by the end of the month. Despite the State Government not coming forward to pay its share of cost, few sections were opened last year up to Falaknuma and Medchal, he claimed.



### Supreme Court Declares Electoral Bonds Scheme Unconstitutional:-

On February 15, a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court unanimously declared the electoral bond plan 'unconstitutional'. The Supreme Court ruled that the system violates Article 19 of the Constitution by not disclosing the funding to political parties. As a result, regulations relating to electoral bonds have been knocked down by the Supreme Court under the Companies Act, Income Tax Act, and Representation of the People Act. As a consequence of striking down the electoral bonds scheme, the State Bank of India (SBI), which is mandated to issue such bonds, has been asked to stop issuing them with immediate effect.



### Ministry Of Defence Achieves ₹1 Lakh Crore Total Order Value Milestone On Government E-Marketplace :-

The defence ministry announced that its purchase through the government e-Marketplace (GeM) had reached the Rs one lakh crore "accomplishment". GeM is an online platform for public procurement in India. It was launched on August 9, 2016, by the Commerce Ministry with the goal of providing an inclusive and transparent platform for buyers and sellers to conduct competitive procurement. In the current fiscal year, the defence ministry has placed orders worth Rs 46,000 crore approximately on the GeM as of February 13.



### MSME Minister Narayan Rane Launches Rs 20 Lakh Scheme Under CGTMSE For GST-Exempted Micro Units

MSME Minister Narayan Rane has launched a special scheme that allows informal micro enterprises (IMEs) that are exempt from the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime to obtain collateral-free loans of up to Rs 20 lakh through the government's Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE). The scheme 'Special Provision for Informal Micro Enterprises under Credit Guarantee Scheme' enables micro or nano enterprises with credit support from lenders and aims

"at moderating the credit risk perception," the MSME Ministry said in a statement.



### Prime Minister Modi Virtually Unveils Mahabharata-Inspired Jyotisar Anubhav Kendra :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, virtually from Rewari, opened the galleries of the Mahabharata-themed Jyotisar Anubhav Kendra (Experience Center) in Kurukshetra district. The creation of this center is proceeding at Jyotisar, and two ready galleries have already been opened to the public. Present at this occasion included Haryana Tourism Minister Kanwar Pal, Swami Gyananand, Thanesar MLA Subhash Sudha, Haryana Tourism Department Principal Secretary MD Sinha, and key officials of the district administration.



### Government Raises Authorized Capital Of FCI From ₹10,000 Crore To ₹21,000 Crore :-

The Food Ministry has increased the authorised capital of the state-run Food Corporation of India (FCI) from ₹10,000 crore to ₹21,000 crore to improve operational capabilities and perform its mandate effectively. The FCI is the central government's nodal agency in charge of procuring foodgrains at a minimum support price (MSP)

in order to protect farmer interests. It also keeps strategic stocks and distributes food through various charity packages. With this infusion of capital, the FCI should also embark upon modernising its storage facilities, improving transportation networks, and adopting advanced technologies.



#### PM Modi Launches ₹43,875 Cr Educational And Infra Projects Including 3 IIMs, IITs, 20 KVs, 13 NVs, And AIIMS In Jammu :-

On February 20, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated educational initiatives totaling ₹13,375 crore. This comprises three new IIMs, permanent campuses for IITs, 20 new buildings for Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs), and 13 new Navodaya Vidyalayas (NVs) throughout the country. The projects include permanent campuses for IIT Bhilai, IIT Tirupati, IIT Jammu, IIITDM Kancheepuram, Indian Institute of Skills (IIS), a pioneer skill training institute for advanced technologies based in Kanpur, and Central Sanskrit University campuses in Devprayag (Uttarakhand) and Agartala (Tripura).



#### Govt Launches Rs 100 Cr Projects For People With Disabilities :-

Union Minister Virendra Kumar Kumar launched several projects worth more than Rs 100 crore across the country as part of the government's efforts to promote inclusion and improve rehabilitation facilities for people with disabilities (PwD). During a virtual inauguration ceremony, Kumar stated that individuals with disabilities will play a critical part in making India a developed country by 2047. The inauguration ceremony saw the opening of a variety of critical facilities across several regions. These projects, aimed at enhancing rehabilitation facilities and fostering inclusivity, underscore the government's unwavering commitment to the welfare of every citizen.



#### CJI Chandrachud Inaugurates Ayush Wellness Center At Supreme Court Premises :-

The Supreme Court of India's Chief Justice, Justice DY Chandrachud, launched the 'Ayush Holistic Wellness Centre' on its grounds. The companion Supreme Court Judges were present during the event. Minister of Ayush Sarbananda Sonowal and Minister of State for Ayush, Dr. Munjpara Mahendrabhai, were also in attendance. On this occasion, an MoU regarding establishing, operationalizing and providing expert services at the Ayush Holistic Wellness Centre was also signed between the Supreme Court and the All-India Institute of Ayurveda.



### PM Modi To Lay Foundation For 550 Amrit Bharat Stations :-

On February 26, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone for 550 Amrit Bharat stations, which would upgrade railway station facilities by building rooftop plazas and city centers at a cost of Rs 40,000 crore. The prime minister will also lay the groundwork for about 1,500 road overbridges and underbridges in various states during a ceremony held virtually at over 2,000 train stations, according to officials. The prime minister will join the function via videoconferencing.



### PM Narendra Modi Inaugurates India's Longest Cable-Stayed Bridge, Sudarshan Setu :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has opened the Sudarshan Setu, a four-lane cable-stayed bridge that connects Okha to Beyt Dwarka island in Gujarat. According to an official announcement from the Devbhumi Dwarka authority, the bridge spans 2.32 kilometers, with a central double-span cable-stayed part of 900 meters and a 2.45-kilometer approach road. Constructed for Rs 979 crore, the bridge boasts a width of 27.20 metres, featuring 2.50-metre-wide footpaths on either side.



### Gaganyaan Mission And ISRO Projects Inauguration By PM Modi :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched three key ISRO space infrastructure projects during his visit to the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) in Thumba, close here. During his visit, the Prime Minister examined ISRO's Gaganyaan human spaceflight programme. Prime Minister Narendra Modi revealed the squad that would travel to space as part of India's first manned space mission, Gaganyaan. Group Captain P Balakrishnan Nair, Group Captain Ajit Krishnan, Group Captain Angad Pratap and Wing Commander S Shukla met the PM and were handed the astronaut wings.



### Government Launches 'Mera Pehla Vote Desh Ke Liye' Campaign In Higher Educational Institutions :-

The government will hold 'Mera Pehla Vote Desh Ke Liye' in higher education institutes across the country to guarantee that all young participate in elections. The initiative's major goal is to engage and inspire young voters to vote, as well as to communicate the necessity of voting for the greater welfare of the nation. The programme will be continued till 6th of March. Union

Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has urged the youth of the nation to make their voices heard.



**PM Narendra Modi Inaugurates ISRO's Second Spaceport In Tamil Nadu :-**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi lay the groundwork for the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s new launch site at Kulasekharapattinam, Tamil Nadu's Thoothukudi district. The Rs 986 crore facility is designed to handle 24 launches each year. PM Modi also dedicated many projects worth more than Rs 17,300 crore, claiming that Tamil Nadu is beginning a new chapter of progress in Thoothukudi. PM Modi said increasing connectivity due to the consistent efforts of the Centre has enhanced 'ease of living' in Tamil Nadu.

## 12: Obituaries



**Shiv Sena MLA Anil Babar passes away; CM Shinde expresses condolence :-**

Anil Babar has died, Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said on Wednesday, January 31, 2024. He was 74. Babar was a politician representing Khanapur, Maharashtra's Sangli district. Mr. Shinde stated that with Babar's death, he has lost a guide and close associate, while the State has lost a leading representative of the people. In a condolence message on X, Shinde said Babar's work in the Khanapur-Atpadi constituency cannot be forgotten as he worked towards the Tembhoo (lift irrigation) scheme, farmers' issues and several other developmental works.

**Carl Weathers, 'Rocky's' Apollo Creed and 'Mandalorian' Actor, Dies at 76 :-**

Carl Weathers, a former professional American football player best known for his portrayal of the boisterous and dynamic boxer Apollo Creed in the "Rocky" films, died on February 1 of unexplained reasons, according to his manager. He was 76. Though he had other prominent roles, acting in the recent Star Wars spinoff series The Mandalorian and the 1987 science fiction horror movie Predator, Weathers was best known for playing Apollo Creed opposite Sylvester Stallone's Rocky Balboa in the hit movies of the 1970s and 1980s.



### Namibian president Geingob passes away after battling cancer :-

Namibia's President Hage Geingob, 82, died in hospital early on February 4, the presidency announced, weeks after being diagnosed with cancer. Geingob had been in charge of the sparsely populated and largely arid southern African country since 2015. In 2014, while serving as Prime Minister, he informed the nation that he had overcome prostate cancer. He became president the next year. Born in 1941, Geingob was a prominent politician since before Namibia achieved independence from white minority-ruled South Africa in 1990.



### Former Chile President Sebastian Pinera Dies In Helicopter Crash :-

Sebastian Pinera, the billionaire who helped Chile's political right wing emerge from the shadow of former dictator Augusto Pinochet and win two terms as president, passed away in a helicopter crash in the country's south. He was 74. Pinera was president in 2010 and again in 2018, overseeing two periods of development. However, the second was overshadowed by the worst social upheaval in a generation, paralyzing most of the country. One key to Pinera's early political

success was distancing his right-wing coalition from Pinochet's 17-year dictatorship, which ended in 1990.



### Veteran music composer Vijay Anand passes away in Chennai :-

Vijay Anand (71), a veteran music composer, passed away in Chennai. Beginning his career in 1982, he composed music for Kannada, Tamil, and Telugu films. The song 'Oru Jeevanthan' from Superstar Rajinikanth's 1986 film 'Naan Adimai Illai' is Vijay's most popular work. In Tamil, Vijay Anand composed for 'Naanayam Illatha Naanayam', 'Vettri Mel Vettri', 'Vaai Sollil Veeraradi', 'Kavalan Avan Kovalan', 'Oorukku Ubathesam' and many other movies apart from Rajinikanth's 'Naan Adimai Illai'. His contribution to the art of music will be eternal.



### Padma Shri awardee Hindi, Maithili writer Usha Kiran Khan dies in Patna :-

Padma Shri Dr. Usha Kiran Khan, a renowned litterateur, died at a private hospital in Patna, the capital of Bihar. She was 79. Dr. Usha Kiran Khan was a well-known Hindi and Maithili writer who won numerous awards, including the Sahitya Akademi Award for her Maithili novel 'Bhamati: Ek Avismaraniya Premkatha'. Usha Kiran Khan, born on July 7, 1945, has garnered numerous important

awards for her unmatched contributions to the Hindi and Maithili languages. Her contributions to literature and education were further acknowledged when she was bestowed with the Padma Shri in 2015, one of India's highest civilian awards.



#### Dattajirao Gaekwad, India's oldest Test cricketer, passes away at 95 :-

Dattajirao Gaekwad, the former Indian Test captain, died in Vadodara at the age of 95. He was the nation's oldest living Test cricketer. He was the father of former Indian cricketer Anshuman Gaekwad and a distant member of Baroda's royal Gaekwad family. Dattajirao first played for Bombay University before joining the Baroda team. He made his Test debut in 1952, during India's tour of England. A right-handed batsman, Dattajirao played 11 Tests and scored 350 runs. He captained the Indian team when it toured England in 1959.



#### Udaan Actor Kavita Chaudhary Passed Away At 67 Due To Cardiac Arrest :-

Kavita Chaudhary, an actor best known for her role as Lalitaji in Surf advertisements and her television show Udaan, died on February 15 night. Her nephew, Ajay Sayal, told a news outlet that the actress died of a heart

arrest in Amritsar at the age of 67. She began performing in the early 1970s and swiftly rose to become one of India's most recognized actresses. The actress starred in many films and television shows, including Udaan, Hum Log, and Lalitaji.



#### Iconic Chef Imtiaz Qureshi Passes Away At 93 :-

Imtiaz Qureshi, a legendary chef famed for reviving the historic Lucknowi practice of dum pukht cuisine, died of age-related diseases on February 16 at Mumbai's Lilavati Hospital. He was 93. Throughout a five-decade career, Qureshi served countless opulent feasts to figures such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi in the 1960s. His famous restaurant, Dum Pukht, in Lucknow became a standard-bearer for Indian fine dining. Qureshi received the Padma Shri in 2016 and founded the restaurant Bukhara, which still operates.



#### Dangal actor Suhani Bhatnagar passes away at 19 :-

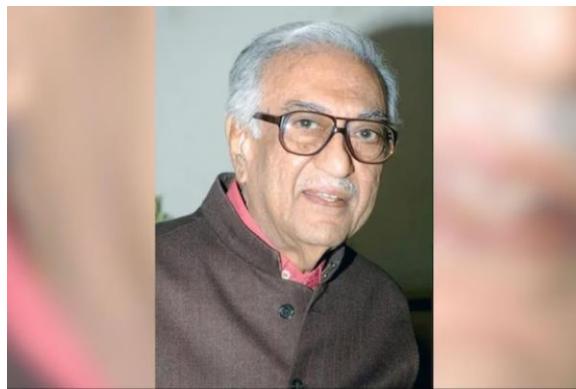
Suhani Bhatnagar, who played young Babita Phogat in Aamir Khan's wrestling film Dangal, fell of Dermatomyositis, a rare inflammatory condition and passed away in Delhi at the age of 19. Her performance in 'Dangal', a 2016 biographical film about a wrestler who mentors his two daughters to success, was widely

praised. Dangal focuses on amateur wrestler Mahavir Singh Phogat, who trains his daughters Geeta and Babita Phogat to become India's first world-class female wrestlers.



#### **Actor Rituraj Singh Passes Away At 59 :-**

Rituraj Singh, a well-known actor who appeared on television shows such as Anupamaa and in films like as Badrinath Ki Dulhania, died at home after suffering a heart arrest, according to a close friend. He was 59. Rituraj Singh's career lasted more than three decades. He appeared in several popular series, including Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kii, Kutumb, Hitler Didi, Diya Aur Baati Hum, and Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai. More recently, he was seen in the hit show Anupamaa. On the films front, Rituraj was last seen in Yaariyan 2.



#### **Legendary radio host Ameen Sayani passes away at 91 :-**

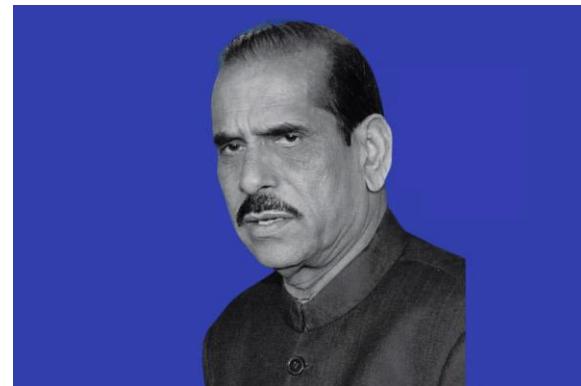
Ameen Sayani, the renowned radio personality best known for hosting the popular show 'Geetmala,' died at the age of 91. With the death of Ameen Sayani, India says goodbye to a broadcasting legend whose voice rang across the airwaves for almost six decades. Sayani was instrumental in popularizing radio listening in India,

attracting audiences with his intelligence, wit, and engaging delivery style. His contributions have left an indelible mark on the Indian broadcasting landscape. Ameen Sayani produced and presented over 54,000 radio programs.



#### **Senior Supreme Court Advocate Fali S Nariman Passes Away At 95 :-**

Fali S. Nariman, an eminent jurist, died at the age of 95. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1991 and the Padma Vibhushan in 2007. Throughout his career, Nariman was involved in several important cases. He also wrote an autobiography, When Memory Fades, in which he dedicated one chapter to the Bhopal gas leak case, which he handled as senior counsel for Union Carbide Corporation. He also resigned from the post of additional solicitor general in protest against Indira Gandhi's decision to impose Emergency.



#### **Former Lok Sabha Speaker Manohar Joshi Passes Away At 86 :-**

Manohar Joshi, former Maharashtra Chief Minister and Lok Sabha Speaker, was one of Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray's most trusted advisers, died at the age of 86. Mr. Joshi, one of the Shiv Sena's most recognizable faces

during its early years, became the first non-Congress Chief Minister in Maharashtra after the United Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) 'Mahayuti' coalition came to power in 1995. Mr. Joshi remained as Maharashtra's CM from 1995-99, then serving as the Union Heavy Industries Minister in Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government at the Centre from 1999-2002.



#### **Karnataka Cricketer K Hoysala, 34, Passes Away From Cardiac Arrest :-**

K. Hoysala, a former Karnataka junior cricketer, died from cardiac arrest after playing against Tamil Nadu in the South Zone IA & AD tournament at the RSI grounds in Bengaluru. He was 34. Hoysala, who represented Karnataka in age-group events, fainted on the pitch during the post-match huddle. Hoysala had also donned the jersey of Shivamogga Lions in the Karnataka Premier League (KPL), later rebranded as KSCA Maharaja T20 Trophy, for a couple of seasons.



#### **D Seshachary of the Hyderabad Brothers passes away :-**

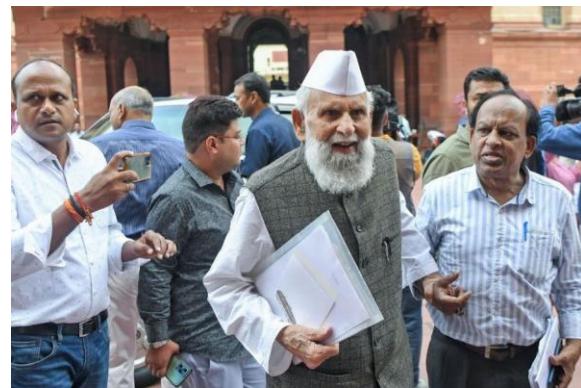
Vidwan D. Seshachari, the younger of the Hyderabad brothers and one of the city's most well-known Carnatic music performers, died at his home in Padmaraonagar. He was 67. The Hyderabad Brothers won the Best Young Talent Award from the Sangeetha Nataka Akademi in

Hyderabad in 1977 and 1978, as well as the Madras Music Academy three years in a row in 1990, 1991, and 1992. In 1993, The Music Academy presented them the Maharajapuram Viswanatha Iyer award for the best rendering of Thyagaraja kritis.



#### **Ghazal singer Pankaj Udhas dies at 72 :-**

Pankaj Udhas, a legendary singer known for hits such as 'Chitthi aayi hai', died in Mumbai after a protracted illness. He was 72. 'Chandani Raat Mein', 'Na Kajre Ki Dhaar', 'Aur Ahista Kijiye Baatein', 'Ek Taraf Uska Ghar', and 'Thodi Thodi Piya Karo' are some of his timeless ghazals. The singer, who also established the talent quest TV show 'Aadab Aarz Hai', has performed at events all over the world and has several records to his name. His song 'Chitthi Aayee Hai', which became a massive smash, was named one of BBC Radio's 100 songs of the Millennium.



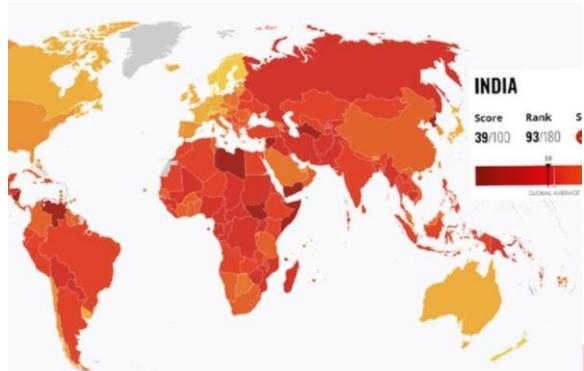
#### **Shafiqur Rahman Barq, India's Oldest MP And Samajwadi Party Leader, Dies At 94 :-**

Shafiqur Rahman Barq, the Samajwadi Party's leader and India's oldest Parliamentarian, died at the age of 94 in a private hospital in Moradabad. He was a Member of Parliament from Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal. Barq was a

highly regarded Muslim leader in Uttar Pradesh. He began his political career over 57 years ago, under the leadership of former Prime Minister Charan Singh. He collaborated closely with Mulayam Singh Yadav, Azam

Khan, and Janeshwar Mishra. Barq joined the Samajwadi Party in 1995. He won the Lok Sabha election from the Moradabad seat in 1996 in the first attempt.

## 13: Ranks & Reports



### India Placed 93rd Among 180 Nations In 2023 Corruption Index :-

According to Transparency International, India placed 93 out of 180 nations on the corruption perceptions index in 2023, with its overall score remaining fairly unchanged. The index, which evaluates 180 nations and territories based on experts' and business people's perceptions of public sector corruption, employs a 0 to 100 scale, with 0 indicating severely corrupt and 100 indicating very clean. Seventy-one per cent of the countries across Asia and the Pacific have a CPI score below the regional average score of 45 and the global average of 43 out of 100.



### Bhupender Yadav Releases The Status Report Of Snow Leopards In India :-

Shri Bhupender Yadav, Union Minister of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, issued the report on the Status of Snow Leopards in India at the National Board for Wildlife meeting in New Delhi. The Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SPA) Program is the first scientific endeavor to report the population of 718 Snow Leopards in India. The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) is the National Coordinator for this exercise that was carried out with support the support of all snow leopard range states and two conservation partners, the Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysuru and WWF-India.



### IMF raises India's FY24 growth forecast to 6.7% from 6.3% :-

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has increased India's GDP growth prediction for the current fiscal year (FY24) to 6.7% from 6.3%, and for the following year (FY25) to 6.5% from 6.3%. The growth prediction for FY26 was also increased to 6.5 percent. In its most recent World Economic Outlook (WEO) report, the IMF increased global economic growth forecasts to 3.1% from 3.0% for calendar year 2024 and 3.1% from 2.9% for 2025. Forecasts were raised for almost all major economies including United States, China and Eurozone.



### Toyota Retains Its Position As The World's Top-Selling Automaker In 2023 :-

Toyota Motor claimed it sold a record 11.2 million vehicles in 2023, making it the world's best-selling automaker for the fourth consecutive year. The Japanese carmaker recorded a 7.2% increase in global group sales last year, including those of truck subsidiary Hino Motors and small-car producer Daihatsu, thanks to record overseas sales of 8.9 million vehicles. Toyota's parent-only car sales, which include its namesake and Lexus brands, set a new high in 2023 at 10.3 million vehicles. Gasoline-electric hybrids made up about a third of those. Battery electric vehicles accounted for less than 1%.



### RBI's Digital Payments Index (RBI-DPI) Surges To 418.77 In September 2023 :-

The level of digital payments throughout the nation is gauged by the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Digital Payments Index, which rose from 395.57 in March 2023 to 418.77 in September 2023. The basis period for the RBI-DPI's construction is March 2018, meaning that the DPI score for that month is 100. The index was 173.49 in September 2019, 217.74 in September 2020, and 304.06 in September 2021. The RBI-DPI comprises five broad

parameters that measure the penetration of digital payments in the country over different time periods.



### RBI Announces: 97.50% Of Rs 2,000 Notes Returned To System :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reported that 97.50 percent of the Rs 2,000 currency notes in circulation as of May 19, 2023, have been returned to the banking system. The entire value of such banknotes in circulation fell to Rs 8,897 crore at the end of business on January 31, 2024, from Rs 3.56 lakh crore on May 19, 2023, when the government announced the withdrawal of the Rs 2,000 bills, according to an RBI statement. The central bank announced the withdrawal of the high-value denomination banknotes from circulation as part of its clean note policy.



### UPI Transactions Hit ₹18.4 Trillion In January: NPCI Data

Unified Payment Interface (UPI) transactions reached a record high in January, totaling Rs 18.41 trillion, up 1% from Rs 18.23 trillion in December. Transactions grew by 1.5 percent to 12.20 billion from 12.02 billion in October. In November, the value was estimated at Rs 17.4 trillion, with 11.4 billion transactions. According to data shared by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), January numbers were 52 per cent higher in volume and

42 per cent higher in value compared to the same month last financial year.



#### **Mukesh Ambani Tops Global Brand Guardianship Index 2024 :-**

Mukesh Ambani, Chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Industries Limited, has been ranked No. 1 among Indians and second globally in the Brand Guardianship Index 2024, which was created by Brand Finance. The Brand Guardianship Index is a global acknowledgment of CEOs that are creating long-term value for their companies by balancing the requirements of all stakeholders, including employees, investors, and society at large. Brand Finance's survey gave Mukesh Ambani a BGI score of 80.3, just below 81.6 of Huateng Ma of China-based Tencent.



#### **OECD Raises India's Growth Forecast For FY25 To 6.2%:-**

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in its latest report has boosted India's growth forecast for fiscal year 2024-25 (FY25) to 6.2%, up from 6.1% previously. This positive change comes after a solid performance in fiscal year 2022-23. However, expected growth rates for the future fiscal years point to a downturn. The real GDP growth is expected to decrease to 6.3% in FY 2023-24 and further

to 6.1% in FY 2024-25. This slowdown is attributed to adverse weather conditions and a weakening international economic outlook.



#### **India Ranks 38th Out Of 139 Countries In The World Bank's LPI Report 2023 :-**

The World Bank's 'Logistics Performance Index Report (2023): Connecting to Compete 2023' ranks India 38th out of 139 countries. India's rank has risen six places from 44 in 2018 and sixteen places from 54 in 2014. An inter-ministerial committed team made up of stakeholder ministries/departments has been constituted. These stakeholder Ministries/Departments focus on targeted action plans with interventions needed to improve logistics performance across all six LPI parameters i.e. Customs, Infrastructure, Ease of arranging shipments, Quality of logistics services, Tracking and Tracing, and Timeliness.



#### **Urban Jobless Rate In India Declines To 6.5% In Q3FY24: PLFS Data Analysis :-**

According to quarterly Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) data, the urban unemployment rate fell to its lowest level in almost four years, 6.5%, in October-December 2023, while female labor force participation increased to a high of 25%. In October-December 2022, urban unemployment was 7.2%, compared to 6.6% in the previous quarter. Female labour force participation was up 2.7 percentage points from Q3FY23, and a percentage

point higher than the previous quarter. The unemployment rate in urban areas was lower than the previous month's level of 6.6%.



#### Germany Overtakes Japan As Third-Largest Economy :-

Japan, once slated to become the world's largest economy, fell below Germany to fourth place last year, according to official figures, though India is expected to overtake both later this decade. Despite a 1.9% increase, Japan's nominal 2023 GDP in dollar terms was \$4.2 trillion, according to government data, compared to \$4.5 trillion in Germany, according to estimates released last month. The change in positions primarily reflects the sharp fall in the yen against the dollar, rather than the German economy - which contracted 0.3% in 2023 - outperforming Japan, economists said.



#### National Coal Index Dips 4.75% In Dec, 2023 :-

The National Coal Index (Provisional) fell by 4.75% in December 2023, to 155.44 points, from 163.19 points in December 2022. This large decline suggests that there is enough coal in the market to meet rising demand. The National Coal Index (NCI) is a price index that includes coal prices from all sales channels: Notified Prices, Auction Prices, and Import Prices. Established with the base year as FY 2017-18, NCI serves as a reliable indicator

of market dynamics, providing valuable insights of price fluctuations.



#### India Achieves Global Digitalization Milestone As Third Largest Digital Economy :-

According to a recent study conducted by a Delhi-based think tank, India is the world's third largest digitalised country, trailing only the United States of America (USA) and China. According to the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER)'s State of India's Digital Economy Report, 2024, India's digitalisation is better than that of some developed countries, including the United Kingdom, Germany, and Japan, in terms of overall digitalisation. However, at the level of individual users, India is ranked 12th in terms of digitalisation among the G20 countries.



