

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## January

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

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# PREFACE

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

**The Magazine is divided into three sections:**

## Section 1: Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short

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

## Section 2: Practice Questions with Answers

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

## Section 3: Detailed Analysis of important Event

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



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## Section 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs

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# SECTION 1

# Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short



## 1: Important Days



### Global Family Day : 01 January :-

Every year on January 1st, Global Family Day is observed. The United Nations General Assembly established the International Decade for Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World in 1997. In 1999, the members of the United Nations were formally invited to devote the first day of the year to brainstorming methods to bring the global peace. Since then, Global Family Day has been observed on the same date each year. Global Family Day is also known as World Peace Day as it speaks of the importance of bringing harmony and unity in diversity.



### World Braille Day : 04 January :-

Every year on January 4, World Braille Day is commemorated to raise awareness of the value of Braille as a communication medium for the blind and partially sighted. This day commemorates the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, the inventor of Braille, who was born on January 4, 1809, in France. The United Nations General Assembly established the day, which coincides with Braille Literacy Month in 2019. The event is celebrated throughout the month of January to bring up the importance of Braille and Braille Literacy.



### World Day of War Orphans : 06 January :-

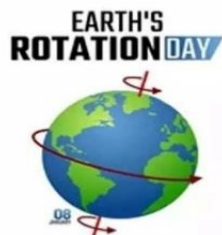
On January 6, World War Orphans Day is marked to raise awareness about the issue of war orphans and to address the traumatic conditions they face. The goal of the day is to raise global awareness about the importance of protecting the human rights of war-orphaned children and mobilizing efforts to ensure a better future for them. According to UNICEF estimates, there were around 140 million orphans worldwide in 2015, with Asia accounting for 61 million, Africa accounting for 52 million, Latin America and the Caribbean accounting for 10 million, and Eastern Europe and Central Asia accounting for 7.3 million. The theme for the 2024 World Day of War Orphans is "Orphan Lives Matter."



### African National Congress Foundation Day : 08 January :-

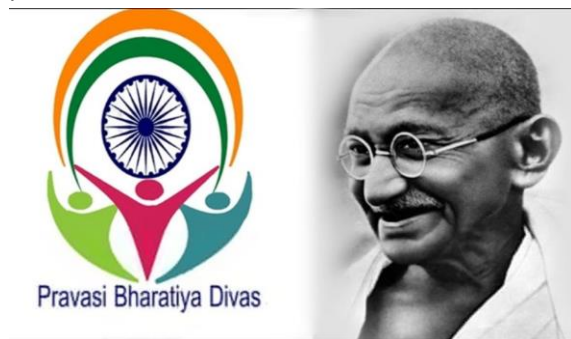
Every year on January 8, African National Congress Foundation Day is honored. On this day, Africans battled for their rights against British and Boer colonizers with spears in their hands. The ANC sees this day as a day of fight for freedom and justice. Since the transition to democracy in April 1994, the African National Congress

has been in power. The day was formed marking the beginning of the end of centuries of exploitation and humiliation faced by the African people. Initially, the organisation was formed as the South African Native National Congress in Bloemfontein.



**Earth's Rotations Day : 08 January :-**

Every year on January 8, Earth Rotation Day is observed. This day commemorates the 1851 confirmation by French physicist Leon Foucault that the Earth revolves on its axis. The rotation of the earth is a well-known phenomena. It happens as our planet rotates on a vertical axis around the sun. This occurs once a day. In 470 BC, the Greeks claimed that the world revolves on its own. Several experiments were also carried out to back up this allegation. The most notable one was carried out in 1851 by a French physicist by the name of Leon Foucault. He devised a pendulum to demonstrate the earth's rotation about a fixed axis. Because of its notoriety, the experiment was used to demonstrate the phenomenon.



**Pravasi Bharatiya Divas : 09 January :-**

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD), also known as NRI Day, is a day observed in India to recognize the contributions of the Indian diaspora to the country's growth. It is observed annually on January 9th, the same day Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in 1915. The day is also intended to commemorate and

respect the accomplishments and services of Indians living abroad, as well as to improve links between India and the Indian population worldwide. PBD was first celebrated in 2003, and it has since become an annual event.



**World Hindi Day : 10 January :-**

Hindi is one of the most widely spoken languages in northern India and around the world. After Mandarin and English, Hindi is the third most widely spoken language in the world. Every year, World Hindi Day is observed to recognize the contributions of Hindi speakers, the value of the language, and the need to make it more widely recognized around the world. In 1949, Hindi was spoken for the first time in the United Nations General Assembly. In 2006, the first Vishwa Hindi Divas was observed by the then Prime Minister of the country – Dr. Manmohan Singh. In 2024, the theme of the World Hindi Day is “Hindi–Bridging Traditional Knowledge and Artificial Intelligence”.



**Death anniversary of Lal Bahadur Shastri : January 11 :-**

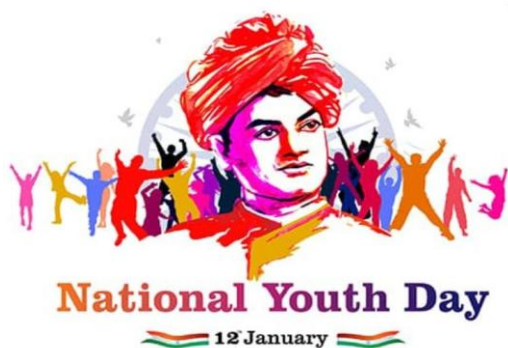
Lal Bahadur Shastri's death anniversary is observed every year on January 11, and he is regarded as a national hero in India. He died on January 11, 1966, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, only a few days after guiding India to victory

in the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965. Lal Bahadur Shastri was India's second Prime Minister, serving from 1964 to 1966. He was born on October 2, 1904, in Mughalsarai, United Provinces, British India (now Uttar Pradesh, India). Shastri's political career began in the 1920s, when he joined India's independence struggle. He was arrested several times for participating in protests and was eventually imprisoned for over two years for his role in the Salt Satyagraha of 1930.



**National Road Safety Week : January 11 to 17 :-**

National Road Safety Week in India is observed from 11 to 17 January. The week is dedicated to promoting road safety measures that will help prevent accidents. According to studies, more than one lakh and fifty thousand individuals die each year in road accidents. Road accidents can be fully avoided if road safety practices are followed. National Road Safety Week is observed with different activities and campaigns aimed at educating people about the significance of following road safety practices like wearing seat belts, avoiding rage driving, wearing helmets, and abstaining from drunk driving.



**National Youth Day : 12 January :-**

Every year on January 12, India commemorates National Youth Day to commemorate Swami Vivekananda's

birthday. The Indian government designated Swami Vivekananda's birthday, January 12, 1984, as National Youth Day for the first time. Since then, the day has been honored as National Youth Day throughout the country. The government's primary goal is to improve the country's future by pushing young people to live their lives in accordance with Swami Vivekananda's thoughts and principles. The National Youth Festival began in 1995 as a major activity under the Programme of National Integration Camp (NIC).



**Indian Army Day : 15 January :-**

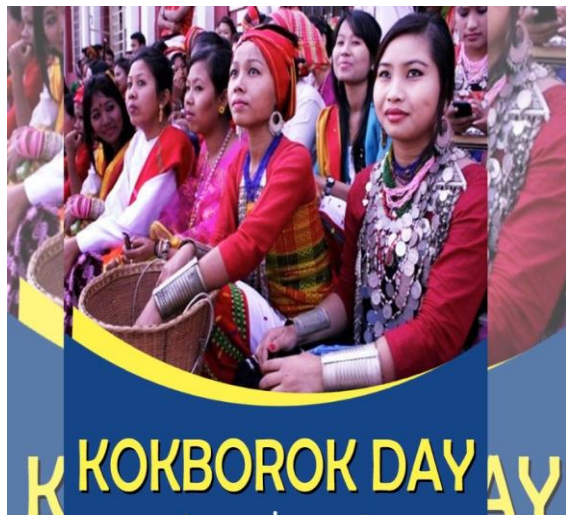
Every year on January 15, India commemorates Army Day to honour the achievements of the Indian Army's first Commander in Chief, General (later Field Marshal) K.M. Cariappa. On this day, Cariappa, who led Indian forces to victory in the 1947 war, gained command of the Indian Army from General Sir FRR Bucher, the final British Commander-in-Chief, in 1949, becoming the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of Independent India. The theme for Indian Army Day 2024 is "In Service of the Nation."



**National Startup Day : 16 January :-**

National Startup Day is observed on January 16. From January 10 to 16, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, observed National

Startup Week. On January 15, 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the establishment of National Startup Day on January 16. The first National Startup Day was held in India that year. The day is observed in order to give startup business owners a forum to talk about innovation for India's youth and their contribution to the economy.



**Kokborok Day : 19 January :-**

On January 19th, the Indian State of Tripura honors Kokborok Day, also known as Tripuri Language Day, with the objective of promoting the Kokborok language. This day commemorates the first official recognition of Kokborok, which occurred in 1979. Tiprakok/Tripurikok was Kokborok's prior name. Kokborok (Tripuri), a Tibeto-Burman language, is one of the most widely spoken languages in northeastern India, specifically in the state of Tripura and the surrounding CHT hill regions in Bangladesh. The Tripuri clans like Debbarma, Kalai, Reang, Jamatia, Tripura, Noatia, Rupini, Murasing, and Uchoi are the main speakers of the language.



**Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya Foundation Day : 21 January :-**

The North Eastern Region (Re-organisation) Act of 1971 established Tripura, Manipur, and Meghalaya as full-fledged states on January 21, 1972. In October 1949, the princely states of Tripura and Manipur united with India. At the time of independence, the North East was divided into three regions: the Assam plains of the former Assam Province, the hill districts, and the North East Frontier Tracts (NEFT) along the North-Eastern boundary. Nagaland was granted statehood on 1 December 1963.



**Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti : 23 January :-**

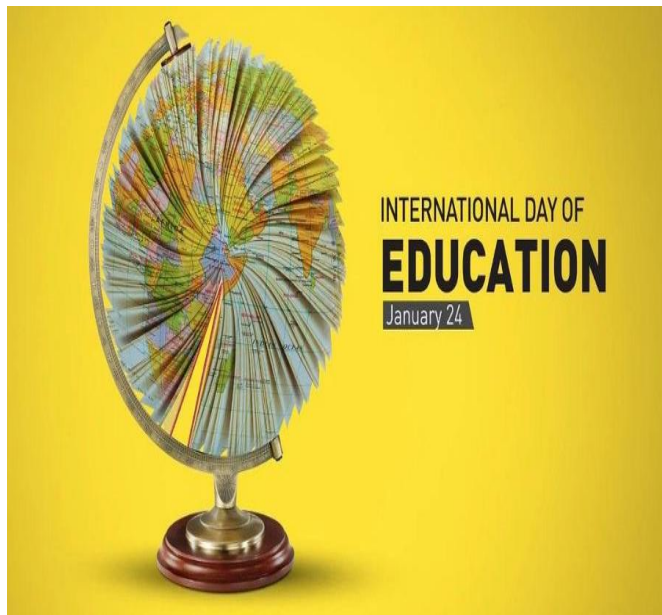
Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was an Indian nationalist whose enthusiasm for India has left an imprint on the hearts of countless Indians. He is most known as the originator of 'Azad Hind Fauj', with the iconic motto 'Tum Mujhe Khoon Do, Main Tumhe Aazadi Dunga'. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was born on January 23, 1897, in Cuttack, Orissa, and died on August 18, 1945, in a hospital in Taiwan from burn injuries incurred in a plane crash. Subhas Chandra Bose is considered the most influential freedom fighter with extraordinary leadership skills and a charismatic orator.





**National Girl Child day (India) : 24 January :-**

National Girl Child Day is celebrated on January 24 to raise awareness of the disparities that girls suffer in Indian society, as well as to increase knowledge about girls' rights and the importance of female education, health, and nutrition. The day coincides with the Indian government's several campaigns and programs, including Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and Save The Girl Child. The Ministry of Women and Child Development created National Girl Child Day in 2008. The objective behind celebrating National Girl Child Day is to provide support and opportunities to the girls of India.



**International Day of Education : 24 January :-**

The International Day of Education is observed every year on January 24th. In 2018, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution designating January 24 as International Day of Education to raise awareness about the accessibility of education and why it is important for everyone. Following this, the first International Day of Education was held on January 24, 2019. This year marks the sixth year of the celebration, under the theme 'learning for lasting peace'. On January 24, UNESCO will organise a one-day online training for several thousand teachers from around the world on the deconstruction of hate speech.



**National Voters Day : 25 January :-**

National Voters' Day is observed on January 25 to commemorate the formation of the Election Commission of India. This day was established in 2011 to encourage young voters to participate in the electoral process. The Election Commission of India (ECI), which was established in 1950, celebrates its founding day on January 25. Earlier the eligibility age of the voter was 21 years but in 1988 it was lowered to 18 years. National Voters' Day 2024 theme - 'Nothing Like Voting, I Vote For Sure' is a continuation from last year's theme.



**National Tourism Day : 25 January :-**

Every year on January 25, National Tourism Day is observed to honor India's natural beauty and create awareness about the value of tourism to the Indian economy. In India, the Ministry of Tourism is in charge of establishing and promoting tourist policy at the national level. The day is commemorated to highlight the importance of tourism in the country's economy, since the sector accounts for 9.2% of total GDP and 8.1% of employment. The theme of National Tourism Day 2024 is "Sustainable Journeys, Timeless Memories".



**Republic Day : 26 January :-**

On January 26, 2024, India will celebrate its 75th Republic Day, which commemorates the establishment of the Indian Constitution. While India obtained independence from the British Raj in 1947, the Constitution of India did not go into effect until January 26, 1950, when the country became a sovereign state and declared itself a republic. The Constituent Assembly held its first session on December 9, 1946, and the final one on November 26, 1949, after which the Constitution was adopted a year later. Dr BR Ambedkar headed the Drafting Committee of the Constitution and on this day, India also marks Constitution Day.



**International Customs Day : 26 January :-**

On the anniversary of Indian Republic Day, another notable day is honored around the world, namely International Customs Day. Every year, the day falls on January 26. It is when the globe recognizes the importance and contributions of customs agencies. The day commemorates the contributions of the officials, as well as their difficult working conditions. The day was first initiated in the year 1953 and was first confirmed by the Customs Cooperation Council (CCC). This customs department is the agency that collects tariffs and manages the flow of goods across borders. The theme for

International Customs Day in 2024 is “Customs Engaging Traditional and New Partners with Purpose”.



**International Holocaust Remembrance Day : 27 January :-**

The United Nations General Assembly has declared January 27 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day, marking the anniversary of Auschwitz-Birkenau's liberation. From 1941 to 1945, Nazi Germany and its allies murdered more than six million Jews systematically. Nazi Germany regarded the Holocaust, or Shoah, to be the "Final Solution" in order to completely eliminate the Jewish community within the country. As per reports, by the end of the gruesome act, around two-thirds of Europe's Jewish population was killed.



**Shaheed Diwas (Martyrs' Day) : 30 January:-**

Mahatma Gandhi is known as the Father of the Nation. Gandhi, a famed peace activist, spearheaded India's freedom movement while advocating for nonviolent and peaceful resistance to British authority. The British ruled India for over 200 years – Mahatma Gandhi was the one who proposed that we can fight the British through non-violent methods. However, Mahatma Gandhi was shot briefly after the country gained independence. On January 30, 1948, Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated.

## 2: Agreements



### France And Germany To Provide 100 Million Euros For AMRUT Mission Financing :-

According to people familiar with the situation, France's AFD and Germany's KfW Bank are in talks with India about providing a €100 million loan to fund the country's urban infrastructure plan, AMRUT project. The financing will be negotiated in early 2024, with the signing scheduled for February. This follows the countries' recent collaboration on the City Investments to Innovate, Integrate and Sustain or CITIIS 2.0 program, a four-year initiative focused on urban renewal and sustainable waste management, to which they contributed €100 million each.



### Gujarat Government Inks Agreements Worth \$86 Billion Ahead Of Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit :-

The state government announced the signing of initial investment agreements totaling 7.17 trillion Indian rupees (\$86.07 billion) with 58 firms operating in industries such as energy, oil and gas, and chemicals ahead of the 10th edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit. NTPC Renewable Energy Limited, which proposed an investment of 900 billion Indian rupees (\$10.80 billion) to create 15 gigatonnes (GW) of renewable energy parks and projects to meet the

agricultural sector's power needs, was among the companies that signed the pacts, according to a senior Industries Department official.



### Cabinet Approves India-USAID MoU For Railways' Net-Zero Emission Goal :-

The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been informed of the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between India and the United States for International Development/India (USAID/India) on June 14, 2023, to support Indian Railways in achieving Mission Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2030. The MoU facilitates utility modernization, advanced energy solutions and systems, regional energy and market integration and private sector participation and engagement, training and seminars/workshops focusing on specific technology areas like Renewable Energy, energy efficiency and other interactions for knowledge sharing.



### Nepal To Export 10,000 MW Of Power To India In Next 10 Years :-

Nepal and India have agreed to set a target of 10,000 megawatts of electricity export to India over the next decade. During a meeting with the two foreign ministers in Kathmandu, Secretary for the Nepalese Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation Gopal Sigdel and Indian Energy Secretary Pankaj Agarwal signed a memorandum of agreement on the deal. On September 5 last year, India had announced that it would buy 10,000 megawatts of electricity from Nepal over 10 years with the endorsement of a long-term inter-government power trade agreement.



**Indian Railways And CII Ink MoU For Green Initiatives :-**

The Indian Railways (IR) has signed an MoU with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to minimize energy and water use, hence cutting GHG emissions. The Memorandum of Understanding between IR and CII has been extended for the third time. Since July 2016, CII has been actively collaborating with IR to promote and enable green projects across Indian Railways. The first MoU was signed in 2016 for three years, and after it expired, another one was signed in 2019 for another three years. Over 40 building facilities, including administrative buildings, hospitals, schools, and colonies have been facilitated to achieve green certification.



**FIH And Viacom18 Ink Four-Year Media Rights Deal :-**

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has reached a big television rights agreement with Viacom18. This agreement is for a four-year period (2023-2027) and

covers all FIH tournaments except the FIH Nations Cup. Viacom18 channels will broadcast the upcoming FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers, the first FIH Hockey5s World Cup, the FIH Hockey Pro League, the 2026 FIH Hockey World Cup, and many other events to Indian hockey enthusiasts. Matches will be available on OTT platform JioCinema and Viacom18’s linear channels Network Sports18.



**Rural Ministry Partners With SBI For SHG Loans :-**

The Rural Development Ministry and the State Bank of India have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to simplify enterprise financing for rural self-help groups (SHG), according to an official release. State Bank of India presented Svyam Siddha, a specialised financial instrument designed specifically for SHG women entrepreneurs seeking loans of up to Rs 5 lakhs. This initiative is designed to alleviate the challenges associated with extensive documentation requirements for bank loan applications and reduce the turnaround time (TAT).



**Security Agreement Signed Between Ukraine And Britain In Kyiv :-**

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak declared 2.5 billion British pounds in military aid to Ukraine during a surprise visit to Kyiv. Sunak met with Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelenskyy to sign the historic UK-Ukraine Security Cooperation Agreement. The UK-Ukraine Agreement on Security Cooperation follows the Group of Seven's prior commitment to provide Ukraine with bilateral security guarantees. Britain said it would provide the largest delivery of drones to Ukraine from any nation, with most of them expected to be manufactured in Britain.



**IndoSpace Signs Rs 2000 Cr Deal With Tamil Nadu Govt :-**

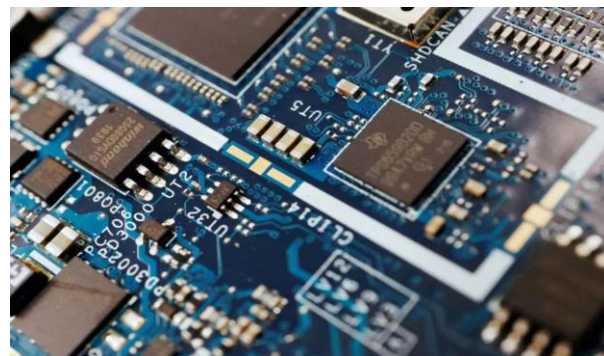
IndoSpace, India's biggest developer and owner of Grade A industrial real estate, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Tamil Nadu government to spend over Rs 2,000 crore in the state. IndoSpace has an existing land bank of around 600 acres in the region. With an expansive presence of 14 Grade A industrial and logistics parks strategically located around the main industrial hubs, IndoSpace has developed and leased around 13 million sq ft with a total investment of Rs 4,000 crore in the state.



**World Economic Forum And Telangana Government Collaborate To Establish C4IR In Hyderabad :-**

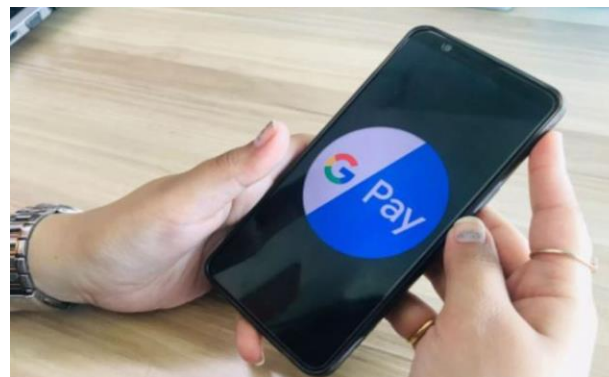
The World Economic Forum's (WEF) Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) will be inaugurated in

Hyderabad on February 28 during BioAsia 2024 with the subject 'State Health Tech Landscape'. An agreement to this effect was reached during Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and his team's visit to the WEF in Davos, Switzerland. Revanth met with WEF President Borge Brende to advance the project. Notably, this will be the first C4IR centre — an autonomous and non-profit organisation — that will focus on healthcare and life sciences and the 19th C4IR centre overall.



**Foxconn And HCL Group Forge Partnership For Chip Packaging Unit In India :-**

Foxconn has struck a collaboration with HCL Group for semiconductor assembly and testing, marking the Taiwanese company's second attempt to enter the chip-making market in India. They will establish an outsourced assembly and testing (OSAT) operation, the two announced in separate statements. The entire investment is projected to be between \$100 and \$150 million. Foxconn's share in the joint venture will be \$37.2 million for 40% stake through Foxconn Hon Hai Technology India Mega Development, a subsidiary of Hon Hai Technologies (Foxconn), it said in a filing.



**Google Pay Partners With NPCI To Extend UPI Payments Globally :-**

Google Pay, a digital payment application, plans to expand its UPI services abroad by partnering with NPCI Payments International Limited (NPII), a subsidiary of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). According to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) inked by Google India Digital Services and NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIIPL), Google Pay users will be able to make UPI transactions and pay foreign merchants with G-pay when abroad. This feature eliminates the need for international cards, as users are paying foreign merchants directly in the local currency.



**National Farmers Society, IndiaAI, Wadhvani Foundation Signs MoU For AI-Driven Agriculture :-**

The agriculture ministry announced the signing of a tripartite agreement to harness artificial intelligence (AI) in the agricultural industry. The agreement was signed between the National Farmers' Welfare Programme Implementation Society (NFWPIS), IndiaAI under Digital India Corporation, and the Wadhvani Foundation, according to the agriculture ministry. As per the MoU, the Wadhvani Foundation will provide critical support in formulating and executing an AI strategy. It will assist the ministry in establishing India as a global leader in AI-driven digital agriculture transformation, aligning with MeitY's National Plan for AI.



**Sony Terminates \$10 Billion Merger Deal With Zee Entertainment :-**

Sony Group has delivered a termination letter to Zee Entertainment Enterprises (Zee), advising the business of its intention to cancel the proposed \$10 billion media merger transaction, effectively ending a two-year acquisition process, according to Bloomberg News. According to the termination letter reviewed by Bloomberg, Sony cited unmet merger agreement requirements as the reason for the termination. Sony's decision comes after an extended impasse between the two companies, primarily revolving around the leadership question for the merged entity.



**Switzerland-India Free Trade Agreement Concluded After 16-Year Negotiation :-**

Swiss Economy Minister Guy Parmelin said that Switzerland and India have secured an agreement on a free-trade agreement after 16 years of discussions. Parmelin traveled to India immediately following the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, to meet with counterpart Piyush Goyal, according to a post by the Swiss minister on the platform X. The agreement "will create jobs for the young population of India, and secure employment in Switzerland," Parmelin said in an interview with the Swiss newspaper Sonntagszeitung.



**Serum Institute Partners With CEPI For Affordable Outbreak Vaccines :-**

The Serum Institute of India (SII) will join an expanding CEPI network of vaccine makers in the Global South to facilitate faster, more agile, and fair responses to future disease outbreaks. The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) is a novel global collaboration working to speed the development of vaccines and other biologic countermeasures to epidemic and pandemic threats. CEPI has articulated an aspirational goal: vaccines should be ready for initial authorisation and manufacturing at scale within 100 days of recognition of a pandemic pathogen, when appropriate.



**MoD inks contract, worth over Rs 1070 cr, with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd :-**

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-IDDMM) Category and will be delivered in total 63 months. Along with several high tech advanced features and equipment, these FPVs will be equipped with multipurpose drones and AI capability etc



**Cabinet Approval For India-Oman IT Cooperation MoU :-**

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and the Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology to collaborate in the field of information technology. According to officials, the MoU, which was signed on December 15, 2023, aims to foster complete cooperation between the two countries through mutual assistance, the sharing of technology, information, and IT investments.



**Rajasthan-Madhya Pradesh ink MoU for Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project :-**

The Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh governments have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP). The MoU was inked in front of Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat. The Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP), an ambitious drinking and agricultural water project, was announced by the BJP administration in the 2017-18 state budget as a permanent solution to the drinking and irrigation water shortage in 13 districts of eastern Rajasthan.

### 3: Appointments



#### The Union finance ministry appointed economist Arvind Panagariya as the chairman of the new Finance Commission :-

Arvind Panagariya, former Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog and Professor at Columbia University, has been appointed as Chairman of the 16th Finance Commission by President Droupadi Murmu. The 16th Finance Commission would be required to release its Report by October 31, 2025, covering a five-year period beginning April 1, 2026. Between January 2015 to August 2017, Panagariya, an Indian-American economist, served as the first Vice Chairman of the Government of India's think tank NITI Aayog. An authority on free trade, Panagariya is widely regarded as the foremost expert in the world on Indian economy.



#### Rashmi Govil To Be Next Director (HR) Of IOC :-

Rashmi Govil, a senior HR professional at Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), is scheduled to become the state-owned company's next Director (Human Resources). According to a notification from the government headhunter, her name was recommended for the job by the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB). According

to the announcement, PESB evaluated 11 individuals, including five from IOC, before suggesting Govil for the position. She is presently Executive Director (HRD & ER) in IOC. Govil will replace Ranjan Kumar Mohapatra, who was in May denied an 8-month extension of service till his superannuation age.



#### Ravindra Kumar Tyagi Appointed As CMD Of Power Grid Corporation :-

Ravindra Kumar Tyagi has been named the new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of the state-owned Power Grid Corporation. Tyagi will succeed Sreekant Kandikuppa, who retired after attaining the age of superannuation, according to a regulatory filing by the business. Tyagi, 57, has a degree in electrical engineering from Punjab Engineering College (PEC) in Chandigarh and a M Tech in Energy Studies from IIT Delhi. He is a "fulbright scholar" from Carnegie Mellon University, USA and has over 33 years of industry experience in the power sector at various key positions.



#### NIVEA India Appoints Geetika Mehta As New Managing Director :-



Geetika Mehta has been named as the new managing director of Nivea. Mehta adds a wealth of experience and knowledge to the brand, reaffirming Nivea India's commitment to being a premier skincare brand. Mehta has experience creating small enterprises as well as managing huge corporations in regions such as South Asia, Thailand, Brazil, and South Africa. Her previous stints include managing director at Hershey India for 2.5 years and an illustrious 18-year journey at Hindustan Unilever Limited.



**Randhir Jaiswal Takes Over As MEA Spokesperson From Arindam Bagchi :-**

Arindam Bagchi, the official spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), handed over the baton to Randhir Jaiswal, who took over as official MEA spokesperson. MEA Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi was named India's next Permanent Representative to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva in October 2023. The new MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal previously served as consul general in New York in July 2020. Mr. Jaiswal has served in Portugal, Cuba, South Africa and at India's permanent mission to the UN in New York.



**Kia India Appoints Gwanggu Lee As New MD And CEO:-**

Kia India, a renowned automobile manufacturer in India, has named Gwanggu Lee as its new Managing Director and CEO, effective immediately. He replaces Kook Hyun Shim and Tae Jin Park as the company's third Managing Director and CEO. Tae Jin Park, the former MD and CEO, is slated to retire after 36 years with Kia Corporation, including four years with Kia India. Mr. Gwanggu Lee brings over 30 years of experience in the automotive industry, having held leadership roles in various global markets, including the US, Canada, Italy, Mexico, Central and South America, and Germany.



**Shashi Singh Appointed As New President Of AIRIA :-**

Shashi Singh has been chosen president of the All India Rubber Industries Association (AIRIA), India's peak body for the rubber industry. Singh will succeed Ramesh Kejriwal as President of AIRIA, and will play a critical role in driving the organization forward. Shashi Singh was a senior vice president at AIRIA prior to becoming President. His extensive involvement in the association includes serving on various committees and acting as the chief convener for the western region, overseeing the organization the National Rubber Conference in 2019.



भारतीय प्रतिभूति और विनिमय बोर्ड  
Securities and Exchange Board of India

**SEBI Names G Ram Mohan Rao As Executive Director For 3 Years :-**

G Ram Mohan Rao has been appointed as Executive Director (ED) of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for a three-year term. Rao will be in charge of the investigation and internal inspection departments. He has worked for the markets regulator for over 25 years, supervising a variety of portfolios including inspections, litigation, recovery, investor awareness, grievance redressal, and so on. Prior to the appointment, Rao was the regional director of the Eastern Regional Office of SEBI.

**Senior IAS Officer Vikas Sheel Appointed Executive Director, Asian Development Bank :-**

Vikas Sheel, a senior bureaucrat, has been appointed Executive Director of the Asian Development Bank in Manila, according to a Personnel Ministry directive. Sheel, a 1994-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) official from Chhattisgarh, is currently Additional Secretary and Mission Director of the Jal Jeevan Mission under the Ministry of Jal Shakti. He has been appointed as the Executive Director of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for a three-year term beginning on the date of assumption of charge. Smita Sarangi has been appointed to the post of Adviser to the Executive Director, ADB, Manila, Philippines for a period of three years from the date of assumption of charge, the order said.



**Sanjiv Aggarwal Appointed CEO And MD Of NIIFL :-**

The National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIFL), an infrastructure investment platform for international and Indian investors anchored by the Government of India, has hired Sanjiv Aggarwal as Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, according to a release. Aggarwal has extensive experience in both the infrastructure and energy sectors. He joined Actis, a prominent worldwide investor in sustainable infrastructure, in 2008 and became a partner in 2010. He has till recently been responsible for Actis' energy investments in Asia including India, stated a press release.



**PhonePe Appoints Ritesh Pai As CEO For International Payments Division :-**

PhonePe, a Walmart-owned fintech company, has named Ritesh Pai CEO of its international payments unit. The move comes as India attempts to expand the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) globally. In his previous capacity as TerraPay's president of products and solutions, he was in charge of worldwide payment product and solution introduction and implementation. Before that, he served as the senior group president and chief digital officer at Yes Bank, where he led the digital strategy and transformation for the bank and launched multiple successful partnerships with many of today's leading fintech players.





**Sheel Vardhan Singh Appointed As UPSC Member :-**

Sheel Vardhan Singh, former Director General of the Central Industrial Security Force, has been appointed by the Central government to the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). Singh is a 1986 batch IPS officer. Singh's tenure as a UPSC member will begin on the date he joins office. The term of his appointment will be regulated in accordance with the provisions of Article 316 (2) of the Constitution of India, and the conditions of service will be governed by UPSC (Members) Regulations, 1969 as amended from time to time.



**PepsiCo India Appoints Marketing Chief Jagrut Kotecha As New CEO:-**

PepsiCo India has named Jagrut Kotecha as its chief executive officer (CEO), succeeding Ahmed El Sheikh, who has held the role for seven years. Kotecha is the company's Chief Marketing Officer for Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia (AMESA). He will take over the CEO position in March 2024. Jagrut Kotecha earned a degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of Mumbai, according to his LinkedIn profile. He also has an MBA degree in Marketing from SVKM's Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS).



**Vice Admiral AN Pramod Appointed Director General Naval Operations :-**

Vice Admiral AN Pramod took over as Director General of Naval Operations (DGNO), according to an official release. According to a Ministry of Defence announcement, Pramod, an alumnus of the 38th Integrated Cadet Course at the Naval Academy in Goa, was commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 1, 1990. The Flag Officer is a CAT 'A' Sea King Air Operations Officer and a Communication and Electronics Warfare Specialist. He did the Staff Course at DSSC Wellington (Nilgiris) and the Naval Higher Command Course at NWC, Goa.



**Justice Prasanna B Varale Appointed Supreme Court Judge :-**

The Centre has approved the appointment of Karnataka High Court Chief Justice Prasanna B Varale as a Supreme Court judge. The nomination comes less than a week after the Supreme Court Collegium, led by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, recommended him on January 19. With this nomination, the Supreme Court will once again be at full strength of 34 judges. The Collegium also underlined that it has taken into consideration the fact that Justice Varale belongs to the Scheduled Caste and

ranks sixth in the All-India list of seniority of High Court judges.



**Sharat Chauhan Appointed As Puducherry’s New Chief Secretary :-**

Sharat Chauhan, Principal Commissioner, Finance, Planning, and Investment Department, Arunachal Pradesh, has been appointed as the Union Territory of Puducherry's next Chief Secretary. Rajeev Verma, the outgoing Chief Secretary, has been appointed Adviser to the Administrator in Chandigarh, according to an order issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Dr. Chauhan belongs to the 1994 AGMUT (Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territory) cadre. The postings are ordered with immediate effect and until further notice, the MHA order said.

**4: Awards**



**Hero MotoCorp’s Facility Wins CII National Award For Water Management :-**

Hero MotoCorp's manufacturing site in Gurugram, Haryana, was named the CII National Award for Excellence in Water Management's 'Winner' in the 'Within the Fence' category. Hero MotoCorp is well on its way to meeting its committed aim of being 500% water positive by 2025. Hero MotoCorp – the world’s largest manufacturer of motorcycles and scooters - is currently saving close to 3.8 million kiloliters of water every year, the company said in a media release.



**Ministry of Youth Affairs And Sports  
Government of India**

**Ministry Of Youth Affairs & Sports Announced The National Sports Awards 2023 :-**

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has announced the National Sports Awards 2023, which recognized individuals and institutions who have excelled in their particular disciplines. President Droupadi Murmu presented the Arjuna Awards to several sporting figures at Rashtrapati Bhawan. Several athletes from various sports have been selected for the National Sports and Adventure Awards 2023, including World Cup star Mohammed Shami, Asian Games stars Ojas Pravin Deotale, shooter Aishwarya Pratap Singh Tomar, and Parul Chaudhary.



**Swachh Survekshan Awards 2023: Indore And Surat Share Cleanest City Title :-**

Indore and Surat were jointly named India's cleanest cities at the Swachh Survekshan Awards-2023, which were presented by President Droupadi Murmu at Bharat Mandapam. This was Indore's eighth consecutive win, and Surat's first, albeit shared, pole position. Three of the lowest-ranked cities in the million-plus population category were in West Bengal: Haora (Howrah) at the bottom, with Asansol and Kolkata following closely as the worst-performing cities on the cleanliness indicators. Faridabad, in Haryana, and Madurai, Tamil Nadu, were the fourth- and fifth-worst cities on the list.



**Savita Kanswal Posthumously Honored With Tenzing Norgay Award :-**

President Droupadi Murmu posthumously awarded Savita Kanswal the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award 2022 in Land Adventure. Savita achieved history as the first Indian woman to summit both Mt. Everest and Mt. Makalu in a record 16-day period. She received the prestigious award in recognition of her outstanding achievements in the field of adventure. Despite her

untimely passing, Radhe Shyam Kanswal, Savita's father, graciously accepted the award on behalf of his daughter.



**Pat Cummins and Deepti Sharma clinch ICC Player of the Month awards For December 2023:-**

Australian captain Pat Cummins and Indian all-rounder Deepti Sharma have received the prestigious ICC Men's and Women's Player of the Month honors for December 2023, respectively. Pat Cummins, who was vital in Australia's successful year across formats, received the ICC Men's Player of the Month award for his outstanding performance in the winning Test series against Pakistan. Deepti Sharma, the rising star of Indian women's cricket, clinched the ICC Women's Player of the Month award for her outstanding all-round contributions against England and Australia.



**US Air Force Officer Madison Marsh Becomes First Active-Duty Winner Of Miss America 2024 :-**

Madison Marsh, a 22-year-old Air Force pilot from Arkansas, made history by not only becoming the first active-duty officer in the United States Air Force to compete, but also winning the prestigious Miss America title. Marsh, who graduated from the United States Air Force Academy with a physics degree, is a second

lieutenant in the air service branch. Currently pursuing a master’s in public policy at the Harvard Kennedy School, she has also contributed to Harvard Medical School, working on the application of artificial intelligence for pancreatic cancer detection.



**REC Limited Wins ICAI Award For Excellence In Financial Reporting FY 2022-23 :-**

REC Limited, a Maharatna Public Sector Unit and a leading NBFC under the Ministry of Power, has received the 'Plaque' in the 'Financial Services Sector (Other than Banking and Insurance)' category at the ICAI Awards for Excellence in Financial Reporting for fiscal year 2022-23. This is the only award bestowed by the ICAI under this category and the selection has been made based on the company’s accounting practices, disclosure policies, presentation of financial statements, other information contained in the Annual Report and degree of compliance with Indian Accounting Standards, Statutory guidelines and Regulations.



**Assam Govt To Honor Ex-CJI Ranjan Gogoi With ‘Assam Baibhav’ Award:-**

Former Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi will be recognized with Assam's highest civilian award, the 'Assam Baibhav'. While athlete Hima Das will receive the Assam Saurav Samman. It is one of the highest civilian distinctions bestowed by the state of Assam. Gogoi will receive a citation, certificate, medal, and a monetary prize of Rs 5 lakh. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has announced the 22 names of the esteemed awardees of the Assam State Civilian Award 2023 at Lok Seva Bhawan in Dispur. Which include Assam Baibhav, Assam Saurav and Assam Gaurav.



**Bengaluru, Delhi Airports Get Best Airport Award At Wings India :-**

Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) has won another title as the "Best Airport of the Year" at the Wings India Awards 2024, while Mangaluru International Airport in Karnataka has won in the under-five million passenger category. The Bengaluru airport apparently shared the title with its Delhi equivalent, since the two airports were tied for first place. The Wings India forum is Asia’s largest civil aviation exhibition, according to news agency PTI. It conducted the four-day event at Hotel Taj Krishna in Hyderabad from Thursday, January 18, onwards.



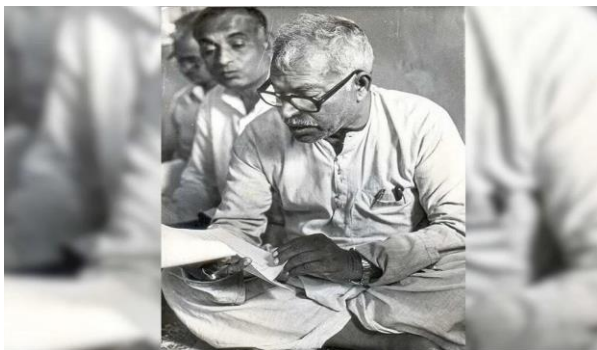
**Skyways Air Services Wins Best Cargo Services Award At Wings India Awards :-**

Skyways Air Services Pvt Ltd was awarded for its outstanding cargo services at the prestigious Wings India Awards, which were hosted in Hyderabad. This distinction demonstrates Skyways Air Services' dedication to excellence in the aviation freight business. The Wings India Awards are a prominent event in the aviation industry that recognizes the accomplishments of many stakeholders. This year's event, held at the Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad, showcased major announcements and developments in the civil aviation sector.



**Shubman Gill, Ravi Shastri honoured at BCCI Awards :-**

Two former Indian cricketers, allrounder Ravi Shastri and wicketkeeper-batsman Farokh Engineer, were honored with the BCCI's Lifetime Achievement Award in Hyderabad. Shubman Gill, who had a breakout year in international cricket in 2023, becoming the fastest to reach 2000 runs in ODIs and scoring five tons in the format, received the Cricketer of the Year title. Shastri, 61, represented India in 80 Tests and 150 ODIs. Post retirement, he gained fame as a TV commentator. He also twice headed the coaching staff of the Indian team.



**Former Bihar CM Karpoori Thakur Awarded Bharat Ratna Posthumously :-**

The President of India, Droupadi Murmu, recently bestowed the nation's highest recognition, the Bharat Ratna, posthumously on former Bihar Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur. Karpoori Thakur died on February 17, 1988, hence the award came 35 years after his death. Karpoori Thakur, dubbed "Jan Nayak" by many in the state, was Bihar's Chief Minister for two brief periods: December 1970 to June 1971 and December 1977 to April 1979. The Centre's recognition for the state's first non-Congress Chief Minister meets a long-standing demand of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and his Janata Dal United.



**Dr. Ritu Karidhal and Naveen Tiwari were honored with Uttar Pradesh Gaurav Award :-**

Dr Ritu Karidhal Srivastava of Lucknow and Kanpur's Naveen Tiwari received the Uttar Pradesh Gaurav Samman from Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Dr Ritu Karidhal played a key part in the creation of India's Mars Orbiter Mission, and in Chandrayaan served as the mission's deputy director of operations. Dr. Ritu has been working at ISRO since 1997. Naveen Tiwari, is credited with establishing the largest independent mobile Ad tech platform in the world, connecting local businesses in Uttar Pradesh and India with national and international audiences.



**Shubman Gill and Deepti Sharma awarded Polly Umrigar Award for 2023 :-**

Shubman Gill and Deepti Sharma have received the BCCI awards for top men's and women's international cricketers in 2022-23. Gill won the men's award, named after former India captain Polly Umrigar, for the first time in his career, while Deepti won the women's award for the second time, having previously won it for the 2019-20 season. Shubman Gill, Indian opener, was voted the Best International Cricketer in the men's category after finishing the season on a high note. Youngster Gill emerged as the fourth Indian batter after Sachin Tendulkar, MS Dhoni and Virat Kohli to take the top spot in the ICC batting rankings in the 50-over format.



**President approves conferment of Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards-2023 :-**

The President of India Droupadi Murmu has approved the conferment of Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards-2023 on 31 persons which includes Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak to 03, Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak to 07 and Jeevan Raksha Padak to 21 persons. Three awardees are posthumous. Jeevan Raksha Padak series

of awards are given to a person for meritorious act of human nature in saving the life of a person. The award is given in three categories, namely, Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak, Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak and Jeevan Raksha Padak.



**Padma Shri Award for Kashi scientist Ravi Prakash Singh :-**

Dr Ravi Prakash Singh, an agricultural scientist based in Kashi who has played a pivotal role in increasing food production and ensuring nutritional security in India and numerous other countries through his contributions to research, development, training, and education, has been named for the prestigious Padma Shri award by the Indian government this year. A BHU alumnus, Dr Ravi Prakash Singh has made significant contributions to the development of over 730 wheat varieties in collaboration with public and private partners across 49 countries.



**Tableau of Ministry of Culture secures first prize at Republic Day Parade 2024 :-**

The Ministry of Culture's tableau 'Bharat: Mother of Democracy' won first place among tableaux in the 75th Republic Day parade. Indira Gandhi National Centre for



the Arts (IGNCA) stated that the Ministry of Culture tableau won first award at the Republic Day Celebration Parade 2024, marking a remarkable achievement in cultural representation. The Culture Ministry's Republic

Day tableau carried replicas of B.R Ambedkar handing over the Constitution to the country's first president Rajendra Prasad, as well as ancient symbols that championed the democratic ethos.

## 5: Banking



### RBI cancels licence of 2 co-operative banks :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has canceled The Botad Peoples Co-operative Bank's banking license with immediate effect and designated it as a non-banking institution. Separately, the RBI has cancelled the license of Adarsh Mahila Nagari Sahakari Bank Maryadit, and the bank will cease operations on December 29. The RBI has requested that the Maharashtra Commissioner and Registrar of Cooperative Societies issue an order winding up the bank and appointing a liquidator.



