

CURRENT AFFAIRS

March

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

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PREFACE

This is our special edition of Current Affairs Magazine for various Central & State level Competitive Examinations, covering content from the month of March 2025.

The Magazine is divided into three sections:

Section 1: Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short

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

Section 2: Practice Questions with Answers

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

Section 3: Detailed Analysis of important Event

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



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Section 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs

Section 2

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SECTION 1

Topic Wise Current Affairs in Short



1: Important Days



2 March Historical Significance :-

March 2 has been marked by several significant events in history. On this day in 1836, Texas declared its independence from Mexico, leading to the creation of the Republic of Texas. In 1877, Rutherford B. Hayes was declared the winner of the contentious 1876 U.S. presidential election, following the Compromise of 1877, which ended Reconstruction. The birth of Theodor Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, in 1904, brought a legendary author and illustrator into the world, whose work would enchant generations of children. Additionally, in 1962, basketball player Wilt Chamberlain set an unbroken record by scoring 100 points in a single NBA game. These events highlight the diverse and impactful nature of March 2 in the annals of history.



World Wildlife Day : 03 March :-

World Wildlife Day, observed annually on March 3, is an international celebration of our planet's vast diversity of life as well as a plea to safeguard endangered species and natural habitats. Established by the United Nations in 2013, this day emphasizes the importance of sustainable living and wildlife conservation for future generations.

World Wildlife Day reminds us all of the need to maintain the world's ecosystems and invest in their future. The 2025 Theme is "Wildlife Conservation Finance: Investing in People and Planet."



World Hearing Day : 03 March :-

World Hearing Day is marked on March 3 to spread knowledge about hearing loss and advocate ear and hearing care around the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) organized this global event to highlight the significance of early detection, prevention, and treatment of hearing difficulties. The World Health Organization (WHO) first recognized World Hearing Day in 2007. Previously, it was known as International Ear Care Day. In 2016, the WHO officially renamed it World Hearing Day. This year's theme is "Changing mindsets: empower yourself to make ear and hearing care a reality for all!".



National Defence Day (India) : 03 March :-

National Defence Day commemorates the sacrifices made by our armed services to protect our country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is observed on March 3rd every year in India. National Defence Day is

widely observed throughout the country with great passion and patriotism. The day is observed with a variety of events and activities, including parades, flag-raising ceremonies, and wreath-laying rituals at war memorials. The government and the armed forces also organise exhibitions and show to showcase the achievements and capabilities of the Indian Armed Forces.

**National Safety Day (India) : 04 March :-**

Every year on March 4, National Safety Day is commemorated with the goal of raising awareness about the necessity of safety precautions and promoting a safe culture throughout the country. The day marks the start of Safety Week, which serves as a reminder to prioritize measures that promote individual well-being and prevent accidents. National Safety Day dates back to March 4, 1966, when the Indian government's Ministry of Labour formed the National Safety Council of India (NSC). In 1972, the NSC declared its founding day as National Safety Day. The theme for National Safety Day 2025 is "Safety & Well-Being Crucial for Viksit Bharat".

**International Women's Day : 08 March :-**

International Women's Day, marked annually on March 8, honors women's contributions in a variety of disciplines. It is a platform for advocating for gender

equality and raising awareness of the difficulties that women confront around the world. International Women's Day originated in 1911, driven by labour movements pushing for women's rights. Clara Zetkin, a German activist, originated the idea, which sparked the first festivities in the United States and Europe. The United Nations officially recognised March 8 as International Women's Day in 1975. In 2025, the theme will be "For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment".

**Holi 2025 : 14 March :-**

Holi is one of India's most happy and bright celebrations. The annual celebration of Holi is celebrated with enormous enthusiasm. Children, adults, and the elderly all participate in the fun. The lively Holi celebration will take place on Friday, March 14, 2025. Holi is traditionally celebrated on the Purnima (full moon) day of the Hindu month of Phalguna, which usually occurs in March. Celebrations are especially notable in regions like Mathura and Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh, known for their historical association with Lord Krishna, as well as in cities like Jaipur, Pushkar, and Udaipur in Rajasthan, which offer vibrant and tourist-friendly experiences.

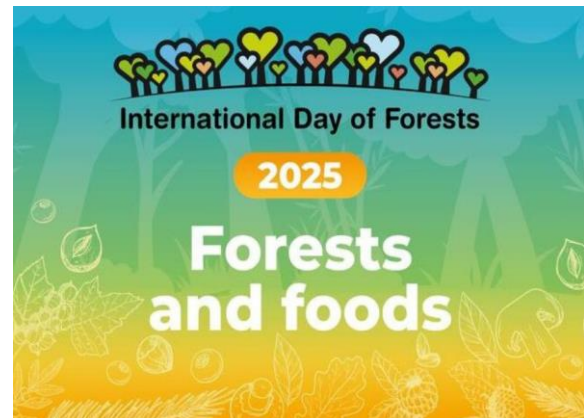


Pi Day : 14 March :-

Pi Day is observed each year on March 14th. This day not only remembers a very unusual number, but it also marks the birthday of the great scientist and mathematician, Albert Einstein. Pi Day is observed on March 14, as the mathematical constant π is commonly abbreviated as 3.14. The day's goal is to increase awareness of the significance of mathematics and its function in shaping our world, as well as to introduce a wider audience to the beauty and relevance of mathematics. Pi is one of the most famous symbols in mathematics and has many important applications in physics, engineering and statistics.

**World Consumer Rights Day : 15 March :-**

Every year on March 15th, the world marks World Consumer Rights Day. This day serves as a timely reminder of the value of consumer rights in the worldwide marketplace. It is an opportunity to increase awareness, educate consumers, and hold firms accountable for ethical actions. This day dates back to 1962. In a historic speech, former US President John F. Kennedy became the first international leader to openly address consumer rights on a worldwide scale. This sparked a movement, and in 1983, the consumer movement began marking March 15th as World Consumer Rights Day. The theme for World Consumer Rights Day 2025 is, 'A Just Transition to Sustainable Lifestyles.'

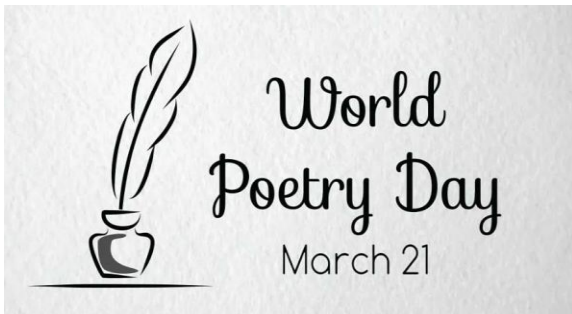
**International Day of Forests : 21 March :-**

According to the UN, forests account for over 80% of terrestrial biodiversity worldwide, with over 60,000 tree species. Around 1.6 billion people rely on forests for food, housing, energy, medicine, and money. International Day of Forests or World Forestry Day is held on March 21st around the world to raise awareness about the importance of forests, woodlands, and trees in our lives. In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly designated March 21 as the International Day of Forests to recognise and raise awareness about the importance of forests worldwide. The theme of International Day of Forests 2025 is "Forests and Food".

**World Down Syndrome Day : 21 March :-**

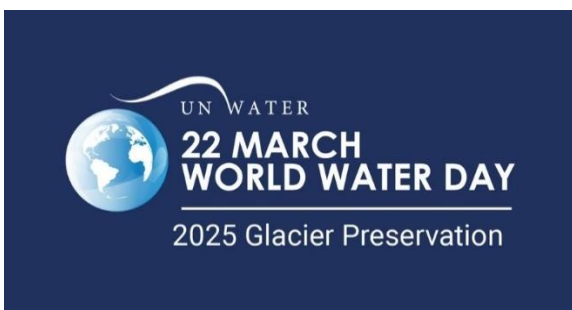
Every year, March 21 is observed as World Down Syndrome Day. The inaugural World Down Syndrome Day was commemorated on March 21, 2006. The decision of March 21st represents the uniqueness of the 21st chromosomal triplication that causes Down syndrome. According to Down Syndrome International's official website, on World Down Syndrome Day, people

with Down syndrome and those who live and work with them organize and participate in activities and events to raise public awareness and create a unified global voice advocating for people with Down syndrome's rights, inclusion, and well-being. In 2025, the theme for World Down Syndrome Day is "Improve Our Support Systems."



World Poetry Day : 21 March :-

UNESCO established World Poetry Day in 1999 during its 30th General Conference in Paris. Every year on March 21, it is celebrated. Poetry is a form of literature that praises the abstraction and beauty of language. The poem's objective is to analyze human problems via the use of imagery and metaphor. It has become an underlying source of relief for many of humanity's existential concerns, internal concepts, and so on. The day honours the poets who continue the tradition in newer generations. The theme for the 2025 World Poetry Day is "Poetry as a Bridge for Peace and Inclusion."



World Water Day : 22 March:-

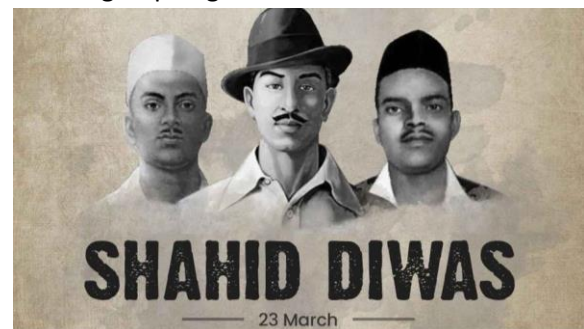
World Water Day is commemorated each year on March 22 to emphasize the importance of freshwater and advocate for sustainable water resource management. The United Nations (UN) established this global event in 1993 with the goal of raising awareness and inspiring action to address the global water crisis. The major purpose of World Water Day is to recognise the

importance of water to our planet. Beyond celebration, it serves as a platform to highlight the severe water crisis affecting millions worldwide. The theme of World Water Day 2025 is 'Glacier Preservation'.



World Meteorological Day : 23 March :-

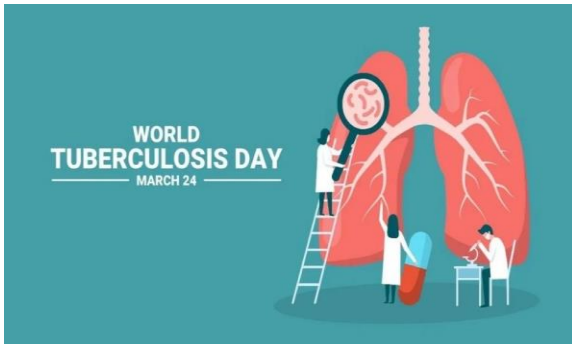
Every year on March 23, the world celebrates World Meteorological Day. It marks the formal founding of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). According to the World Meteorological Organization's website, the day recognizes the critical role that the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHS) play in ensuring society's safety and wellbeing. The World Meteorological Organization Convention went into effect on March 23, 1950, and in 1951, it became a UN specialised agency for meteorology, operational hydrology, and allied geophysical sciences. The theme of this year's World Meteorological Day is "Closing the Early Warning Gap Together".



Martyr's Day (India) : 23 March :-

On March 23, India honors Martyrs Day, also known as Shaheed Diwas. This day is marked to pay tribute to the Bravehearts who gave their lives for the country's freedom, as well as to honor the sacrifices of the warriors who battled for the country's independence. The British government executed Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev, three teenage freedom fighters, on March 23,

1931, at Lahore jail. Their sacrifice for India's freedom is honored every year on Shaheed Diwas. These brave individuals, in their twenties, gave their lives for the country.



World Tuberculosis (TB) Day : 24 March :-

World Tuberculosis (TB) Day is celebrated yearly on March 24th. It is a day set aside to raise awareness about the global TB epidemic, which remains one of the deadliest infectious diseases. World Tuberculosis Day marks the date in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced the discovery of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, the bacterium that causes tuberculosis. This breakthrough paved the way for diagnosing and treating tuberculosis. According to WHO, nearly half of all TB cases occur in just eight nations — Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and South Africa. This year's theme is “Yes! We Can End TB: Commit, Invest, Deliver”.



International Day of the Unborn Child : 25 March :-

International Day of the Unborn Child is observed on March 25 every year by various governments and organizations around the world. The goal of this day is to increase education about the value and importance of unborn children, as well as to advocate for the protection of their rights by condemning abortion. Some organizations use the day to raise awareness about abortion and the rights of the unborn child, while others promote prenatal care and support for pregnant mothers. The International Day of the Unborn Child is not recognised as an official United Nations observance, but it has been recognised by several countries and organisations around the world.



World Theatre Day : March 27 :-

Every year on March 27th, we commemorate World Theatre Day to remind ourselves of the value of theatre in society. It demonstrates how theatre plays an important part in entertainment and has a good impact on our lives. The International Theatre Institute (ITI) founded World Theatre Day in 1961 to highlight the global importance of theatre. World Theatre Day is observed worldwide with a variety of events, performances, and talks. Theatre communities around the world hold special shows, award presentations, and discussions to promote the beauty and importance of theatre. The theme for World Theatre Day 2025 is “Theatre and a Culture of Peace”.

2: Agreements



Hindustan Power signs MoU with Assam govt for Rs 620-cr projects :-

Hindustan Power announced plans to invest Rs 620 crore in new-age electricity and battery energy storage projects in Assam. Following the recent 'Advantage Assam 2.0' business event, the company inked an MoU with the state government on this matter. The investment will fund the construction of a 100-MW solar power plant and a sophisticated 100-MW battery energy storage system. To be developed in collaboration with the Assam government, these projects will not only enhance the state's energy infrastructure but also generate employment of more than 5,000 man-days, fostering economic growth and employment opportunities, the statement said.



Paytm Partners With Startup Perplexity To Integrate AI-powered Search :-

According to a regulatory filing by Paytm's parent company, One 97 Communications Limited, the payments platform has teamed with answer engine Perplexity to provide artificial intelligence (AI) to its

Indian customers. This partnership incorporates AI-powered search into the Paytm app. "This collaboration marks a major step toward integrating AI-driven intelligence into mobile payments, enabling users to get real-time financial assistance within the Paytm app," according to the filing. Paytm aims to enable users to make informed financial decisions, in managing finances, exploring market trends, or making daily choices.



Indian Overseas Bank CII Indian Green Building Council ink pact :-

The public sector Indian Overseas Bank has inked a memorandum of understanding with the Confederation of Indian Industry - Indian Green Building Council to give developers and house buyers with accessible and inexpensive financing solutions, according to a top official. According to the partnership, Indian Overseas Bank would provide preferential financing alternatives to developers building IGBC-rated green buildings. The bank would also provide tailored financial support to home buyers purchasing residential units in the IGBC - certified projects.