#### Henley Passport Index 2024, France Tops List Of World's Most Powerful Passports :-

The Henley Passport Index for 2024 has been revealed, with France taking the top spot, while India's passport ranking has dropped one notch from last year, from 84th to 85th. This drop in India's position may surprise some, given Indian passport holders were able to travel visa-free to 60 countries last year, but that number has grown to 62 this year. The Henley Passport Index ranks nations

based on the strength of their passports. In 2024, France leads the list, with its passport granting visa-free access to 194 countries.



#### UP Leads In Vehicle Sales Oct-Dec 2023: SIAM Report :-

Uttar Pradesh had the highest number of car sales in October-December 2023, followed by Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu, according to the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers. According to figures from the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), Uttar Pradesh sold a total of 8,22,472 passenger and commercial vehicles, as well as two and three-wheelers. Maharashtra was second with 6,88,192 units across the four categories followed by Gujarat with 4,21,026 units and Tamil Nadu 4,19,189 units in the quarter.



#### Cybercrime Report: India Ranks 80th Worldwide :-

India was ranked 80th in a research concentrating on local dangers in the year 2023. The position is based on malicious programs discovered directly on users' computers or removable media connected to them (flash drives, camera memory cards, phones, external hard drives) or that initially made their way onto the computer in non-open form, such as programs hidden in complex installers or encrypted files. Additionally, nearly 34% of

users in India were targeted by local threats, amounting to some 74,385,324 local incidents being blocked by Kaspersky products.



#### India Ratings Forecasts Moderation In GDP Growth To 6.5% For FY25 :-

India's GDP is predicted to slow to 6.5 percent in fiscal year 2024-25, down from 7.3 percent in the initial advance forecasts, according to India Ratings and Research. The forecast is somewhat below the Reserve Bank of India's estimate of 7% GDP growth in FY25. Furthermore, the rating agency raised its FY24 projection to 6.9 percent from 6.7% before, citing a buildup in the economy due to current climatic conditions in north India, which would drive agriculture and consuming demand.



#### Bank Of Baroda Projects India's GDP Growth At 6.75-6.8% In FY25 :-

In a research, the Bank of Baroda (BoB) forecasts that India's GDP would increase by 6.75 to 6.8 percent in FY25 and 6.8 percent in the current fiscal year. "The Indian economy is relatively better off than its global counterparts on the back of resilience reflected through domestic demand and sustained government thrust on capital expenditure," stated the report. The BoB forecasts growth in the third quarter of the current fiscal

year to slow to 6.4% from 7.6% in the previous quarter due to reduced growth in the agriculture and industry sectors.



#### NSSO Survey Shows Poverty Down To 5%: NITI Aayog CEO :-

According to the most recent consumer spending survey, the country's poverty rate has dropped to 5%, and people are prospering in both rural and urban areas, according to NITI Aayog CEO B V R Subrahmanyam. The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), which is part of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, has released data on household consumption expenditure for the fiscal year 2022-23, revealing that per capita monthly household expenditure has more than doubled since 2011-12.

## 14: Schemes & Committees



#### Punjab Govt Launches 'Sadak Surakhy Force' (SSF), First Of Its Kind To Cut Road Deaths :-

The Punjab government has established the 'Sadak Surakhy Force' (SSF), the first of its type in the country, to minimize road fatalities. The State Chief Minister, Bhagwant Singh Mann, launched off high-tech automobiles from Jalandhar. Anyone in the state can request assistance by dialing 112, and a vehicle will arrive within 10 minutes of receiving the call. A Report says that Indian Hockey team's former captain and AIG traffic Gaganjit Singh will lead this Sadak Surakhy Force. The vehicles are fitted with specialised equipment to check for drunken driving and overspeeding.



#### Tamil Nadu Announced 'Kalaignar Sports Kit' Initiative

In honor of former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi's centennial, the State government has announced plans to launch the "Kalaignar Sports Kit," an initiative that will distribute sporting goods to 12,000 village panchayats. This announcement was made by Minister of Sports Development and Youth Welfare Udhayanidhi Stalin. Speaking at the sixth edition of Khelo India's closing ceremony at Kalaivanar Arangam in Chennai, Mr. Udhayanidhi said that he would launch the program on February 7 in Tiruchi. Mr. Udhayanidhi said Khelo India 2023 had helped identify many sportspersons who can compete and win in the international arena.



### NCPCR Launches GHAR Portal For Child Restoration And Repatriation :-

In a coordinated effort to strengthen child safety measures, the Ministry of Women and Child establishment led the establishment of two critical portals: the Track Child Portal and the GHAR - GO Home and Re-Unite Portal. These platforms serve an important role in tracking lost and found children, improving restoration and repatriation processes, and protecting the welfare of vulnerable adolescents in the Juvenile Justice system. GHAR enables the digital tracking and monitoring of children within the Juvenile Justice system, ensuring their timely restoration or repatriation.



### Uttarakhand CM Launches "Dhami Against Drugs Campaign" :-

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami started the "Dhami against drugs campaign" run by the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha Metropolitan Dehradun from February 5 to February 10. Earlier, Dhami urged residents to work together to support the government's goal of making the state drug-free by 2025. He held a high-level meeting at his official residence and directed the officials to rapidly involve the students and colleges in a campaign to achieve the target of a "Drugs Free Uttarakhand" by the year 2025.



### Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal Launches Free Bus Travel For Transgender Community :-

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal declared free bus travel for the transgender population in the national capital, claiming that they are often overlooked in society and deserve equal rights. He hoped that the government's action would significantly benefit the transgender population. In October 2019, the Delhi government introduced free bus travel for women, and since then, women have received about 147,000,000 free tickets. Meanwhile, Delhi minister Kailash Gahlot said trans people will receive the benefit of free bus services based on the government certificate.



### Uttar Pradesh's Green Hydrogen Initiative Targets 1 Million Tonne Capacity And 1.2 Lakh Jobs :-

Uttar Pradesh plans to build a green hydrogen generation capacity of one million tonnes per annum (mtpa). According to A K Sharma, state energy minister, the project has the potential to produce 120,000 jobs. The state received Rs 2.73 trillion in investment bids for green hydrogen plants from 20 firms during the UP Global Investors Summit in February 2023. The policy being created by the state will offer investment incentives, including on capital outlay, land availability, power transmission, etc.



### SWATI Portal Launched To Empower Women In STEMM :-

Prof Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India, has launched Science for Women-A Technology & Innovation (SWATI), a portal dedicated to promoting girls' participation in STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Medicine). Prof Sood, who launched the portal on the occasion of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science at the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) in New Delhi, stated that the SWATI portal's database will be used in policymaking to overcome gender gaps.



### Prime Minister Narendra Modi Unveils 'PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana' :-

In an effort to increase solar power and promote sustainable development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced the commencement of the 'PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana', which seeks to light up one crore households by distributing up to 300 units of free energy every month. Modi stated the project would cost more than Rs 75,000 crore. From substantive subsidies, which will be given directly to people's bank accounts, to heavily concessional bank loans, the central government will ensure that there is no cost burden on the people, the prime minister added.



### NITI Aayog Unveils GROW Initiative For Agroforestry Development To Revitalize India's Wastelands :-

NITI Aayog has released the Greening and Restoration of Wasteland with Agroforestry (GROW) report and portal, which aims to boost efforts in environmental conservation and sustainable land use across India. Using cutting-edge remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technologies, the research provides a complete state- and district-level analysis, providing critical insights to government departments and enterprises working on greening and restoration programs. Under the leadership of NITI Aayog, the report employed remote sensing and GIS techniques to evaluate the suitability of agroforestry practices across all districts of India.



### Union Cabinet Expanded National Livelihood Mission (NLM) :-

The National Livelihood Mission (NLM) will now have more activities after the Union Cabinet resolved to change the scheme. According to a government announcement, the initiative would now include a 50% capital subsidy provision. Individuals, FPOs, SHGs, JLGs, FCOs, and Section 8 corporations will each receive up to 50 lakhs to start horse, donkey, mule, and camel businesses. Also, the state government will assist with the breed conservation of horses, donkeys, and camels.

The Central Government will provide ₹10 crore to establish semen stations and nucleus breeding farms for horses, donkeys and camels.



#### Government Continues Women Safety Scheme Till 2025-26 :-

The Union Government has approved the Ministry of Home Affairs' proposal to continue the execution of the Umbrella Scheme on 'Safety of Women' at a total cost of approximately 1,180 crore rupees from 2021-22 to 2025-26. The decision was made during a Union Cabinet meeting headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Addressing the media after the meeting, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur said, under it, 24-hour emergency helpline service 112 will be scaled up.



#### NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd. (NTPC-REL) Inaugurates First Solar Project In Rajasthan :-

On February 21, NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd (NTPC-REL) announced that its first solar plant in Chhattargarh, Rajasthan, would begin commercial operations with a capacity of 70 MW. With this, the NTPC Group's installed capacity has reached 73,958 megawatts. NTPC-REL is currently working on 17 projects with a combined capacity of more than 6000 MW. With this, the total renewable energy operational capacity of NTPC Group

stands at 3,448 MW, the Ministry of Power said in a statement.



#### Odisha Government Extends KALIA Scheme for 3 More Years :-

The Odisha government has approved a total outlay of ₹6,029.70 crore to extend the farmers' welfare plan 'KALIA' for another three years, to gear up for the forthcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain stated that the state has been implementing the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme since 2018-19 because agriculture supports the majority of the state's population, either directly or indirectly.



#### US-India Cybersecurity Initiative Launched :-

The US Consulate, in partnership with the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, Industries, and Agriculture (MCCIA), inaugurated the first-ever US-India cybersecurity project to promote IT ties between the two nations. US Consul General Mike Hankey, who was in Pune, stated that the effort aims to bring together the world's best cybersecurity specialists to create jobs and develop cutting-edge solutions. The initiative will lead the city into a mentorship model in cyberspace and will also foster people-to-people ties in cyberspace, he said.



**Government Forms Expert Committee, Chaired By Finance Secretary T V Somanathan, For Uniform KYC Norms :-**

A government expert team led by Finance Secretary TV Somanathan has been working for some time to develop universal Know Your Customer (KYC) rules, according to a senior ministry official. "Yes, there is such a panel that is being headed by Finance Secretary, but this was formed a while back," the official went on to say. The Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) said at its 28th meeting on February 21 that it will develop a strategy to streamline and digitalise the banking sector's KYC procedure.

## 15: Science & Technology



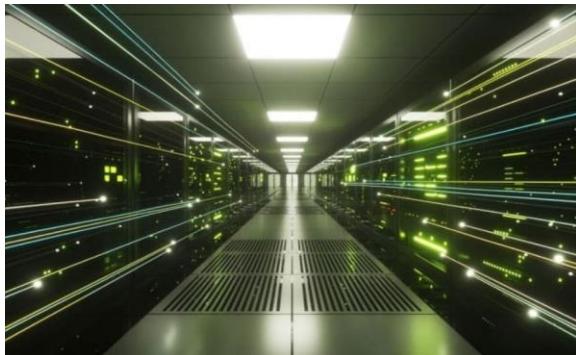
**Elon Musk's Neuralink Implants Brain Chip In First Human :-**

Elon Musk, the billionaire founder of brain-chip business Neuralink, announced that the company's first human patient has gotten an implant and is doing well. Last year, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the company's first study to test its implant on humans, a significant milestone in the startup's plans to help patients overcome paralysis and other neurological problems. In September, Neuralink said it received approval for recruitment for the human trial.



**Scientists Discover New Kangaroo Lizard Species In Western Ghats :-**

Scientists have discovered a new species of tiny lizards in the Western Ghats' biodiverse forests, which they refer to as "diminutive dragons." The newly discovered species, Agasthyagama edge or the northern kangaroo lizard, belongs to the Agamidae family and is distinguished by its small size, with a maximum snout-vent length of 4.3 cm. This is the second species in the Agasthyagama genus, following the previously reported A. beddomii from the Sivagiri highlands of Tamil Nadu. The recent discovery was made by a collaborative team of scientists from various institutions in India and abroad, conducting research in the southern Western Ghats at Kulamavu in Idukki.



#### Ayodhya to have centralised GIS data centre :-

A centralized data center will be built in the temple town to oversee infrastructural improvements. The Ayodhya Development Authority would monitor the geographical information system (GIS)-based data centre in order to speed infrastructure-related civil activities. The UP government has delegated the task of carrying out critical projects to the development authority. The authority has floated its requirements over its website and has started looking for suitable agencies which can provide the software and hardware required to establish the data centre.



#### BHU Launched Human DNA Bank Under Make In India Initiative :-

Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has taken two big steps toward scientific progress: the establishment of the Human DNA Bank and the nearing completion of the Wildlife DNA Bank. Emulating Estonia's esteemed Genome Bank, BHU's DNA banks aim to collect and analyze genetic data from diverse populations. This ambitious undertaking promises to advance genetic studies and address prevalent challenges such as endogamy-related hereditary diseases.



#### Russian Cosmonaut Oleg Kononenko Sets World Record For Most Time In Space :-

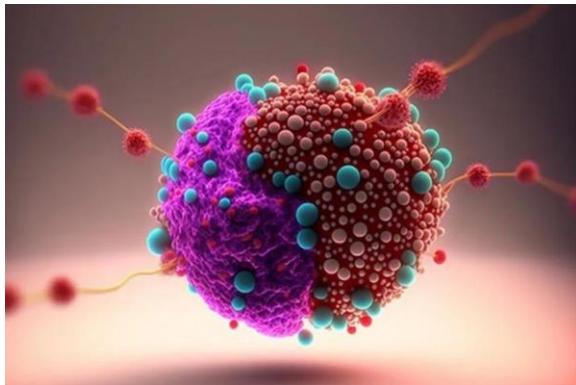
Russian cosmonaut Oleg Kononenko set a new world record for the longest time spent in space. Kononenko has now spent more than 878 days in orbit, surpassing his compatriot Gennady Padalka, according to Russia's space organization, Roscosmos. Furthermore, he is anticipated to reach 1,000 days in orbit on June 5 and 1,110 days by late September. The 59-year-old cosmonaut replaced Padalka, who previously held the record with a total of 878 days, 11 hours, 29 minutes, and 48 seconds.



#### Israeli Researchers Uncover Underwater Canyon Near Cyprus :-

The Geological Institute of Israel identified a previously unknown underwater canyon near Cyprus. The canyon, named Eratosthenes after the nearby underwater mountain, dates back to the Messinian Event, which occurred approximately 5.5 million years ago. The canyon, which is roughly 10 kilometers wide and 500 meters deep, was buried during the beginning of the Messinian period before the salt layer was deposited. Also known as the Messinian salinity crisis, the Messinian event was a geological event during which the

Mediterranean Sea went into a cycle of partial or nearly complete desiccation.



#### AIIMS Launches iOncology.Ai For Early Cancer Detection :-

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi, in conjunction with the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing in Pune, introduced iOncology.ai, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) platform designed for the early diagnosis of breast and ovarian cancer. While this indigenously developed technology has already been deployed for validation in five district government hospitals, including Mathura and Faridabad, officials confirmed that the government intends to install the system in additional medical centers in the future with the help of National Information Centres and the Ministry of Information Technology.



#### NASA Launches PACE Mission To Study Oceans And Atmosphere :-

NASA's Plankton, Aerosol, Cloud, and Ocean Ecosystem (PACE) mission launched into orbit on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from the Space Launch Complex 40 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida. The Pace mission advances our understanding of the Earth's seas, air quality, and climate change. Within minutes of its

ascent, NASA reported that it had received a signal from the satellite, confirming that PACE was functioning properly. NASA Administrator Bill Nelson expressed his congratulations to the PACE team for the flawless launch.



#### Google Rebrands Its Chatbot, Bard, As Gemini :-

Google has renamed its Bard chatbot after the new artificial intelligence that powers it, Gemini, and announced that people can pay for improved reasoning capabilities as it competes with Microsoft. Google, seeking to launch another product with billions of users, will rely on its massive network of Android phone users to help it succeed. The company said Android users can opt into Gemini as the default digital aide on their phones, accessing it through an app, the power button or by saying "Hey Google." Users get a two-month subscription trial at no cost.



#### Dubai Launches World's First Air Taxi Service At World Government Summit 2024 :-

Dubai signed arrangements to introduce the first air taxi service in history at the World Government Summit in 2024, marking a groundbreaking step that will transform urban mobility. The agreements allow Dubai to take the lead in implementing a vertiport network and an electric aerial taxi service throughout the entire city. At the heart of the initiative lies the Joby Aviation S4, an innovative aircraft designed to comfortably accommodate four passengers along with a pilot. Sporting six propellers and

powered by four battery packs, the S4 boasts a maximum range of 161 km and a top speed of 321 km per hour.



#### ISRO's New Weather Satellite, INSAT-3DS, Launched From Sriharikota :-

The GSLV-F14, carrying the INSAT-3D meteorological satellite, was successfully launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. The INSAT-3DS satellite is a follow-up mission to the third-generation meteorological satellite in geostationary orbit. The satellite is an exclusive mission meant to improve meteorological observations, monitor land and ocean surfaces for weather forecasting, and provide disaster warnings. The INSAT-3DS satellite will augment meteorological services along with the presently operational INSAT-3D and INSAT-3DR in-orbit satellites.



#### India's First Indigenous Spy Satellite By TASL Set For SpaceX Launch :-

According to a source, the first spy satellite in India built by a local private company would be launched in a SpaceX rocket in April and utilized by the armed forces to gather discreet information. Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL) manufactured the satellite, which is being transferred to Florida for launch, according to the report. Earlier, the armed forces had to acquire the required exact coordinates and timings from foreign vendors. But

now, this satellite will allow them to be monitored by India and also provide it with full ground control.



#### NASA And JAXA Set To Launch World's First Wooden Satellite :-

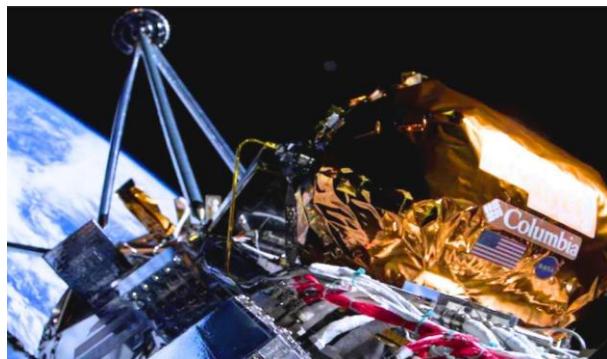
NASA and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) are looking into launching the LignoSat probe, the world's first wooden satellite, into space in an effort to make spaceflight operations more sustainable. Kyoto University scientists created the mini satellite in partnership with Sumitomo Forestry, a forestry firm. Scientists believe that the satellite's biodegradable nature will help to protect the Earth's ecosystem. Currently, our stratosphere is inundated with metallic particles from spacecraft, including satellites, which are majorly constructed out of aluminium.



#### Reliance Industries Is Set To Launch 'Hanooman', A ChatGPT-Style AI Service :-

The BharatGPT group, funded by Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd, is planning to launch its first ChatGPT-style service next month. The model, known as Hanooman, reflects India's rush to develop potentially breakthrough artificial intelligence technology. The model will operate in 11 local languages across four sectors: health care, governance, financial services, and education. The model is being developed in collaboration

with Indian Institute of Technology universities and is backed by Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd.



#### America's Odysseus Spacecraft Makes 1st Commercial Moon Landing In History :-

The United States' Odysseus spacecraft safely landed on the moon on February 22nd (local time), becoming the first American spacecraft to do so in more than 50 years. With this, Intuitive Machines (IM), the commercial initiative behind the Nova-C lander, has become the first private venture to successfully arrive on the moon. This marks the first American soft landing on the lunar surface since the Apollo era in 1972. Notably, this landing comes months after India's Chandrayaan-3 lander.



#### NVIDIA And Indian Govt Join Forces For Sovereign AI :-

## 16: Sports



NVIDIA, a global computer pioneer, has agreed to partner with the Indian government in order to promote the growth of artificial intelligence (AI) within India's Digital Public Infrastructure. Shanker Trivedi, a senior leader of NVIDIA, met with IT Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar at MeitY to discuss potential contributions to the development of India's Sovereign AI. Trivedi conveyed NVIDIA's strong interest in the concept of Sovereign AI, emphasizing its alignment with the nation's expanding digital public infrastructure.



#### PM Modi Announces India's Own Space Station By 2035

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that India will build its own space station by 2035 and become a commercial hub for the field. While recalling the successful softlanding of Chandrayaan-3 on the Moon's South Pole, the Prime Minister stated that India's achievement in the space sector is instilling scientific values in the country's youth. The Indian space economy, PM Modi said, will increase five-fold in the next 10 years to touch \$40 billion. India's maiden human space flight mission, Gaganyaan, is slated to be launched in 2024-25.

#### Karnataka Clinches Nagesh Trophy Beating Andhra Pradesh :-

Karnataka won the IndusInd Bank Nagesh Trophy after defeating Andhra Pradesh by nine wickets in the final of the Men's National T20 Cricket Tournament for the Blind 2023-24 in Nagpur. This is Karnataka's first national title in 20 years. Andhra Pradesh set a lofty goal by scoring 237/5 in the final, demonstrating a respectable effort.

However, Karnataka (241/1) displayed remarkable resilience, chasing down the target with just 3 balls to spare, concluding the tournament with a thrilling finish for visually impaired cricketers.



#### **Abhinav Bindra Selected As Torchbearer For The 2024 Paris Olympics :-**

Abhinav Bindra, India's first individual gold medalist at the Olympics, has been named a torchbearer for the 2024 Paris Olympics. He will take part in the Olympic torch relay, which runs from April 16 to July 26. Bindra, a member of the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) Athletes Commission, won the gold medal in the men's 10m air rifle event at the Beijing Olympics in 2008. The torch relay is set to last 68 days, covering 65 territories, including five overseas territories.



#### **MetLife Stadium Secures Hosting Rights for FIFA 2026 World Cup Finale :-**

FIFA has revealed vital facts about the highly anticipated 2026 World Cup, including a complicated schedule unlike any other. The tournament will begin in Mexico City and end in MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, with the United States men's national team scheduled to play matches in Southern California and Seattle. Atlanta and Arlington,

Texas, have been designated as the sites for the semifinals, while a staggering 78 out of 104 games will be hosted in the United States. The U.S. cities selected will each stage a minimum of six matches.



#### **Telangana Football Association To Host FIFA World Cup Qualifiers In Hyderabad :-**

The Telangana Football Association (TFA) successfully obtained approval to host the FIFA World Cup qualifying round between India and Kuwait on June 6 this year in Hyderabad, according to Dr. K.T. Mahi, TFA Chairman. Dr Mahi thanked the All India Football Federation President, Kalyan Chaubey, for entrusting the TFA with "this unique opportunity." Dr Mahi said the World Cup qualifier marked a historic moment as Telangana prepares to host the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers match for the first time.



#### **FIFA To Introduce Blue Cards :-**

The International Football Association Board (IFAB) is prepared to introduce a new card, the blue card, as part of trials involving sin bins in professional football. In November 2023, the governing board acknowledged the importance of managing player behavior towards match officials, which resulted in the establishment of temporary dismissals for dissent and some tactical

offenses. IFAB proposes adding blue cards to the standard yellow and red cards. Blue cards will serve as a disciplinary measure for dissent and cynical fouls, resulting in players being temporarily sent to the sin-bin.



#### **Etiad Airways becomes official sponsor of CSK :-**

Etiad Airways, headquartered in Abu Dhabi, has established a three-year agreement with the Chennai Super Kings. The corporation made no mention of the agreement's worth and anticipated that it would be for a longer duration. The name of the carrier will be displayed on the back of the CSK jersey. They will be on boarding and other displays. CSK, one of the richest cricket franchises in India, will get about 100 crore from all sponsorships. Etiad, eyeing increased share from the Indian market, announced Katrina Kaif as brand ambassador last year.



#### **Pathum Nissanka Smashes Sri Lankan Records With Historic Double Century :-**

Sri Lanka opener Pathum Nissanka made history by becoming the country's first hitter to score 200 runs in ODIs. Nissanka achieved the country's maiden double century in the format during the first ODI against Afghanistan in Pallekele. The opener finished unbeaten

on 210 from 139 balls, slamming 20 fours and eight sixes in a superb knock that helped Sri Lanka to a gigantic score of 381/3. Nissanka's 210\* is the fifth-highest individual score in ODI history, and he is the fifth batter to have carried the bat after scoring a double century.



#### **U19 World Cup 2024 Final, Australia Beats India By 79 Runs :-**

Australia U19 won the U19 World Cup 2024 final by 79 runs. With the crushing victory over India, Australia has won its fourth World Cup in U-19 cricket. India's much-talked-about batting crumbled in the final, as prominent batsmen such as skipper Uday Saharan, Musheer Khan, and Sachin Dhas failed to trouble the scorers. Australia, who made the gutsy call of winning the toss and batting first in overcast conditions, posted 253, the highest total in the final of a U19 Men's World Cup tournament.



#### **Sumit Nagal Clinches Chennai Open Title, Secures First-Ever Top 100 Spot :-**

Sumit Nagal, India's top-ranked men's singles player, easily won the final of the Chennai Open Challenger. Nagal defeated top seed Luca Nardi of Italy 6-1, 6-4 at the SDAT Tennis Stadium to win his fifth Challenger championship and join the top 100 of the world rankings.

for the first time in his career. Nardi did not have the greatest of starts and mistakes at crucial moments from the Italian helped Nagal go a break up. The shoulder injury that had bothered Nagal in his semifinal win seemed a thing of the past as the Indian did enough to build on the break.



### Shamar Joseph And Amy Hunter Crowned ICC Players Of The Month For January 2024 :-

Shamar Joseph made history as the first West Indian to win the Men's ICC Player of the Month title. This honor is based on his great performance in the Australia Test series. The 24-year-old pace wonder had an immediate effect in his maiden Test series against Australia, dismissing Steve Smith with his first delivery in international cricket. Ireland's explosive young batter Amy Hunter claimed the honour in the women's category after her dominance against Zimbabwe.



### Ravichandran Ashwin Joins Elite 500 Test Wickets Club

:-

Ravichandran Ashwin, an Indian off-spinner, took his 500th Test wicket in the first innings of the third Test against England at the Niranjan Shah Stadium in Rajkot. The 37-year-old accomplished this incredible record in

his 98th Test match. Ashwin dismissed Zak Crawley in the fourth session of the second day, joining Anil Kumble as the second Indian to reach 500 wickets in Test history. Kumble is India's highest wicket-taker in Tests with 619 wickets to his name. Ashwin is only behind the legendary off-spinner in the all-time highest wicket-takers list for India in Test cricket.



### Badminton Asia Team Championships 2024: India Women Win Title :-

India defeated Thailand to win the first Badminton Asia Team Championships in a thrilling final that went down to the wire, with the Indian ladies winning 3-2. The star of the show was Anmol Kharb, world number 472 and only 17 years old, who once again came out clutch in the most pressured scenario, defeating world number 45 Pornpicha Choeikeewong handily (21-14, 21-9) in the decider. What makes this title even more remarkable is the nature of it: India beat China, Hong Kong, Japan and now Thailand at the BATC, three out of four wins coming against steep odds.