### Mudra Loans Show Record Growth To Rs 3-Lakh Crore In Q3 FY24 :-

In what could be interpreted as a New Year's greeting for small enterprises, Loans under the Pradhan Mantri

Mudra Yojana (PMMY) have hit an all-time high of Rs 3-lakh crore in December 2023, representing a 16 percent year-on-year rise. "The loans sanctioned now stand at Rs 2,99,457 crore a week before the end of the third quarter of the current financial year on December 22, 2023 against Rs 2.58-lakh crore in the same period in previous fiscal. As per the provisional figures, this has already crossed Rs 3-lakh crore by December 29," a senior official of Mudra said.



### Tata Pay Secures RBI Payment Aggregator License For E-Commerce Transactions :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has awarded Tata Payments, the Tata group's digital payments app, a payment aggregator (PA) license. This will assist the company in facilitating ecommerce transactions via its platform. Tata Payments is owned by Tata Digital, the group's subsidiary that houses the group's digital operations. Tata Pay joins Razorpay, Cashfree, and Google Pay in obtaining the long-awaited payments license. Along with Tata Pay, Bengaluru-based identity verification startup DigiO, backed by investment platform Groww, has also secured the PA licence as of January 1.



### SBI Raises \$1 Billion From Overseas For ESG Financing Market :-

State Bank of India (SBI) said that it has raised USD 1 billion (about Rs 8,300 crore) to serve the domestic ESG financing sector. SBI said in a regulatory statement that the bank had completed the issuance of USD 1 billion (USD 750 million and a green shoe of USD 250 million) via Syndicated Social Loan. It stated that the loan book was closed on January 2, 2024. Last year, the country's largest lender raised a syndicated social loan of USD 1 billion. The fund raised would cater to domestic ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) financing market.



### IndusInd Bank Introduces 'Samman RuPay Credit Card' For Government Employees :-

IndusInd Bank has launched the UPI-enabled IndusInd Bank Samman RuPay Credit Card in collaboration with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), specifically for government employees. The cards were developed for government personnel to give them with a variety of exclusive incentives and improve their overall banking experience. The Samman RuPay Credit Card will offer the benefits of a traditional credit card with the advanced features of UPI, creating a seamless financial tool.

### NPCI Launches UPI-PayNow Linkage For Cross-Border Remittances Between India And Singapore :-

India and Singapore have linked their digital payment systems, UPI and PayNow, enabling quick, safe, and cost-effective cross-border remittances. The service is currently available on BHIM, PhonePe, and Paytm, with additional banks and third-party application providers likely to be added soon. The funds are transmitted in real time and arrive at the recipient's bank account within seconds. The collaboration between RBI and MAS has played a pivotal role in fostering the growth of India's digital payment ecosystem.



### RBI Penalizes Three Banks For Violations: Dhanlaxmi, Punjab And Sind, ESAF :-

The Reserve Bank issued a Rs 2.49 crore penalty on three banks: Dhanlaxmi Bank, Punjab and Sind Bank, and ESAF Small Finance Bank, claiming regulatory noncompliance. This step demonstrates the central bank's commitment to enforcing financial regulations and ensuring compliance in the banking sector. The sanctions are intended to prevent financial firms from violating regulatory norms. Moreover, these penalties encourage a culture of continual improvement, urging banks to enhance their internal controls.



### HDFC Bank Aims For Singapore Expansion With Banking License Application :-

HDFC Bank Ltd, India's biggest private sector lender, is planning to create its first branch in Singapore, underscoring its foreign ambitions after sewing up a blockbuster merger with mortgage financier Housing Development Finance Corp. According to sources acquainted with the subject, the bank has applied for a banking license from Singapore's Monetary Authority and is awaiting clearance. The banking giant is seeking a bigger presence abroad to tap the Indian diaspora for savings and term deposits, as well as to cross-sell more products, including mortgages, the people said.



### LIC Introduces Jeevan Dhara II Deferred Annuity Plan :-

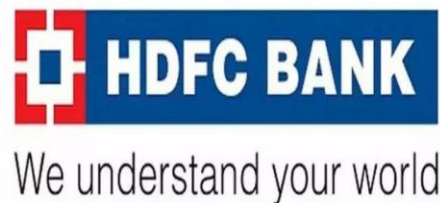
According to a press release, the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has launched a new insurance plan called Jeevan Dhara II, which is an individual savings and deferred annuity plan. It is neither a linked or participating annuity plan. LIC Jeevan Dhara II will be available for purchase through both online and offline channels beginning January 22, 2024, it added. The minimum age of entry into the Jeevan Dhara II policy is 20 years and the maximum age of entry into the policy

can be 80/70/65 years minus the deferment period, depending upon the annuity option chosen.



### SEBI Chairperson Launches CDSL's Multi-Lingual Initiatives For Investor Ease :-

SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch inaugurated two multilingual CDSL projects targeted at boosting capital market inclusivity and accessibility. CDSL has introduced an upgrade in investor CAS through the 'Apka CAS – Apki Zubaani' initiative, enabling investors to receive their statements in their preferred language amongst 23 diverse Indian languages. Moreover, the unique multi-lingual chatbot on the CDSL website, 'CDSL Buddy Sahayta 24\*7,' will simplify investors' processes.



### HDFC Bank Surpasses 20 Million Credit Card Milestone, Leading Indian Market :-

HDFC Bank, India's largest private sector bank, said that it has become the country's first lender to reach the 20 million credit card milestone. The lender entered the credit card business in 2001 and reached the ten-million mark in 2017. The following 10 million issuances occurred in just over six years. According to Reserve Bank of India figures for November 2023, HDFC Bank's cards in circulation were almost 19.51 million, compared to 19.18 million in October 2023. HDFC Bank is followed by SBI Card, ICICI Bank, and Axis Bank, in terms of the number of credit cards issued.



**RBI allows LIC to acquire up to 9.99% holding in HDFC Bank :-**

Reserve Bank of India has approved Life Insurance Corporation of India to acquire up to 9.99% stake in HDFC Bank Ltd. LIC has been advised by RBI to acquire the aforesaid major shareholding in the Bank within a period of one year i.e. by January 24, 2025. Further, LIC must ensure that the aggregate holding in the Bank does not exceed 9.99% of the paid-up share capital or voting rights of the Bank at all times. The approval has been granted concerning the application made by LIC to RBI and is subject to the conditions mentioned.



**Zomato Payments gets RBI's nod to operate as an online payment aggregator:-**

Zomato Payments, a wholly owned subsidiary of Zomato Limited, has received the certificate of authorisation from the Reserve Bank of India to operate as an online payment aggregator. The central bank has allowed it to carry out the business as a payment aggregator and issuer of pre-paid payment instruments with effect from January 24, 2024. Last year, Zomato joined hands with ICICI Bank to launch its own unified payments interface (UPI) offering -- Zomato UPI. The feature was offered to select users and did not involve a KYC process.

**6: Books and Author**



**Amit Shah releases reference books on newly passed criminal justice laws :-**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has issued 12 reference books on the recently approved criminal justice legislation, claiming that the books have lucidly brought out amendments to the rules in a clear and simple manner. The three new laws, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and the

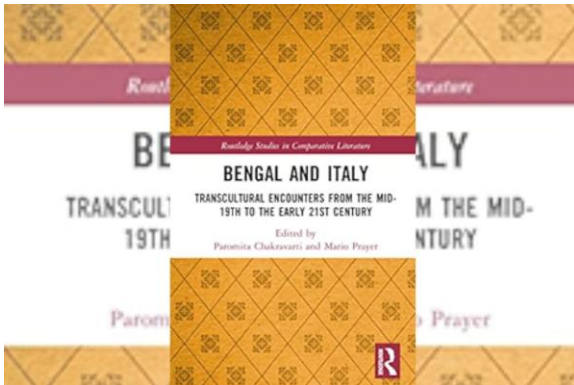
Bharatiya Sakshya Act, were approved by Parliament and signed by the president on December 25. The laws will replace the colonial era Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act of 1872 respectively.



**'Indra: The First of the Aryas' Book Launched :-**

The magnificent book launch event for Indra: First of the Aryas, published by NuVoice and distributed globally by

Simon & Schuster India, took place at Crosswords Jaipur, commemorating 14-year-old author Abhiveer Soni's debut. The evening was distinguished by the appearance of renowned author Kevin Missal as the main guest. Abhiveer Soni, a young and talented author from Rajasthan, showcased his literary prowess with a captivating narrative that weaves together history, Indian and Greek mythology, and religious texts.



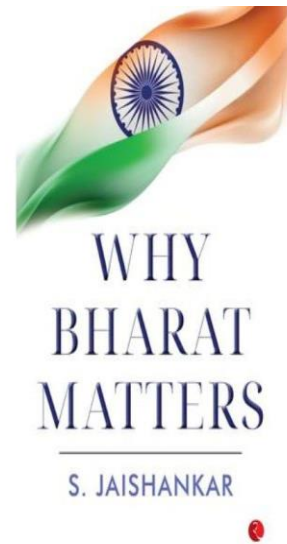
**A Book titled “Bengal and Italy: Transcultural Encounters from the Mid-19th to the Early 21st Century” launched :-**

A book titled "Bengal and Italy: Transcultural Encounters from the Mid-19th to the Early 21st Century" was released in the fourth edition of the Italo-Kolkata Heritage Conversations. Mario Prayer, co-editor of the book and professor at Sapienza University in Rome, said digitally, “This book is a result of a project funded by the Sapienza University in collaboration with Jadavpur University.” Sukanta Chaudhuri, retired professor at Jadavpur University, whose essay, From Dante to Rabindranath: An Unfolding Renaissance, is the book's first chapter, emphasized the importance of Italy in influencing the Bengal Renaissance.



**CM Stalin unveils Vairamuthu’s latest book :-**

In the presence of former Union minister P Chidambaram, actor-politician Kamal Haasan, and vice president of Tamil Nadu Science and Technology Forum scientist Mylswamy Annadurai, Chief Minister M K Stalin launched poet and writer Vairamuthu's latest book "Maha Kavithai" at Kamarajar Arangam. Congratulating and lauding the lyricist for his book, M K Stalin said, “I’m not a poet nor an art critic, but if Kalaingar, who was both a poet and a critic, were here today he would have definitely praised Vairamuthu for the extensive work he has done for his book Maha Kavithai”.



**Jaishankar launched his new book “Why Bharat Matters”:-**

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar remarked at an event to commemorate the launch of his new book "Why Bharat Matters" that the year 2024 will be challenging due to geopolitical happenings in the previous year, but India should be confident in tackling challenges because of its political and economic capabilities. According to Jaishankar, his book contrasts India's progress and expansion with events from the epic Ramayana and examines the transformation of India's foreign policy, particularly over the last decade. This has been a period of globalisation, rebalancing, multipolarity, a deeper impact of technology, and the competitiveness of international relations, he said.



**General Manager Western Railway Released A Coffee Table Book Titled “125 Years Of A Timeless Legacy” :-**

Western Railway has planned a month-long celebration in January 2024 to commemorate the historic completion of 125 years of Western Railway's Headquarter building, which will feature various events such as Exhibitions, Heritage Walks, Light & Sound show, Cultural programs, and so on. Ashok Kumar Misra, General Manager of Western Railway, and Prakash Butani, Additional General Manager, Western Railway, launched a Coffee Table Book titled "125 Years of A Timeless Legacy" as part of this spectacular occasion.



**M K Sanoo’s book on Mohanlal to be released on January 13 :-**

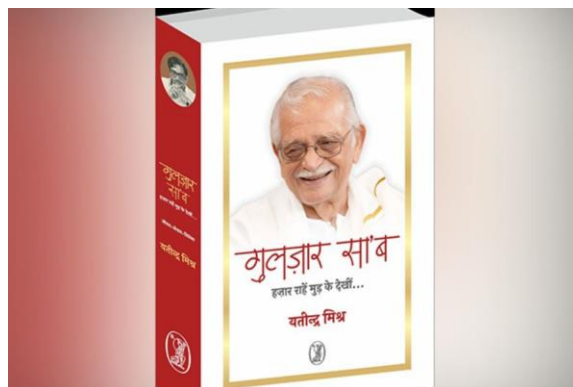
The book 'Mohanlal - Abhinayakalayile Ithihasam' by M K Sanoo master will be released on January 13 in Kochi. "Mohanlal is a good actor. I have witnessed his growth as an actor. He is spiritual as well. This inspired me to write a book about him," stated Sanoo master. The book will be launched by film director Sathyan Anthikad, who will deliver it to music director M Jayachandran. While addressing the media, he also announced the Sanoo master award 2023. "Writer M T Vasudevan Nair has

been selected as the winner of the award this year for his contributions to literature," he said.



**Telangana Deputy CM Bhatti launches Telugu version of Sam Pitroda’s book “Redesign The World”:-**

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka has issued the Telugu edition of Sam Pitroda's book, "Redesign The World," which addresses global challenges. The Telugu translation Prapanchaniki Kotha Roopam Iddam Kadilirandi was translated by Poludasu Narsimha Rao. Mr. Sam Pitroda participated in the book launch via a Zoom call. In the book, Mr. Pitroda says that India is set for a true digital democracy with rapid adoption of digital literacy through digital skills in a new and vibrant youthful India. Hence, India has the power to impact world order.



**Authorized biography 'Gulzar Saab: Hazar Rahein Mud Ke Dekhin...' Launched :-**

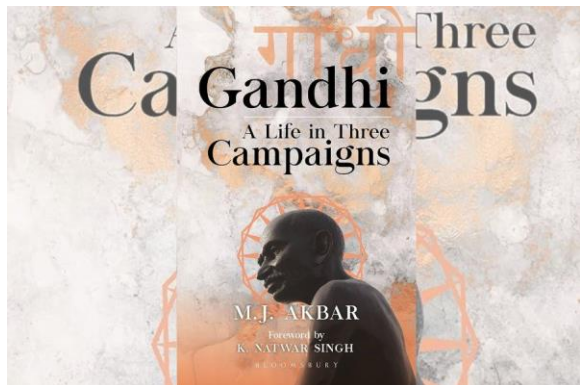
The authorized biography 'Gulzar Saab: Hazar Rahein Mud Ke Dekhin...' of famed director, lyricist, and poet Gulzar was released at the Veda Kunba Theatre, Cinta Tower, Andheri West, Mumbai. The book was authored by Yatindra Mishra, a National Award-winning author, and published by Vani Prakashan Group. Yatindra

Mishra, a Swarna Kamal awardee, poet, writer, and music expert, has written a book based on his 15-year relationship with Gulzar. Honourable MP, veteran dancer and actress Hema Malini was the chief guest to launch the book, while Sahitya Akademi award winning writer and poet Sheen Kaaf Nizam was a special guest.



**Keanu Reeves and China Miéville To Co-author “The Book of Elsewhere”:-**

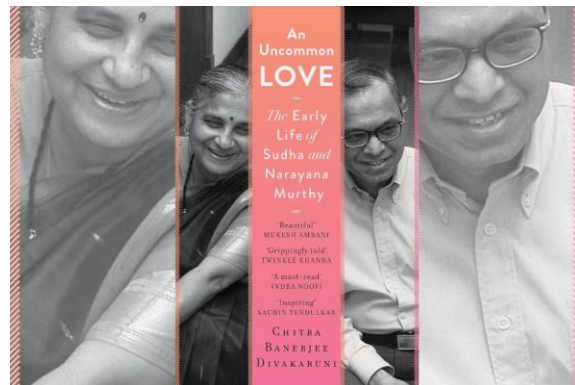
Keanu Reeves, the star of "John Wick," is releasing a new novel titled "The Book of Elsewhere," which he co-wrote with author China Mieville. The future book is inspired by "BRZRKR," a 2021 comic book series co-written by the actor, Matt Kindt, and illustrator Ron Garney. In this fresh literary undertaking, Reeves and Miéville will explore the mysterious storyline, tracing the adventures of an immortal warrior as they traverse through time, seeking to unravel the secrets behind the curse of everlasting life.



**A book named “Gandhi A Life in Three Campaigns” Launched by M.J. Akbar :-**

M.J. Akbar, an eminent author, released his new book "Gandhi A Life in Three Campaigns" at the Prime Minister's Museum and Library at the Pradhan Mantri Sangrahalaya. The ceremony was hosted by Nripendra

Misra, who was Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Principal Secretary and is now the Chairman of the Executive Council of the Prime Ministers' Museum and Library Society. Nripendra Misra spoke during the event, praising M.J. Akbar for his book. Some of the other speakers at the function were Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Union Minister Hardeep Puri.



**The Book “An Uncommon Love: The Early Life Of Sudha And Narayana Murthy” Released :-**

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's book, "An Uncommon Love: The Early Life of Sudha and Narayana Murthy," was published. The book provides an intimate look into the lives of one of India's most recognized couples, Sudha and Narayana Murthy, Infosys co-founders. The biography discusses their early lives, love story, and the early days of Infosys. The book delves into the professional hurdles they faced, particularly Narayana Murthy's commitment to establishing Infosys. The biography also touches on an incident where Narayana Murthy had to sleep in a storeroom during a business trip due to a demanding client, highlighting the struggles they faced in their early professional years.



**PM Modi releases commemorative postage stamps, book on Ram Temple :-**

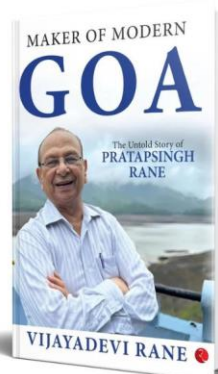
On January 18, Prime Minister Narendra Modi issued a collection of commemorative postage stamps devoted to the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, as well as a book containing stamps from around the world honoring the cherished god. The elaborate design of the stamps embodies the essence of Shri Ram Janmbhoomi Mandir, which has six different components. These include the Ram Mandir itself, the timeless Choupai 'Mangal Bhavan Amangal Hari', a radiant depiction of the sun, the sacred Saryu River, and sculptures found in and around the temple.



**Book on food security released :-**

MLC Dr K Ravi Babu, Member, and Andhra University Vice-Chancellor Prof PVGD Prasad Reddy have published a book named "Food Security in India: Issues and Challenges". Dr. P Subba Rao, director of the Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy at Andhra University, edited the book. The book contains 24 papers

contributed by different authors who presented their papers at the two-day national seminar on 'food security and development of socially and economically disadvantaged groups in India.'



**Book released on ex-Goa CM Pratapsingh Rane's political and personal journey :-**

A biography of Goa's former chief minister Pratapsingh Rane's personal and political career includes tales about the changing political environment of the coastal state as well as peeks into his governance style. The book, 'Maker of Modern Goa: The Untold Story of Pratapsingh Rane' is authored by his wife Vijayadevi Rane. In the introduction of the 236-page book, the author, who has been married to Pratapsingh Rane for more than 55 years, says it is a dynamic and engaging biography that reveals how he brought in "stability and sane, reasoned governance" to Goa's volatile and unstable politics every time he became the chief minister.

**7: Defence**



**Four senior officers assume new roles in Army and Navy**

Lieutenant General RC Tiwari assumed command of the vital Rising Sun Eastern Command, which is situated in Kolkata. Tiwari, a National Defence Academy graduate and Kumaon regiment veteran since 1987, took over for Lieutenant General RP Kalita, who retired on December 31. Lieutenant General Prit Pal Singh, who was commissioned into the 62 Armoured Regiment in December 1989, acquired command of the Sudarshan Chakra Corps (19 Corps), which is located in Mathura. In the Indian Navy, Vice-Admiral B Sivakumar assumed the role of Controller Warship Production and Acquisition,



with a notable background in indigenous warship production. Vice-Admiral Kiran Deshmukh took charge as the Chief of Material of the Navy. He was commissioned as an engineer officer in March 1986.



**Indian Army to deploy Apache attack helicopters in Jodhpur near Pakistan border :-**

The Indian Army will enhance its combat capabilities in the western desert near the Pakistani border by deploying six Apache attack helicopters at a military installation in Jodhpur. "The first of the choppers is expected to start arriving from the US in February-March timeframe at the Hindan air base as scheduled in the contract. The choppers would then be deployed at a military station in Jodhpur for operations," military officials added. The Indian Air Force already has 22 Apache helicopters posted around its western and northern borders, and the Army inductions would bring the total combined inventory to 28.



**Vice Admiral Sanjay Jasjit Singh Assumes Command of Western Naval Command :-**

Vice Admiral Sanjay J Singh, AVSM, NM, formally succeeded Vice Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, AVSM, NM, as Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief (FOC-in-C) of the

Western Naval Command (WNC). The changeover was marked with an outstanding Ceremonial Parade at INS Shikra, where Vice Admiral Singh paid tribute to fallen warriors at the Gaurav Stambh - Victory at Sea Memorial, Naval Dockyard, Mumbai. Vice Admiral Sanjay J Singh is a distinguished graduate of the National Defence Academy, Pune. Commissioned into the Executive Branch of the Indian Navy in 1986, he embarked on a career that spans 37 years of dedicated service.



**Boosting Indigenous Defence Production: Centre Inks Two Crucial Deals Worth Rs 802 Crore :-**

The Ministry of Defence has inked two contracts for Rs 802 crore with Jupiter Wagons and BEML (Bharat Earth Movers Limited) for the procurement of military equipment. The defense ministry inked a contract with Jupiter Wagons for the acquisition of Qty-697 Bogie Open Military (BOM) Wagons for Rs 473 crore and BEML Ltd for the procurement of Qty-56 Mechanical Minefield Marking Equipment (MMME) Mark II for Rs 329 crore under the Buy (Indian-IDDMM) category. BOM wagons are used to transport light vehicles, Artillery Guns, BMPs, Engineering Equipment etc. from their peacetime locations to operational areas.



**DRDO Launches Assault Rifle 'Ugram' For Indian Army :-**

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has launched the 'Ugram' indigenous assault rifle, which is designed to satisfy the operational needs of armed forces, paramilitaries, and state police. The rifle, calibre 7.62 x 51 mm, was conceived, developed, and manufactured in partnership with a private industrial partner. The first operational prototype of the rifle was unveiled at the DRDO's Armament and Combat Engineering Systems in Pune. It has an effective range of 500 metres and weighs less than four kilograms.



**Navy gets its first India-made drones from Adani Defence :-**

The Indian Navy has received its first domestic medium-altitude long-endurance (MALE) drone, the Drishti 10 Starliner unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), which will improve its intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capability. Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar stated that the drone will be a powerful force multiplier in the Indian Ocean region, which faces a variety of security problems. The Drishti 10 Starliner drone has been built by Adani Defence and Aerospace at its Hyderabad facility with technology transfer from Israeli defence firm Elbit Systems.



**US And UK Launch Airstrikes On Yemen's Huthi Rebels Over Red Sea Attacks :-**

The United States and the United Kingdom joined forces to conduct a retaliatory operation against the Iran-based rebel organization Houthis in Yemen, shortly after the group claimed responsibility for a series of attacks on cargo ships and vessels passing through the Red Sea. The US and UK airstrikes targeted at targeting Houthi sites in Yemen have exacerbated the crisis in the region, which is already rife with Israel-Hamas hostility. Heavy explosions were reported in the Yemeni capital of Sana'a and the port city of Al Hudaydah.



**DRDO conducts successful flight-test of New Generation AKASH missile off Odisha coast :-**

India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully tested the New Generation AKASH (AKASH-NG) missile. The test was carried out from the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha, against a high-speed unmanned aerial target at extremely low altitude. The AKASH-NG missile system is cutting-edge and capable of stopping fast, agile aircraft threats. It has a range of around 80 km. During the flight test, senior officers from DRDO, the Indian Air Force (IAF), Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) were present.



**Joint Exercise 'Sahyog Kaijin' Between Indian And Japanese Coast Guards :-**

The Indian and Japanese Coast Guards recently completed a successful cooperative exercise called 'Sahyog Kaijin' off the coast of Chennai. This exercise is part of the two countries' continuous partnership under the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC), signed in 2006. The test involved a simulated collision between two vessels, MT Matsyadristi and MV Anveshika, which resulted in a fire on the MT Matsyadristi and a crude oil spill. The exercise focused on swift reaction and rescue activities.



**Union Minister Ajay Bhatt Flags Off Astra Missile For IAF Delivery :-**

Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt has launched the indigenously developed and manufactured Astra Missiles for delivery to the Indian Air Force. The event was place at Bharat Dynamics Limited's Kanchanbagh Unit, where BDL CMD Commodore A Madhavarao (Retd) and other top officials from DRDO, IAF, and BDL were present, according to a BDL announcement. "Astra Weapon System is best in its class of weapon systems in the world in the category of air-to-air missiles. The missile has a range of 100 plus km," the release said.



**Senior IPS Officer Daljit Singh Chaudhary Appointed Director General Of Sashastra Seema Bal :-**

According to an official order, the Centre has named Daljit Singh Chaudhary, a senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, as the director-general of the Sashastra Seema Bal. The appointment of Chaudhary, a 1990 batch IPS officer from the Uttar Pradesh cadre, is notable given the SSB's important role in border security ahead of the Ram temple consecration ceremony in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved his appointment for a period up to November 30, 2025 i.e. the date of his superannuation, the order said.



**Defence Minister Unveils 35 BRO Projects In Border Regions :-**

During an event on the Joshimath-Malari Road in Uttarakhand, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated 35 infrastructure projects developed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) worth Rs 670 crore. In his speech, the defence minister stressed the significance of connecting rural areas to the rest of the country. 29 of the 35 projects inaugurated are bridges, with the remaining six being roads. 11 of these projects are being constructed in Jammu & Kashmir, nine in Ladakh, eight in Arunachal Pradesh, three in Uttarakhand, two in Sikkim, one in Mizoram, and one in Himachal Pradesh.



**India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise KHANJAR Being Held In Himachal Pradesh:-**

The 11th edition of the India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise Khanjar began at the Special Forces Training School in Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh. The drill is taking place from January 22 to February 3. The exercise would allow both parties to strengthen defense ties while addressing shared concerns about international terrorism and extremism. It will also provide an opportunity to showcase the capabilities of cutting-edge indigenous defence equipment. The exercise is an annual event conducted alternately in the two nations.



**Defence Ministry signed ₹1,070 crore contract with Mazagon Dock for 14 advanced fast patrol vessels :-**

The Defense Ministry has inked a contract worth over ₹1,070 Crore with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai for 14 Fast Patrol Vessels (FPV) for the Indian Coast Guard. Along with many high-tech advanced features and equipment, these FPVs will include multipurpose drones, a wirelessly controlled remote water rescue boat lifebuoy, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) capabilities, among other things enabling greater flexibility and operational edge to the ICG to face new age multidimensional challenges, the Ministry said in a statement.



**India, France, UAE Conduct Joint Air Exercise Over Arabian Sea :-**

India, France, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) conducted a massive aviation drill over the Arabian Sea amid growing global worries about Houthi terrorists targeting several commercial vessels in the region's critical waterways. The drill 'Desert Knight' involved multiple frontline aerial assets and combat jets from the three countries' air forces, according to officials. The Indian Air Force (IAF) component at the drills consisted of Su-30 MKI, MiG-29 and Jaguar fighter jets besides AWACS (airborne early warning and control aircraft), C-130-J transport plane and air-to-air refuelling aircraft.



**JSW Group enters defence manufacturing :-**

Sajjan Jindal-owned JSW Group became the latest conglomerate to enter the defence manufacturing sector space by acquiring a majority stake in Gecko Motors Private Ltd, an off-road vehicle company. The company has secured an order of Rs 250 crore from the Ministry of Defence to manufacture and supply 96 Specialist Mobility Vehicles (SMVs), branded as ATOR N1200. The vehicles are currently manufactured at JSW Gecko's newly set-up manufacturing unit in Chandigarh and will be supplied to the armed forces by June this year.



**Indian Army Introduces New Fitness Policy to Fight 'Declining Physical Standards' :-**

The Indian army has implemented a new fitness guideline in response to "declining physical standards among officers". The policy adds new tests to the existing ones while also requiring each person to get an Army Physical Fitness Assessment Card (APAC). According to the new regulations, a Brigadier rank officer, rather than a Commanding officer, will preside over quarterly tests. The new policy is aimed at bringing consistency in the testing procedure and addressing issues of officers being physically unfit or obese amid the rising threat of lifestyle diseases.



**Indian Navy to showcase twin carrier operations with Rajnath Singh on board :-**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will see the Indian Navy's twin carrier operations on board INS Vikrant between Kochi and Goa at the top Naval Commanders Conference in March. INS Vikrant, India's second aircraft carrier, completed a maintenance repair at Cochin Shipyard on

January 26 and is scheduled to participate in the 50-nation Milan exercise off the coast of Visakhapatnam in February. It is during his sea trip from Kochi to Goa, Singh will witness the full power of the Indian Navy with aircraft carriers INS Vikramaditya and INS Vikrant showcasing their prowess at sea with fighter operations using MiG-29 K aircraft.



**India-Saudi Arabia Joint Military Exercise 'SADA TANSEEQ' Commences in Rajasthan :-**

The first edition of India-Saudi Arabia joint military exercise 'SADA TANSEEQ', which aims to foster interoperability, goodwill, and camaraderie among troops from both countries, began in Rajasthan on January 29, according to officials. The exercise is slated to last until February 10. "The Saudi Arabian contingent comprising 45 personnel is being represented by Royal Saudi Land Forces. The Indian Army contingent also comprising 45 personnel is being represented by a battalion from the Brigade of the Guards (Mechanised Infantry)," the defence ministry said in a statement.

**8: Economy**



**Market cap of NSE Listed Companies' Surpass USD 4 Trillion Mark :-**

Despite geopolitical disruptions and the impact of the Covid epidemic in recent years, the Indian stock market just crossed the \$4 trillion valuation threshold, closing in on the value of the Hong Kong stock exchange. India has now joined the ranks of the world's stock market superpowers, a position previously held by the United States, China, and Japan. Being the fifth highest stock market in the world, India now only ranks behind these

through countries. India's market growth in 2023 is the sharpest it has ever seen in the last three years.



**RBI names SBI, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank as systemically important banks :-**

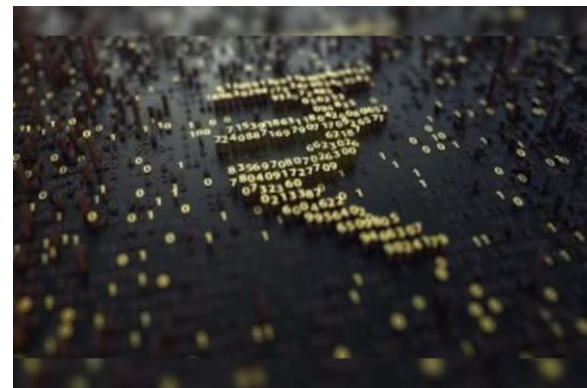
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has classified State Bank of India (SBI), HDFC Bank, and ICICI Bank as domestic systemically important banks (D-SIBs). While ICICI Bank remained in the same bucketing system as last year, SBI and HDFC Bank were to higher buckets. The increased D-SIB buffer requirements resulting from the bucket increase will be applicable for SBI and HDFC Bank on April 1, 2025, with the additional Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) requirement being in addition to the capital conservation buffer, according to the banking regulator.



**Hyundai hits record 6 lakh domestic sales mark in India:-**

Hyundai Motor India has declared that it has surpassed the six lakh sales barrier in the domestic market in the calendar year 2023, marking the company's highest performance since its arrival in India in 1996. Between January and December 2023, Hyundai sold 6.02 lakh units in the domestic Indian market, a 9% increase over the 5.52 lakh units sold in the same period in 2022. But while Hyundai hit a personal best milestone in terms of

domestic sales, its exports in 2023 also rose to 1.63 lakh units as against 1.48 lakh units in 2022.



**Interest rates on two small savings schemes were increased for January to March 2024 :-**

The national government has boosted the interest rate on two minor savings schemes by 10-20 basis points for the period January-March 2024. While the three-year time deposit interest rate has been raised by 10 basis points to 7.1 percent from 7.0 percent, the Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme interest rate has been raised by 20 basis points to 8.2 percent for January-March 2024. There is however no change in interest rates of all other small savings schemes and they will continue to offer the same rate of interest as they did in October-December 2022, according to Finance Ministry. One basis point is one-hundredth of a percentage point.



**Finance Ministry Allows 30th Tranche Of Electoral Bonds :-**

The Centre has authorized the issuing of the 30th tranche of electoral bonds, which will go on sale on January 5th. The window for purchasing and redeeming electoral bonds will be open until January 11. As part of efforts to increase openness in political fundraising, electoral

bonds have been promoted as an alternative to cash donations to political parties. The sale of the first batch of electoral bonds happened in March 2018. The latest window — 30th tranche — comes ahead of the general elections due later this year.



**India Inc’s Investment Slump Persists In FY24’S First Nine Months: Bank Of Baroda Analysis :-**

According to an analysis by Bank of Baroda's Economic Research Department (ERD), new investments announced by India Inc in the first nine months (9M) of FY24 at Rs 10.80 lakh crore are still low and not rising up at the expected rate. According to the ERD, this is a sign that the industry is still in a wait-and-see mindset. The investment intentions are biased towards four sectors -- aviation, chemicals, machinery and power. New investments were at Rs 21.89 lakh crore in 9MFY22 and Rs 13.22 lakh crore in 9MFY21, per the analysis, which is based on CMIE data.



**Flipkart’s Binny Bansal Launches OppDoor :-**

Binny Bansal, co-founder of Flipkart, has launched OppDoor. OppDoor will assist e-commerce companies in expanding their business abroad by delivering end-to-end solutions. The new company will offer design,

product, human resource, and other backend support to e-commerce enterprises wishing to grow into new markets by using the network of leading platforms like Amazon and others. The company’s website now confirms the developments around Binny Bansal's latest startup. OppDoor’s website says the company offers “a comprehensive suite of services.”



**Amit Shah Launches Tur Dal Procurement Portal For Farmers :-**

Amit Shah, Minister of Cooperation, launched a tur dal procurement platform via which farmers may register and sell their produce to NAFED and NCCF at a minimum support price or market price. A comparable facility for urad and masoor farmers, as well as maize producers, will be launched in the future, he said. The minister also sent Rs 68 lakh to 25 farmers via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) as payment for the sale of tur on the platform. After the launch, the Minister said before the sowing operation, tur farmers can register on the portal to sell their produce to NAFED and NCCF at minimum support price (MSP).



**GIM2024: Tamil Nadu’s \$1 Trillion Economy Vision Unveiled :-**

The Tamil Nadu Global Investors Meet (GIM) 2024, sponsored by the DMK government, got off to a flying start at the Chennai Trade Centre, with Chief Minister M.K. Stalin revealing a plan to transform the state into a \$1 trillion economy by 2030. The government also unveiled its Semiconductor and Advanced Electronics Policy, 2024, on the same day as a spate of memorandum of understandings (MOUs) involving massive investments were signed. The vision report provides a comprehensive “growth framework” for achieving Mr. Stalin’s ambitious target.



**Government To Invest 60,000 Cr In River Cruise Tourism And Green Vessels :-**

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal stated that the government plans to invest Rs 60,000 crore by 2047 on river cruise tourism and green vessel development. "We are going to invest Rs 45,000 crore in river cruise, which will take the passenger capacity from 2 lakh to 15 lakh by 2047," he said on the sidelines of the maiden Inland Waterways Development Council meeting in Kolkata. Sonowal further stated that the government intends to invest another Rs 15,000 crore in green transport over the next ten years to create 1,000 vessels and ferries.



**LIC Approves Acquisition Of 10% Stake In NHB-Promoted Company :-**

The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) announced its board has approved acquiring up to 10% of a company

promoted by the National Housing Bank (NHB). In a regulatory filing, LIC stated that the board has approved the proposal to invest in a new firm, proposed by the NHB, for residential mortgage-backed securities through an equity contribution of up to 10% of the share capital. The investment is to be made in one or more tranches, it added. Details about the company were not disclosed. LIC has a housing finance subsidiary -- LIC Housing Finance Ltd -- that was incorporated in 1989.



**Simmtech To Set Up Semiconductor Plant In Sanand, Gujarat :-**

Following US chipmaker Micron and the Tata Group, South Korean business Simmtech has announced plans to build a facility in Sanand for Rs1,250 crore as part of a semiconductor ecosystem in Gujarat. Ashwini Vaishnav, Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology, stated this at a seminar as part of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit in Gandhinagar. The South Korean firm Simmtech has signed an MoU with the state government to set up its plan close to Micron in Sanand near Ahmedabad city.



**PM Modi Inaugurates India’s Longest Sea Bridge – Atal Setu :-**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the country's longest sea bridge, 'Atal Bihari Vajpayee Sewri-Nhava Sheva Atal Setu', connecting south Mumbai with the



satellite city of Navi Mumbai. He stated that the completion of the ₹ 17,840 crore project reflects a new India. The maximum speed restriction for four-wheelers on the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL) will be 100 km/h. The maximum speed limit for vehicles like cars, taxis, light motor vehicles, minibuses and two-axle buses is 100 kilometres per hour.



**Tata Consumer Products Acquires 100% Stake In Capital Foods For ₹5,100 Crore:-**

Tata Consumer Products stated that it has purchased a 100% share in Capital Foods, which markets products under the labels Ching's Secret and Smith & Jones. The ₹5,100 crore purchase will be completed entirely in cash. The FMCG firm stated that it would initially purchase 75% of the stock stake, with the remaining 25% to be acquired over the next three years. Ching's Secret holds a dominant position in the Desi Chinese segment across various product categories, including Chutneys, Blended Masalas, Sauces, and Soups.



**Centre Introduces New Rules To Boost Ease Of Business In Green Energy Sector :-**

The Power Ministry has issued new rules to make doing business easier for industries such as green hydrogen makers, as well as to assist energy transition and energy

security by establishing energy storage capacity more quickly. Now users, having more than a specified quantum of load and Energy Storage Systems (ESS) are able to create, operate and maintain dedicated transmission lines themselves without the requirement of licence. By allowing such a facility, a new category of bulk consumers would emerge in the country, benefiting from more affordable electricity and enhanced grid reliability.



**Government Reduces Windfall Tax On Crude Oil Amid Global Economic Concerns :-**

According to Reuters, India has decreased its windfall tax on petroleum crude from Rs 2,300 per tonne to Rs 1,700, Reuters reported citing a government notice. This adjustment in taxation takes effect on January 16. A windfall tax is an additional tax levied on businesses that make unexpectedly big profits due to advantageous conditions beyond their control. Windfall taxes are a tool for governments to manage the distribution of wealth during periods of economic anomalies. Since July 2022, India has been imposing a windfall tax on local crude oil producers, Reuters reported.



**L&T Secures 'Mega Order' For Mumbai-Ahmedabad Bullet Train Electrification Project :-**

Larsen & Toubro (L&T) announced that its construction arm has received a 'mega order' to install an electricity system for the country's bullet train project. After completion, this electrification system will allow trains to run at speeds of up to 320 km/h. The order was received from an authorized Japanese agency. This project is being funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and is being implemented by an authorised Japanese agency acting for and on behalf of National High Speed Rail Corporation Ltd.



**Adani Group Announces Rs 50,000 Crore Investment For 1 GW Data Centre In Maharashtra :-**

Adani Enterprises Ltd would invest Rs 50,000 crore in Maharashtra over the next ten years to build 1 GW of hyperscale data infrastructure, the firm announced. The state government and the firm inked a Memorandum of Understanding at the World Economic Forum 2024, in the presence of Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani. The infrastructure for this data center will be set up in either Mumbai or Navi Mumbai and Pune, and will provide direct and indirect employment to 20,000 people.



**Tata Group Secures IPL Title Sponsorship For Next 5 Years :-**

The TATA group has secured the Indian Premier League (IPL) for Rs 2500 crores, the highest sponsorship value in

the league's history, according to the BCCI. The TATA Group previously owned title sponsorship rights for the IPL in 2022 and 2023, as well as the Women's Premier League. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had laid out stringent conditions for potential bidders, particularly excluding entities from territories with which India does not share friendly relations, effectively disqualifying Chinese companies like Vivo from the race.



**SBI raises Rs 5,000 crore issuing AT1 bonds at 8.34% rate :-**

The State Bank of India (SBI) has raised Rs 5,000 crore through its second Basel III-compliant Additional Tier (AT) 1 bond issue for the current fiscal year at an 8.34% interest rate. The coupon rate on the most recent AT-1 bond issuance is 24 basis points higher than the previous issuance. In July 2023, India's largest bank issued AT-1 bonds for Rs 3,101 crore at an interest rate of 8.10 percent. The tenor of AT-1 bonds is perpetual, with a call option after 10 years and every anniversary thereafter. The issue was oversubscribed by about 2.65 times against the base issue size of Rs 2,000 crore, the bank said in a statement.



**India's Foreign Exchange Reserves Jump \$1.63 Billion to \$618.9 Billion :-**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said that India's currency reserves increased by USD 1.634 billion to USD 618.937

billion during the week ending January 12. In the preceding reporting week, total reserves fell drastically by USD 5.89 billion to USD 617.3 billion. The country's forex reserves reached an all-time high of USD 645 billion in October 2021. For the week ended January 12, the foreign currency assets -- a major component of the reserves -- increased USD 1.859 billion to USD 548.508 billion, the data said.



#### **AIIB Invests \$58.4 Million In India's Largest Renewable Energy InvIT :-**

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has invested INR 4.86 billion (US\$58.4 million) in Sustainable Energy Infra Trust (SEIT), India's largest Renewable Energy Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT). SEIT, which is sponsored by Mahindra Susten Private Limited and the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, has eight operating solar power assets with a total peak capacity of 1.54 gigawatts scattered across India. This marks AIIB's second foray into InvITs in India, emphasizing its commitment to innovative infrastructure financing solutions.



#### **Competition Commission Of India Greenlights JSW Group's 38% Stake Buy In MG Motor India :-**

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved Sajjan Jindal's JSW Group's proposed acquisition of up to a 38% stake in MG Motor India. This equity purchase is made through JSW Ventures Singapore, a newly formed corporation that is a wholly-owned subsidiary of JSW International Tradecorp Pte Ltd and a member of the JSW Group. The competition watchdog has also approved, in a separate proposal, the acquisition of Wistron Infocomm Manufacturing (India) Pvt Ltd by Tata Electronics.



#### **Petroleum Ministry Approves ONGC's Green Energy Unit :-**

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) said that the Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry has approved the development of a subsidiary firm for green energy and gas operations. The subsidiary's activities will include green hydrogen, hydrogen blending, renewable energy (solar, wind, and hybrid), biofuels and biogas, and liquefied natural gas (LNG). The newly sanctioned subsidiary, tentatively titled "ONGC Green Limited," is expected to be completely controlled by ONGC. However, the proposed name is subject to the approval of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.

## 9: International



### Earthquake : 7.6 magnitude quake jolts Japan, tsunami warning issued:-

According to NHK, the state broadcaster, a 7.6 magnitude earthquake hit north central Japan on January 1. In response, the Japan Meteorological Agency has issued tsunami warnings for the prefectures of Ishikawa, Niigata, and Toyama. Authorities in Noto, Ishikawa Prefecture, are on high alert, expecting waves of up to 5 meters. NHK reports 1 meter waves slamming the coast of Wajima City in Ishikawa Prefecture. Hokuriku Electric Power is inspecting nuclear facilities for safety post-quake, NHK reveals.



### US Navy destroys boats controlled by Iran-backed militias in Red Sea :-

A US Navy ship destroyed three boats carrying pro-Iranian Yemeni rebels after they attacked a Danish-owned cargo ship on December 31st, the latest in a series of attacks that have impeded Red Sea maritime activity. In reaction to the United States' support for Israel's military effort, Iranian-backed extremist organizations

have launched a series of attacks on Western interests, including assaults on ships transiting through the Red Sea. Earlier in December 2023, shipping companies, oil producers and cargo owners suspended transit through the Red Sea after some vessels were attacked by Houthi militants.



### Dong Jun Named As China's New Defense Minister :-

China has announced the nomination of a new defense minister, two months after the former office holder, Li Shangfu, was abruptly removed from his post. The National People's Congress Standing Committee, China's de facto legislature, announced Dong Jun, 62, as the new defense minister. Dong was most recently the commander of the Chinese navy. The announcement comes days after three senior executives from the aerospace defence industry were removed from a top advisory body to the Chinese Communist party (CCP) as part of a shake-up of the military that is thought to be linked to an anti-graft campaign that may have ensnared Li.



**IMF To Release \$700 Million Bailout Tranche To Pakistan In January :-**

According to media reports, Cash-strapped Pakistan is set to get \$700 million as the next tranche of the IMF bailout when the global lender's Executive Board meets on January 11. According to the Dawn daily, the board of the Washington-based International Monetary Fund is expected to consider and maybe provide final permission for the release of the next \$700 million tranche for Pakistan under the existing \$3 billion Stand-By Arrangement (SBA). According to the IMF Executive Board calendar, upcoming meetings are scheduled for January 8, 10 and 11, with Pakistan's case slated for discussion on the last day.



**Denmark's Queen Margrethe II To Step Down After 52 Years On Throne :-**

Denmark's Queen Margrethe II has revealed that she intends to abdicate after 52 years and pass the kingdom to her son, Crown Prince Frederik. The queen, Europe's longest-reigning living monarch, declared during her New Year's speech that she would abdicate on January 14, the anniversary of her ascension to the throne at the age of 31 following the death of her father, King Frederik IX. Ever since his birth on May 26, 1968, Frederik André Henrik Christian has been the heir to the Danish throne.