Karnataka signs Rs 200 cr MoU with Steer World to drive sustainable manufacturing :-

The Karnataka government has penned a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bengaluru-based Steer World, an international leader in technologically advanced and sustainable manufacturing solutions, to drive innovation, encourage industrial growth, and promote sustainable practices in India's manufacturing sector. According to the MoU, Steer World will be allocating Rs 200 crore over the next five years. The MoU was formalised in the presence of S Selvakumar, Principal Secretary of the Commerce and Industries Department, Government of Karnataka.



CCRH Signs MoU to Promote Research in Homoeopathy

The Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH) in New Delhi and Adamas University in Kolkata have inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote academic and scientific collaboration in homoeopathy, according to a news statement from the Ministry of Ayush. This Memorandum of Understanding represents a key milestone in interdisciplinary research, setting the road for scientific advances in homoeopathy through knowledge exchange and joint activities. It reflects the shared commitment of both institutions to furthering innovation and evidence-based research in alternative medicine.



SIDBI and Federal Bank Partner to Strengthen MSME Financing :-

A Memorandum of Understanding was inked by the Federal Bank Limited (FBL) and the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) to finance MSMEs in order to support the expansion and advancement of the MSME Ecosystem. The agreement is for the provision of financial support in the areas of working capital (including bank guarantees and letters of credit), project finance, machinery/equipment finance, loan against property, etc. Further, joint financing shall also be explored while extending credit facilities to MSMEs. The MoU was signed by Shri Prakash Kumar, Deputy Managing Director, SIDBI and Shri Harsh Dugar, Executive Director, FBL.



Elon Musk's Starlink signs deal with Bharti Airtel, Jio for high speed internet in India :-

Mukesh Ambani-led Jio Platforms Limited announced a partnership with SpaceX to deliver Starlink's internet services to India, a day after competitor Bharti Airtel signed a similar agreement. Jio Platforms Limited intends to provide Starlink solutions through its retail outlets and online platforms. Bharti Airtel previously signed an agreement with SpaceX to launch Starlink's satellite internet services in India, according to a regulatory filing. However, the partnership remains subject to regulatory

approvals for SpaceX to offer Starlink services in the country.



MoU signed to develop 3 heritage buildings as hotels in U.P.:-

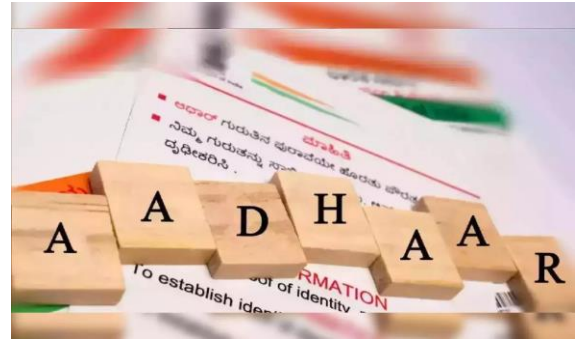
A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed for the development of three heritage assets: Chunar Fort in the Mirzapur district, Roshan-ud-Daula and Chhatar Manzil in Lucknow, in an effort to revitalize the state's heritage properties and bring them back to their former splendor while increasing revenue. Manvendra Singh Shekhawat, MD of Golden Triangle Fort and Palace Private Limited, and Prakhar Mishra, director of tourism, inked this deal.



RBI and Bank of Mauritius Sign MoU to Promote Trade in Local Currencies :-

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been signed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Bank of Mauritius to encourage the use of the Indian Rupee (INR) and the Mauritian Rupee (MUR) for cross-border transactions. The agreement covers all current account transactions and permissible capital account transactions as agreed upon by both countries, according to the release. The MoU was signed by RBI governor

Sanjay Malhotra and his Bank of Mauritius counterpart Rama Krishna Sithanen.



UIDAI Partners with Sarvam AI to Enhance Aadhaar Services with AI-Powered Solutions :-

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has teamed with Bengaluru-based generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) firm Sarvam AI to improve the user experience across all Aadhaar services, according to the government. As part of the deal, Sarvam AI will make its voice-based interaction platform available for resident-centric use cases immediately. The engagement is for one year and can be extended by another year. The AI-enabled system aims to deliver near real-time feedback to Aadhaar number holders, including notifications around potential overcharging during enrolment and updates.



Delhi Assembly to go paperless, signs agreement to implement NeVA platform :-

The Delhi Assembly, the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, and the Delhi government have inked a three-way contract to adopt the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA), a step towards paperless work. Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju were present when the Memorandum of Understanding was signed. With this,

Delhi Assembly has become the 28th legislature to adopt the NeVA platform, a statement from the Assembly Secretariat said.



India-Singapore to jointly develop Green and Digital Shipping corridor :-

At the present Singapore Maritime Week, India and Singapore signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) to collaborate on the Green and Digital Shipping Corridor (GDSC). India and the Netherlands have addressed the idea of leveraging Dutch global expertise to enable cargo movement in the low-draft rivers of Brahmaputra and Barak. The Singapore-India GDSC, when established, will enhance collaboration from both countries and help accelerate the development and uptake of zero or near-zero GHG

emission technologies and the adoption of digital solutions, the Ministry said.



MoRD and UNICEF YuWaah Sign Statement of Intent to Empower Rural Women and Youth :-

In an important step toward empowering rural women and youth, the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) has concluded a Statement of Intent (SOI) with UNICEF YuWaah to provide livelihood possibilities and increase female employment participation in rural India. The three-year agreement intends to connect women from Self-Help Groups (SHGs) with job, business, and skill development opportunities. Under this initiative, digital infrastructure will be strengthened through pilot projects such as “Computer Didi Centers” and “Didi ki Dukan”.

3: Appointments



Rajesh Nirwan Appointed as Director General of Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) :-

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of senior IPS officer Rajesh Nirwan as the new Director General of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS). Nirwan, a 1992-batch IPS officer from the Rajasthan cadre, has held several key positions in law enforcement, bringing extensive

experience in security and aviation regulations to his new role. His appointment comes at a time when India is strengthening its aviation security framework amid rising air travel demand and emerging threats. Nirwan's tenure is expected to focus on modernizing airport security infrastructure, enhancing threat detection systems, and coordinating with global aviation bodies to ensure international compliance.



Senior Advocate Manan Kumar Mishra Re-Elected as Chairman of Bar Council of India :-

The Bar Council of India (BCI) declared that Manan Kumar Mishra, Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court of India and Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), was successfully returned to office unopposed as Chairman of the Bar Council of India for a record seventh consecutive term. According to a statement, the elected representatives of India's almost 27 lakh vibrant legal community have renewed their faith in his remarkable leadership.

**Ajay Seth Takes Additional Charge as Revenue Secretary**

According to a Personnel Ministry order, Economic Affairs Secretary Ajay Seth has been granted an additional position of Secretary, Department of Revenue. The vacancy was created by the appointment of Revenue Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey as Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on February 27. The competent authority has authorized the handing over of the additional responsibility of the Secretary of Revenue to Ajay Seth, Secretary of Economic Affairs, until a regular incumbent is appointed, according to the order.

**Dr. Mayank Sharma Assumes Office as Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA) :-**

Dr. Mayank Sharma recently took charge as Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA). Dr Sharma, a 1989 batch officer of the Indian Defence Accounts Service (IDAS), has had a successful career in government stretching more than three decades. Dr Sharma held a major position in the cabinet secretariat and represented India as the Alternate Permanent Representative at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law.

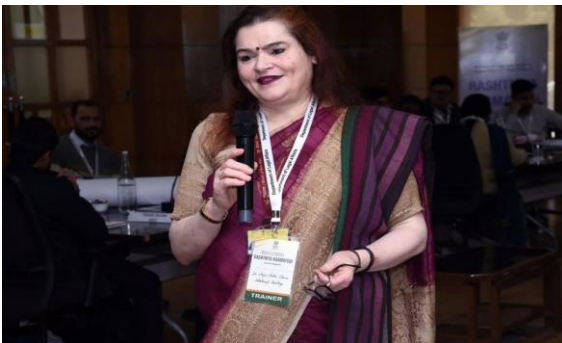
**Ajay Bhadoo Appointed CEO of Government e Marketplace (GeM) :-**

The government has selected Ajay Bhadoo, an additional secretary in the Department of Commerce, as CEO of GeM, a public procurement platform. According to an official announcement, he will take on this responsibility in addition to his current obligations within the department. Bhadoo, a 1999 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from the Gujarat cadre, has over two decades of experience in policy design and implementation across a wide range of sectors, including urban infrastructure development. In August 2024, he was appointed as additional secretary in the department.



RBI Appoints Dr. Ajit Ratnakar Joshi as Executive Director :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed Dr Ajit Ratnakar Joshi as executive director. Joshi was Principal Adviser at the Department of Statistics and Information Management (DSIM) until his promotion. Joshi will be the executive director of both the Department of Statistics and Information Management and the Department of Financial Stability. His role will involve ensuring the accuracy and reliability of statistical data used for policy formulation and overseeing financial stability measures critical to the banking sector, the RBI said.

**Anju Rathi Rana Appointed As The First Woman Law Secretary :-**

The new Union law secretary is Anju Rathi Rana, an Indian Legal Service official. She was the first female to hold the position of secretary of legal affairs, often known as the law secretary. In 2017, Rana became a joint secretary in the law ministry. She worked for the Delhi government for eighteen years as a public prosecutor before that. Her appointment is expected to strengthen the department's role in providing legal advice to the government and overseeing key legislative matters.

**Eyal Zamir Appointed as Israel's New Military Chief :-**

Israel has named Eyal Zamir as its new Chief of Staff at a critical period in its military history. Zamir, a veteran tank commander and defense ministry director, takes over for Lieutenant General Herzi Halevi, who resigned after the Hamas attack on October 7, 2023. His nomination comes amid ongoing Israeli military operations in Gaza, escalating tensions with Iran, and a renewed emphasis on West Bank security. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has expressed confidence in Zamir's ability to secure "absolute victory" against Hamas.

**Rajeev Shukla Replaces Jay Shah in ACC Leadership :-**

Rajeev Shukla, Vice-President of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), will represent India as an Executive Board Member on the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) Board. Shukla will fill a vacancy left by Jay Shah's resignation as president of the Continental Cricket Council. Meanwhile, Ashish Shelar, former BCCI treasurer, has been named as the BCCI's Ex-Officio Board Member to the ACC Board. Jay Shah vacated the ACC presidency in December 2024 after serving three consecutive terms.

**Vikas Kaushal Appointed as HPCL CMD :-**

According to an official decree, the government has appointed private sector expert Vikas Kaushal as Chairman and Managing Director of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL) for a five-year term. He follows Rajneesh Narang, director (finance), who has held the additional role of CMD since September 1, 2024. Kaushal is a seasoned worldwide leader with over 30 years of experience in the energy, oil and gas, and power sectors. Twice elected to Kearney's global board of directors, he completed two full terms at the firm.



Justice Joymalya Bagchi appointed as Supreme Court judge :-

The Centre has accepted Justice Joymalya Bagchi's appointment as a Supreme Court judge. He is expected to become India's Chief Justice in May 2031. Bagchi will take over as CJI on May 25, 2031, after Justice K V Viswanathan retires, and he will serve for just over four months, until October 2, 2031. Justice Bagchi was born in Calcutta on October 2, 1966. He stood first in the LLB examinations in 1991 and graduated from Calcutta University. He enrolled as an advocate in November 1991 and began practising at the Calcutta High Court.



Takashi Nakajima Appointed as the New President & CEO of Honda Cars India :-

Honda Motor Company has selected Takashi Nakajima as the new President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Honda Cars India (HCIL), beginning April 1. The news followed Honda Motor Company's yearly management reshuffle. Nakajima, who entered Honda in 1994, is going to succeed Takuya Tsumura. Tsumura will return to Japan to join Honda's headquarters after serving in India for three years, according to a corporate statement. A Honda veteran of 30 years, Nakajima was the President at Honda Motor Russia since 2021.



Atul Kumar Goel Assumes Charge as Chief Executive of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) :-

As per the Indian Banks' Association (IBA), Atul Kumar Goel recently took over as the organization's CEO. Goel served as the MD and CEO of Punjab National Bank (PNB) from February 2022 to December 2024. He was IBA Chairman from 2021 to 2022, and again from 2022 to 2023. Sunil Mehta, his predecessor at IBA, was the association's chairman from 2018 to 2019 and the MD and CEO of PNB from May 2017 to September 2019. From January 2020 to September 2024, Mehta served as Indian Banks' Association Chief Executive.



ICICI Bank Appoints Kamal Wali as Head of Security Operations :-

ICICI Bank Limited has recruited Kamal Wali as Chief of its Security Operations Center, offering over 18 years of cybersecurity and IT operations experience to the firm. Kamal will lead the bank's security operations, with an emphasis on risk mitigation and digital resilience. Before joining ICICI Bank, he held senior positions at Jio Platforms Limited, Wipro, IBM, Intex Technologies, and Spanco Telesystems. His leadership is expected to further bolster the bank's efforts in safeguarding customer data and ensuring secure banking operations.



Dr. Shivkumar Kalyanaraman Appointed as CEO of Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) :-

Shivkumar Kalyanaraman, a former senior Microsoft executive, has been appointed CEO of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation, India's leading research funding body, with a focus on universities. Kalyanaraman took office, succeeding Abhay Karandikar, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology, who was serving as the chief executive officer of the ANRF, which was founded two years ago. Earlier, Kalyanaraman was the chief technology officer, Energy Industry- Asia at Microsoft. He is a Distinguished Alumnus Awardee of IIT Madras and Ohio State University (2021).



Bajaj Auto Reappoints Rajiv Bajaj :-

Bajaj Auto has announced that Rajivnayan Rahul Kumar Bajaj would be reappointed as managing director and

CEO for another five-year term beginning April 1, 2025. This move, agreed by the board of directors, requires shareholder approval. Simultaneously, the business announced a Rs 1,500 crore investment in its wholly owned subsidiary, Bajaj Auto Credit Ltd (BACL). This investment is intended to help BACL achieve its expected growth in assets under management (AUM) for the fiscal year 2025-26. The funds will be distributed in instalments and may take the form of equity capital, preference capital, or subordinated debt.



Indranil Bhattacharyya Appointed as RBI's Executive Director :-

Indranil Bhattacharyya has been appointed Executive Director (ED) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Bhattacharyya had previously worked as an adviser in the central bank's Monetary Policy Department before being promoted. Bhattacharyya's remarkable career spans nearly three decades and includes substantial knowledge in major economic and policy fields such as monetary policy, fiscal policy, banking, and international economic relations. Bhattacharyya also served as an Economic Expert in the Technical Office of the Governor at Qatar Central Bank, Doha, Qatar, from 2009 to 2014.