### 8-Year-Old From Singapore Beats Polish Grandmaster, Sets Record :-

An eight-year-old youngster of Indian heritage created history by defeating Polish chess grandmaster Jacek

Stopa at the Burgdorfer Stadthaus Open in Switzerland. With this incredible achievement, he becomes the youngest player to defeat a grandmaster in traditional chess. According to Channel News Asia, Singapore's Ashwath Kaushik outperformed Stopa, who is nearly five times his age at 37 years old. This incredible feat comes shortly after Serbia's Leonid Ivanovic, who is only a few months older than Ashwath, defeated 60-year-old Bulgarian grandmaster Milko Popchev at the Belgrade Open.



#### IIT Guwahati Launches India's Largest Drone Pilot Training Organisation :-

The Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, in collaboration with EduRade, a brand owned by RC HobbyTech Solutions Pvt. Ltd. and incubated at IIT Guwahati Research Park, has launched India's largest Remote Pilot Training Organization (RPTO), spanning 18 acres and capable of flying 9 medium-class drones simultaneously. In a press statement, the IIT Guwahati authority said that the launch of the IIT Guwahati RPTO symbolizes the institute's dedication to transforming drone training, aiming to equip individuals with essential expertise.



#### Army Tops Khelo India Winter Games 2024:-

The Indian Army outshined in the Khelo India Winter Games 2024, bagging 10 gold medals, followed by first runner-up Karnataka and second runner-up Maharashtra. The Khelo India Winter Games 2024 was conducted in two phases. The first, from February 2 to 6, was held in Leh, Ladakh while the second was scheduled from February 21 to 25, in Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir. Gulmarg witnessed the concluding ceremony of the 4th edition of Khelo India. 800 Athletes from around 20 states and union territories participated in these games.



#### Namibia's Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton Smashes Fastest T20I Hundred :-

Namibia's Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton broke the T20 International record by scoring a century in 33 balls against Nepal. After a rough start, Loftie-Eaton's sensational knock helped Namibia take power of the Nepal Tri-Nation T20I series in its first encounter. He launched a brilliant display of attacking cricket, pushing Namibia over the 200-run barrier. With an astonishing array of strokes, Loftie-Eaton blasted 11 fours and eight sixes en route to his phenomenal century, reaching 101 off just 36 deliveries.

## 17: State



### Karnataka's Digital Detox Initiative For A Responsible Gaming Environment :-

Less than a day after releasing its policy on animation, visual effects, gaming, and extended reality, the state government declared it will pursue "digital detox" programs to guarantee a responsible gaming environment. At the GAFX2024-Bengaluru valedictory celebration, IT-BT Minister Priyank Kharge stated that the initiative's goal is to create a digitally empowered Karnataka through responsible technology use. The govt plans to launch the detox initiative in collaboration with All India Game Developers' Forum (AIGDF).



### Tamil Actor Vijay Announced The Formation Of His Political Party, 'Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam,' :-

Tamil actor Thalapathy Vijay has announced the foundation of the political party 'Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam,' proclaiming his commitment to "fundamental political change" through transparent, caste-free, and corruption-free governance. The actor

made the momentous announcement after his fan group, Vijay Makkal Iyakkam, agreed to the foundation of the political party during a meeting in Chennai. After receiving Election Commission approval, the party intends to hold public meetings and events. During these gatherings, they will present their policies, principles, and action plans, as well as introduce a flag and party symbol.



### Uttarakhand Police Adopt Self-Balancing E-Scooters For Smart Patrols :-

Abhinav Kumar, Director General of Police in Uttarakhand, launched four cutting-edge self-balancing electric scooters from the Police Headquarters to patrol the bustling streets of Haridwar. Haridwar police will patrol with self-balancing scooters to ensure the safety of tourists and locals. Donated by Utkarsh Small Finance Bank, these eco-friendly electric scooters are equipped to navigate narrow streets, allowing police personnel to efficiently monitor walking paths, Ganga ghats, and crowded areas of the city.



**Uttarakhand Cabinet approves UCC draft report, Bill likely to be tabled in assembly on Feb 6 :-**

The Uttarakhand Cabinet approved the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) report at a meeting held at the house of Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami. The proposal is anticipated to be presented to the Uttarakhand Assembly on February 6. The Uniform Civil Code drafting team, led by former Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai, handed over the document to Chief Minister Dhami. Once implemented, Uttarakhand is set to become the first Indian state post-independence to adopt the UCC.



**Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit Resigns :-**

Banwarilal Purohit has resigned as Punjab governor and administrator of the Union Territory of Chandigarh, claiming "personal reasons," a day after meeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi. The resignation came days after the Chandigarh mayoral election dispute on January 30. Manoj Sonkar of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won the poll, defeating the Congress-Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) alliance, which alleged tampering with ballot papers by the presiding officer.



**Telangana To Establish AI Hub, Make Internet A Basic Right :-**

Telangana Government will set up a dedicated AI city in 50 acres to 100 acres. The Government will position Hyderabad and Telangana as the AI capital of the country by inviting the top global and national technology companies to set up their AI Centres, said the State Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan. The Government has also announced that one of the most significant forthcoming initiatives would be to introduce internet as basic right. She said that the focus would not just be to create digital infrastructure, but also to make it accessible and affordable to all sections of society.



**CM Himanta Biswa Sarma Inaugurates Construction Skill Training Centre In Assam :-**

CM Himanta Biswa Sarma opened a Construction Skill Training Centre at Gogamukh, Dhemaji district, for Assam Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board-registered construction workers and their families. The Construction Skill Training Centre, a joint initiative of the Assam Government and Larsen & Toubro, was established with the goal of improving skill training for registered construction workers, aligning trained resources in the construction industry from workmen to supervisors, connecting trainees with future skills and modern technology, and training unemployed youths with employable construction skills.



**RCF Plans To Launch Vande Metro Prototype By April :-**

The Rail Coach Factory (RCF) in Kapurthala, Punjab, plans to launch the first prototype of the Vande Metro coach for intercity travel in April of this year, according to general manager S Srinivas. A total of 16 such coaches are projected to be ready by the end of the fiscal year 2024-25, he stated. Vande Metro, based on the concept of India's first indigenous semi-high-speed rail, Vande Bharat, will transport intercity passengers up to 250 kilometers. A Vande Metro train will have 16 air-conditioned coaches and can run at a maximum speed of 130 km per hour.

**Assam Designates Kaji Nemu As The Official State Fruit**

**:-**

The Assam government declared Kaji Nemu (Assam lemon), the state fruit. Kaji Nemu, known for its scent, flavor, and health advantages, has already received the GI tag. Assam produces 1.58 lakh metric tonnes of Kaji Nemu every year on 15.9 hectares of land, and large quantities have been sold to London and West Asia markets in the last two years. Assam agriculture minister Atul Bora said the decision to accord state fruit status to Kaji Nemu was taken at the cabinet meeting chaired by chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

**India's First Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) To Start From Uttarakhand :-**

Union Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia has announced that India's first helicopter emergency medical service (HEMS) will begin in Uttarakhand. Scindia on X announced that a helicopter will be positioned at the All Indian Institute of Medical Science in Rishikesh, from where it could be despatched anywhere within a 150-kilometer radius to airlift people to the hospital. He said that HEMS would operate under project 'Sanjeevani'. The helicopter is being assembled at present and is under the certification process.

**Haryana Launches 'Van Mitra' Scheme To Boost Green Cover:-**

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has launched the 'Van Mitra' scheme and portal to encourage community involvement in tree planting efforts in non-forest areas. Members of families with an annual income of less than Rs 1.80 lakh can apply to become 'Van Mitras'. CM Khattar said that the objective of this scheme is to directly involve the local public in increasing forest areas across the state, ensuring an increase in the survival rate of afforestation, and promoting tree planting in non-forest areas.



### Tourism Minister Reddy Lays Foundation Stone For Komuravelli Railway Station In Siddipet, Telangana :-

Union Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav have laid the groundwork for Komuravelli Railway Station in Siddipet District, Telangana. The well-known Komuravelli Mallikarjuna Swamy Temple is located in the Komuravelli village. Every year, over 25 lakh people from four different states visit the temple town to take darshan of the presiding deity. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said passenger utility has increased after the introduction of Metro and Vande Bharat trains besides other special trains.



### Odisha CM Inaugurates Bagchi Sri Shankara Cancer Center In Bhubaneswar :-

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik opened the Bagchi-Sri Shankara Cancer Centre and Research Institute in Bhubaneswar. The 750-bed hospital has been built on 22 acres of land in Info Valley-II on the outskirts of the city. Subroto Bagchi, co-founder of Mind-Tree and the Odisha government's chief adviser (institutional capacity building), and his wife have donated Rs 210 crore to this non-profit enterprise. The centre has facilities to provide radiotherapy to 300 patients and chemotherapy to 150 patients daily.



### AAP Candidate Declared Chandigarh Mayor, Top Court Cancels Earlier Result:-

The Supreme Court made history by crowning Aam Aadmi Party candidate Kuldeep Kumar the winner of last month's Chandigarh mayoral election, putting an end to weeks of controversy when Returning Officer Anil Masih was caught on camera invalidating and discarding eight votes in his favor. The order - preceded by the counting of votes, including those erroneously rejected, in the courtroom rather than a counting centre - cancels the earlier result that saw the Bharatiya Janata Party's Manoj Sonkar elected Mayor. Delhi Chief Minister and AAP boss Arvind Kejriwal has hailed the verdict.



### Tribal Festival 'Sammakka Saralamma Jatara' Being Held In Telangana :-

The four-day 'Sammakka Saralamma Jatara', which is considered to be the world's largest gathering of tribals, began on February 21 at Medaram in Mulugu district. Around one crore pilgrims are anticipated to visit Medaram for the four-day festival, which is held once every two years. The government had made elaborate efforts to ensure that the celebration ran well. President Droupadi Murmu will be visiting Medaram to participate in the tribal festival on Feb 23. Medaram is a remote place in the Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary, a part of Dandakaranya, the largest surviving forest belt in Mulugu.



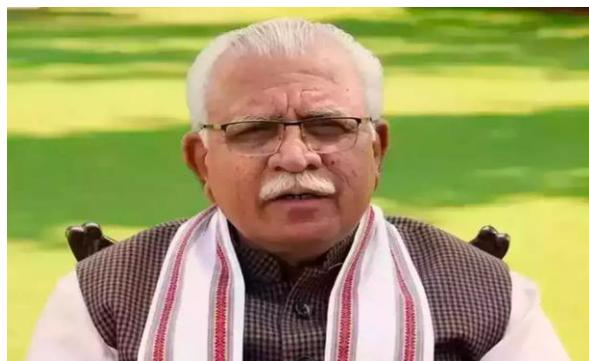
### ADB Funds \$23 Million For Fintech Advancement In Gujarat :-

In an important decision to strengthen India's fintech ecosystem, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has authorized a \$23 million loan that will promote fintech education, research, and innovation at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT). This transformative initiative underscores the growing prominence of GIFT City as a hub for fostering financial services and nurturing local startups, marking a pivotal step towards catalyzing innovation and entrepreneurship in the region.



### India's First Gati Shakti Research Chair Established At IIM Shillong :-

India's first Gati Shakti Research Chair will be established at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Shillong. An MoU was signed between the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW) and the IIM for the Chair, which will lead high-quality academic research on multimodal logistics with a North-East focus, building knowledge on multimodal logistics development strategies and practice in the North-Eastern region (NER), and facilitating knowledge and innovation for logistical capacity building in the region.



### Haryana CM launches 'Savera' program:-

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated the 'Savera' program initiated by the Medanta Foundation in collaboration with the Health Department in Gurugram, aimed at early detection and prevention of breast cancer, a growing concern among women. He emphasized that this groundbreaking initiative marks the first of its kind in the country, focusing on detecting breast cancer in its early stages among women. Furthermore, he expressed his intention to expand this program to other districts of the state following its successful implementation.



### PM Modi Inaugurates Sikkim's First Railway Station In Rangpo :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the groundwork for Sikkim's first railway station in Rangpo. It was among the over 2,000 rail infrastructure projects worth about ₹ 41,000 crore unveiled by the prime minister. The Rangpo railway station's design would be inspired by Sikkim's rich culture, heritage, and architecture, the prime minister stated in his video conference address. Sikkim Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya was present at Khanikola in Rangpo where a function was held. The station will be a part of the under-construction 45-km rail line from Sevoke near Siliguri in West Bengal to Rangpo in Sikkim.



### Telangana Government Decided To Scrap Hyderabad Pharma City :-

The Congress government in Telangana has decided to demolish Hyderabad Pharma City, the much-touted exclusive facility for pharmaceutical businesses strongly promoted by the previous Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) government. D Sridhar Babu, Minister of Industries and Information Technology, has announced that the government has chosen to discontinue the project due to legal concerns and farmer demands. Issues related to the environment too are said to be one of the major reasons for winding up of the project.

### Tripura CM Inaugurates Jagannath Dighi Waterfront Development Project In Udaipur :-

Dr. Manik Saha, Tripura Chief Minister, inaugurated the Jagannath Dighi Waterfront Development Project in Udaipur, signaling a watershed point in the state's

development. This substantial undertaking demonstrates the government's commitment to improving infrastructure and increasing tourism in the region. In conjunction with the inauguration, Chief Minister Dr. Manik Saha flagged off the Astha Special Train to Ayodhya at Agartala Railway Station. This initiative not only facilitates pilgrimage to Ayodhya but also promotes spiritual tourism, aligning with the government's vision to enhance connectivity and promote cultural exchanges.



## 18: Summits & Conferences

# Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024

### Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024 will take place from 1st February to 3rd February 2024 :-

The highly anticipated Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024 is planned to begin on February 1st, 2024. This will be a global automotive expo, similar to the biennial Auto Expo, which was last held in January 2023. It will be held at the Bharat Mandapam in Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. The Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024 will be organised with support from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Heavy Industries, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Ministry of Petroleum and

Natural Gas, Ministry of Power, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy among others.



### Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurated CLEA-CASGC 2024 Conference :-

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has inaugurated the Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA) - Commonwealth Attorneys and Solicitors General Conference (CASGC) 2024 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 3rd February. Prime Minister has also addressed the gathering on the occasion. The theme of the conference

was “Cross-Border Challenges in Justice Delivery”. This conference was aimed on important issues pertaining to law and justice like judicial transition and the ethical dimensions of legal practice; executive accountability; and revisiting modern-day legal education, among others.



### INDIA ENERGY WEEK 2024

6-9 FEBRUARY 2024 | ONGC, GOA | INDIA

#### India Energy Week 2024 is set to take place in Goa from February 6 to 9, 2024 :-

On February 6, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will kick off India Energy Week 2024 in Goa and dedicate to the nation the permanent campus of the National Institute of Technology, in addition to laying the groundwork for different projects worth more than Rs 1,330 crores. The Energy Week will be India's largest and only all-encompassing energy exhibition and conference expected to be attended by roughly 17 energy ministers from different countries. It will be India's largest and only all-encompassing energy exhibition and conference, bringing together the entire energy value chain, and will serve as a catalyst for India's energy transition goals.



#### Bharat Rang Mahotsav, India's Biggest Theatre Festival, Kicks Off In Gujarat :-

Following a spectacular premiere in Mumbai, India's largest theatre festival, Bharat Rang Mahotsav, has recently begun in Gujarat's Kachchh district. The Bharat Rang Mahotsav is a 21-day cultural event that includes more than 150 plays, workshops, and conversations. The festival will take place in 15 cities across India, highlighting the country's unique performing arts and culture. The festival will unfold in parallel venues across Mumbai, Pune, Bhuj, Vijayawada, Jodhpur, Dibrugarh, Bhubaneswar, Patna, Ramnagar, and Srinagar, ensuring a nationwide celebration of the transformative power of theatre.



#### Divya Kala Mela 2024 Inaugurated In Agartala, Tripura :-

The Divya Kala Mela, an initiative of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), is set to brighten the dynamic metropolis of Agartala, Tripura. This event, which inaugurated on February 6, 2024, intends to showcase the talents and skills of Divyang artisans and entrepreneurs from across the country. The inauguration, led by Shri Ratan Lal Nath, Cabinet Minister of Power, Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare, and Election Department, Government of Tripura, kicked off a six-day extravaganza.



### PM Narendra Modi To Address World Government Summit In Dubai :-

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to speak at the prestigious World Government Summit (WGS) in Dubai on February 14. This is his second invitation to the WGS; the first came in 2018. The World Government Summit, an annual worldwide conference held in Dubai since 2013, brings together world leaders, policymakers, and professionals to address important global concerns. The WGS, which runs from February 12 to 14, is a staple of Dubai's event, attracting attendees from all around the world. This follows UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan's recent attendance at the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit in January, underscoring the growing diplomatic ties between India and the UAE.



### World book fair begins on Feb 10 in Delhi :-

The 51st edition of the New Delhi World Book Fair (NDWBF), hosted by the National Book Trust (NBT) of India, began on February 10 in Pragati Maidan in Delhi. The exhibition will run till February 18 and will feature

over 2,000 stalls with books in many languages. In addition to books covering a wide range of subjects, visually challenged youngsters will be able to access braille books for free. The event was inaugurated by Union minister for education Dharmendra Pradhan. The guest country for the book fair this year is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



### 2024 World Governments Summit in Dubai: India, Türkiye, and Qatar Named Guests of Honor :-

India, Turkey, and Qatar have been named guests of honor for the 2024 World Governments Summit, which will take place in Dubai from February 12-14. Over 25 government and state heads from around the world will attend the conference, which is themed "Shaping Future Governments." The delegations from Türkiye, India, and Qatar will be led by their respective leaders: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani.



### Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurates National Conference on APAAR: One Nation One Student ID Card :-

On February 13, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated a nationwide conference to mark the development of 25 crore 'APAAR: One Nation One

Student ID Card.' The Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) is a transformative program that aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 and the National Credit and Qualifications Framework (NCrF). Its objective is to streamline and unify the academic journey of students throughout India by issuing a distinct and permanent 12-digit ID to each student.



#### India's First Beachside Startup Festival, "Emerge-2024," To Be Held In Mangalore :-

The inaugural Mangalore Beachside Startup Fest will take place from February 16th to 18th, marking an important milestone in the region's entrepreneurial scene. The festival's organizers hope to recreate the success of Spain's renowned South Summit in Mangalore. The Mangalore Beachside Startup Fest, organized by Tapasya Beach Festival (TBF), is poised to become a hotbed of creativity and innovation. Beyond merely showcasing startups, it endeavors to foster meaningful connections, spark innovation, and cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit among participants.



#### Sri Lanka To Host Geeta Mahotsav's 5th Edition From March 1 :-

The fifth edition of the International Gita Mahotsav (IGM) on foreign land will take place in Sri Lanka from March 1-3. A three-member team, including the Kurukshetra Development Board's (KDB) Chief Executive Officer, Honorary Secretary of the Board, and Chairman of the 48-Kos Tirtha Monitoring Committee, will travel to Sri Lanka on February 28 to oversee event preparations. Earlier, the International Gita Mahotsav (IGM) was organised in Mauritius, London, Canada and Australia.



#### Mobile World Congress 2024 Begins On February 26 :-

Mobile World Congress 2024 (MWC) is scheduled to begin on February 26 this year. The GSMA is hosting the connectivity event, which will take place in Barcelona, Spain. The event will run till February 29. Every year, the event brings together representatives from firms involved in mobile and wireless technologies. It allows them to communicate as well as collaborate. Various companies from around the world showcase their latest products and innovation at the event. Tech companies including OnePlus, Honor, Xiaomi and others are expected to unveil their latest gadgets and smartphones at the event.

## SECTION 2



# Practice Questions with Answers



## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**1. Dedicated to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi temple in \_\_\_\_\_, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released six special commemorative postage stamps recently.**

- A) Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh
- B) Bhubaneswar, Odisha
- C) Nashik, Maharashtra
- D) Orchha, Madhya Pradesh

**2. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared which of the following country as a Malaria-free country?**

- A) Angola
- B) Burkina Faso
- C) Mozambique
- D) Republic of Cabo Verde

**3. Which of the following Insurance Company has launched a retirement annuity plan with Benefit Enhancer recently?**

- A) HDFC Life Insurance
- B) Edelweiss Tokio Life Insurance
- C) ICICI Prudential Life Insurance
- D) Aviva Life Insurance

**4. Who among the following became the India's No.1 Chess Player after beating world champion Ding Liren at Tata Steel Masters?**

- A) Gukesh D
- B) Pantala Harikrishna
- C) Rameshbabu Praggnanand
- D) Vidit Gujrati

**5. Which of the following country tested a nuclear-capable underwater attack drone 'Haeil-5-23' recently?**

- A) Iran
- B) Israel
- C) North Korea
- D) Russia

**6. Which of the following small finance bank has partnered with Uncia Technologies for its supply chain finance platform 'Uncia Chain'?**

- A) Au Small Finance Bank
- B) Equitas Small Finance Bank
- C) Ujjivan Small Finance Bank

D) Unity Small Finance Bank

**7. Kachchhi Kharek of which of the following state has received geographical indication (GI) tag recently?**

- A) Rajasthan
- B) Punjab
- C) Gujarat
- D) Haryana

**8. Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has collaborated with which of the following Indian Institute of Management (IIM) to develop 'Vision 2049' document?**

- A) IIM Ahmedabad
- B) IIM Bangalore
- C) IIM Kozhikode
- D) IIM Lucknow

**9. Which of the following bank became the first Indian bank to execute an export finance transaction on the International Trade Financing Services Platform (ITFS) of RXIL Global IFSC Limited?**

- A) YES Bank
- B) State Bank of India
- C) ICICI Bank
- D) Bank of Baroda

**10. How many children were awarded the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2024 by the President of India Droupadi Murmu?**

- A) 10
- B) 12
- C) 16
- D) 19

**11. For cooperation on digital public infrastructure which of the following country has inked an agreement with India?**

- A) Chile
- B) Cuba
- C) France
- D) Peru

**12. Coaching centres in India have been prohibited from enrolling students below the age of \_\_\_\_\_, according to new guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education.**



- A) 18
- B) 16
- C) 12
- D) 10

**13. Union Fisheries Minister Parshottam Rupala has launched an artificial reef project in which of the following state?**

- A) West Bengal
- B) Tamil Nadu
- C) Kerala
- D) Karnataka

**14. The 11th India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise 'Khanjar 2024' was held in which of the following state?**

- A) Gujarat
- B) Himachal Pradesh
- C) Madhya Pradesh
- D) Maharashtra

**15. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched which of the following scheme under which one crore households will get rooftop solar power systems?**

- A) Pradhan Mantri Bijli Yojana
- B) Pradhan Mantri Dhamra Urja Yojana
- C) Pradhan Mantri Surya Shakti Yojana
- D) Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana

**16. Which of the following company has received petroleum ministry approval to form green energy subsidiary?**

- A) ONGC
- B) Indian Oil Corporation
- C) Hindustan Petroleum
- D) Bharat Petroleum

**17. The 9th India International Science Festival (IISF) 2023 was held in which of the following city?**

- A) Faridabad, Haryana
- B) Gandhinagar, Gujarat
- C) Kolkata, West Bengal
- D) Pune, Maharashtra

**18. Which of the following company has signed a pact with the IHI Corporation to supply green ammonia from Odisha, India to Japan?**

- A) ACME Group

- B) Aristopharma Limited
- C) Azure Power Global Limited
- D) Lodha Group

**19. Which of the following insurance company has launched two new term plans 'Saral Swadhan Supreme' and 'Smart Swadhan Supreme' recently?**

- A) SBI Life Insurance
- B) ICICI Prudential Life Insurance
- C) HDFC Life Insurance
- D) Canara HSBC Life Insurance

**20. Who of the following won the BCCI award for best women's international cricketer of 2022-23?**

- A) Deepti Sharma
- B) Shafali Verma
- C) Harmanpreet Kaur
- D) None of the above

**21. Indian Air Force (IAF) has conducted 'Exercise Desert Knight' with which of the following country?**

- A) France
- B) Oman
- C) United Arab Emirates
- D) Both A & C

**22. The Ministry of Defence has signed a contract with which of the following defence manufacturing company for acquisition of 14 Fast Patrol Vessels (FPVs) for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG)?**

- A) Cochin Shipyard Limited
- B) Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Limited
- C) Hindustan Shipyard Limited
- D) Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited

**23. The second State Mining Ministers' Conference was held in which of the following city?**

- A) Bhopal
- B) Raichur
- C) Pune
- D) Gandhinagar

**24. The Indian Army threw open the 'India Selfie Point' near the Line of Control (LOC) in which of the following state/UT?**

- A) Sikkim
- B) Ladakh
- C) Jammu and Kashmir

D) Himachal Pradesh

**25. Who among the following was awarded the Bharat Ratna posthumously?**

- A) Bhagwat Jha Azad
- B) Kapoori Thakur
- C) Lalu Prasad Yadav
- D) Ram Sundar Das

**26. Which of the following life insurance company has launched iSelect Guaranteed Future Plus, an individual savings life insurance plan?**

- A) Canara HSBC Life Insurance
- B) Edelweiss Tokio Life Insurance
- C) HDFC Life Insurance
- D) Tata AIA Life Insurance

**27. Which of the following payment company has received RBI authorisation to operate as online payment aggregator?**

- A) Instamojo Private Limited
- B) IppoPay Private Limited
- C) PayU Private Limited
- D) Zomato Payments Private Limited

**28. Who among the following was honoured with the 'Freedom of The City of London' title?**

- A) Ram Jethmalani
- B) Mukul Rohtagi
- C) Ashok Desai
- D) Ajit Mishra

**29. Who among the following was appointed as the brand ambassador of VARNI?**

- A) Kuldeep Yadav
- B) Ravindra Jadeja
- C) Shreyas Iyer
- D) Suryakumar Yadav

**30. Which of the following team has won the Big Bash League 2023-24 title?**

- A) Brisbane Heat
- B) Melbourne Renegades
- C) Perth Scorchers
- D) Sydney Sixers

**31. Which of the following organisation has launched an innovative USD 100 million plastic waste reduction-linked bond to tackle plastic pollution?**

A) Asian Development Bank

- B) United Nations Development Programme
- C) United Nations Environment Programme
- D) World Bank

**32. To boost renewable energy and infrastructure financing, along with the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIFL) which of the following company has signed an MoU?**

- A) Adani Green Energy Limited
- B) Power Grid Corporation of India Limited
- C) REC Limited
- D) Reliance Industries Limited

**33. Tshering Tobgay was elected as the prime minister of which of the following country?**

- A) Bhutan
- B) Nepal
- C) Thailand
- D) Vietnam

**34. For the \_\_\_\_\_ time, Nitish Kumar took oath as the Chief Minister of Bihar in January 2024.**

- A) 5th
- B) 6th
- C) 7th
- D) 9th

**35. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) to increase its stake up to 9.99% in which of the following bank?**

- A) Axis Bank
- B) HDFC Bank
- C) ICICI Bank
- D) YES Bank

**36. Along with Madhya Pradesh which of the following state has signed an agreement with the Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) for implementation of the "Modified PKC-ERCP" link project?**

- A) Karnataka
- B) Maharashtra
- C) Rajasthan
- D) Punjab

**37. The inaugural India-Saudi Arabia joint military exercise "SADA TANSEEQ" is being held in which of the following state?**



- A) Gujarat
- B) Rajasthan
- C) Odisha
- D) Punjab

**38. Azali Assoumani has been re-elected as the president of which of the following country?**

- A) Cape Verde
- B) Djibouti
- C) Seychelles
- D) Comoros

**39. President of India Droupadi Murmu has nominated who among the following as a member of the Rajya Sabha?**

- A) Anil Ambani
- B) Mahendra Singh Dhoni
- C) Satnam Singh Sandhu
- D) Uday Kotak

**40. When the first International Day of Clean Energy was observed?**

- A) 30 January 2024
- B) 29 January 2024
- C) 26 January 2024
- D) 27 January 2024