**Abu Dhabi's First Temple To Be Inaugurated By PM Modi On 14 Feb :-**

On February 14, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will dedicate a historic temple in Abu Dhabi. The BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi is the country's first Hindu temple in UAE, located in the capital's Abu Mureikha neighborhood. The temple will be one of the largest and most beautiful Hindu temples outside of India, as well as the largest in West Asia. During Prime Minister Modi's first visit to the UAE in 2015, the UAE decided to allot land for the construction of a temple in Abu Dhabi. The PM's visit was crucial diplomatically as he became the first Indian Prime Minister after Indira Gandhi to visit this strategic Gulf nation in 34 years.



**Fitch Forecasts Strong Growth For Asia Pacific Emerging Markets In 2024 :-**

According to Fitch Ratings, Asia Pacific economic growth would remain strong in 2024, with GDP growing by roughly 5% in India and a number of developing market countries. Fitch said in its study titled 'APAC Cross-Sector Outlook 2024' that the outlooks for the banking sectors in India and Indonesia, as well as APAC emerging markets overall, improve in 2024, reflecting the robust economic backdrop. The Indian economy grew 7.2 per cent in 2022-23 fiscal year. India's GDP expanded 7.8 per cent and 7.6 per cent in the June and September quarters, respectively.



**India Plans 'Bharat Park' Trade Zone In UAE For Global Showcase :-**

The government intends to establish 'Bharat Park', an India-specific trade zone in the UAE that will include a showroom and warehouse. Goods manufactured in India will be showcased and stored for a global audience in the Park. Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Textiles and Commerce, stated that the Bharat Park will allow other countries to acquire Indian goods while payment is secured in the UAE. Urging the industry to maintain the quality of goods exported from India, he said the Bureau of Indian Standard will spend Rs 40 crore to set up 21 testing laboratories at various places in India.



**Bangladesh Election 2024: Sheikh Hasina Secures Fifth Term Amid Opposition Boycott:-**

Despite poor turnout and a boycott of Bangladesh's general elections, incumbent Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gained her fifth term in power after her Awami League Party won an absolute majority in the polls. Following the polling on January 7, the Awami League took an early lead, gaining 216 of the 224 seats on 07 January. Sheikh Hasina became the world's longest-serving female head of state after being elected to a fifth

term as prime minister. The Bangladesh elections of 2024 saw a considerably low voter turnout, amid boycotts against the current government.



**Tshering Tobgay Re-Elected As Bhutan's Prime Minister :-**

Bhutanese voters have elected Tshering Tobgay as Prime Minister for the second time, with his party winning over two-thirds of the seats, the election commission said in results. Mr. Tobgay, the leader of the liberal People's Democratic Party (PDP), who was prime minister of the Himalayan country from 2013 to 2018, won 30 of the 47 seats. The 58-year-old, a former civil servant, is a passionate conservation advocate who holds a degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Pittsburgh and a Master's in public administration from Harvard.



**IIT Madras To Establish New Campus In Kandy, Sri Lanka :-**

Sri Lanka's Education Minister, Dr. Susil Premajayantha, has announced that a new IIT Madras campus will be established in Kandy, Sri Lanka. The proposal, according to the minister, was part of Sri Lanka President Ranil Wickremasinghe's Budget 2024, which he submitted as

Finance Minister. He further stated that during his visit to IIT Madras last month, he spoke with the Director and Deans of Faculty. Dr. Premajayantha added that a team of academics would be sent by his ministry to IIT Madras before the team from IIT would visit Sri Lanka for starting the Campus.



**Bernardo Arevalo Sworn In As Guatemala President :-**

Anti-corruption crusader Bernardo Arevalo was sworn in as Guatemala's president following a turbulent inauguration that was delayed for hours by a last-ditch attempt by Congress opponents to restrict his authority. Arevalo won the August elections by a landslide, and almost 9 hours after his inauguration was set to begin, he took the oath of office, succeeding conservative candidate Alejandro Giammattei. Arevalo's unexpected election victory was seen as a watershed moment for Guatemala, where the 65-year-old has cast himself as a democracy advocate and the leader of a progressive movement bent on reshaping a political landscape long dominated by conservative parties.



**India Secures Lithium Blocks In Argentina To Address ₹24,000 Crore Import Dependency :-**

In a momentous milestone, India is preparing to acquire exploration and development rights to five lithium blocks in Argentina. India has taken a significant step towards

lowering its ₹24,000 crore lithium import dependency, mostly from China. The contract was reached between Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL) and Catamarca Minera Y Energética Sociedad Del Estado (CAMYEN), an Argentine state-owned mining and energy firm. Under the agreement, KABIL gains Exploration and Exclusivity Rights for five lithium brine blocks located in Argentina, spanning approximately 15,703 hectares. The specific blocks include Cortadera-I, Cortadera-VII, Cortadera-VIII, Cateo-2022-01810132, and Cortadera-VI.



**UNDP And Denmark Launch “Green Rooms” In Ukraine :-**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in conjunction with the Danish government, has launched a ground-breaking effort in Ukraine by establishing "green rooms" at the National Police headquarters in Zaporizhzhia Oblast. This innovative effort seeks to provide a secure and supportive atmosphere for successful communication between law enforcement officials and child survivors or witnesses to crime. Interactions in the “green room” can be recorded, providing a valuable resource for court proceedings.



**India Aids Afghanistan With 40,000 Liters Of Malathion Against Locust Threat :-**

In its continuous efforts to help Afghanistan, India has delivered 40,000 litres of Malathion, a pesticide used to control locust problem, through the Chabahar port. The Taliban-controlled Ministry of Agriculture has expressed gratitude for this aid, emphasizing its importance in crop protection and preserving food security for Afghanistan. Malathion, which is noted for its effectiveness in arid areas and low water consumption, is regarded as an important weapon in locust management. The aid not only addresses the immediate threat in Afghanistan but also serves to prevent the spread of locusts to neighbouring Central Asian countries.



**Saudi Arabia To Open First Alcohol Store For Diplomats :-**

Saudi Arabia is set to build its first alcohol store in the capital, Riyadh, to serve only non-Muslim officials. The move is a significant step in the kingdom's efforts, led by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, to open the ultra-conservative Muslim country to tourism and industry, as alcohol consumption is prohibited in Islam. It is also part of a larger plan called Vision 2030 to create a post-oil economy. A source familiar with the plans said the store is expected to open in the coming weeks.



**Maersk Reveals World's Largest Methanol-Powered Container Ship :-**

AP Moller-Maersk has revealed the Ane Maersk, the world's largest Ship that can run on the green hydrogen derivative. It was named after Ane Maersk Mc-Kinney Uggla, Chairman of the Parent Company AP Moller Holding. It can carry 8 times more containers than Danish Logistics Company's Laura Maersk, which became the world's first methanol dual-fuel container ship when it was launched in September 2023. The Ane Maersk will begin its first voyage on 9th Feb from Hyundai Heavy Industries Shipyard in Ulsan, South Korea.



**Iran Says It Launched 3 Satellites Simultaneously Into Orbit :-**

Iran claimed to have launched three satellites into orbit at the same time, nearly a week after the Revolutionary Guards launched a research spacecraft that obtained criticism from the West. The satellites were transported by the two-stage Simorgh (Phoenix) satellite carrier and launched into a minimum orbit of 450 kilometers (280 miles), according to state TV. The Mahda satellite, which weighs around 32 kilogrammes and was developed by Iran's Space Agency, is designed to test advanced satellite subsystems, the official IRNA news agency said.



**India Nominates 'Maratha Military Landscapes' For UNESCO World Heritage List 2024-25 :-**



In a significant move to recognise and preserve India's rich historical heritage, the Ministry of Culture has announced that 'Maratha Military Landscapes of India', which represents the extraordinary fortification and military system envisioned by the Maratha rulers, will be the country's nomination for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List for the 2024-25 cycle. Developed

between the 17th and 19th centuries, the nomination comprises the 12 components of Salher Fort, Shivneri Fort, Lohgad, Khanderi Fort, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Suvarnadurg, Panhala Fort, Vijaydurg, Sindhudurg in Maharashtra, and Gingee Fort in Tamil Nadu, the statement said.

## 10: Miscellaneous



### David Warner Retires From One-Day Cricket :-

In the run-up to his final Test, David Warner has declared his retirement from one-day international cricket. Following Australia's 2023 World Cup victory in India, where he was the team's leading run-scorer, the veteran opener stated the time has come to call it quits in one-day internationals. Warner retires as the sixth-highest ODI run-scorer in Australian history, with 6,932 runs from 161 matches. His 22 centuries are the second most by any Australian ODI player, behind only Ricky Ponting, who made 29 in 105 more innings than Warner played.



### Vodafone Idea Director P Balaji Moves To Air India :-

P Balaji, director (regulatory and corporate affairs) at Vodafone Idea, has resigned, the telecom operator announced. He will join Air India as group head (governance, regulatory, compliance, and corporate affairs), according to the Tata Group airline. Balaji was the principal individual at Vodafone Idea who interacted with government authorities, the company's largest shareholder. In a statement, Air India said Balaji will assume his role on January 11 and report to CEO and MD Campbell Wilson.



### 10th Century Kadamba Inscription Written In Kannada, Sanskrit Found In Goa :-

In the Mahadeva temple in Cacoda in southern Goa, an inscription written in Kannada and Sanskrit dating from the 10th century A.D. Kadamba period was uncovered. The inscription was investigated by T. Murugeshi, a retired associate professor of ancient history and archaeology at Mulki Sundar Ram Shetty College in Shirva, Udupi district. According to Mr. Murugeshi, its epigraph is engraved in Kannada and Nagari characters. Rajendra Kerkar, an environmentalist of Goa, found the inscription and informed Mr. Murugeshi.



**Ujjain Unveils India’s First Hygienic Food Street ‘Prasadam’ :-**

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya unveiled India's first health food street, Prasadam, in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh. The food street at Neelkanth Van, Mahakal Lok in Ujjain will be the first of 100 to open across the country's districts. Ujjain, home to the world-famous Mahakal Temple, is also the hometown of MP's new Chief Minister, Mohan Yadav. Mandaviya, who opened the food street, along with the Chief Minister, stated that the launch marks a significant stride in the country’s journey towards healthy eating habits.

21,619 square metres, a whopping 90.04% is covered by drought-tolerant or native species while 9.96% is covered by turf.



**Government Approves 1-Year Extension For RBI Deputy Governor Michael Patra :-**

Michael Patra, deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), has had his tenure extended by the Centre for another year. The extension is effective January 15 of current year. Patra is in charge of the crucial monetary policy section and a member of the rate-setting committee. Patra was originally appointed as RBI deputy governor in January 2020 for a three-year term. Last year, the government extended his term by one year. Patra, a career central banker since 1985, has worked in various positions in the RBI. Before becoming deputy governor, Patra was executive director of the RBI.



**NICMAR Hyderabad Achieves Platinum Certification Under IGBC Green Campus Rating :-**

The National Institute of Construction Management and Research (NICMAR) in Hyderabad has been awarded platinum certification under the Indian Green Building Council's Green Campus Rating. With approximately 25 trees per acre, or 47% green cover, and water-efficient irrigation systems, among other green measures, NICMAR is leading the way in promoting sustainability in India's higher education institutions and sensitizing young architects early on. Of the total landscape area of



**Food Corporation of India**

**FCI (Food Corporation Of India) Marks Its 60th Anniversary :-**

The FCI celebrates its 60th anniversary, with Union Minister Piyush Goyal hailing India's food self-sufficiency as a unique achievement in human history. On January 14, 2024, Goyal stressed the FCI's critical role in eliminating hunger for all citizens of the world's most populated nation. Minister Goyal emphasized the

importance of maintaining transparency in the FCI's operations and adopting digital technologies to improve efficiency and quality. He urged the organization to explore avenues to manage expenses effectively, acknowledging the vital role it plays in maintaining India's food security.



**Shaun Marsh Announces Retirement From Professional Cricket :-**

Shaun Marsh, an Australian cricketer, announced his retirement from professional cricket, with the Melbourne Renegades' Big Bash League match against Sydney Thunder being his final assignment on January 17. Before joining the Renegades for the 2019-20 season, he played for the Perth Scorchers from 2011 to 2019, and he paid tribute to his former squad. Marsh also had a great stint with Australia across formats, scoring more than 5,200 runs and 13 centuries, while his last outing for the Kangaroos was against Sri Lanka at The Oval during the 2019 ODI World Cup.



**Tallest Ambedkar Statue Unveiled In Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh :-**

The Andhra Pradesh government inaugurated the world's tallest statue of BR Ambedkar, recognized as the architect of the Indian Constitution, in Vijayawada on January 19. Standing 206 feet tall, the 'Statue of Social Justice' will be one of the world's top 50 tallest statues, which Sardar Vallabhai Patel's 'Statue of Unity' tops. The second-tallest Ambedkar statue, which is 175 feet, is situated in neighbouring Telangana. The project to build the statue incurred ₹404.35 crore and it is spread over 18.81 acres of land covered in a lush green park.



**Centre allows female employees to nominate son and daughter for family pension :-**

According to an official release, the Central government has altered regulations to allow women government employees to nominate their children above their spouses for family pensions, a pivotal decision with substantial socioeconomic consequences. Previously, the family pension was assigned to the spouse of a deceased government servant or pensioner, and other family members were only eligible if the spouse died or became ineligible. The alteration enables female government workers or pensioners to allocate family pension to their eligible children posthumously, superseding their spouse.

## 11: National



### **E-Commerce Exports Handbook for MSMEs Launched:-**

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has launched the Directorate General of Foreign Trade's (DGFT) 'E-Commerce Exports Handbook for MSMEs' as an authoritative reference for MSMEs wishing to harness e-commerce platforms to boost their exports. The manual is currently available in English, Hindi, Gujarati, and Kannada and will be translated into all official languages in India. The minister also announced extending the Scheme for Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) to courier and postal exports.



### **68 Rajya Sabha Members, Including Notables Like Manmohan Singh And Jaya Bachchan, Set To Retire In 2024 :-**

This year, 68 Rajya Sabha members, including nine Union ministers, will complete their terms. Elections have already been announced for three of the 68 vacancies in Delhi, where AAP leaders Sanjay Singh, Narain Dass Gupta, and Sushil Kumar Gupta will finish their terms on January 27. As many as 57 leaders, including Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, Education Minister

Dharmendra Pradhan, Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav, Health Minister Mansukh Madaviya, and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, will complete their tenures in April. BJP members Anil Agrawal, Ashok Bajpai, Anil Jain, Kanta Kardam, Sakaldeep Rajbhar, GVL Narasimha Rao, Vijay Pal Singh Tomar, Sudhanshu Trivedi and Harnath Singh Yadav, Samajwadi Party member Jaya Bachchan from Uttar Pradesh are retiring.



### **India Aims To Reach \$5 Trillion Economy By FY28, \$30 Trillion By 2047: Finance Minister At Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit :-**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated that India will become the world's third largest economy by 2027-28, with a GDP of more than \$5 trillion. Even with conservative forecasts, the Indian economy will be worth USD 30 trillion by 2047, she noted. "It is possible that we will be the third largest economy by 2027-28, and our GDP will cross USD 5 trillion by that time. By 2047, it is a conservative estimate that we will reach at least USD 30 trillion in terms of economy," Sitharaman said at the Vibrant Gujarat summit.



**Indian Army To Observe 2024 As The Year Of Technology Absorption :-**

The Indian Army will observe 2024 as the "Year of Technology Absorption" as it strives to gradually mature into a modern force with a new operational philosophy for the induction of drones and counter-drones systems across infantry, artillery, and armoured battalions, as well as the establishment of Command Cyber Operations Support Wings (CCOSWs), in addition to bridging other conventional asymmetries. The Army's new pitch is an attempt to grow out of previous declaration of making 2023 as the "Year of Transformation" that saw moves such as reorientation of its arms like that of artillery, induction of fresh human resource through Agniveers, downsizing of some verticals and tech infusion.



**Defense Minister Sanctions Insurance Scheme For BRO Workers :-**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal to grant insurance coverage to tens of thousands of casual laborers employed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) to build infrastructure on the country's most remote frontiers. "This scheme will provide Rs.10 lakh as insurance in any kind of death to the family of casual paid labourers," the defence ministry said in a statement. The latest welfare step comes months after the ministry implemented a new policy for BRO's casual workers in September 2023 to ensure their dignity in the event of death.



**PM Modi Inaugurates NACIN Campus In Andhra Pradesh :-**

Prime Minister Modi has inaugurated the new campus of the National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes & Narcotics (NACIN) at Palasamudram in Andhra Pradesh's Sri Sathya Sai district. He interacted with the Officer Trainees of the 74th and 75th batch of Indian Revenue Service (Custom and Indirect Taxes) as well as the Officer Trainees of Royal Civil Service of Bhutan. He visited the Antiques Smuggling Study Centre, Narcotics Study Centre and Wildlife Crime Detection Centre at NACIN. The PM also released a book titled "Flora of Palasamudram".



**Ministry of Home Affairs Revokes FCRA Registration of Centre for Policy Research :-**

The Centre for Policy Research (CPR), a well-known non-governmental organization, has had its Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) license revoked by the Ministry of Home Affairs for alleged regulatory infractions. The CPR's license under the Foreign Contribution Registration Act was suspended 11 months ago. The cancellation order was issued on January 10, according to reports. Established in 1973, CPR is one of

India's oldest and most prominent think tanks and research centers. It came under scrutiny by the Income Tax authorities in September 2022.



**India Records Its First-Ever Confirmed Sighting Of A Rare Tibetan Brown Bear :-**

India has made a significant discovery by recording the first confirmed sighting of a rare Tibetan Brown Bear. The bear was discovered in the high elevations of Northern Sikkim thanks to video traps deployed by the Sikkim Forest Department and WWF-India. With this discovery, the nation's animal variety has grown by one subspecies. According to sources, over the past decades, foresters, interacting with the Dokpas or nomadic herders in the high-altitude areas of Tso-Lhamo plateau and Muguthang, heard incidents of a large unidentified animal stealing sugar and oil stored in the herders' camps.



**Farsi As India's New Classical Language :-**

In a crucial step toward strengthening cultural connections, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said that the Government of India has agreed to incorporate Farsi (Persian) as one of India's nine classical languages under the New Education Policy. This accreditation

demonstrates a dedication to increasing understanding and appreciation for Farsi's rich tradition within the Indian educational framework. Tamil was the first language in India to be accorded classical language status in 2004. Sanskrit, Kannada, Malayalam and Odia are the other languages that have been declared classical languages in India by the central government.



**PM Modi Inaugurates Boeing's Global Engineering & Technology Centre Campus Near Bengaluru :-**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi officially inaugurated Boeing's worldwide engineering and technology campus in Bengaluru, which cost Rs 1,600 crore to build on a 43-acre plot of land. According to a statement, the Boeing India Engineering & Technology Center (BIETC) is the company's largest investment outside of the United States and will serve as a foundation for collaborating with India on products and services for the global aerospace and defense industry. Modi said that Bengaluru links aspirations to innovations and achievements, and Indian technology to global demand.



**PM Launched Khelo India Youth Games 2023 In Chennai, Tamil Nadu :-**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Khelo India Youth Games 2023 at Chennai's landmark Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, kicking off a two-week athletic festival. Over 5,500 competitors from 26 competitive sports are expected to attend the event, which runs from January 19 to January 31. PM Modi has launched ₹250 crore worth of broadcasting projects. This includes the launch of the revamped DD Podhigai channel as DD Tamil, 12 Akashvani FM projects in 8 States, and 4 DD transmitters in Jammu and Kashmir.



**Union Cabinet Approves Creation of Posts to Assist 16th Finance Commission :-**

The Cabinet has approved the formation of three officer-level positions to support the 16th Finance Commission, chaired by Arvind Panagariya. The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the creation of three Joint Secretary positions for the 16th Finance Commission, comprising two Joint Secretaries and one Economic Adviser, according to an official statement. All other posts in the commission have already been created as per the delegated powers, it added. Ritvik Ranjanam Pandey was named as the Secretary to the Commission.



**Ayodhya Ram Mandir Inaugurated By Prime Minister Narendra Modi :-**

On January 22, 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, marking an important event in Indian history. The inauguration included the 'Pran Pratishtha' (consecration) ceremony of the Ram Lalla idol, which is a significant ritual that represents the infusion of life into the statue. Over 7,000 dignitaries attended the event, which served as both a religious service and a cultural milestone for India. The temple itself, an architectural marvel, stands at a length of 380 feet, a width of 250 feet, and a height of 161 feet, embodying the traditional Nagara style of architecture.



**Vice-President Launches 'Hamara Samvidhan, Hamara Samman' Campaign For India's 75th Republic Year :-**

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar launched a year-long pan-India effort called 'Hamara Samvidhan, Hamara Samman' in New Delhi to commemorate India's 75th anniversary as a republic. The campaign's major goal is to empower all citizens to actively participate in India's democratic journey. Throughout the year, various themes such as 'Sabko Nyay - Har Ghar Nyaya,' 'Nav Bharat Nav Sankalp,' and 'Vidhi Jagriti Abhiyan' will be explored. Addressing the gathering, Vice President Dhankhar called for remembering the nation's forgotten heroes and rediscovering India.



**Republic Day 2024: Women Tri-Services contingent participated in parade for the first time :-**

India has celebrated its 75th Republic Day on 26 January 2024. The theme for this year's festival is 'Viksit Bharat' and 'Bharat - Loktantra ki Matraka,' which promises a unique blend of traditions and innovation, as well as spectacular events and attractions celebrating togetherness and patriotism. For the first time this year, a tri-service ensemble made up entirely of women marched in the Republic Day Parade. According to ANI, the organisation consists of female soldiers from the Army's military police as well as staff members from the other two services.



**Air India fined Rs 1.1 cr for violating flight safety rules:-**

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has imposed a Rs 1.1 crore fine on Air India for violating safety rules on flights on certain long-range routes that were “critical” in terms of terrain. In a complaint filed with the DGCA in October last year, a pilot accused the

Tata Group-run airline of carrying insufficient emergency oxygen on its B777 aircraft operating on India-US routes. The DGCA, after an investigation, found merit in the pilot's allegations and imposed the aforementioned penalty.



**Centre Identifies 'Hotspots' in 30 Cities to Achieve Goal of Beggar-Free India :-**

From Ayodhya in the north to Guwahati in the east, Trimbakeshwar in the west to Thiruvananthapuram in the south, the Centre has identified 30 cities of religious, historical, and tourism significance for surveying and rehabilitating adults, particularly women and children who beg. The ministry of social justice and empowerment is aiming to support the district and Municipal authorities in identifying hotspots and making these spaces free of beggary by 2026. According to officials more cities are likely to be added to this list over these two years.

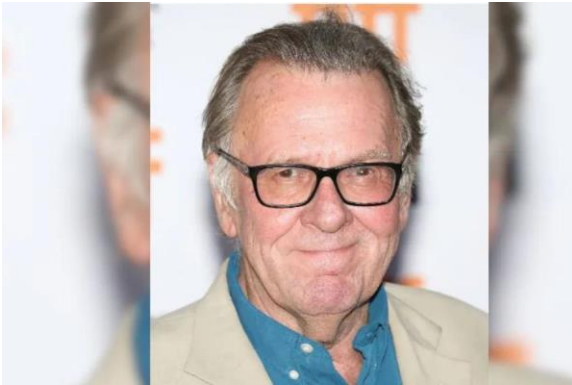
**12: Obituaries**



**Carnatic vocalist O.S. Thyagarajan passes away :-**

O S Thiagarajan, a well-known carnatic singer, died at the age of 76 in a private hospital in Chennai after a protracted illness. O S Thiagarajan was the recipient of various honors, including the Sangeetha Natak Academi Puraskar, the Sangeetha Choodamani (Sri Krishna Gana Sabha, Chennai), and the Sangeetha Kala Sagara (Kalasagaram, Hyderabad). He frequently appeared at Margazhi music festivals. Thiagarajan, was also the dean and faculty of fine arts at Annamalai University for 5 years. He has trained many disciples who are active on the carnatic circuit.





**Oscar-nominated actor and 'The Full Monty', 'Batman Begins' star, Tom Wilkinson, passes away at 75 :-**

Tom Wilkinson, the Oscar-nominated British actor best known for his appearances in "The Full Monty," "Michael Clayton," and "The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel," has died, according to his family. He was 75. Wilkinson was nominated for an Academy Award for best actor for his work in the 2001 family drama "In The Bedroom," as well as for best supporting actor for his role in "Michael Clayton," a 2007 courtroom thriller starring George Clooney. He starred in dozens of other TV dramas and movies, from "Rush Hour" and "Batman Begins" to "Shakespeare in Love", "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" and "Valkyrie".



**Padma Bhushan Awardee Prof Ved Prakash Nanda Passes Away :-**

Professor Ved Prakash Nanda, a prominent Indian-American law expert, died lately. Nanda, a Padma Bhushan recipient for his contributions to literature and education, was also the John Evans Distinguished University Professor of International Law at Colorado's University of Denver. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over Nanda's demise. who said that

Professor Nanda's work highlighted his commitment to legal education. Home Minister Amit Shah also condoled Nanda's demise.



**German football legend Franz Beckenbauer passes away at age of 78 :-**

Franz Beckenbauer, the respected German football star regarded as one of the game's all-time greats, died at the age of 78. His legacy as "Der Kaiser" is well established as one of football's best. He is one of only three people to have won the World Cup as both a player and a manager, with Brazil's Mario Zagallo and France's Didier Deschamps. The former Bayern Munich stalwart clinched the European Cup thrice with the Bavarian giants, securing the Bundesliga title four times as a player and once as a coach. His leadership guided Bayern to UEFA Cup victory in 1996.



**Maestro Ustad Rashid Khan Passes Away At 55 :-**

Ustad Rashid Khan, a music maestro, died while being treated for prostate cancer at a hospital in Kolkata, according to officials. The classical singer was 55. The classical singer, a member of the Rampur-Sahaswan Gharana, is Inayat Hussain Khan's great-grandson. Born in Uttar Pradesh, Badayun Rashid Khan, the nephew of

Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan, received his early tuition from his maternal grandfather, Ustad Nissar Hussain Khan (1909–1993). At the age of eleven, Rashid Khan delivered his debut concert, and in the subsequent year, 1978, he graced the stage at an ITC concert in Delhi.



**Former TCS executive director Phiroz Vandrevala passes away at 70 :-**

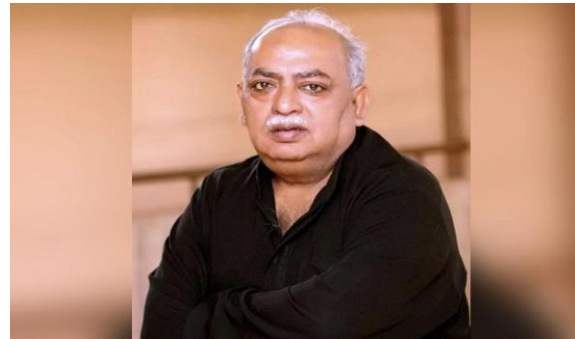
Phiroz Vandrevala, a former executive director of IT major Tata Consultancy Services, died at the age of 70. Vandrevala, a former chairman of the IT industry association Nasscom, left the TCS board in 2016. Vandrevala joined the Mumbai-based Tata Group in 1982 and has been a major member of its leadership team for decades. From 2007 to 2016, he served as the company's executive director and head of global corporate affairs at TCS. Vandrevala also had a stint as vice-chairman and managing director of TCS' UK-based subsidiary Diligenta and led the company's life insurance and pensions industry business.



**Renowned classical singer Prabha Atre dies at 92 :-**

Dr. Prabha Atre, a renowned classical vocalist and Padma Vibhushan laureate, died on January 13 of a heart arrest at her Pune home at the age of 92, according to individuals close to her. Atre, a torchbearer of Hindustani

classical music's Kirana Gharana, received all three Padma awards from the Indian government. In January 2022, she received the Padma Vibhushan, the nation's second-highest civilian honour. She was earlier honoured with the Padma Shri award in 1990 and the Padma Bhushan in 2002.



**Urdu poet Munawwar Rana passes away at 71 :-**

Munawwar Rana, a renowned poet, died on January 14 at the Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences in Lucknow. He was 71. He had been suffering from throat cancer for a long time. Mr. Munawwar Rana, born in 1952 in Rae Bareli, received the Gyanpeeth Award in 2014. His use of basic terms in his poetry made them famous among the general public. Mr. Munawwar Rana's poem Maa, which is considered one of his most famous works, has a special place in the world of Urdu literature.



**World Champion Pole Vaulter Shawn Barber Passed Away :-**

Shawn Barber, the Canadian pole vault record holder and 2015 world champion, died of medical issues. He was 29. He owns the men's pole vault record of 6.00 meters. The record was set in January 2016 in Reno, Nevada. Barber also won the 2015 World Championships in Beijing, China, with a mark of 5.90m. In 2015, Shawn Barber won

the NCAA outdoor title for the University of Akron. The year was special for Shawn Barber in terms of victories, as he won one of his five Canadian titles in the year 2015.



**Ilaiyaraaja's daughter and playback singer Bhavatharini passed away :-**

Bhavatharini, the daughter of music director Ilaiyaraaja and playback vocalist, died lately from cancer. According to accounts, she traveled to Sri Lanka to seek treatment for liver cancer. Bhavatharini debuted as a singer with 'Raasaiya'. She became the composer for Revathy's film 'Mitr, My Friend' in 2002. She later composed for 'Phir Milenge' and a number of films. Her last music album was for the Malayalam film, 'Maayanadhi'. She won the National Film Award for Best Female Playback singer for Tamil song, 'Mayil Pola Ponnu Onnu' from 'Bharathi'.

**13: Ranks & Reports**



**Bank achieve 80% annual crop loan target in first half of FY24 :-**

According to the State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC), banks in Telangana disbursed Rs 35,023 crore in crop loans in the first six months of the fiscal year, up to September, attaining 79.48% of the yearly target. Presenting a report on performance of the banks, during the first half of 2023-24, at the SLBC meeting in Hyderabad, SBI Chief General Manager Rajesh Kumar said Rs 26,730 crore investment credit was disbursed by the banks to allied agriculture activities and thus meeting 67.97% of the targets.



**India confident FY24 growth will be comfortably above 6.5% :-**

In its Half-Yearly Economic Review 2023-24, the Union Finance Ministry predicted healthy economic growth for fiscal year 2023-24 (FY24), comfortably reaching the 6.5% level. "The growth witnessed in Q2 of FY24 is indicative of a strong economic recovery, and we anticipate this momentum to continue into Q3. High-Frequency Indicators (HFIs) for October and November 2023 demonstrate robust economic activity, further supporting our optimistic outlook" the Finance Ministry stated.



**UPI Ends 2023 With Record Transactions Worth Rs 18-Lakh Crore, Up 42% Y-O-Y :-**

The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) finished 2023 on a high note, with over 1,200 crore transactions worth more than Rs 18 lakh crore recorded in December, a record for both the number and value of transactions. According to data from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), over 11,765 UPI transactions worth Rs 182.2 lakh crore were performed in 2023, representing a 59% increase in volume and a 45% increase in value over 2022. Transactions worth Rs 18.23-lakh crore were processed during December, significantly higher than the previous high of Rs 17.40-lakh crore in November.



**Hyderabad, Bengaluru Airports Score High In Global On-Time Ranking :-**

In 2023, Hyderabad and Bengaluru airports were ranked second and third in the world for on-time performance (OTP). With an OTP of 84.44%, Minneapolis' St Paul International Airport topped the list. OTP declined at Japanese airports. Netaji Subhash Chandra airport in Kolkata was ranked ninth in the 'medium airports' category. IndiGo secured the eighth rank in the low-cost carriers category. On-time performance (OTP) is a valuable metric of reliability, with OTP arrivals used to rank airlines and OTP departures used to rank airports.



**PNB Housing Finance's NCD Ratings Upgraded By India Ratings To IND AA+ With Stable Outlook :-**

PNB Housing Finance, a housing finance firm, announced that India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has upgraded the company's non-convertible debentures (NCDs) to 'IND AA+' with a stable outlook from 'IND AA'. The rating rationale, published on January 2, 2024, mentions that the key drivers for the rating upgrade are granularisation of loan book with 96 per cent being retail and almost complete rundown of the corporate book, robust capital buffers post equity infusion of ₹2,500 through rights issue, improved asset quality, diversified resource profile with the ability to raise funds from banks and the capital markets, adequate liquidity and improvement in profitability.



**India's FY24 GDP Growth Projection At 7.3%: NSO Data :-**

The National Statistical Office (NSO) forecasts 7.3 percent growth in the Indian economy in 2023-2024, higher than the Reserve Bank of India's estimate of 7%, assuming an investment-led rebound in the world's fifth largest economy. This far exceeds the Street's expectations. Most economists expect India's gross domestic product (GDP) to expand between 6.5% and 6.7% in the current fiscal year. The Indian economy grew

7.7 per cent in the first half (April-September) of FY24, data for which was released on November 30.



**UN Report: India’s GDP Growth Forecast At 6.2% For 2024 :-**

A United Nations report lowered India's GDP growth forecast for the calendar year 2024 to 6.2 percent from 6.7 percent previously. “Growth in India is projected to reach 6.2 per cent in 2024, slightly lower than the 6.3 per cent estimate for 2023, amid robust domestic demand and strong growth in the manufacturing and services sectors,” according to the World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) study. According to the research, declining global demand, unresolved trade concerns among the main trading partners, and geopolitical conflicts are all having an impact on trade flows in the medium term.



**Delhi’s Robust Economic Growth: Per Capita Income Soars By Over 14% To Rs 4,44,768 :-**

According to the Department of Economics and Statistics' newly released 'Statistical Handbook-2023', Delhi's per capita income increased from Rs 3,89,529 in 2021-22 to Rs 4,44,768 in 2022-23. This is more than the national average per capita income of Rs 1,72,276, according to the handbook. An average of 41 lakh passengers used DTC buses daily last year — there are over 7,200 DTC and Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit

System (DIMTS) buses in the city, of which 1,300 buses were electric ones in 2023.



**EU Scientists Confirm 2023 As Hottest Year Ever Recorded :-**

According to the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), last year was the world's hottest year on record by a significant margin and most likely the warmest in the last 1 million years. Scientists had generally anticipated the milestone after climate records had been regularly broken. Since June, each month has been the hottest on record when compared to the prior year's comparable month. On average, in 2023 the planet was 1.48 degrees Celsius warmer than in the 1850-1900 pre-industrial period, when humans began burning fossil fuels on an industrial scale, pumping carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.



**India’s Retail Inflation Reaches 4-Month High At 5.69% In December :-**

In December, India's headline retail inflation rate rose to a four-month high of 5.69 percent, according to figures issued by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. The latest CPI inflation rate of 5.69 percent is lower than expected, with economists predicting a 5.9 percent year-on-year increase in

December. While headline retail inflation rose again in December - it has now spent 51 consecutive months above the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) medium-term target of 4 percent - it has undershot forecasts for the second month running, ensuring that it has been lower than the Indian central bank's forecast of 5.6 percent for October-December.



**India's Outward FDI Plummeted To \$2.25 Billion In December 2023: RBI Data :-**

India's outward foreign direct investment (OFDI) commitments fell sharply from more than \$4.12 billion in December 2022 to \$2.25 billion in December 2023, according to Reserve Bank of India data. Sequentially, they were down from \$4 billion in November 2023, according to RBI data. OFDI is a business strategy in which a domestic company expands operations into a foreign country. It involves acquiring assets in another country, often through the establishment of foreign subsidiaries, branches, or ownership stakes in foreign enterprises.



**Wholesale Price Index (WPI) Inflation Hits Nine-Month High At 0.73% In December 2023 :-**

In December, India's wholesale pricing index (WPI) inflation increased to a nine-month high of 0.73% from 0.26% the previous month, primarily to rising food prices,

according to commerce ministry data. The December print was also boosted by the fading high base effect, which had kept WPI deflationary in the first seven months of FY24. On a month-on-month basis, the overall index declined 0.9% in December, at the steepest pace in four months. With the current print, WPI inflation has averaged (-)1.07% in April-December FY24 as against 11.69% in the comparable period of FY23.



**US Leads 2024 Military Rankings, India Fourth :-**

The United States possesses the world's most powerful military, with Russia and China ranking second and third, respectively. According to Global Firepower, a website that tracks worldwide defence information, India ranks fourth. Global Firepower's Military Strength Rankings for 2024 evaluate 145 countries based on more than 60 criteria, including troop numbers, military equipment, financial stability, geographic location, and accessible resources. These factors together determine a PowerIndex score, where lower scores indicate stronger military capabilities.



**TCS Ranked Second Most Valuable IT Brand In Global List :-**

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), the country's largest IT services company, has been named the world's second most valuable IT services brand in Brand Finance's 2024

Global 500 IT Services Ranking. Over the past few decades, TCS has made considerable expenditures to develop its brand's global footprint. These include increasing its visibility at important industry and business conferences, internet channels, and social media, as well as improving its leadership status in industry analyst reports. Accenture's brand value grew to \$40.5 billion and it tops the most-valued IT services brands list.



**Apple Surpasses Samsung As Top Smartphone Maker For The First Time Since 2010 :-**

Apple Inc.'s iPhone dethroned Samsung Electronics Co. devices to become the best-selling smartphone series in 2023, marking the first time South Korea's largest firm has lost the top rank since 2010. According to IDC, the iPhone accounted for around one-fifth of the global market last year, with nearly 235 million shipments. Samsung, whose shipments fell by double-digits to 226.6 million, finished second, ahead of Chinese device makers such as Xiaomi Corp. Apple benefited from aggressive offers that have enticed a shift toward premium devices.



**Four DISCOMs Secured A+ Rating In The Latest CSRD Report For Exceptional Consumer Service :-**

Four electricity distribution companies (DISCOMs) in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh received the coveted A+ rating in the recent Consumer Service Rating of Discoms (CSRD)

report. The study, released by Power Minister RK Singh, monitors the functioning of DISCOMs across the country and seeks to increase their accountability to consumers. "Out of the 62 DISCOMs evaluated, Delhi emerged as the frontrunner, with three companies securing the top rating: BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL), BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL), and Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited (TPDDL), " Office of union Minister RK Singh posted on X.



**Indian Equity Market Surpasses Hong Kong, Ranks 4th Globally With \$4.33 Trillion Market Cap :-**

According to Bloomberg data, India's stock market has overtaken Hong Kong's for the first time, with the total value of shares listed on Indian exchanges hitting \$4.33 trillion as of 22 January close, compared to \$4.29 trillion in Hong Kong. This ranks India as the world's fourth-largest equities market. Indian shares are soaring, fueled by an increasing number of retail investors and strong corporate results. India presents itself as a viable alternative to China, attracting global capital and companies due to its stable political environment and a consumption-driven economy among the fastest-growing globally, according to the report.



**Bhopal Ranks 5th In Swachh Survekshan 2023 Cleanliness :-**

The dedicated efforts of the Bhopal Municipal Corporation have had a significant influence on Swachh Survekshan-2023. Moving up from sixth place in 2022, Bhopal is currently the fifth cleanest city among cities with a population of more than one lakh. Bhopal has also received a 5-star Garbage Free City (GFC) designation, making it the cleanest state capital in the country. The city produces 850 tons of waste daily, and the entire waste stream is processed every day. Bhopal's ascent in recent years can be attributed to its adoption of best practices, innovation, and distinctiveness.



**Direct Tax-To-GDP Ratio Hits 15 -Year High In FY23: CBDT Report :-**

In FY23, the government's direct tax-to-GDP ratio reached a 15-year high of 6.11%, according to figures from the Central Board of Direct Taxes. The Centre's direct tax receipts increased by 17.8% year on year to Rs 16.6 trillion in FY23. Corporate tax collections for the year were Rs 8.26 trillion, up 16% from the previous year, while income tax receipts were Rs 8.33 trillion, up 19.6%. Direct tax buoyancy — rate of growth of tax mop-up in comparison to nominal GDP growth—, however, stood at 1.2 in FY23 as compared to 2.5 in FY22.



**India to become a \$7 trillion economy by 2030: Finance ministry report :-**

The Indian economy is expected to grow at a rate above 7% in the coming years, owing to the strength of its financial sector and other recent and future structural reforms, and can aspire to become a \$7 trillion economy by 2030, according to the Union Finance Ministry in a report titled 'Indian Economy -- A Review' released on January 29th, just days before presenting the interim Budget for 2024-25 in Parliament on February 1st. The full Budget for FY25 is expected to be presented after the 2024 general elections in July as an interim Budget is only a Vote on Account, presented in an election year to cover expenditure for a brief period to keep the government functioning.



***NTPC Limited***  
(A Government of India Enterprise)

**NTPC Limited gets certified as a Top Employer 2024 in India by the Top Employers Institute :-**

NTPC Limited has been recognized as a Top Employer in India by the Top Employers Institute, a global HR authority that certifies excellence in HR best practices. NTPC fulfilled the necessary processes to qualify for the certification: HR Best Practice Survey, Validation, and Audit. According to a press statement from the Union Ministry of Power, NTPC's performance score was assessed against an international benchmark, and the company has been designated as a 'Top Employer'. The survey is based on an international standard; so, participants are measured against globally applicable best practice.



## 14: Schemes & Committees



### **Around 1.25 crore property cards have been distributed by the government under the SVAMITVA Scheme :-**

Under the SVAMITVA Scheme, the government has given around 1.25 crore property cards in the country. On the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented 35 lakh of these property cards. According to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, drone flying has been accomplished in 2.89 lakh villages under the initiative. It further said that nearly 18 lakh participants have received training under Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) in the current year, and a total of 42 panchayats were awarded based on their performance.



### **Microsoft's 'AI Odyssey' To Upskill 100,000 Indian Developers: Boosting AI Talent In India :-**

Microsoft has launched a new initiative called AI Odyssey, which aims to train 100,000 developers throughout India in cutting-edge artificial intelligence technologies and tools. The curriculum is intended to

provide developers with the necessary abilities to tackle critical projects that correspond with corporate objectives. Recognising the transformative impact of AI on various sectors, Microsoft's initiative seeks to cultivate a proficient workforce capable of leveraging AI to address intricate challenges and drive innovation in India.



### **Shanghai's NDB Commits \$500 Million Loan For Gujarat's Infrastructure Development :-**

The New Development Bank (NDB), headquartered in Shanghai, has agreed to provide a \$500 million loan to the Gujarat government. As part of the Vibrant Gujarat Summit, the state's Mukhayamantri Gram Sadak Yojana will receive a project financing. The NDB and the Gujarat government reached an agreement on this at the Gandhinagar summit. NDB will also provide knowledge support to strengthen the rural road network in the State by adopting new technology, safeguarding the environment and implementing safer road designs.



**PM Modi Releases First Instalment Of PM-JANMAN Scheme For Pucca Homes :-**

On January 15, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released ₹540 crore, the first instalment of funding, for pucca homes under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) to one lakh Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) beneficiary families as part of the recently launched PM-JANMAN package for the overall development of PVTG habitations. In the two months since the Prime Minister launched the scheme on November 15, the government said it had sanctioned projects worth over ₹4,700 crore through nine Ministries under the PM-JANMAN package, which includes the first instalment for PMAY(G) homes for one lakh beneficiaries.



**India Launches “Alliance For Global Good-Gender Equity And Equality” At World Economic Forum :-**

On the sidelines of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, India unveiled a new alliance for global good, gender equity and equality, with WEF Founder and Chairman Klaus Schwab promising full support for the effort. The statement was made at an India Reception held on the margins of the WEF Annual Meeting, which was hosted by the peak industrial lobby CII and attended by Union Ministers Smriti Irani and Hardeep Singh Puri, as well as WEF Founder and Executive Chairman Klaus Schwab.



**Union Minister Launches Project For Artificial Reefs In Vizhinjam To Boost Fish Population :-**

Sri. Parshotham Rupala, Union Minister of Fisheries, launched a project to install artificial reefs in the seabed in Vizhinjam, Thiruvananthapuram, via video conferencing. The project, a joint initiative of the Central and State governments, aims to boost fishermen's incomes by boosting the region's fish population. The project is being undertaken under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, with a total cost of 13.02 crore. Out of this, 7.812 crore is being provided by the Central Government and 5.208 crore is the State government's share.



**Edu Ministry bars admission of students below 16 years in coaching centres :-**

According to new guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education, coaching centers cannot enroll students under the age of 16, make deceptive promises, or guarantee rank or good scores. The criteria for regulating coaching institutes have been developed to fulfill the requirement for a legal framework while also managing the unregulated proliferation of private coaching facilities. It comes following complaints received by the government about rising cases of student suicides, fire

incidents, lack of facilities in coaching incidents as well as methodologies of teaching adopted by them.