Amitabh Kant Appointed as NIIT University Chancellor

NIIT University (NU) has named Amitabh Kant, the former Head of the government policy think tank NITI Aayog, as its chairman (chancellor). Kant succeeds scientist K Kasturirangan. Kant led pioneering programs at Niti Aayog, including the Atal Innovation Mission, the Aspirational Districts Programme, and the National Artificial Intelligence Programme. NIIT University has partnerships with more than 700 industry entities, including IBM, Tata Consultancy Services, Morgan Stanley and Deloitte.

**Justice Harish Tandon Appointed as Chief Justice of Orissa High Court :-**

Justice Harish Tandon of the Calcutta High Court has been appointed as the new Chief Justice of Orissa High Court. He is currently a judge of the Calcutta High Court. Earlier this month, the Supreme Court collegium recommended that Justice Tandon be elevated as Chief Justice of the Orissa High Court. The office of the Orissa High Court Chief Justice became vacant in January after Justice Chakradhari Sharan Singh retired. Justice Tandon was appointed as a judge of the Calcutta High Court in April 2010 and has been functioning there since then.

**Parminder Chopra Assumes Additional Charge as Chairman & MD of REC Ltd :-**

According to an official order issued by the ministry of power, the government has awarded Smt. Parminder Chopra the additional role of Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of REC Ltd. Chopra currently serves as the CMD of Power Finance Corporation Ltd. (PFC). The ruling is part of an administrative directive and will be in effect for three months or until additional directives, whichever occurs first. Chopra's leadership at PFC has been marked by her role in financing power and infrastructure projects, and she will now oversee key operations at REC Ltd.

**Ajay Seth Appointed as India's New Finance Secretary :-**

Ajay Seth, a veteran bureaucrat, has been named the next Finance Secretary, according to an official order. Seth is a 1987 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from the Karnataka cadre who is right now the Secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs. The position was vacant following Tuhin Kant Pandey's recent appointment as chairman of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). As per the convention, the senior-most secretary in the Union Finance Ministry is designated as the Finance Secretary.



Sanjay Singh Elected UWW-Asia Bureau Member :-

The national federation announced that WFI President Sanjay Kumar Singh has been elected to the United World Wrestling (UWW)-Asia bureau. "This is not just a personal milestone but a testament to the growth and recognition of Indian wrestling at the global level. I look forward to working closely with UWW-Asia to promote and develop the sport across the continent," said Singh in a release. According to WFI, Singh secured 22 votes out of 38, "demonstrating strong support from the Asian wrestling community."

**Ex-Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba Appointed Full-Time Member of NITI Aayog :-**

Former Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba has been appointed a full-time member of NITI Aayog, bringing him from a renowned bureaucratic career to a prominent role in India's leading policy think tank. Gauba, a 1982-batch IAS official from the Jharkhand cadre, was Cabinet Secretary from August 2019 until his retirement in August 2024. His tenure was extended twice. He was instrumental in directing significant policy decisions, including India's COVID-19 reaction and economic recovery plans. His appointment to NITI Aayog aligns with the government's push for experienced policymakers to shape long-term national strategies.

**Canara Bank Appoints S. K. Majumdar as Executive Director :-**

Canara Bank, a Bengaluru-based public sector bank, has appointed S K Majumdar as its Executive Director. Before his promotion, Majumdar was the bank's CFO. Majumdar has been with Canara Bank since January 2000, working in a variety of capacities across branches and administrative offices, making important contributions to major functional areas of the bank. Earlier in February, the bank had announced the appointment of Madhavankutty G as the Chief Economist.

**Yusuf Pachmariwala Appointed as Managing Director & CEO of Hitachi Cash Management Services :-**

Hitachi Cash Management Services (CMS), a division of Hitachi Payment Services, has named Yusuf Pachmariwala as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, beginning April 1, 2025. He will replace Anup Neogi, who has opted to retire from his position. According to a release, Pachmariwala is currently the Director of Operations- Cash Business at Hitachi Payments Services and has played an important role in scaling cash business operations. Hitachi Payment Services has over 79,000 ATMs under management and

over 3 million merchant touchpoints nationwide, processing over 7 million digital transactions daily.



Rajneet Kohli Appointed as Executive Director of Foods at HUL :-

Rajneet Kohli, the former CEO and Executive Director of Britannia, has been appointed Executive Director, Foods at Hindustan Unilever Ltd. He will succeed Shiva Krishnamurthy, who will leave his position to seek an external opportunity, Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) said in a statement. Kohli will join the company's Management Committee on April 7, 2025, it added. He comes with over 28 years of experience across the consumer goods and retail sectors and has a strong track record of leading for high performance and transformation.



Sunil Kakkar Appointed as Whole-Time Director at Maruti Suzuki :-

Sunil Kakkar, who leads Maruti Suzuki India Limited's (MSIL) corporate planning section, has been the company's first native Indian employee to be nominated as a full-time director. Suzuki Motor Corporation (SMC), the primary stakeholder of MSIL, made the nomination. MSIL's board currently consists of 11 members: five Indians and six Japanese. Among the Indian members, four are independent directors, while chairman R C Bhargava is the fifth. With Kakkar's addition, the board will now have equal representation of six Indians and six Japanese.

4: Awards

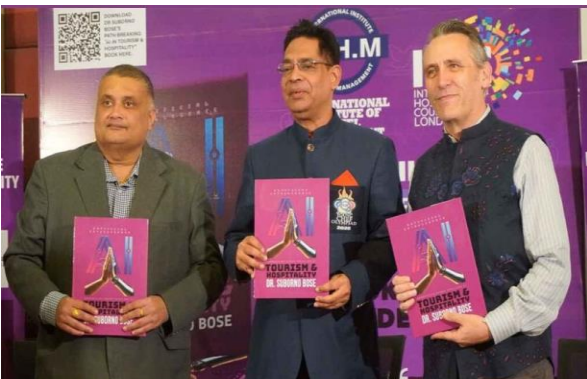


ICC Chairman Jay Shah Honored with Icon of Excellence Award at FILA 2025 :-

Jay Shah, the head of the International Cricket Council (ICC), received the prestigious Icon of Excellence award at the 14th Forbes India Leadership Awards (FILA 2025). This award recognizes his outstanding achievements to cricket administration as well as his involvement in promoting innovation and inclusion in the sport. Jay Shah, 36, made history as the ICC's youngest-ever chairman. He has been instrumental in enhancing the sport's global appeal, ensuring its financial sustainability, and introducing progressive reforms that benefit players, stakeholders, and fans alike.

**Oscars 2025 highlights :-**

The 97th Academy Awards honored filmmakers. Conan O'Brien hosted the presentation, which honored films that enthralled viewers worldwide, ranging from huge blockbusters to personal tragedies. Sean Baker's romantic comedy-drama 'Anora' won the Best Picture award for film of the year. Anora additionally took Best Original Screenplay and Best Film Editing. Sean Baker won Best Director for 'Anora', his third Oscar. Adrien Brody secured his second Oscar for Best Actor for his powerful performance in 'The Brutalist', directed by Brady Corbet.

**Dr. Suborno Bose Honored for Revolutionizing Hospitality Education :-**

Dr. Suborno Bose, Chairman of the International Institute of Hotel Management (IIHM), one of India's leading hospitality educators and a visionary in integrating technology with hospitality, has received the 'Lifetime Achievement in Hospitality and Education Through Technology' award from Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Shekhawat. Bharat 24 arranged the Vibrant Bharat Global Summit 2025, where the prize was given out. This prestigious recognition marks a significant milestone in Dr. Bose's relentless efforts to revolutionize

hospitality, tourism, and education through technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI).

**Delhi International Airport Wins Prestigious ASQ Award for Best Airport in Asia-Pacific :-**

GMR Airports Infrastructure Limited revealed that its subsidiary, Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), has received the coveted Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Airport Experience Award, 2024, for Best Airport With Over 40 Million Passengers in the Asia-Pacific region. This extraordinary achievement represents Delhi Airport's seventh straight year of recognition for its commitment to customer service excellence. The ASQ Awards, presented by Airports Council International (ACI), are globally regarded as the gold standard in airport experience.

**Muthoot Microfin Wins Double Gold at SKOCH Awards 2025 :-**

Muthoot Microfin won a surprising double triumph at the SKOCH Awards 2025, receiving two coveted Gold Awards. The awards were awarded to Sadaf Sayeed, CEO of Muthoot Microfin, by Sameer Kochhar, Chairman of SKOCH Group, and Gursharan Dhanjal, Vice-Chairman of SKOCH Group, at a ceremony in New Delhi. The recognition at SKOCH Awards 2025 underscores Muthoot Microfin's commitment to innovation,

customer-centricity, and social impact, further strengthening its position as a leader in the microfinance industry.



Shubman Gill and Alana King Won ICC Player of the Month Awards for February 2025 :-

Shubman Gill was named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for February 2025, in recognition of his outstanding batting performances, after leading India to victory in the Champions Trophy 2025. Gill scored 406 runs in 5 ODIs, maintaining an outstanding batting average of 101.50 and a strike rate of 94.19. In the women's division, Australia's Alana King was named the ICC Women's Player of the Month for February 2025. She was recognized for her brilliant bowling performances, playing a vital role in her team's success during the month.



RBI Honoured with Digital Transformation Award 2025

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been honoured with the Digital Transformation Award 2025 by Central Banking, London, UK, for its pioneering digital initiatives. The central bank earned this recognition for its internally developed platforms, Pravah and Saarthi. Launched in January 2023, Saarthi improved document management, data analysis, and internal workflow digitisation, greatly enhancing operational efficiency. Pravah, introduced in

May 2024, is a secure online portal that enables external users to submit regulatory applications to the RBI, improving transparency and cybersecurity. The successful implementation of these platforms reflects RBI's commitment to digital innovation and strengthening financial governance.



ATEEZ Wins K-pop Artist of the Year at iHeartRadio Awards :-

On Wednesday, March 19, 2025, the Supreme Court scheduled a detailed hearing for April 16 on multiple petitions challenging the 2023 law that grants the Central government a dominant role in appointing the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (EC). A bench comprising Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh set the date after senior advocate Prashant Bhushan highlighted that the matter, listed as item number 38, was unlikely to be heard during the day. Bhushan urged the court to prioritise the case, emphasising that it directly impacts the foundation of democracy and is already addressed in the 2023 Constitution Bench ruling. Justice Kant acknowledged the significance of the matter but noted that the court has numerous urgent cases scheduled daily.



Ayushmann Khurrana Named 'Fit India Icon' by Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya :-

Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya appointed actor Ayushmann Khurrana as the official 'Fit India Icon' during the launch function in New Delhi. The 40-year-old actor has joined Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Fit India Movement, which aims "to inspire people to focus on their fitness and wellbeing," according to a news statement. The Fit India Movement is dedicated to fostering a culture of fitness through various initiatives and events. Its core objectives include promoting fitness as easy, fun, and free by showcasing simple and enjoyable ways to incorporate physical activity into daily routines, eliminating barriers to fitness.

**BCCI Honors Team India with ₹58 Crore After ICC Champions Trophy Win :-**

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has given a financial reward of 58 crore rupees for Team India following their victory in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025. The BCCI stated that this financial acknowledgment acknowledges the players, coaching and support personnel, and members of the Men's Selection Committee. The Rohit Sharma-led Men in Blue remained undefeated throughout the tournament, winning by four wickets in the final against on-field rivals New Zealand in Dubai on March 9. BCCI President Roger Binny said that winning back-to-back ICC titles is special and this reward recognizes Team India's dedication and excellence on the global stage.

**Chiranjeevi Honoured with Lifetime Achievement Award by UK Government :-**

Megastar Chiranjeevi made history as the first Indian superstar to receive the British government's Lifetime Achievement Award. He received the honor at the UK Parliament in London. Andhra Pradesh's Deputy Chief Minister and Chiranjeevi's brother, Pawan Kalyan, congratulated him on his great achievement. The ceremony, held at the House of Commons, was attended by prominent dignitaries, including Members of Parliament from the ruling Labour Party—Navendu Mishra (Stockport), Sojan Joseph, and Bob Blackman.

**Vijay Sankar Honoured with Denmark's Knight's Cross :-**

Vijay Sankar, Honorary Consul General of Denmark for Southern India in Chennai and Chairman of The Sanmar Group, received the coveted 'Knight's Cross of the Order of Dannebrog' from the King of Denmark in appreciation of his consular services. According to a news statement, Rasmus Abildgaard Kristensen, Denmark's Ambassador in India, gave the award and citation to Mr. Vijay Sankar at a reception in Chennai. The Danish Ambassador, who read the citation, highlighted the contribution of Mr. Vijay Sankar to Indo-Danish relations during his tenure.

**Statue of Unity Sculptor Ram Sutar Conferred with Maharashtra Bhushan Award :-**

Ram Sutar, a renowned sculptor, has received the coveted Maharashtra Bhushan Award. The statement was made by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in the state Legislative Assembly. Sutar, who built Gujarat's Statue of Unity—the world's tallest statue—has been commissioned by the Maharashtra government to create a statue of Bharat Ratna Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar for installation in Chaityabhoomi. Sutar, who turned 100 last month, hails from the Dhule district of Maharashtra.

**Hydrologist Günter Blöschl Wins 2025 Stockholm Water Prize :-**

According to a statement released by the Prize Committee, hydrologist Günter Blöschl, a pioneer in water engineering, has been awarded the coveted Stockholm Water Prize. Blöschl's extensive database and research have transformed and enriched the global understanding of flood risk reduction and water resource management. According to the statement, all of this has contributed to a greater understanding of flood risks associated with climate change worldwide. Blöschl is a professor at the Vienna University of Technology, the current head of the Institute of Hydraulic Engineering

and Water Resources Management at the Vienna University of Technology.

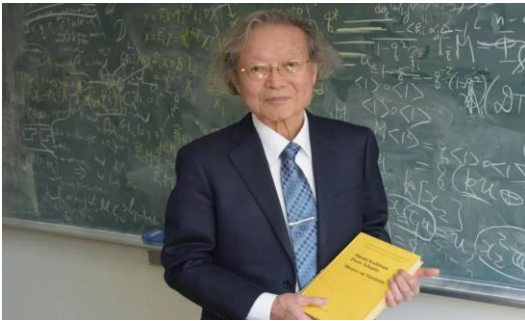
**Vinod Kumar Shukla Selected for 59th Jnanpith Award**

Vinod Kumar Shukla, a renowned Hindi writer, has received India's highest literary honour, the 59th Jnanpith Award. He will become the first writer from Chhattisgarh to get the honor. The 88-year-old short story writer, poet, and essayist, regarded as one of the best contemporary writers in the language, is the 12th Hindi author to receive the honor. The prize includes a financial payment of Rs 11 lakh, a bronze statue of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of learning, and a citation. Shukla said it was a moment of immense happiness for him and admitted that he had never imagined receiving such recognition.