**41. \_\_\_\_\_ snow leopards are reported in India as per the report on the Status of Snow Leopards in India released by the Union environment minister Bhupender Yadav recently.**

- A) 718
- B) 690
- C) 518
- D) 437

**42. To expedite hydroelectric project in which of the following state/UT the government has diverted Chenab river recently?**

- A) Uttarakhand
- B) Ladakh
- C) Himachal Pradesh
- D) Jammu and Kashmir

**43. Which of the following company has delivered India's first mineral exploration drones to NMDC Limited?**

- A) Drone Destination Limited

- B) Info Edge (India) Limited

- C) Marut Drones

- D) Paras Defence and Space Technologies Limited

**44. What is the rank of India in the corruption index released by the Transparency International?**

- A) 93
- B) 90
- C) 85
- D) 45

**45. Which of the following country topped the corruption index released by the Transparency International?**

- A) New Zealand
- B) Finland
- C) Denmark
- D) England

**46. 5 wetlands of India have recently been designated as Ramsar sites taking the total number of Ramsar sites in India to \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) 82
- B) 80
- C) 75
- D) 72

**47. Sultan Ibrahim was sworn in as the 17th king of which of the following country recently?**

- A) Morocco
- B) Oman
- C) Qatar
- D) Malaysia

**48. A new species of kangaroo lizard was discovered in which of the following state recently?**

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

**49. Who among the following won the Tata Steel Chess Tournament held in the Netherlands?**

- A) Wei Yi
- B) Nodirbek Abdusattorov
- C) Anish Giri
- D) Alireza Firouzja

**50. When was the raising day of Indian Coast Guard (ICG) was observed?**

- A) 04 February
- B) 03 February
- C) 02 February
- D) 01 February

**51. Jay Shah, President of the BCCI, has been reappointed as President of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) for a \_\_\_\_\_ consecutive term.**

- A) 2nd
- B) 3rd
- C) 4th
- D) 5th

**52. Who among the following was appointed as a brand ambassador of BoAt?**

- A) Arjun Kapoor
- B) Ranbir Kapoor
- C) Ranveer Singh
- D) Vicky Kaushal



**53. With 158 medals which of the following state topped the medal tally of 6th edition of Khelo India Youth Games-2023?**

- A) Haryana
- B) Maharashtra
- C) Rajasthan
- D) Tamil Nadu

**54. When the World Wetlands Day was observed?**

- A) 02 February
- B) 01 February
- C) 31 January
- D) 29 January

**55. Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary has been designated Tamil Nadu's \_\_\_\_\_ wildlife sanctuary.**

- A) 14
- B) 16
- C) 18
- D) 20

**56. National Rural Livelihood Promotion Society (NRLPS) has signed an agreement with which of the following organisation for economic inclusion and social protection for the poorest of the poor women?**

- A) Thar Deep Rural Development Programme
- B) National Rural Support Programme
- C) Landesa champions
- D) BRAC International

**57. The year 2024 has been declared as the \_\_\_\_\_ by the Indian Navy.**

- A) Year of Naval AI
- B) Year of Naval Civilians
- C) Year of Naval Technology
- D) Year of Naval Weapons

**58. Insurance regulator IRDAI has set \_\_\_\_\_ as deadline for insurers to include AYUSH treatment under health covers.**

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

**59. Which Small Finance Bank has entered into a bancassurance partnership with Edelweiss Tokio Life Insurance to extend financial security to a broader section of the unbanked and underbanked population?**

- A) AU Small Finance Bank
- B) Capital Small Finance Bank
- C) Equitas Small Finance Bank
- D) ESAF Small Finance Bank

**60. Who among the following was awarded the "Outstanding Business Woman of the Year 2023' Award?**

- A) Bina Modi
- B) Shikha Sharma
- C) Vandana Luthra
- D) Vani Kola

**61. Which of the following IIM has secured top rank among the top government MBA colleges in India in Indian Institutional Ranking Framework (IIRF) 2024?**

- A) IIM Ahmedabad
- B) IIM Bangalore
- C) IIM Calcutta
- D) IIM Indore

**62. Which of the following bank has received Rs 9,000 crore by the Government of India after decade-plus old**

**loans extended to some African countries turned into non-performing assets?**

- A) Canara Bank India
- B) DBS Bank India
- C) Exim Bank of India
- D) Standard Chartered Bank

**63. What is the expected Indian economy growth between fiscal 2024 and 2031 according to a CRISIL report?**

- A) 6.7%
- B) 6.5%
- C) 6.2%
- D) 6.1%

**64. Who among the following took oath as the Interim President of the Republic of Namibia?**

- A) Hifikepunye Pohamba
- B) Nangolo Mbumba
- C) Saara Kuugongelwa
- D) Sam Nujoma



**65. Which of the following country has launched nine satellites into orbit via Jielong-3 rocket recently?**

- A) China
- B) Iran
- C) Japan
- D) Russia

**66. In which of the following city the 7th session of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH7) was held?**

- A) Kochi
- B) Jaipur
- C) Chennai
- D) Bengaluru

**67. Which of the following bank has launched National Common Mobility Card (NCMC)-integrated debit cards?**

- A) Axis Bank
- B) Federal Bank
- C) ICICI Bank
- D) IDFC FIRST Bank

**68. Which of the following government enterprise was awarded the Best Green Bond-Corporate Award at The Asset Triple A Awards for Sustainable Finance 2024?**

- A) Coal India Limited

- B) NTPC Limited
- C) Power Finance Corporation
- D) REC Limited

**69. Who will be the 50th awardee of India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna?**

- A) Bhairon Singh Shekhawat
- B) Chaudhary Devi Lal
- C) Krishan Kant
- D) Lal Krishna Advani

**70. Who among the following was appointed as the goodwill ambassador for UNESCO's Education for All initiative?**

- A) Cristiano Ronaldo
- B) Karim Benzema
- C) Vinicius Junior
- D) Lionel Messi

**71. Which of the following state has the highest number of Ramsar sites in India?**

- A) Tamil Nadu
- B) Maharashtra
- C) Kerala
- D) Karnataka

**72. Who among the following became the first female Subedar in the Indian Army?**

- A) Tanmay Bharat
- B) Preeti Rajak
- C) Mehul Malik
- D) Champai Soren

**73. What is the total expenditure projected in the Union Budget for fiscal year 2024-25?**

- A) ₹1.72 Lakh Crore
- B) ₹11.11 Lakh Crore
- C) ₹14.96 Lakh Crore
- D) ₹47.66 Lakh Crore

**74. Which of the following city is set to host India's first beachside startup fest, Emerge-2024?**

- A) Chennai
- B) Delhi
- C) Mangaluru
- D) Mumbai

**75. As per the Interim Budget 2024, how many normal rail bogies will be converted to the Vande Bharat**

**standards to enhance safety, convenience and comfort of passengers?**

- A) 40,000
- B) 30,000
- C) 20,000
- D) 10,000

**76. What is the expected fiscal deficit for the financial year 2024-25 (FY25)?**

- A) 5.1% of GDP
- B) 5.4% of GDP
- C) 6.2% of GDP
- D) 6.9% of GDP

**77. How many registrations did the Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) portal surpass by January 31, 2024?**

- A) 1.9 Crore
- B) 1.75 Crore
- C) 1.45 Crore
- D) 1.2 Crore



**78. Who among the following was appointed as the part-time chairman of AU Small Finance Bank?**

- A) HR Das
- B) HR Verma
- C) Raj Das
- D) Harun Rashid Khan

**79. Along with Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) which of the following organization has collaborated to organize the PM GatiShakti Summit, New Delhi?**

- A) Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
- B) Finance Ministry
- C) Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade
- D) None of the above

**80. What is the budget for Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB) issuance in fiscal year 2024-25?**

- A) ₹4,000 crore
- B) ₹3,500 crore
- C) ₹2,500 crore
- D) ₹1,000 crore

**81. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced an interim Budget of Rs \_\_\_\_\_ for fiscal 2024-25 for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.**

- A) Rs 2.20 lakh crore
- B) Rs 1.18 lakh crore
- C) Rs 4.80 lakh crore
- D) Rs 5.60 lakh crore

**82. What is India's fiscal deficit forecast in 2024-25 (FY25) according to a report by Fitch?**

- A) 6.0%
- B) 5.4%
- C) 5.1%
- D) 4.5%

**83. Who among the following was appointed as the next Army Vice Chief of India?**

- A) Lt Gen Bipin Rawat
- B) Lt Gen Dalbir Singh Suhag
- C) Lt Gen MV Suchindra Kumar
- D) Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi

**84. Which of the following eminent athlete was conferred with the 'Lifetime Achievement' award by Sports Journalists Federation of India (SJFI) and Delhi Sports Journalists Association (DSJA)?**

- A) Dutee Chand
- B) Hima Das
- C) Milkha Singh
- D) PT Usha

**85. At the Defence Literature Festival, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan has launched which of the following book?**

- A) Artificial Intelligence and National Security
- B) Defending the Nation
- C) The Future of Warfare
- D) War and Peace

**86. Union Minister of State for Electronics and IT, Rajeev Chandrasekhar has inaugurated the "Digital India FutureLABS" in which of the following Institute?**

- A) University of Delhi
- B) Jawaharlal Nehru University
- C) Jamia Millia Islamia University
- D) IIIT Delhi

**87. India contributed how much amount to United Nations Regular Budget for 2024?**

- A) \$32.895 million
- B) \$29.134 million

- C) \$25.091 million
- D) \$21.098 million

**88. Which of the following bank has partnered with Flywire Corporation to ease Indian student's international education payments?**

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

**89. Which of the following bank has launched four new variants of business credit card named BizFirst, BizGrow, BizPower, and BizBlack?**

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

**90. At the 66th Annual Grammy Awards who among the following won album of the year award?**

- A) Ariana Grande
- B) Billie Eilish
- C) Miley Cyrus
- D) Taylor Swift

**91. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) gave nod to which of the following fintech company to operate as payment aggregators?**

- A) Zoho Payment Technologies Private Limited
- B) Juspay Technologies Private Limited
- C) Decentro Tech Private Limited
- D) All of the above

**92. The Natural History Museum, London, UK has awarded the 2023 Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award to \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) Frans Lanting
- B) Nima Sarikhani
- C) Sandesh Kadur
- D) Sascha Fonseca

**93. Who among the following was appointed as the Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare?**

- A) Vijay Kumar
- B) Raj Kumar Goyal
- C) Apurva Chandra
- D) Anil Malik

**94. Olzhas Bektenov was elected as the youngest prime minister of which of the following country?**

- A) Uzbekistan
- B) Turkmenistan
- C) Kyrgyzstan
- D) Kazakhstan

**95. Which among the following is the first civil servant in the history of India to be appointed as the brand ambassador of the Fit India movement?**

- A) Manoj Kumar Sharma
- B) Krishna Gopal Tiwari
- C) Narendra Kumar Yadav
- D) Abhishek Singh

**96. Google has partnered with which of the following state government to provide artificial intelligence (AI)-led solutions across key sectors in the state?**

- A) Gujarat
- B) Jharkhand
- C) Madhya Pradesh
- D) Maharashtra

**97. Who among the following was elected as the next President of the International Court of Justice?**

- A) Nawaf Salam
- B) Julia Sebutinde
- C) Joan Donoghue
- D) Abdulqawi Yusuf

**98. Bandhan Financial Holdings Limited (BFHL) has received the final approval from IRDAI to acquire the 100% paid up share capital of which of the following life insurance company?**

- A) Aegon Life Insurance
- B) Aviva Life insurance
- C) Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance
- D) Max Life Insurance

**99. Max Financial Services got IRDAI nod for capital infusion of Rs 1,612 crore by which of the following bank into Max Life Insurance?**

- A) Axis Bank
- B) ICICI Bank
- C) IndusInd Bank
- D) YES Bank

**100. Chief Minister of which of the following state launched the Logo, Anthem, Mascot, Jersey and Torch of Khelo India University Games - 2023?**

- A) Assam
- B) Karnataka
- C) Odisha
- D) Uttar Pradesh

**101. Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) along with \_\_\_\_\_ launched DigiReady Certification Portal to empower MSMEs and small retailers.**

- A) Quality Council of India
- B) National Association of Software and Service Companies
- C) Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry
- D) Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India

**102. Which of the following ministry launched the Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) in rural regions through Common Service Centres (CSCs) recently?**

- A) Ministry of Education
- B) Ministry of Panchayati Raj
- C) Ministry of Rural Development
- D) Ministry of Women and Child Development

**103. The World Defence Show 2024 was held in which of the following city?**

- A) Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- B) Delhi, India
- C) Doha, Qatar
- D) Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

**104. To facilitate farmers and traders in providing low interest rate loans, Warehousing Development Regulatory Authority (WDRA) has signed an agreement with which of the following bank?**

- A) Bank of Baroda
- B) Punjab & Sind Bank
- C) Indian Overseas Bank
- D) State Bank of India

**105. Along with LeRemitt which of the following bank has partnered to enable smooth cross-border**

**transactions for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)?**

- A) Axis Bank
- B) ICICI Bank
- C) IndusInd Bank
- D) YES Bank

**106. Which of the following Department of Indian government has launched the National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) Way Forward Annual Report 2023?**

- A) Department of Social Justice and Empowerment
- B) Department of Pension & Pensioners Welfare
- C) Department of Justice
- D) Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances

**107. CRISIL's impact assessment report 'Prabhaav' was launched by which of the following regulatory body?**

- A) Small Industries Development Bank of India
- B) Securities and Exchange Board of India
- C) Reserve Bank of India
- D) Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority

**108. In February 2024 India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) services were launched in which of the following country?**

- A) Uganda
- B) Mauritius
- C) Sri Lanka
- D) Both B & C

**109. Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has increased its shareholding in SBI Cards & Payments Services Limited from 4.99% to \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) 5.02%
- B) 5.25%
- C) 6.03%
- D) 6.45%

**110. Along with Embraer Defense & Security which of the following company has announced a collaboration for a project related to procurement of transport aircraft for the Indian Air Force?**

- A) Alpha Design Technologies Private Limited
- B) Larsen and Toubro Limited
- C) Mahindra Defence Systems Limited

D) Tata Advanced Systems Limited

**111. Along with India which country has signed a protocol on amendments to the 2008 intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in construction of additional nuclear reactors in Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project site and new sites in India?**

- A) United Arab Emirates
- B) Russia
- C) Japan
- D) Israel

**112. Along with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi which of the following bank has signed an MoU to launch digital patient care card service?**

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



**113. In which state the Ministry of Rural Development unveiled the National Generic Document Registration System (NDGRS) alongside the launch of the Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) and Blockchain technology in the Darrang district?**

- A) Arunachal Pradesh
- B) Assam
- C) Nagaland
- D) Odisha

**114. On 10 February 2024, which of the following bank has celebrated its 88th annual Foundation Day?**

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

**115. Centre For Development Of Telematics (C-DOT) and which of the following IIT has signed an agreement to develop a 140 GHz fully integrated transmitter and receiver module to enable applications for 6G and beyond?**

- A) IIT Delhi
- B) IIT Guwahati
- C) IIT Madras

D) IIT Roorkee

**116. The GROW report and portal was launched by which of the following government organization recently?**

- A) Food and Agriculture Organization
- B) Indian Council of Agricultural Research
- C) National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
- D) NITI Aayog

**117. Which of the following Mutual Fund company has launched India's first Multi factor-based ETF on Nifty Smallcap250 Index?**

- A) Mirae Asset Mutual Fund
- B) Motilal Oswal Mutual Fund
- C) Nippon India Mutual Fund
- D) UTI Mutual Fund

**118. Which state-owned company has signed agreements worth ₹588 crore with the Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) to bolster infrastructure and energy projects in the Damodar Valley region?**

- A) Coal India Limited
- B) NTPC Limited
- C) Power Finance Corporation
- D) REC Limited

**119. Sports minister Anurag Thakur has handed over the Chess Olympiad Torch to which of the following country to host the 45th edition of the Chess Olympiad this year?**

- A) Georgia
- B) Germany
- C) Hungary
- D) Uzbekistan

**120. When the World Radio Day was observed?**

- A) 12 February
- B) 13 February
- C) 14 February
- D) 15 February

**121. On February 16, 2024, how much capital acquisition proposals were approved by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)?**

- A) Rs 90,000 crore
- B) Rs 84,560 crore

- C) Rs 80,000 crore  
 D) Rs 100,000 crore

**122. Which of the following Indian cities were among the top ten worst cities for traffic in 2023, according to the TomTom report?**

- A) Delhi and Pune  
 B) Delhi and Mumbai  
 C) Bengaluru and Pune  
 D) Bengaluru and Mumbai

**123. How much hydrogen is now needed in Uttar Pradesh, according to estimates?**

- A) 900,000 tonnes per annum  
 B) 700,000 tonnes per annum  
 C) 500,000 tonnes per annum  
 D) 1.1 million tonnes per annum

**124. Uttar Pradesh is planning to launch how many centres of excellence (CoE) for research and innovation on green hydrogen?**

- A) Two  
 B) Three  
 C) One  
 D) Four

**125. At the first edition of the 'Vividdha ka Amrit Mahotsav' how many stalls were featured?**

- A) 320  
 B) 300  
 C) 250  
 D) 200

**126. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated which of the following Hindu Temple in Abu Dhabi?**

- A) BAPS Mandir  
 B) Krishna Mandir  
 C) Shiva Temple  
 D) Swaminarayan Temple

**127. The world bank has approved how much loan amount for the Sikkim INSPIRES program?**

- A) \$50 million  
 B) \$200 million  
 C) \$150 million  
 D) \$100 million

**128. Which of the following bank has allowed users to digitally enroll under the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti**

**Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)?**

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

**129. What is India's target year for achieving 50% of its installed power generation capacity from non-fossil fuels?**

- A) 2050  
 B) 2040  
 C) 2030  
 D) 2025

**130. What is the overall amount of private investment pitched by the Indian government to expand its nuclear energy sector?**

- A) \$26 billion  
 B) \$20 billion  
 C) \$15 billion  
 D) \$10 billion

**131. "100 Cube Startup initiative" of which of the following IIT was launched by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan?**

- A) IIT Madras  
 B) IIT Kharagpur  
 C) IIT Kanpur  
 D) IIT Bhubaneswar

**132. Which of the following state government has launched a declaration to strengthen bird conservation initiatives in the South Asian region?**

- A) Bihar  
 B) Karnataka  
 C) Odisha  
 D) West Bengal

**133. Which of the following bank has launched a groundbreaking savings solution named 'Stellar Savings Account'?**

- A) Union Bank of India  
 B) State Bank of India  
 C) Federal Bank  
 D) Canara Bank

**134. Who among the following won the Special Award for the Maharashtrian of the Year 2024 in an event held by News 18 Lokmat?**

- A) Aditi Gupta
- B) Isha Ambani
- C) Leena Nair
- D) Radhika Ghai

**135. Who among the following was elected as the president of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)?**

- A) Aniket Sunil Talati
- B) Pramod Bhasin
- C) Radhe Shyam Agarwal
- D) Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal

**136. How many astronauts have been nominated for the Gaganyaan mission?**

- A) 2
- B) 10
- C) 6
- D) 4



**137. Which player has recently made the record of the fastest century in men's T20 International cricket history?**

- A) Jan Nicol
- B) Rohit Sharma
- C) Kushal Malla
- D) David Miller

**138. The world's first Vedic clock has been installed in which Indian city?**

- A) Lucknow
- A) Varanasi
- B) Ujjain
- C) Jamnagar

**139. Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI) has successfully commissioned India's largest Battery Energy Storage System in which state?**

- A) Maharashtra
- A) Chhattisgarh
- B) Karnataka
- C) Tamil Nadu

**140. The 'DHARMA GUARDIAN' military exercise is conducted between India and which country?**

- A) Bangladesh
- B) China
- C) South Korea
- D) Japan

**141. Which country has been removed from the FATF grey watchlist 2024?**

- A) United Arab Emirates
- B) South Africa
- C) India
- D) Qatar

**142. Faleti Teo has been appointed as the Prime Minister of which country?**

- A) Kenya
- B) Tuvalu
- C) Suriname
- D) Zambia

**143. Which of these has been elected as the first woman chief minister of a province in Pakistan?**

- A) Muniba Mazari
- B) Khaleda Zia
- C) Benazir Bhutto
- D) Maryam Nawaz

**144. What is the name of India's longest cable-stayed bridge which is recently opened by PM Modi?**

- A) Atal Setu
- B) Sardar Setu
- C) Sudarshan Setu
- D) Bandu Setu

**145. India's largest defence equipment exhibition, Defence Expo was organized in which state?**

- A) Uttar Pradesh
- B) Rajasthan
- C) Gujarat
- D) Maharashtra

**146. Researchers have discovered a new species of damselfly named Cliffside Bambootail (*Phylloneura rupestris*), in which of the following state?**

- A) Andhra Pradesh
- B) Kerala
- C) Odisha
- D) Tamil Nadu

**147. Who among the following was appointed as the Karnataka High Court's next Chief Justice?**

- A) Arun Bhansali
- B) NV Anjaria
- C) Ramesh Sinha
- D) Sunita Agarwal

**148. The Acquisition worth of Rs \_\_\_\_\_ was approved by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) for enhancing the operational capabilities and reach of the Armed Forces and the Indian Coast Guard.**

- A) Rs 62,850 crore
- B) Rs 79,120 crore
- C) Rs 84,560 crore

- D) Rs 92,810 crore

**149. Where did the Indian Air Force have conducted Exercise Vayu-Shakti 2024?**

- A) Chandipur, Odisha
- B) Jalandhar, Punjab
- C) Pokhran, Rajasthan
- D) Siliguri, West Bengal

**150. In February 2024, which of the following bank marked its 89th Business Commencement Day?**

- A) Bank of Baroda
- B) Bank of India
- C) Bank of Maharashtra
- D) Indian Bank

## ANSWERS

**1. Correct Answer: A**

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi has released six special commemorative postage stamps dedicated to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi temple in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh along with an album carrying similar stamps related to Lord Ram issued earlier in different countries of the world was also released.

**2. Correct Answer: D**

The World Health Organization (WHO) has certified Cabo Verde as a malaria-free country, marking a significant achievement in global health. With this announcement, Cabo Verde joins the ranks of 43 countries and 1 territory that WHO has awarded this certification.

**3. Correct Answer: C**

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance said that it has launched ICICI Prudential Guaranteed Pension Plan Flexi with Benefit Enhancer. This product is being billed as the industry's first annuity plan that provides customers with the option to receive a 100 per cent refund of premiums paid at any time starting from the date of purchase.

**4. Correct Answer: C**

Chess prodigy Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa made headlines by securing the number one spot among India's chess players following his impressive victory over World champion Ding Liren at the 2024 Tata Steel Chess tournament. The 18-year-old defeated the reigning champion with the black pieces, and surpassed the

legendary Viswanathan Anand to claim the top position in India.

**5. Correct Answer: C**

North Korea has tested a nuclear-capable underwater attack drone in response to joint naval exercises involving South Korea, the United States and Japan. Pyongyang tested the Haeil-5-23 in waters off the east coast as the US and its allies were "seriously threatening the security" of the country and "destabilising the regional situation", North Korea's Ministry of Defence said in a statement.

**6. Correct Answer: D**

Uncia Technologies has announced the go-live of Uncia Chain, its state-of-the-art Supply Chain Finance platform, at Unity Small Finance Bank Limited (Unity Bank), a new-age, digital-first bank. Unity Bank is a scheduled Commercial Bank, offering digital first banking solutions.

**7. Correct Answer: C**

Kachchhi Kharek, the indigenous variety of dates of Kutch, has become the second fruit of Gujarat to get a geographical indication (GI) tag from the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks (CGPDT) of India. Jubilant farmers of the semi-arid district have hailed the decision.

**8. Correct Answer: A**

ICAI Institute, which is the world's largest accounting body, has initiated an exercise to develop a 'Vision 2049'

document to position itself as a globally recognised leader in the accounting profession. This vision document will be prepared in collaboration with IIM Ahmedabad.

**9. Correct Answer: A**

YES Bank became the first Indian bank to execute an export finance transaction on the International Trade Financing Services Platform (ITFS) of RXIL Global IFSC Limited (RXIL), a leading cross-border fintech company registered under the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA).

**10. Correct Answer: D**

The President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu has conferred the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar, 2024 to 19 exceptional children in an award ceremony at Vigyan Bhawan on 22nd January, 2024. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi interacted with Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar awardees on 23rd January, 2024.

**11. Correct Answer: B**

An MoU was signed between Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Communications of the Republic of Cuba on Cooperation in the field of Sharing Successful Digital Solutions Implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformation on 19 January 2024 in New Delhi.

**12. Correct Answer: B**

Coaching centres cannot enroll students below 16 years of age, make misleading promises and guarantee rank or good marks, according to new guidelines announced by the Ministry of Education. The guidelines for regulating coaching institutes have been framed to address the need for a legal framework and manage the unregulated growth of private coaching centres.

**13. Correct Answer: C**

Union Minister Parshottam Rupala of the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying (MoFAHD) virtually began the project to deposit artificial reefs on the seabed in Vizhinjam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. The project intends to boost the fish population in Kerala waters, increasing fishermen's revenue opportunities.

**14. Correct Answer: B**

The 11th India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise, "Khanjar 2024," began on January 22, 2024, at the Special Forces Training School in Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh. The exercise is scheduled from January 22nd to February 3rd, 2024.

**15. Correct Answer: D**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 22 announced the 'Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana', a government scheme under which one crore households will get rooftop solar power systems. The Pradhanmantri Suryodaya Yojana intends to supply power household through solar rooftop installations while also providing extra money for excess electricity output.

**16. Correct Answer: A**

The state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) will set up a new unit for gas and clean energy projects, such as green hydrogen, as it looks to fast-track its foray into new areas. "The proposed name of the company is 'ONGC Green Limited', subject to the approval of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India," it said.

**17. Correct Answer: A**

The 9th edition of the India International Science Festival (IISF) 2023 was held at Faridabad, Haryana from January 17th-20th, 2024. India's mega Science Fair was held at the Campus of Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI) and Regional Centre for Biotechnology (RCB) of Department of Biotechnology in Faridabad.

**18. Correct Answer: A**

Leading renewable energy company ACME Group in India and Japanese integrated heavy industry group IHI Corporation have signed an offtake term sheet. The agreement, signed by Manoj Upadhyay, Founder and Chairman of Acme Group, and Hiroshi Ide, President and CEO of IHI Corporation, paves the way for the supply of 0.4 million metric tons per annum (MMTPA) of green ammonia from Odisha, India, to Japan.

**19. Correct Answer: A**

SBI Life Insurance, one of most trusted private life insurers in the country, recently launched two products- 'SBI Life - Saral Swadhan Supreme' and 'SBI Life - Smart

Swadhan Supreme', that not only provides a life cover but also benefit of return of premiums at maturity, to fulfil customer's financial objectives.

**20. Correct Answer: A**

Shubman Gill and Deepti Sharma have won the BCCI awards for best men's and women's international cricketers of 2022-23. Gill won the men's award, named after the former India captain Polly Umrigar, for the first time in his career, while Deepti won the women's award for the second time - she also won it for the 2019-20 season.

**21. Correct Answer: D**

In a display of military cooperation, the Indian Air Force (IAF) successfully conducted Exercise Desert Knight alongside the French Air and Space Force (FASF) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Air Force on January 23. The joint exercise was hosted at the Al Dhafra air base in the UAE.