**PM Initiates 8 AMRUT Projects Worth Rs. 2,000 Crores In Solapur, Maharashtra :-**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently laid the groundwork for eight AMRUT projects in Solapur, Maharashtra, and dedicated more than 90,000 finished residences under PMAY-Urban, marking a momentous day. The Prime Minister dedicated over 90,000 residences built under PMAY-Urban in Maharashtra, giving thousands of families a feeling of security and stability. The inauguration of 15,000 houses in the Raynagar Housing Society, Solapur, is particularly noteworthy, benefitting handloom workers, vendors, power loom workers, rag pickers, Bidi workers, drivers, and others.



**PM Modi Launches 'Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana' For One Crore Households :-**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the launch of the 'Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana'. This is a project that will give rooftop solar panels to consumers. The Pradhanmantri Suryodaya Yojana aims to provide power

to households through solar rooftop installations while also compensating for excess electricity output. One crore families will benefit from the Pradhan Mantri Suryodaya Yojana, which provides rooftop solar energy access. This scheme is meant to help poor and middle-income households lower their electricity bills.



**President Droupadi Murmu Inaugurates Kaushal Bhawan :-**

In a historic event, President Droupadi Murmu opened Kaushal Bhawan, signifying India's unwavering commitment to uplifting its youth via skill development. The Bhawan, which is overseen by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), is intended to stimulate the realization of goals and foster the nation's young talent, guiding India toward a more skilled future. Kaushal Bhawan, equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure, provides an ideal environment for ideation, collaboration, and execution of groundbreaking skill development initiatives.



**Odisha Launches LABHA: A 100% State-Funded MSP Scheme For Tribal Empowerment :-**

The Odisha government has announced the launch of the LABHA ('Laghu Bana Jatya Drabya Kraya') Yojana, which

is a 100% state-funded minimum support price (MSP) initiative for minor forest produce. The move, described as historic by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's Cabinet, is anticipated to have an impact on Odisha's significant

tribal population, which numbers nearly one crore or 23% of the overall population. The new scheme may help the ruling BJD make further inroads into tribal pockets and forest fringe areas.

## 15: Science & Technology



### ISRO's first mission of 2024, XPoSat, to be launched on January 1 :-

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) will kick off the year 2024 on January 1, Monday, with the launch of XPoSat (X-ray Polarimeter Satellite). It is India's first XPoSat, with the goal of studying the polarization of powerful X-Ray sources and the mysterious world of black holes. The PSLV Orbital Experimental Module-3 experiment will be carried out with the goal of delivering ten specified payloads supplied by ISRO and IN-SPACE. This will be done after a successful 2023 where the research organisation created history with the successful launch of Chandrayaan-3 followed by the first solar mission - Aditya-L1.



### PM Modi lauds ISRO scientists after XPoSat launch:-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) scientists on the successful launch of the inaugural X-Ray satellite 'XPoSat' on January 1, 2024, the first day of the New Year. The space agency launched the X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat) at 9:10 a.m. from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, in its first space mission of 2024. Raman Research Institute made the primary payload of the satellite, and the second payload was made by the Astronomy Group of URSC (U R Rao Satellite Centre).



### ISRO Tests Fuel Cell On PSLV-C58'S POEM3 Platform Successfully :-

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully tested a 100 W class Polymer Electrolyte Membrane Fuel Cell based Power System (FCPS) in its POEM3 orbital platform, which was launched onboard PSLV-C58 on January 1, 2024. According to the ISRO, the experiment's goal was to evaluate Polymer Electrolyte Membrane Fuel cell operation in space and collect data to aid in the design of systems for future flights. The space agency added that hydrogen fuel cells produce electricity directly from Hydrogen and Oxygen gases, along with pure water and heat.



**IIT Madras Researchers Engineered Plant Cells To Produce Drug For Cancer :-**

Researchers at the Indian Institutes of Technology Madras and Mandi metabolically engineered plant cells to produce more of the anti-cancer medication camptothecin (CPT). *Nathapodytes nimmoniana*, a native and endangered plant, is used in the production of allopathic medication. It takes roughly 1,000 tonnes of plant material to extract one tonne of CPT. The International Union for Conservation of Nature has red-listed the plant as in the past decade alone there has been a 20% decline in the plant’s population.



**Google DeepMind Introduces Mobile ALOHA Humanoid Technology :-**

Researchers from Google DeepMind and Stanford University have announced Mobile ALOHA, a low-cost open-source hardware system for bimanual teleoperation. It is a humanoid robot that can be controlled remotely by a user and act autonomously using imitation learning. ALOHA is a lightweight robot that walks at a human speed of 1.42 metres per second and can carry up to 100 kilogrammes. Both the hardware and machine-learning algorithm of ALOHA are open-

sourced. The whole system costs less than \$20,000 with off-the-shelf robots and 3D-printed components.



**U.S. Launches Peregrine-1 Lander To Moon In Historic Lunar Mission :-**

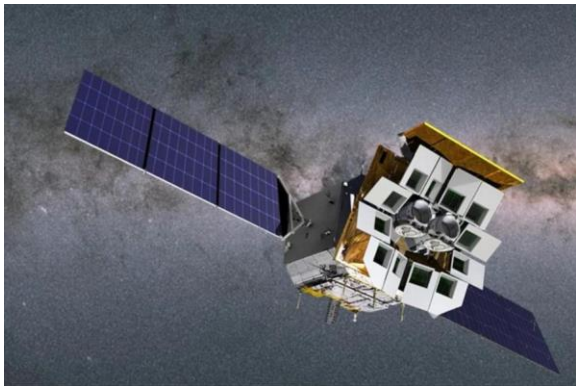
A spacecraft constructed by a commercial US corporation and carrying a slew of NASA scientific instruments lifted off from Florida, hoping to become the first US spacecraft to land on the Moon in more than 50 years. The Peregrine lander module of the project, as well as the Vulcan rocket that launched it, were constructed by private space businesses in the United States. The Mission is part of NASA’s Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS) initiative that seeks to involve private space sector in its ambitious Artemis programme that is planning a return to the Moon in a big way.



**Ancient Tools Found In Telangana’s Mulugu District :-**

Paleolithic tools, including a stone axe, were discovered in a stream near Gurrevula and Bhupathipuram villages in Telangana's Mulugu district. Charitra Brundam, a history enthusiast from Kotha Telangana, stated that scientists have proven that the tool dates back to the early Stone Age. A stone axe measuring 15.5cm long, 11cm wide, and 5.5cm thick was discovered. Paleolithic

Age is also known as Paleolithic Age or Old Stone Age or early Stone Age. It dates back to 33 lakh years BC. It lasted for 10,000 years, International paleontologist Ravi Korisettar of Karnataka said.



**China Deploys 'Einstein Probe,' A Lotus-Shaped Satellite, To Monitor Cosmic Turbulence :-**

China has launched a new astronomical satellite fashioned like a lotus into orbit to investigate unexplained transitory phenomena in the universe that flicker like fireworks. Einstein Probe (EP), a satellite that uses innovative X-ray detection technology inspired by the operation of a lobster eye, was launched by a Long March-2C carrier rocket from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in southwest China's Sichuan Province. Weighing about 1.45 tonnes and as large as a full-size SUV, the satellite is shaped like a lotus in full bloom and features 12 petals and two stamens, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.



**Mitsubishi Heavy Launches H-IIA Rocket Carrying Japan's Spy Satellite :-**

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries claimed in a social media X post that an H-IIA rocket carrying the Japanese government's Information-Gathering Satellite "Optical-

8" was launched. It was the 48th launch of Japan's flagship launch vehicle since 2001, increasing the rocket's success rating to 97.92% developed by Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA). Japan plans to retire H-IIA after two more launches and replace it with H3, but has been struggling with the transition after JAXA's first test launch failed in March last year. The H3's second test launch is slated for Feb. 15.



**Oxford Scientists Initiates First Human Trials For Nipah Virus Vaccine :-**

Scientists at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom have begun first-in-human vaccine trials for the deadly Nipah virus, which affects numerous Asian countries, including India. The Oxford Vaccine Group will lead the trials for the ChAdOx1 NipahB vaccine, which will include 51 persons aged 18 to 55. Nipah virus is a severe disease that can be fatal in approximately 75% of cases, according to the researchers. Outbreaks have occurred in countries in Asia, including Singapore, Malaysia, Bangladesh and India, with a recent one in Kerala in September last year, they said.



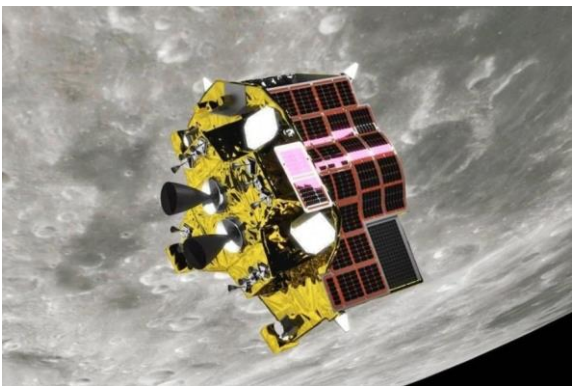
**Pixxel Inaugurates MegaPixxel: A State-Of-The-Art Satellite Manufacturing Facility In Bengaluru :-**

Pixxel, a space data firm recognized for its cutting-edge hyperspectral earth imaging technology, has opened its first spacecraft manufacturing facility, MegaPixxel, in Bengaluru. This cutting-edge facility, spanning more than 30,000 square feet, is intended to speed the satellite manufacturing process from idea to launch readiness. The MegaPixxel facility will handle spacecraft assembly, integration, and testing (AIT), allowing Pixxel's satellites to be built, integrated, and tested for the rigors of launch before being delivered to their separate launch sites.



**China's Betavolt Unveils Groundbreaking Nuclear Battery: 50 Years Of Maintenance-Free Power Generation :-**

Betavolt, a Chinese business, has revealed the development of a revolutionary battery that can power cellphones for up to 50 years without needing to be recharged. This nuclear battery, dubbed the world's first miniature atomic energy system, uses 63 radioactive isotopes that are compactly organized within a module smaller than a coin. The technology operates by converting the energy released from decaying isotopes into electricity, a concept initially explored in the 20th century and now realized by Betavolt.



**Japan's Lunar Ambition: Smart Lander Mission Set For Success On January 20 :-**

Japan is about to join a select group of nations that have successfully landed on the Moon. The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's (JAXA) Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) is slated to land on the moon on January 20, 2024. SLIM, which was launched on September 6, 2023, aboard an H-IIA rocket, offers a huge leap forward in lunar exploration technology. The mission aims to demonstrate highly accurate landings, a capability that will enhance the science value of future lunar missions.



**SpaceX Launches Ax-3 Mission To ISS With First Turkish Astronaut Onboard :-**

In a historic moment, SpaceX successfully launched the Ax-3 mission to the International Space Station (ISS) from NASA's Kennedy Space Center. The Crew Dragon capsule, called "Freedom," was launched into orbit on a Falcon 9 rocket, marking Axiom orbit's third mission. The Ax-3 mission, directed by veteran NASA astronaut Michael López-Alegría, includes a diverse crew. Alongside mission pilot Walter Villadei and European Space Agency astronaut Marcus Wandt, it includes Alper Gezeravci, Turkey's inaugural astronaut.



**Bhavish Aggarwal's AI startup Krutrim becomes India's first unicorn in 2024 :-**

The Ola founder Bhavish Aggarwal's artificial intelligence startup Krutrim has raised \$50 million in funding at a \$1 billion valuation. Krutrim IS now India's first AI startup to reach unicorn status. The investors in Krutrim's latest funding round include Matrix Partners India. Interestingly, Krutrim has hit a billion-dollar valuation just a month after its debut as a large language AI model. Krutrim, which means "artificial" in Sanskrit, is also in the process of developing data centres across the country, aiming to create a supercomputer ecosystem for AI development in India.



**ISRO adds another feather to its cap with POEM-3 success :-**

The Indian Space Research Organisation has successfully completed all of the tests planned for its orbital platform, which was launched recently by the PSLV-C58 mission. The space agency is currently planning to make a controlled re-entry into Earth's atmosphere within the

next 75 days, ensuring that no space debris remains behind. After placing X-Ray Polarimeter Satellite into an orbit of 650km with 6-degree inclination, ISRO lowered the launch vehicle's fourth spent stage. It was used as a platform for onboard experiments.



**ISRO To Launch INSAT-3DS Satellite From Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh :-**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced that the INSAT-3DS satellite has been flagged off to the launch port at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. The INSAT-3DS satellite is a unique meteorological satellite developed by ISRO with the primary goal of providing continuity of services to the existing in-orbit INSAT-3D and 3DR satellites while greatly increasing the INSAT system's capabilities. The satellite is likely to be launched onboard the GSLV F14 next month. ISRO said that the satellite had successfully completed satellite assembly, integration and testing activities at U.R. Rao Satellite Centre, Bengaluru.

**16: Sports**



**Indian Teenager Anahat Singh Bags Girls' U-19 2023 Scottish Junior Open Title At Edinburgh :-**

Anahat Singh, a budding star in Indian squash, won the girls' under-19 division at the 2023 Scottish Junior Open squash in Edinburgh in a brilliant display of ability and commitment. Anahat Singh demonstrated her squash court domination with a dominant performance in the final against home favorite Robyn McAlpine. The young talent claimed victory with a decisive scoreline of 11-6, 11-1, 11-5, leaving no room for doubt about her



supremacy in the girls' under-19 division. The Delhi-based player had earlier clinched both the under-19 and senior National championships.



**Oman To Host FIH Hockey5s World Cup Qualifiers :-**

Oman is about to unveil its latest sporting marvel: a cutting-edge building built to host the FIH Hockey5s World Cup qualifiers. This magnificent facility demonstrates Oman's commitment to nurturing excellence in sports, notably in hockey. This cutting-edge stadium will host heated combat between elite international teams from January 15 to 21, 2024. With the world's eyes on Oman, players will battle it out on the field, showcasing their skills and determination to secure a place in the prestigious Summer 2024 Olympic Games in Paris.



**Raghuram Iyer Appointed As CEO Of Indian Olympic Association :-**

The Indian Olympic Association has selected Raghuram Iyer as Chief Executive Officer, according to a news release. The lack of a CEO was highlighted by International Olympic Committee (IOC) chairman Thomas Bach during his visit to Mumbai for the IOC Session a few months ago. "His wealth of experience and

proven track record in sports management and administration makes him an ideal candidate to lead the IOA in its mission to promote and develop Olympic sports in India," the IOA said in a statement.



**Alexander Zverev-Led Germany Defeats Swiatek's Poland In United Cup :-**

Germany defeated top seeded Poland to win the United Cup, with Alexander Zverev and Laura Siegemund defeating Hubert Hurkacz and Iga Swiatek in the deciding mixed doubles match. With the score equal at 1-1 after Swiatek and Zverev won their singles bouts, the Germans won the doubles match 6-4, 5-7, 10-4. Germany had a relatively poor group stage and just about qualified for the knockouts, but Zverev and Siegemund formed a formidable pair to rescue their side by winning three deciders in as many days to lead their team to the title.



**Rhythm Sangwan Clinches 16th Olympic Quota For 2024 Paris Games :-**

Rhythm Sangwan made history as the 16th Indian shooter to clinch a quota spot at the 2024 Paris Olympics. She accomplished this milestone by winning a bronze medal in the 25m sports pistol category at the Asian Olympic Qualifications in Jakarta. This accomplishment means that India will send its largest-ever shooting

contingent to the Paris Olympics, surpassing the previous record of 15 shooters set at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020. Jakarta has proven to be a favorable venue for Indian shooters, with three athletes — Esha Singh, Varun Tomar (both in 10m air pistol), and now Rhythm—securing quota slots for the country during the Asian Olympic Qualifiers.



**Tim Southee Achieves Historic Milestone In T20 Internationals :-**

Tim Southee, a veteran New Zealand pacer, attained the milestone when he dismissed Abbas Afridi in his 150th T20I match wicket. Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan (140) is second, followed by Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan (130) and Kiwi spinner Ish Sodhi (127). Southee made his T20I debut in 2008 and now has 746 international wickets, including over 350 in the Test format. In the match against Pakistan, Southee showcased his skills by dismissing Mohammad Rizwan, Iftikhar Ahmed, Abbas, and Haris Rauf during Pakistan's chase of 227.



**Madhya Pradesh Clinches Overall Championship In Inaugural Diu Beach Games 2024:-**

Madhya Pradesh won the inaugural Beach Games 2024, which took place on Diu's pristine blue flag-certified Ghoghla beach. The landlocked state won an incredible

18 medals, including 7 golds, demonstrating the depth of talent within its delegation. The competition had 1404 teenage athletes from 28 states and Union Territories competing in a variety of disciplines. Maharashtra clinched 14 medals, including 3 golds, while Tamil Nadu, Uttarkhand, and hosts Dadra, Nagar Haveli, Diu & Daman secured 12 medals each.



**Sue Redfern: ICC's First Female Neutral Umpire In Bilateral Series :-**

Sue Redfern of England will become the first ICC-appointed female neutral umpire to take part in a bilateral series, the upcoming WT20I against Australia and South Africa. Redfern's appointment comes after the International Cricket Council (ICC) decided to appoint one neutral umpire for all ICC Women's Championship series and any T20I matches scheduled with them, ensuring some neutrality in running matches while also considering the long-term development of female umpires. Seven female neutral umpires will officiate across ICC Women's Championship series with match-day pay on par with those on the ICC Elite Panel of Umpires.



**RuPay Prime Volleyball League Season 3: Hrithik Roshan Onboards As Brand Ambassador :-**

RuPay Prime Volleyball, powered by A23, has named Hrithik Roshan as its brand ambassador. The RuPay Prime Volleyball League powered by A23, co-owned and exclusively marketed by Baseline Ventures, will enter its third season this year with nine franchises: Hyderabad Black Hawks, Ahmedabad Defenders, Kolkata Thunderbolts, Calicut Heroes, Kochi Blue Spikers, Chennai Blitz, Bengaluru Torpedoes, Mumbai Meteors, and Delhi Toofans. The league's second season had a total cumulative viewership of 206 million, up from 133 million in season one.



**Wrestler Ravi Kumar Dahiya Claims Bronze At France's Grand Prix :-**

Ravi Kumar Dahiya, the Tokyo Olympic silver medalist who missed the entire 2023 international season owing to injury, returned won a bronze medal at the Grand Prix De France Henri Deglane 2024 wrestling event in Nice, France. The Indian star wrestler defeated Kazakhstan's Kairat Amirtayev 10-4 in the men's 61kg freestyle bronze medal battle. Dahiya trailed 2-4 in the first minute but used his experience to clinch the contest convincingly. Ravi Kumar Dahiya last competed on the international stage at the 2022 World Wrestling Championships.



**ICC Announced The Men's And Women's T20I Teams Of The Year For 2023 :-**

The Men's ODI Team of the Year predominantly features eight players from the final of the ICC ODI World Cup 2023. Six players from the Indian Cricket team and two players from the Australian Cricket team find themselves in the ICC's ODI team of the year. The ICC Men's T20I Team of the Year 2023 included four players from the Indian cricket team - Yashasvi Jaiswal, Suryakumar Yadav, Ravi Bishnoi and Arshdeep Singh. Suryakumar Yadav was also adjudged as the captain of the ICC Men's T20I Team of the Year 2023.



**Raiza Dhillon and Gurjoat Khangura Win Bronze in Skeet Mixed Team in Asia Olympic Shotgun Qualifiers :-**

Young Raiza Dhillon, who secured India's Paris Olympics quota, teamed up with Gurjoat Khangura to win bronze in the skeet mixed team event and her third medal in the Asia Olympic Qualification Shotgun competition. In the second bronze medal match, the Indian pair defeated local favourites Abdullah Alrashidi and Eman Al Shama 41-39. The 19-year-old Raiza had won a silver and a Paris Olympic berth in the women's skeet individual event, as did Anantjeet Singh Naruka in men's skeet.



**ICC Awards 2023: Rohit Sharma Named Captain Of ICC ODI Team Of The Year :-**

India skipper Rohit Sharma has been picked as the captain of ICC Men's ODI Team of the Year 2023, which

comprises Men in Blue players like batting lynchpin Virat Kohli, batter Shubman Gill, top pacers Mohammed Siraj, Mohammed Shami and spinner Kuldeep Yadav. The playing XI is likewise dominated by Australian players who performed admirably during the ODI World Cup. In 2023, Rohit's remarkable performance resulted in 1255 runs at an average of 52. His exceptional form extended to the ODI World Cup, where he played a pivotal role at the top of the order.



**Rohan Bopanna won the Men's Doubles Title at the Australian Open:-**

Indian tennis sensation Rohan Bopanna has scripted history by becoming the oldest man to win a grand slam after clinching the Australian Open 2024 men's doubles title, pairing with Matthew Ebden. Bopanna, who turns 44 in March this year, also unlocked a new milestone by becoming the oldest World Number One in men's doubles history by winning the title in Melbourne on Saturday, thereby making India proud. This triumph happened to be their maiden title as a pair and Bopanna's first in men's doubles after 60 previous Grand Slams.



**Sports Ministry Approves Avinash Sable and Parul Choudhary's Training in USA :-**

On January 29, the Sports Ministry approved the request of Asian Games medalist long distance runners Avinash Sable and Parul Choudhary to train in Colorado, USA. The government also approved training stays for wrestlers Anshu Malik and Sarita Mor in Japan and the United States, respectively. While national record holders Sable and Choudhary will train at high altitude centre at Colorado Springs under coach Scott Simmons, Mor will head to United States Olympic/Paralympic Training Center (USOPTC), which is a training base of several top grapplers, including a few Olympic medallists.



**Sonam Maskar Wins Silver In Women's Air Rifle In Cairo, Egypt:-**

Sonam, competing in her first World Cup, finished 0.9 behind Germany's Anna Janssen at the Egypt International Olympic City Shooting range with a score of 252.1 in the eight-woman final. Aneta Stankiewicz of Poland won bronze. In the men's event, Divyansh Singh Panwar had previously won gold by setting a world record in the final. In other results, debutant Simranpreet Kaur Brar finished a creditable fifth in the women's 25m pistol event. Two other Indians in the fray could not make it to the top eight as Rhythm Sangwan shot 582 to finish ninth and Manu Bhaker ended 14th with a score of 580.

## 17: State



### Jharkhand government reduced the qualifying age for old-age pension for tribals and Dalits to 50 years :-

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren announced plans to reduce the age restriction for old-age pensions for SCs, STs, and OBCs from 60 to 50. The state now gives a Rs 1,000 monthly pension to senior persons and intends to lower the age limit to assist Adivasi and Dalit beneficiaries. Soren also presented letters to lab technicians, trained graduate teachers and health department personnel, and launched infrastructure projects worth Rs 4,500 crore. The government will be hiring cooks for colleges and universities to provide meals for students in far-flung areas.



### Gujarat Sets Guinness Record In Mass Surya Namaskar

On January 1, a Guinness World Record was set in Gujarat when more than 50,000 individuals performed the Surya Namaskar simultaneously at 108 locations, even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised the performance, adding that Gujarat "welcomed 2024 with a remarkable feat." Gujarat's name was entered into the Guinness World Records on the first day of 2024 for the

biggest number of persons conducting Surya Namaskar simultaneously at 108 places, according to the state administration.



### PM Modi Launches Projects Worth Rs 20,000 Crore In Tamil Nadu:-

In Tamil Nadu's Tiruchirappalli, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and lay the foundation stones for multiple development projects totaling over Rs 20,000 crore in the aviation, rail, road, oil and gas, shipping, and higher education sectors. He also dedicated the new Tiruchirappalli International Airport terminal building. The two-level terminal building has been developed at a cost of over Rs 1100 crore. It has the capacity to serve more than 44 lakh passengers annually and about 3,500 during peak hours.



### Czech PM To Be Chief Guest At Vibrant Gujarat Summit

Petr Fiala, Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, is slated to be the Guest of Honor at the 10th Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors Summit, which will be held in Gandhinagar from January 10 to 12. PM Fiala will be

joined by Timor-Leste President José Ramos-Horta, United Arab Emirates (UAE) President Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and Mozambique President Filipe Nyusi. The Prime Minister will open the event on January 10th in Gandhinagar. Czech PM Andrew Babis attended the last summit in 2019.



**PM Inaugurates Rs 400 Crore Fast Reactor Plant In Tamil Nadu :-**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi commemorated a historic occasion by dedicating to the country the Rs 400 crore Demonstration Fast Reactor Fuel Reprocessing Plant (DFRP) at the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR), Kalpakkam. The Kalpakkam-based fast reactor power generation business, Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Ltd (BHAVINI), is at the forefront of this endeavor. BHAVINI is currently setting up the PFBR and has plans for two additional fast reactors in the future. The DFRP, a pilot project for larger facilities, plays a vital role in reprocessing fuel from the upcoming PFBRs.



**Punjab Becomes First State To Map All Accident Prone Sites :-**

Punjab Police has mapped all 784 accident black spots around the state on their navigation system Mappls App, in partnership with MapMyIndia. Punjab Police Chief Gaurav Yadav described it as "another road safety

initiative" ahead of the introduction of the chief minister's showpiece project, "Sadak Suraksha Force." "Citizens navigating using Mappls App will now receive voice alerts in Punjabi alerting them about a black spot ahead, making Punjab the first state to map accident-prone sites as part of the road safety," he added.



**Adidas To Set Up Its First Asia GCC Outside China In Tamil Nadu :-**

According to individuals familiar with the developments, Adidas is establishing its first and only global capacity center (GCC) in Asia outside of China in Chennai, to focus on "key processes." The sports footwear and clothing behemoth's plan adds to the recent surge of multinationals investing heavily in India to establish GCCs to capitalize on the country's vast software capabilities. The German corporation headquartered in Herzogenaurach, Bavaria, will set up its Global Business Services (GBS) hub with Akhil Kapoor leading operations.



**West Bengal Secures GI Tags For Unique Products, Boosting Local Economies :-**

As part of the National GI Drive Mission, West Bengal has obtained Geographical Indication (GI) status for certain items, including Sundarban honey, Black Nunia rice from Jalpaiguri district, and Tangail, Gorod, and Kadiyal sarees.

West Bengal Forest Development Corporation Limited (WBFDC) has applied for an exclusive GI designation for Sunderban honey. WBFDC had to compete with a Pune-based company to win the case. This honey was collected by the 'Mouli' community from the Sunderban forest. WBFDC collects and processes the honey and sells it with the brand name Mouban.



**Vietnam To Invest \$2 Billion In Tamil Nadu EV Facility :-**

VinFast, a Vietnamese electric vehicle (EV) manufacturer, announced plans to develop an integrated EV plant in the state, with a total expenditure of up to \$2 billion. According to a statement, the corporation has invested \$500 million for the first phase of the project, with a total outlay of five years from the start date. The company is signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Tamil Nadu state government to establish an EV manufacturing facility in Thoothukudi, which it says will grow into a first-class electric vehicle production hub in the region with an annual capacity of up to 150,000 units.



**Naveen Patnaik Inaugurates Malkangiri Airport In Odisha :-**

Naveen Patnaik, Chief Minister of Odisha, has opened the Malkangiri airport in the state's southwest. The airport, which covers an area of 233 acres, is located in

Katelguda, Goudaguda panchayat. It cost Rs 70 crore to build and has a 1620-meter-long, 30-meter-wide runway, according to an official. This brings the state's total number of operational airports to seven. The other six are located in Bhubaneswar, Jharsuguda, Jeypore in Koraput, Utkela in Kalahandi, Rourkela in Sundergarh and Rangeilunda in Ganjam.



**Maharashtra Government Declares New Atpadi Conservation Reserve In Sangli District:-**

The Maharashtra government has designated a new conservation reserve, Atpadi Conservation Reserve, in the forest land of Sangli district. This newly established Conservation Reserve has three types of forest cover: semi-evergreen, moist deciduous, and dry deciduous. This area has 36 tree species, 116 herb species, 15 shrub species, 14 vine species, and one parasitic plant. The Atpadi Conservation Reserve will help preserve the habitat of wolves, jackal, deer, foxes, civets, rabbits and other mammals in the area.



**'Yuva Nidhi' Scheme Launched For Jobless Youth In Shivamogga, Karnataka :-**

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar introduced the Yuva Nidhi initiative in Shivamogga, the Congress's fifth poll guarantee for educated unemployed young in Karnataka. Aside from





**Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy Inaugurates Five New Galleries At Salar Jung Museum In Hyderabad :-**

G. Kishan Reddy, Union Culture and Tourism Minister, inaugurated five new galleries at the Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad. Speaking at the event, the minister stated that Salar Jung Museum, one of India's most prominent museums, has made efforts to innovate and improve by reorganizing old galleries and introducing new ones from collections that have the potential to appeal to the public. The Indian Sculpture Gallery has some of the 40 sculptures dated back to the 2nd century B.C. like an 'Anantsayana Vishnu' from the Kakatiya period.



**Telangana To Unveil Gruha Jyothi Scheme In February :-**

Revanth Reddy, the Chief Minister of Telangana, has made tremendous efforts to expedite the implementation of many social projects, notably the much-anticipated Gruha Jyothi Scheme. The state government intends to implement this initiative in the first week of February, providing relief to many households. As part of this program, every home with a Below Poverty Line (BPL) card will receive 200 units of free power beginning in February. For households with electricity consumption within the 200-unit threshold, there will be no electricity charges.



**Indian Navy To Establish Second VLF Communication Station In Telangana :-**

The Telangana government has transferred 1,174 hectares of forest land in the Dammaigudem forest region of Vikarabad district to the Indian Navy's Very Low Frequency (VLF) communication transmission station. According to the chief minister's office (CMO), the station will be finished in 2027. The Navy communicates with ships and submarines via VLF communication transmission facilities. The officials of Vikarabad DFO and Naval Command Agency signed the agreement for transfer of forest lands.



**Odisha's CM Naveen Patnaik Announced World's First 'Black Tiger Safari' :-**

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik declared that the state will establish a melanistic tiger safari, the first of its type in the world. The safari would take place near the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Mayurbhanj, he said on X. "Tourists and visitors can now have a glimpse of the rare and majestic species found only in Odisha," he said. Melanistic tigers, often known as black tigers, have been spotted in Similipal National Park recently. These unusual animals are distinguished by a prominent dark stripe pattern on a lighter background of white or golden fur.



**Odisha to have a melanistic tiger safari in Mayurbhanj:-**

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has said Odisha will soon have a melanistic tiger safari near the Similipal Tiger Reserve in Mayurbhanj district. The NTCA in 2020 asked Odisha to start the melanistic tiger safari on the fringe of the tiger reserve. Odisha's Simlipal Tiger Reserve is the only tiger habitat in the world with melanistic tigers,

which have broad black stripes running across their bodies which are thicker than those seen on normal tigers, so much so that their tawny skin colour is barely visible. The melanistic tiger safari will come up on around 200 hectares.

## 18: Summits & Conferences



### 34th edition of the Vijayawada Book Festival Society (VBFS) :-

The 34th edition of the Vijayawada Book Festival Society (VBFS) is being held on the premises of the Government Polytechnic College from 28 December. Madhav Koushik, chairman of the Kendra Sahitya Academy, launched the book display. VBFS president Manohar Naidu told the media that scores of books will be released during the 11-day festival, and that cultural shows, seminars, and book reviews will be held every day. Over 200 stalls will display the various books, said VBFS honorary president Babji.

Kerala will hold a global summit on artificial intelligence (AI) in Kochi, ahead of IBM establishing the city as its country base for AI-assisted technology. P. Rajeev, Minister of Industries, and Industries Principal Secretary Suman Billa met with IBM India to discuss the idea of establishing an IBM base in Kochi. Mr. Billa stated that the summit would be organized in collaboration with the State Department of Industry. The IT Parks, Kerala Startup Mission, Digital University, and APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University would collaborate.



### 12th Divya Kala Mela 2023 is being held in Surat, Gujarat:-

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India's Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) is organizing a unique event to showcase the products and workmanship of Divyang entrepreneurs and craftsmen from across the country. The festival, dubbed 'Divya Kala Mela,' is being held in Surat, Gujarat, from December 29, 2023 to January 7, 2024. Around 100 Divyang artisans, artists, and entrepreneurs from approximately 20 states and Union Territories will participate in the Surat event.



### Kerala to host global AI summit ahead of IBM making Kochi its hub :-



**Sagar Parikrama (Phase X) event organized from 1st January 2024 to 6th January 2024 :-**

From January 1st to 6th, 2024, the 10th phase of Sagar Parikrama, a government effort centered on the welfare of fishing communities and coastal development, traversed several areas in Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry. Shri Parshottam Rupala, Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying, and Minister of State Dr. L Murugan took part in the yatra, interacting with fishermen, fish farmers, and other stakeholders. Coastal districts saw the launch of Kisan Credit Card (KCC) campaigns and other initiatives.



**Union Minister Piyush Goyal Unveils Logo and Booklet for Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024 :-**

Piyush Goyal, Union Minister, introduced the logo and booklet for the upcoming "Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024." Goyal urged the automobile industry to aspire for at least a 50% export share, citing the tremendous prospects in the global economy. The Mega Mobility event will be held in New Delhi on February 1-3, 2024, at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan. The expo, with over 600 exhibitors from 50+ countries, promises to showcase

cutting-edge technologies and breakthroughs in mobility.



**58th DGSP/IGSP Conference 2023 Held In Jaipur:-**

Shri Amit Shah, Union Home Minister, inaugurated the 58th DGSP/IGSP Conference 2023 at the Rajasthan International Centre in Jaipur. The three-day Conference (05-07 January) was held in a hybrid format, with the DGSP/IGSP and Chiefs of Central Police Organisations in person from Jaipur and over 500 police personnel of various grades participating via video conferencing from around the country. The Union Home Minister distributed Police Medals for Meritorious Service to IB officers and awarded trophies for the three best Police Stations.



**First Meeting Of Inland Waterways Development Council Held In Kolkata :-**

The Inland Waterways Authority of India, which reports to the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW), made history by holding the inaugural meeting of the Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC) in Kolkata. This historic event, organized by Union Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal, brought together delegates from waterway

states, central government officials, and specialists aboard the MV Ganga Queen. Ministers and officials from various state governments, the central government, and domain experts participated in the event.



**PM Modi To Inaugurate 27th National Youth Festival In Nashik :-**

On January 12, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the 27th National Youth Festival in Nashik, Maharashtra, and address the nation's young. This year, National Youth Day will be observed by all field organisations of the Department of Youth Affairs in districts across India, in partnership with several government departments. Addressing media in New Delhi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Nitesh Kumar Mishra said the theme of the National Youth Festival this year is "MYBharat-ViksitBharat@2047- By the Youth, For the Youth".



**Wings India To Be Held At Hyderabad's Begumpet Airport From Jan 18 :-**

The Wings India 2024 event will take place from January 18 to 21 at Begumpet Airport, displaying a variety of new-generation aircraft exhibits, associated aviation

services, auxiliary unit industries, and tourism improvements. The Airports Authority of India, in partnership with the Ministry of Civil Aviation, is planning a four-day spectacle that will be Asia's largest gathering. The event is scheduled to hold conference sessions on January 18 and 19, serving as a specialized platform for industry professionals and experts to engage in insightful discussions and presentations.



**India to Chair UNESCO's World Heritage Committee and Host 46th Session in 2024:-**

India will chair and host the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s World Heritage Committee from July 21 to 31 this year in New Delhi, in a historic development, according to Vishal V Sharma, India's Permanent Representative to UNESCO. The UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, which meets once a year and consists of representatives from 21 member states, plays an important role in bringing new additions to the prestigious list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.



**WEF Annual Meeting 2024 Being Held In Davos :-**

The 54th annual conference of the World Economic Forum (WEF) began on January 15, embracing a 'back to

basics' mentality at the local Swiss Alpine School in Davos and will run until January 19, 2024. Over 100 governments, international organizations, forum partners, and varied stakeholders attend the event, which focuses on developing open communication among government, business, and civil society leaders. Over 60 heads of state and notable business leaders, including Israeli President Isaac Herzog and Microsoft's executives, will engage in discussions.



**Switzerland To Host Ukraine Peace Summit On Zelenskiy's Request :-**

Switzerland has agreed to hold a global peace summit on Ukraine at the invitation of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Neutral Switzerland has already functioned as a conflict resolution broker, and it could now assist in resolving the war that began on February 24, 2022, when Russia launched troops into Ukraine. "At

the request of the Ukrainian president, Switzerland has agreed to host a summit on the peace formula," the Swiss government said. "Further details are now being worked out."



**19th NAM Summit Held in Uganda's Kampala :-**

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar recently participated in the 19th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit, which began in Uganda. The two-day summit, themed 'Deepening Cooperation for Shared Global Affluence,' brings together more than 120 developing nations, marking a watershed point in history. India, as a leading and founding member of NAM, completely endorses Uganda's theme, confirming its dedication to the movement's principles and values. On the sidelines of the NAM Summit, EAM Jaishankar held meetings with counterparts from Egypt and Belarus.

# SECTION 2

# Practice Questions with Answers



## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

**1. Why are paramilitary forces transitioning to the 'Sandes App' for official communication?**

- A) Improved entertainment features
- B) Enhanced data security and indigenous technology
- C) Cost-effective communication
- D) Integration with international communication platforms

**2. What is the name of the asteroid that NASA's OSIRIS-REx spacecraft will study, and when is it expected to approach Earth closely?**

- A) Apophis; April 13, 2029
- B) Bennu; December 30, 2023
- C) Chaos; March 15, 2028
- D) Xylophus; May 20, 2031

**3. How much funding has the government allocated for road projects in Ladakh, as announced by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari?**

- A) Rs 850 Crore
- B) Rs 1,000 Crore
- C) Rs 1,170.16 Crore
- D) Rs 1,500 Crore

**4. What is the purpose of the Composite Regional Centre (CRC) inaugurated by Lt. Governor Shri Manoj Sinha in Samba-Jammu?**

- A) Military training facility
- B) Skill development and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities
- C) Regional cultural center
- D) Scientific research institute

**5. What is the ambitious mission of China's ocean drilling vessel, Mengxiang?**

- A) Study the Earth's atmosphere
- B) Explore the Mariana Trench
- C) Probe Earth's mantle and breach the Moho
- D) Search for underwater archaeological sites

**6. For the short refit of an Indian naval ship, which of the following ship manufacturing company has signed a contract worth Rs 488.25 crore with the Ministry of Defence (MoD)?**

- A) Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited

- B) Hindustan Shipyard Limited
- C) Goa Shipyard Limited
- D) Cochin Shipyard Ltd

**7. The Government of Assam has authorized which of the following bank to collect revenue on electronic-Government Receipt Accounting System (e-GRAS)?**

- A) Bandhan Bank
- B) Bank of Baroda
- C) IndusInd Bank
- D) Kotak Mahindra Bank

**8. Who among the following was honoured with the 6th Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize?**

- A) Arundhati Subramaniam
- B) Rukmini Bhaya Nair
- C) Sukrita Paul Kumar
- D) Vikram Seth

**9. For which of the following mission the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) won the Leif Erikson Lunar Prize?**

- A) NISAR
- B) Gaganyaan 1
- C) Chandrayaan-3
- D) Aditya-L1

**10. Who among the following became the first Indian to be inducted as a governing board member to the International Table Tennis Federation's (ITTF) Foundation?**

- A) Chetan Baboor
- B) Naina Jaiswal
- C) Sujay Ghorpade
- D) Vita Dani

**11. Which of the following airline became the first Indian airline to carry 100 million passengers in a single calendar year?**

- A) Air India
- B) IndiGo
- C) SpiceJet
- D) Vistara

**12. The International Gita Seminar and Gita Mahotsav was held in which of the following state?**

- A) Uttar Pradesh
- B) Madhya Pradesh
- C) Haryana
- D) Bihar

**13. Which of the following University won the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy for the year 2022-2023?**

- A) Jaipur University
- B) Lovely Professional University
- C) Kurukshetra University
- D) Guru Nanak Dev University

**14. Arunachal State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ArSRLM) has signed an MoU with the State Bank of India (SBI) to \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) Enhancing cultural exchange programs
- B) Facilitating banking services for self-help groups (SHGs)
- C) Promoting industrial growth in the state
- D) Strengthening political ties in Arunachal Pradesh

**15. What is India's total debt in the September quarter?**

- A) Rs 234 lakh crore
- B) Rs 200 lakh crore
- C) Rs 205 lakh crore
- D) Rs 210 lakh crore

**16. Which of the following country rejected BRICS membership?**

- A) Egypt
- B) Iran
- C) Ethiopia
- D) Argentina

**17. How much is the Bikaner-III Neemrana-II Transmission project expected to cost?**

- A) ₹1,544 crore
- B) ₹1,500 crore
- C) ₹1,250 crore
- D) ₹1,000 crore

**18. The Union government has decided to raise the returns on the Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme (SSAS) from 8% to \_\_\_\_\_, for the first quarter of 2024.**

- A) 8.4%
- B) 8.3%
- C) 8.2%

- D) 8%

**19. What is the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) permitted stake percentage in Federal Bank for ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company Ltd (ICICI AMC)?**

- A) 12%
- B) 9.95%
- C) 7.5%
- D) 5%

**20. What exactly is ASEAN stand for?**

- A) Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- B) Asian States Economic Association Network
- C) Asian Southeast Economic Agreement
- D) Alliance for South East Asia Networking

**21. The central government has allocated how much fund for the PM Vishwakarma Yojana?**

- A) 13,000 crores rupees
- B) 12,000 crores rupees
- C) 10,000 crores rupees
- D) 9,000 crores rupees

**22. To digitize the land acquisition process for National Highway (NH) Projects, which of the following ministry launched 'Bhoomi Rashi Portal'?**

- A) Ministry of Rural Development
- B) Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
- C) Ministry of Cooperation
- D) Ministry of Agriculture

**23. The World Bank has approved how much fund for the project 'Sikkim: Integrated Service Provision and Innovation for Reviving Economies (INSPIRES)'?**

- A) \$200 million
- B) \$100 million
- C) \$400 million
- D) \$300 million

**24. The year 2024 has been declared as the International Year of \_\_\_\_\_ by the United Nations (UN).**

- A) Camelids
- B) Glass
- C) Indigenous Languages
- D) Millets



**25. A new insurance product named “T.U.L.I.P – Term with Unit Linked Insurance Plan” was launched by which of the following insurance company?**

- A) Bharti AXA General Insurance
- B) HDFC Life Insurance
- C) Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance
- D) Max Life Insurance

**26. Ministry of Textiles launched which of the following application to facilitate jute farmers?**

- A) Samarth
- B) Paat-Mitro
- C) E-Dhaga
- D) e-Aushadhi

**27. Which among the following is the official mascot of the 6th Khelo India Youth Games?**

- A) Veeran
- B) Veera Mangai
- C) Bomman
- D) Appu

**28. When the Kisan Diwas was observed?**

- A) 20 December
- B) 21 December
- C) 22 December
- D) 23 December

**29. India's coking coal imports are at a five-year high for the April-November period (11 months) of fiscal year 2023-24 at \_\_\_\_\_ million tonnes (mt).**

- A) 15.95
- B) 22.37
- C) 38.14
- D) 41.11

**30. Along with the Government of India which of the following organisation has inked USD 100 million loan agreement to improve urban services, tourism facilities in Tripura?**

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

**31. MedTech Mitra, an online portal will be coordinated collaboratively by which of the following government agency?**

- A) Central Drugs Standard Control Organization
- B) Indian Council of Medical Research
- C) NITI Aayog
- D) Both A & B

**32. Which of the following city recorded highest crypto adoption in India according to a report released by CoinSwitch in December 2023?**

- A) Bengaluru
- B) Hyderabad
- C) Delhi
- D) Pune

**33. Which of the following is the biggest threat faced by the Indian organisations as per the report titled “PwC Global Risk Survey 2023 – India highlights”?**

- A) Climate change risks
- B) Cyber risks
- C) Inflation risks
- D) Macroeconomic volatility risks

**34. The first-ever week-long winter carnival was held in which of the following state/UT in December 2023?**

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

**35. Bajaj Finance Limited and which of the following bank received a 1-year extension for the co-branded credit card partnership by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)?**

- A) HDFC Bank
- B) IDFC FIRST Bank
- C) IndusInd Bank
- D) RBL Bank

**36. India's first Corporate Credit Card ‘The eSvarna Card’ on RuPay network was launched by which of the following bank?**

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

**37. For rooftop solar projects which of the following bank has signed a \$165 million Line of Credit (LoC) with the World Bank (WB)?**



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

**38. To reduce carbon footprint Flipkart has signed an MoU with which of the following company?**

- A) Mahanagar Gas Limited
- B) Indraprastha Gas Limited
- C) GAIL Gas Limited
- D) Adani Total Gas Limited

**39. Who among the following was appointed as the chairman of the BSE?**

- A) Pramod Agrawal
- B) Sundararaman Ramamurthy
- C) Sushri Jayshree Vyas
- D) Umakant Jayaram

**40. In Mumbai, Maharashtra which of the following stealth guided missile destroyer was commissioned by the Indian Navy (IN) recently?**

- A) INS Arihant
- B) INS Imphal
- C) INS Kolkata
- D) INS Rajput

**41. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the market regulator, has extended until \_\_\_\_\_ the deadline for adding candidates to mutual fund portfolios and Demat Accounts.**

- A) 30 June 2024
- B) 31 May 2024
- C) 30 April 2024
- D) 31 March 2024

**42. Atanu Chakraborty is set to be re-appointed as the part-time non-executive chairman and independent director of which of the following bank?**

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

**43. The United Nations Security Council has named who among the following as the special envoy for peace in Afghanistan?**

- A) Hamid Karzai
- B) Joe Biden
- C) Narendra Modi
- D) S Jaishankar

**44. Defense Minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated the first girls sainik school in which of the following city of UP?**

- A) Lucknow
- B) Mathura
- C) Moradabad
- D) Vrindavan

**45. Along with which of the following state government the Bharat Electronics Limited has signed a contract worth Rs 445 crore recently?**

- A) Assam
- B) Bihar
- C) Himachal Pradesh
- D) Uttar Pradesh

**46. Reliance Jio Infocomm has collaborated with which of the following IIT to develop the 'BharatGPT' program?**

- A) IIT Bombay
- B) IIT Delhi
- C) IIT Kanpur
- D) IIT Kharagpur

**47. The 8th Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs (CoC) was held in which of the following city?**

- A) Bangkok, Thailand
- B) Delhi, India
- C) Dhaka, Bangladesh
- D) Paris, France

**48. Who among the following launched the new logo of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)?**

- A) Narendra Modi
- B) Jagdeep Dhankhar
- C) Droupadi Murmu
- D) Amit Shah

**49. Who among the following was appointed as the first woman Director General of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)?**

- A) Arti Sarin

- B) Madhuri Kanitkar
- C) Nina Singh
- D) Sheila Samanta

**50. Who among the following was appointed as Hyundai Motor India's brand ambassador?**

- A) Alia Bhatt
- B) Anushka Sharma
- C) Deepika Padukone
- D) Katrina Kaif

**51. Which of the following state topped the list of states with the highest number of registered investors as per the latest data from the National Stock Exchange (NSE)?**

- A) Gujarat
- B) Maharashtra
- C) Uttar Pradesh
- D) West Bengal

**52. The National Transit Pass System (NTPS)-'One Nation-One Pass' was launched by which of the following ministry recently?**

- A) Ministry of Tribal Affairs
- B) Ministry of Home Affairs
- C) Ministry of External Affairs
- D) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

**53. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) extended the Payment Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) scheme until \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) 30 April 2025
- B) 31 December 2025
- C) 31 December 2024
- D) 30 April 2024

**54. Along with the Kisetsu Saison Finance, India which of the following bank has entered into a Co-Lending Partnership for MSME Loans?**

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

**55. The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) decreased its shareholding in Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) to \_\_\_\_\_ from 11.701%.**

- A) 7.367%
- B) 8.438%

- C) 9.617%
- D) 10.785%

**56. In order to facilitate non-resident Indians (NRIs) for resolving their issues which of the following state government has launched a new website of the NRI Affairs Department?**

- A) Karnataka
- B) Madhya Pradesh
- C) Punjab
- D) West Bengal

**57. The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Automobiles and Auto Components has been extended by \_\_\_\_\_ year by the Ministry of Heavy Industries.**

- A) 01
- B) 02
- C) 04
- D) 05

**58. When did the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) celebrated its Raising Day?**

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

**59. Which of the following state emerged as the 'petro capital' of India recently?**

- A) Odisha
- B) Maharashtra
- C) Karnataka
- D) Gujarat

**60. Which bank has launched a new 'Super Special Fixed Deposit' scheme which has a maturity period of 175 days and will offer an interest rate of 7.50% per annum for the period?**

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

**61. Where did India and UAE joint military exercise 'Desert Cyclone' is being held?**

- A) Tamil Nadu
- B) Madhya Pradesh
- C) Rajasthan

D) Punjab

**62. Which of the following became the first Union Territory (UT) in India to implement the Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana (PMVY)?**

- A) Delhi
- B) Ladakh
- C) Lakshadweep
- D) Jammu and Kashmir

**63. In January 2024 which of the following country has withdrawn the country's planned entry into BRICS?**

- A) Argentina
- B) Egypt
- C) Saudi Arabia
- D) United Arab Emirates

**64. From Rs 15 lakh and above the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) raised the Bulk Deposits limit for Scheduled Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks in Tiers 3 and 4 to \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) 75 lakh and above
- B) 60 lakh and above
- C) 50 lakh and above
- D) 1 crore and above

**65. Edu-fintech startup LEO1, in collaboration with which of the following payments bank launched India's first numberless Prepaid ID card for students and educational institutions?**

- A) Airtel Payments Bank
- B) Fino Payments Bank
- C) Jio Payments Bank
- D) NSDL Payments Bank

**66. EPFO has extended the deadline to upload wage details for higher pension options till \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) 31 March 2024
- B) 30 April 2024
- C) 31 May 2024
- D) 30 June 2024

**67. To develop 'Green Cover Index' for national highways along with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) which of the following Centre of the ISRO has inked an MoU?**

- A) ISRO Telemetry Tracking and Command Network
- B) Master Control Facility

C) National Remote Sensing Centre

D) North Eastern Space Applications Centre

**68. Adi Kekir (Ginger), Handmade Carpet and Wancho Wooden Craft products of which of the following state received Geographical Indication (GI) tag recently?**

- A) Arunachal Pradesh
- B) Assam
- C) Mizoram
- D) Odisha

**69. Along with the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) which of the following organization has inked an MoU to enhance the quality of khadi products, empower artisans and introduce a 'Made in India' label for khadi?**

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

**70. Which of the following oil company has started crude oil production from its deep-sea project in Krishna Godavari Basin?**

- A) Reliance Refinery
- B) ONGC
- C) Indian Petroleum
- D) Indian Oil

**71. Tangail, Korial, and Garad sarees from which of the following state has received Geographical Indication (GI) tag recently?**

- A) Assam
- B) Mizoram
- C) Odisha
- D) West Bengal

**72. Along with which of the following bank the state-owned REC Limited has inked an MoU to finance power, infrastructure, logistics projects?**

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

**73. Which of the following company became the first Indian e-scooter (e2W) company to get eligible for the**

government's production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme?