**Violinist R.K. Shriramkumar Honored with Sangita Kalanidhi Award :-**

R K Shriramkumar, a well-known violinist from Rudrapatnam in Karnataka's Hassan district, on the banks of the Cauvery River, has been nominated for the renowned Sangita Kalanidhi award by The Music Academy, Madras. Shriramkumar, a solo violinist and accompanist, was trained by his grandfather, the great

musician R K Venkatarama Sastry. He is acknowledged with enhancing the vocalist's performance. Shriramkumar (58) has the distinction of working with both the legends of Carnatic music like Semmangudi R Srinivasa Iyer, T Brinda, M S Subbulakshmi and D K Pattammal, and the present-day musicians.



Masaki Kashiwara Wins the 2025 Abel Prize for Mathematics :-

Masaki Kashiwara, a Japanese mathematician, was given this year's Abel prize. The Abel Prize, which was first presented in 2003, is widely regarded as a comparable to the Nobel Prize, which does not include a category for mathematics. It has been designed as such. The Abel Prize, as its name implies, "recognises pioneering scientific achievements in mathematics". It is named after Niels Henrik Abel (1802-29), a Norwegian mathematician who made groundbreaking contributions in a variety of domains during his brief life. The prize was established by the Norwegian Parliament in 2002, on Abel's 200th anniversary.

5: Banking



City Union Bank Partners with Chennai Super Kings to Launch Co-Branded Credit Card :-

City Union Bank (CUB) has established a strategic agreement with Chennai Super Kings (CSK) to launch a new co-branded credit card. This agreement allows fans of the brand to improve their financial situation while also receiving exclusive incentives tied to their passion of cricket. Customers who utilize the City Union Bank - Chennai Super Kings Co-Branded Credit Card will receive numerous incentives. Fans can enjoy the thrill of CSK's iconic yellow color and lion logo on their credit card, showcasing their passion for the team.



HDFC Bank Signs MoU with Indian Air Force and CSC Academy; Launches Project HAKK :-

HDFC Bank has announced Project HAKK (Hawai Anubhavi Kalyan Kendra), which will supply assistance and amenities to Indian Air Force (IAF) pensioners, veterans, and families. In this respect, the Bank has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the IAF, represented by the office of the Assistant Chief of Air Staff - Accounts & Air Veterans and the CSC Academy. The Bank said in a statement that 25 centres have been proposed across the Air Force units, including New Delhi, Bengaluru, Gurgaon, Pune, Secunderabad, Guwahati, Jodhpur, and Chandigarh.



PhonePe Launches 'Insuring HEROES' Campaign for International Women's Day 2025 :-

PhonePe has launched its 'Insuring HEROES' campaign in honor of International Women's Day. As part of this promotion, the business is offering women-only discounts of up to 30% on select term life and health insurance plans available through the PhonePe platform till March 9, 2025. Women can take advantage of these exclusive deals on the PhonePe app to improve their overall financial well-being and long-term stability. Discounts include up to 15% off on health insurance Plans, and up to 30% off on term life insurance Plans.



HDFC Bank, Indian Army, and CSC Academy Expand Project NAMAN :-

HDFC Bank, India's largest private-sector bank, has reaffirmed its Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Army and CSC e-Governance to enhance Project NAMAN. This project to commemorate soldiers will now be undertaken in 26 Directorates of Indian Army soldiers (DIAV) locations. Project NAMAN aims to give assistance and services to Army veterans, their families, and next of kin. The CSC centers, operated by Army veterans or their families, are dedicated to offering

pension-related services, Government-to-Citizen (G2C) services, and Business-to-Consumer (B2C) services directly at the doorstep of defense establishments.



India's Razorpay forays into Singapore :-

Fintech unicorn Razorpay is increasing its foothold in Singapore, marking its second Southeast Asian market incursion after Malaysia. The move is consistent with the company's overall objective to increase its regional presence, catering to firms seeking cross-border payment solutions. Razorpay now employs 50-60 people in Southeast Asia, with aims to treble that number by the fiscal year 2025-26. Singapore has demonstrated a 97% adoption rate in digital payments and its financial sector is expected to reach \$180 billion by 2029.



RBI Imposes ₹76.6 Lakh Penalty on Four NBFCs for Regulatory Violations :-

The Reserve Bank has imposed a penalty of Rs 76.6 lakh on four non-banking financial entities for failing to comply with certain requirements of its 'peer-to-peer lending platform' guidelines. Fairassets Technologies India has been fined Rs 40 lakh, while Bridge Fintech Solutions and Rang De P2P Financial Services have each been fined Rs 10 lakh for failing to comply with particular

sections of the 'Non-Banking Financial Company - Peer-to-Peer Lending Platform (Reserve Bank) Directions, 2017'. RBI also said the penalty of Rs 16.6 lakh has been imposed on Visionary Financepeer.



SBI Life Insurance Expands Product Line with Two New Child Insurance Plans :-

SBI Life Insurance, one of India's most recognized private life insurers, has introduced two new child products, 'SBI Life - Smart Future Star' and 'SBI Life - Smart Platina Young Achiever', which are specifically designed to assist parents in safeguarding their children's future goals. The rising cost of school, combined with shifting career goals and increased living expenses, can be troubling for parents today. Addressing parent's innate need to ensure a fulfilling life for their children regardless of socio-economic challenges, SBI Life's child products offers parents the necessary tool to build a comprehensive financial safeguard for their child.



SBI to Launch Project Finance Unit for AI, Fintech, and E-Commerce :-

According to a top executive at State Bank of India, the country's largest lender, a unit will be established to oversee project finance solutions for "new age industries" which includes artificial intelligence, e-commerce, and fintech. The public sector bank intends to complete the project within a year and would engage

"specialised professionals" to staff it, according to Ashwini Kumar Tewari, the bank's managing director. It's also in the process of appointing an external consultant, Tewari said. The project will help diversify the work of the bank's project finance and structuring unit, which appraises, structures and funds large projects in infrastructure.



SEBI Partners with DigiLocker to Reduce Unclaimed Assets and Strengthen Investor Protection :-

Sebi, the market regulator, has teamed with DigiLocker, a government-backed digital document storage platform, to decrease unclaimed assets in the Indian securities market and improve investor safety. The project will enable investors to save and retrieve information about their demat and mutual fund holdings via DigiLocker, benefiting both investors and their family. This expands the existing DigiLocker services, which already include bank account statements, insurance policy certificates, and NPS account statements.



SEBI Reduces Minimum Investment in SSE to ₹1,000 :-

SEBI, the capital markets regulator, cut the minimum investment amount for Zero Coupon Zero Principal (ZCZP) instruments on the Social Stock Exchange (SSE) from ₹10,000 to ₹1,000. ZCZP are instruments used to

donate funds for non-profit organizations (NPOs) listed on the SSE. The move is intended to increase retail participation in social impact investing. The change also modifies the provisions outlined in a previous circular dated September 19, 2022, which was amended on December 28, 2023.



Unclaimed Deposits in India: Over ₹45,000 Crore Transferred to RBI's DEA Fund :-

The Finance Ministry notified the Lok Sabha that public sector banks transferred over ₹45,000 crore in "unclaimed deposit" to the Depositor Education and Awareness Fund between 2019-20 and 2024-25 (till December 31, 2024). Last year, the RBI introduced UDGM (Unclaimed Deposits-Gateway to Access Information), a service that allows registered users to search for unclaimed deposits/accounts from numerous banks in a centralized manner. Thirty banks are part of UDGM portal, and they cover around 90 per cent of unclaimed deposits (in value terms) in DEA Fund. The effort is to bring other banks on the portal.



ATM Withdrawals to Get Costlier from May 1 as RBI Approves Fee Hike :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has increased interchange fees for ATM withdrawals, making it more

expensive to withdraw cash from ATMs in India beginning May 1, 2025. Customers who frequently use ATMs would be impacted by this shift, which will raise the cost of withdrawals, according to a Doordarshan (DD) news report. An ATM interchange fee is a cost that one bank pays to another to provide ATM services to clients. Banks frequently pass on these fees to customers as part of their operating expenses. The price hike is expected to affect customers of smaller banks the most, as these banks depend on larger financial institutions for ATM infrastructure and services.



HDFC Bank Embassy Fixed Deposit :-

HDFC Bank has introduced Diplomat or Embassy Fixed Deposits. This fixed deposit is intended for special consumers. The newly established fixed deposits adhere to tight criteria regarding who can invest in them, the duration of fixed deposits, the minimum fixed deposit amounts, renewals, interest rates, and early withdrawals. According to the HDFC Bank website, embassy deposits are only open to diplomats, non-diplomatic workers, and diplomatic missions. These are Foreign Currency (FCY) Term Deposits available only in USD (United States Dollar).

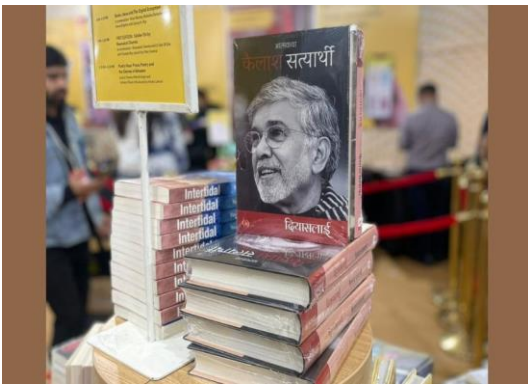


RBI imposes penalties on HDFC Bank, Punjab & Sind Bank :-

The Reserve Bank has placed penalties on HDFC Bank and Punjab & Sind Bank for regulatory compliance violations. HDFC Bank faces a ₹75 lakh penalty for failing to follow RBI's 'Know Your Customer' (KYC) guidelines. In another

statement, the RBI said a penalty of ₹68.20 lakh has been imposed on Punjab & Sind Bank for non-compliance with certain directions on 'Creation of a Central Repository of Large Common Exposures - Across Banks' and 'Financial Inclusion - Access to Banking Services - Basic Savings Bank Deposit Account (BSBDA)'.

6: Books and Author

**Kailash Satyarthi's autobiography 'Diyaslai' launched :-**

The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) hosted a special conversation about Nobel Peace Laureate Kailash Satyarthi's autobiography, 'Diyaslai'. Former President Ram Nath Kovind was the event's chief guest. Padma Bhushan Ram Bahadur Rai, Chairman of IGNCA; Dr Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary of IGNCA; Kailash Satyarthi; and social activist Sumedha Kailash, also attended the ceremony. In his remarks, Ram Nath Kovind termed 'Diyaslai' as a movement committed to children's rights rather than a book.

among others, attended the grand launch of "I Did It My Way: My Life of Love, Betrayal, Regret, and Wisdom," the much-anticipated biography of Rajan Lall written by celebrated writer Manju Ramanan. Rajan Lall is a well-known movie producer who has worked on Thalapathi, Raasaiyya, Ninne Pelladatha, and more films. The launch was held in a glittering venue and witnessed heartfelt speeches and reminiscences about his impactful contributions and his indomitable spirit.

**Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu unveils 'Prapancha Charitra' book :-**

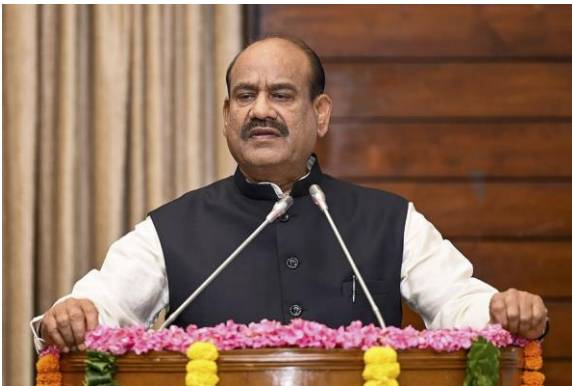
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu joined the book inauguration of "The Glimpses of World History" by former Minister Daggubati Venkateswara Rao at Vishakapatnam. The Chief Minister applauded the book and encouraged the audience to read it. He maintains that he will read the book in its entirety when he has the time, and that it covers issues such as past practices, food habits, and farming systems. The Chief Minister said that he is of the opinion that writing a book is possible only when one makes a deep study with the objective of achieving something.

**Rajan Lall's Book Launch :-**

Veteran Bollywood actors Anupam Kher, Shatrughan Sinha, Jeetendra Kapoor, Ranjit, and Poonam Dhillon,

**Chandigarh-Based Author Hitakshi Sharma Released Her Second Book :-**

Hitakshi Sharma, a Chandigarh novelist, recently published her second book, 'Varanasi to Gomukh'. Renu Vig, Vice-Chancellor of Panjab University, and Gaurav Gaur from the Centre for Social Work launched the book. The book describes Sharma's travels from Varanasi to Gomukh, delving into both physical and inner journeys. It explores ways to overcome self-imposed anxieties and limits, as well as how settings and interactions with others can alter viewpoints. The book also touches upon kindness and the importance of stepping out of one's comfort zone.

**LS Speaker Birla releases book on former Uttarakhand CM Koshiyari :-**

Om Birla, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, praised Bhagat Singh Koshyari, former Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, former Governor of Maharashtra and Goa, and former Member of Parliament, as an amazing personality who lives an average, simple life by example. He delivered these statements while launching Madan Mohan Sati's book "Parvat Shiromani Bhagat Singh Koshyari" at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) in Delhi.

He highlighted that throughout his life, Koshyari placed the nation above everything, a principle that remained unwavering.

**100 Heroes Book Launch :-**

The acclaimed 100 Heroes book was inaugurated in a lavish ceremony by Vennela Gaddar, Chairman of Telangana Samskruthika Sarathi, along with the book's founder, Saidulu Garu, and other distinguished visitors. This extraordinary book pays tribute to the greatest freedom fighters, revolutionaries, and inspiring personalities who shaped Indian and global history. The 100 Heroes book highlights the sacrifices, struggles, and contributions of legendary figures who fought for justice, equality, and freedom.

**Bill Gates' Favourite Author, Vaclav Smil, Releases a New Book on Fixing the Global Food System:-**

Bill Gates has once again recommended a book by his favorite author, Vaclav Smil—this time on the pressing challenges of food waste and global food poverty. Smil's most recent book, 'How to Feed the World', investigates how reducing food waste might make food more inexpensive and accessible around the world. Smil, a Czech-Canadian emeritus professor at the University of

Manitoba, has written over 40 books on issues ranging from energy and technical innovation to government policy and population development. Gates has been a longtime admirer of his work, describing himself as a "devoted reader" who has read nearly all of Smil's published books.