**22. Correct Answer: D**

The Ministry of Defence has signed contract with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL), Mumbai on 24 January, 2024, for acquisition of 14 Fast Patrol Vessels (FPVs) for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG). The value of the contract is Rs 1070.47 cr. These multi role FPVs will be indigenously designed, developed and manufactured by MDL under Buy (Indian-IDDM) Category and will be delivered in total 63 months.

**23. Correct Answer: A**

The 2nd State Mining Ministers' Conference was held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh on 23rd January 2024. Union Minister of Mines, Coal and Parliamentary Affairs Shri Pralhad Joshi chaired the function. Dr. Mohan Yadav, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh was the Chief Guest of the Conference.

**24. Correct Answer: C**

The Indian Army has opened the 'India Selfie Point' near the Line of Control in Uri sector of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The 'India Selfie Point' has been gifted by acclaimed artist Rouble Nagi, who has set up several such points elsewhere in Jammu and Kashmir, they said.

**25. Correct Answer: B**

Former Bihar Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur was awarded the Bharat Ratna posthumously, the highest civilian honour in India. Popularly known as Jan Nayak (people's hero), Thakur was widely respected for his integrity and dedication to the welfare of the common people.

**26. Correct Answer: A**

Canara HSBC Life Insurance introduced iSelect Guaranteed Future Plus, a comprehensive plan designed to deliver life insurance and assured benefits, ensuring the safeguarding of goals and providing peace of mind. The product encompasses a range of crucial features, including a life cover serving as a safety net for the policyholder and their loved ones, ensuring financial security during uncertain periods.

**27. Correct Answer: D**

Online food delivery firm Zomato said its subsidiary Zomato Payments Pvt Ltd (ZPPL) has received authorisation from RBI to operate as an online payment aggregator. The company had disclosed on August 4, 2021 about the incorporation of ZPPL, a wholly-owned subsidiary, to carry out the business as a payment aggregator and issuer of pre-paid payment instruments.

**28. Correct Answer: D**

The City of London Corporation presented the "Freedom of the City of London" Award to Ajit Mishra, an Indian-born lawyer in the United Kingdom (UK), for his contributions to improving the City of London-India commercial connection. He received the honors at the Chamberlain's Court in Guildhall, London, United Kingdom.

**29. Correct Answer: B**

VARNI, a premium electronics brand, has named Indian cricketer Ravindra Jadeja as its brand ambassador. VARNI was formed in 2009 by Kishan Mali, who also serves as its Managing Director.

**30. Correct Answer: A**

Josh Brown's outstanding half-century and Spencer Johnson's four-wicket spell with the ball helped Brisbane Heat beat Sydney Sixers to the Big Bash League 2023-24 title. Heat became only the third team to win more than one championship in BBL history.

**31. Correct Answer: D**

The World Bank (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, IBRD) has unveiled a groundbreaking seven-year USD 100 million Plastic Waste Reduction-Linked Bond. According to the World Bank, this innovative financial instrument ties investor returns to Plastic Waste Collection Credits, Plastic Waste Recycling Credits, and Voluntary Carbon Units expected to be generated by projects in Ghana and Indonesia.

**32. Correct Answer: C**

In a significant move to bolster renewable energy and infrastructure financing in India, REC Limited has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIFL). This collaboration aims to develop a suite of funding solutions for renewable energy projects and large-scale infrastructure projects across the country.

**33. Correct Answer: A**

Bhutanese voters have elected Tshering Tobgay to become Prime Minister for a second time after his party won nearly two-thirds of seats. Mr. Tobgay, head of the liberal People's Democratic Party (PDP), who served as prime minister of the Himalayan kingdom from 2013 to 2018, won 30 of 47 seats.

**34. Correct Answer: D**

Janata Dal (United) president Nitish Kumar recently took oath as Bihar Chief Minister for a record ninth time, returning to the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance just 18 months after he left it, in his fifth switch in political loyalties since 2015.

**35. Correct Answer: B**

The Reserve Bank of India has approved state-run insurer Life Insurance Corporation of India's (LIC) application to acquire a 9.99% aggregate holding of paid-up share capital in HDFC Bank. According to the RBI's regulations, LIC will have to acquire the 9.99% stake within the year, while ensuring that its holding never crosses the 9.99% mark.

**36. Correct Answer: C**

Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh signed an MoU with Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS), Government of India for implementation of the 'Modified PKC-ERCP' (integration

of original PKC with Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project of Rajasthan), which is the second project under the national perspective plan of interlinking of rivers (ILR) program of Government of India.

**37. Correct Answer: B**

The inaugural edition of India-Saudi Arabia Joint Military Exercise 'SADA TANSEEQ' is being held at Mahajan, Rajasthan. The Exercise is scheduled to be conducted from 29th January to 10th February 2024. The Exercise will enable both the sides to share their best practices in the tactics, techniques and procedures of conducting operations in sub-conventional domain.

**38. Correct Answer: D**

Comoros President Azali Assoumani has been re-elected for a fourth term in a poll disputed by the opposition as "fraudulent". He secured the win with 63% of the vote, the electoral body said. However, turnout was low amid an opposition boycott - just 16% of people voted in the presidential election.

**39. Correct Answer: C**

President of India Droupadi Murmu has nominated educationist and the founder of Chandigarh University (CU) Satnam Singh Sandhu as a member of the Rajya Sabha. Sandhu, son of a farmer, founded the Chandigarh Group of Colleges (CGC) at Landran in Mohali in 2001 and Chandigarh University in 2012.

**40. Correct Answer: C**

The first-ever United Nations (UN) International Day of Clean Energy was held worldwide on January 26, 2024, to raise awareness and mobilize action for a fair and equitable transition to clean energy for the benefit of people and the environment. The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) was founded on January 26.

**41. Correct Answer: A**

Union environment minister, Bhupender Yadav released the report, Status of Snow Leopards in India during the National Board for Wildlife meeting held in Delhi. There are around 718 snow leopards in the country, the first ever population estimation exercise of the vulnerable species by the Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SPA) Program has found.

**42. Correct Answer: D**

On January 27, 2024, the Chenab River was redirected through the diversion tunnels at Drabshalla in Kishtwar district, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). This is a significant milestone for the 850 MegaWatt (MW) Ratle Hydroelectric Project on the Chenab River in Kishtwar, which is slated to be operational in May 2026.

**43. Correct Answer: C**

Dronetech startup Marut Drones said it has delivered India's first mineral exploration drones to state-run iron ore miner NMDC Ltd. The Hyderabad-based startup has supplied two customised Octacopter drones to the Navratna PSU.

**44. Correct Answer: A**

India's rank in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2023 has slipped to 93 out of 180 countries, with a score of 39. Transparency International points out that most countries, including India, have made little progress in tackling corruption.

**45. Correct Answer: C**

The index, which lists countries by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, ranked Denmark at the top, followed by Finland, New Zealand and Norway. The index uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. While western Europe and the European Union remained the top-scoring regions, its regional average score dropped to 65 this year, as checks and balances weakened and political integrity eroded, the report said.

**46. Correct Answer: B**

Five more Indian wetlands have been added to the global list of wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention, taking the total number of such highly recognised waterlogged ecosystems in the country to 80, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said. Of the five wetlands added to the Ramsar list, Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve, Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve, and Aghanashini Estuary are in Karnataka and Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary and Longwood Shola Reserve Forest are in Tamil Nadu.

**47. Correct Answer: D**

Sultan Ibrahim, the powerful billionaire ruler of southern Johor state, was sworn in as Malaysia's 17th king. Sultan Ibrahim took the reins from Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah of Pahang state, whose tenure was marked by challenging times, navigating through the complexities of Covid-19 lockdowns and a phase of political unrest.

**48. Correct Answer: B**

A group of researchers from various institutes in India and overseas discovered a new species of tiny lizards known as 'Agasthyagama edge' or the northern kangaroo lizard in the southern Western Ghats near Kulamavu in Idukki, Kerala. The findings were published in Vertebrate Zoology, a scholarly magazine released by the Senckenberg Museum in Germany.

**49. Correct Answer: A**

Grandmaster (GM) Wei Yi of China earned his first master title by defeating GM Gukesh D of India in the finals of the 86th Tata Steel Chess Tournament (2024), which took place from January 12-28, 2024 in Wijk aan Zee, The Netherlands. GM Leon Luke Mendonca (India) won the Challengers title by defeating International Master (IM) Divya Deshmukh (India) in the final.

**50. Correct Answer: D**

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) celebrated its 48th Raising Day in New Delhi on 01 February 2024, commemorating its remarkable journey from a modest beginning in 1977 to becoming a formidable force in maritime security. With 152 ships and 78 aircraft in its arsenal, the ICG is on track to achieve its targeted force levels of 200 surface platforms and 100 aircraft by 2030.

**51. Correct Answer: B**

Jay Shah, Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), was reappointed President of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) for a third term. He took over as President of ACC in January 2021, after Nazmul Hassan, President of the Bangladesh Cricket Board.

**52. Correct Answer: C**

Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh has been roped in as the brand ambassador of audio products brand boAt, the company announced through an official statement.

Ranveer Singh has also made an investment in the company.

**53. Correct Answer: B**

The sixth edition of the Khelo India Youth Games-2023, which took place over 13 days in four districts of Tamil Nadu, concluded on January 31 with Maharashtra winning 158 medals and taking first place, while Tamil Nadu, the host state, and Haryana finished second and third.

**54. Correct Answer: A**

Every year on February 2nd, the world celebrates World Wetlands Day, highlighting the crucial role these ecosystems play in human health and well-being. The theme of the World Wetlands Day 2024 is 'Wetlands and Human Wellbeing'.

**55. Correct Answer: C**

The Tamil Nadu government has declared 80,114.80 hectares of reserve forests in Bargur Hills in Erode district, as the Thanthai Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary. This stretch of protected forests, links the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve with Cauvery South Wildlife Sanctuary, and has been notified as the 18th wildlife sanctuary in the State.

**56. Correct Answer: D**

National Rural Livelihood Promotion Society (NRLPS), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) signed an MOU with BRAC International, a Global South-led organisation with a mission to empower people and communities. The MoU has been signed for inclusion of the poorest of the poor under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), a flagship programme under MoRD.

**57. Correct Answer: B**

Indian Navy has declared 2024 as 'Year of Naval Civilians' to improve administration, efficiency and well-being of Naval Civilians by addressing all facets of Civilian HR Management in a time bound manner. Major focus areas towards maximising administrative efficiency, digital initiatives, generic and specific training programmes and welfare activities have been identified for implementation in 2024.

**58. Correct Answer: D**

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) asked general insurance companies to have board-approved policy guidelines for AYUSH coverage and give policyholders an option to choose a treatment of their choice. The guidelines will be effective from April 1, 2024.

**59. Correct Answer: D**

Taking a substantial step to enrich the array of financial solutions for customers, ESAF Small Finance Bank has officially declared a bancassurance collaboration with Edelweiss Tokio Life Insurance. The partnership plays a crucial role in ESAF Small Finance Bank's strategy to broaden its range of offerings, demonstrating its commitment to providing financial security to a more extensive segment of the unbanked and under-banked population.

**60. Correct Answer: A**

Dr. Bina Modi, Chairperson of Modi Enterprises, was honoured with the 'Outstanding Business Woman of the Year - 2023' Award by Rajnath Singh, Defence Minister of India. The award, presented to her at a prestigious conference by the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC) on 'Strengthening Indo-US Relationship in Amritkal-Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

**61. Correct Answer: A**

The Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad (Gujarat), has been ranked as one of the top government MBA colleges in India by the Indian Institutional Ranking Framework (IIRF) for 2024. Xavier Labour Relations Institute (XLRI), Jamshedpur (Jharkhand), has been ranked as one of India's best private MBA colleges for 2024.

**62. Correct Answer: C**

The government has given Exim Bank of India Rs 9,000 crore after some of the loans extended to foreign countries become non-performing assets (NPAs). The bank had to use the government guarantee on these loans, which were made to some African countries more than a decade ago.

**63. Correct Answer: A**

Indian economy is expected to grow at an average rate of 6.7 per cent per annum until the decade's end (from

2024-2031), according to CRISL global market research, analytics and credit rating agency. This forecast surpasses the pre-pandemic average of 6.6 per cent positive trajectory for the coming decade.

**64. Correct Answer: B**

Nangolo Mbumba, former Vice President of the Republic of Namibia, took office as Namibia's interim President on February 4, 2024, following the death of outgoing President Hage Geingob. Nangolo Mbumba will occupy the position until the 2024 elections.

**65. Correct Answer: A**

A small but powerful Chinese rocket capable of sending payloads at competitive costs delivered nine satellites into orbit on 03 February. The Jielong-3, or Smart Dragon-3, blasted off from a floating barge off the coast of Yangjiang in southern Guangdong province. It was the third launch of the rocket, developed by China Rocket Co, a commercial offshoot of a state-owned launch vehicle manufacturer, since December 2022.

**66. Correct Answer: A**

The quality standards for five spices, small cardamom, turmeric, juniper berry, allspice, and star anise, were finalized during the 7th Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH7) meet in Kochi, Kerala. CCSCH7, hosted by the Government of India, took place from January 29 to February 2, 2024.

**67. Correct Answer: B**

Private sector lender Federal Bank has launched NCMC-integrated debit cards. National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) is a feature introduced on RuPay contactless debit card that allows cardholders to make payments across NCMC-enabled terminals at metro stations, buses, etc., in an offline mode within a fraction of a second, just by tapping the card on the card reader.

**68. Correct Answer: D**

REC Limited, a Maharatna Central public sector enterprise under the Ministry of Power and a leading NBFC, has been bestowed with the prestigious Best Green Bond-Corporate Award at The Asset Triple A Awards for Sustainable Finance 2024.

**69. Correct Answer: D**

Former Deputy Prime Minister and Veteran Leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Lal Krishna (LK) Advani will receive the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award. He will be the 50th recipient of the Bharat Ratna since its foundation in 1954. Lal Krishna Advani served as India's Deputy Prime Minister from 2002 to 2004.

**70. Correct Answer: C**

Real Madrid's Vinicius Jr has been appointed as a goodwill ambassador for UNESCO's Education for All initiative, UNESCO said. The international player of Brazil was appointed at a ceremony at his club's training centre, becoming the second soccer player from his country to serve as a UNESCO goodwill ambassador after Pele.

**71. Correct Answer: A**

Two more Ramsar sites, Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary and Longwood Shola Reserve Forest, have been approved by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEFCC). With this, the total number of Ramsar sites in Tamil Nadu has increased to 16, the highest in the country.

**72. Correct Answer: B**

Havildar Preeti Rajak, who is a champion trap shooter, has become the first woman to hold the rank of Subedar in the Indian Army after she was promoted in January 2024. Subedar Rajak joined the Army in the Corps of Military Police in December 2022.

**73. Correct Answer: D**

In 2024-25, the total receipts other than borrowings are estimated to be ₹ 30.80 lakh crore and the total expenditure is estimated at ₹ 47.66 lakh crore. The tax receipts are estimated at ₹ 26.02 lakh crore. Union Finance Minister said that, during 2024-25, gross and net market borrowings through dated securities are estimated at ₹ 14.13 lakh crore and ₹ 11.75 lakh crore respectively.

**74. Correct Answer: C**

India's first beachside startup fest, Emerge-2024, will be held from Feb 16 to 18 at Tannirbhavi Beach in Mangaluru. Held under the banner of Tapasya beach festival (TBF), the event is aimed at fostering and nurturing emerging startups.

**75. Correct Answer: A**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, during her Interim Budget 2024 speech, said that 40,000 normal rail bogies will be converted to Vande Bharat standards. The Finance Minister further said that three major economic railway corridor programmes-- energy, mineral and cement corridors, port connectivity corridors, and high traffic density corridors--will be implemented.

**76. Correct Answer: A**

The government expects fiscal deficit to be 5.1 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) for the financial year 2024-2025 (FY25), Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her Budget 2024 speech on February 1. The finance minister also revised the fiscal deficit target for FY24 to 5.8 per cent of GDP.

**77. Correct Answer: C**

The Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) portal has reached a historic milestone with over 1.45 crore registrations as on 31.01. 2024. This has been possible due to the user friendly interface that allows registration to be completed within a few minutes.

**78. Correct Answer: D**

As per an official notification AU Small Finance Bank (SFB) has announced the appointment of Reserve Bank of India's former Deputy Governor Harun Rashid Khan as part-time chairman. It added that Raj Vikash Verma has completed his tenure on 29 January, 2024 and will cease to be a part time chairman and independent director of the bank with immediate effect.

**79. Correct Answer: C**

The 'PM GatiShakti Summit: Towards Logistics Efficiency and Integrated Infrastructure Planning', organized by the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), in collaboration with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) took place in New Delhi on 30 January 2024.

**80. Correct Answer: B**

The Budget has more than doubled Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB) issuance for next fiscal to ₹3,500 crore against ₹1,500 crore logged in the financial year ended March 31, 2023. It has also retained the Budget estimate for this fiscal at ₹1,500 crore against ₹402 crore raised last fiscal.

**81. Correct Answer: B**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has proposed an interim Budget of Rs 1.18 lakh crore for fiscal 2024-25 for the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. According to Sitharaman, the crucial reforms undertaken in 2019 enabled "path-breaking" measures by the Union Territory Government to decentralise governance structure, promote inclusive development,

**82. Correct Answer: B**

Fitch expects India's fiscal deficit would be 5.4% of GDP in FY25, surpassing the government's target of 5.1%. This estimate suggests that meeting budget consolidation goals may be difficult, especially given increasing spending ahead of general elections.

**83. Correct Answer: D**

Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi has been appointed as the new Army Vice Chief as of February 15. He replaced Lt Gen MV Suchindra Kumar, who would be his successor at the Northern Army Command in Udhampur. Lt Gen. Kumar has been the Vice Chief for around a year after he was promoted to the rank of Army Commander. He served as the 16 Corps commander earlier and has served in multiple command and staff roles.

**84. Correct Answer: D**

Legendary sprinter and Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president, PT Usha was conferred with the 'Lifetime Achievement' award by Sports Journalists Federation of India (SJFI) and Delhi Sports Journalists Association (DSJA) at the National Sports Club of India.

**85. Correct Answer: A**

Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan unveiled a book, 'Artificial Intelligence and National Security' at the Defence Literature Festival, "Kalam and Kavach," in Pune. Chief Guest Gen Anil Chauhan, the CDS, inaugurated the event, marking a significant milestone in blending India's rich cultural heritage with contemporary national security strategies.

**86. Correct Answer: D**

Union Minister of State (MoS) for Electronics and IT, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Rajeev Chandrasekhar launched the "Digital India FutureLABS"

at IIIT Delhi and delivered the keynote address at the 'Digital India FutureLABS Summit 2024,' focused on 'Catalyzing the Next-generation Electronics System Design through Digital India FutureLABS.'

**87. Correct Answer: A**

India contributed 32.895 million dollars to the 2024 United Nations Regular Budget and made the payment on January 31, 2024. India has consistently been among the countries to pay its contributions to the UN budget on time and in full.

**88. Correct Answer: A**

The country's largest lender, State Bank of India (SBI) on February 2 said it has partnered with Flywire Corporation to ease Indian student's international education payments. This partnership integrates Flywire technology directly into the bank's platform, offering Indian students an advanced digital checkout experience for their international educational payments.

**89. Correct Answer: B**

HDFC Bank, India's largest private sector bank, has announced the expansion of its small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) payment solutions with the launch of its business range of credit cards. The credit cards are available in four variants — BizFirst, BizGrow, BizPower, and BizBlack.

**90. Correct Answer: D**

The 66th Grammy Awards took place in Los Angeles on 05 February. Taylor Swift won album of the year for *Midnights*, which made her the first person to win that category four times. She also won Best Pop Vocal Album. Meanwhile, Miley Cyrus won her first-ever Grammy for Best pop solo performance for *Flowers*.

**91. Correct Answer: D**

Two fintech startups Juspay and Decentro have received the final licence to operate as payment aggregators on February 6. Software as a service startup Zoho also got the payment aggregator licence on February 2. Zoho is the first enterprise SaaS player to get the payment aggregator nod from the RBI.

**92. Correct Answer: B**

An image of a polar bear sleeping on a small iceberg has bagged the 2023 Wildlife Photographer of the Year

People's Choice Award. As per reports, Nima Sarikhani, the winner, captured the image after searching for polar bears for three days on Norwegian islands.

**93. Correct Answer: C**

Apurva Chandra has been appointed as the Secretary, Department of Health and Family Welfare. Currently, Mr. Chandra is the Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Sanjay Jaju will be the new Information and Broadcasting secretary.

**94. Correct Answer: D**

In a significant political reshuffle, Kazakhstan's president, Qasym-Zhomart Toqaev, has appointed Olzhas Bektenov as the new Prime Minister. Bektenov, who previously served as Toqaev's chief of staff and led the Anti-Corruption Agency, succeeds Alikhan Smailylov.

**95. Correct Answer: C**

The Fit India movement, a flagship initiative of the Government of India envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, takes a significant leap forward with the appointment of Narendra Kumar Yadav, Additional Director GST as its newest brand ambassador.

**96. Correct Answer: D**

Tech giant Google has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Maharashtra to provide artificial intelligence (AI)-led solutions across key sectors in the state. As a part of the collaboration, Google will leverage its AI capabilities to provide solutions in sectors like agriculture, healthcare, sustainability, education, and startups.

**97. Correct Answer: A**

Lebanese-born Judge Nawaf Salam has been elected as the new President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ). He will hold this prestigious position for a three-year term, taking over from Judge Joan E. Donoghue of the United States, who was elected on February 8, 2021.

**98. Correct Answer: A**

Bandhan Financial Holdings is in the final stages of taking control of Aegon Life Insurance. The holding company of Bandhan Bank has received the final approval on the acquisition from the Insurance Regulatory & Development Authority (IRDAI).

**99. Correct Answer: A**

Max Financial Services has announced that it has received approval from Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) for capital infusion of Rs 1,612 crore by Axis Bank into the company's material subsidiary, Max Life Insurance.

**100. Correct Answer: A**

Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma on 08 February 2024 ceremonially launched the Logo, Anthem, Mascot, Jersey and Torch of Khelo India University Games - 2023, Ashtalakshmi in Guwahati in the presence of Nisith Pramanik, Union MoS for Youth Affairs & Sports and Home Affairs.

**101. Correct Answer: A**

In a significant stride towards fostering digital inclusion in the MSME sector, the Quality Council of India (QCI) and Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) has announced the launch of the DigiReady Certification (DRC) portal. For the initiative, QCI, in conjunction with ONDC, aim to assess and certify digital readiness of MSME entities.

**102. Correct Answer: A**

The Education Ministry recently launched the Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) in rural regions through Common Service Centres (CSCs). According to a press release by the Ministry of Education, APAAR has been conceptualised under the National Education Policy (NEP 2020) which mandates all college/university-going students to register on Academic Bank of Credits (ABC).

**103. Correct Answer: D**

The Riyadh International Convention & Exhibition Center hosted the second edition of the World Defence Show (WDS 2024) from February 4th to 8th, 2024. The General Authority for Military Industries (GAMI), the regulator, enabler, and licensor for Saudi Arabia's military sector, organized WDS 2024 with the theme "Equipped for Tomorrow".

**104. Correct Answer: B**

With an objective to facilitate farmers and traders in providing low interest rate loans, Warehousing Development Regulatory Authority (WDRA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Punjab &

Sind Bank (PSB). The MoU was signed with the intent of promoting awareness to fund against e-NWRs (electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipt).

**105. Correct Answer: D**

Fintech startup LeRemitt and Yes Bank have partnered to introduce a cross-border platform that enables micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to conduct international transactions in key currencies, including US dollars and euro, according to an official statement.

**106. Correct Answer: D**

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions has released the National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA) Way Forward Annual Report 2023. In December 2023, States/UTs delivered a total of 16,487 e-services, compared to 11,614 in April 2023.

**107. Correct Answer: A**

The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has unveiled the report 'Prabhaav' of the impact assessment of the Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS), a key component of the startups. The third-party assessment of the scheme was undertaken by CRISIL, India's premier analytics company and pioneer of AIF benchmarking in the country.

**108. Correct Answer: D**

India's Unified Payment Interface (UPI) services were on February 12 rolled out in Sri Lanka and Mauritius. The launching of UPI services in Sri Lanka and Mauritius enables the availability of UPI settlement services for Indian nationals travelling to Sri Lanka and Mauritius as well as for Mauritian nationals travelling to India.

**109. Correct Answer: A**

Life Insurance Corporation of India's (LIC) shareholding in SBI Cards and Payments Services crossed 5% with the insurer, as an investment function, acquiring recently a little more than three lakh shares in the non-banking financial company at an average cost of ₹716 per share. The shareholding has increased from 4.99% to 5.02% following the open market purchase, LIC said in a filing.

**110. Correct Answer: C**

Embraer Defense & Security and Mahindra announced that they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the objective of jointly fulfilling the acquisition of the C-390 Millennium multi-mission aircraft by the Indian Air Force in its upcoming Medium Transport Aircraft (MTA) procurement project. The MoU was signed at the Embassy of Brazil in New Delhi.

**111. Correct Answer: B**

India and Russia have signed a protocol on amendments to the 2008 intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in construction of additional nuclear reactors in Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project site in Tamil Nadu and in construction of Russia-designed nuclear power plants at new sites in India.

**112. Correct Answer: D**

Aiming to transition all payments to digital mode and enhance patient convenience, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, launched the AIIMS-SBI digital patient care card service. The digital patient care or smart card facility was inaugurated by Union Health Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya in the presence of Dr M Srinivas, Director of AIIMS New Delhi, and SBI General Manager Manjeet Singh.

**113. Correct Answer: B**

Secretary, Department of Land Resources, Nidhi Khare has rolled out National Generic Document Registration System (NDGRS) throughout Assam along with the launch of Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) seeding of geo referenced cadastral maps. Special Chief Secretary, Government of Assam, Syedain Abbasi launched the Blockchain application in land records in Darrang district as a pilot.

**114. Correct Answer: C**

Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) a premier public sector bank in the country, celebrated its 88th annual Foundation Day in Chennai on 10 February 2024. IOB announced the opening of 88 new branches across the country and a 20 bps increase in interest rates on retail term deposits for the 444-day bucket, effective from February 10, 2024.

**115. Correct Answer: D**

Centre For Development Of Telematics (C-DOT), the premier telecom R&D center of the Department of

Telecommunications (DoT) and Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee (IIT-R) signed an agreement for developing a 140GHz fully integrated transmitter and receiver module for 6G and beyond.

**116. Correct Answer: D**

Greening and Restoration of Wasteland with Agroforestry (GROW) report and portal was launched by Prof Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog at NITI Aayog. This multi-institutional effort led by NITI Aayog utilized remote sensing and GIS to assess agroforestry suitability across all districts in India.

**117. Correct Answer: A**

Mirae Asset Mutual Fund on February 12, 2023, launched "India's first Multi factor-based ETF on Nifty Smallcap250 Index," called Mirae Asset Nifty Smallcap 250 Momentum Quality 100 ETF. As a passive fund, it replicates the Nifty Smallcap 250 Momentum Quality 100 Total Return Index.

**118. Correct Answer: D**

REC Ltd., a Maharatna central public sector enterprise, has signed agreements worth Rs 588 crore with the Damodar Valley Corporation to strengthen infrastructure and energy projects in the region. The agreements aim to strengthen their cooperation for the development of tubed coal mines and include a term loan agreement, an escrow agreement and hypothecation deeds.

**119. Correct Answer: C**

Sports minister Anurag Thakur has handed over the Chess Olympiad Torch to Budapest, the Hungarian capital, which will host the 45th edition of the prestigious tournament this year. During a function at Major Dhyanchand National Stadium in New Delhi, Thakur handed over the torch to the FIDE president Arkady Dvorkovich and representatives of the host city.