- A) Hero MotoCorp
- B) Ola Electric
- C) Royal Enfield India
- D) TVS Motors

74. Who among the following was appointed as the Prime Minister of the Republic of Chad?

- A) Albert Pahimi Padacké
- B) Moussa Faki
- C) Saleh Kebzabo
- D) Succes Masra

75. Sheikh Mohammed Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah was appointed as the Prime Minister of which of the following country?

- A) Kuwait
- B) Lebanon
- C) United Arab Emirates
- D) Yemen

76. Along with Indian Railways which of the following organisation has inked an MoU for green initiatives promotion?

- A) Quality Council of India
- B) National Association of Software and Service Companies
- C) Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry
- D) Confederation of Indian Industry

77. As per a report by the United Nations, what is India's projected economic growth in 2024?

- A) 6.5%
- B) 6.4%
- C) 6.2%
- D) 6.0%

78. Which of the following company has appointed Ravindra Kumar Tyagi as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD)?

- A) Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
- B) NTPC Limited
- C) Power Finance Corporation Limited
- D) Power Grid Corporation of India

79. Who among the following was appointed as the MD & CEO of National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIFL)?

- A) A.K.T Chari
- B) Ashwani Kumar
- C) Rajiv Dhar
- D) Sanjiv Aggarwal

80. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has appointed who among the following as Executive Director (ED) for a period of three years?

- A) Ananth Narayan G
- B) Ashwani Bhatia
- C) Govindayapalli Ram Mohan Rao
- D) Kamlesh Chandra Varshney

81. 'College Phagthansi Mission' was launched in which of the following state?

- A) Arunachal Pradesh
- B) Assam
- C) Manipur
- D) Meghalaya

82. Country's first healthy & hygienic food street 'Prasadam' was launched in which of the following state?

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

83. When the 'Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas' was observed?

- A) 10 January
- B) 09 January
- C) 08 January
- D) 07 January

84. For Netflix documentary series "Working: What We Do All Day" who among the following won the Creative Arts Emmy for outstanding narrator?

- A) Robert Downey
- B) Oprah Winfrey
- C) Ellen DeGeneres
- D) Barack Obama

85. Who among the following was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA)?



- A) Gagan Narang
- B) Kalyan Chaubey
- C) Raghuram Iyer
- D) Sahdev Yadav

**86. Which of the following state has accounted for the highest share (17%) of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in India according to a report by the CBRE India Research?**

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

**87. The 27th National Youth Festival was held in which of the following city?**

- A) Kolkata
- B) Nashik
- C) Patna
- D) Varanasi

**88. The minimum capital requirement for Small Finance Banks (SFBs) has been raised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) from Rs 100 crore to \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) 200 crore
- B) 300 crore
- C) 400 crore
- D) 600 crore

**89. Who among the following has been nominated as the Chairman of the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee (SCLSC)?**

- A) BR Gavai
- B) Sanjay Kishan Kaul
- C) Sanjiv Khanna
- D) Venugopala Gowda

**90. Brookfield Asset Management (BAM) is set to acquire American Tower's Indian assets for USD \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) 3.1 Billion
- B) 2.9 Billion
- C) 2.5 Billion
- D) 2.0 Billion

**91. The International Kite Festival 2024 was held in which of the following city?**

- A) Ahmedabad, Gujarat
- B) Chandipur, Odisha
- C) Chennai, Tamil Nadu
- D) Kolkata, West Bengal

**92. In collaboration with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) which of the following bank launched the UPI-enabled 'Samman RuPay Credit Card' for government sector employees?**

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

**93. Which of the following bank has launched 'Savings Account Portability Online' scheme?**

- A) City Union Bank
- B) Indian Overseas Bank
- C) Karur Vysya Bank
- D) South Indian Bank

**94. Who among the following was named the youngest-ever Prime Minister (PM) of France?**

- A) Bernard Cazeneuve
- B) François Fillon
- C) Gabriel Attal
- D) Jean Castex

**95. For the Indian Army the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) launched which of the following assault rifle recently?**

- A) Deepak
- B) Pushpak
- C) Sitara
- D) Ugram

**96. At its maiden meeting, the Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC) allocated Rs \_\_\_\_\_ to the promotion of river cruise tourism in India.**

- A) Rs 45,000 crore
- B) Rs 55,000 crore
- C) Rs 60,000 crore
- D) Rs 65,000 crore

**97. To protect tobacco farmers from climate change, ITC has collaborating with which of the following companies?**

- A) Tata and Coca-Cola



- B) Microsoft and PepsiCo
- C) Microsoft and Skymet
- D) Skymet and Reliance

**98. RBI has raised bulk deposit limit for large urban co-operative banks to ₹1 crore. What was the bulk deposit limit across all urban co-operative banks prior to the revision?**

- A) ₹25 lakh and above
- B) ₹15 lakh and above
- C) ₹10 lakh and above
- D) ₹1 lakh and above

**99. GST collection in December 2023 rises 10% YoY to \_\_\_\_\_ lakh crore rupees.**

- A) ₹1,69,929 crore
- B) ₹1,67,929 crore
- C) ₹1,64,800 crore
- D) ₹1,49,507 crore

**100. What is the average gross GST collection in first 9 months of FY24?**

- A) ₹1,40-lakh crore
- B) ₹1,49-lakh crore
- C) ₹1,60-lakh crore
- D) ₹1,66-lakh crore

**101. Between 2013–14 and 2021–22, how much did the number of individual taxpayers filing returns increase?**

- A) 110%
- B) 90%
- C) 70%
- D) 50%

**102. According to the RBI's FY23 report, what is the trend in gross household financial savings?**

- A) Decreased to 8.3%
- B) Fluctuated between 11-12%
- C) Increased to 12.5%
- D) Decreased to 10.9%

**103. Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) has launched a National Single Window System (NSWS) Portal developed by \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) Google
- B) Infosys
- C) Microsoft
- D) Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)

**104. As per the latest data from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) what is the projected GDP growth for Pakistan in 2024?**

- A) Expected decrease in inflation
- B) Increase in foreign reserves
- C) Projected GDP contraction of 0.5%
- D) Projected GDP growth of 3%

**105. What was the total amount of investment made by India Inc during the first nine months of FY24 as per a report by the Bank of Baroda's Economic Research Department (ERD)?**

- A) ₹5.94 lakh crore
- B) ₹10.80 lakh crore
- C) ₹13.22 lakh crore
- D) ₹17.80 lakh crore

**106. Who among the following launched the logo and booklet for the "Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024"?**

- A) Narendra Singh Tomar
- B) Nitin Gadkari
- C) Piyush Goyal
- D) Narendra Modi

**107. As per a UN report what is the projected GDP growth rate for India in 2024?**

- A) 6.5%
- B) 6.2%
- C) 6.0%
- D) 5.5%

**108. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) gave nod to \_\_\_\_\_ to establish a finance company at GIFT City in Gujarat.**

- A) Power Finance Corporation
- B) NASA
- C) Gujarat Government
- D) None of the above

**109. Who among the following was the Chief Guest of the International Purple Fest – Goa 2024?**

- A) Shripad Naik
- B) Ramdas Athawale
- C) Dr. Vishwajit Rane
- D) Dr. Pramod Sawant

**110. Which among the following is the traditional dance of Lakshadweep?**



- A) Mohiniyattam
- B) Kolkali Dance
- C) Kuchipudi
- D) Bharatanatyam

**111. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has increased the mandatory weekly rest period for flight crew to 48 hours from the earlier \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) 24 hours
- B) 26 hours
- C) 36 hours
- D) 40 hours

**112. To increase the Indigenous Content (IC) in the ship the Indian Coast Guard has signed an MoU with which of the following company?**

- A) Cochin Shipyard Limited
- B) Goa Shipyard Limited
- C) Hindustan Shipyard Limited
- D) Steel Authority of India Limited

**113. India has nominated which of the following cities for global wetland accreditation?**

- A) Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
- B) Indore, Madhya Pradesh
- C) Udaipur, Rajasthan
- D) All of the above

**114. Which of the following company has launched India's first growth liquid exchange-traded fund (ETF)?**

- A) Aditya Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund
- B) ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund
- C) Nippon India Mutual Fund
- D) Zerodha Fund House

**115. As per a World Bank report what is the projected global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in 2024?**

- A) 2.4%
- B) 2.6%
- C) 2.9%
- D) 3.1%

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

- A) 76
- B) 79
- C) 80
- D) 83

**117. What is the rank of India in the MSCI Emerging Markets index?**

- A) 6th
- B) 5th
- C) 4th
- D) 2nd

**118. To launch the Indian Railway Freight Activity (IRFA) Index, Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) has collaborated with which of the following company?**

- A) Titagarh Rail Systems
- B) Texmaco Rail & Engineering Ltd
- C) RailTel Corporation of India Ltd
- D) Jupiter Wagons Ltd

**119. Who among the following inaugurated the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL), also known as the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Sewri Nhava Sheva Atal Setu?**

- A) Amit Shah
- B) Anurag Thakur
- C) Narendra Modi
- D) Rajnath Singh

**120. Which of the following cities have received the 'Cleanest Ganga City' award in the 'Swachh Survekshan Awards 2023'?**

- A) Kanpur and Prayagraj
- B) Prayagraj and Ghazipur
- C) Varanasi and Kanpur
- D) Varanasi and Prayagraj

**121. The Indian Army is observing 2024 as the \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) Year of Cyber Operation
- B) Year of Digital Transformation
- C) Year of Technology Absorption
- D) Year of Transformation

**122. Which of the following became India's first BSI Certified ISO 27001:2022 Petrochemical firm?**

- A) Savita Oil Technologies Limited
- B) Reliance Petroleum Limited
- C) Indian Oil Corporation Limited
- D) Haldia Petrochemicals Limited

**123. The Rural Development Ministry has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with which of**





the following bank to facilitate loans for rural self-help groups (SHG)?

- A) Canara Bank
- B) Indian Bank
- C) State Bank of India
- D) Union Bank of India

**124. Which of the following bank has partnered with FPL Technologies, to launch a co-branded credit card?**

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

**125. Which of the following bank has launched Green Rupee Term Deposit scheme to mobilise funds to support environment-friendly initiatives and projects?**

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

**126. Which of the following state government has launched 'Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan' scheme to empower 40 lakh members of self-help groups?**

- A) Assam
- B) Gujarat
- C) Odisha
- D) West Bengal

**127. Along with Indian Coast Guard which of the following country has conducted a 5-day annual joint exercise, 'Sahyog Kaijin' in Chennai, Tamil Nadu?**

- A) France
- B) Japan
- C) Sri Lanka
- D) Thailand

**128. Which of the following state government has launched the 'Shri Ramlala darshan scheme,' a pilgrimage to the newly built Ram temple in Ayodhya?**

- A) Chhattisgarh
- B) Gujarat
- C) Madhya Pradesh
- D) Odisha

**129. Which of the following country has announced an alliance on green fuels in India?**

- A) France
- B) Germany
- C) Spain
- D) Denmark

**130. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed penalties totalling Rs 2.49 crore on which of the following bank?**

- A) Dhanlaxmi Bank
- B) ESAF Small Finance Bank
- C) Punjab & Sind Bank
- D) All of the above

**131. In a ceremony at Port Blair which of the following Indian Navy ship was decommissioned after 40 years of service?**

- A) INS Cheetah
- B) INS Guldar
- C) INS Kumbhir
- D) All of the above

**132. According to a discussion paper released by NITI Aayog how many Indians have moved out of multidimensional poverty in the last nine years?**

- A) 24.82 crore
- B) 29.40 crore
- C) 36.21 crore
- D) 39.10 crore

**133. Along with the National Human Resources Development Network (NHRDN) which of the following government department has inked an MoU to boost employment opportunities for Divyangjans?**

- A) Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities
- B) Department of Home
- C) Department of Personnel and Training
- D) Department of School Education & Literacy

**134. Along with the DLabs which of the following bank has collaborated to launch "Build for Billions" startup accelerator program?**

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



D) Union Bank of India

**135. Citing inadequate capital and earning prospects the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled which of the following urban co-operative bank's licence recently?**

- A) Karad Urban Co-operative Bank
- B) Sangli Urban Co-operative Bank
- C) The Hiriyur Urban Co-operative Bank
- D) The Khamgaon Urban Co-operative Bank

**136. The Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) Rao Inderjit Singh launched which of the following mobile application for revised fund flow procedure under MPLAD Scheme?**

- A) e-PRANA
- B) e-SAKSHI
- C) JALDOOT
- D) Paat-Mitro

**137. In December 2023 which of the following bilateral exercise was conducted between Indian Navy and Royal Thai Navy (RTN)?**

- A) Ayutthaya
- B) Prabal Dostyk
- C) Sampriti
- D) SIMBEX

**138. Under the 'One Vehicle, One FASTag' initiative, FASTags with incomplete KYC will get deactivated or blacklisted by banks by \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A) 31 January 2024
- B) 31 March 2024
- C) 30 April 2024
- D) 30 June 2024

**139. Dr. V.K. Saraswat, Member (S&T) at NITI Aayog, has inaugurated India's first National Highway Steel Slag Road section on which of the following national highway?**

- A) Mumbai-Goa
- B) Gandhinagar-Maharashtra
- C) Noida-Bihar
- D) Pune-Gujarat

**140. India has signed an agreement for exploration & mining of 5 Lithium blocks in which of the following country?**

- A) Argentina
- B) Peru
- C) Spain
- D) Uganda

**141. What led to the abandonment of Jadung Village in Uttarkashi district?**

- A) Natural disaster
- B) Indo-China war
- C) Economic reasons
- D) Tribal conflicts

**142. Who has been sworn in as the Chief Minister of Bihar for a record 9th term?**

- A) Lalu Prasad Yadav
- B) Nitish Kumar
- C) Sushil Kumar Modi
- D) Ram Vilas Paswan

**143. Why did Sahel States announce their withdrawal from the ECOWAS bloc?**

- A) Economic crisis
- B) Military coups
- C) Border disputes
- D) Sovereign decision

**144. What has the National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGR) recently discovered in Tamil Nadu and Kerala?**

- A) New coral species
- B) Two new species of Congrid eels
- C) Rare seahorses
- D) Deep-sea trenches

**145. What is INSAT-3DS, which was recently flagged off by ISRO?**

- A) Military aircraft
- B) Meteorological satellite
- C) Advanced submarine
- D) Underwater drone

**146. What is the estimated total horticulture production for 2022–23 as per a report released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare?**

- A) 355.25 million tonnes



- B) 392.14 million tonnes  
 C) 419.34 million tonnes  
 D) 502.15 million tonnes

**147. What is the rank of Jio among the world's strongest brands as per the latest report 'Global-500 2024' published by Brand Finance?**

- A) 19  
 B) 18  
 C) 17  
 D) 15

**148. India has \_\_\_\_\_ strongest military globally according to an index released by Global Firepower (GFP).**

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

- D) 6th

**149. Along with Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) which of the following bank has signed an agreement for funding for renewable energy projects in India?**

- A) State Bank of India  
 B) Indian Overseas Bank  
 C) Canara Bank  
 D) Bank of India

**150. Which of the following bank launched 360 Term Deposit Scheme, a special short-term retail deposit scheme?**

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

## ANSWERS

### 1. Correct Answer: B

Paramilitary forces are transitioning to the 'Sandes App' to address concerns regarding data security, prioritizing the use of indigenous technology over popular international platforms like WhatsApp. The shift underscores the strategic move to safeguard sensitive information and ensure secure communication within security organizations, aligning with the government's emphasis on data sovereignty.

### 2. Correct Answer: A

NASA has redirected its OSIRIS-REx spacecraft to study the asteroid Apophis. This celestial body, named after the Egyptian god of Chaos, is anticipated to approach Earth at a close distance of 32,000 km on April 13, 2029. Scientists view this event as a unique opportunity to gather valuable data about this 370-meter-diameter asteroid and advance our understanding of near-Earth objects.

### 3. Correct Answer: C

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari announced a substantial allocation of Rs 1,170.16 crore for 29

road projects in Ladakh. This funding aims to address the connectivity challenges faced by Ladakh, the largest Union Territory, and foster socio-economic development. Additionally, Rs 181.71 crore from the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF) has been earmarked for the construction of eight bridges in the region.

### 4. Correct Answer: B

The CRC Samba-Jammu, inaugurated by Lt. Governor Shri Manoj Sinha, is a significant initiative by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India. It aims to provide comprehensive support, skill development, and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities (Divyangjan), promoting their empowerment and facilitating their seamless integration into mainstream society.

### 5. Correct Answer: C

China's ocean drilling vessel, Mengxiang, embarks on an unprecedented journey to probe Earth's mantle and breach the Mohorovicic discontinuity (Moho).

Weighing an impressive 33,000 tonnes and stretching 179 meters, Mengxiang is a colossal ship engineered to withstand powerful tropical cyclones. The vessel's mission represents humanity's inaugural exploration into the uncharted territory of the Earth's mantle, a crucial layer connecting the surface to the core.

**6. Correct Answer: D**

State-run Cochin Shipyard Ltd (CSL) has signed a firm contract worth Rs 488.25 crore with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) for the short refit of an Indian naval ship. The contract, officially signed on December 19, 2023, involves the repair and maintenance of equipment and systems on board the naval vessel, the company said.

**7. Correct Answer: A**

Bandhan Bank has announced that it has secured mandate to collect revenue on e-GRAS portal from Assam government. This will enable people of Assam to make their tax payments as well as non-tax payments through the Government Receipt Accounting System Portal (GRAS). This will make transactions easier, paperless and accessible for people of Assam.

**8. Correct Answer: C**

The sixth edition of the Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize was awarded to poet-critic Sukrita Paul Kumar for her book, 'Salt & Pepper: Selected Poems'. An amount of USD 5,000, a Tagore statue and a certificate for contribution to literature was given to Kumar at the award ceremony in New Delhi.

**9. Correct Answer: C**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) has been awarded the prestigious Leif Erikson Lunar Prize by the Husavik Museum, Iceland in recognition of the space agency's unwavering commitment and significant contributions to lunar exploration. The award celebrates Isro's successful Chandrayaan-3

mission, which has played a pivotal role in enhancing our understanding of celestial mysteries.

**10. Correct Answer: D**

Sports entrepreneur Vita Dani has become the first Indian to be inducted as a governing board member of the International Table Tennis Federation's (ITTF) Foundation. The Foundation was established in 2018 by the ITTF to attract more people to the sport.

**11. Correct Answer: B**

Indian airline IndiGo has announced that it had made history by "becoming the first Indian airline to carry 100 million passengers in a single calendar year." With this achievement, it has joined a select club of global carriers to operate on such scale. This development further cements IndiGo's standing among the 10 largest airlines in the world by passenger traffic.

**12. Correct Answer: C**

The grand event of the International Gita Mahotsav - 2023 took place from December 7 to December 24 in Kurukshetra, Haryana. Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar inaugurated the main programme on December 17 and also inaugurated a three-day International Gita Seminar at Kurukshetra University.

**13. Correct Answer: D**

Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU) has been declared the winner of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy for the year 2022-2023. The university has won the trophy for the record 25th time. Twelve athletes from the university this year competed in various disciplines at the Asian Games, including fencing, shooting, cricket, cycling and water sports, with five of them winning 10 medals for India.

**14. Correct Answer: B**

Arunachal State Rural Livelihoods Mission (ArSRLM) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the State Bank of India for banking services to self-help groups (SHGs) in the state. The MoU has

been signed to expedite the SHG bank linkage on savings, credit, insurance and remittances for 12,000 self-help groups promoted under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) in the northeastern state.

**15. Correct Answer: C**

The country's total debt, or the total outstanding bonds which are being traded in the market, rose to USD 2.47 trillion (Rs 205 lakh crore) in the September quarter, according to a report. The total debt amount in the March quarter of the previous fiscal was USD 2.34 trillion (Rs 200 lakh crore).

**16. Correct Answer: D**

Argentina's new President, Javier Milei, has withdrawn the country from its planned entry into the expanding BRICS club of nations. It would have been admitted to the BRICS club on 1 January, alongside Egypt, Iran, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

**17. Correct Answer: A**

Bikaner-III Neemrana-II Transmission, a project special purpose vehicle (SPV) set up by Power Finance Corporation's subsidiary PFC Consulting is estimated to cost ₹1,544 crore. Tata Power will maintain the transmission project for 35 years.

**18. Correct Answer: C**

The interest rate applicable to the Sukanya Samridhi scheme was increased by 20 basis points to 8.2 per cent, and that to the three-year Time Deposit Scheme—a fixed deposit (FD) scheme with a maturity period of three years—by 10 basis points to 7.1 per cent—both with effect from January 1, according to a circular by the Ministry of Finance.

**19. Correct Answer: B**

Private lender Federal Bank said that it has received the approval from Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to permit ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company (ICICI AMC) to acquire an aggregate holding of up to 9.95 percent of stake in the bank. RBI accorded the

approval subject to conditions, Federal Bank said in a regulatory filing.

**20. Correct Answer: A**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the Founding Fathers of ASEAN: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

**21. Correct Answer: A**

The government has set aside Rs 13,000 crore for the PM Vishwakarma Yojana from fiscal year 2023-2024 to fiscal year 2027-28. On the occasion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 73rd birthday, the PM Vishwakarma Yojana was launched on September 17, 2023. PM Vishwakarma Yojana is a central government scheme.

**22. Correct Answer: B**

The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has developed the Bhoomi Rashi portal to digitize the land acquisition process for National Highway (NH) Projects. The portal has greatly reduced the time period for publication of notifications and brought in efficiency as well as transparency.

**23. Correct Answer: B**

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors has given its nod to a transformative initiative aimed at upskilling and providing job opportunities for 300,500 women and youth in India's northeastern state of Sikkim. According to the World Bank, the USD 100 million 'Sikkim: Integrated Service Provision and Innovation for Reviving Economies (INSPIRES)' Operation aims to foster growth and development by focusing on non-farm sectors, including renewable energy, IT services, tourism, hospitality, wellness care, and creative design.

**24. Correct Answer: A**

The United Nations has declared 2024 the International Year Of Camelids. The decision has

been taken to highlight the significant importance of camelids in the lives of people across the world. According to the official website of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), camelids influence the lives of millions of households in more than 90 countries.

**25. Correct Answer: C**

Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance has launched a new product, T.U.L.I.P, a term with a unit-linked insurance plan. The product is a plan that gives a life cover up to 100 times the annual premium while permitting customers to earn returns like a ULIP product.

**26. Correct Answer: B**

To provide important information about MSP and agronomy to jute farmers, the Ministry of Textiles launched "Paat-Mitro" - a mobile application, developed by The Jute Corporation of India Limited (JCI). The application can be freely downloaded from Google Play Store and all the functionalities are made available to the users free of cost.

**27. Correct Answer: B**

Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Singh Thakur and Tamil Nadu Sports Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin unveiled the official jersey of 6th Khelo India Youth Games in Chennai recently. Mr Thakur also unveiled the mascot for the Games. The mascot is the Veera Mangai Velu Nachiyar. The theme song of the games was also released.

**28. Correct Answer: D**

Every year, National Farmer's Day is celebrated on December 23. National Farmer's Day is celebrated on the birth anniversary of Chaudhary Charan Singh, the former Prime Minister of the country. Chaudhary Charan Singh served the nation from 1979 to 1980.

**29. Correct Answer: C**

India's coking coal imports are at a five-year high for the April-November period (11 months) of this fiscal at 38.14 million tonnes (mt). Imports were slightly

higher on a Y-o-Y basis with nearly 38.12 mt of shipments coming in for the comparative period last year.

**30. Correct Answer: A**

The Government of India has signed an agreement with Asian Development Bank to avail 100 million US dollar loan, to improve urban services and tourism facilities in the northeastern state of Tripura. Finance Ministry said, the project will upgrade urban water supply systems by installing 42 kilometers of new transmission and distribution pipes and establishing four new water treatment plants.

**31. Correct Answer: D**

Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Mansukh Mandaviya has launched MedTech Mitra, an online portal that aims to assist medtech innovators in clinical evaluation, regulatory facilitation, and uptake of new products. The portal will be coordinated collaboratively by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), under the guidance of NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission.

**32. Correct Answer: C**

A report by crypto trading platform CoinSwitch showed Delhi maintained its lead in India's crypto adoption, followed by Bangalore and Mumbai. The parameter for this was in terms of value invested. The report also states that the markets picked up significantly towards the end of 2023.

**33. Correct Answer: B**

Cyber risks are seen as the most serious concern to Indian organizations, with 38% of respondents believing they are highly or extremely vulnerable to them. When compared to the highlights of the 2022 Global Risk Survey - India, cybersecurity has risen two points from third to first on the risk radar.

**34. Correct Answer: C**

To showcase the rich cultural heritage and to promote tourism in Himachal Pradesh, Chief

Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu inaugurated the first-ever 'Shimla Winter Carnival' at its historic ridge on 25 December. The event started with a cultural parade that saw the participation of 450 women presenting Mahanati, showcasing the talent of self-help groups and Anganwadi workers.

**35. Correct Answer: D**

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has granted a one-year extension to the co-branding partnership between Bajaj Finance and RBL Bank. On October 27, Bajaj Finance had sought a longer extension for its credit card ties with RBL Bank. The initial permit was for a two-year period.

**36. Correct Answer: D**

IndusInd Bank has launched 'eSvarna' which is a corporate credit card on RuPay network. eSvarna RuPay credit card can be used to link with any supporting UPI app and then payments can be made using it too. While many retail credit cards were launched on RuPay network however as per the claim by IndusInd Bank eSvarna is India's first corporate RuPay credit card to be linked with UPI.

**37. Correct Answer: C**

The country's biggest lender, State Bank of India (SBI), said that it has signed a \$165 million Line of Credit (LoC) from the World Bank in Delhi to support grid-connected rooftop solar photovoltaic projects in residential and institutional sectors. SBI is planning to make it mandatory for builders to make rooftop solar installations if the project is funded from the bank's green funds.

**38. Correct Answer: D**

Adani Total Gas Ltd (ATGL) and Flipkart entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate on decarbonising Flipkart's supply chain. The initiative aims to reduce Flipkart's carbon footprint in the primary, secondary, and tertiary movements of goods across sourcing locations, warehouses, and customer deliveries.

**39. Correct Answer: A**

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has approved the appointment of former Coal India chief Pramod Agrawal as the chairman of the BSE. The appointment will be effective from January 17, 2024. Agrawal, a former IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre, served as Coal India Chairman from February 2020 to June 2023.

**40. Correct Answer: B**

INS 'Imphal', the first ship to be named after a city from the Northeast was commissioned to the Mumbai-headquartered Western Naval Command, the sword arm of the Indian Navy. INS Imphal, a Project 15B stealth guided missile destroyer of the Visakhapatnam-class, was built in the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL) in Mumbai.

**41. Correct Answer: A**

Markets regulator Sebi has extended the deadline to June 30 2024 for demat and mutual fund account holders to provide a nomination. Earlier, the deadline to nominate a beneficiary or opt out of it by submitting a declaration form was December 31, 2023. The move is aimed at helping investors to secure their assets and pass them on to their legal heirs.

**42. Correct Answer: B**

HDFC Bank has informed that the Board of Directors has recommended the reappointment of Atanu Chakraborty as the part time non-executive chairman and independent director of the Bank to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for a second term of three years.

**43. Correct Answer: A**

The United Nations Security Council has appointed former Afghan President Hamid Karzai as special envoy for peace in Afghanistan. China and Russia abstained from voting on the Security Council resolution, which was supported by 13 countries.

**44. Correct Answer: D**

Defence minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated the first all-girls sainik school at Vrindavan recently. According to the defence ministry, Samvid Gurukulam Girls Sainik School, the first all-girls sainik school with a strength of about 870 students, has been inaugurated under the initiative of establishing 100 new sainik schools in partnership with NGOs/private/state government schools in all states/Union territories.

**45. Correct Answer: D**

State-owned aerospace and defence electronics company Bharat Electronics has signed a contract valued at Rs 445 crore with the Uttar Pradesh government. This contract will provide "comprehensive and state-of-art hardware, AI-based software tools and cyber security solutions" for the Dial 112 project of the Uttar Pradesh government, which is an emergency response system.

**46. Correct Answer: A**

Reliance Jio Infocomm is working with the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay to launch 'Bharat GPT', a large language model specifically tailor for India's needs, said chairman Akash Ambani. Speaking at the annual IIT Bombay TechFest, Ambani said the company is also "comprehensively thinking" to launch an operating system for smart televisions.

**47. Correct Answer: A**

The 8th edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs (CoC) was conducted by Royal Thai Navy at Bangkok, Thailand from 19 – 22 Dec 2023. Chiefs of Navies/ Senior Delegates from 27 Members/ Observer countries participated in the event.

**48. Correct Answer: B**

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has unveiled a new logo for Chartered Accountants (CA) India recently. The logo was launched by Vice-President of India, Jagdeep Dhankhar in the presence of Union Minister of Commerce and Industry CA

Piyush Goyal and Praful Pansheriya, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs.

**49. Correct Answer: C**

The Centre has appointed Nina Singh as the first woman Director General of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). She will hold the top post till July 31, 2024. Singh, a 1989-batch IPS officer of Rajasthan cadre, is currently the Special Director General of CISF, which mans airports, Delhi Metro, government buildings and strategic installations throughout the country.

**50. Correct Answer: C**

Hyundai Motor India has roped in popular Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone as its brand ambassador, the Korean automaker said. Her association adds a touch of star power, emphasising Hyundai's commitment to style, performance and an unparalleled driving experience, the company said in a statement.

**51. Correct Answer: B**

The number of stock market investors in India has surged past the 8 crore milestone, registering a remarkable growth of 22.4% from the figure recorded on December 31, 2022, as per data from the National Stock Exchange (NSE). The state of Maharashtra tops the list of highest number of registered investors at 1.48 crore. Uttar Pradesh has ascended to the second position, surpassing Gujarat, with 89.47 lakh investors. The state recorded a growth of 33.8% in new investors.

**52. Correct Answer: D**

Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav has launched the National Transit Pass System (NTPS) pan-India to facilitate the seamless transit of timber, bamboo, and other forest produce across the country. Speaking during the launch in New Delhi, Mr. Yadav said that NTPS is envisioned as a 'One Nation-One Pass' regime that will contribute to the ease of doing business.



**53. Correct Answer: B**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced an extension of the Payments Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) scheme until December 31, 2025. Initially launched in 2021 for a three-year period, this extension aims to continue fostering financial inclusion and supporting the country's payment infrastructure.

**54. Correct Answer: B**

Public sector lender Central Bank of India has entered into a strategic co-lending partnership with Kisetsu Saison Finance, India for MSME Loans. Bank in its regulatory filing said that the participation by both entities in this co-lending arrangement will result in greater expansion of the portfolio by Central Bank of India and Kisetsu Saison Finance, India.

**55. Correct Answer: C**

Life Insurance Corporation of India has reduced its shareholding in Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd to 9.617 per cent from 11.701 per cent. In a disclosure to the exchanges, LIC said it sold the shares at an average price of ₹79.58 through secondary market between June 2019 and December 2023.

**56. Correct Answer: C**

In order to facilitate non-resident Indians (NRIs) for resolving their issues, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann launched a new website [nri.punjab.gov.in](http://nri.punjab.gov.in) of the NRI Affairs Department. Launching the website, the Chief Minister described it as a path-breaking initiative aimed at ensuring the well-being of the NRIs on one hand and helping them to stay connected with their roots on the other.

**57. Correct Answer: A**

The Ministry of Heavy Industries has extended the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Automobile and Auto Components by one year. The scheme will be applicable for five consecutive financial years, starting from FY24 and ending in 2027-28.

**58. Correct Answer: D**

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) celebrated 66th DRDO Day on January 01, 2024. It was on this day in 1958 when DRDO was formed to make India strong and self-reliant in terms of science and technology and especially in military technologies.

**59. Correct Answer: D**

With the world's largest grassroot oil refinery in Jamnagar and OPaL petrochemical complex at Dahej in Bharuch district, Gujarat is now recognised as the 'petro capital' of India, officials said. Reliance Industries Ltd's (RIL) Jamnagar refinery is the largest and most complex single-site refinery in the world with 1.4 million barrels per day (MMBPD) crude processing capacity, they said.

**60. Correct Answer: D**

Bank of India has rolled out a Super Special Fixed Deposit scheme, featuring an alluring interest rate of 7.50 per cent per annum. This exclusive offer is open to both existing customers and new ones and is applicable for deposits ranging from Rs 2 crore to less than Rs 50 crore. The fixed deposit comes with a specified maturity period of 175 days, commencing January 1, 2024.

**61. Correct Answer: C**

The UAE Land Forces contingent comprising 45 personnel is in India to participate in the 1st edition of the India - UAE Joint Military Exercise 'DESERT CYCLONE'. The Exercise is scheduled to be conducted in Mahajan, Rajasthan from 2nd to 15th January 2024.

**62. Correct Answer: D**

Jammu and Kashmir has become the first Union Territory to implement the PM Vishwakarma Yojana, an initiative that aims to empower and enhance the skills of the craftsman community, officials said. PMVY, an initiative launched by the Central government in September 2023, aims to recognise

artisans and craftspeople through PM Vishwakarma certificates and ID cards, officials said.

**63. Correct Answer: A**

Argentine President Javier Milei has withdrawn the country's planned entry into BRICS, informing leaders of member nations in letters. In his letter to the leaders of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, Javier Milei said that the decision taken by the previous government has been reversed.

**64. Correct Answer: D**

After a review, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to enhance the bulk deposit limit for Scheduled Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks, in Tier 3 and 4, to Rs 1 crore and above from ₹15 lakh and above which was the meaning of bulk deposits as per a previous Master Direction.

**65. Correct Answer: D**

LEO1, an edu-fintech startup, in collaboration with NSDL Payments Bank, has introduced prepaid ID cards for students and educational institutions. This card, supported by MasterCard, is devoid of traditional numbering, offering a secure and efficient payment solution to educational institutes and students, according to an official release.

**66. Correct Answer: C**

Retirement fund manager EPFO has extended the deadline till May 31 2024 for employers to upload wage details of those opting for higher pension to its database. Earlier, the deadline for employers to upload wage details for those opting for higher pension on higher contribution was December 31, 2023, a labour ministry statement said.

**67. Correct Answer: C**

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has entered into a three-year Memorandum of Understanding with the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), a unit of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), to develop a "Green Cover

Index" for the country's extensive network of National Highways.

**68. Correct Answer: A**

Three items of Arunachal Pradesh have received the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag, officials said. These are adi kekir (ginger), carpet handmade by Tibetan settlers and wooden items made by the Wancho community, they said.

**69. Correct Answer: D**

Quality Council of India (QCI) and the Khadi Village & Industries Commission (KVIC) have signed an MoU to introduce made in India labelled khadi merchandise, improve the quality of khadi products and empower khadi artisans, the QCI said in a statement.

**70. Correct Answer: B**

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has started crude oil production from its massive deep-sea project in the Krishna-Godavari (KG) basin block KG-DWN-98/2, which was hit by multiple delays and deadline extensions over the past few years. The project is expected to help the state-owned oil and gas behemoth to arrest the decline in its overall oil production from its mature fields.

**71. Correct Answer: D**

Three varieties of handloom sarees - tangail, korial and garad from West Bengal have received the GI tag, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said. The tangail sarees are woven in Nadia and Purba Bardhaman districts, while korial and garad are woven in Murshidabad and Birbhum.

**72. Correct Answer: D**

State-owned REC Limited has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Bank of Baroda (BoB) to jointly finance projects in the power, infrastructure, and logistics sectors over the next three years. The MoU was signed in presence of Vivek Kumar Dewangan, IAS, CMD, REC Limited and Debadatta Chand, MD and CEO, Bank of Baroda

along with Lalit Tyagi, executive director, Bank of Baroda.

**73. Correct Answer: B**

Ola Electric has become the first Indian e-scooter (e2W) company to get eligible for the government's production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, according to a report. "Ola Electric has successfully met the stringent eligibility assessment requirements outlined in the PLI Scheme, including a minimum of 50% domestic value addition to its vehicles," the report claimed.

**74. Correct Answer: D**

Chad's transitional government has appointed former opposition leader Succes Masra, who recently returned to the country following exile, as prime minister. Masra will serve through the transition to civilian rule, Mahamat Ahmad Alhabet, Chad's new secretary-general of the presidency, said.

**75. Correct Answer: A**

Kuwait's ruler appointed Sheikh Mohammed Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah as the country's new prime minister. Sheikh Mohammed, an academic and a former foreign minister who also served as ambassador to the United States, is tasked with forming the first new government since Emir Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah took over after the death of his half brother last month.

**76. Correct Answer: D**

Indian Railways (IR) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) have renewed their Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the third consecutive term. The agreement, aimed at reducing energy and water consumption and lowering greenhouse gas emissions, was officially signed and exchanged on 4 January 2024.

**77. Correct Answer: C**

"India is projected to grow at 6.2% in 2024, supported by robust domestic demand and strong

growth in the manufacturing and services sectors," the United Nations has said. The UN World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2024 report, launched on January 4, said that gross domestic product in South Asia is projected to increase by 5.2% in 2024.

**78. Correct Answer: D**

State-owned Power Grid Corporation said it has appointed Ravindra Kumar Tyagi as the new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD). Tyagi will take over from Sreekant Kandikuppa, who retired after reaching the age of superannuation, the company said in a regulatory filing.

**79. Correct Answer: D**

National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIFL) announced that its board of directors has appointed Sanjiv Aggarwal as chief executive officer (CEO) and managing director (MD) of the company. The appointment follows a search process conducted by NIIFL's board of directors.

**80. Correct Answer: C**

Govindayapalli Ram Mohan Rao has been appointed as Executive Director, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), on January 3. His appointment is for three years and he will be handling the Investigation Department and Internal Inspection Department.

**81. Correct Answer: C**

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh announced the 'College Phagthansi Mission' while laying the groundwork and inaugurating numerous development projects in Bishnupur district. At a gathering at Moirang College, the Chief Minister announced the 'College Phagthansi Mission' to strengthen the state's government institutions.

**82. Correct Answer: A**

Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare inaugurated the country's first healthy & hygienic food street, 'Prasadam', at Neelkanth Van, Mahakal Lok, in Ujjain, Madhya

Pradesh. Dr Mohan Yadav, Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh praised the initiative of Food Street which will serve to ensure that healthy and clean food will be available to all in an engaging manner contributing to a healthy nation.