'Law, Justice, Society: Selected works of Upendra Baxi' launched in Delhi :-

The book "Law, Justice, and Society: Selected Works of Upendra Baxi" was recently launched at the Indian Law Institute in New Delhi. Prof. Upendra Baxi is widely considered as one of India's most famous legal experts, with a strong voice and thought leadership in human rights, constitutional law, and legal theory. The four-volume collection includes pioneering contributions across four decades, including a curated selection of essays and lectures that offer insights into diverse areas such as human rights, constitutionalism, law and society, and legal education.



Books released to commemorate intellectual legacy of Srikanta Sastri :-

Three books were released in honor of renowned scholar and polymath S. Srikanta Sastri at a ceremony attended

by prominent scholars and many of his students. The Department of Ancient History and Archaeology at the University of Mysore arranged the event, which was billed as a celebration of Dr. Sastri's intellectual legacy after his death in 1974. Srikanta Sastri (November 5, 1904 - May 10, 1974) was a historian and Indologist who began his career as a teacher at the Department of History at the University of Mysore in 1930 and continued to teach there until he resigned as the department head in 1960.



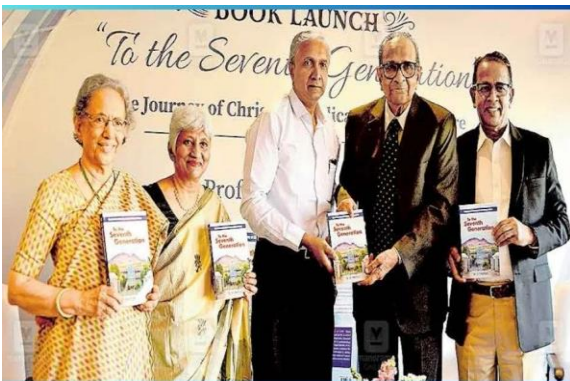
CM Stalin releases book documenting Tamil Nadu's financial management from Sangam Age :-

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin unveiled 'Tamil Nadu Fiscal Management: Antiquity and Continuity', a book published by the Finance Department that covers the state's financial administration from the Sangam Age to the present. According to the release, the book discusses ancient trade, taxation systems, and financial administration during the colonial period, as well as an analysis of present Tamil Nadu budget records. It documents the history of financial management dating back many centuries, and has articles from reputed historians, the release added.



Dhoni, Ashwin Participated In CSK Book Launch Event :-

A new book about the Chennai Super Kings, 'Leo—The Untold Story,' written by prominent attorney and former TNCA vice president P.S. Raman, was officially published in the presence of former CSK captain M.S. Dhoni at a star-studded event. Former India cricketer C. D. Gopinath, a member of India's first Test-winning team, unveiled the book, and singer Anirudh Ravichander was given the first edition. R. Ashwin, who just resigned from international cricket, was honored by former India captain K. Srikkanth. In his welcome address, Raman spoke about how the idea of the book came about and read a passage from his work.

**Book on CMC Vellore 'To the Seventh Generation' Launched in Chennai :-**

V.I. Mathan, the hospital's director from 1994 to 1997, introduced the book 'To the Seventh Generation: The Journey of Christian Medical College Vellore' in Chennai. Dr. Mathan had spent 50 years at the university, starting as a student and retiring as director. The first copy was

received by the present director and haematologist Vikram Mathew and the second copy was received by V.V. Bashi, director of Institute of Cardiac Diseases and senior consultant cardiothoracic surgeon at SIMS, Vadapalani.

**Jal Shakti minister launches 'Ripples of Change' book on women-led rural WASH initiatives :-**

Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Paatil unveiled 'Ripples of Change: Gender-transformative rural WASH programmes in India,' a publication produced by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) in conjunction with UNICEF India. The book features ten stories from rural India that demonstrate the impact of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) and Jal Jeevan Mission through the lenses of women's empowerment, community leadership, and grassroots innovation. Alongside the book launch, Paatil unveiled the revamped website of the Ministry of Jal Shakti's Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (WASH).

7: Defence

**DRDO Conducts High-Altitude Trial of Integrated Life Support System for Tejas Aircraft :-**

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has reported a successful high-altitude demonstration of an indigenous integrated life support system (ILSS) for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas. The On-Board Oxygen Generating System-based (OBOGS) ILSS is intended to create and manage breathing oxygen for aircrew during flight, removing the

requirement for standard liquid oxygen cylinder-based systems, it noted. The trial was carried out by the Bengaluru-based Defence Bio-Engineering & Electro Medical Laboratory (DEBEL), a lab under the DRDO.



U.K. announces new \$2 billion deal to fund air-defence missiles for Ukraine :-

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has unveiled a new £1.6 billion (\$2 billion) arrangement that will allow Ukraine to buy 5,000 air-defense missiles with export financing. According to the British Ministry of Defence, Thales will build the lightweight multirole missiles for Ukraine. Thales stated that the missiles have a range of more than 6 kilometers and can be launched from a variety of platforms on land, sea, and air. "This will be vital for protecting critical infrastructure now and strengthening Ukraine in securing the peace when it comes," Mr. Starmer told reporters at a summit in London.



China Increases Defence Budget by 7.2% in 2025 Amid Rising Regional Tensions :-

China's declared military spending has risen to nearly \$245 billion after a 7.2% increase in the country's yearly defense budget. The number, which was disclosed at the National People's Congress, highlights Beijing's ongoing

attempts to strengthen its military power in the face of escalating geopolitical tensions. Experts believe that China's real expenditure is far higher, even though the percentage increase is the same as it was the previous year. Even with the declared figures, China's defence budget remains over three times that of India's \$79 billion and second only to the United States, which has allocated more than \$900 billion this year.



Navy's theatre level operational exercise concludes :-

In response to China's growing maritime presence in the area, India wrapped up a three-month-long major naval drill in the Indian Ocean that involved over 65 vessels, 10 submarines, and over 80 aircraft. The exercise's operational area stretched from the Sunda and Lombok Straits in the east to the Strait of Hormuz in the west. The Theatre Level Operational Exercise (TROPEX), according to the Indian Navy, was the triumphant conclusion of a rigorous operational campaign intended to evaluate the force's operational readiness and material readiness for battle.



Sea Dragon 2025 Naval Exercise :-

Sea Dragon 2025, a five-nation naval exercise that involves the Indian Navy, began off the coast of Guam in the western Pacific Ocean. The United States Navy's 7th Fleet is hosting the Sea Dragon exercise 2025, which will

take place from March 4 to 19, 2025. The Indian Navy, together with the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF), Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), and Republic of Korea Navy (ROKN), is taking part in this tactical interoperability exercise, which aims to improve coordination in maritime security operations.



India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise KHANJAR-XII :-

The 12th edition of the India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise Khanjar-XII will take place in Kyrgyzstan from March 10 to 23. According to the Ministry of Defence, Exercise Khanjar XII has been an annual training event since its commencement in 2011. The rotating locations between India and Kyrgyzstan highlight the distinctive aspects of the flourishing strategic cooperation. The last edition of the same exercise was conducted in India in January 2024. The Indian contingent is represented by troops from the Parachute Regiment (Special Forces).



India-Bangladesh Joint Patrol Corpat And Bilateral Exercise Bangosagar Held In Bay Of Bengal :-

The 6th joint patrol 'Coordinated Patrol' (CORPAT) and the 4th bilateral exercise 'BONGOSAGOR' were held for the 6th time with the participation of naval ships of the two countries in the designated areas of the Bangladesh and Indian maritime borders in the Bay of Bengal. This joint patrol and exercise, under the supervision of Commander Flotilla West, began on March 10, 2025, and concluded on March 12, 2025. Ships and aircraft from both navies undertook joint patrolling along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) and subsequently conducted maritime exercises to enhance interoperability.



India signs \$248 million deal with Russia to upgrade T-72 tank engines :-

The Ministry of Defence has inked a USD248 million contract with Russian defense business Rosoboronexport (RoE) to purchase 1,000 horsepower (HP) engines for T-72 battle tanks in fully constructed, totally knocked-down, and semi-knocked-down configurations. The agreement encompasses the transfer of technology (ToT) from the Russian defense manufacturer to Chennai-based Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (Heavy Vehicle Factory) for engine integration and subsequent licenced production under ToT to support the 'Make in India' initiative in the defence sector, officials said.



Keel Laying of Second Fleet Support Ship (FSS) for Indian Navy :-

The L&T Shipyard in Kattupalli hosted the keel laying ceremony for the second of five Fleet Support Ships (FSS). Vice Admiral Rajaram Swaminathan, Controller Warship Production & Acquisition, attended the event, as did senior officials from the Indian Navy, Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL), and Larsen & Toubro. The Indian Navy inked a contract with HSL in August 2023 to acquire five FSS, with first delivery planned for mid-2027. To optimize domestic shipbuilding capacity and ensure adherence to stringent delivery timelines, HSL has subcontracted the construction of two ships to L&T Shipyard, Kattupalli.



DRDO & Indian Navy Successfully Test-Fire VLSRSAM Missile :-

India successfully flight-tested its locally built Vertically-Launched Short-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (VLSRSAM) from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha, according to defence sources. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy launched the VLSRSAM in a test run. The flight test was conducted from a land-based vertical launcher, using a high-speed aerial target at very

close range and low altitude. It has established the Near-Boundary-Low Altitude capability of the missile system.



Launch of the Tenth Ammunition Cum Torpedo Cum Missile (ACTCM) Barge, LSAM 24 (Yard 134) :-

The 10th Ammunition Cum Torpedo Cum Missile (ACTCM) Barge, LSAM 24 (Yard 134), was unveiled by M/s Suryadipta Projects Pvt Ltd in Thane. Cmde Rahul Jagat, SPS, Submarine Overseeing Team (SOT), Mumbai, served as the Chief Guest at the launching ceremony. Indigenously Designed and Built for the Indian Navy The contract for 11 ACTCM Barges was given to MSME Shipyard, M/s Suryadipta Projects Pvt Ltd on March 5, 2021. The Barges have been designed and built in India in collaboration with an Indian Ship Design firm and the Indian Register of Shipping (IRS).



Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi Inaugurates New North Jetty at Naval Base :-

Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Chief of Naval Staff, opened the New North Jetty at the Naval Base in Kochi, Kerala. The jetty, which is 300 metres long and 18 metres wide, is intended to accommodate various types of naval ships

and auxiliary vessels. The effective and timely completion of projects demonstrates indigenous engineering expertise, increasing the Indian Navy's ability to efficiently maintain and turnaround significant naval combatants. The project would provide greater flexibility in Naval operations and strengthen India's maritime capability.



Army conducts tri-service Ex Prachand Pahaar in Arunachal :-

According to an official release, the Army conducted a Tri-Service integrated multi-domain combat exercise called 'Prachand Pahaar' in Arunachal Pradesh's high-altitude environment from March 25 to 27. The statement emphasized that 'Prachand Pahaar' builds on the momentum of Exercise Poorvi Pahaar, which took place in November 2024 and largely focused on the integrated deployment of aviation assets. This underscores the increasing emphasis on "jointness, technological superiority, and readiness to tackle multi-domain threats," the statement said.

8: Economy



India's GDP Growth Rebounds in Q3 FY 2024-25 :-

India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rebounded in the October-December quarter of FY 2024-25, with the economy showing resilience amid global headwinds. The recovery was primarily driven by strong government spending on infrastructure projects, a rebound in manufacturing output, and steady expansion in the services sector. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had previously forecasted a temporary slowdown in Q2 due to external factors, including global trade disruptions and inflationary pressures. However, a rise in consumer demand and private investments helped the economy regain momentum. Economists expect the GDP growth

to remain strong in the coming quarters, provided inflation remains under control and global uncertainties do not escalate.



Volkswagen Faces \$2.8 Billion Tax Dispute in India Over Import Duties :-

Volkswagen, one of the world's largest automobile manufacturers, is currently embroiled in a \$2.8 billion tax dispute with Indian authorities over the alleged misclassification of imported car components. According to tax officials, Volkswagen has underpaid import duties by categorizing certain high-value auto parts under a lower tax bracket. The company has denied any wrongdoing and is preparing to challenge the allegations.

in court. Industry experts warn that the outcome of this case could set a precedent for multinational corporations operating in India, as the government continues to tighten regulatory measures to ensure compliance with tax laws.



Farmers' Share in Rabi Crop Prices Ranges Between 40-67%: RBI Survey :-

A recent survey conducted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has revealed that Indian farmers receive only 40-67% of the final consumer prices for rabi crops such as wheat, mustard, and pulses. The survey highlights the wide disparity in farm gate prices and consumer prices, with middlemen and logistics costs contributing to the gap. Policymakers have called for reforms in agricultural marketing to ensure that a larger share of consumer spending reaches the farmers. The government is considering steps such as expanding direct procurement mechanisms, strengthening farmer-producer organizations (FPOs), and increasing transparency in the supply chain to improve farmers' earnings.



Bihar's Economy Triples in Over a Decade :-

Bihar's economic transformation is a standout story of the last decade. The state's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has surged from Rs 2.47 lakh crore in 2011-12 to Rs 8.54 lakh crore in 2023-24, reflecting a nearly threefold increase. This remarkable growth has been driven by a robust increase in investment proposals—with the State Investment Promotion Board receiving proposals worth over Rs 75,000 crore—as well as improvements in tax collections and sector-specific advancements. Infrastructure developments, enhanced agricultural output, and an upswing in manufacturing and services have all contributed to this success. The rising share of tax revenue in the state's total receipts and initiatives to support entrepreneurs and startups indicate a comprehensive policy push aimed at sustaining this growth trajectory.



Eight Core Industries Index Rises by 4.6% in January 2025 :-

The latest industrial data indicates that the combined index for eight core industries has grown by 4.6% in January 2025. Key sectors such as coal, cement, steel, petroleum refining, and electricity generation have driven this increase, reflecting a robust performance in both traditional and modern industries. This upward trend is seen as a positive sign of economic recovery and resilience amid global economic uncertainties. The increase in production and output across these critical sectors highlights the effectiveness of recent government measures aimed at boosting industrial activity and infrastructure development, thereby contributing to overall economic growth.



India's GDP Growth Registers 6.2% in Q3 FY2024-25 :-

According to the National Statistical Office (NSO), India's real GDP grew by 6.2% during the October–December quarter of the 2024–25 fiscal year. This marked improvement from the previous quarter's 5.6% growth is attributed to higher government spending on infrastructure, a rebound in export activity, and a rise in consumer demand. The positive figures are being welcomed as a sign of economic resilience and a potential turnaround in the broader economic scenario. Policymakers remain cautiously optimistic, noting that continued reforms and robust fiscal measures will be essential to sustain this momentum and drive further growth in the upcoming quarters.