**120. Correct Answer: B**

World Radio Day is marked annually on 13 February. The theme for the World Radio Day 2024 is "Radio: A century informing, entertaining and educating". The 2024 observance highlights the history of radio and its powerful impact on news, drama, music and sports.

**121. Correct Answer: B**

The Defence Ministry said the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for various capital acquisition proposals amounting to ₹84,560 crore. The approvals accorded by the DAC, which is chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, lay special emphasis on the procurement of various equipment from Indian vendors, the Defence Ministry said.

**122. Correct Answer: C**

The UK capital London was the slowest city to drive through 2023 in the world, with an average speed of 14 kmph in rush hour, a report said. Two Indian cities, Bengaluru and Pune, were also on the list of cities with the worst traffic, the report by the Amsterdam-based location technology specialist TomTom showed.

**123. Correct Answer: A**

Uttar Pradesh is looking to construct one million tonne per annum (mtpa) green hydrogen production capacity. At present, the hydrogen demand in UP is estimated at 900,000 tonnes per annum, especially in the fertiliser and refinery sectors.

**124. Correct Answer: A**

Uttar Pradesh is planning to establish two centres of excellence (CoE) for research and innovation on green hydrogen. It will be under the ambit of UP New and Renewable Energy Development Agency. Moreover, the policy will lay emphasis on increasing hydrogen blending in regions where green hydrogen is consumed.

**125. Correct Answer: A**

The inaugural edition of "Vividhta ka Amrit Mahotsav: A cultural odyssey unveiling the richness of Northeast India" was held at Rashtrapati Bhavan from the 8th to the 11th February, 2024. The Mahotsav features 320+ stalls, each dedicated to showcasing the unique handicrafts, handlooms, and agro products of the eight culturally rich states.

**126. Correct Answer: A**

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated BAPS Mandir in Abu Dhabi in a festive consecration ceremony attended by Hindu and Muslim leaders and thousands of spectators. Built across 27 acres of land gifted by United Arab Emirates President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan

in 2015, the temple is the biggest in the Middle East and is made of pink sandstone from Rajasthan, India.

**127. Correct Answer: D**

The World Bank has approved INSPIRES program aimed at supporting the state of Sikkim in India. The project aims to train, upskill, and create jobs for 300,500 women and youth in high-growth and priority areas. The International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) will offer a \$100 million loan with a 14-year maturity and a five-and-a-half-year grace period.

**128. Correct Answer: D**

The State Bank of India, which is the largest public sector bank in the country, has said that users can use the self-subscribing route to enroll for the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) schemes.

**129. Correct Answer: C**

India is on its track to have 50% of its installed power generation capacity from non-fossil sources by 2030, Union Minister R K Singh informed the Rajya Sabha. The country's installed power generation capacity from non-fossil source is 186.46 gigawatt (GW), which is 43.82 per cent of its total installed capacity, the minister for new and renewable energy said.

**130. Correct Answer: A**

The Centre will invite private companies to invest about \$26 billion (₹2.16 lakh crore) in nuclear energy to increase the amount of electricity from sources that don't produce carbon dioxide emissions. This is the first time the government is pursuing private investment in nuclear power, a non-carbon-emitting energy source that contributes less than 2% of India's total electricity generation.

**131. Correct Answer: D**

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has launched the IIT-Bhubaneswar Research and Entrepreneurship Park's '100 Cube Start-up initiative' that aims at creating 100 startups with a valuation of Rs 100 crore each by 2036.

**132. Correct Answer: A**

To strengthen bird conservation initiatives and to address the challenges posed by illegal hunting in the

South Asian region, the Bihar government has brought out the 'Patna Declaration'. As per the Patna Declaration, a task force on illegal killing, taking, and trade of migratory birds in the South Asian region will be established.

**133. Correct Answer: C**

On February 12, 2024, Federal Bank introduced its newest product, the Stellar Savings Account, aiming to transform the banking sector by delivering exceptional benefits and innovative features. The Stellar Savings Account is currently accessible to both new and existing customers at all Federal Bank branches.

**134. Correct Answer: B**

Isha Ambani, who heads Reliance Group's retail venture Reliance Retail and is also a non-executive director on the board of Jio Financial Services, received Maharashtrian of the Year 2024 for her valuable contribution to the business sector.

**135. Correct Answer: D**

The apex body of chartered accountants, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), announced that Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal has been elected as its President for the 2024-25 term, succeeding Aniket Talati. Agarwal, the 72nd President of ICAI, previously served as Vice President during the 2023-24 term.

**136. Correct Answer: D**

Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, Group Captain Ajit Krishnan, Group Captain Angad Pratap and wing commander Shubhanshu Shukla have been nominated. All four of them have been training extensively for the Gaganyaan mission for the last five years in Russian and Indian facilities.

**137. Correct Answer: A**

Namibia's Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton created the record for the fastest century in T20I cricket, taking just 33 balls to reach his 100. He achieved this feat on 27 February 2024 vs Nepal in Kirtipur. The previous record belonged to Nepal's Kushal Malla, who scored in 34 balls against Mongolia last year.

**138. Correct Answer: C**

The world's first Vedic clock, designed to showcase time according to the ancient Indian traditional Panchang, has

been installed in Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain district and is set for unveiling on March 1. The Vedic clock stands tall on an 85-foot tower within Ujjain's Jantar Mantar.

**139. Correct Answer: B**

SECI, under the aegis of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, has successfully commissioned India's largest BESS in Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh. The energy would be purchased by the state of Chhattisgarh to meet the peak energy demand of the state.

**140. Correct Answer: D**

India and Japan commenced the 'Dharma Guardian' army combat exercise in Rajasthan to enhance bilateral military engagements, foster cooperation, develop capabilities and promote interoperability, bonhomie, and camaraderie among troops till March 9.

**141. Correct Answer: A**

The Financial Action Task Force ("FATF") has removed the United Arab Emirates ("UAE") from its "grey" watchlist. FATF's grey list pertains to countries that have deficiencies in anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing systems but are committed to actively addressing them.

**142. Correct Answer: B**

Feleti Teo, who is a Tuvaluan politician and lawyer was appointed as the 14th Prime Minister of Tuvalu. He was elected to the Parliament of Tuvalu in the 2024 Tuvaluan general election after he was elected unopposed by the parliament as Prime Minister on 26 February 2024.

**143. Correct Answer: D**

PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz who is also the daughter of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has become the first-ever woman Chief Minister of a province in Pakistan. She was elected to head the Punjab province on 26 February 2024.

**144. Correct Answer: C**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 25 opened the Sudarshan Setu which is India's longest cable-stayed bridge connecting Okha mainland and Beyt Dwarka island. It is the longest cable-stayed bridge in the country and is around 2.32 kilometers long.

**145. Correct Answer: D**

India's largest defence equipment exhibition, Defence Expo was organized from 24 to 26 February by the Industries Department of the Maharashtra government at the International Exhibition and Convention Center at Moshi near Pune. More than 1,200 companies presented their capabilities at the Expo.

**146. Correct Answer: B**

A team of researchers have discovered a new species of damselfly named Cliffside Bambootail (*Phylloneura rupestris*) at the Ponmudi hills in Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala. The Ponmudi hills are biodiversity-rich, and this is the third species of damselfly discovered from the region.

**147. Correct Answer: B**

The Central Government has announced the appointment of Justice NV Anjaria of the Gujarat High Court as the Karnataka High Court's next Chief Justice. He took over the job upon the retirement of Justice PS Dinesh Kumar, the current Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court, on February 24, 2024.

**148. Correct Answer: C**

The Defence Acquisition Council, chaired by Rajnath Singh, approved capital acquisition proposals worth Rs

84,560 crore to enhance the capabilities of the Armed Forces and the Indian Coast Guard. Amendments to the Defence Acquisition Procedure, 2020 were also approved.

**149. Correct Answer: C**

The Indian Air Force (IAF) held the Vayu-Shakti 2024 demonstration exercise on February 17, 2024, at the Pokhran Air-to-Ground Range near Jaisalmer, Rajasthan. The 2024 Vayu-Shakti exercise included joint operations with the Indian Army, demonstrating the perfect cooperation between the two arms of the military.

**150. Correct Answer: C**

Bank of Maharashtra (BoM), a premier public sector bank in the country celebrated its 89th Business Commencement Day in Pune on 8th February, 2024. As Bank has undertaken Digital transformations in areas of digital journey, digital operations & digital compliance, accordingly new 89 digital products and services were launched marking this occasion as "Maha Parivartan Diwas 2.0".

## SECTION 3

**Detailed Analysis**

**of** 

**Important Events**



## Economics

### Nano DAP: Revolutionizing Fertilizers in Indian Agriculture



#### Introduction

- The interim budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduces the expansion of Nano DAP application in agriculture.

#### Understanding Nano DAP

- DAP: Di-ammonium phosphate, or DAP, is a common fertilizer used in India that is high in phosphorus to support the growth of plant roots.
- The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) introduced Nano DAPL, a liquid DAP form with particles smaller than 100 nanometers, which increases its effectiveness.

#### Advantages of Nano DAP

- Efficiency: Because of its small particle size, Nano DAP is able to enter plant openings and seeds more successfully, increasing yields and improving crop quality as well as seed vigor, chlorophyll, and photosynthetic efficiency.
- Affordability: A 500 ml bottle of nano DAP, which is equal to a 50 kilogram bag of DAP, costs just Rs 600, making it more affordable than regular DAP.
- Convenience: Farmers can benefit from the liquid form's ease of application, storage, and transportation.
- Decreased Imports: By using domestically made Nano DAP from Kalol, Gujarat, India's agriculture

gains more self-sufficiency and is less dependent on fertilizer imports.

#### Government's Perspective

- Fiscal relief is provided by Nano DAP's cost-effectiveness, which lessens the government's reliance on fertilizer subsidies.
- Self-sufficiency: Manufacturing Nano DAP domestically contributes to the objective of being self-sufficient in fertilizer production and minimizing reliance on imports.
- Agricultural Progress: Increased use of Nano DAP promotes agricultural expansion, boosts food grain output, and helps farmers.

### Satellite-Based Toll Collection likely before General Elections



#### Introduction

- Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari was advised that the Model Code of Conduct for the 2024 general election will be implemented prior to the launch of satellite-based toll collection.
- FASTags will be replaced by this technology, which will benefit drivers by increasing efficiency and ease.

#### How Satellite-Based Toll Collection Works?

- Vehicles with GPS Equipment: In order to collect tolls, each vehicle must have a GPS equipment installed, which allows for real-time tracking of its movements.
- Microcontroller Integration: To enable data transfer, the government intends to install

microcontrollers in cars with third-generation (3G) and GPS connectivity.

- Constant Monitoring: Through the collection of GPS coordinates, officials are able to trace the utilization of toll roads, keep an eye on vehicle routes, and compute toll taxes according to the distance traveled.
- Configuration of Toll Gates: At the moment, toll gates are located at the conclusion of every road segment or project. The National Highway Authority of India sets the rates for toll tax, which is computed for trips up to 60 km (NHAI).

#### Why is a GPS-based system preferred over FASTag?

- Infrastructure Elimination: Since GPS-based systems don't need toll booths, traffic jams and infrastructure expenses are decreased.
- Constant Vehicle Tracking: By tracking cars constantly, they make it possible to calculate tolls accurately based on actual distance traveled.
- Flexibility and Scalability: GPS is more flexible and scalable, making it appropriate for a range of toll prices and travel times.
- Administration is Reduced: Automation lessens the need for manual intervention and administrative work.
- Improved User Experience: Passengers travel smoothly and don't have to stop at toll booths.

#### Operational Framework

- Integration of the Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS): For toll computations and transactions, vehicles will need on-board units (OBUs) connected to a satellite constellation (e.g., GPS, GLONASS, IRNSS).
- Barrier-Free Movement: By enabling distance-based tolling, OBUs, which are similar to car tracking devices, will promote unimpeded highway transportation.
- Legal prerequisites: Implementation requires geofencing national highways and legal changes to allow distance-based tolling under the Motor

Vehicles Act of 1988 and National Highway Fee Rules.

#### Cameroon adopts Nagoya Protocol



#### Introduction

- Cameroon's recent adoption of the Nagoya Protocol marks a significant step towards harnessing its rich biodiversity for sustainable development.

#### Cameroon's Biodiversity Wealth

- Biodiversity Hotspot: With over 11,000 species, Cameroon provides a wealth of genetic resources for study and advancement.
- Customs: Native American tribes have priceless customs related to biodiversity that support bioprospecting—the quest for practical items made from bioresources such as plants, microbes, animals, etc.
- Prospects for Sustainable Resource Use Presented by Bioprospecting: Initiatives centered around organisms like Irvingia wombulu offer prospects for sustainable resource management.

#### About Nagoya Protocol

	Details
Purpose	Implements access and benefit-sharing obligations of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
Adoption	October 2010

Entry into Force	October 12, 2014
Legal Status	Legally binding global agreement
Objective	Ensures fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilization of genetic resources
Membership	India is a member
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishes a framework for accessing genetic resources for research</li> <li>Provides certainty for investment in biodiversity-based research</li> <li>Ensures fair sharing of benefits from resource use</li> <li>Recognizes the value of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources</li> </ul>
Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Genetic resources covered by the CBD</li> <li>Benefits arising from their utilization</li> <li>Traditional knowledge (TK) associated with genetic resources covered by the CBD and benefits from their utilization</li> </ul>

#### Key Facts about Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):

	Description
Adoption Date	Opened for signing in 1992 at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro
Objectives	Conservation of biological diversity, Sustainable use of biological diversity, Fair and equitable benefit sharing
Membership	196 contracting parties
Scope	Covers biodiversity conservation at all levels:

	Ecosystems, Species, and Genetic resources
Decision-Making Body	Conference of the Parties (COP)
Secretariat	Based in Montreal, Canada
Supporting Agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cartagena Protocol (2000) for regulating LMOs movement,</li> <li>Nagoya Protocol (2010) for access and benefit sharing</li> </ul>

#### DigiReady Certification for MSMEs and Small Retailers



#### Introduction

- The Quality Council of India (QCI) and Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) announced the launch of the DigiReady Certification (DRC) portal.

#### What is DigiReady Certification?

- Goal:** QCI and ONDC are working together to evaluate and certify MSMEs (micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises) for digital preparedness.
- Self-Assessment Tool:** To improve their digital capabilities and business potential, MSMEs can use this online self-assessment tool to determine how ready they are to join as sellers on the ONDC platform.
- Streamlined Seller Journey:** For MSMEs and small shops, the portal is made to make the seller journey easier and to integrate it seamlessly into their current digital workflows.

- The certification process assesses a number of digital ready factors, such as online operations documentation, technology proficiency, workflow integration, and effective order and catalog management.
- Significance: Offers vendors more economic opportunities, empowering them to play a crucial role in the digital economy.

#### Quality Council of India (QCI):

- Establishment: The Indian industry, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, and the Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade (DPIIT) collaborated to form the organization in 1997.
- Legal Status: In accordance with Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860, the organization is registered as a non-profit.
- Operational Structure: Overseen by the National Accreditation Board for Testing & Calibration Laboratories (NABL) and the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB), which are the main constituent boards.
- **Composition:**

1. Controlled by a 38-member Council that is equally represented by the government, business, and consumers.
2. The Prime Minister appoints the Chairman of QCI based on suggestions made to the government by the industry.

#### RuPay and UPI rolled out in Mauritius, Sri Lanka



#### Introduction

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has declared that RuPay cards and Unified Payments Interface

(UPI) connectivity will be established between India and Mauritius, and between India and Sri Lanka.

- The purpose of this project is to promote digital payments between inhabitants of the three nations and further financial integration.

#### Discussion: Rupee Integration with Neighbours

- UPI in Mauritius: While Mauritian tourists can use the Instant Payment System (IPS) app to make payments in India, Indian tourists visiting Mauritius can now pay local shops using UPI.
- Adoption of RuPay: RuPay technology will be used by the MauCAS card program in Mauritius, enabling banks to issue RuPay cards domestically. In Mauritius and India, these cards are accepted at Point of Sale (PoS) terminals and ATMs.
- First Adoption: RuPay technology is implemented in Mauritius, making it the first nation outside of Asia to accept Indian RuPay cards at ATMs and PoS terminals.
- Payments using QR Codes in Sri Lanka: Indian tourists can use their UPI apps to pay with QR codes at merchant locations in Sri Lanka.

#### About RuPay and UPI

##### [A] RuPay Debit Cards

	Details
<b>Launch Year</b>	2012
<b>Conceived by</b>	National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)
<b>Key Features</b>	First global card payment network of India Wide acceptance at ATMs, POS devices, and e-commerce websites
<b>Security Measures</b>	Highly secure network against anti-phishing Supports electronic payments at all Indian banks and financial institutions
<b>International Acceptance</b>	NPCI maintains ties with Discover Financial, JCB for international acceptance

<b>Issuers</b>	More than 1100 banks including public sector, private, regional banks, and cooperatives
<b>Core Promoter Banks</b>	SBI, PNB, Canara Bank, BOB, Union Bank of India, Bank of India, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Citibank, HSBC

### [B] Unified Payments Interface (UPI)

	Details
<b>Launch</b>	April 11, 2016
<b>Developed by</b>	National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)
<b>Key Features</b>	Enables simple, easy, and quick transactions using Unified Payments Interface (UPI)
<b>Payment Methods</b>	Direct bank payments using UPI ID or QR code scanning Requesting money from a UPI ID
<b>Working</b>	Transfers using UPI ID, mobile number, QR code, or Virtual Payment Address. Offers consistent transaction PIN across apps, enhancing cross-operability. Supports push and pull transactions, over-the-counter payments, and recurring payments such as utility bills and subscriptions.

### Countries where UPI works

	Details
<b>Bhutan</b>	Launched in July 13, 2021. Partnership between NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL) and the Royal Monetary Authority (RMA) of Bhutan. First country to adopt UPI.
<b>Oman</b>	Launched on October 4, 2022. Enables acceptance of Indian RuPay cards at all OmanNet network ATMs, POS & E-commerce sites.



	Allows reciprocal acceptance of Oman cards/MPCSS in the networks of NPCI in India.
<b>Mauritius</b>	Connectivity allows Indian visitors in Mauritius to use UPI for local payments, and vice versa for Mauritian tourists in India using the Instant Payment System (IPS) app. Enables issuance of RuPay cards by banks in Mauritius through the MauCAS card network.
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	Digital payments connectivity enables Indian travellers to make QR code-based payments at merchant locations in Sri Lanka using their UPI apps.
<b>Nepal</b>	Nepali users can make bank transfers to India using a unified payment interface (UPI) ID through mobile banking.
<b>France</b>	UPI service launched at the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France this year. Partnership between NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) and Lyra, a French leader in securing e-commerce and proximity payments.
<b>Southeast Asia</b>	Agreement signed between NIPL and Liquid Group to enable QR-based UPI payments in 10 countries: Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, Singapore, Cambodia, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

### Why such move?

- Promotion of Tourism:** By offering simple payment methods, RuPay and UPI facilitate digital payments, which in turn entices Indian tourists to travel to Mauritius and Sri Lanka.
- Financial Integration:** By facilitating cross-border transactions and financial services, the introduction of RuPay and UPI promotes stronger economic linkages between Mauritius, Sri Lanka, and India.
- Diversification (apart from the Maldives):** By offering cutting-edge payment methods and infrastructure that are on par with those found

in well-known travel hotspots like Mauritius and Sri Lanka, countries can draw in more visitors and expand their tourism industries.

## Global Pulse Confederation (GPC) held in New Delhi



### Introduction

- The Global Pulse Confederation (GPC) has initiated the three-day convention — Pulses 24 — in New Delhi, India.

### About Global Pulse Confederation (GPC)

	Description
Formation	Founded in 2016 through the merger of the Global Pulse Confederation (GPC) and the International Starch Institute (ISI).
Headquarters	Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
Mission	Represents the global pulse industry, aiming to promote the sustainable growth of the pulse industry worldwide.
Focus Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocating for policies supporting the pulse industry's interests.</li> <li>Providing resources and support to pulse industry stakeholders.</li> <li>Facilitating research and innovation in pulse production and utilization.</li> </ul>

Membership	Open to businesses, organizations, and individuals involved in the pulse industry, including growers, processors, traders, and researchers.
India's Connect	India, being a major producer and consumer of pulses, actively participates in the GPC and holds membership status, contributing to the organization's objectives.

### Key Highlights from Pulses 24 Convention

- Growth in Production:** Over the last ten years, India's production of pulses has climbed by 60%, from 171 lakh tonnes in 2014 to 270 lakh tonnes in 2024.
- cooperation Objectives:** Mr. Goyal underlined the NAFED and GPC cooperation, which aims to promote pulses as an essential part of diets not just in India but throughout the world.
- Minimum Support Price (MSP):** The Center makes sure that farmers receive an MSP that is 50% more than their actual cost of production, providing them with competitive returns on investment. It was noted that MSP for a variety of pulses had increased significantly over the previous ten years, rising as high as 117% in masoor and 90% in moong.
- India's progress toward self-sufficiency:** chickpeas and other pulses by 2027, with an emphasis on attaining self-sufficiency in all pulses by then. New seed kinds are being supplied, and tur and black gram cultivation is being expanded.
- Global Knowledge Sharing:** The president of GPC highlighted how India might gain from the conference by exchanging technological innovations and best practices in pulse cultivation with other nations.
- Emphasis on Smallholding Farmers:** Pulses are known for their nutritional content and benefits to soil, which are especially helpful for smallholding farmers.

## Discussions to lower CRR on Green Deposits



### Introduction

- State Bank of India (SBI) is in talks with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to reduce the cash reserve ratio (CRR) requirement on green deposits.

### What are Green Deposits?

- Definition: Green deposits are fixed-term financial instruments designed for people and organizations that want to contribute to green projects.
- Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investing is reflected in these deposits, which are in line with the expanding trend of sustainable financing.
- Utilization: Initiatives supporting clean transportation, renewable energy, pollution prevention, green infrastructure, and sustainable water management are funded using funds from green deposits.

### RBI Framework for Green Deposits

- Greenwashing is prevented by the RBI's framework, which guarantees the veracity of environmental claims made in connection with green deposits.
- alternatives for Deposits: Banks provide rupee-denominated green deposits, with the option of either cumulative or non-cumulative alternatives.
- Application: This framework is mandatory for non-banking financial organizations (NBFCs),

housing finance companies (HFCs), small finance banks, and scheduled commercial banks.

- Eligibility: Investing in green deposits allows both business entities and individual customers to support environmentally friendly activities.
- Allocation: The industries that benefit most from the money raised by green deposits include afforestation, waste management, and renewable energy.
- Limitations: Lenders are not allowed to invest money from green deposits in industries such as nuclear power, fossil fuels, or tobacco.
- Verification: To evaluate the distribution and effects of money raised through green deposits, an independent third-party verification is carried out once a year.
- Supervision: Every year, lenders must assess the effects of the money they've provided for green financing initiatives.
- Financial institutions are afforded flexibility as there are no penalties for underutilizing funds obtained through green deposits.

### Distinguishing Green Deposits from Normal Deposits

- Project Allocation: Unlike conventional deposits, green deposits designate money for particular ecologically beneficial initiatives.
- Interest Rates: Lenders set the interest rates on green deposits, which are currently similar to those on conventional deposits.

### In news: Kiru Hydel Project

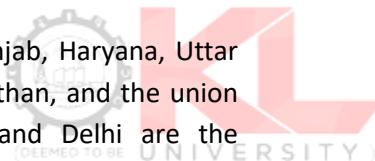


### Introduction

- The CBI has conducted searches at 12 locations in Delhi and Rajasthan regarding alleged corruption in the award of civil works worth ₹2,200 crore related to the Kiru hydroelectric power project.

#### About Kiru Hydel Project

- Location: In the Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), close to the villages of Patharnakki and Kiru, on the Chenab River.
- A 624 MW run-of-river project is its capacity.
- Developers: Power Trading Corporation (PTC, 2%), Jammu & Kashmir State Power Development Corporation (JKSPDC, 49%), and National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC, 49%) jointly own Chenab Valley Power Projects (CVPP).
- J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, and the union territories of Chandigarh and Delhi are the beneficiary states.



- The Hydropower Plant consists of :
  - Concrete gravity dam, 135 meters high, close to Kiru.
  - 10,225 km<sup>2</sup> of catchment land, including a 1.03 km<sup>2</sup> reservoir that is 6.5 km long.
  - 700-meter-long diversion tunnel in the shape of a horseshoe with two openings to redirect river flow so that a dam can be built.

#### Run-of-the-River Hydroelectric Systems

- These systems differ from traditional impoundment hydroelectric plants in that they use the energy of flowing water to create power without the requirement for a sizable dam and reservoir.
- Run-of-the-river projects make use of a river's natural flow, channeling some of the water through turbines to produce energy.
- When compared to conventional dam projects, this has a lower environmental impact.

## Environment & Diversity

#### Five more Wetlands added to Ramsar List



#### Introduction

- There are now eighty such internationally recognized wetland habitats in India, after five more were added to the Ramsar Convention's worldwide list of wetlands of international importance.

- India is currently the fourth-largest country on the Ramsar map, only after China (82) and the UK (175).
- With sixteen Ramsar sites, Tamil Nadu still holds the record, followed by Uttar Pradesh with ten.

#### List of newly designated Ramsar Sites:

##### [1] Ankasamudra Bird Conservation Reserve (Karnataka):

- Dispersed over 98.76 hectares, close to the town of Ankasamudra.
- 240 bird species, 8 mammals, 25 reptiles, and nearly 210 plant species make up this biodiversity hotspot.
- Important breeding and roosting area for more than 30,000 waterbirds, such as the Black-headed Ibis and Painted Stork.

##### [2] Aghanashini Estuary (Karnataka):

- Spans 4,801 hectares at the point where the Arabian Sea and the Aghanashini River converge.

- provides livelihood support, biodiversity conservation, and flood and erosion risk prevention.
- sustains 6,000–7,500 households via fishing, farming, and customary fish farming.
- serves as a storm- and cyclone-resistant natural barrier.

### [3] Magadi Kere Conservation Reserve (Karnataka):

- An approximately 50-hectare man-made wetland that was first intended to store rainwater.
- 166 bird species, 130 of which are migratory, can be found there.
- Refuge for near-threatened and fragile species, such as Oriental Darter, River Tern, and Common Pochard.
- An important area for the Bar-headed Goose to spend the winter.

### [4] Karaivetti Bird Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu):

- It's one of the biggest inland wetlands in Tamil Nadu, covering 453.72 hectares.
- encourages the replenishment of groundwater and helps with agricultural operations.
- Approximately 198 bird species are found there, such as the Common Teal and Bar-headed Goose.

### [5] Longwood Shola Reserve Forest (Tamil Nadu):

- Derived from the Tamil word "Solai," which means tropical rainforest.
- essential to the distinct biodiversity of the Western Ghats.
- gives refuge to bird species that are vulnerable and endangered worldwide, including the Nilgiri Wood-pigeon, Nilgiri Blue Robin, and Nilgiri Laughing Thrush.
- 14 of the 26 indigenous bird species of the Western Ghats can be found here.

## Invasive Species: Cuscuta Dodder



### Introduction

- An invasive weed, Cuscuta dodder, is gradually strangling the Chengalpet forests and Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary, posing a severe threat to local vegetation, ecology, and the habitat of migratory birds.

### About Cuscuta Dodder

- Its nature is parasitic; it is a rootless vine that has already infected acres of trees in reserve forests and is starting to grow within the oldest bird sanctuary in India.
- Origin: Native American continent.
- Modus Operandi: A holoparasitic plant, it grows a canopy over the host plant and shoots hundreds of tendrils, creating a dense show that lasts until the host is strangled and killed.