**83. Correct Answer: B**

Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) is observed on 9 January to mark the contribution of the Overseas Indian community to the development of India. On this day in 1915, Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Pravasi, returned to India from South Africa. He played an important role in the freedom struggle of India and also changed the lives of Indians forever.

**84. Correct Answer: D**

Barack Obama won the Emmy for best narrator for his Netflix documentary series, "Working: What We Do All Day", repeating in a category he previously won for narrating a Netflix series on national parks. He also has two Grammys for his voice work on the audiobooks of his two memoirs.

**85. Correct Answer: C**

The Indian Olympic Association appointed Raghuram Iyer as the Chief Executive Officer. The lack of a CEO was an issue which was flagged even by International Olympic Committee (IOC) chief Thomas Bach when he was visiting Mumbai for the IOC Session a couple of months back.

**86. Correct Answer: C**

According to CBRE India Research's report "MSMEs: Unleashing the Engines of Economic Prosperity", Maharashtra has the largest share (17%) of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in India, followed by Tamil Nadu (10%) and Uttar Pradesh (9%). The research was revealed during the CREDAI National New India Summit 2024 (5th edition), which took place in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, from January 7th to 9th, 2024.

**87. Correct Answer: B**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 27th National Youth Festival in Nashik, Maharashtra on January 12. 12 January is the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda and it is celebrated as National Youth Day in India.

**88. Correct Answer: A**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has raised the minimum capital requirement for small finance banks (SFBs) from Rs 100 crore to Rs 200 crore. This move aims to enhance the financial resilience of SFBs and ensure their long-term sustainability. It is worth noting that all SFBs currently in operation have a net worth exceeding Rs 200 crore.

**89. Correct Answer: A**

Supreme Court judge Justice BR Gavai has been nominated as the Chairman of the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee (SCLSC), replacing Justice Sanjiv Khanna – the seniormost judge of the top court after the Chief Justice of India (CJI).

**90. Correct Answer: D**

Canada-based Brookfield will acquire the Indian business of American Tower Corporation (ATC) for an enterprise value of USD 2 billion, a release said. The transaction is subject to regulatory approvals and expected to close in the second half of 2024. ATC India has a portfolio of approximately 78,000 sites across the country.

**91. Correct Answer: A**

On 07 January Gujarat's Chief Minister (CM) Bhupendrabhai Patel inaugurated the International Kite Festival 2024 at the Sabarmati Riverfront, Vallabh Sadan in Ahmedabad. The festival was held in Ahmedabad from January 7 to 14, 2024.

**92. Correct Answer: B**

IndusInd Bank has launched its UPI-enabled IndusInd Bank Samman RuPay Credit Card, in association with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) especially for government sector employees. The cards have been launched for government sector

employees to provide them with a range of exclusive benefits and enhance their overall banking experience.

**93. Correct Answer: B**

Public sector bank Indian Overseas Bank has introduced 'Savings Account Portability Online', a scheme that is aimed at offering an easier savings account portability process for customers who move to different locations. With the new online scheme, customers don't have to fill out those endless forms and wait for days and weeks for the account transfer to materialise.

**94. Correct Answer: C**

Gabriel Attal was named on January 9 as France's youngest-ever Prime Minister, as President Emmanuel Macron seeks a fresh start for the rest of his term amid growing political pressure from the far right. Mr. Attal, 34, rose to prominence as the government spokesman and Education Minister.

**95. Correct Answer: D**

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has launched an indigenous assault rifle named 'Ugram', intended to meet the operational requirements of armed forces, paramilitary, and state police entities. The rifle, with a calibre of 7.62 x 51 mm, has been designed, developed, and manufactured in collaboration with a private industry partner.

**96. Correct Answer: A**

An investment of Rs 45,000 crore for the development of river cruise tourism in the country has been promised by the Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC). The centre aims to develop 26 more waterways which will be fit for River Cruise tourism. Present operational strength is of eight waterways.

**97. Correct Answer: C**

ITC, a renowned Indian corporation, has formed a significant cooperation with Microsoft and Skymet to

address the growing issues that tobacco producers in India confront as a result of climate change. This effort uses cutting-edge technology like drones, AI, and data analytics to give precise weather forecasts, crop advisories, hotspot mapping, and nutritional supplementation.

**98. Correct Answer: B**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to enhance the bulk deposit limit for large urban co-operative banks (UCBs) to ₹1 crore and above from the current ₹15 lakh and above. With the bulk deposit bar being raised to ₹1 crore and above, customers' placing deposits below this threshold will earn a uniform rate of interest.

**99. Correct Answer: C**

India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenues crossed ₹1,64,800 crore in December 2023, with year-on-year growth slowing to a three-month low of 10.3% from a 15.1% rise in the previous month. December's GST kitty is about 1.8% lower than the nearly ₹1.68 lakh crore collected a month earlier.

**100. Correct Answer: D**

The average monthly gross GST collection of ₹1.66 lakh crore in the first 9-month period this year represents a 12% increase compared to the ₹1.49 lakh crore average recorded in the corresponding period of FY23. The revenues for the month of December, 2023 are 10.3% higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year.

**101. Correct Answer: B**

The returns filed by individual taxpayers have increased from 3.36 crore in Assessment Year (AY) 2013-14 to 6.37 crore in AY 2021-22 registering an overall increase of 90%. During the current fiscal too, 7.41 crore returns have been filed for AY 2023-24 till date, including 53 lakh new first time filers.

**102. Correct Answer: D**

The central bank observed that gross household financial savings, which had surged to 15.4 per cent

of GDP in 2020-21 (pandemic peak year), supported by large precautionary savings, fell to 11.1 per cent in 2021-22 and further to 10.9 per cent in 2022-23, reverting to its pre-pandemic trend (an average of 11 per cent during 2011-12 to 2019-20).

**103. Correct Answer: D**

In a move to streamline the import, clinical investigations, and testing of medical devices, the Centre has launched the National Single Window System (NSWS). The NSWS portal, distinct from the existing SUGAM and cdscomonline portals, has been developed by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS).

**104. Correct Answer: C**

The board of the Washington-based International Monetary Fund is set to deliberate and potentially grant final approval for the disbursement of the next \$700 million tranche for Pakistan under the existing \$3 billion Stand-By Arrangement (SBA). According to the IMF's latest figures, the projected real GDP for the year is anticipated to experience a contraction of 0.5 per cent, indicating potential economic headwinds.

**105. Correct Answer: B**

New investments, announced by India Inc in the first nine months (9M) of FY24, at ₹10.80 lakh crore are still low and not picking up at the desired rate, according to an analysis by Bank of Baroda's Economic Research Department (ERD). This is an indication that the industry in general is still in a wait and watch mode, the ERD said in a report.

**106. Correct Answer: C**

Union Minister Piyush Goyal unveiled the logo and booklet for the upcoming "Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2024." The Mega Mobility show is set to take place from February 1-3, 2024, at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

**107. Correct Answer: B**

"Growth in India is projected to reach 6.2% in 2024, slightly lower than the 6.3% estimate for 2023, amid

robust domestic demand and strong growth in the manufacturing and services sectors," UN report said. The report notes that economic growth in India is projected to remain "strong" at 6.2% this year mainly supported by resilient private consumption and strong public investment.

**108. Correct Answer: A**

Power Finance Corporation (PFC) has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to set up a wholly-owned finance company in the GIFT City in Gujarat. The entity at the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) will present new business opportunities for PFC and contribute to the growth of the country's power sector.

**109. Correct Answer: D**

The International Purple Fest – Goa 2024 was organized from 8 to 13 January 2024. Pramod Sawant, Chief Minister of Goa was the Chief Guest, and Shri Ramdas Athawale, Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, was the Guest of Honour.

**110. Correct Answer: B**

Kolkali dance is a traditional folk dance of the Lakshadweep Islanders. Kolakali dance is performed by moving in a circle, striking small sticks, and maintaining rhythm using particular moves. The circle would gradually shrink as the dance progressed.

**111. Correct Answer: C**

India's aviation regulator DGCA has increased the mandatory weekly rest period for flight crew to 48 hours from 36 hours to combat pilot fatigue. On January 7, 2024, aviation minister Jyotiraditya Scindia had said that the new norms proposed to deal with pilot fatigue, including more rest hours, will help in putting in place a facilitative regime for pilots.

**112. Correct Answer: D**

Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) and the Indian Coast Guard has signed an MoU to promote the

Indigenous Content (IC) in shipbuilding projects. This collaboration marks a significant step towards strengthening India's self-reliance in the strategic maritime sector.

**113. Correct Answer: D**

India has submitted nominations of three cities - Indore, Bhopal and Udaipur - for Wetland City Accreditation (WCA) under the Ramsar Convention, an intergovernmental treaty that provides a framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

**114. Correct Answer: D**

Zerodha Fund House has announced a new scheme and India's first growth liquid exchange-traded fund (ETF)—Zerodha Nifty 1D Rate Liquid ETF. The fund is expected to be listed on the NSE and BSE exchanges by January 24.

**115. Correct Answer: A**

Global growth is projected to slow for the third consecutive year, reaching 2.4 per cent in 2024, down from 2.6 per cent in 2023, said the World Bank forecast in its latest Global Economic Prospects report. Among global economies, developing countries' economies will be hit harder, growing at just 3.9 per cent, far below their pre-pandemic average.

**116. Correct Answer: C**

The Henley Passport Index 2024 highlighted the "power" of passports of 199 countries. The index, which ranks countries based on the number of destinations that allow visa-free entry to their passport, was topped by France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Singapore and Spain. According to the latest ranking, India stands at the 80th rank in the list of most powerful passports.

**117. Correct Answer: D**

Ranking second after China, India has surpassed Taiwan in weightage in MSCI Emerging Markets index. India's index weightage took a leap from 7 per

cent to 17.1 per cent in eight years. Although India's position in emerging markets portfolios remains relatively light, its growing size is making its markets more relevant for global funds.

**118. Correct Answer: D**

Dun & Bradstreet, a global leader of business decisioning data and analytics, in collaboration with Jupiter Wagons, introduces the Indian Railway Freight Activity (IRFA) Index, a pioneering initiative aimed at providing a comprehensive and data-driven assessment of the dynamics of Indian Railway freight activity.

**119. Correct Answer: C**

The Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL), also known as the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Sewri Nhava Sheva Atal Setu, was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. MTHL, India's longest sea bridge covering 21.8 km out of which 16.5 km is over the sea, is expected to see the movement of more than 70,000 vehicles every day.

**120. Correct Answer: D**

Varanasi and Prayagraj, both in Uttar Pradesh, won the top two awards amongst the cleanest Ganga towns. Chandigarh walked away with the award for the Best Safaimitra Surakshit Sheher (safest city for sanitation workers).

**121. Correct Answer: C**

Indian Army will observe 2024 as the "Year of Technology Absorption" as it's trying to gradually mature into a modern force that will have a new operational philosophy for induction of drones and counter-drones systems right across infantry, artillery and armoured battalions, and establish Command Cyber Operations Support Wings (CCOSWs), besides bridging other conventional asymmetries.

**122. Correct Answer: D**

Haldia Petrochemicals Limited (HPL) has become India's first ISO/IEC 27001:2022 certified

petrochemical firm. The British Standards Institution (BSI), a certification authority based in the United Kingdom (UK), gave the accreditation at a ceremony in Kolkata, West Bengal.

**123. Correct Answer: C**

The Rural Development Ministry and State Bank of India has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to facilitate enterprise financing for rural self-help groups (SHG), an official statement said. The MoU was signed by Additional Secretary Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission, Charanjit Singh and Chief General Manager, State Bank of India, Corporate office Mumbai, Shantanu Pendsey.

**124. Correct Answer: C**

Public sector Indian Bank has partnered with FPL Technologies, to launch the Indian Bank One Co-branded Credit Card. The partnership brings in Indian Bank, FPL Technologies, NPCI, and VISA, signaling a synergy of expertise, innovation, and commitment toward providing customers with unparalleled services in the credit card domain.

**125. Correct Answer: D**

SBI Green Rupee Term Deposit is a special fixed deposit scheme introduced by the State Bank of India (SBI) with the aim of mobilizing funds dedicated to supporting environmentally-friendly projects. This initiative aligns with the Indian government's ambitious goal of achieving net carbon neutrality by 2070.

**126. Correct Answer: A**

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has announced a scheme to develop 40 lakh self-help-group (SHG) members as rural micro-entrepreneurs and help them become 'lakhpati baidos (elder sister)'. The scheme, 'Mukhya Mantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyan', will be implemented at an estimated cost of Rs 4,000 crore and offered to those SHG members who are willing to undertake a

personal business plan along with their group activity.

**127. Correct Answer: B**

Coast Guards of India and Japan took part in a joint exercise 'Sahyog-Kaijin' off the Chennai coast as part of strengthening the bond of the two countries. One ship of the Japanese Coast Guard and four ships and an aircraft of the Indian Coast Guard took part in the exercise.

**128. Correct Answer: A**

The Chhattisgarh government has decided to launch the 'Shri Ramlala Darshan scheme,' a pilgrimage to the newly built Ram temple in Ayodhya. In a meeting of the state cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Vishnudeo Sai, the decision was made to fulfill one of the poll guarantees given during the last assembly elections.

**129. Correct Answer: D**

Denmark has announced its Green Fuels Alliance India (GFAI) initiative to boost collaborative efforts between the two countries in the sustainable energy solutions sector and advance their joint global goal towards carbon neutrality.

**130. Correct Answer: D**

The Reserve Bank said it has imposed penalties totalling Rs 2.49 crore on three banks, including Dhanlaxmi Bank and Punjab & Sind Bank and ESAF Small Finance Bank for contravention of regulatory norms. A penalty of Rs 1.20 crore has been slapped on Dhanlaxmi Bank for non-compliance with certain directions on 'Loans and Advances - Statutory and Other Restrictions', KYC and certain norms related to interest rate on deposits.

**131. Correct Answer: D**

Indian Navy Ships Cheetah, Guldar and Kumbhir were decommissioned on 12 Jan 2024 after rendering four decades of glorious service to the nation. Cheetah, Guldar and Kumbhir were constructed at the Gdynia Shipyard, Poland as



Polnocny class Landing Ships and were commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1984, 1985 and 1986 respectively.

**132. Correct Answer: A**

An estimated 24.82 crore Indians have moved out of multidimensional poverty in the last nine years, with poverty levels declining to 11.28 percent in 2022-23 from 29.17 percent in 2013-14 — a reduction of 17.89 percentage points — according to a discussion paper released by NITI Aayog.

**133. Correct Answer: A**

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD) and the National Human Resources Development Network (NHRDN) have signed a memorandum of understanding on the closing day of the International Purple Fest in Goa. This strategic collaboration aims to aggregate employment opportunities for Divyangjans through the innovative PM-DAKSH-DEPWD digital portal.

**134. Correct Answer: D**

DLabs at the Indian School of Business (ISB) launched 'Build for Billions', a startup accelerator programme, themed around financial inclusion for the informal economy, in partnership with Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH) and Union Bank of India.

**135. Correct Answer: C**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on January 12 said it has cancelled the licence of The Hiryur Urban Co-operative Bank over inadequate capital and earning prospects. After the cancellation of licence, the bank is prohibited from conducting the business of 'banking' which includes, acceptance of deposits and repayment of deposits with immediate effect, the RBI added.

**136. Correct Answer: B**

The Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) Rao Inderjit Singh launched the MPLADS e-SAKSHI Mobile Application for revised

fund flow procedure under MPLAD (Member of Parliament Local Area Development) Scheme, at Khurshid Lal Bhawan, New Delhi.

**137. Correct Answer: A**

The Indian Navy and Royal Thai Navy (RTN) conducted a maiden bilateral exercise, named 'Ex-Ayutthaya', which symbolises the significance of 'Ayodhya' in India and Ayutthaya in Thailand, which holds historic legacies and has rich cultural ties. The exercise between the two navies was conducted from December 20 to 23 last year.

**138. Correct Answer: A**

The National Highway Authority of India has undertaken 'One Vehicle, One FASTag initiative to discourage use of single FASTag for multiple vehicles or linking multiple Fastags to a particular vehicle. "FASTags with valid balance but with incomplete know your customer (KYC) will get deactivated or blacklisted by banks post 31st January 2024," the ministry of road transport and highways said in a statement.

**139. Correct Answer: A**

Dr. V.K. Saraswat, Member (S&T), NITI AAYOG inaugurated India's First National Highway Steel Slag Road section on NH- 66 Mumbai-Goa National Highway. Dr Saraswat said that the Steel Slag Road Technology, developed by CSIR-Central Road Research Institute (CSIR-CRRI) is transforming the waste of steel industries into wealth and is helping the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to build stronger and ecofriendly national highways in the country.

**140. Correct Answer: A**

The Centre has signed an agreement to acquire five lithium brine blocks for exploration and development in Argentina. The agreement was signed between Khanij Bidesh India Ltd (KABIL) and Catamarca Minera Y Energética Sociedad Del Estado

(CAMYEN), a state-owned mining and energy company in the Argentine province of Catamarca.

**141. Correct Answer: B**

Jadung Village in Uttarkashi district witnessed abandonment following the 1962 Indo-China war, which significantly impacted diplomatic relations between the two nations and left unresolved border disputes. The fallout from the conflict resulted in the residents deserting the village due to the strategic and geopolitical changes in the region.

**142. Correct Answer: B**

Nitish Kumar, the president of Janata Dal (United), has achieved the remarkable feat of being sworn in as the Chief Minister of Bihar for the record ninth time. This political development occurred just 18 months after his departure from the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

**143. Correct Answer: D**

The military regimes governing Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger surprised the international community by announcing their immediate withdrawal from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This decision was labeled as a "sovereign decision," indicating a self-determined move without external influence.

**144. Correct Answer: B**

Researchers from the National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources (NBFGR) have contributed to India's marine biodiversity knowledge by discovering two new species of Congrid eels. This finding enriches our understanding of relatively less studied fish groups along the coasts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

**145. Correct Answer: B**

INSAT-3DS, flagged off by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), is an advanced meteorological satellite. Weighing 2275 kg, the satellite has completed assembly, integration, and testing at ISRO's UR and is poised for an upcoming launch to enhance India's capabilities in weather monitoring.

**146. Correct Answer: A**

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has released Third advance estimate of area and production of various horticultural crops for the year 2022-23. The estimation of total horticulture production for the year 2022-23 is 355.25 million tonnes, which is about 8.07 million tonnes more (increase of 2.32%) than the year 2021-22.

**147. Correct Answer: C**

Jio continues to be the strongest Indian brand, ahead of likes of Life Insurance Corporation and State Bank of India, according to the latest report 'Global-500 2024' published by Brand Finance. In the 2024 ranking, Jio is placed at the 17th position among the world's strongest brands with a Brand Strength Index of 88.9 in the list led by WeChat, YouTube, Google, Deloitte, Coca Cola and Netflix.

**148. Correct Answer: C**

The United States continues to have the most powerful military in the world, followed by Russia and China, according to the Global Firepower rankings 2024. India has the fourth strongest military globally, according to the index which evaluated the strength of 145 countries.

**149. Correct Answer: B**

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Overseas Bank (IOB), setting the stage for collaborative efforts in co-lending and loan syndication for a diverse spectrum of Renewable Energy projects across the nation.

**150. Correct Answer: A**

Public sector lender Bank of Baroda has launched a Special Short Term Deposit Product offering higher Rate Of Interest in Short Term deposits. The Bank of Baroda special FD scheme --"bob360 Term Deposit" -- is available for a tenor of 360 days. bob360 Term Deposit offers high rate of interest for Domestic Term Deposits to Residents/NRO and Resident Senior Citizen.

## SECTION 3

# Detailed Analysis of Important Events



## Economics

### India's 1991 Crisis and the RBI Governor's Role



S. Venkitaraman, former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), passed away, leaving behind a legacy of significant contributions. His tenure is marked by crucial interventions during India's economic crises and a commitment to open dialogue and innovative policies.

#### Navigating the Balance of Payments Crisis

- **1990's Economic Turbulence:** As a result of rising oil costs and declining remittances, India experienced a serious balance of payments issue.
- **Crucial Actions:** To prevent an international payment failure, the RBI under Venkitaraman's direction made audacious moves, such as committing gold reserves.
- **Impact of Gold Pledging:** Despite receiving backlash at home, this action was essential to preserving India's financial stability and international standing.

#### Role in Economic Reforms

- **Import Compression Strategy:** By launching an import compression program, Venkitaraman was able to drastically lower the current account deficit.
- **Basis for Future Reforms:** These actions set the stage for the economic reforms that Dr. Manmohan Singh and the Narasimha Rao administration implemented.

#### Challenges and Controversies

- **The Harshad Mehta Scandal:** Venkitaraman's early accomplishments were overshadowed by the securities scandal involving Harshad Mehta, which ruined his term.
- **popular Perception:** In spite of his noteworthy accomplishments, his role in guiding India through economic upheaval is sometimes forgotten in the popular mind.

#### Remarkable Openness and Inclusivity

- **Interaction with Diverse Opinions:** Venkitaraman was renowned for his receptivity to various points of view, interacting with both critics and economists.
- **Creative Method for Creating Policies:** His openness to taking into account many viewpoints helped create more inclusive and successful economic policies.

#### Legacy in the RBI and Beyond

- **The Development Research Group** was founded with the intention of promoting communication between the RBI and independent economists, thanks to Venkitaraman's vision.
- **Impact on Present Economic Policies:** Despite ongoing difficulties with inflation control, his conviction that the RBI should rely on India's intellectual resources continues to shape the organization's strategy.

#### Conclusion

- **Long-lasting Effect:** During his time as RBI Governor, S. Venkitaraman demonstrated bravery and a dedication to intellectual transparency.
- **Recalling His Contributions:** Despite the difficulties he faced during his mandate, he will be best remembered for his role in protecting India's economy and encouraging discussion and research at the RBI.
- **Motivation for Upcoming Leaders:** Leaders in the profession, both present and future, continue to

draw inspiration from his approach to economic policy and management.

## India's Transition in Slum Definitions



### Central Idea

- Research Citation: Nipesh Narayanan's study explores how the idea of slums was reinterpreted in Indian parliamentary discussions between 1953 and 2014, and it was published in the Economic & Political Weekly on October 21, 2023.
- Slum Policy: Government attitudes and policies have been greatly impacted by these changing narratives.

### Evolution of Discourses on Slums

- Parliamentary discussions Analysis: To track the development of discourses around slums, Narayanan examined 1,228 Rajya Sabha discussions as well as a number of policy documents, such as Five-Year Plans.
- Dynamic Definitions: The study draws attention to the imprecise character of slum definitions and the propensity to ignore urban inequality as a contributing element to the development of slums.

### Eras of Changing Perspectives

1. 1950s–1960s: Slums were first thought to be a result of rapid urbanization and division. Health issues and geographical limitations prompted the focus on eradication, ignoring socioeconomic variables like migration. A major change was brought about by the Slum regions

Act of 1956, which permitted government involvement in slum regions.

2. The storyline changed in the early 1970s and mid-1980s to portray slums as unavoidable ills that need to be developed rather than eradicated. Town planning became an important instrument, driving slums to the outskirts of cities and giving basic services precedence over demolition.
3. Mid-1980s–Late 1990s: Cities and slums started to be viewed as economic assets with the National Commission on Urbanization's 1985 report. During this time, interventions were motivated by economic considerations and the construction of infrastructure and housing policy.
4. 2000s–2014: Targeted plans were developed as a result of the 2001 Census, which produced extensive data about slums. Slums changed from being social issues to being commercial and technological objects. The main points of emphasis were property rights, legal rights, and upgrading tactics for slum inhabitants.

### Slum Formation and Government Response

- Causality and Complexity: The study pinpoints the main causes of slum creation as being problems with urban planning, population expansion, land pressure, and housing affordability.
- Government Role: With an emphasis on data-driven policy, the Union government's role was redirected to financing State governments for urban development.

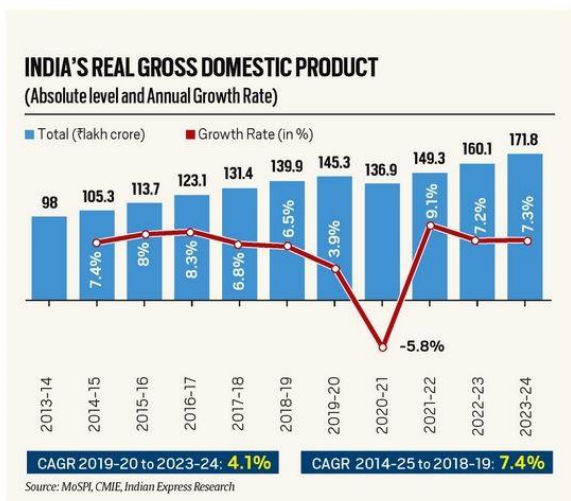
### Technocratic Solutions and Challenges

- Technological Dependency: Present government initiatives make clear the growing reliance on technological solutions to urban problems.
- Critical Analysis: The study stresses the importance of comprehending slum construction beyond numerical data and cautions against utilizing slums solely as a tool for anti-poverty programs.

**Conclusion**

- **Historical Insights:** Narayanan's research offers insightful historical perspectives on the changes in government attitudes and policies regarding slums.
- **Importance for Urban Studies:** This study makes a substantial contribution to our knowledge of Indian slum life, socioeconomic disparities, and urban dynamics.

**First Advance Estimates of India's GDP out**



**Introduction**

- **Growth Projection:** According to the government's First Advance Estimates (FAEs), India's GDP is expected to rise by 7.3% in the fiscal year 2023–2024.
- **Comparing This Year with Last:** This rate is marginally greater than the growth of 7.2% observed in 2022–2023.

**What is Gross Domestic Product (GDP)?**

- **Definition:** GDP measures the entire monetary value created inside a nation's borders during a given period of time, usually a year.
- **GDP is not the same as GNP,** which is a measure of the total value of goods and services produced by the citizens of a nation, regardless of where those goods and services are produced.

**First Advance Estimates of GDP**

- **Introduction and Timing:** The First Advance Estimates (FAE), which were first released at the

start of January, were first implemented in the financial year 2016–17.

- **Type of Estimates:** Released before to the end of the fiscal year, they are the first official estimates of GDP growth for the year.
- **Notably,** official GDP data for the third quarter (October to December) is not included in the FAE. This data is issued with the Second Advance Estimates (SAE) at the end of February.

**Significance of FAE**

- **Election Year Context:** Although there won't be a formal Union Budget this year, the FAEs take on more importance given the impending Lok Sabha elections in April and May.
- **Budgetary Relevance:** Since the SAE are released after the budget is finalized, the FAE are essential to the Union Finance Ministry's budgetary planning for the upcoming fiscal year.
- **Emphasis on Nominal GDP:** When creating a budget, consideration should be given to the observable variable, or nominal GDP, which includes both its growth rate and absolute amount.
- **Real GDP vs. Nominal GDP:** Real GDP is a derived number that is adjusted for inflation, while nominal GDP is the starting point for all budget calculations.

**GDP Growth Analysis**

- **Real GDP Growth:** By March 2024, the real GDP (adjusted for inflation) is predicted to approach Rs 172 lakh crore.
- **In contrast to Modi's Tenure:** From the commencement of Prime Minister Modi's first term to the start of his second, the GDP increased from Rs 98 lakh crore to about Rs 140 lakh crore.
- **Trends in Growth Rates:** Compared to other estimates, the predicted 7.3% growth for 2023–24 shows a robust economic recovery. On the other hand, Modi's second term has seen a discernible slowdown in growth in contrast to his first.

**Factors Driving India’s Growth**

- Private final consumption expenditure, or PFCE, is projected to increase by 4.4% this year and represents about 60% of GDP.
- Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF): This year has seen a 9.3% increase in investment spending, the second-largest growth driver.
- Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GFCE): This year's growth in government spending has been more moderate, coming in at 3.9%.
- Net Exports: This year's 144% increase in the import-than-export rate is indicated by the negative growth in net exports.

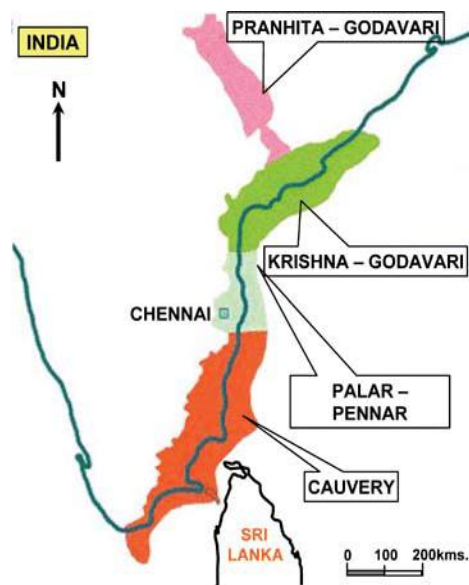
**Concerns and Challenges**

- Private Consumption: There is still worry over muted private consumption, particularly in rural India.
- Investment Spending: Private consumption is still quite low when it comes to investment spending, which is still mostly controlled by the government.
- Government Spending: During the second term of Modi's administration, the growth in government spending has been very modest.
- Net Exports: Despite a slight improvement over the previous two terms, the negative rise in net exports nevertheless points to a trade imbalance.

**Conclusion**

- Economic rebound: The growth rate of 7.3% indicates a strong rebound of the economy following the pandemic.
- Balanced Growth: Sustainable development depends on balanced growth in all areas, particularly when it comes to increasing private investment and consumption.
- Future Prospects: India's growth trajectory in the upcoming years will be significantly shaped by the current economic policies and changes.

**India’s First Oil Production in Krishna-Godavari Basin**



**Introduction**

- Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) commenced its ‘first oil production’ from the deep-water block in the Krishna Godavari (KG) basin off the Bay of Bengal on the Kakinada coast.

**First Crude Oil Production: Significance**

- Location: In the Krishna Godavari basin, thirty kilometers off the coast of Kakinada, oil is being extracted.
- Phase I of Production: At now, four of the twenty-six wells are producing.
- Production Forecast: It is anticipated that by May or June, production will have reached 45,000 barrels per day, or 7% of India's total production of crude oil.
- Outlook for Gas Production: In addition to oil, the project is expected to provide a major contribution to India's gas supply.

**About Krishna-Godavari Basin and its Natural Resources**

	Details
Location	Eastern coast of India

<b>Geological Setting</b>	Rift basin formed during the Mesozoic era
<b>Sedimentary Fill</b>	Primarily composed of sedimentary rocks
<b>Tectonic Evolution</b>	Went through phases of rifting, subsidence, and sedimentation
<b>Stratigraphy</b>	Includes Krishna Formation, Godavari Formation, Cauvery Formation, and more
<b>Source Rocks</b>	Organic-rich shales and mudstones
<b>Reservoir Rocks</b>	Typically sandstones and limestone formations
<b>Trap Structures</b>	Anticlines, fault traps, stratigraphic pinch-outs, and more
<b>Major Discoveries</b>	KG-D6 Block (Dhirubhai-1 and Dhirubhai-3 fields)
<b>Exploration and Production</b>	Companies like Reliance Industries, ONGC, GAIL, and others are active
<b>Land Size</b>	Approximately 15,000 square kilometers
<b>Geomorphological Units</b>	Upland plains, coastal plains, recent flood plains, and delta plains
<b>Notable Gas Discovery</b>	ONGC made the first gas finding in 1983 in the D-6 block, noted for India's largest natural gas reserves

### Challenges in India's Tea Industry: A Call for Introspection and Resilience



Introduction

- Echoes of the Past: According to the Tea Association of India (TAI), the issues affecting the tea business in India are reminiscent of the "dark phase" that lasted from 2002 to 2007.
- Principal Issues: A tendency toward less expensive teas, overstock, the imbalance between supply and demand, and stagnant prices are the main problems facing the sector.

#### Historical Context and Recent Developments

- Previous Crisis: From 2002 to 2007, the industry had a severe downturn as a result of regulatory obstacles, declining demand, competition from lower-cost international teas, and worries about export quality.
- Present Situation: In spite of India's economic achievements, the tea sector suffers from rising input costs and stagnating prices, which forces estate closures and increases need on subsidies.

#### Demand-Supply Imbalance and Quality Concerns

- Problems with overstock: The important issue of overstock causing an imbalance between availability and demand was brought up throughout the conference.
- Quality Decline: In an effort to lower prices, tea's quality has declined, causing a "race to the bottom."

#### Proposed Measures and Tea Board of India's Role

- Repositioning Tea: In order to improve tea's perception and consumption habits, TAI advises repositioning tea.
- Regulations: Actions include limiting the import of inferior teas, controlling the amount of tea waste sold domestically, and highlighting the health advantages of tea.
- Potential Effect: Import restrictions might eliminate an extra 30 million kg of inferior teas, while waste regulations could cut supply by 15–20 million kg.

#### Tea Industry Statistics and Trends

- Production and Export: Between 2008 and 2022, India's tea output climbed by 39%; a little increase is anticipated in 2023. Nonetheless,



shipments through October 2023 were 2% lower than in 2022.

- Increase in Imports: In 2022, tea imports totaled 30 million kg, up from 27 million kg in 2021.

### Overview of the Indian Tea Industry

- Global Status: With a sizeable domestic tea market, India is the world's fourth-largest exporter and the world's second-largest producer of tea.
- Employment and Regulation: The Tea Board of India regulates cultivation, and 1.16 million people are directly employed in the sector.
- Primary Growing Regions: The Northeast, which includes Assam, and north Bengal are important regions for the production of tea, with the Nilgiris in south India seeing substantial production as well.

### Challenges and Issues

- Global Competition and Decline in Quality: India's market position has been impacted by competition from nations like Kenya as well as the demand for organic tea.
- Poor working conditions for tea workers and the difficulties small-scale tea growers face—such as problems with recognition and cost—are serious concerns.
- External Factors: The industry's issues have been made worse by international occurrences like the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

### Tea Board of India Initiatives

- Establishment: The Tea Board operates as a statutory entity within the Ministry of Commerce, having been established by the Tea Act of 1953. Every three years, the Board is reformed, with its headquarters situated in Kolkata.
- Promotional Activities: The Board funds participation in international fairs and launches a number of campaigns to raise awareness of packaged Indian tea.

- The Tea Development and Promotion Scheme is designed to improve worker welfare, productivity, quality, and market promotion.
- Assistance for Small Growers: To help small tea growers, the Board established FPOs, FPCs, and SHGs.

### Way Forward

- The One District One Product (ODOP) initiative may aid in the marketing of Indian tea.
- Enhancing "AROMA": "AROMA" stands for support for small farmers, infrastructure re-energization, promotion of organic and GI tea, supply chain modernization, and climate change adaptation.
- Encouraging Small Farmers: The expansion of the sector depends on boosting output, quality, and sustainability while concentrating on high-value markets.

### Direct Tax Collections cross 80% of 2023-24 target



### Introduction

- With net direct tax collections of ₹14.7 lakh crore, or more than 80% of the target for the fiscal year, as of January 10, India has accomplished a noteworthy milestone.
- This performance shows a strong 19.4% gain over the same period in the previous fiscal year, demonstrating the effective tax administration and the nation's healthy economic recovery.

### Overview of Tax Collection Performance

- Total revenues: 80.61% of the budget estimates for the fiscal year 2023–24 were achieved with net direct tax revenues of ₹14.7 lakh crore.
- Growth Rate: Compared to net collections for the same period previous year, this indicates a 19.41% growth.
- Growth in Gross Collection: The amount collected in gross direct taxes increased by 16.77% to ₹17.18 lakh crore. This was attributed to a 26.11% increase in Personal Income Tax (PIT) and an 8.32% increase in Corporate Income Tax (CIT) inflows.

#### Detailed Analysis of Tax Collection

- Post-Refund Growth: Following the adjustment for refunds, there was a net growth of 12.37% in CIT collections and a 27.26% increase in PIT collections.
- Growth in PIT and STT Receipts: PIT and Securities Transaction Tax receipts increased by 27.22% after accounting for refunds.

#### What are Direct Taxes?

- A direct tax is a kind of tax in which the incidence and the impact are classified under the same heading.
- The organization or the individual pays the tax directly to the body that imposed the payment.
- No one else may receive payment of the tax; it must be made directly to the government.

#### Types of Direct Taxes

The various types of direct tax that are imposed in India are mentioned below:

##### (1) Income Tax:

- Income taxes are due based on an individual's age and wages.
- The Government of India establishes various tax slabs to determine the required amount of Income Tax.
- Income Tax Returns (ITR) are required to be filed by the taxpayer annually.
- Depending on their ITR, people can be eligible for a refund or might have to pay taxes. People who fail to file their ITRs face penalties.

##### (2) Wealth Tax:

- The yearly tax payment is contingent upon both the property's market value and ownership status.
- If someone possesses real estate, they are required to pay wealth tax regardless of whether the property brings in money or not.
- Wealth tax is a requirement for corporate taxpayers, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), and individuals based on their residential status.
- Assets such as gold deposit bonds, stock holdings, real estate, and commercial property rented for longer than 300 days are all excluded from wealth tax payment provided the real estate is owned for business or professional purposes.

##### (3) Estate Tax:

- It is also called Inheritance Tax and is paid based on the value of the estate or the money that an individual has left after his/her death.

##### (4) Corporate Tax:

- Domestic businesses must pay corporate tax, in addition to their shareholders.
- In India, foreign firms that generate revenue are also required to pay corporate tax.
- Dividends, royalties, interest, asset sales proceeds, and technical service fees are all taxed in India.
- The below-mentioned taxes are also included under Corporate Tax:
  1. Securities Transaction Tax (STT): Any income derived from taxable securities transactions is subject to this tax.
  2. Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT): DDT is imposed on domestic enterprises that declare, distribute, or receive any sums as dividends from their shareholders. However, international businesses are exempt from the DDT tax.
  3. Fringe perks Tax: This tax is imposed on businesses that offer drivers, maids, and other employees fringe perks.

- 4. Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT): MAT is imposed on zero-tax corporations whose accounts are prepared in accordance with the corporations Act.

**(5) Capital Gains Tax:**

- It is a type of direct tax that must be paid as a result of revenue received from investments or asset sales. Capital assets include investments in houses, farms, bonds, stocks, companies, and artwork.
- Tax can be divided into two categories: long-term and short-term, depending on how long it is held.
- Short-term gains are any assets—aside from securities—that are sold within 36 months of their acquisition.
- If any money is received from the sale of properties that have been owned for longer than 36 months, it is deducted from long-term assets.

**Advantages of Direct Taxes**

The main advantages of Direct Taxes in India are mentioned below:

- Economic and Social Equilibrium: The Indian government has implemented equitable tax rates based on an individual's age and wages. The nation's economic status is taken into consideration when determining the tax slabs. In order to balance out all income disparities, exemptions are also implemented.
- Productivity: The number of people working and contributing to the community grows along with the returns from direct taxation. As a result, direct taxes are thought to be very productive.
- Taxes are raised by the government to counteract inflation. Tax increases decrease demand for goods and services, which causes inflation to slow down.
- Certainty: Both the government and the taxpayer feel certain because direct taxes are in place. The taxpayer and the government are aware of the amount that needs to be paid and

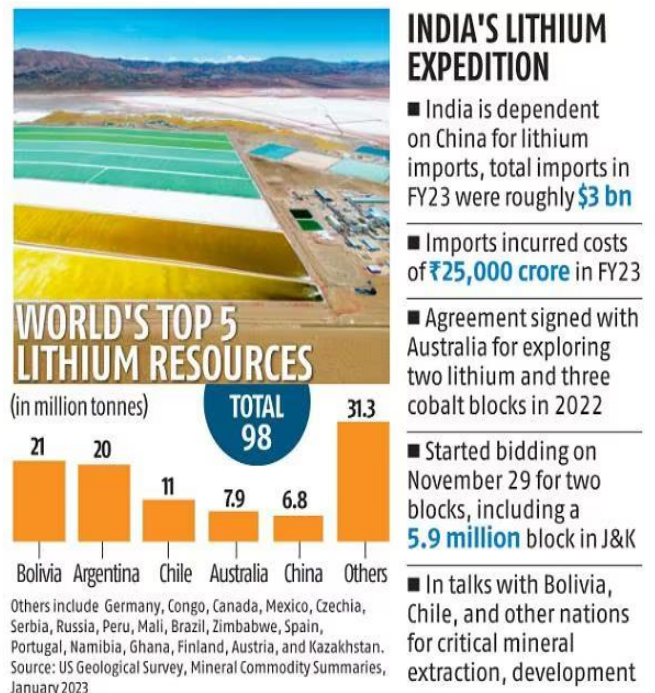
the amount that needs to be collected, respectively.

- Equitable wealth distribution occurs when the government levies higher taxes on those people or entities who can afford them. The excess cash is utilized to support India's lower classes and impoverished people.

**What are the disadvantages of direct taxes?**

- Simple to get around: Not everyone is prepared to give their taxes to the government. To get around taxes, some people are prepared to file a fictitious income return. These people have no accountability to the law of the land, thus they may easily hide their money.
- Arbitrary: The Finance Minister sets taxes at random, if they are progressive. It places a great burden on the impoverished if it is proportionate.
- Disincentive: High taxes prevent people from saving or investing, which exacerbates the nation's economic problems. It damages industries and enterprises by preventing them from expanding.

**KABIL acquires 5 lithium blocks in Argentina**



**Introduction**

- Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL), has taken a significant step towards securing its strategic mineral supply by acquiring five lithium blocks in Argentina.

**About KABIL**

- Joint Venture: National Aluminium Company Ltd. (NALCO), Hindustan Copper Ltd. (HCL), and Mineral Exploration Company Ltd. (MECL) are the three Central Public Sector Enterprises that have joined forces to form Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL), a joint venture company.
- Formation: The main goal of KABIL's 2019 founding was to obtain vital minerals from foreign sources, such as cobalt and lithium.
- Ministry Oversight: NALCO, HCL, and MECL each receive 40% of KABIL's equity participation, whereas MECL is under the Ministry of Mines' jurisdiction.

**Mission and Functions**

- Strategic Mineral Security: Ensuring India's mineral security and achieving self-reliance in vital and strategic minerals is the main goal of KABIL. It locates and purchases foreign mineral resources, such as cobalt and lithium.
- Functions: In order to satisfy the nation's commercial needs, KABIL identifies, acquires, explores, develops, mines, and processes strategic minerals overseas.
- Exploration: It looks at many ways to find resources, such as through trade, partnerships with governments, smart acquisitions, and investments in mining and exploration equipment.
- Global Partnerships: By utilizing India's proficiency in mineral processing and exploration, KABIL builds business relationships with mineral-rich nations across the globe, including Australia, Africa, and South America.

**Key Developments**

- Argentina's Lithium Resources: With Chile, Bolivia, and Argentina, the three countries make

up the "Lithium Triangle," which accounts for more than half of the world's lithium resources. With the third-largest lithium reserves, the second-largest lithium resources, and the fourth-largest production worldwide, Argentina stands out.

- Acquisition of Block: Exploration and Exclusivity Rights for five lithium brine blocks in Argentina have been acquired by KABIL, a state-owned company.
- Branch Office in Argentina: To further demonstrate its dedication to the initiative, KABIL is preparing to open a branch office in Catamarca, Argentina.

**Significance of this acquisition**

- Strategic Significance: India's move toward sustainable energy solutions depends critically on this ground-breaking project. Known as "white gold," lithium is essential for many uses, such as electric vehicles (EVs), mobile phone batteries, and energy storage systems.
- Minimizing Dependency on Imports: China accounts for a large amount of India's imports, which are used to meet the country's lithium requirements, which are estimated to be worth ₹24,000 crore.
- Unlocking Technical Expertise: The Union Minister for Mines emphasizes that this project delivers significant operational and technical knowledge in brine-type lithium exploration, exploitation, and extraction, in addition to meeting India's demands for lithium sourcing.

**Conclusion**

- Purchasing lithium blocks in Argentina through KABIL is a significant step in the right direction for India's vital mineral supply security.
- This program fits with India's aim to clean and independent energy solutions while also bolstering its position in the global lithium market.

## Airbus and CSIR-IIP collaborate to advance Sustainable Aviation Fuel in India



### Introduction

- Airbus, a prominent aircraft manufacturer, has joined forces with the CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum (CSIR-IIP) to pioneer innovative technologies and accelerate the development and qualification of indigenous sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) within India.

### Advancing Sustainable Aviation Fuel

- Decarbonization Ambitions: By reducing carbon emissions in the Indian aircraft industry, the partnership hopes to improve environmental sustainability.
- HEFA Technology Pathway: The collaboration will make use of state-of-the-art HEFA (Hydroprocessed Esters and Fatty Acids) technology, a promising SAF manufacturing pathway that prioritizes environmental impact and sustainability.
- Key Goals: In order to achieve SAF production, Airbus and CSIR-IIP will collaborate to carry out technical evaluations, obtain clearances, gain market access, and obtain sustainability accreditations.

### SAF as a Decarbonization Catalyst

- Transformative Impact: SAF is thought to be the most effective strategy for decarbonizing the aviation sector, including a version created by CSIR-IIP.