SEBI Launches 'Bond Central' Database Portal :-

In a major initiative to enhance transparency and investor confidence, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has launched the 'Bond Central' portal. Developed in collaboration with market infrastructure institutions and the Online Bond Platform Providers Association, the new portal serves as a centralized repository for all information related to corporate bonds. Investors will now have free and easy access to detailed risk assessments, bond documents, and comparative price data, allowing for better-informed investment decisions. This initiative is part of SEBI's broader strategy

to streamline the fixed-income market, promote fair practices, and facilitate a more transparent and efficient financial ecosystem in India.



EPFO's board recommends 8.25% interest rate for FY25

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation's (EPFO) Central Board of Trustees proposed that the 8.25% interest rate for its subscribers be maintained in 2024-25 (April-March). The interest rate would be formally announced by the Government of India, after which EPFO would credit the rate of interest to subscribers' accounts. At the 237th meeting of the Central Board of Trustees of the EPFO, the central board also decided to enhance the insurance benefits under the Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance (EDLI) scheme, the labour ministry said in a release.



India's circular economy could generate a market value of over \$2 trillion and create close to 10 million jobs :-

Union Minister Bhupender Yadav stated that India's circular economy has the ability to develop a market worth more than USD 2 trillion and approximately 10 million jobs by 2050. "On a global scale, the circular economy could contribute an additional USD 4.5 trillion to the global economy by 2030," he said. The Union Minister for Forest, Environment, and Climate Change

stated that the circular economy will result in the most important trade shift. This shift will revolutionise the traditional "take, make, waste" model of production and consumption.



Union Minister Scindia Unveils India's Telecom Progress at MWC 2025 :-

Minister for Communications Shri Jyotiraditya M Scindia attended the highly regarded Mobile World Congress (MWC) in Barcelona, Spain, where he met with CEOs, discussed key sessions, and witnessed major technological innovations at one of the world's largest gatherings for the mobile and telecommunications industries. This visit showcased India's telecom transformation at Mobile World Congress 2025, with Bharat's rapid 5G rollout, world's lowest data tariffs, indigenous 4G/5G stacks & robust cybersecurity measures highlighted in the prestigious event.



SEBI's Total Income Rises 48% to ₹2,075 Crore in 2023-24 :-

Due to higher fees and subscription revenue, capital markets regulator SEBI's overall revenue climbed 48% year over year to ₹2,075 crore in 2023–2024. The regulator received ₹1,851.5 crore in fee money out of the total income, which was much more than the ₹1,213.22 crore received in the previous fiscal year, according to

Sebi's publicly released annual statement of accounts 2023-24. Additionally, income from investments widened to ₹192.41 crore from ₹161.42 crore and other income increased to nearly ₹18 crore from close to ₹15 crore.



MSME Sector Sees Continued Growth as NPAs Decline Over the Past 5 Years :-

According to the most recent statement from the Ministry of Finance, total advances outstanding to the MSME sector have steadily climbed over the last five years. During the same time period, the MSME Sector's gross NPAs and NPA ratio have steadily dropped. Furthermore, according to RBI's provisional data for FY 2025, which runs until December 31, 2024, both Gross NPAs and Gross NPA ratios in the MSME sector have decreased. Gross NPA ratio, of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) in MSME sector fell from 11% in FY2020 to 4% in FY2024.



India's Retail Inflation Drops to Seven-Month Low in February :-

Retail inflation in India fell to a seven-month low of 3.61 percent in February 2025, from 4.31 percent in January, according to statistics issued by the National Statistics Office. For the first time since August 2024, inflation has dipped below the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) medium-term objective of 4%. The decline in the Consumer Price

Index (CPI) was primarily due to a major drop in food costs. Food inflation fell sharply to 3.75 per cent in February from 5.97 per cent in January, reaching its lowest level since May 2023.



Government Considers Incentives to Mitigate Global Trade Uncertainties :-

In response to escalating global trade uncertainties and potential tariffs from major partners like the United States and the European Union, the Indian government is contemplating new incentives for exporters. These measures aim to bolster the competitiveness of Indian goods in international markets and safeguard the interests of domestic industries. The proposed incentives are expected to be finalized within a month, with funding provisions included in the upcoming fiscal year's budget.



RBI Recognised with Digital Transformation Award 2025

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has received the Digital Transformation Award 2025 from Central Banking, London, UK, for its innovative digital initiatives. This recognition was awarded for RBI's in-house developed digital platforms, Pravah and Saarthi. Saarthi, introduced in January 2023, improved document management, data analysis, and streamlined internal processes, significantly enhancing operational efficiency. Pravah, launched in May 2024, is a secure online platform enabling external

users to submit regulatory applications to the RBI, improving transparency and cybersecurity. By the end of 2024, Pravah had processed over 2,000 online applications, marking an 80% increase in monthly submissions.



Allianz Divests 26% Stake in Indian Joint Ventures for \$2.8 Billion :-

Allianz, a German insurer, has announced that it will sell its 26% ownership in two joint ventures with India's Bajaj Finserv to the Bajaj Group for around €2.6 billion (\$2.84 billion). This decision marks the end of a long-standing cooperation. Despite the transaction, Allianz believes India remains a big growth market and intends to seek new prospects in the nation. Reports indicate that Allianz had previously attempted to increase its stake in the joint ventures with Bajaj. An alternative strategy for Allianz could involve partnering with Mukesh Ambani's Jio Financial Services.



Parliament approves Rs 51,463 crore additional expenditure for FY25 along with Manipur Budget for FY26 :-

Parliament approved the supplementary demands for grants, allowing an additional expenditure of Rs 51,463 crore in the current fiscal year, as well as enacting the Manipur Budget for 2025-26. The Rajya Sabha returned four bills to the Lok Sabha, completing the process. In

addition, Parliament approved Rs 1,291 crore in surplus grants for the fiscal year 2021-22 and Rs 1,861 crore in additional demands for funding for Manipur in 2024-25. The Lok Sabha had already cleared the supplementary grants and the Manipur Budget on March 11.



CCI Approves Tata Sons' Plan to Acquire Additional 10% Stake in Tata Play :-

The Competition Commission of India (CCI), the country's antitrust authority, has approved Tata Group's holding company Tata Sons' bid to acquire an additional share in Tata Play. According to an official announcement, the antitrust commission has approved Tata Sons to increase its share in Tata Play by 10%. Tata Play is the group's digital content distribution division. The disclosed data shows that Tata Sons will purchase the additional stake from Baytree Investments, a Mauritius-based investment firm.



India's Net FDI Declines to \$1.4 Billion in 2024-25 Amid Rising Outward Investments :-

Net foreign direct investment (FDI) in India fell to \$1.4 billion during the first ten months of 2024-25 (April 2024-January 2025) from \$11.5 billion the previous year, owing to increased repatriation and outward FDI from India. According to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) figures, gross FDI increased by 12.4% year on year (Y-o-Y) to \$67.7 billion in April 2024-January 2025, up from \$60.2

billion in April 2023-January 2024. Repatriation/disinvestment by those who made direct investments in India rose to \$46.1 billion during the 10-month period of 2024-25, up from \$36.9 billion in April 2023-January 2024, RBI data showed.



BPCL Inaugurates Floating Solar Power Plant at Kochi Refinery :-

Sarada Muraleedharan, the Chief Secretary, has inaugurated Bharat Petroleum Corporation's floating solar power project at the Kochi refinery. According to the statement, the 3.2MW AC floating solar plant has been installed in the rainwater harvesting pond and spans eight acres of the waterbody, which totals approximately 19 acres. The facility cost ₹28.93 crore to set up. Ms. Muraleedharan also visited the 150 TPD municipal solid waste to compressed bio gas (CBG) plant being set up by BPCL near the Brahmapuram waste dumping yard of the Kochi Corporation and reviewed its progress, it said.



RRBs Get Five More Years to Amortize Additional Pension Liabilities :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced that regional rural banks (RRBs) will have five more years to amortize the higher cost resulting from the pension revision, beginning with the current fiscal year (FY25). The

additional time was given due to the difficulty stated in absorbing the higher liability in a single year. RRBs were previously able to amortize their liability under the Employee Pension Scheme 2018 over five years, beginning with the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019. RRBs are now required to implement the pension scheme with effect from November 1, 1993.



RBI Revises Priority Sector Lending (PSL) Norms Effective April 1, 2025 :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued new Priority Sector Lending (PSL) criteria, which will take effect on April 1, 2025. These modifications are intended to increase loan flow to critical economic segments such as housing, renewable energy, and education. Banks will now have a stronger incentive to lend in previously underserved areas. To protect small borrowers, the RBI prohibits banks from collecting loan-related or ad hoc service fees for PSL loans up to ₹50,000. Overall, the new norms aim to bridge the credit gap and ensure that banking benefits reach more people on the ground.

9: International



Russian and U.S. Diplomats to Hold Key Talks in Turkey

Diplomatic representatives from Russia and the United States are set to meet in Turkey to discuss critical issues affecting their embassies in Moscow and Washington. The meeting is being viewed as a significant step toward reducing tensions between the two global powers, which have been strained due to geopolitical conflicts and economic sanctions. Key topics on the agenda include easing visa restrictions for diplomats, ensuring security for embassy staff, and reopening certain diplomatic channels that were suspended in recent years. Experts believe that while the meeting may not lead to immediate breakthroughs, it could lay the groundwork for future negotiations on broader issues, including arms control and economic cooperation.



Indian Rupee Falls Against the U.S. Dollar, Crosses 87 Mark :-

The Indian rupee weakened significantly against the U.S. dollar, breaching the 87 mark amid rising global economic uncertainties. The depreciation is primarily attributed to a strengthening dollar, capital outflows from emerging markets, and concerns over India's trade deficit. Analysts predict that if the rupee continues to weaken, it could lead to higher import costs, impacting industries dependent on foreign raw materials. The Reserve Bank of India is closely monitoring the situation and may intervene in the foreign exchange market if volatility persists. Meanwhile, exporters see a silver lining in the depreciation, as a weaker rupee makes Indian goods more competitive in global markets.

**India–EU Aim to Conclude Free Trade Pact This Year :-**

In high-level bilateral discussions, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen have jointly committed to pushing for the finalization of a comprehensive free trade agreement between India and the European Union within this year. The pact, which has been in negotiation since 2021 after an eight-year stalemate, is expected to cover a wide array of sectors including semiconductors, clean energy, pharmaceuticals, batteries, and defense equipment. Both sides have emphasized the strategic importance of deepening economic and technological ties to boost bilateral trade and investment, and to counterbalance global supply chain disruptions. The agreement, if successfully concluded, will not only reinforce India's status as a major global trading partner but also contribute significantly to economic growth on both sides.

**India extends USD 1 million grant for food fortification Laos :-**

The Indian government has allocated around USD 1 million to the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) through the India-UN

Development Partnership Fund. The award will help fund a critical study called 'Strengthening Large-scale Food Fortification: The Case for Investing in Rice Fortification.' The effort aims to promote food fortification in Lao PDR, with a special emphasis on rice, to fight vitamin deficiencies. The project will enhance long-term nutrition-specific strategies, bolster food systems, and improve the nutritional diversity of the country's food supply.

**Yamandu Orsi Sworn in as Uruguay's President :-**

Yamandu Orsi was sworn in as Uruguay's president for a five-year tenure. Orsi, a member of the left-wing Broad Front coalition, took the pledge of office in parliament a little more than three months after overcoming his center-right competitor Alvaro Delgado in a close election. Orsi, born in June 1967, formerly worked as a school history teacher and became involved in local politics. Later, he became mayor of Canelones, Uruguay's second-most populous department. Orsi has promised to strike a different balance between social welfare and economic growth by ushering in what he described as a "modern left" agenda.

**U.S. President Donald Trump halts all U.S. military aid to Ukraine :-**

Following his fight with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, US President Donald Trump suspended all

military aid to Ukraine. This decision involves after Mr. Trump reversed U.S. policy on Ukraine and Russia after taking office in January, adopting a more conciliatory stance toward Moscow — and following an explosive confrontation with Mr. Zelenskyy at the White House in which Trump chastised him for being insufficiently grateful for Washington's support in the war with Russia. Mr. Zelenskyy's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment outside office hours.



Mark Carney Appointed as Canada's New Liberal Party Leader and Prime Minister :-

Mark Carney was named the new leader of Canada's Liberal Party and the country's next prime minister, succeeding Justin Trudeau despite growing public dissatisfaction. The former central banker is going to head the party in the upcoming general election and oversee Ottawa's response to challenges from US President Donald Trump. Carney easily won the Liberal Party leadership race, receiving 85.9 percent of the votes polled. With a career spanning top roles at the Bank of Canada and the Bank of England, Carney earned a reputation for steady leadership during financial crises.



India Becomes the Top Source of FDI into Dubai :-

According to a research, India's foreign direct investment (FDI) in Dubai increased fivefold from \$589 million in

2023 to \$3.018 billion in 2024, making it the top investor in Dubai. India, the United States, France, and the United Kingdom were the leading source countries for FDI into the emirate. According to the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism's Dubai FDI Monitor, India was the top source country for total estimated FDI capital into Dubai, accounting for 21.5%, followed by the United States (13.7%), France (11%), the United Kingdom (10%), and Switzerland (6.9%).



Foreign Minister Advocates for Reformed Global Governance Structures :-

Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar has called for reforms in global governance institutions, such as the United Nations Security Council, to better reflect contemporary geopolitical realities. He emphasized the need for a multipolar world order that accommodates the interests of emerging economies and addresses inherent biases in the existing system. Jaishankar also highlighted India's pragmatic foreign policy approach, maintaining strategic relationships with various global powers while advocating for a more equitable international framework.



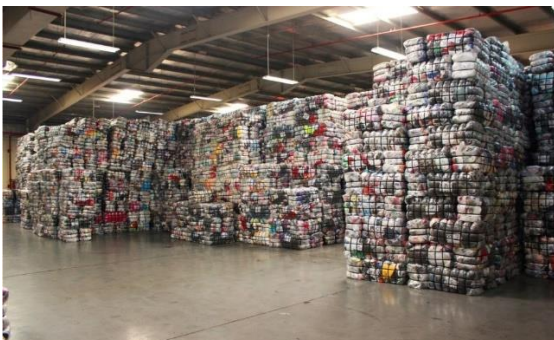
India and New Zealand Resume FTA Discussions After a Decade, Says PM Modi :-

India and New Zealand have decided to commence in-depth negotiations for a mutually advantageous Free Trade Agreement (FTA), Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated on Monday after discussions with New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon. The FTA discussions had been stalled since 2015 due to unresolved issues in key sectors such as dairy and agriculture. Both leaders emphasised the need for a balanced agreement that would boost bilateral trade and investment. They also discussed strengthening economic ties in areas such as technology, renewable energy, and education to foster long-term collaboration between the two nations.