### Persistence and Germination

- Cuscuta seeds are spheroid and have a strong coat that allows them to endure at least 10 years in the field and up to 50 years in dry storage.
- Germination: Cuscuta seeds proliferate more quickly than root parasites because they do not need a particular stimulant to initiate germination.

### Impact and Spread

- India: Cuscuta poses a serious threat to oilseeds, pulses, and fodder crops in a number of states, including Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Orissa, West Bengal, and portions of Madhya Pradesh, under both rain-fed and irrigated conditions, according to a technical paper

published by the National Research Centre for Weed Science.

- International Law: It is prohibited from entering 25 nations due to its status as a "declared noxious weed," which includes seeds and plant material. It is the only cannabis seed that is illegal to transport in every state in the union.

### Horseshoe Crab: Living Fossils of the Sea



#### Introduction

- Environmental organizations have petitioned the US government to conserve the American horseshoe crab as an endangered species.
- Often referred to as "living fossils," horseshoe crabs have been around since before the time of the dinosaurs.

#### About Horseshoe Crab

	Description
Habitat	Shallow coastal waters with soft sandy or muddy bottoms; Spawns primarily on intertidal beaches during summer-spring high tides.
Taxonomic Division	Chelicerata, a division of Arthropoda, comprising spiders, scorpions, harvestmen, mites, and ticks; characterized by segmented body and limbs, and a chitinous exoskeleton.

Status	Referred to as a marine "living fossil" due to minimal evolutionary changes over time.
Geographic Range	<b>American horseshoe crab:</b> Eastern coast of the USA and the Gulf of Mexico. <b>Indo-Pacific species (Tri-spine, Coastal, Mangrove):</b> Mainly in coastal waters of India, Southeast Asia, China, and Japan.
Habitat	Odisha serves as the largest habitat for horseshoe crabs in India.
Conservation Status	Schedule IV of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.
IUCN Status	American horseshoe crab: <u>Vulnerable</u> . Tri-spine horseshoe crab: <u>Endangered</u> . Other two are not listed yet.

#### Collapse of the Gulf Stream System



The Gulf Stream System, sometimes referred to as the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), is critically threatened by continuing global carbon emissions, according to recent research. This collapse could happen between 2025 and 2095, with a central estimate of 2050, if nothing is done.

#### What is Gulf Stream System?

	Description
Origin	Begins in the Gulf of Mexico, merging warm waters from the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico.
Flow	Flows northward along the eastern coast of the United States.
Current	Carries warm waters from the tropics towards higher latitudes.

	<b>Description</b>
<b>Speed and Volume</b>	Swift ocean currents with speeds of 2 to 5 miles per hour, transporting 30 million cubic meters per second.
<b>Function</b>	Redistributes heat towards the North Atlantic region, influencing climate and weather patterns.
<b>Climate Impact</b>	Moderates the climate of Western Europe, keeping it relatively warmer than other regions at similar latitudes.
<b>Interaction with Atmosphere</b>	Releases heat and moisture, influencing weather and precipitation.
<b>Importance for Marine Life</b>	Supports diverse marine life, serving as a migratory route for fish and marine mammals.

#### Gulf Stream's Vulnerability

- The Gulf Stream is suffering from the effects of global warming and is at its weakest point in 1,600 years.

- In 2021, warning signs of a tipping point were already present.
- Its enormous climatic impact is demonstrated by the fact that previous collapses during ice ages have caused abrupt temperature swings of up to 10 degrees Celsius in a matter of decades.

#### Implications of Collapse

The potential collapse of Gulf Stream could lead to dire consequences worldwide, including:

- Disrupted Rainfall Patterns:** Food insecurity will arise for billions of people who depend on these patterns for food production in areas like West Africa, South America, and India.
- Colder Temperatures and Increasing Storm Activity:** Storm activity would rise and temperatures would drop over Europe.
- Increasing Sea Levels:** Coastal communities would be at danger as a result of rising sea levels along North America's eastern coast.
- Endangered Ecosystems:** There is a serious risk to the Antarctic ice sheets and the Amazon jungle.

## Governance

### Nazool Land: Behind the Violence in Haldwani



#### Introduction

- Violence erupted in Uttarakhand's Haldwani district after the administration conducted a demolition drive at the site allegedly on Nazool Land.

#### What is Nazool Land?

- Definition:** Nazool land is land owned by the government that is frequently leased to organizations for certain uses as opposed to being managed as state property.
- Conditions of Lease:** When a Nazool land is leased, the lessee usually has the option to extend the lease after the initial term of 15 to 99 years ends.

#### Historical Context

- Origins:** During British control in India, areas taken from rival kings and kingdoms and declared state property gave rise to nazool land.
- Post-Independence:** Due to a lack of appropriate documents proving previous ownership by the erstwhile royal families, these territories were given to the different state governments after Independence.

#### Governance of Nazool Land

- Legal Framework: The Nazool Lands (Transfer) Rules, 1956 are commonly used for adjudication, even though several states have established government orders to manage Nazool land.
- Process for Renewal of Lease: Generally, the local development authority's Revenue Department is in charge of overseeing the renewal or termination of leases on Nazool land.

#### Utilization of Nazool Land

- Public Uses: The government frequently uses Nazool property for construction projects related to public infrastructure, including Gram Panchayat buildings, schools, and hospitals.
- Housing Societies: Nazool property is frequently leased for housing societies and other residential constructions in metropolitan regions.

### 4 Portals for Modernized Media Landscape



#### Introduction

- Minister of Information and Broadcasting unveiled four groundbreaking portals poised to reshape India's media landscape, promising efficiency, transparency, and accessibility.

#### [1] Press Sewa Portal:

- The Press and Registration of Periodicals Act, 2023 (PRP Act, 2023) aims to simplify the process of newspaper registration and associated tasks through the Press Sewa Portal.

##### • Key Features:

- Online Application: Using Aadhar-based e-signatures for authentication,

publishers can apply online for title registration.

- Publishers can gain insight into the registration process by using the Probability Meter, which shows the chance of a title becoming available.
- Real-time tracking: Promotes efficiency and transparency by enabling users to monitor the status of their applications via an easy-to-use dashboard.
- District Magistrate Module: Provides District Magistrates with a consolidated dashboard to manage applications received from publications.
- Advantages of Automation: The portal provides online services for registering titles, e-signing documents, paperless processes, integration of a direct payment gateway, digital certificates based on QR codes, and a feature that allows press keepers/owners to notify others online about printing press activities.
- Impact: Modernizes the registration environment for publishers, improving efficiency and transparency, and streamlines the onerous registration processes that were previously in place under the antiquated PRB Act, 1867.

#### [2] Transparent Empanelment Media Planning and eBilling System:

- The primary objective of this system is to provide an end-to-end ERP solution for the media business, with a focus on the Central Bureau of Communication (CBC), while also revolutionizing media planning processes and improving transparency.
- Key Features:
  - Streamlined Empanelment Process: Provides a transparent and effective online mechanism for empaneling different media channels, including newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, and digital media.

- Automated media planning reduces the need for manual intervention and preparation time by improving online tools and features for media plan production.
- Automated Billing: The incorporation of an electronic billing processing system to facilitate the easy submission, validation, and settlement of bills.
- Mobile App: Offers partners a feature-rich mobile app with geotagging and timestamp capabilities for systematic monitoring.
- Encouraging Ease of Doing Business: Promotes quicker payment processing, automated compliance, hassle-free business environments, and quicker empanelment, all of which contribute to a more convenient business environment in the media sector.
- Reliable Solution: Data-driven decision-making and effective media planning are made possible by the portal's integration with the newest technologies, which create real-time analytical reports.

### [3] NaViGate Bharat Portal:

- Goal: The NaViGate Bharat portal acts as the country's National Video Gateway by providing a single, multilingual platform for the hosting of videos about the government's welfare- and development-related programs.
- Key Features:
  - Dedicated Pages: Provides comprehensive descriptions and sophisticated search features on pages specifically designated for ministries, sectors, schemes, and campaigns.
  - Simple Navigation & Search: Utilizing powerful search features, tagging, and categorization, this feature makes it simple for viewers to locate pertinent videos.



### [4] National Register for LCOs:

- The goal of the National Register for Local Cable Operators (LCOs) is to unify LCOs under a single, centralized registration system by centralizing the registration procedure.
- Key Features:
  - Web Form: For the National Register, a web form is used to gather data from nearby cable companies.
  - Online Publication: A more structured method of cable sector registration is provided by the National Register for LCOs, which is updated and published online on a regular basis.
- Impact: Offers a more streamlined cable industry by providing LCOs with a National Registration Number, which will make it easier to create new regulations for responsible service and ease of use for cable operators.
- Aligning with goal: The project supports India's goal of a prosperous and well-organized cable industry that enhances the welfare and general development of the nation.

## History

### 390 year old Lamp Post in Nalgonda dedicated to Kasi Viswanatha



#### Introduction

- New information about early medieval trade connections in the area is provided by the discovery of a Deepastambham (lamp post) and other archaeological artifacts along the Krishna River in the Telangana district of Nalgonda.

#### Lamp Post and its Structure

- Unusual Discoveries: In Telangana, archaeologists discovered a modest flat-roofed building close to the Krishna River bank and a 20-foot-tall lamp post with an inscription.
- Rare Artifacts: This discovery is remarkable because lamp posts are a rare sight in the Deccan, yet they are frequent in west coast temple design.
- Historical Context: The lamp post, which dates to June 1635, is dedicated to Kasi Viswanatha and has a multilingual inscription in Tamil and Telugu.
- Functional Significance: The lamp post's height probably allowed it to function as a lighthouse along the riverine commerce route, aiding in trade and navigation.

#### Significance of Inscriptions

- Historical Documentation: Early medieval inscriptions offer important insights into the sociocultural and economic climate of the area.
- Cultural Links: The existence of inscriptions adds to our knowledge of past trade routes by implying a link between the local community and larger trading networks.
- Hyderabad Connection: The village's importance in the regional trade network is suggested by its close proximity to Hyderabad, which is governed by the Qutb Shahi dynasty.
- European Accounts: During the same time period, riverine trade routes may have existed alongside land routes, as suggested by references made by European explorers like Jean Baptiste Tavernier.

#### Continuity of Trade Routes

- Longstanding Trade Links: The settlement has been an important hub for trade for millennia, as evidenced by the finding of an eighth-century inscription from the Badami Chalukya era.
- Trade routes promoted cultural contacts in addition to economic ones, which helped to shape the region's rich cultural legacy.

### In news: Mohammed Quli Qutb Shah's Tomb



#### Introduction

- A digital twin of the Mohammed Quli Qutb Shah's tomb was unveiled by a reality technology company, Hexagon in Hyderabad.

### Who was Mohammed Quli Qutb Shah?

- Parentage: Ibrahim Quli Qutb Shah Wali and his Hindu mother Bhagirathi welcomed Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah into the world on April 4, 1565.
- Literary Talent: He was a talented poet who wrote poetry in Urdu, Telugu, and Persian in addition to being a capable administrator.

### Contemporaries of Quli Qutb Shah

- Mughal Emperor Akbar (1556–1605) is renowned for his administrative innovations and tolerance for other religions.
- Rani Durgavati (1550–1564), the courageous queen of central India's Gondwana Kingdom, was well-known for her resistance against Mughal expansion.
- Maharana Pratap (1572–1597) was a Rajput king of Mewar who gained notoriety for his bravery in combat and for standing up to the Mughal Emperor Akbar.
- Chand Bibi (1550–1599) was a regent of the Deccan Sultanate of Ahmednagar, famous for her role in preventing the Mughals from taking Ahmadnagar.
- Fourth Sikh Guru, Guru Ram Das (1574–1581), founded Amritsar and made a major contribution to the expansion of Sikhism.
- Sher Shah Suri (1540–1545): renowned for his administrative reforms and building of the Grand Trunk Road, Sher Shah Suri founded the Sur Empire in North India.

### Key Accomplishments

#### [A] Reign and Accomplishments

- Ascension to the Throne: At the age of 15, Muhammad Quli took the throne from his father in 1580 and ruled for 31 years.
- Military Campaigns: In spite of uprisings, he marshaled forces skillfully and put an end to unrest, guaranteeing peace in his domain.

#### [B] Foundation of Hyderabad

- Urban Planning: Muhammad Quli started building Hyderabad in 1591 because he was worried about the crowding in Golkonda.

- Land Selection: Muhammad Quli's plan for Hyderabad's development attempted to reduce traffic and encourage expansion, but legend presents a romanticized view of the process.

#### [C] Architectural Marvels and City Planning

- Charminar: Constructed under Muhammad Quli's patronage, the architectural centerpiece Charminar represents the magnificence of the city.
- Gridiron-style city planning was used to carefully build Hyderabad, which includes important sites including Badshahi Ashurkhana, Mecca Masjid, and Darulshafa.

#### [D] Support for Arts and Literature

- Calligraphic Art: During Muhammad Quli's leadership, calligraphy had a boom, with many scripts adorning structures like the Mecca Masjid.
- Literary Contributions: Muhammad Quli's poetry in Dakhni and Urdu revealed his appreciation for different cultures and a wide range of interests.
- Taraqqi: Writing under the pen name "Taraqqi," he was a poet in both Persian and Telugu.

#### [E] Medical and Literary Contributions

- Intellectual Hub: Under Muhammad Quli's rule, Hyderabad developed into a hub for academic and medical endeavors, with intellectuals creating important works.
- Preservation of Culture: The literary legacy of Muhammad Quli, which includes his Diwan, is conserved at establishments such as the Salar Jung Museum, demonstrating his role in the preservation of cultural heritage.

#### Legacy and Influence

- Cultural Fusion: The Deccan region had a period of cultural fusion during Muhammad Quli's reign, combining Islamic and Hindu customs.
- Symbol of Unity: His ongoing attempts to advance peace and harmony serve as evidence of his administration's inclusive philosophy.

## International Relations

### Visa-Free Travel to Iran for Indians



#### Introduction

- The recent announcement of visa-free travel to Iran for Indian passport holders has garnered significant attention, marking a significant milestone in bilateral travel facilitation.

#### Iran's Visa-Free Regime for India

- Travel for tourist: Indian nationals with regular passports are eligible for visa-free entry into Iran, but they must plan to visit the country exclusively for tourist.
- Mode of Entry: Only passengers arriving in Iran via air are eligible for the relaxation.

- Maximum Duration: Under this program, visitors are limited to a maximum of 15 days in Iran per visit.
- Re-entry Provisions: After a six-month break from the last departure, one may re-enter Iran.
- Long-Term or Multiple Entry: People who wish to remain longer than six months, visit more than once during a six-month period, or apply for other visa categories need to obtain the necessary visas from the Iranian embassies located in India.

#### Visa Trends for Indians beyond Iran

- Currently, 27 countries (Kenya, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Sri Lanka are among the newest additions) allow Indian residents to enter without a visa.
- Global Outreach: In keeping with changing patterns of international travel, nations such as Barbados, Bhutan, Maldives, Mauritius, and Nepal, as well as its immediate neighbors, let Indian residents admission without a visa.
- Top Travel Destinations for Indian Citizens: Many Indian diasporans travel to the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, and Thailand, ranking first through fifth.

## Polity

### How Political Parties are created in India?



#### Introduction

- Tamil superstar Thalapathy Vijay's announcement of his political party has sparked

interest in the process of registering political entities in India.

#### Creating a Political Party

- Legal Framework: The Election Commission is authorized to establish party registration guidelines by Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and Article 324 of the Indian Constitution.
- Application: Within 30 days after its founding, a party wishing to register must submit an application to the Election Commission.
- Public Notice: The proposed party name must be announced in two daily publications, one

nationwide and one locally. The Election Commission's website also has the notice posted.

- Documentation: Within 30 days of the party's creation, the application must be submitted to the Election Commission Secretary in the format specified. A printed copy of the party's memorandum, rules, or constitution, the most recent electoral records for at least 100 party members, and a demand draft for Rs. 10,000 should also be included.
- Affidavits: It is necessary to have an affidavit that has been properly signed by the President or General Secretary and sworn before a magistrate or notary public. Individual affidavits from each of the 100 members attesting to their non-membership in any other legally recognized political party are also necessary.

#### Need for Registration

- Not Required: In accordance with the Representation of the People Act, 1951, registration with the Election Commission is not required, but it does have benefits.
- Allotment of Symbols: Independent candidates are not given preference when it comes to the distribution of free symbols; registered party candidates do.
- Parties may be recognized as "state parties" or "national parties" if they meet the requirements outlined in the 1968 Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order.

#### Recognition Criteria

- **State Party:** To be recognized as a state party, a registered party must meet any of these five conditions:
  1. Secure at least 6% of valid votes and win at least 2 seats in an Assembly General Election.
  2. Secure at least 6% of valid votes and win at least 1 seat in a Lok Sabha General Election.



3. Win at least 3% of the seats or at least 3 seats, whichever is more, in an Assembly General Election.
4. Win at least 1 out of every 25 seats from a state in a Lok Sabha General Election.
5. Secure at least 8% of the total valid vote in an Assembly or Lok Sabha General Election.

- **National Party:** To attain national party status, a registered party must meet any of these three conditions:

1. Secure at least 6% of valid votes in an Assembly or Lok Sabha General Election in four or more states and win at least 4 seats in a Lok Sabha General Election from any state.
2. Win at least 2% of total Lok Sabha seats in a Lok Sabha General Election, spanning at least 3 states.
3. The party is recognized as a State Party in at least four states.

#### Benefits of Recognition

- Reserved emblem: National parties are permitted to use the reserved emblem throughout the nation, whereas state parties are only allowed to use it inside their own state.
- Nomination Ease: To submit a nomination, these parties simply need one proposer.
- Free Electoral Rolls: They are eligible to get two sets of free electoral rolls.
- Media Access: During general elections, recognized parties are permitted to broadcast or telecast using state-owned Akashvani/Doordarshan facilities.
- Extra Benefits: Parties that have been recognized are eligible for additional benefits, such as discounted land for party offices, among other things.

#### Uttarakhand readies Final UCC draft



### Introduction

- Important initiatives are being taken by Uttarakhand to put the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) into effect.
- The state has made a big step in upholding its commitment to justice and equality by receiving the committee's final report.

### Uttarakhand UCC

- Expert Committee: To draft the UCC, Uttarakhand formed a committee under the direction of retired judge Ranjana Prakash Desai.
- Within the State Legislature: On February 5, the UCC report will be discussed in the State Assembly. Before becoming law, it will go through a thorough evaluation process.

### Key Recommendations

- Gender Equality: Achieving gender equality and getting rid of unfairness in a number of sectors, like property rights and adoption regulations, are the main goals of the final UCC text.
- Language Selection: It is noteworthy that the UCC draft is 750 pages long and is written only in Hindi, with no Urdu or other languages included.
- Protection of the Tribal Community: According to the report, the UCC shouldn't include the tribal community. We will handle each individual's requirements and problems in a separate manner.

### Ensuring Equal Rights

- Prohibition of Regressive Practices: The UCC draft suggests severe penalties for Muslim personal law practices related to marriage and divorce, such as triple talaq, iddat, and halala. It

also suggests outlawing polyandry and polygamy.

- Legalizing Live-In Relationships: The document proposes legalizing live-in partnerships and requiring couples in them to register.
- Equal Inheritance Rights: Under the proposed UCC, women have the same inheritance rights as males.
- Minimum Marriage Age: According to the UCC draft, women should be able to marry at the age of 21.

### Conclusion

- Uttarakhand has shown its dedication to guaranteeing justice and equal rights for all by working to create a Uniform Civil Code.
- The state's commitment to advancing gender equality and doing away with discriminatory practices is demonstrated by the thorough writing process, inclusive approach, and robust suggestions.

### Floor Test in Jharkhand Assembly



### Introduction

- The new government has won the trust vote on the floor of the Jharkhand Assembly. A floor test serves as a pivotal check to determine if the executive enjoys the confidence of the legislature.

### What is Floor Test?

- Definition: A floor test is a constitutional procedure used to determine if the Governor-appointed Chief Minister has the support of the majority of the Legislative Assembly.

- The Governor's Position: The CM is chosen by the Governor, who usually chooses someone from the party that wins the majority of Assembly seats.
- Voting of Confidence: In order to validate the majority among the present and voting members, the Chief Minister must request a vote of confidence if the majority is contested or questioned.
- Repercussions of Not Success: In the event that the floor test fails to yield a majority, the Chief Minister must resign.
- Application: State legislative assemblies and the Parliament both do floor exams. They are also applied when there are disagreements among coalition administrations.

#### Postponement of Floor Tests

- Legal Precedent: Recent decisions from the Supreme Court have made it clear that floor tests do not have to be delayed while the issue on the disqualification of rebel members is being considered.
- Case Shivraj Singh Chouhan v. Speaker: This principle was established in the 2020 case concerning Shivraj Singh Chouhan.
- Discretion in Special Cases: The Governor may exercise discretion to hasten the selection of the Chief Ministerial candidate for a floor test in extraordinary circumstances where there is no clear majority.

#### Composite Floor Test

- Multiple Claimants: A Composite Floor Test is carried out when more than one person makes a claim to form the government.
- Majority Determination: A special session is called to determine the majority in situations where it is unclear.
- Counting the Majority: The number of voters that are present determines the majority. Voting can be done with electronic devices, ballots, or slips, and can take the form of division or voice voting.

- Speaker's Vote: The Speaker may cast the decisive vote in the event of a tie.

#### Challenges with the Floor Test

- Luring of MLAs: The legitimacy and impartiality of the floor test may occasionally be compromised by the ruling party MLAs being enticed with gifts or other benefits.
- Constitutional and Moral Implications: Because these measures use the legal system to orchestrate defections in order to get around the Tenth Schedule, they are viewed as morally repugnant and unjust under the constitution.

#### Election Symbols Issue in Maharashtra



#### Introduction

- A faction within a political party led by the Maharashtra Deputy CM has been officially recognized as the legitimate group by the Election Commission of India retaining its election symbol.

#### Election Symbol and its Significance

- Impact on Voting: Election symbols have a significant impact on voter perception and identification, which in turn shapes the electoral fortunes of political parties.
- Transparency Concerns: In order to guarantee justice and transparency in the electoral process, it is necessary to evaluate the current symbol allocation mechanism.

#### EC's Powers in Symbol Disputes

- Legal Framework: The Symbols Order, 1968, Paragraph 15, gives the ECI the authority to resolve conflicts resulting from divisions between political parties.
- Test of Majority: In order to identify the legitimate faction, the ECI performs a test of majority while taking into account all relevant information and circumstances.
- Binding Decision: The ruling of the ECI applies to recognized national and state parties and is binding on all competing sections or groupings that arose following the split.

#### Historical Precedents

- Pre-1968 Period: In accordance with the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, the ECI handled disputes using notifications and executive orders prior to the Symbols Order, 1968.
- High-profile incidents: Two notable incidents include the Indian National Congress's initial split in 1969 and the Communist Party of India's (CPI) split in 1964.

#### Options for Resolution

- Symbol Freeze: Until a final decision is made, which usually entails drawn-out hearings, the ECI may freeze the symbol to stop any side from using it.
- Legal Action: In the event that the matter cannot be resolved by internal negotiation or EC intervention, the parties may take legal action.

#### Alternate Resolution Mechanisms

- Majority Test: To ascertain the legitimacy of a faction, EC mostly depends on assessing support inside the party structure, especially among elected MPs and MLAs.
- Registration as a Separate Party: Splinter groups that are not accepted by the main party may register as independent organizations and apply for state or national party status in accordance with their electoral results after doing so.

#### Conclusion

- The Election Commission's acknowledgement of political groups highlights the difficulty in

allocating symbols and resolving internal party conflicts.

- Maintaining democratic values and making sure procedures are fair continue to be crucial to building confidence and integrity in the election process while the EC negotiates these difficulties.

#### In news: Appointment of Election Commissioner



#### Introduction

- Anup Chandra Pandey, the Election Commissioner, will resign on February 14, which will mark a dramatic change in India's election practices.
- Under the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, the government would, for the first time, choose his successor through a consultation process, breaking with previous practices of government discretion.

#### EC Appointments: Judicial Imperative

- Supreme Court Intervention: To close the long-standing legislative gap pertaining to the appointment of Chief Election Commissioners (CECs) and Election Commissioners (ECs), the Supreme Court intervened in March 2023.
- Putting the Focus on Independence The Court underscored the necessity of an independent Election Commission, drawing parallels with

other constitutional entities possessing self-governing appointment processes.

#### CEC and EC Appointment Act, 2023: Key Provisions

- Procedure for Appointment: The Act creates a Selection Committee that is made up of the Union Cabinet Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Leader of the Majority Opposition Party in the Lok Sabha.
- Qualifications & Requirements: Applicants must have held or be holding posts comparable to those of the Central Government Secretary, with pay commensurate with that of the Cabinet Secretary.
- Removal Mechanism: As per the Constitution, the CEC may be removed in a manner similar to that of a Supreme Court judge, and ECs may be removed on the proposal of the CEC. The Law delineates this procedure.

#### Current Challenges and Concerns

- Transparency and Independence: There are worries that members of the ruling party may monopolize the Selection Committee, compromising its independence and variety.
- Executive Influence: Concerns about government influence are raised when one compares the salary of Election Commissioners to that of executive officers.
- Eligibility Requirements: Restricting eligibility to government employees may result in a reduction in the Election Commission's knowledge and diversity.
- Lack of Parity: Inequity and institutional autonomy are called into question by differences in the removal process between the CEC and ECs.

#### Way forward

- Protecting Independence: Maintaining the Election Commission's independence and integrity is crucial, calling for strong oversight procedures.
- Addressing issues: In order to promote public trust and confidence, it is imperative to mitigate

issues pertaining to transparency, executive influence, and eligibility requirements.

- Sustained Judicial Vigilance: Maintaining democratic values and ensuring the successful execution of electoral changes require constant judicial supervision.

#### Conclusion

- A key turning point in India's electoral governance is the move from a selection procedure for Election Commissioners to one that is consultative.
- Although the reform law is a positive beginning toward increasing inclusivity and transparency, maintaining institutional independence and tackling present issues are critical to building public confidence and bolstering democratic institutions.

#### Call for imposing Financial Emergency in Kerala



#### Introduction

- After the parties' failed negotiations, the State of Kerala filed a lawsuit against the Center alleging arbitrary interference in its financial affairs, and the Supreme Court heard the case.
- A financial emergency was previously requested by the governor of Kerala under Article 360(1) of the Constitution as a result of the State's declining financial resources.

#### What is Financial Emergency?

- Enshrined in Article 360, it is an essential clause designed to deal with serious financial crises that

pose a threat to the stability of the Indian economy.

- Declaration and Authority: The President may issue a proclamation if he is satisfied that there is a risk to India's credit or financial stability, or to any portion of its territory.
- CoM recommendation: The statement, which reflects the executive branch's collective responsibility, is based on the Council of Ministers' recommendation.

#### Legislative Approval

- A Financial Emergency may be declared by the President, but it requires the consent of both Houses of Parliament to be extended beyond two months.
- When authorized, it is enforceable until the President revokes it, providing for adaptable financial crisis management.

#### Effects and Implications

- During a financial emergency, the Center's executive authority greatly increases, allowing it to provide states financial directions.
- Fiscal policy becomes more centralized, with the President able to hold up bills approved by state legislatures for further review.
- To overcome financial difficulties, austerity measures such as reducing public officials' salaries and benefits are a viable option.