- Problems to Be Solved: Expanding the usage of SAF requires overcoming obstacles including higher SAF production and narrowing the cost difference between SAF and conventional jet fuel.

### Airbus' Commitment to SAF

- Partial Adoption: All Airbus airplanes are currently authorized to fly with a 50% SAF blend.
- Future Objective: By 2030, Airbus wants all of its aircraft to be 100% SAF compatible, highlighting the importance of this partnership with CSIR-IIP.

### Collaborative Efforts

- Research Focus: To evaluate the fuel's effects on aircraft systems and the environment, CSIR-IIP will carry out comprehensive studies on the fuel's attributes inside the new pathway.
- Expert Guidance: Airbus will offer insightful information about the fuel evaluation procedure, impart knowledge about fuel testing, and lend its expertise in aircraft systems.

### India's Potential as a Global SAF Hub

- Plenty of Feedstock: India has the potential to become a major center for SAF production by leveraging feedstock availability, local expertise, and technological know-how.
- Scaling Up Solutions: The partnership demonstrates India's ability to grow its sustainable aviation fuel solutions and establish itself as a world leader in this crucial area.

### Conclusion

- The partnership between Airbus and CSIR-IIP represents a major advancement in India's development of sustainable aviation fuel.
- Through the use of indigenous resources, technological know-how, and a dedication to decarbonization, this collaboration seeks to advance India's aerospace sector and support worldwide endeavours to tackle climate change.
- A more environmentally friendly and sustainably oriented aviation future is greatly anticipated with India's potential as a SAF production powerhouse.

## Environment & Diversity

### Earthquake and Tsunami strikes Central Japan

#### Strong earthquake hits central Japan

A magnitude 7.6 earthquake struck Japan's Ishikawa prefecture on Monday afternoon. It is the strongest earthquake to have hit the country's western coast in many decades. Large intensity earthquakes are more common along its eastern coast, close to the Japan Trench that runs along the boundary of the Pacific and North American tectonic plates.



Sources: United States Geological Survey; Natural Earth  
Vijdan Mohammad Kawoosa • Jan. 1, 2024 | REUTERS

On January 1, 2024, a 7.5-magnitude earthquake hit Ishikawa prefecture in Japan, triggering tsunami waves over a meter high.

#### Japan's Geographical Vulnerability

- One of the main causes of Japan's environmental and catastrophe management issues is its geographic fragility, especially with regard to plate tectonics.
- The nation is particularly vulnerable to seismic activity due to its placement at the meeting point of many major tectonic plates.

Here's a detailed look at how plate tectonics contribute to Japan's geographical vulnerability:

#### [1] Convergent Plate Boundaries:

- Pacific Ring of Fire: Japan is situated on the Pacific Ring of Fire, an area known for its frequent tectonic plate borders and intense seismic activity.

- Plates Involved: The Pacific Plate, the Philippine Sea Plate, the Eurasian Plate, and the North American Plate are the main tectonic plates interacting close to Japan.
- Subduction Zones: Underneath the Eurasian and North American plates are the Pacific and Philippine Sea plates. A major source of seismic activity, including strong earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, is this subduction process.

#### [2] Earthquake Activity:

- Regular Earthquakes: These earthquakes are caused by the movement of these plates. Every year, thousands of earthquakes, ranging in intensity from mild to devastating, strike Japan.
- Major Earthquakes: Japan's geological setting has the ability to cause enormous destruction and a high death toll. Past occurrences such as the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011 and the Great Hanshin Earthquake of 1995 illustrate this.

#### [3] Tsunami Risk:

- Tsunami Formation: Tsunamis can be caused by earthquakes that occur beneath the sea or along the shore, which can move significant amounts of water. A strong underwater earthquake in 2011 sent up a tsunami that resulted in severe destruction and the Fukushima nuclear accident.
- Impact on the Coast: Because of its long coastline, Japan is especially susceptible to tsunamis, which can strike minutes after an earthquake beneath the surface and leave little time for evacuation.

#### [4] Volcanic Activity:

- Volcanic Eruptions: Significant volcanic activity is a result of the subduction of the Pacific and Philippine Sea plates, which also produces earthquakes. Volcanic eruptions result from the rising magma caused by the subducted plate melting.
- Over 100 active volcanoes can be found in Japan as a direct result of the country's geological

setting. Eruptions can affect local economy and air transport, as well as endanger the communities in the vicinity.

**[5] Geological Complexity:**

- **Intersecting Faults:** When two or more tectonic plates collide, a complex network of faults is created that makes seismic activity more unpredictable and variable.
- **Diverse Seismic Phenomena:** Because of this complexity, there are many different types of seismic phenomena that can occur. For example, deep-focus earthquakes can occur at deeper depths and have wider effects.

**Kyrgyzstan declares Snow Leopard as National Symbol**



Kyrgyzstan, a Central Asian country, has declared the snow leopard as its national symbol.

**About Snow Leopard**

	Details
<b>Habitat</b>	Mountainous regions of Central and Southern Asia; in India: western and eastern Himalayas.
<b>Indian Geographical Range</b>	Western Himalayas (J&K, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand) and Eastern Himalayas (Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh).
<b>Project Snow Leopard (2009)</b>	Aims to strengthen wildlife conservation in the Himalayan high altitudes, involving local communities.
<b>Conservation Status</b>	IUCN Red List: Vulnerable CITES: Appendix I

	Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (India): Schedule I
<b>India's Conservation Efforts</b>	Flagship species for high altitude Himalayas. Part of GSLEP Programme since 2013. Himalaya Sanrakshak community programme (2020). National Protocol on Snow Leopard Population Assessment (2019) SECURE Himalaya project (GEF-UNDP funded). Listed in 21 critically endangered species for recovery by MoEF&CC. Conservation breeding at Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park.
<b>GSLEP Programme</b>	Inter-governmental alliance of 12 snow leopard countries (India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Mongolia, Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan), focusing on ecosystem value awareness.
<b>Living Himalaya Network Initiative</b>	WWF's initiative across Bhutan, India (North-East), and Nepal for conservation impact in the Eastern Himalayas.

**Significance of the Snow Leopard**

- Since mountain ecosystems make up a sizable amount of the world's surface, the health and stability of these ecosystems are symbolized by the snow leopard.
- In ancient Kyrgyz culture, the snow leopard was considered a totemic animal and was linked to the mythological character Manas.
- In Chyngyz Aitmatov's novel "When Mountains Fall," the snow leopard serves as a symbol for the harmony that exists between humans and the natural world.

**Tiger Sightings in Buxa National Park**



Experts and forest officials in West Bengal's Buxa National Park were encouraged when camera traps there produced pictures of a tiger. The tiger had been absent from the reserve for decades, as evidenced by the fact that the last sighting was 23 years prior to December 2021.

**Buxa Tiger Reserve: Geography and Ecology**

	Details
<b>Location</b>	Alipurduar district, West Bengal, India. Near the Bhutan border.
<b>Establishment</b>	Created in 1983 as a tiger reserve; declared a national park in January 1992.
<b>Area</b>	Total area of approx. 760 sq km (core area: 390 sq km, buffer zone: 370 sq km).
<b>Ecological Significance</b>	Part of the Eastern Himalayan subregion, known for its unique biodiversity.
<b>Geographical Connectivity</b>	Shares a northern boundary with Bhutan. Connected with Bhutanese forests, Kochugaon forests, Manas Tiger Reserve, and Jaldapara National Park.

**Reasons for the Tiger’s Return**

- Improvement of Habitat: Tigers now live in a more suited habitat thanks to initiatives to lessen human interference, enhance the amount of grasslands, and boost the base of prey.
- Preservation Techniques: Among these attempts have been the introduction of spotted deer, or chital, as prey as well as the construction of watering holes.

**Conservation Initiatives and Future Plans**

- The National Tiger Conservation Authority, the Wildlife Institute of India, and the state forest department are all involved in the 2018 launch of the Tiger Augmentation Project.
- Village Relocation: Relocating villages outside of the core region is part of a plan to lessen human presence and enhance the ecosystem.
- Expert Views: In order to bring tigers back to Buxa, scientists believe that two important criteria are habitat connection between Bhutan and Buxa and a decrease in human disturbances.

**Assessing India’s Progress in Air Quality Improvement**



**Introduction**

- Ambitious Goals: In 131 Indian cities, the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) seeks to cut particulate matter concentrations by 40% by 2026.
- Variable Outcomes: Respirer Living Sciences and Climate Trends' investigation shows that



different cities have made different amounts of progress, with very few of them reaching the desired reductions in PM 2.5 levels.

**About National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**

	Details
<b>Launch</b>	Launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in January 2019.
<b>Objective</b>	To create a national framework for air quality management with a time-bound target for reducing air pollution.
<b>Targets</b>	Aims to reduce the concentration of PM10 and PM2.5 particles by at least 20% in five years, using 2017 as the base year.
<b>Coverage</b>	Focuses on 132 non-attainment cities identified by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).
<b>Non-attainment Cities</b>	Cities that have consistently fallen short of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for over five years.
<b>NAAQS Pollutants</b>	Includes PM10, PM2.5, SO2, NO2, CO, NH3, Ozone, Lead, Benzene, Benzo-Pyrene, Arsenic, and Nickel.
<b>Current Standards</b>	Annual average prescribed limits are 40 µg/m3 for PM2.5 and 60 µg/m3 for PM10.
<b>Revised Targets (2022)</b>	Updated target of a 40% reduction in particulate matter concentration by 2026.
<b>Improvement Assessment</b>	Requires a 15% or more reduction in annual average PM10 concentration and at least 200 clean air quality days starting from 2020-21.

**Particulate Matter Reduction: Varied City Performances**

- **Inconsistent Declines:** Out of 49 cities where data was available for five years, 27 saw a decrease in PM 2.5, but only four of them either met or exceeded the desired level.

- **Notable Pollution Increases:** PM 2.5 levels have marginally decreased or increased in cities like Delhi, Navi Mumbai, Mumbai, Ujjain, Jaipur, Visakhapatnam, and Pune.

**Success Stories and Regional Disparities**

- **Significant Reductions:** PM 2.5 and PM 10 levels have significantly decreased in cities like Varanasi, Agra, and Jodhpur.
- **Progress in Uttar Pradesh:** With the exception of Jodhpur, most of the cities meeting the 2026 reduction targets are located in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Pollution in the Indo-Gangetic Plain (IGP):** Eighteen of the twenty most polluted cities are found in the IGP, which continues to be a hotspot for elevated PM 2.5 levels.

**Factors Influencing Pollution Levels**

- **Annual Variations:** The amount of pollution can vary greatly in a single year, peaking in winter in northern and eastern Indian cities.
- **Infrastructure for Monitoring Air Quality:** The quantity and dispersion of continuous ambient air quality monitors have a major influence on the precision of pollution data.
- **Geographical and Meteorological Influences:** The report notes that additional investigation is required to fully comprehend how location, meteorology, and emissions affect pollution levels.

**NCAP's Progress and Future Outlook**

- **Notable Efforts:** Although the NCAP has reduced pollution in some cities, its overall efficacy is yet unknown.
- **Improved Monitoring:** It is anticipated that the installation of more air quality monitoring stations will improve the picture of pollution levels and support mitigation measures.

**Conclusion**

- **Persistent Pollution Challenges:** Despite certain achievements, growing pollution levels are still a problem in many urban areas.

- Commitment to Environmental Goals: India's dedication to challenging environmental goals is shown in the NCAP's updated aim.
- Need for Comprehensive Strategies: To achieve long-term improvements in air quality, effective air quality management calls for a mix of careful monitoring, focused policy actions, and increased public awareness.

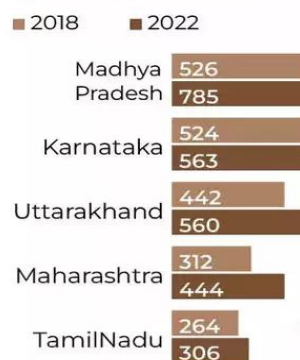
## Project Tiger and India's Conservation Landscape

### The Tiger Count

Tiger numbers in India:

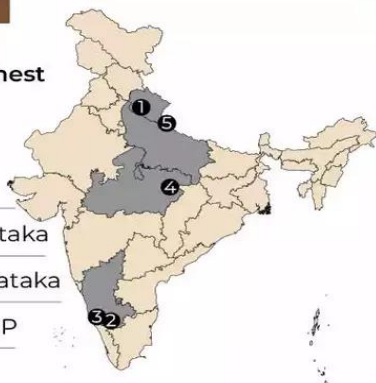


States with highest tiger numbers



Reserves with highest tiger population

- 1 Jim Corbett, Uttarakhand
- 2 Bandipur, Karnataka
- 3 Nagarhole, Karnataka
- 4 Bandhavgarh, MP
- 5 Dudhwa, UP



statutory category in 2006, turning into a worldwide conservation success story.

- Tiger Reserve Expansion: India presently has 54 reserves spread over 18 states, accounting for 2.38% of the nation's total land area, up from nine reserves in 1973.

### Tiger Population and Conservation Efforts

- Population Growth and Census Methods: With the switch from the pug-mark method to camera-trap techniques, there has been a notable increase in the number of tigers; three-quarters of the world's tiger population currently resides in India.
- The Wildlife (Protection) Act (WLPA) of 1972 changed the rights of forest inhabitants and centralized control with the State government. It also established National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.

### Project Tiger's Transformation and Critical Tiger Habitats (CTH)

- Transitioning from a Centrally Sponsored Scheme to a CTH: Project Tiger's move to emphasize CTHs sought to give tiger-centric conservation top priority by enacting buffer areas surrounding CTHs.
- 2006 Amendment and Establishment of NTCA: The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and a tiger conservation strategy were established as a result of the WLPA amendment in 2006, however CTHs were not violated.

### Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006 and Its Implications

- Rights of Forest inhabitants Recognized: The Forest Rights Act (FRA) designated Gram Sabhas as the supreme authority for managing forests and acknowledged the rights of forest inhabitants, including those residing in Tiger Reserves.
- Critical Wildlife Habitat (CWH) Introduction: The FRA implemented CWH to prevent the diversion of notified areas for non-forestry uses.

### Challenges in CTH Delineation and Legal Compliance

TOI FOR MORE INFOGRAPHICS, DOWNLOAD THE TIMES OF INDIA APP

### Introduction

- Launch and Growth: Started in 1973, Project Tiger has transformed over time from an effort managed by the forest administration to a

- Hasty CTH Notifications: In 2007, 26 Tiger Reserves were not fully compliant with legal requirements as a result of a hurried process.
- Absence of Buffer Areas: Prior to the Supreme Court's intervention in 2012, the majority of CTHs were devoid of buffer areas.

**Relocation and Rehabilitation Issues**

- The legal framework for relocation is outlined by the WLPA and LARR Act 2013, which include standards for rehabilitation and particular compensation.
- Gaps in Implementation: Real-world relocation procedures frequently don't meet legal criteria, which results in a lackluster level of consent and pay.

**Conflict between Tiger Conservation and Forest Dwellers' Rights**

- Opposition to the Recognition of Forest Rights: Conflicts frequently arise in Tiger Reserves as a result of opposition to the recognition of the rights of forest inhabitants.
- The role of the NTCA and its legal challenges: The NTCA has occasionally infringed on the legal rights of forest inhabitants through its activities, such as interim prohibitions and obligations for wildlife clearance.

**Conclusion**

- The journey of India with Project Tiger emphasizes the necessity to strike a balance between the rights and livelihoods of forest inhabitants and the conservation of tigers.
- upcoming prospects: India must manage rising human-wildlife conflicts while maintaining sustainable conservation methods as tiger populations and sanctuaries expand.
- Evolution of Laws and Policies: The changing laws and policies pertaining to the conservation of tigers are a result of a dynamic process of adjustment to the ecological, social, and legal intricacies.

**Madhya Pradesh's Ken-Betwa River Project**



**Introduction**

- The Ken-Betwa river interlinking project, a significant initiative of the Madhya Pradesh government and part of the Centre's ambitious plan, has come under scrutiny.

**Overview of the Project and Violations**

- Project Details: Work on the Lower Orr dam, which is a component of the second phase of the Ken-Betwa river interlinking project, started in 2019.
- Breaking the Laws of Clearance: According to a 2022 expert appraisal committee (EAC) study, the project was started without official Environment Ministry approval.
- Unfinished Construction: According to the most recent report, approximately 82% of the dam and 33.5% of the network of canals had been finished without the required permissions.
- Recent Recommendations from the EAC: The EAC requested additional information and a new assessment in December 2023 regarding possible harm brought on by the construction.

**What is the Ken Betwa Link Project?**

- First of its Kind: The National Perspective Plan's first attempt to connect Indian rivers is this initiative.
- River linking is the process of moving water between the Betwa and Ken rivers, which are both Yamuna tributaries.

**Phases of the Project**

- The Daudhan dam complex, the Ken-Betwa link canal, the High Level Tunnel, the Low Level Tunnel, and the Power houses are the Phase I components.
- Phase-II Components: The Lower Orr dam, the Bina complex project, and the Kotha barrage will all be built during this phase.

**Utility of the Project**

- Benefits of Irrigation: The project intends to irrigate 10.62 lakh hectares per year.
- Drinking Water Supply: An estimated 62 lakh individuals will have access to drinking water.
- Power Generation: 27 MW of solar power and 103 MW of hydropower will be produced by the project.
- Regional Development: By boosting employment and agricultural activity, it aims to provide socioeconomic prosperity to the Bundelkhand region.
- Fighting Rural Distress: The project is also seen to be a way to stop this area's distressed migration.

**Ecological Issues with the Project**

- Scientific Basis: Questions have been raised concerning the Ken River's water availability as well as the "surplus and deficit" paradigm.
- Disputes over Water Sharing: UP and MP have clashed over sharing water, particularly in non-monsoonal months.
- Environmental Impact: The downstream Ken Gharial Sanctuary will be impacted by the project's construction of a reservoir dam in the Panna National Park and Tiger Reserve.

- Compliance with the Wildlife Act: It is not yet established that the National Board for Wildlife has given its approval, as mandated by the Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972.

**Issues with the Projects**

- Displacement: A large number of people will be displaced as a result of the project.
- Topographical Changes: Building dams in the Ganga basin is difficult due to its level terrain.
- Seismic and Inundation Hazards: In the Himalayan region, large-scale water transfer poses a risk of flooding forests and causing earthquakes.
- Financial and Political Difficulties: The project necessitates a significant outlay of funds as well as political backing.
- Ecological Feasibility and Land Acquisition: Reaching a consensus on ecological issues and land acquisition presents significant challenges.

**Criticisms of Such Projects**

- Dubious Science: Opponents claim that the foundation of these initiatives is out-of-date knowledge about water management.
- Natural processes are perceived as being violated by them, as they present more risks than opportunities.

**Way Forward**

- Expert Scrutiny: It is essential to conduct a thorough and impartial expert examination throughout the approval phase.
- Independent Hydrological Study: To evaluate the viability and impact, a thorough investigation of these rivers is required.

**Conclusion**

- Developmental initiatives such as the Ken-Betwa Link shouldn't jeopardize vital wildlife habitats or delicate ecosystems.
- In addition to legal compliance, the potentially detrimental effects on water flow and sanctuary ecosystems must be carefully evaluated and taken into account.

- In order to balance the demands of ecological preservation with those of development, sound environmental governance and attentiveness are crucial.

**Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival**



**Introduction**

- Arunachal Pradesh will host the ninth Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival (PPHF), which will showcase the state's dedication to protecting wildlife in general and hornbills in particular.
- This event, which takes place at Seijosa in the Pakke Kessang area on January 18–20, 2024, unites several communities in their attempts to preserve these unique birds and raise public awareness of environmental issues.

**Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival**

- The festival's theme is "Paga hum Domutoh, Domutoh Domutoh."
- Meaning: This year's theme, which translates to "Let Our Hornbills Remain" in Nyishi, emphasizes how vital it is to protect these amazing birds.
- Advocating for conservation: The PPHF provides a forum for promoting the preservation of hornbill populations and their native environments.

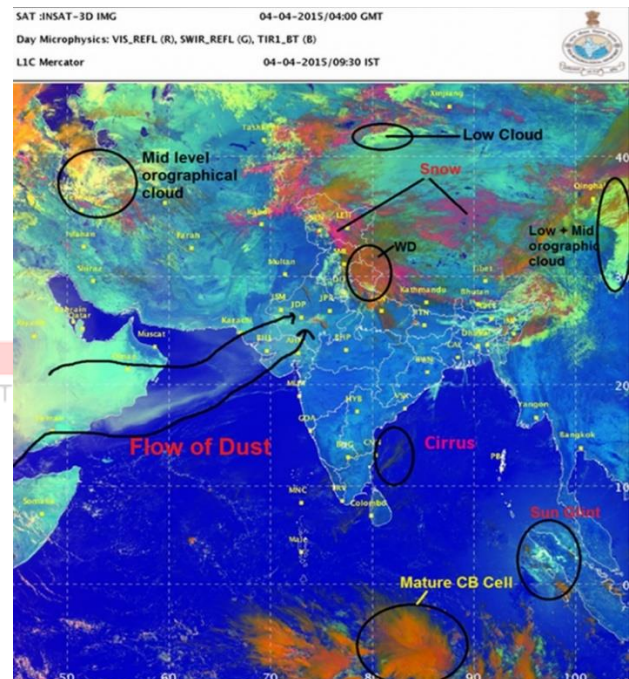
**Emphasis on Wildlife Conservation**

- Four species of hornbills may be found in the Pakke Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Arunachal Pradesh: the endangered Rufous-necked hornbill, the Great Indian, Oriental Pied, and the wreathed hornbill.
- The celebration honors the Nyishi, the biggest tribal group in Arunachal Pradesh, for their significant contribution to hornbill conservation.

They stopped hunting hornbills and started working to protect them instead.

- Alternative Income: To promote economic development and environmental preservation, PPHF seeks to create alternative revenue streams for the area and increase public knowledge of PTR and its surrounds.

**INSAT 3D's Role in Monitoring Foggy Conditions in North India**



**Introduction**

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has been sending out alerts and advisories to advise locals about the current situation as a huge portion of North India, including areas like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Delhi, and Punjab, struggle with intense fog.
- The purpose of this paper is to explain the science underlying these alerts and how the INSAT 3D satellite contributes vital data for fog monitoring.

**Fog Situation in North India**

- Persistent Fog: Since December 2023, a thick layer of fog has covered much of North India.
- IMD Warnings: On January 16, the IMD issued warnings about "very dense fog" in a number of

states, including Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh. During the night and early morning, visibility is predicted to plummet below 50 meters.

#### Decoding Satellite Images

- Perspectives from INSAT 3D: Using imagery, the INSAT 3D satellite is essential for tracking cloudy situations.
- Solar reflectance and brightness temperature are the two elements that affect the colors in these pictures.
- The quantity of solar energy that a surface reflects in proportion to the energy it receives is known as its solar reflectance.
- Brightness Temperature: Connects the surface brightness of an item, measured at different wavelengths, to its temperature.

#### Day Microphysics Data

- Wavelengths of Solar Reflectance are Studied by INSAT 3D's "Day Microphysics" Component: Visible radiation at 0.5  $\mu\text{m}$ , shortwave infrared radiation at 1.6  $\mu\text{m}$ , and thermal infrared radiation at 10.8  $\mu\text{m}$ .
- Color Determination: The RGB (red, green, and blue) colors of the image are determined by the strength of signals at these wavelengths.
- Applications: Cloud kinds, thunderstorm stages, snow identification, and fire detection are all aided by these photographs.

#### Night Microphysics Data

- Complex Color Determination: Two colors are obtained from the difference between two thermal infrared signals by INSAT 3D's "night microphysics" component.
- Variables in Color: Green indicates a signal between 10.8  $\mu\text{m}$  and 3.9  $\mu\text{m}$ , blue indicates a signal between 10.8  $\mu\text{m}$  and 3.9  $\mu\text{m}$ , and red indicates the difference between 12  $\mu\text{m}$  and 10  $\mu\text{m}$  signals.

- Characterizing Features: Cloud types and their temperature variations can be identified with the help of night microphysics data.

#### Combining Day and Night Data

- Comprehensive Insights: Meteorologists watch the creation, evolution, and depletion of meteorological events, including cyclones, and investigate temperature changes and moisture droplets by combining day and night microphysics data.
- Applications for advanced warning systems include the one- to three-hour advance prediction of thunderstorms.

#### Radiometers and Sounders

- Satellite Instruments: INSAT 3D and 3DR assess spectral properties with radiometers and analyze water vapor, temperature, and humidity with atmospheric sounders.
- Better Technology: Compared to their predecessors, these satellites offer notable advances in spectrum channels and spatial resolution, which strengthen India's capacity to monitor the weather.

#### Future with INSAT 3DS

- Further Developments: In February 2024, the Indian Space Research Organization intends to launch the INSAT 3DS meteorological satellite.
- Enhanced Capabilities: By expanding on the achievements of its predecessors, this satellite will help India monitor and warn about the weather.

#### Conclusion

- With its capacity to record and process microphysics data both during the day and at night, the INSAT 3D satellite is essential for tracking and forecasting weather patterns, particularly those involving fog in North India.
- Through a thorough comprehension of the complex science underlying these satellite photos, meteorologists are able to offer useful insights and timely warnings to safeguard public

safety while navigating the difficulties presented by severe weather conditions.

- India's meteorological capabilities are constantly improving due to impending breakthroughs,

which will improve the country's readiness for future weather-related incidents.

## Governance

### CAA Rules to be notified before 2024 General Elections



The rules of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) are likely to be notified before the next general election, confirms MHA officials.

#### About Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019

- **Parliamentary Approval:** The CAA is not yet in effect, having been passed by the Parliament in December 2019.
- **Present Situation:** The Act's regulating regulations have not yet been announced by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- **Timeline for Implementation:** As reported on December 29, 2023, there is a one-month window beginning on February 1 to be used for the CAA's implementation prior to the next Budget Session.

#### Key Provisions of the CAA

- **Facilitation of Citizenship:** The CAA seeks to grant citizenship to undocumented immigrants who unlawfully entered India from six non-Muslim groups in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan.

- **Communities Eligible:** People from the following three nations who entered India on or before December 31, 2014, including Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis, Christians, and Jains, are eligible.
- **Decreased Residency Requirement:** The Act lowers the qualifying candidates' 11-year cumulative stay in India to six years.

#### Salient Features of the Act

- **Definition of unlawful Migrants:** Certain populations from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan are not considered unlawful migrants under the revised Citizenship Act of 1955.
- **Naturalization or Citizenship by Registration:** The Act amends the requirements for citizenship, lowering the period of residency to five years for certain localities.
- **Exemptions:** The Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873's "Inner Line" areas and the tribal regions of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura are exempt from the rules.
- **Cancellation of OCI Registration:** The Act adds new reasons for OCIs (overseas citizens of India) to withdraw their registration.

#### Recent discussions over CAA

- **2011 UPA Government Decision:** In 2010, the Long Term Visas (LTVs) were issued to Sikhs and Hindus from Pakistan who claimed to be victims of religious persecution by the Congress-led UPA administration.
- **Legal Amendments:** The government representative said that if necessary, legislation might be changed to extend the 2014 deadline.
- **Indeterminate Recipient Numbers:** It is unknown how many undocumented individuals in states

like West Bengal and Assam will gain overall from the CAA.

- High Application Volume: There are currently almost 80,000 Pakistani Hindu applications outstanding, of whom 35,000 are from Rajasthan alone.
- Online Citizenship Process: District collectors and home secretaries have the authority to grant citizenship to applicants from the six communities, and this has been the case since 2018.

#### Challenges in the Online Process

- Problem with Pakistani Passports: Passports that have expired cannot be renewed by the Pakistan High Commission; instead, they must be renewed online.
- Visa and Citizenship Pathway: The majority of Sikhs and Hindus from Pakistan came to India on pilgrimage or long-term visas, which come before citizenship.

#### Conclusion

- Security and humanitarian concerns must be balanced: A delicate balance between satisfying refugee humanitarian needs and national security considerations is necessary for the CAA's implementation.
- Impact to be Expected: The announcement of the CAA regulations will signal a dramatic change in India's citizenship laws, with a special impact on refugees from nearby nations.
- Current Developments: A close eye will be kept on the effects on impacted communities and the legal environment as the government completes the CAA regulations.

### Project 'Devika': North India's First River Rejuvenation nears completion



North India's first river rejuvenation project, 'Devika', is nearing completion and will soon be inaugurated by Prime Minister.

#### About Project 'Devika'

- Beginning: The project was initiated by the PM in February 2019 and is based on the "Namami Ganga" concept.
- Demand: The project, which has long been called for rehabilitation and rejuvenation, picked up steam after 2014, which was a big step forward for North Indian river revitalization initiatives.
- Project Execution: The LWM project's construction is being handled by J&K's Urban Environmental Engineering Department (UEED).
- Cultural Importance: The Devika River, especially in Udhampur, Jammu & Kashmir, is highly significant religiously, as it is considered the sister of the holy Ganges.

#### Key Features

- Liquid Waste Management (LWM): In order to preserve the river's holiness, a different LWM project that connects homes with a system of pipelines and manholes is being carried out.
- Solid Waste Management (SWM): Maintaining the river's holiness requires both LWM and SWM initiatives.
- Infrastructure Development: Three sewage treatment facilities, a 129.27 km sewerage network, the construction of cremation ghats, protective fence, landscaping, tiny hydropower and solar power plants, and protection fencing are also part of this project.



## Maharashtra approves option for Old Pension Scheme



The Maharashtra Cabinet has approved a proposal allowing certain state government employees to opt for the old pension scheme (OPS). The option is extended to employees who joined the service after November 1, 2005, based on recruitment advertisements issued before that date.

### Transition in Pension Schemes

- Old Pension Scheme (OPS): Without employee contributions, the OPS promised, after a minimum of ten years of service, a pension equal to half the last basic pay + dearness allowance. In addition, it offered Death Cum Retirement Gratuity (DCRG) and a family pension.
- The NPS, or New Pension Scheme: The NPS, a market-linked, participatory program that requires contributions from both employers and employees, was introduced to solve the mounting pension bill.

### Background and Implementation of NPS

- OASIS Project: Started in 1999, it resulted in the government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee's 2003 proposal of the NPS.
- Scheme Specifics: 10% of base pay is contributed by employees, with an employer match of up to 14%. The money is invested in market-linked pension funds that are subject to PFRDA regulations.
- Account administration: For lifelong account administration, NPS offers a Permanent Retirement Account Number (PRAN).

- State Adoption: The NPS has been adopted by every state but West Bengal. Plans to return to the OPS were announced by a few opposition-ruled states.

### Rationale Behind NPS Adoption

- Pension Debt Sustainability: The NPS depends on accumulated money, while the OPS was a financial burden in the absence of funds.
- Taking Care of the Aging Population: The OPS could no longer be maintained as life expectancy increased.
- Preventing Early Retirements: Because of its long-term investment fund philosophy, the NPS promotes longer service.
- Investment and Flexibility: NPS provides the flexibility to move between different investment options and fund managers.

### Criticism of NPS

- Market Risks: Concerns regarding old age security are raised when retirement savings are subjected to market volatility.
- Pension Amount Concerns: Under NPS, pensions are not inflation-indexed, and there is no minimum pension guarantee.
- Accountability Concerns: There are still concerns around market failure accountability as well as the security of the invested corpus.

### Conclusion

- State Governments' Challenge: The financial effects on future generations must be carefully considered before switching back to OPS.
- Examining and fortifying NPS: The NPS can be strengthened by taking steps like implementing inflation-indexed annuities, guaranteeing minimum returns, and making sure contributions and registration are made on time.
- Balanced Approach: It takes a careful strategy to strike a balance between pensioners' access to enough social security and the requirement to maintain fiscal sustainability.

## History

### Kharsawan Massacre of 1948: A Tragic Chapter in Jharkhand's History



A massacre that occurred on January 1, 1948, in the town of Kharsawan in modern-day Jharkhand was similar to the one that took place in Jallianwala Bagh in 1919. A crowd had assembled for the weekly haat (market) and a protest when police opened fire, killing hundreds, or according to other sources, thousands of Adivasis.

#### Kharsawan Massacre: A Background

- Adivasis in the area have yearned for a separate state that would represent their distinct culture and complaints since the provinces of Bihar and Orissa were established in 1912.
- Over time, this need grew stronger, and in 1930 the Simon Commission acknowledged the unique characteristics of the area.
- To further this objective, the Adivasi Mahasabha was founded in 1938 under the leadership of well-known figure Jaipal Singh Munda.

#### Kharsawan's Merger Controversy

- Merger with Orissa: During the integration of India's princely states, in 1947, Kharsawan, a princely state with a sizable population speaking Odia, made the decision to merge with Orissa.

- Opposition from Adivasis: The majority of Adivasis, however, were against this merger and preferred a separate state.

#### The Massacre

- Protest assembly: To express opposition to the merger, a sizable assembly was planned for January 1, 1948, the weekly market day, in Kharsawan. More than fifty thousand people, many of them from far-off villages, gathered to witness Jaipal Munda, who was supposed to arrive but never did.
- Police Open Fire: The Orissa military police opened fire, causing a massacre, due to the enormous crowd and stressful situation. There are differing estimates about the precise number of victims, ranging from several dozen to several thousand.

- Aftereffects: Numerous injuries went neglected, and the dead were dumped in a bush and a well. In Indian history, the tragedy is still a sordid and unresolved chapter.

#### Legacy

- Uncertain Death Toll: While 35 deaths are listed in official records, figures as high as 2,000 are suggested by other sources, such as P.K. Deo's "Memoir of a Bygone Era."
- Absence of Accountability: No conclusive investigation or system of responsibility for the massacre has been put in place.
- Memorial and Remembrance: Political leaders frequently pay their condolences at the memorial located in Kharsawan, which serves as a remembrance of this catastrophe.

#### Conclusion

- The Kharsawan massacre serves as a sobering reminder of the difficulties and tragedies encountered by India during its independence process, especially for underprivileged groups such as the Adivasis.

- It highlights the continuing problems with regard to tribal status and rights in India's past.

### Paleolithic Tools Discovered in Telangana's Mulugu District



A Palaeolithic tool discovered in Mulugu district in Telangana. | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunsgi in Karnataka</li> <li>• Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh</li> <li>• Didwana in Rajasthan</li> <li>• Belan Valley in Uttar Pradesh</li> </ul>
<b>Lifestyle</b>	Nomadic hunter-gatherers; relied on hunting animals and gathering plants for food.
<b>Cultural Developments</b>	Development of basic stone tools and control of fire.
<b>Art and Symbolism</b>	Evidence of early art found in Bhimbetka rock shelters, with paintings and engravings.
<b>Climate and Environment</b>	Varied climatic conditions over millennia; included ice ages and warmer periods.
<b>Human Species</b>	Mainly Homo erectus and Homo sapiens.

#### Introduction

- **Floods Unearth Historical Artifacts:** Paleolithic quartzite tools have been found in the Mulugu district of Telangana, following recent floods. These finds provide new insight into the prehistoric human occupation of the area.
- **Findings Made by Non-Historians:** An amateur historian named Sriramoju Haragopal led a team that discovered the implements in a dried-up creek bed.

#### About Paleolithic Age

	Details
<b>Timeframe</b>	Approximately 2.6 million years ago to about 10,000 BCE.
<b>Characteristics</b>	Marked by the use of stone tools by early humans. Tools were mainly hand axes, cleavers, and choppers.
<b>Major Sites</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh</li> <li>• Soan Valley in Punjab</li> <li>• Sites in Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Maharashtra</li> <li>• Narmada Valley in Central India</li> <li>• Attirampakkam in Tamil Nadu</li> </ul>

#### Details of the Discovery

- **Location of Find:** In the Mulugu district, between the villages of Gurrevula and Bhupatipuram, the hand axes were found.
- **Particular Discovery:** An important stone axe with dimensions of 15.5 cm in length, 11 cm in width, and 5.5 cm in thickness was discovered by the researchers.

#### Context and Comparison

- **Global Significance:** Similar hand axes have been found all throughout the world, suggesting that early humans employed a similar tool type for a variety of tasks.
- **Historical Context in India:** In 1863, the first Paleolithic site in the country was discovered at Attirampakkam, close to Madras (now Chennai). This site is known as the Madras Hand-Axe Industry or Madrasian Culture, and it contains bifacial hand axes that date back around 15 lakh years.

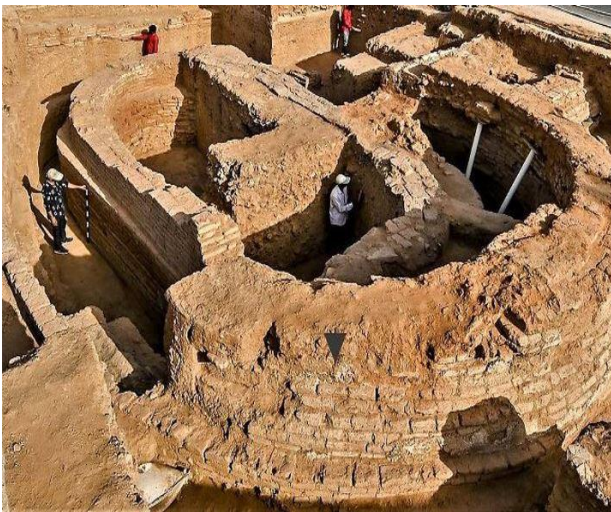
#### Historical Significance

- **Tools of the Paleolithic Era:** The stone axe is thought to have originated about 30 lakh years

ago during the Lower Paleolithic period, according to paleontologists.

- Identification of the implements: Paleolithic hunter-gatherers employed hefty quartzite for huge implements, and their chipping style, substance, and size were used to identify the artifacts.

## India's Oldest Living City found in Vadnagar: IIT study



### Introduction

- Significant findings from a recent collaborative study conducted by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur have been found in PM Modi's hometown of Vadnagar.
- The study indicates a continuous cultural presence in the region, in contrast to the widely held concept of a "Dark Age" after the collapse of the Harappans.

### Vadnagar: Mysteries Revealed

- Historical Significance: The finding indicates a continuous human settlement for 5,500 years, and it closes a gap in the history of Indian archaeology between 1,500 and 500 BCE.
- Multicultural Settlement: It was determined that Vadnagar was influenced by a number of different cultures and religions, including Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, and Jain.

- Cultural Continuity: Based on available data, Vadnagar may have been established as early as 1,400 BCE, which would place it in the latter half of the post-urban Harappan period.
- Archaeological Artifacts: A wide range of artifacts were found at the site, including beautifully designed bangles, potteries, and objects made of copper, gold, silver, and iron.
- Climatic Influence on History: Over a 3,000-year span, the study shows that climatic shifts had a major impact on the development and collapse of Indian kingdoms as well as invasions.
- Vadnagar was ruled by several kingdoms and empires in succession, including the Rashtrakuta-Pratihara-Chawada kings, the Solanki kings (Chalukya rule), the Sultanate-Mughals, the Indo-Greeks, the Indo-Scythians (Kshatrapa kings), Maitrakas (Gupta kingdom), and the British. This information is based on radiocarbon dating.
- Trigger for Migration: The team surmised that migration from central Asia may have been sparked by cold, dry, or hyperarid circumstances.

### Challenging the "Dark Age" Narrative

- Redefining Historical Gaps: The results cast doubt on the idea of a "Dark Age" that began when the Indus Valley Civilization collapsed about 4,000 years ago and ended before Iron Age cities such as Gandhar, Koshal, and Avanti emerged.
- The Significance of Vadnagar: Research indicates that Vadnagar is among the oldest continuously inhabited cities in India under a single fortification, refuting this myth.
- Possible Continuity of Harappanism: Vadnagar's town may have originated as early as 1400 BCE, according to preliminary radiocarbon dating, which places it in the late stages of the post-urban Harappan period.

## International Relations

### Houthi Rebels and Regional Dynamics



#### Introduction

- On January 11, the United States and the United Kingdom began conducting military operations against Houthi groups in Yemen.
- This move is a reaction to the Houthis' ongoing hostility toward ships in the Red Sea, a vital conduit for international trade.

#### Background of the Conflict

- Houthi Attacks on Shipping: One of the busiest maritime trade routes in the world has been disrupted since November 2023 when Houthi forces have started attacking ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.
- Israeli-Hamas Conflict: The Houthis' actions are a reaction to the Israeli military's assault of Gaza after Hamas launched a major attack on October 7 that left many dead.

#### Houthi Group and Regional Dynamics

- What Is the Houthis: The Houthis are a Shia militant organization that is leading the civil war in Yemen and seizing control of large areas of the nation, including Sana'a, the capital.
- Long-standing regional rivalries are reflected in the conflict, with Saudi Arabia supporting the Yemeni government and Iran supporting the Houthis. It is believed that these larger regional dynamics also include the Houthis' engagement in the Israel-Hamas conflict.

#### Concerns for Global Trade

- Impact on World traffic: The security of the Red Sea and Suez Canal is vital since they handle 12% of all international traffic.
- Alternative Routes: Some ships have been redirected around the Cape of Good Hope due to safety concerns, which has resulted in longer transit times and higher fuel prices.

#### Implications for the Region

- The Prosperity Operation Guardian: Started by the United States, this alliance seeks to guarantee marine safety in the area; nevertheless, participating nations have demonstrated a hesitancy to make substantial contributions.
- Risks of Wider Conflict: Unpredictable results in the Middle East could result from the conflict extending beyond Israel and Gaza.
- Effect on Yemeni Peace Talks: The UN-sponsored and Oman-mediated peace talks in Yemen could be impacted by the strikes.

### World Economic Forum (WEF) Summit at Davos



#### Introduction

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) has begun its annual summit in Davos, Switzerland.

#### World Economic Forum (WEF)

- WEF is an international non-profit organization with its headquarters located in Geneva, Switzerland. Its mission is to address global

political, social, and economic concerns by bringing together the public and private sectors.

- Professor Klaus Schwab, a German economist who was born in Switzerland, founded it in 1971 with the goal of fostering international collaboration on these urgent issues.
- Over fifty years ago, the World Economic Forum had its inaugural conference in Davos, Switzerland. Since then, the annual gathering has been held there every year, and the word "WEF" has become a shorthand for the event.

#### Purpose and Essence of the WEF

- **Bringing Stakeholders Together:** To discuss global issues and come up with solutions, the WEF brings together influential figures from industry, politics, and civil society.
- **Extension of Scope:** The WEF's initial focus was on European companies catching up with US management methods; however, as time went on, it began to cover social and economic issues as well.

#### Annual Meeting in Davos

- **Membership:** The World Economic Forum (WEF) launched a membership program for the top 1,000 global corporations in 1975.
- **International diplomacy:** Davos provides a neutral setting for world leaders to diffuse conflict and have important conversations.
- **Historic Meetings:** The first ministerial-level negotiations between North and South Korea as well as discussions on German reunification have taken place in Davos.
- **The G20's founding:** The G20, which consists of 20 nations and first addressed global finance, was conceived during the 1998 WEF debates.

#### Funding and Davos's Serene Environment

- **WEF Funding:** Partnering corporations, usually multinational businesses with annual sales of more than \$5 billion, provide the majority of funding for the WEF.
- **Davos Environment:** The peaceful environs of Davos offer the perfect setting for the WEF's

objective of promoting a more thriving global economy.

#### Beyond Discussions: WEF's Impact

- **International indices and rankings:** The WEF releases important international indices and rankings, including the Global Competitiveness Report and the Global Gender Gap Report.
- **Significance:** The WEF Summit provides a vibrant forum for leaders and stakeholders to come together and discuss urgent global challenges, promoting massive collaboration and innovation.

#### India-UAE Relations



#### Introduction

- The robust India-UAE connections were recently emphasized by PM Modi during the Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2024.
- As the Chief Guest, there were bilateral talks with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, the President of the United Arab Emirates.

#### India-UAE Relations: Historical Context

India-UAE relations have seen significant milestones:

- **India-UAE CEPA:** 90% of Indian exports to the UAE are now eligible for duty-free access because to this agreement, which went into effect on May 1, 2022, and reduced tariffs on over 80% of products. With a target of \$100 billion by 2030, non-oil trade increased to \$50 billion between May 2022 and April 2023.
- **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC):** The UAE is essential to the IMEC, which

provides a counterbalance to China's Belt and Road Initiative.

- Group I2U2: This alliance, which consists of the United States, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and India, fosters private sector collaboration in the water, energy, and transportation sectors.
- Rupee-Dirham Agreement: To lessen reliance on the US dollar, the Reserve Bank of India and the Central Bank of the United Arab Emirates have developed a framework for using local currencies in cross-border transactions.
- Cultural Exchange: The building of the BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi, the country's first temple of its kind, is evidence of the UAE's tolerance.

**Significance of India-UAE Relations**

These relations hold immense strategic, political, economic, and cultural importance:

**[A] Strategic Significance:**

- Security Concerns: In the midst of Middle East tensions, the cooperation between India and the UAE strengthens both countries' security by combating terrorism and piracy.
- Energy Security: As the country's sixth-largest exporter of crude oil, the UAE is essential to India's Strategic Petroleum Reserves Program.