Social Media Platforms Face Heavy Fines Under UK's New Online Safety Laws :-

The Online Safety Act requires social media services to protect users from hazardous content, including as terrorism-related material and child sexual abuse. If these platforms fail to implement strong safety procedures in the UK, they risk facing significant penalties. The prohibited content includes fraud, terrorism, child exploitation, suicide promotion, extreme pornography, and illegal drug transactions. All websites and apps under the Online Safety Act—spanning over 100,000 platforms like Facebook, Google, X (Twitter), Reddit, and OnlyFans—must prevent access to such harmful content or remove it swiftly when detected.



USTR Urged to Act on Restrictions Affecting Secondhand Clothing Exports :-

The Secondary Materials and Recycled Textiles Association (SMART) has requested the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to take action against prohibitions put on the export of secondhand apparel from the United States. In its statement to the USTR, SMART underlined the growing number of nations applying limitations or outright bans on these important exports. According to SMART, this trend is detrimental to both the United States' textile recycling industry and global access to affordable clothing. Representing businesses engaged in textile collection, reuse, and recycling, the association advocates for secondhand clothing exports as a crucial part of the circular economy.



Kirsty Coventry Becomes First Female and African President of the International Olympic Committee :-

At the General Assembly of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Kirsty Coventry was elected president, making athletic history. She will lead the IOC for the first time as woman and first person from Africa. With 49 of the 97 votes that could be cast, Coventry triumphed after only the first round of voting. Sebastian Coe, the head of World Athletics, received eight votes, while Juan Antonio Samaranch Junior received twenty-eight. Coventry will also be the youngest president since Pierre de Coubertin, the founding father of the modern Olympic Games.



First-Ever Export of Anthurium Flowers from Mizoram to Singapore :-

Anthurium flowers from Mizoram were sent for the first time to Singapore, boosting India's floriculture potential for export, specifically from the northeastern area. The first shipment of Anthurium flowers from Aizawl, Mizoram, to Singapore was flagged off on February 26, 2025, according to the Commerce Ministry. The consignment, comprising 1,024 Anthurium cut flowers (weighing 70 kg) packed in 50 corrugated boxes, was exported by IVC Agrovet Pvt. Ltd. from Aizawl, Mizoram, to Singapore via Kolkata.



India Imposes Anti-Dumping Duty on Five Chinese Products :-

India has levied anti-dumping duties on five Chinese commodities, including vacuum flasks and aluminum foil, this month to defend domestic players from low-cost imports from China. These charges were levied because these products - Soft Ferrite Cores, a particular thickness of vacuum insulated flask, aluminum foil, Trichloro Isocyanuric Acid, and Poly Vinyl Chloride Paste Resin - were exported to India from China at below-market costs. These duties are imposed after recommendations for the same were made by the Commerce Ministry's investigation arm, the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR).



Indonesia to Join BRICS New Development Bank :-

Indonesia has declared its decision to join the New Development Bank (NDB), an international financial institution founded by the BRICS states. President Prabowo Subianto made the announcement at a meeting with NDB President and former Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff. Indonesia's decision to join the NDB accords with its goal of boosting economic growth and expanding financial relations with global partners. President Prabowo emphasized that joining NDB will provide Indonesia with access to funding for infrastructure development, renewable energy projects, and technological advancements.



Thai PM Declares Emergency After Myanmar Earthquake :-

A severe 7.7 earthquake struck central Myanmar, near the country's second city of Mandalay, causing vibrations to shake buildings as far as Bangkok, Thailand. The epicenter was in the adjacent Sagaing region, which has been devastated by the civil war, with the junta, pro-military militia, and rebel factions contending for control and all maintaining checkpoints, making movement by road or river exceedingly difficult. Thai authorities have declared a state of emergency in Bangkok, Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra said on 28 March after the city was hit by a major earthquake centred in Myanmar.

10: Miscellaneous



Rare Rusty-Spotted Cat Spotted in West Bengal for the First Time :-

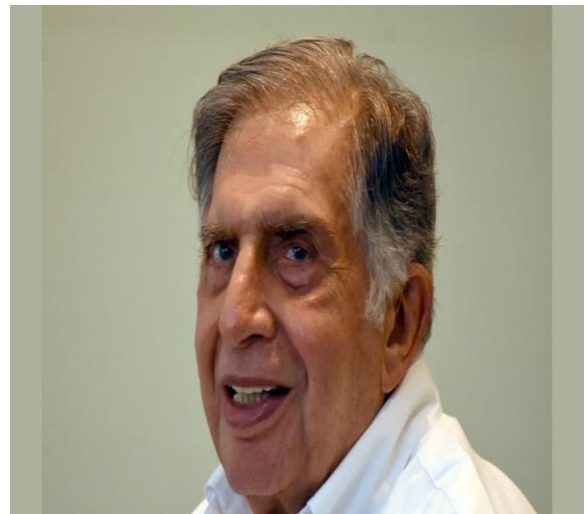
In a significant discovery for wildlife conservation, the rusty-spotted cat, one of the world's smallest and rarest wild cats, has been spotted in the forests of Purulia district, West Bengal. Weighing less than 1.5 kg and known for its elusive nature, this feline species is categorized as Near Threatened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Conservationists have expressed excitement over this sighting, emphasizing the need for increased protection of the species and its habitat. The discovery highlights the rich biodiversity of India and reinforces the importance of wildlife conservation initiatives aimed at preserving endangered species in their natural habitats.



10,000 FPOs Launched to Empower Small Farmers

In a significant boost for India's agriculture sector, the government has successfully established 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) to strengthen the

economic position of small and marginal farmers. This ambitious initiative, launched several years ago and now reaching a major milestone, is designed to enhance collective bargaining power, improve market access, and facilitate better access to formal credit. With nearly 30 lakh farmers now part of the FPO network and a substantial 40% of the membership comprising women, the initiative aims to foster inclusive rural development. Financial measures under the scheme include equity grants, credit guarantee cover, and seed money to support operational costs. The FPOs are also integrating with digital platforms like the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), which will further widen their reach and help them capture better prices for their produce.



Assam Names Electronics City After Ratan Tata :-

The entire area covered by the Assam Semiconductor & Electronics Logistics Park (ASELP), Jagiroad Tata OSAT Center, and the proposed township with social infrastructure has been approved by the Assam Cabinet meeting to be named Ratan Tata Electronics City (RTEC), Jagiroad, in honor of the contributions made by the Tata Group and its Chairman Emeritus, Late Ratan Naval Tata. The Cabinet has passed a resolution expressing gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his guidance and support to Assam in successfully organizing the Advantage Assam 2.0 Summit.

**LIC ranked world's third strongest insurance brand :-**

The Brand Finance Insurance 100 (2025) report ranks Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) as the world's third strongest insurance brand, with a Brand Strength Index (BSI) score of 88 out of 100. PZU, situated in Poland, topped the standings with a BSI score of 94.4, while China Life Insurance came in second with 93.5. LIC also ranks 12th in brand value among worldwide insurers, with SBI Life ranking 76th, making them the only two Indian insurers in the top 100. The top 100 insurance brands grew by 9% in brand value in 2025.

**Saina Nehwal Joins Naarica as Strategic Investor & Brand Ambassador :-**

Saina Nehwal, a badminton superstar and former World No.1, has entered the business world as a strategic investor and brand ambassador for Naarica, a groundbreaking menstrual hygiene brand. This collaboration aims to reinvent period care in India by making sustainable and high-quality products available to women throughout the country. With nearly 50% of menstruating women in India still lacking access to proper sanitary products, Naarica is on a mission to bridge the gap with innovative, eco-friendly solutions.

**Salman Khan Teams with GRM for Wheat Flour Campaign :-**

GRM Overseas Limited recently revealed the launch of a fresh advertising initiative for its 10X Classic Chakki Fresh Atta, which features Bollywood actor Salman Khan as the brand ambassador. The campaign, dubbed "Better Half Ki Better Choice," tries to market the product as the preferable alternative for families under the tagline "10 Ka Dum." GRM stated the campaign will begin airing on leading Hindi news channels and will be supported through print media, digital platforms, outdoor advertising, and cinema promotions across India.

**Axar Patel Appointed as Delhi Capitals Captain for IPL 2025 :-**

Axar Patel has been named the captain of the Delhi Capitals. With this, all ten leaders have been announced for the upcoming IPL 2025 season. This season, Pat Cummins is the sole overseas captain, with the remaining nine leaders all being Indians. Rajat Patidar will head RCB after being elected captain of the Bengaluru franchise in February 2025. Ajinkya Rahane will manage the defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), with

Venkatesh Iyer serving as his deputy. Wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant will captain Lucknow Super Giants.



Severe Heatwaves Hit Multiple States Ahead of Schedule :-

Several Indian states, including Odisha, Vidarbha, Madhya Maharashtra, Saurashtra, Kutch, and Telangana, are experiencing severe heatwave conditions weeks earlier than usual. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued warnings, predicting that these extreme temperatures will persist in Odisha until March 18 and in Saurashtra and Kutch until March 17. This unprecedented early onset of heatwaves raises concerns about public health, water scarcity, and agricultural impacts, prompting authorities to advise residents to take necessary precautions against heat-related illnesses.



India Projects Record Wheat Production Amid Climate Concerns :-

The Indian Ministry of Agriculture forecasts a record wheat production of 115.4 million metric tons for 2025, surpassing the previous year's 113.3 million tons. This increase is attributed to higher state-set guaranteed prices and the adoption of high-yielding seed varieties by farmers. However, the weather office has predicted above-average temperatures for March, which could adversely affect the wheat yield. This projection

underscores the delicate balance between agricultural advancements and climatic challenges, emphasizing the need for adaptive farming practices to ensure food security.



Parliamentary Committee Proposes Reforms for Farm Workers' Welfare :-

The Standing Committee of Parliament on Agriculture, led by Charanjit Singh Channi, has recommended reforms aimed at enhancing the welfare of farm workers in India. The proposals seek to better integrate the contributions of agricultural laborers into national agricultural policies, ensuring fair treatment and improved working conditions. These recommendations reflect a commitment to addressing longstanding issues faced by farm workers and promoting equitable growth in the agricultural sector.



India Launches First Auction of Exploration Licences :-

The Ministry of Mines has initiated India's first auction of Exploration Licences (ELs) in Goa, marking a significant step toward unlocking critical mineral resources. The auction includes a roadshow and an AI Hackathon, aiming to attract investment and innovation in the mining sector. This initiative is expected to boost domestic mineral exploration and reduce dependency on

imports, aligning with the country's strategic resource development goals.



Studies Reveal Cancer Risk Linked to Heavy Metal Pollution in Punjab :-

Recent research conducted by Punjabi University and Thapar University has uncovered alarming health risks associated with heavy metal pollution in Punjab. The studies indicate a correlation between residing near polluted river drains and increased cancer rates among local populations. These findings highlight the urgent need for environmental remediation and stricter pollution control measures to protect public health in affected regions.



India Faces Growing Water Contamination Crisis :-

A recent parliamentary committee has raised concerns over widespread water contamination across India. The Standing Committee on Water Resources revealed that more than 11,000 habitations in various states lack proper measures to tackle pollutants such as iron, nitrate, and heavy metals. This crisis poses serious health hazards to affected communities. The report urges both immediate interventions and long-term strategies to ensure access to safe drinking water.



Lachit Barphukan Police Academy Inaugurated in Assam by Amit Shah :-

Union Home Minister Amit Shah praised Assam's quick development, noting the newly established Lachit Barphukan Police Academy in Golghat district's Dergaon as a significant milestone. He stated that the state, which was previously relied on other regions for police training, now has an academy that is on track to become the best in the country within five years. Later, in Aizawl, Shah oversaw the historic relocation of the Assam Rifles battalion headquarters from the center of Mizoram's capital city to Zokhawsang, roughly 15 kilometers east. The paramilitary force had occupied land in Aizawl since 1890.



Skechers appoints Jasprit Bumrah as Brand Ambassador

One of the most renowned cricket players and a highly regarded pace powerhouse in the world, Jasprit Bumrah, has joined Skechers, the Comfort Technology Company, as an elite cricket athlete. The bowler for the Mumbai Indians and India National Team now wears Skechers Cricket footwear and will be featured in Skechers marketing campaigns, which will support the brand's performance and lifestyle collections. Bumrah joins a

Skechers roster that already includes cricket stars Ishan Kishan and Yastika Bhatia, who have been competing in the brand's innovative footwear for the past year.



Delhi Minister Launches Mobile Dental Clinics for Free Check-ups :-

Delhi Health Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh launched six mobile dental clinics to provide free care to the city's population. The clinics, which are jointly administered by the Delhi government and the Maulana Azad Institute of Dental Sciences, are outfitted with contemporary dental chairs, portable X-ray machines, ultrasonic scalers, and sterilization units. "Patients will receive free fluoride treatments, sealants, and simple restorative procedures. We are ensuring that these clinics reach every part of the city, including slums," said the dentist-turned-politician.



Goibibo Appoints Rishabh Pant as Brand Ambassador :-

Goibibo, a travel brand, has released its latest campaign, which features Rishabh Pant as the new brand ambassador. Goibibo, true to its legacy of delivering youth-centric advertisements that resonate across generations, has unveiled its latest campaign featuring Indian cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar and Rishabh Pant. Raj Rishi Singh, Chief Marketing Officer at Goibibo, said,

"Renowned for his spontaneous style of play, playful attitude, and vibrant personality, Rishabh Pant is the ideal choice to represent Goibibo—bringing the same energy and enthusiasm to travel that he does to cricket."



Tata Motors announces Vicky Kaushal as Brand Ambassador :-

Tata Motors has teamed up with Bollywood star Vicky Kaushal for advertising its Passenger and Electric Vehicle lineup. The collaboration will begin with a commercial for the new Tata Curvv during the IPL season. While Kaushal will play an important role in several brand activities, this relationship will begin with a campaign for the all-new Tata Curvv during the IPL season. Titled 'Take the Curvv', the campaign showcases how the Curvv is more than just a car—it's a statement of boldness, self-belief, and following your heart, the company added in media statement.



Equitas Small Finance Bank Strengthens Ties with Chennai Super Kings & Gujarat Titans :-

Equitas Small Finance Bank has renewed its collaboration with the Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Gujarat Titans (GT) as the Official Banking Partner for the forthcoming Indian Premier League (IPL 2025). This is a six-year and

three-year cooperation with CSK and GT, respectively. As part of the relationship, the Equitas emblem will appear prominently on CSK's lead helmet and the back of GT's helmet in IPL 2025. This partnership focuses on connecting the bank's offerings with the excitement of cricket to create an engaging experience for fans and customers.