#### Judicial Review and Criticism

- The President's judgment is final and not subject to court review thanks to the 38th Amendment Act of 1975.
- The 44th Amendment Act of 1978, however, made judicial review possible.
- By ensuring checks and balances within the constitutional structure, this amendment prevented the executive branch from acting without power.

#### Historical Context and Usage

- Despite experiencing major financial crises like the one in 1991, India has rarely used the term "financial emergencies" throughout its history.
- The judicious application of this clause emphasizes how crucial it is to match its execution with federalism and democratic ideals.

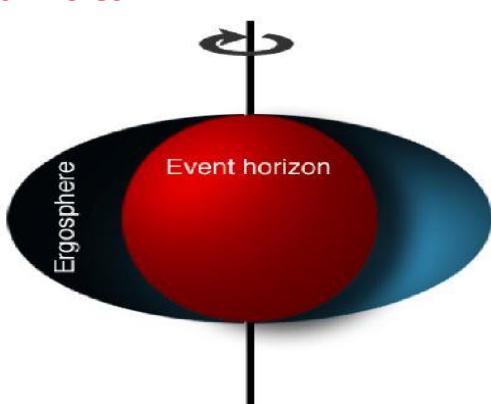
#### Conclusion

- Cooperative federalism is crucial for resolving interstate disputes, as demonstrated by the Supreme Court's intervention in the Kerala-Centre financial dispute.
- The next hearings are intended to promote goodwill between the Center and the states by resolving disagreements and guaranteeing the fair allocation of resources.

## Science, Technology, Art & Culture

### Ergosphere: A Unique Feature of Rotating

#### Black Holes



#### Introduction

- Rotating black holes, also known as Kerr black holes, possess a fascinating region called the ergosphere, which sets them apart from their non-rotating counterparts.

#### Formation of Black Holes

- Origin: Massive stars that run out of nuclear fuel and explode as supernovae give birth to black holes. A black hole is created when the remaining core collapses due to its own gravitational pull.

- Gravitational Singularity: The point at which general relativity's predictions can no longer be reliably made is located in the center of a black hole.
- Event Horizon: The event horizon is the border that surrounds the singularity and beyond which nothing can escape, not even light. For anything entering it, it serves as a point of no return.

#### What is Ergosphere?

- Ergosphere Description: Rotating black holes have an additional special region known as the ergosphere that lies beyond the event horizon. This area grows farther away from the singularity, encircling the black hole with a second sphere.
- Name Origins: The Greek word "ergon," which means "work," is the source of the term "ergosphere." Its name comes from the fascinating prospect that it presents: the extraction of materials and energy from this area.

#### Characteristics of the Ergosphere

- Acceleration Potential: To take advantage of an object's special properties, some scientists have experimented with launching it into the ergosphere. By gaining energy and momentum, objects inside the ergosphere are able to "borrow" a portion of the angular momentum of the black hole.

#### Interplanetary Dust damage NASA's Juno Mission



#### Introduction

- NASA launched the spacecraft Juno in 2011 with the goal of learning more about Jupiter and its moons.
- Fast-moving dust particles that Juno encountered on its journey to Jupiter seriously damaged its solar panels.

#### About NASA's Juno Mission

	Description
<b>Launch Year</b>	2011
<b>Mission Objective</b>	Study Jupiter, the largest planet in the solar system, to gain insights into the origin and evolution of Earth.
<b>Focus Areas</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investigate Jupiter's atmosphere composition and isotopic ratios.</li> <li>2. Study Jupiter's magnetic field and its interaction with the atmosphere, leading to aurora formation.</li> <li>3. Explore Jupiter's structure, atmosphere, and interior to understand early solar system conditions.</li> </ol>
<b>Earth Insights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Juno mission's advanced instruments include the Microwave Radiometer, which measures atmospheric temperature and water content.</li> <li>• By comparing Jupiter's composition with Earth's, scientists infer similarities and differences in planetary origins.</li> <li>• Understanding the magnetic field and auroras on Jupiter contributes to knowledge about Earth's own magnetic field and auroras.</li> <li>• Studying Jupiter's structure provides clues about early solar</li> </ul>

system conditions and Earth's evolutionary processes.

### Dusts in Interplanetary Space

- Dust Flux Calculation: By utilizing Juno's data, researchers were able to determine the amount of dust particles that are encountered within the range of 1 to 5 Astronomical Units (AU), providing insight into the density and dispersion of interplanetary dust.
- Investigating Dust Sources: Research pointed to Deimos and Phobos, two moons of Mars, as possible sources of interplanetary dust, providing intriguing hints for figuring out the mysterious beginnings of these celestial particles.



### How Martian Moons, Deimos and Phobos produce this Dust?

- Impacts of Micrometeorites: Because Mars's moons lack atmospheres, micrometeorites, which are minuscule but powerful dust particles, attack them, causing momentary clouds of dust to form upon impact.
- Escape into Space: The low gravity of Deimos and Phobos makes it easier for dust particles to escape into space, which helps to form a dusty ring around Mars.

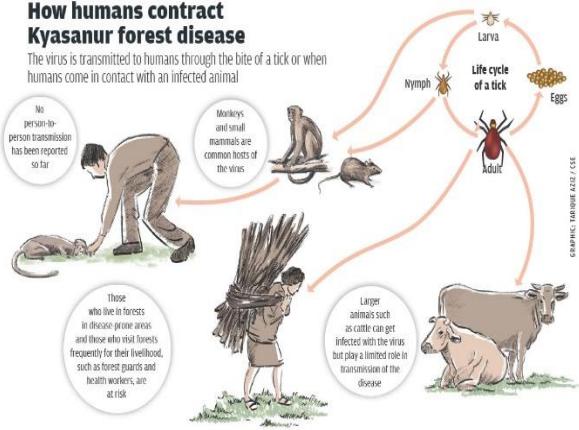
### Insights from Observations

- Gravitational Dynamics: This model provided a thorough knowledge of the dust dynamics inside the Martian system by incorporating lunar shapes, gravitational influences, and dust particle velocities.
- Validation through Upcoming trips: Potential trips to Deimos and Phobos have the potential to confirm the latest discoveries and provide more insight into the arid environments of these mysterious moons.

## Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD): The Monkey Fever

### How humans contract Kyasanur forest disease

The virus is transmitted to humans through the bite of a tick or when humans come in contact with an infected animal.



### Introduction

- Recent fatalities due to Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), known as monkey fever, in Karnataka have sparked concerns about the spread of this viral infection.

### What is Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD)?

- Origins and Identification: A member of the Flaviviridae virus family, the Kyasanur Forest disease virus (KFDV) is the cause of KFD. It was originally discovered in the Kyasanur Forest of Karnataka in 1957.
- The annual report of human cases ranges from 400 to 500, and the estimated case-fatality rate is between 3% and 5%.

### Transmission and Spread

- Tick-Borne Transmission: Humans can get KFD by being bitten by ticks or coming into touch with infected animals, especially dead or sick monkeys.
- Limited Animal Role: Although they can catch the disease, big animals like sheep, goats, and cows have very little effect on the spread of the illness. There is no proof that unpasteurized milk can spread the disease.

### Signs and Symptoms

- Early Symptoms: After an incubation period of three to eight days, the sickness usually presents with chills, fever, and headache.

- Progression: Within three to four days, there may be severe muscle pain, vomiting, gastrointestinal problems, and bleeding tendencies. In the third week, a few patients have neurological symptoms, such as excruciating headaches and blurred vision.

### Diagnosis and Treatment

- Diagnostic techniques: Viral isolation from blood or molecular detection via PCR are used in early diagnosis. ELISA is used for serologic testing, which is done later.
- Treatment Strategy: Early hospitalization and supportive care, such as maintaining hydration, are essential, even if there isn't a specific treatment for this condition.

### Prevention Strategies

- Vaccination: To prevent the disease, a KFD vaccine is available and is given in India's endemic areas.
- Preventive measures: To reduce the risk of infection, it is advised to wear protective clothing and apply insect repellent in tick-infested areas.

## M.S. Swaminathan, P.V. Narasimha Rao, Charan Singh to get Bharat Ratna

		
<b>Dr. M.S. SWAMINATHAN</b> (7 August 1925 - 28 September 2023)	<b>P.V. NARASIMHA RAO</b> (28 June 1921 - 23 December 2004)	<b>CHAUDHARY CHARAN SINGH</b> (23 December 1902 - 29 May 1987)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agricultural scientist &amp; agronomist</li> <li>Born in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu</li> <li>Played an instrumental role in Green Revolution and towards food self-sufficiency in India</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Former Prime Minister of India (1991-96)</li> <li>Born in Warangal, Telangana</li> <li>Credited with steering the liberalisation of Indian Economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Former Prime Minister of India (1979-80)</li> <li>Born in Noorpur, Uttar Pradesh</li> <li>Leader of the Lok Dal, credited as a leader of farmers in north India</li> </ul>

### Introduction

- Former Prime Ministers P. V. Narasimha Rao and Choudhary Charan Singh, along with Green Revolution pioneer S. Swaminathan, will receive the Bharat Ratna.

- This will be in addition to the two recipients—former Deputy Prime Minister L. K. Advani and socialist politician Karpoori Thakur—who were officially named earlier this year.

### About the Bharat Ratna Laureates

#### [1] Dr. M.S. Swaminathan

Aspect	Details
<b>Early Life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Born on August 7, 1925, in Kumbakonam, Madras Presidency.</li> <li>Pursued higher education in zoology and agricultural science.</li> <li>Passed away on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 2023 at the age of 98.</li> </ul>
<b>Career Highlights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted research on combating potato crop parasites during a UNESCO fellowship (1949-1954).</li> <li>Earned a PhD from the University of Cambridge in 1954.</li> <li>Served as Director-General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (1979-1982).</li> <li>Appointed as Director General of the International Rice Research Institute in 1982.</li> </ul>
<b>Green Revolution Contributions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pioneered high-yielding variety seeds and improved irrigation methods.</li> <li>Collaborated with Dr. Norman Borlaug to develop high-yielding wheat varieties (1965-1970).</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges and Advocacy</b>	Advocated for fair Minimum Support Prices for farmers and highlighted ecological concerns.

Legacy and Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received numerous international accolades and civilian awards from India and other nations.</li> <li>Honored with Padma Shri (1967), Padma Bhushan (1972), and Padma Vibhushan (1989) awards in India.</li> <li>Awarded over 80 honorary doctorates from universities worldwide.</li> </ul>
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### [2] PV Narasimha Rao

	Details
Early Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Born on June 28, 1921, in Karimnagar district, Hyderabad State (now Telangana, India).</li> <li>Passed away on December 23, 2004, in New Delhi.</li> </ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bachelor of Arts degree from Osmania University.</li> <li>Higher studies at the University of Bombay and Nagpur University.</li> </ul>
Political Career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Started in the Indian National Congress.</li> <li>Served as MLA in undivided Andhra Pradesh.</li> <li>Held ministerial positions, including Minister of External Affairs and Minister of Defence.</li> </ul>
Economic Reforms (1991)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiated significant economic reforms in response to the 1991 crisis.</li> <li>Reforms included dismantling the License Raj, opening up the economy, and initiating privatization.</li> </ul>
Foreign Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthened ties with the United States and other major powers.</li> </ul>

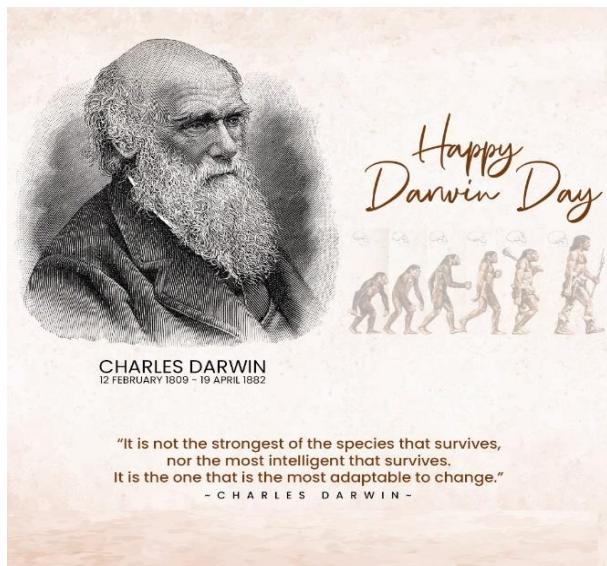
South Asian Diplomacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiated the "Look East Policy" to enhance engagement with Southeast and East Asia.</li> </ul>
Political Legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Handled the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and initiated dialogue with Pakistan.</li> <li>Deployed peacekeeping forces to Sri Lanka as part of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF).</li> <li>Credited with laying the foundation for India's economic liberalization and globalization.</li> <li>Recognized for pragmatic leadership during a critical period in India's history.</li> <li>Remembered as a statesman who shaped India's economic and foreign policies.</li> </ul>

### [3] Choudhary Charan Singh

Aspect	Details
Early Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Born on December 23, 1903, in Noorpur village near Hapur, India.</li> <li>Entered politics during the national movement and was elected to the United Provinces Assembly from Chhaprauli in 1937.</li> </ul>
Political Career	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocated for village economy issues and fought against the exploitation of peasants by big landlords.</li> <li>Served as Revenue Minister in UP's first Chief Minister Govind Ballabh Pant's cabinet, instrumental in implementing zamindari abolition and land ceiling laws.</li> <li>Emerged as a popular leader among North Indian farmer communities and Muslims.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Became UP's first non-Congress Chief Minister in 1967, forming a coalition government.</li> <li>Won the 1977 Lok Sabha elections on the Janata Party ticket, became Deputy PM under Morarji Desai's government.</li> <li>Formed the Janata Party (Secular) in 1979, briefly served as PM with support from Indira Gandhi.</li> </ul>
Legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Championed the cause of peasants and created a new political class representing farming communities in North India.</li> <li>Influenced the shift of farmer communities from Congress and Jan Sangh to parties specifically representing them.</li> <li>His son, Ajit Singh, formed the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), continuing the family's political legacy.</li> <li>Charan Singh remains hailed as one of India's tallest Jat leaders.</li> </ul>

## Celebrating Darwin Day: Understanding Evolution



### Introduction

- Darwin Day is observed on February 12 every year to commemorate the naturalist Charles Darwin's birth and his contributions to the theory of evolution.
- Our concept of evolution was completely transformed by Darwin's groundbreaking article, "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection," which was published in 1859.

### Who was Charles Darwin (1809–1882)?

	Description
Early Life	Shrewsbury, Shropshire, England
Education	Studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh but later shifted focus to natural history at the University of Cambridge
Famous Work	"On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection," published in 1859, outlining his theory of evolution by natural selection
Scientific Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theory of evolution by natural selection</li> <li>Extensive studies on the Galápagos Islands</li> <li>Contributions to the fields of geology, botany, and zoology, research on barnacles</li> </ul>
Research Expeditions	Voyage of the HMS Beagle (1831-1836), a significant expedition during which Darwin collected specimens and made observations that influenced his theories
Death	April 19, 1882, at Down House, Downe, Kent, England
Legacy	Considered one of the most influential figures in scientific history, his work laid the foundation for modern evolutionary biology

### Evolutionary Insights

- Contributions of Darwin and Wallace: The theories of evolution by natural selection were

independently put forth by Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace, which caused a paradigm change in the field of biology.

- Scientific Developments: Darwin Day is an opportunity to draw attention to current developments in evolutionary biology and encourage public participation in research.
- Darwin's theories continue to influence contemporary biology by offering a framework for comprehending the diversity of life on Earth.

#### Key Propositions by Darwin

##### [A] Understanding Genetic Variations

- Function in Adaptation: Natural selection has shown that genetic diversity within populations promotes adaptation to shifting environments.
- Example: In warmer regions, genetic variations that impart heat tolerance to a population become favorable and naturally select for them more frequently.
- Mechanisms of Variation: Genetic variety within populations is created and maintained in part by recombination, gene flow, and mutation.



##### [B] Mechanisms of Evolution

- Natural Selection: The theory of natural selection developed by Darwin and Wallace describes how favorable features spread through populations over time.
- Genetic Drift: Genetic drift is the term for the random variations in allele frequencies that can cause major changes in small populations.
- Gene Flow: New genetic variations can be introduced and genetic divergence can be avoided by migration and gene flow between populations.

#### Universal Principles of Evolution

- Biodiversity and Evolution: Over billions of years, evolutionary processes have shaped the remarkable biodiversity that has been observed on Earth.
- Conservation Implications: Conservation initiatives aiming at protecting species and

ecosystems are informed by our understanding of evolution.

- Ecological Interactions: Competition, mutualism, and predator-prey relationships are examples of how ecological interactions are influenced by evolutionary dynamics.

#### Human Evolution and Genetic Diversity

- Human Origins: Although they have undergone genetic divergence over millennia, humans have a common ancestor with other big apes.
- Genetic Variation: The diversity of human populations is influenced by the distinct genetic variants that each individual possesses.
- Cultural Evolution: The genetic and cultural evolution of human cultures has added to the world's knowledge base.

#### Promoting Equality and Diversity

- Inclusive Society: The significance of equality and inclusivity in all facets of society is highlighted by the recognition of genetic variation.
- Cultural Diversity: Respecting and valuing differences in people's backgrounds broadens their perspectives and encourages collaboration and understanding.
- Reducing Biases: Racial, ethnic, and identity-related prejudices and stereotypes can be lessened by having a better understanding of the genetic foundation of features.

#### Challenges and Conservation

- Habitat Degradation: Because of the challenges that human activity poses to biodiversity, conservation measures are required to protect genetic variety.
- Climate Change: Evolutionary resilience is important because rapid environmental changes, including climate change, might affect a species' capacity for adaptation.
- Community Engagement: Sustainable development and biodiversity conservation depend on cooperative conservation initiatives including stakeholders and local people.

#### Conclusion

- Sustained Education: Progress in the field of evolutionary biology broadens our comprehension of the intricacies of life and directs our endeavors towards a sustainable future.
- Honoring Diversity: Accepting and valuing the genetic, cultural, and ecological diversity of our world enhances human experience and fosters peace in a fast changing global environment.

## SWATI (Science for Women-A Technology & Innovation) Portal



### Introduction

- The “Science for Women-A Technology & Innovation (SWATI)” Portal was recently launched by the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India.

### About SWATI Portal

- Goal: To highlight the accomplishments of Indian women and girls in STEM fields—science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine—SWATI is intended to be an all-inclusive web platform.
- One portal: The Indian women and girls' online representation in STEMM sectors is provided by SWATI.
- Database: It houses a database that will support the creation of policies to solve issues with gender disparity in STEMM.
- Interactive Platform: The National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR), located in New Delhi, develops, hosts, and maintains the

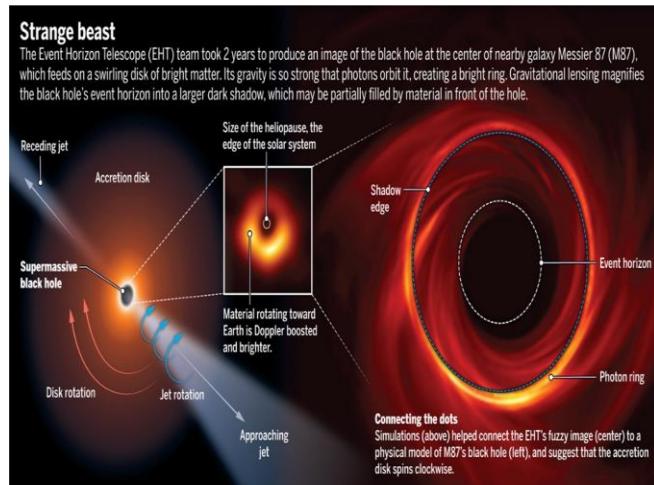
interactive database that SWATI delivers. This is a groundbreaking endeavor in India.

- Faculty: Including academics from Indian institutions, independent agencies, and important ministries including MHRD, UGC, GATI, KIRAN, CSIR, DBT, DST, and the Ministry of Science and Technology.

### Objectives

- Scaling Up: The portal aims to include all career stages and subjects in both academia and industry, with the goal of exponentially scaling up efforts to include every Indian woman in science (WiS).
- Research Facilitation: SWATI seeks to create an active search engine and searchable database by providing dependable and statistically significant long-term research on equality, diversity, and inclusion concerns in India.

## Event Horizon Telescope (EHT) confirms Black Hole Shadow



### Introduction

- Researchers have uncovered fresh information about a massive black hole 53 million light-years away that was first observed by the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT) in 2017.
- This ground-breaking accomplishment confirmed a major prediction of Einstein's theory of general relativity by offering the first visual proof of black hole existence.

### Key Findings by EHT

- The newly acquired information, which was gathered with better telescope coverage and resolution, confirmed the earlier finding of the black hole's "shadow."
- The results verified the presence of a substantial gravitational lensing effect-consistent asymmetric ring structure.
- Over time, observations showed a steady ring building process, with minor variations pointing to alterations in the magnetic field structure.

### About Event Horizon Telescope (EHT)

	Description
<b>About</b>	A large telescope array consisting of a global network of radio telescopes. Uses Very-long-baseline interferometry (VLBI). Resolution of 25 micro-arc-seconds
<b>Collaboration</b>	International collaboration involving over 300 members and 60 institutions across 20 countries and regions
<b>Launch Year</b>	Initiated in 2009
<b>First Image Published</b>	April 10, 2019 (First image of a black hole, M87*)
<b>Objective</b>	Observation of objects the size of a supermassive black hole's event horizon
<b>Key Targets</b>	Black holes including M87* and Sagittarius A* (Sgr A*)
<b>Recent Developments</b>	First image of black hole (March 2021), first image of Sgr A* (May 12, 2022)
<b>Reconstructive Algorithms</b>	Includes CLEAN algorithm and regularized maximum likelihood (RML) algorithm
<b>Scientific Implications</b>	Verification of general relativity, measurement of black hole mass and diameter, study of accretion processes

### Sangam: Digital Twin Initiative



### Introduction

- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has launched the "Sangam: Digital Twin" initiative and is seeking Expressions of Interest (EoI) from innovators, forward-thinking individuals, startups, MSMEs, and academia.

### What is Digital Twin Technology?

- A digital twin is an electronic replica of a real-world item, individual, or procedure, placed within a virtualized replica of its surroundings.
- A business can use digital twins to model real-world scenarios and their results, which will ultimately help it make better decisions.

### About Sangam: Digital Twin Initiative

- Context:** The initiative aligns with the technological advancements of the past decade in communication, computation, and sensing, in line with the vision for 2047.
- Proof of Concept (PoC) in Two Stages:** The initiative will be distributed in two stages, conducted in one of India's major cities.
  - First Stage:** A period of exploration with the goal of opening doors and stimulating the creative imagination to realize possibilities.
  - Phase Two:** A hands-on presentation of particular use cases, creating a future roadmap for cooperation and extending effective tactics in subsequent infrastructure initiatives.

- **Objectives:**

1. Showcase creative infrastructure planning solutions in a real-world setting.
2. Create a model framework to help with collaboration that is quicker and more efficient.
3. Give future infrastructure projects a framework for implementing and expanding on proven tactics.

#### Features

- Sangam: Digital Twin is a cooperative step in the right direction toward redefining infrastructure design and development.
- It combines next-generation computational technologies, IoT, 5G, AI, AR/VR, AI native 6G, Digital Twin, and other technologies, promoting cooperation between government agencies, infrastructure planners, tech companies, startups, and academic institutions.
- Sangam unites all parties involved with the goal of converting creative concepts into workable solutions, closing the gap between conception and execution, and opening the door for revolutionary advances in infrastructure.

#### INSAT-3DS launch: The Naughty Boy of ISRO



Introduction

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched its meteorological satellite INSAT-3DS aboard the spacecraft GSLV F14.

#### INSAT-3DS: Mission Objectives

- Maintenance of Services: The goal of the mission is to maintain and improve the services offered by currently in use satellites such as INSAT-3D and INSAT-3DR.
- Meteorological Observations: Weather forecasting, land and ocean surface monitoring, and advanced meteorological observations will all be made easier by INSAT-3DS.
- Hazard Alert: It will be essential to catastrophe warning systems, helping with alerts and response times.
- Research and Rescue Services (SAR) Assisted by Satellite: The satellite will also help with SAR operations, which will improve the capacity for search and rescue.

#### Significance

- This is the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV)'s (16th) space mission, highlighting India's advancements in space technology.
- An important milestone in India's space development will be reached when INSAT-3DS, which is fully financed by the Ministry of Earth Sciences, is launched into the Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).
- The satellite will be launched into an elliptical orbit of 36,647 km by 170 km after around eighteen minutes.

#### Why called as Naughty Boy?

- Failure: The GSLV F14 spacecraft has a history of encountering issues, leading to its nickname, "naughty boy," within the Indian space program.
- Probability: GSLV F14 has had problems in six of its fifteen missions so far, with a failure probability of forty percent.

#### Secrets of Mimas: Saturn's Smallest Moon



### Introduction

- Recent research that was published in the journal Nature challenges preconceived notions about the makeup and internal dynamics of the moon by indicating that, beneath Mimas' ice exterior, may be a liquid ocean.

### About Mimas

	Description
<b>Discovery</b>	Discovered by William Herschel on September 17, 1789.
<b>Characteristics</b>	Smallest and innermost of Saturn's major moons.
<b>Size</b>	Diameter of about 396 kilometers (246 miles), making it one of the smallest known astronomical bodies that is rounded in shape.
<b>Features</b>	Known for its large <b>Herschel Crater</b> , Called as " <b>Death Star</b> " from the Star Wars films.
<b>Composition</b>	Mostly composed of water ice with a small amount of rock.
<b>Orbit</b>	Orbits Saturn at a distance of about 185,520 km (115,220 miles).
<b>Exploration</b>	Visited by the Cassini spacecraft, which captured detailed images of its surface during its mission to Saturn.

### Astronomical Insights

- Possible Liquid Ocean:** Using information from NASA's Cassini probe, scientists examined Mimas's orbital motion and came to the conclusion that the moon's oscillations suggest the existence of either a worldwide ocean or an extended silicate core.
- Librational Model:** After calculations based on orbital modifications and Mimas's librations came to a standstill, the idea of a subterranean ocean was raised. A thickness of 20–30 km was postulated by theoretical models that included hydrostatic internal contacts and viscoelastic outside layers.
- Surface Heat and Eccentricity:** In 4-5 million years, it is predicted that Mimas's eccentricity will be cut in half due to surface heat release of about 25 milliwatts per square meter. Based on simulations, it is possible that the ocean developed between 25 and 25 million years ago due to hydrothermal activity. Scientists analyzed Mimas's orbital motion using data from NASA's Cassini spacecraft, concluding that the moon's oscillations indicate the presence of either an elongated silicate core or a global ocean.
- Librational Model:** Calculations based on Mimas's librations and orbital changes reached a deadlock, prompting consideration of a subsurface ocean. Theoretical models incorporating viscoelastic outer layers and hydrostatic interior interfaces suggested an *ice shell thickness of 20-30 km*.
- Surface Heat and Eccentricity:** Estimates indicate surface heat release of approximately 25 milliwatts per sq. m, expected to reduce Mimas's eccentricity by half in 4-5 million years. Simulations suggest the ocean may have formed 2-25 million years ago, with potential hydrothermal activity.

### Implications and Findings

- Comparative Analysis:** Despite surface variations, Mimas and Enceladus, another moon of Saturn with a worldwide ocean, share

similarities that may indicate hydrothermal activity.

- **Ice Shell Composition:** The hypothesized ice shell thickness calculated from computations is

supported by the viscoelastic nature of the outer frozen layer of Mimas and the hydrostatic inner interfaces.



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