**[B] Political Significance:**

- Multilateral Reforms: The United Arab Emirates backs India in a number of international fora.
- India's closer ties with the United Arab Emirates serve as a counterbalance to China's increasing influence in the region.
- Engagement with Regional Alliances: Improved ties between the UAE and India may open the door for India to join groups like the OIC and negotiate a free trade pact with the GCC.

**[C] Economic Significance:**

- Remittances: India receives a significant influx of remittances from the UAE.
- Trade and Investments: With significant investments across a range of industries, the UAE is India's third-largest trading partner.

- India's entry into the African market is facilitated by its relations with the United Arab Emirates.

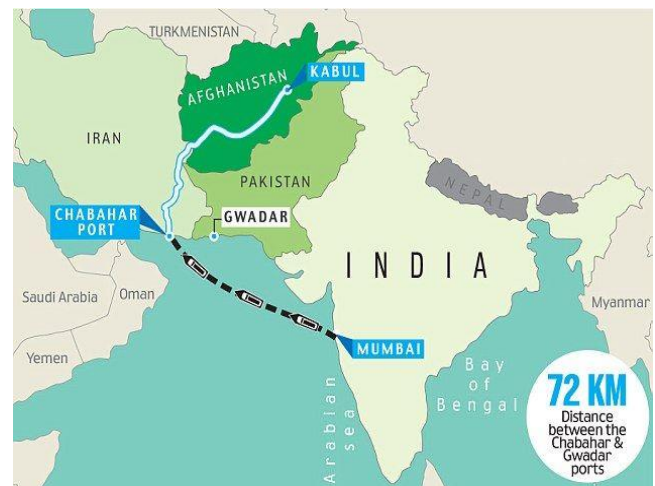
**[D] Cultural Significance:**

- Protecting the Interests of the Indian Diaspora: The interests of the sizable Indian expat population are safeguarded by strong relationships.
- Increasing India's Soft Power: Cordial ties let India project more influence throughout the Middle East.

**Challenges to India-UAE Relations**

- Trade Restrictions: Indian exports have been impacted by the UAE's Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs), which include SPS restrictions and TBT, especially in industries like processed goods and poultry.
- Chinese Economic Influence: Indian businesses in the UAE are overshadowed by China's "Cheque Book Diplomacy."
- Kafala Labor System: Delays in wages, passport confiscation, and harsh working conditions for foreign workers are serious problems.
- Financial Aid to Pakistan: The UAE's significant financial support to Pakistan raises questions.
- Iran-Arab Conflict: Maintaining diplomatic relations with Iran and the UAE while they are at odds is difficult.

**Chabahar Port: India's Gateway to Central Asia via Iran**



**Introduction**

- During his recent visit to Iran, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held important talks with the Iranian Minister of Roads and Urban Development with the goal of establishing a framework for long-term collaboration for the strategically important Chabahar port.

**Chabahar Port: A Strategic Gem**

- **Place:** Chabahar Port is well situated in Iran near the mouth of the Gulf of Oman.
- **Deepwater Port:** It is the first deepwater port in Iran and is strategically located along major oceanic commerce routes.
- **Geographic Positioning:** It is in competition with China's Gwadar Port, which is situated east, and is situated west of Iran's border with Pakistan.
- **Strategic Significance:** Chabahar Port is strategically significant for both India and Iran.
- **Reducing the Effect of Western Sanctions:** It enables Iran to reduce the consequences of Western sanctions.
- **Alternative commerce Route:** By avoiding Pakistan's prohibitions on land access for commerce with Afghanistan and Central Asia, it provides India with an other trade route.

**India's Engagement with Chabahar**

- **Establishing Relations:** India's cooperation with Chabahar began in 2002 when talks between Iranian and Indian representatives were held.
- **Strategic Cooperation:** President Khatami signed a roadmap for strategic cooperation during his 2003 visit to India, with Chabahar serving as a focal point project.
- **Opposing BRI:** The project became well-known for India as it looked for alternate trade routes in the wake of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the growth of Pakistan's Gwadar Port.
- **Access to Central Asia:** India's aspirations to get access to both Russia and Central Asia have increased the significance of Chabahar.

**Development of Chabahar Port**

- **Two Different Ports:** Shahid Beheshti and Shahid Kalantari are the two different ports that make up Chabahar Port.
- **Indian Investment:** The Shahid Beheshti port is the main target of India's investment.
- **Trilateral Agreement:** An agreement was signed by Afghanistan, Iran, and India in April of 2016.
- **Quick Development:** The port was developed quickly by India's Shipping Ministry.
- **Operational Milestones:** Indian wheat may now be transported to Afghanistan more easily after the first phase of Shahid Beheshti Port opened in December 2017.
- **IPGL's Function:** India Ports Global Limited (IPGL) was essential to the running of the port.
- **Phased Expansion:** The Shahid Beheshti port is being developed in four stages, with the goal of having 32 jetties and an annual capacity of 82 million tons.

**Challenges and Delays**

- **Geopolitical Obstacles:** Project delays have been caused by geopolitical complications, including Iran's relationship with the US.
- **US-Iran Relations:** Since the US withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018, the relationship between the two countries has fluctuated, which has presented difficulties.
- **Impact of Sanctions:** India encountered difficulties locating foreign suppliers while sanctions were in place.
- **Afghanistan Dynamics:** Although things improved over time, the situation in Afghanistan nevertheless had an impact on India's relations with Kabul.
- **Recent Developments:** India provided funding for the Chabahar port project and reopened its embassy in Kabul in 2022.
- **Proceeded Wheat Exports:** In 2023, India intends to use the port to ship 20,000 metric tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan.

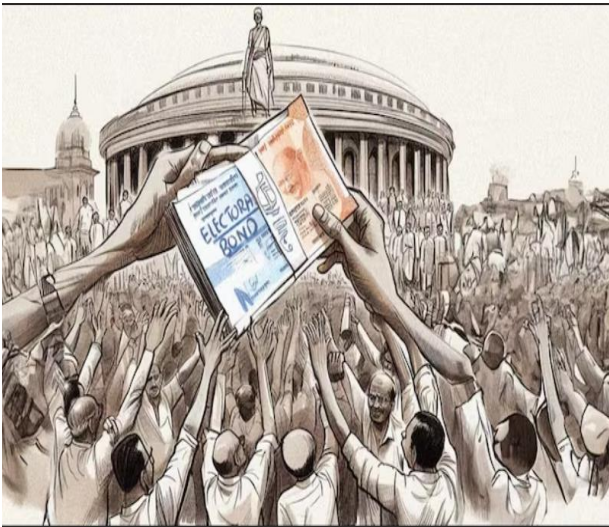
**Future Outlook**



- US-Iran Ties: Regional dynamics and US-Iran relations continue to influence the rate of development of the Chabahar port.
- Persistent Difficulties: Persistent difficulties encompass vulnerability to US sanctions, unpredictability in Afghanistan, and alignment with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- Strategic diplomacy: Overcoming these obstacles and preserving Chabahar's standing as a workable transit center and an essential connection between Iran and India would need active diplomacy, effective execution, and effective operations.

## Polity

### Electoral Bond Scheme



The government has announced a fresh tranche of electoral bond sales for a 10-day period starting through the authorised branches of State Bank of India across the country.

#### About the Electoral Bond Scheme

<b>Definition</b>	Banking instruments for political party donations with donor anonymity.
<b>Launch</b>	2017-18 Union Budget
<b>Purchase Method</b>	Available to Indian citizens and Indian-incorporated companies from select State Bank of India branches. Can be bought digitally or via cheque.
<b>Donation Process</b>	Purchasers can donate these bonds to eligible political parties of their choice.
<b>Denominations</b>	Available in multiples of ₹1,000, ₹10,000, ₹10 lakh, and ₹1 crore.
<b>KYC Requirements</b>	Purchasers must fulfill existing KYC norms and pay from a bank account.

<b>Lifespan of Bonds</b>	Bonds have a 15-day life to prevent them from becoming a parallel currency.
<b>Identity Disclosure</b>	Donors contributing less than ₹20,000 need not provide identity details like PAN.
<b>Redemption</b>	Electoral Bonds can be encashed only by eligible political parties through an Authorized Bank.
<b>Eligibility of Parties</b>	Only parties meeting specific criteria, including securing at least 1% of votes in the last General Election, can receive Electoral Bonds.
<b>Restrictions Lifted</b>	Foreign and Indian companies can now donate without disclosing contributions as per the Companies Act.
<b>Objective</b>	To enhance transparency in political funding and ensure funds collected by political parties are accounted or clean money.

### Political Split and Maharashtra Assembly Speaker's Ruling



**Introduction**

- Maharashtra Assembly Speaker ruled that the ruling faction of a political party was the legitimate and real, having the support of the majority of the party's MLAs.

**Anti-Defection Law in India**

- Rise of Political Instability: Referred to as "Aaya Ram Gaya Ram" after MLA Gaya Lal's frequent party switching in 1967, the late 1970s saw a widespread practice of legislators crossing the floor.
- Legislative Efforts: To address defections, a number of legislation were presented, including the 32nd and 48th Constitution Amendment legislation, but they either expired or were not passed.
- Adoption of the Law: The anti-defection law was included into the Constitution through the Tenth Schedule, which was added by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in the 52nd Amendment of 1985.

**Features of the Anti-Defection Law****[A] Disqualification Criteria:**

- Political Party Members: If a member voluntarily resigns from their party membership or disobeys an order without permission and it is not excused within 15 days, they will be disqualified.
- Independent Members: If they become members of a political party after the election, they will be disqualified.
- Nominated Members: If a member of the House joins a political party within six months after assuming office, they will be disqualified.

**[B] Exceptions:**

- Merger: If a member's original party combines with another party and at least two-thirds of its members approve of the merger, they will remain eligible to vote.
- Presiding Officers: Party members may reclaim their membership following their term without being removed from office if they want to step down as presiding officers.

**[C] Decision Makin:**

- Deciding Authority: As determined by the Kihoto Hollohan case (1991), the presiding officer of the relevant House has the authority to make decisions about disqualification, subject to judicial review.
- Making Rules Power: With the House's consent, the presiding officer may create regulations to carry out the Tenth Schedule.
- Procedure for Disqualification: After receiving a complaint, the presiding officer handles defection cases. The accused member must be given an opportunity to clarify, and a committee may be asked to look into the situation.
- Speaker's position: The Speaker is exempt from party whip rules. However, a member chosen by the House will determine on matters of disqualification under the law pertaining to the Speaker or Chairman.

**Judicial Interpretations and Election Commission's Role**

- Important rulings: In the 1991 Kihoto Hollohan case, the Speaker's defection decision was open to judicial review. Other notable instances that shed light on voluntary membership relinquishment and expulsion are G. Viswanathan v. The Hon'ble Speaker, Tamil Nadu, and Ravi Naik v. Union of India.
- Election Commission Guidelines: When issues within the party cannot be addressed, the EC may freeze party symbols and settles disputes based on the support of the majority in both the legislative and organizational wings.

**Challenges and Criticisms**

- Discriminatory Features: The law has come under fire for treating individual defections differently from collective defections and for failing to distinguish between dissent and defection.
- Impact on Democratic Functioning: According to critics, the bill lessens the independence of lawmakers and the legislative branch's ability to check and balance the executive.

## Science, Technology, Art & Culture

### Sarna Religion and its Forest Conservation Rituals



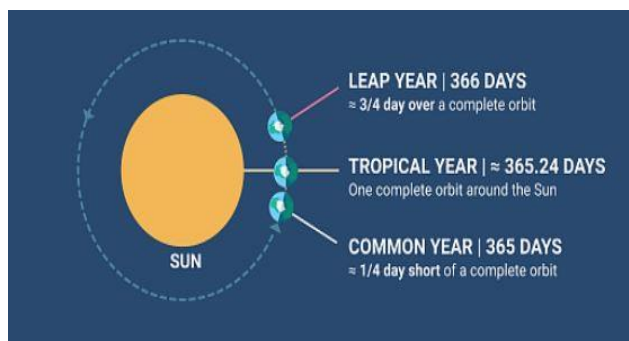
A study at IIT Indore on tribal culture, forest conservation, and wildfire in central India sheds light on the Sarna religion's tenets.

#### About Sarna Religion

	Details
<b>Nature of Faith</b>	Indigenous religious faith predominantly followed in the <i>Chota Nagpur Plateau</i> region.
<b>Geographical Spread</b>	Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and smaller numbers in Assam, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh.
<b>Central Belief</b>	Reverence of Sarna, the sacred groves, and worship of a village deity (Gram deoti, Dharmes, Marang Buru, etc.)
<b>Etymology</b>	'Sarna' means 'grove', related to the sal tree.
<b>Theology</b>	Worship of village deities and the mother goddess identified as the earth or nature.
<b>Sacred Grooves</b>	Patches of forest considered sacred, such as sal, mahua, neem, and banyan trees. No harm allowed to these areas.
<b>Practices</b>	Rituals performed in sacred groves involving village priests; worship of ancestors.

<b>Main Festival</b>	<p><b>Sarhul:</b> Celebrating nature and ancestors, offerings made to sacred trees like sal.</p> <p><b>Karam:</b> Worship of the sacred karam tree, focusing on crop enrichment and preservation of biodiversity.</p> <p><b>Faggu:</b> Gathering of dry wood and leaves from forests, reducing fuel load and lowering wildfire risks.</p>
<b>Tribes Following</b>	Followed by various tribes including Santal, Oraon, Ho, Munda, Bhumij, and others.
<b>2011 Census</b>	Counted 4,957,467 followers in India, primarily in eastern states.
<b>Sarna Code Resolution (2020)</b>	Jharkhand assembly passed a resolution for the inclusion of Sarna as a separate religion in the census.
<b>Impact of Colonialism</b>	Historical conflict due to Western missionary activities in tribal areas.

### Leap Years: Their Significance and Calculation



2024 is a leap year, which occurs every four years, adding an extra day to the calendar. This means that February 2024 will consist of 29 days instead of the usual 28 days.

#### What is a Leap Year?

- Definition: A leap year is one day longer than a regular year (366 days), with February receiving an extra day.
- Goal: By adding one day to the calendar, the Earth's orbit around the Sun is made longer than it would otherwise be.

**Reason for Leap Year Introduction**

- **Astronomical Basis:** The orbit of the Earth around the Sun takes around 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 46 seconds.
- **Adjustment for Time:** In order to correspond with this duration, one extra day is added every four years, resulting in an additional time that is around six hours a year.

**Historical Background**

- **Julian Calendar:** The Julian calendar, which was originally used to implement leap years, was introduced in 46 BC by scholars working for Julius Caesar.
- **Pope Gregory XIII** changed the Gregorian calendar in 1582 by omitting ten days in order to make up for years of inconsistencies.

**Leap Year Calculation**

- **Rule of the Gregorian Calendar:** The leap year doesn't exactly happen every four years. Leap years are typically not years that end in 00 unless they are divisible by 400.
- **As an illustration:** According to this criteria, 1900 was not a leap year, but 2000 was.

India will contribute Rs 1,250 crore to the multinational Square Kilometer Array (SKA) project, a significant international astronomical collaboration.

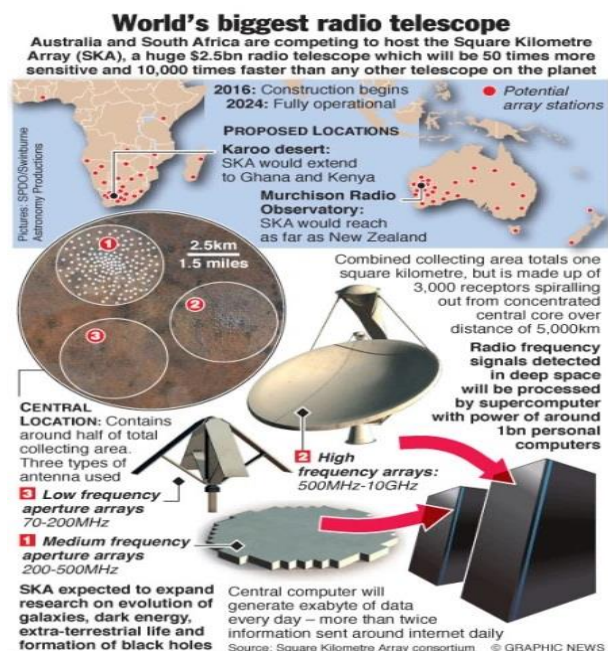
**Square Kilometer Array (SKA) Project: An Overview**

- **Phases of Construction:** The SKA project is being constructed in two stages, with the first stage (SKA1) starting in December 2022.
- **Project Headquarters:** The UK's Jodrell Bank Observatory serves as the home base for the SKA project.
- **Site Location:** The project entails building telescope arrays in South Africa and Australia with the goal of mapping galaxies and conducting unprecedented detail-rich space exploration.
- **Operational Schedule:** By 2029, SKA1 is anticipated to start up.

**Design and Features of the SKA Telescopes**

- **The SKA's array composition** will be made up of 131,072 low-frequency antennas in Australia and 197 parabolic radio antennas in South Africa.
- **Antenna Design:** The antenna design includes dipole and parabolic dishes that can detect radio signals even at great distances.
- **The placement of the dishes and antennae** will be planned to cover a wide area in order to accurately calibrate the source of the signals that are observed.

**India to participate in Square Kilometer Array (SKA) Project**



**Global Collaboration in the SKA Project**

- **Consortium Members:** Australia, South Africa, Canada, China, India, Japan, and a number of European countries are among the sixteen member countries of the SKA Observatory (SKAO).
- **Frequency Range:** While the Australian telescope will cover low-frequency bands, the South African array will concentrate on mid-frequency sounds.
- **Plans for Expansion:** To improve the project's capacity for data triangulation and resolution, more dishes are intended to be installed in nearby African nations.

**Scientific Objectives of the SKA**

- Investigating the Universe: By observing and mapping galaxies near the frontier of the observable universe, the SKA will shed light on the birth and evolution of galaxies.
- Examining the "Dark Ages": The telescope will explore the "Dark Ages" of the early universe and look at things like dark energy and dark matter.
- Search for Extraterrestrial Life: By studying the habitable zones surrounding stars, the SKA will also aid in the hunt for life beyond Earth.

**India's Role**

- Pathfinder Research Partner: An important project partner is the National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA) of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), which is home to India's Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope.
- Participation of the Consortium: The SKA India consortium is made up of more than 20 Indian schools and universities that provide input on different areas of the project.

**ISRO Successfully Tests Polymer Electrolyte Membrane Fuel Cell in Space**

**POEM-3 on PSLV-C58:**  
 VSSC/ISRO successfully tests a 100 W class Polymer Electrolyte Membrane Fuel Cell on PSLV-C58's orbital platform, POEM3.  
[isro.gov.in/FuelCellFlight...](http://isro.gov.in/FuelCellFlight...)  
 Powering missions with efficiency and emitting only water, these fuel cells are the future for power production in space habitats.



**Introduction**

- A Polymer Electrolyte Membrane Fuel Cell based Power System (FCPS) with a 100 W class has been successfully tested in orbit by the Indian orbit Research Organization (ISRO).
- The FCPS was a component of the POEM3 orbital platform, which was launched on January 1, 2024, aboard PSLV-C58.

**About FCPS Experiment**

- The main objective of the experiment was to evaluate Polymer Electrolyte Membrane Fuel cells' performance in space and collect information for next mission designs.
- Power Generation: Using hydrogen and oxygen gasses, 180 W of power was produced during the test, yielding important information on the power system's operation.

**About Polymer Electrolyte Membrane (PEM) Fuel Cells**

	Details
<b>Basic Principle</b>	Converts chemical energy from hydrogen into electrical energy, producing water and heat as byproducts.
<b>Key Components</b>	Membrane Electrode Assembly (MEA) Platinum-based catalyst Gas Diffusion Layers (GDLs) Bipolar Plates
<b>Operation</b>	<b>Hydrogen Oxidation:</b> At the anode, hydrogen molecules (H <sub>2</sub> ) are split into protons (H <sup>+</sup> ) and electrons (e <sup>-</sup> ). <b>Proton Conduction:</b> The PEM allows only protons to pass through to the cathode, blocking electrons. <b>Electron Flow:</b> Electrons travel through an external circuit to the cathode, creating an electric current. <b>Oxygen Reduction:</b> At the cathode, oxygen molecules (O <sub>2</sub> ) from the air combine with the protons and electrons to form water (H <sub>2</sub> O).

	<b>Heat Production:</b> The reaction generates heat, which can be used for heating purposes in some applications.
<b>Types of Membranes</b>	Perfluorosulfonic acid (PFSA) membranes (common) Hydrocarbon-based membranes (alternative)
<b>Advantages</b>	High power density Low operating temperatures (60-80°C) Zero emissions with pure hydrogen

**Applications in Space and Society**

- **Multipurpose Space Use:** Since fuel cells can provide heat, water, and electricity all from a single device, they are especially well suited for human space missions.
- **Benefits to Society:** They have a great deal of promise for use in standby power systems and as a replacement for traditional car engines.
- **benefits compared to Batteries:** Fuel cells are predicted to allow emission-free mobility, with range and refueling times comparable to those of conventional engines.

**AI-Driven Bio-Imaging Bank for Cancer Detection**



Reducing mortality is severely hampered by the growing number of cancer cases and the lack of doctors. Tata Memorial Hospital (TMH) in Mumbai is utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) to establish a "Bio-Imaging Bank" to facilitate the early identification of cancer.

**What is a 'Bio-Imaging Bank'?**

- **All-Inclusive Repository:** The Bio-Imaging Bank is an archive of radiology and pathology images that have been connected to clinical data, outcome data, details on the treatments administered, and more metadata.
- **AI Integration:** Using data from 60,000 patients, the project applies deep learning to create a customized early detection algorithm for cancer.

**Project Scope and Collaboration**

- **Concentration on Particular Cancers:** The project's first focus will be on lung and head and neck cancers, and it intends to gather data for at least 1000 patients in each category.
- **Multi-Institutional Effort:** PGIMER-Chandigarh, RGCIRC-New Delhi, AIIMS-New Delhi, IIT-Bombay, and the Department of Biotechnology are all partners in this research.

**AI's Role in Early Cancer Detection**

- **Learning from Data:** To identify characteristics linked to different malignancies, AI examines large datasets of radiological and pathological pictures.
- **Early identification:** AI helps with early cancer identification, which is essential for successful therapy, by recognizing tissue changes and possible malignancies.

**TMH's Implementation of AI**

- **Data Annotation and Correlation:** To create algorithms, the team segments and annotates photos and correlates them with histopathology reports, biopsy data, and genomic sequences.
- **Clinical Utility:** Treatment plans are guided by algorithms derived from the bio-bank, which minimizes the need for needless chemotherapy for individuals who are projected to not react to treatment.

**Current Usage of AI in Cancer Detection**

- Radiation Reduction: TMH has employed AI to cut radiation exposure for CT scans by forty percent for pediatric patients.
- Thoracic radiography: Following physician validation, an AI algorithm in the ICU for thoracic radiography gives prompt diagnosis with 98% accuracy.

**Future of AI in Cancer Treatment**

- Transformative Potential: AI is anticipated to optimize therapy outcomes, particularly in rural India, by customizing treatment approaches based on patient profiles.
- Simplifying Diagnosis: Artificial intelligence may improve the accuracy of cancer treatments by allowing general practitioners to identify complicated malignancies with a single click.
- Continuous Learning: AI offers earlier cancer diagnosis, improved patient outcomes, and assistance for medical professionals as it continues to learn and advance.
- Debates and Opposition: The application of AI tools in healthcare sparks discussions around the possible replacement of human radiologists. It also comes under regulatory scrutiny and encounters opposition from certain medical professionals and organizations.

**About Chandubi Festival**

- Every year, the Chandubi Festival is held near the Chandubi Lake in Assam for five days, beginning on New Year's Day.
- An earthquake that occurred in 1897 created Chandubi Lake.
- The Khasi words "Chand," which means "five," and "Dubi," which means "sinking," are the sources of the name "Chandubi."
- Enjoy local culture, sample ethnic cuisine, peruse artisan clothing, and go boating during the event.
- The festival's primary objectives are to safeguard the lake, which has been losing water, and promote ecotourism.
- The celebration is held in order to preserve the lake and aid several tribes, including the Rabhas, Garos, Gorkhas, and tea tribes.

**Course of events**

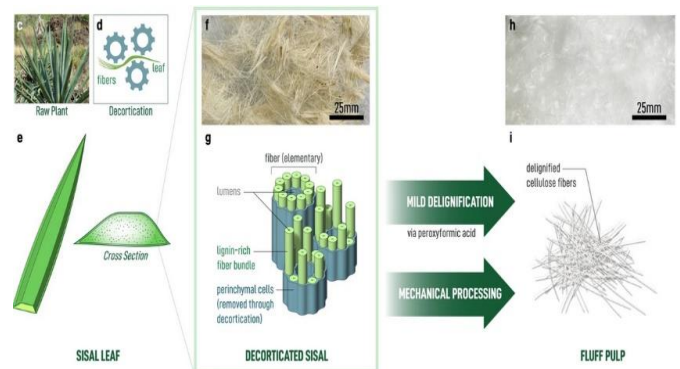
- The festival celebration committee arranged a number of eye-catching ethnic sports competitions throughout the festival, including as the Baghbol, Chagalchari, Khutikhel, and Lewatana competitions.
- Folk dances from several tribes, including the Garo, Boro, Hajpong, Bihu, Rabha, and many more, are performed.

**Assam’s Chandubi Festival**



The 14<sup>th</sup> Chandubi Festival was recently held near the Chandubi Lake in Assam’s Kamrup district from January 1 to January 5.

**Could Sisal Leaves make Sanitary Napkins more Sustainable in India?**



**Introduction**

- Scientists at Stanford University have developed a method to produce highly absorbent material

from sisal leaves for use in menstrual hygiene products.

### Using Sisal for Sanitary Napkins

- Historical Applications of Sisal: Sisal leaves date back to the Aztec and Mayan civilizations and have been used historically to make paper, twine, textiles, carpets, and mezcal, among other things.
- Superior Absorption: Compared to commercial menstrual pads, the material made from sisal leaves has a higher absorption capacity.
- Environmentally Sustainable Method: Small-scale, locally conducted production is possible without the use of hazardous or harmful chemicals.

### Global Menstrual Hygiene Challenges

- Increasing Use of Hygienic Techniques: Access to menstrual hygiene products is still restricted worldwide, despite a rise in the use of tampons, menstrual cups, and sanitary napkins in India.
- Environmental Issues: Because sanitary napkins produce non-biodegradable waste, their extensive use presents environmental issues.

### Sisal as an Eco-Friendly Alternative

- Comparing Sisal with Other Plant Fibers: Sisal is a more sustainable alternative for generating absorbent material in dry places since it is resistant to drought, unlike banana plants.
- Novel Delignification Procedure: The group employs peroxyformic acid, a delignification technique that is less harmful to the environment than conventional procedures.

### Life-Cycle Analysis and Environmental Footprint

- Cradle-to-Gate Analysis of Carbon Footprint: The sisal-based method has an environmental footprint similar to that of commercial cotton and timber technologies.
- Water Consumption: Sisal farming uses a lot less water than the cotton industry, which increases its sustainability.

### Local Manufacturing and Quality Control

- Pilot Production in Nepal: The group is experimenting with how well their plan to produce sanitary napkins in large quantities in Nepal can be scaled up.
- Global Student Engagement Program: Using this method, high school students from all around the world are invited to test local plants and add their findings to a public database.

### Challenges and Future Directions

- Compliance with Quality requirements: It's critical to make sure menstruation hygiene products made from plant fibers adhere to current quality requirements.
- Research Consortium and Collaboration: To address menstrual health and period poverty, the team plans to establish an open-source research consortium.

### Conclusion

- A Novel Approach to Period Poverty: One important development in the fight against period poverty and environmental sustainability is the use of sisal in menstrual hygiene products.
- Global Collaboration, Quality Control, and Technology Adaptation: The initiative's success depends on quality control, global collaboration, and technology adaptation to a variety of environmental situations.
- Possibility of Widespread Adoption: If successful, this invention could revolutionize menstrual hygiene practices by improving their accessibility and sustainability on a global scale.

### Festivals: Kateel Yakshagana Mela





**Introduction**

- The Karnataka High Court has allowed the century-old Kateel Durgaparameshwari Prasadita Yakshagana Mandali to resume all-night shows, adhering to noise pollution norms.

**About Kateel Yakshagana Mela**

- It alludes to the Yakshagana, an ancient theater style that is mostly practiced in the Indian state of Karnataka.
- "Kateel" specifically refers to the Karnataka town of Kateel, which is well-known for its own distinctive troupes, or "Melas," that perform this art form.
- It contains tales from Hindu epics such as the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.
- They can linger for several hours and are typically presented at night on outdoor stages.

**Shree Mandira Parikrama Project in Puri**



**Introduction**

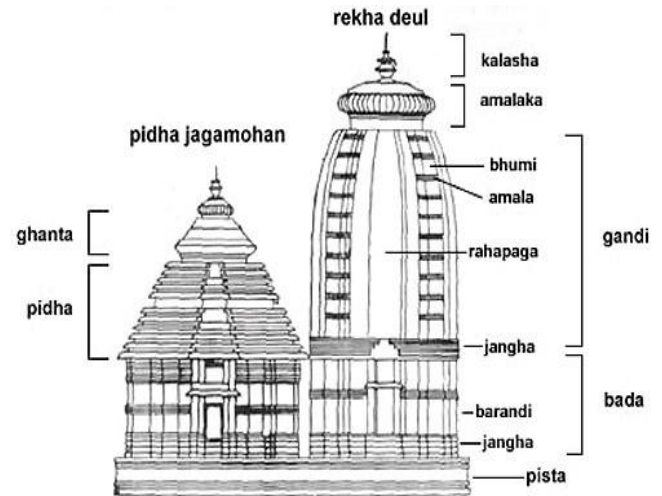
- In a bid to elevate the spiritual experience of devotees and bolster the infrastructure for pilgrims, the Odisha government is all set to inaugurate the grand Shree Mandira Parikrama project.

**What is Shree Mandira Parikrama Project?**

- This Rs 800-crore historical corridor, which circles Puri's famous Jagannath Temple, is a key component of a larger project meant to revitalize this sacred city.
- It involves constructing a 75-meter tunnel around the hallowed Jagannath Temple compound.

- The purpose of this beautifully built hallway is to provide visitors a "visual connect" to the temple, enhancing their spiritual experience.

**About Jagannath Puri Temple**



- In Puri, Odisha, there is a significant Vaishnavite shrine called Jagannath shrine, which is devoted to Jagannath, a manifestation of Sri Krishna.
- The current temple was constructed starting in the tenth century on the location of an ancient temple. The Eastern Ganga dynasty's first ruler, Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva, started the reconstruction of the temple.
- The three main deities are hauled by enormous, ornately decorated temple cars during the yearly Ratha Yatra, or chariot festival, held at the Puri temple.

**Its architecture**

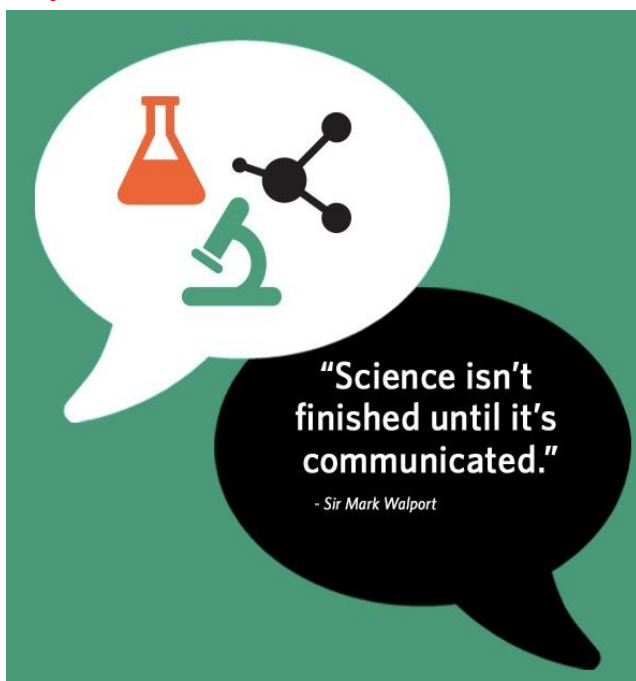
- It is among the most amazing monuments in India because of the richness of its sculpture and the flowing Oriya style of temple building.
- The massive temple complex is encircled by a high defensive wall and spans an area of over 400,000 square feet.
- The name of this 20-foot-tall wall is Meghanada Pacheri.
- The main temple is surrounded by a second wall called Kurma Bedha.

The temple has four distinct sectional structures, namely:

1. The Sanctum sanctorum, also known as Deula, Vimana, or Garba griha, is the location of the triad deities' ratnavedi (Throne of Pearls).
2. Mukhashala (front porch) in the Rekha Deula style;
3. Jagamohan (a.k.a. the audience hall/dancing hall); Nata mandir/Natamandapa
4. Bhoga Mandapa (offerings hall)

- All facets of communicating scientific information, encouraging dialogue about moral, social, and political implications, and involving scientists and a range of audiences are included in science communication.
- It includes disseminating research findings, reaching out to institutions, and encouraging the public to interact with science in the modern setting.

## Science Communication in India: Bridging Gaps



### Contemporary Science Communication in India

- Initiatives by the Government: The CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (CSIR-NIScPR) was founded in 2021. Through press releases, social media campaigns, exhibitions, and lectures, national science funding agencies and research groups actively participate in science communication.
- Expanding Terrain: Research groups, academic institutions, social entrepreneurs, nonprofits, and partnerships between the arts and sciences are all involved in science communication. It connects science with media, outreach, education, and the arts.

### Government-Led Efforts

India's commitment to science communication dates back to the post-independence era. Key milestones include:

- The Publications & Information Directorate (PID) was founded in 1951 as a division of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) with the goal of distributing scientific knowledge through the publication of national science publications.
- The goals of the Birla Industrial and Technological Museum (1959) were to advance science education and define India's scientific legacy.
- Article 51 A (h) was added to the Constitution in the 42nd Amendment (1976), highlighting the need of citizens cultivating a scientific temperament.

### Introduction

- In order to promote comprehension, involvement, and well-informed decision-making, science communication is a vital link between the scientific community and the general population.
- The increasing significance of science communication is demonstrated by the recent emphasis on this field in India, especially during the COVID-19 epidemic and Chandrayaan-3.
- Nonetheless, there are still gaps and difficulties in the efficient communication of scientific knowledge.

### Role of Science Communication

- The sixth Five Year Plan (1980–1985) saw the formation of the National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC), which placed a strong emphasis on making science more widely known.
- An independent organization founded by the Department of Science and Technology in 1989 with the goal of popularizing science was called Vigyan Prasar.

### Addressing Challenges and Forging Ahead

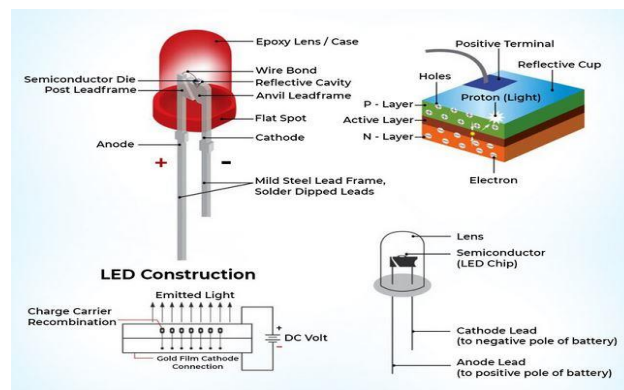
To enhance science communication in India:

1. Formal Education and Training: Explain science communication master's and doctoral programs. A group of proficient communicators sensitive to the various settings in India will be developed through these programs.
2. Combining the Scientific Process with Integration: Motivate scientists to take an active role in communicating science. This entails compensating scientists for their work and integrating communication into the research process.
3. Big-Scale Approach: Form a professional association that works with agencies of the government, interested parties, and specialists to develop all-encompassing frameworks for science communication. These frameworks need to include a wide range of fields, media types, and population segments.

### Conclusion

- In India, scientific literacy, public involvement, and well-informed decision-making are all greatly enhanced by science communication.
- India can create a strong ecosystem for science communication that effectively bridges the gap between science and society, empowering citizens and advancing scientific advancement, by addressing current shortcomings and adopting a forward-looking approach.

### Rise of Light-Emitting Diodes (LEDs)



### Introduction

- The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences predicted in 2014 that "LED lamps will light up the 21st century," highlighting the significance of Light-Emitting Diodes (LEDs) in influencing lighting technology going forward.
- This article explores the intriguing world of LEDs and diodes, as well as their importance in contemporary technology.

### Understanding Diodes

- Fundamentals of Diodes: An anode and a cathode are the two terminals on a diode, which is a tiny electrical component. Because of a p-n junction, its main purpose is to permit current to flow in a single direction alone.
- P-N Junction: A p-n junction is made up of two nearby materials, an n-type with electrons as negative charge carriers and a p-type with holes as positive charge carriers. The diode's one-way current control is enabled by the ease with which electrons can move from the n-type to the p-type but not the other way around.
- Anode and Cathode: The p-type material is connected to the anode terminal, while the n-type material is attached to the cathode. The directionality of the diode is defined by these terminals.

### Birth of Light-Emitting Diodes (LEDs)

- LEDs that produce light are known as electroluminescent diodes. When electrons occupy holes in the p-n junction, they release energy because electrons have greater energy

levels than holes. Electroluminescence is the term for the phenomena that occurs when energy is converted into light and falls inside the visible spectrum.

- **Band Gap:** The band gap determines the precise amount of energy that is released during electron-hole recombination, which is how LEDs produce different hues of light.

#### Significance of Band Gap

- **Energy Levels:** Electrons are limited to specific energy levels and distinct energy values. These electrons often occupy the lowest energy levels that are accessible, resulting in materials with a band gap, insulators, and conductors.
- **The Function of Band Gap:** The energy threshold that must be crossed by electrons in order for materials to conduct electricity is known as a band gap.
- **Band Gap and LEDs:** The color of light in LEDs is determined by the energy released during electron-hole recombination, which is correlated with the band gap.

#### LED's Color Palette

- **Historical Context:** Before creating blue LEDs, scientists spent forty years developing red and green LEDs. Producing gallium nitride crystals with the right characteristics for electroluminescence was the difficult part.
- **Primary Colors:** LEDs have a flexible color pallet because they can create red, green, and blue light. Display boards and screens can have a wide range of colors because to the combination of multiple LEDs.
- **Breakthrough:** Using gallium nitride, Japanese researchers Isamu Akasaki, Hiroshi Amano, and Shuji Nakamura achieved a major breakthrough in the late 1980s by producing a vivid blue LED. They were awarded the 2014 Nobel Prize in Physics for their accomplishment.

#### Advantages of LEDs

- **Efficiency:** In terms of luminous efficacy, LEDs perform better than fluorescent and

incandescent bulbs, emitting more light per watt of power.

- **Durability:** Because LEDs require less maintenance and waste less materials, they are very durable.
- **Various Uses:** LEDs are used in a wide range of industries, including air quality monitoring, greenhouse illumination, consumer electronics, and signs.
- **Color Versatility:** A wide range of applications can be served by the different colors and frequencies that LEDs can emit.

#### Future Prospects

- **Haitz's Law:** LEDs have followed this law, which predicts a decrease in cost and an increase in light output over time, just like Moore's law did.
- **New developments in lighting technology** include the investigation of skin-embedded LEDs, organic LEDs, and efficient LEDs derived from perovskites.

### ISRO's develops 2nd Generation Distress Alert Transmitter (DAT-SG)



#### Introduction

- To improve the safety of fishermen at sea, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) invented the ground-breaking Distress Alert Transmitter (DAT).
- The DAT-SG, a second-generation DAT with cutting-edge features and capabilities, is transforming the transmission of emergency signals from fishing boats.

#### About Distress Alert Transmitter (DAT-SG)

- **Operating Since 2010:** In 2010, fisherman were able to send emergency signals via a

communication satellite thanks to the launch of the first version of DAT.

- Central Control Station: Alert signals were deciphered at the Indian Mission Control Centre (INMCC), a central control station, to identify the fishing boat that was in distress.
- Coordination with MRCCs: The collected data was then sent to the Indian Coast Guard's (ICG) Maritime Rescue Coordination Centers (MRCCs), enabling coordinated search and rescue efforts.
- Widespread Use: More than 20,000 DATs were put into service and used to communicate in times of need.

**Evolution to DAT-SG**

- Technological Developments: ISRO developed the second-generation DAT (DAT-SG) by utilizing developments in satellite communication and navigation.
- Fishermen may now feel certain that their distress signal has been received and assistance is on its way thanks to the acknowledgement feature that has been added to DAT-SG.
- Two-Way Communication: DAT-SG may receive communications from control centers in addition to sending distress signals. This makes it possible

to send out early warnings about bad weather, cyclones, tsunamis, and other crises, giving fisherman the information they need to make safe decisions.

- Enhanced Fishing Zone Information: To maximize catch and save time and fuel, DAT-SG additionally periodically provides fishermen with information about possible fishing zones.
- Mobile Connectivity: Using a special mobile app, messages can be shown in the fishermen's native tongue when DAT-SG is linked to a phone using Bluetooth.

**Central Control and Coordination**

- Sagarmitra Network: Sagarmitra is a web-based network management system used by the central control station, INMCC. This technology allows MRCCs to access registered DAT-SGs in real time and keeps a database of them.
- Real-time Coordination: Sagarmitra improves search and rescue operations by allowing Indian Coast Guard personnel to react to distress calls quickly and without delay.
- Operational 24/7: DAT-SG services are offered around-the-clock to provide fisherman in need of assistance when they are at sea.

**Security Issues**

**Akash Missile System: India's Iron Dome**



During the most recent Exercise Astrashakti 2023, India showed off the firepower of its Akash surface-to-air (SAM) weapon system by engaging and destroying four unmanned targets at once with a single firing unit. Egypt, Brazil, and Armenia are among the nations that have expressed interest in obtaining the Akash SAM.

**About Akash Missile System**

	Details
<b>Development and Production</b>	Developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), produced by Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL).
<b>Type</b>	Short-range Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM).
<b>Engagement Capacity</b>	Engages four aerial targets simultaneously at a range of 25 km from a single firing unit.
<b>Target Engagement</b>	Capable of targeting multiple threats concurrently in group or autonomous modes.

<b>Electronic Counter-Counter Measures (ECCM)</b>	Equipped to counter enemy jamming and evasion tactics.
<b>Mobility and Agility</b>	Configured on mobile platforms for rapid deployment and relocation.
<b>Operational Use</b>	In service with the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force (IAF).
<b>Range and Altitude</b>	Effective range of 4.5 km to 25 km, with an altitude range of 100 meters to 20 km.
<b>Physical Dimensions</b>	Length: 5,870 mm; Diameter: 350 mm; Weight: 710 kg.
<b>Automation and Response</b>	Fully automated with quick response from target detection to neutralization.
<b>System Architecture</b>	Open-system architecture for adaptability to current and future air defense environments.

**Introduction**

- The Indian Army has recently adopted Topa Pir village in Poonch district, Jammu and Kashmir, as a model village under Operation Sadbhavana.

**Operation Sadbhavana**

- The Indian Army's Operation Sadbhavana (Goodwill) in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh aims to provide aid to victims of terrorism, with primary funding from Pakistan.
- Welfare Activities: The operation comprises conducting educational trips for kids in rural locations, infrastructural improvement initiatives, and Army Goodwill Schools.
- Emphasis on Education: Operation Sadbhavana, which is located in the Ladakh Region, operates seven Army Goodwill Schools with the goal of raising educational standards.
- The operation's goals are to create jobs, empower women, integrate the country, and engage in development initiatives that support national development.
- Collaborative Approach: In consultation with the local civil government, projects chosen under Operation Sadbhavana take into account the desires of the community.

**Comparison with Israel's Iron Dome**

- Interception Capabilities: Because Akash can intercept aircraft, helicopters, smaller munitions, and unmanned aerial vehicles, it is frequently likened to Israel's Iron Dome.
- Defensive Role: Although bearing resemblance to the Iron Dome, Akash's main purpose is to fend off aircraft and other larger aerial threats as opposed to tiny rockets.

**Operation Sadbhavana by Indian Army**



**Adoption of Topa Pir Village**

- Model Village Initiative: Taking Topa Pir village under Army control is a first step toward becoming a model village that prioritizes welfare and community development.
- Recent Incidents: Three people died in a contentious episode involving the Army's suspected torture of residents, which brought attention to the village.
- Relationships with the local Gujjar and Bakarwal people, who live mostly in areas close to the Line of Control (LoC), have been severely damaged by the incident.

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