Delhi Budget 2025-26: CM Rekha Gupta unveils Rs 1 lakh crore plan :-

The Rekha Gupta-led BJP government in Delhi presented its first budget in the Assembly, announcing a number of projects such as CM Shri schools, language laboratories, contemporary computer labs, and startup assistance centers. The budget 2025-26 allocated ₹one lakh crore, a 31.5 percent increase from the previous year. This is the BJP government's first budget in Delhi in over 26 years. The government has allocated ₹100 crore to set up new CM Shri schools and ₹500 crore for an education hub in Narela.



B Sumeeth Reddy Announces Retirement from Badminton :-

B Sumeeth Reddy, India's doubles specialist and a member of the mixed team that won the silver medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, has announced his

retirement from competitive badminton to focus solely on coaching. The 33-year-old from Hyderabad, who formed the men's doubles pair with Manu Attri and also played mixed doubles with many shuttlers, including his wife N. Sikki Reddy, made the announcement via social media. He represented India at the 2014 and 2018 Asian Games and won the 2015 Mexico City Grand Prix and 2016 Canada Open, along with finishing as runner-up at the US Open and Dutch Open in 2015.



India's First Nano Electronics Roadshow Inaugurated by MeitY Secretary at IISc Bengaluru :-

The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY), in partnership with IISc Bengaluru and major IITs, launched India's first Nano Electronics Roadshow at IISc Bengaluru. S. Krishnan, Secretary of MeitY, emphasized India's strong progress in semiconductor innovation, citing a potential \$100 billion market and 85,000 trained workers by 2030. 100+ Intellectual Properties (IPs) & 50+ Tech Innovations from premier institutions showcased. 35+ Deep-Tech Startups presented cutting-edge semiconductor solutions. 4 MoUs signed to strengthen industry-academia collaboration.



L&T Finance Ltd. Names Jasprit Bumrah as Brand Ambassador :-

L&T Finance Ltd. (LTF), a premier non-banking financial company (NBFC), has appointed renowned Indian cricketer Jasprit Bumrah as its brand ambassador. This agreement is an exciting step forward for LTF in its continued efforts to extend and strengthen its brand visibility, as well as engage its varied customer base across the country. Jasprit Bumrah will feature prominently in LTF's comprehensive Above The Line (ATL) and Below The Line (BTL) marketing campaigns, spanning a variety of channels.

CDS Gen Anil Chauhan Inaugurates Techkriti 2025 at IIT Kanpur :-

General Anil Chauhan, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), has launched Techkriti 2025, Asia's largest intercollegiate technical and entrepreneurship festival, at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur. The event featured

an entertaining Fireside Chat in which the CDS presented his vision for the modernisation of the Indian Armed Forces and the necessity to prepare for the changing challenges of future warfare. Addressing scholars, students, and NCC cadets, Gen Chauhan underlined the critical importance of emerging technologies — including Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence, Quantum Computing, and Cognitive Warfare — in shaping the battlefield of tomorrow.



11: National

**India's Gold Imports Hit 20-Year Low in February 2025 :-**

India's gold imports have plummeted to a two-decade low in February 2025 due to record-high prices in the global market. Traditionally, India is one of the world's largest consumers of gold, with demand surging during wedding seasons and festivals. However, recent price hikes have deterred consumers, leading to a drastic drop in imports. The slowdown in gold imports is expected to impact the domestic jewelry industry, with traders voicing concerns about declining sales. Analysts suggest

that high inflation and currency fluctuations are playing a key role in this trend. The government is monitoring the situation closely to ensure that it does not negatively impact employment in the gold and jewelry sectors.

**Passport Rules Amended for Streamlined Verification :-**

In a bid to simplify and standardize the passport application process, the Centre has amended the Passport Rules of 1980. Under the new guidelines, individuals born on or after 1 October 2023 must submit a birth certificate issued by the appropriate local authority as the sole proof of their date of birth. For

applicants born before this cutoff, alternate documents such as driving licenses, PAN cards, or school certificates may still be used. This move aims to curb fraudulent claims and ensure the authenticity of personal records, thereby enhancing the overall efficiency of the passport issuance process. The policy change reflects the government's ongoing efforts to modernize administrative procedures and improve service delivery in a rapidly digitizing world.



Centre grants 'Navratna' status to IRCTC, IRFC :-

In a historic decision, the Government of India has promoted the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) and Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) to the prestigious Navratna category among Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs). This elevation gives IRCTC and IRFC the 25th and 26th firms to earn Navratna accreditation, a significant milestone for Indian Railways. The Navratna status provides these enterprises with enhanced financial autonomy, enabling them to invest up to Rs 1,000 crore without requiring prior government approval.



PM Modi inaugurates Anant Ambani's Vantara :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi opened the Vantara Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre in Jamnagar. The prime minister was on a three-day visit to Gujarat.

Vantara is home to approximately 2,000 types of animals, including 1.5 lakh rescued, endangered, and threatened. The Prime Minister also paid a visit to Vantara's wildlife hospital, which offers MRI, CT scans, and ICUs, among other services. The hospital houses multiple departments including Wildlife Anesthesia, Cardiology, Nephrology, Endoscopy, Dentistry, Internal Medicine etc.



Cabinet approves Kedarnath ropeway project :-

The Union Cabinet authorized the Kedarnath ropeway project, which will cost Rs 4,081 crore to build, in order to improve regional accessibility and tourism. "The Cabinet has approved development of 12.9 km long ropeway project from Sonprayag to Kedarnath in Uttarakhand under National Ropeways Development Programme – Parvatmala Pariyojana. The total cost of the project will be Rs 4,081.28 crore," Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw stated this during the Cabinet briefing. Parvatmala Pariyojana is a government program designed to encourage tourism in remote highland locations.



Rajnath Singh Becomes First Defence Minister to Visit IAF's Institute of Aerospace Medicine in Bengaluru :-

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh paid a visit to the Indian Air Force's Institute of Aerospace Medicine (IAM) in

Bengaluru, where he greeted IAF officers. He emphasized the growing need for knowledge in aerospace medicine in view of the ongoing expansion in air and space travel. The Defence Minister emphasized the importance of aerospace medicine, describing it as important for coping with obstacles such as microgravity, radiation, and isolation encountered by humans in space, as well as addressing physical and mental changes. Singh is the first Defence Minister to visit IAM in Bengaluru.



Madhav National Park Declared as India's 58th Tiger Reserve :-

Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said that Madhav National Park in Madhya Pradesh would be the country's 58th tiger reserve. The newly established national park was also the eighth in the state to receive status. The reserve, located in the Shivpuri area of the Chambal region, currently houses five tigers, including two cubs born recently. Three tigers, including two females, were introduced to the Madhav National Park in 2023 as part of the tiger reintroduction project in the State.



Over 50% women among 30.68 crore workers registered on e-Shram portal :-

As of March 3, more than 30.68 crore unorganised workers had registered for social welfare benefits through the government's e-Shram platform, with

women accounting for 53.68% of the total registrants. Shobha Karandlaje, Minister of State for Labour and Employment, presented this information with the Lok Sabha in a written reply. The government launched the e-Shram portal on August 26, 2021, with the goal of developing a comprehensive National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW) seeded with Aadhaar. The e-Shram–One-Stop-Solution integrates 13 central government schemes.



Finance Ministry Notifies Zero Coupon Bond (ZCB) for Power Finance Corporation :-

The Finance Ministry has announced a Zero Coupon Bond (ZCB) for Power Finance Corporation. The company can raise up to ₹10,000 crore. ZCB is an instrument that does not pay interest during its term and is sold at a discount to its face value. When the bond matures, the investor receives its full face value. There will be no recurrent interest payments. The bond, with a face value of ₹1 lakh, would be issued with a discount of ₹49,546 (per notification). In other words, the investor will pay ₹50,454 at the time of issuance, while get ₹1 lakh at maturity.



RBI and NCFE Launch Nationwide Campaigns to Boost Financial Literacy :-

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the National Centre for Financial Education (NCFE) have launched national financial literacy initiatives to increase financial awareness and inclusion. These projects, which are being carried out as part of the National Strategy for Financial Education (NSFE), seek to provide vital financial knowledge and skills to people from all walks of life. Special programs are being conducted across different age groups, particularly targeting youth (below 18 years) and senior citizens (above 60 years).



Lok Sabha Passes Oilfield (Regulatory and Development) Amendment Bill, 2024 :-

The Lok Sabha enacted the Oilfields (Regulation and Development) Amendment Bill, 2024, with the goal of increasing investment in Indian oil and gas exploration. Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, stated that the revisions to current legislation would strengthen and propel the energy sector while also ensuring policy stability, international arbitration, and prolonged leases, among other benefits. The bill proposes to introduce 'petroleum lease' to separate oil and gas exploration projects from mining, in an effort to resolve complexities around land and environmental clearances, which has often resulted in project delays.



Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya Launches Fit India Carnival in New Delhi :-

Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya launched the Fit India Carnival in the national capital, highlighting the significance of sports in shaping culture and lifestyle for a developing India. The three-day event includes multiple fitness activities such as rope skipping, stationary cycling, arm wrestling, cricket bowling, and squat and push-up challenges, promoting a healthier way of life. The initiative aims to encourage people of all age groups to adopt a more active routine and raise awareness about physical fitness. Experts and trainers will also conduct interactive sessions, providing guidance on nutrition, exercise, and overall well-being.



Supreme Court Addresses Plea in High-Profile Rape-Murder Case :-

The Supreme Court has denied a petition by the parents of a victim in the RG Kar rape-murder case, letting them to continue their case in the High Court. This case, involving the violent murder of a trainee doctor, sparked nationwide protests and calls for justice, emphasizing recurring concerns about women's safety and the court system's ability to confront such crimes. In a fresh development in the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital rape-murder case, the Supreme Court disposed of the petition filed by the victim's parents seeking a fresh investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).



EC to Discuss Voter ID-Aadhaar Linkage; SC to Review Plea on Barring Candidates with Criminal Charges :-

In response to concerns made by the Opposition about anomalies in voting registers, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar has set a meeting with the Union Home Secretary and the Legislative Secretary to discuss integrating voter ID cards with Aadhaar. According to officials, this conference is part of the Election Commission's "proactive approach" to resolving "long-standing issues" that have gone unaddressed for 25 years. Opposition party Trinamool Congress has accused the poll body of assigning duplicate voter card numbers to electors in different states, claiming it was "manipulating voter lists to benefit the BJP."



Samarthya: National Competition on Corporate Rescue Strategies 2025 :-

Samarthya: National Competition on Corporate Rescue Strategies 2025 was held at the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) campus in Manesar, Haryana, according to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. The program provides a dynamic environment for students to develop new turnaround methods for businesses in financial crisis. The event emphasises practical learning

and strategic thinking in corporate rescue, providing participants with hands-on experience in navigating real-world financial distress scenarios.



Government Notifies Revisions to MSME Investment and Turnover Criteria: Effective April 1, 2025 :-

The government has notified major adjustments to the turnover and investment criteria for classifying MSMEs, which will take effect on April 1. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) with investments up to ₹2.5 crore would now be considered micro-enterprises, up from the previous ₹1 crore barrier. The turnover limit has been increased from ₹5 crore to ₹10 crore. Units with investments up to ₹25 crore will be classified as small enterprises, from the earlier ₹10 crore. The turnover limit for such enterprises has been doubled from ₹50 crore to ₹100 crore.



Government Launches BAANKNET and e-BKray to Enhance PSU Bank E-Auctions for Asset Sales :-

The Finance Ministry has launched a redesigned e-auction system called 'BAANKNET' to improve the listing and auctioning of bank assets, Parliament was informed. In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary stated that the revised e-auction system was implemented on January 3, 2025. He stated that the platform 'e-BKray' was introduced in

February 2019. The BAANKNET portal is specifically designed to enhance transparency and speed up the process of disposing of non-performing asset (NPA) cases, he added.



Bharati Airtel's Gopal Vittal Elected as GSMA Chairman
Global Communications Sector Organization The GSMA board of directors has elected Gopal Vittal, Bharti Airtel's vice chairman and managing director, as its next chairman until the end of 2026. Vittal is now acting chair of the GSMA board. He will be in charge of the strategic direction of the London-based industry association, which represents 1,000 telecom firms, mobile and device manufacturers, software companies, equipment suppliers, internet companies, and organizations in related industries. Vittal is the second Indian after Bharti Enterprises chairman Sunil Mittal to be elected chairman of the GSMA board.



Centre Notifies 24% Hike in Salaries and Pensions for MPs :-

The government has announced a 24% increase in salary for members of Parliament (MPs) beginning April 1, 2023, based on the cost inflation index, raising their monthly remuneration to Rs 1.24 lakh from Rs 1 lakh previously. According to a notification issued by the parliamentary affairs ministry, the daily allowance for

sitting members, as well as the pension and supplemental pension for each year of service exceeding five years for former members, have been enhanced. While the daily allowance has been increased from Rs 2,000 to Rs 2,500, pension for former MPs has been increased from Rs 25,000 per month to Rs 31,000 per month, it said.



Supreme Court Establishes National Task Force for Student Mental Health Concerns :-

The Supreme Court has established a national task force led by its former judge Justice S Ravindra Bhat to address students' mental health concerns and avoid suicides in educational institutions, noting that student suicides have outnumbered farmer suicides due to agrarian distress. A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan discussed numerous cases of suicide in higher education institutions across the country. The 10-member task force includes representatives from diverse fields to ensure an interdisciplinary approach to tackling the issue of suicides in higher educational institutions.



Commemorative Postage Stamp Issued in Honor of Mata Karma :-

To commemorate the 1009th anniversary of Mata Karma's birth, the Department of Posts, Government of India, presented a commemorative postage stamp.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, Union Minister of State for Housing & Urban Affairs Tokhan Sahu, and a number of Legislative Assembly members graced the release event, which took place in Raipur. Mata Karma is celebrated for her unwavering devotion to Lord Krishna and her lifelong commitment to social reform.



New Pamban Rail Bridge Will Inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate the new Pamban rail bridge connecting Ramanathapuram with Rameswaram island on April 6 on the occasion of Ram Navami. After inspecting the Pamban rail bridge, constructed at a cost of ₹531 crore, Southern Railway General Manager R.N. Singh told reporters that the after inaugurating the new bridge, the Prime Minister would also address a public meeting in Rameswaram. Engineers of Rail Vikas Nigam Limited completed the bridge work to replace the century-old Pamban rail bridge by October last year. This included the construction of new vertical lift span of 72 metres, said to be first-of-its-kind in India.



Sourcex India 2025 Inaugurated At Yashobhoomi Centre

The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), with cooperation from the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, launched the third

edition of Sourcex India 2025 at the Yashobhoomi Convention Centre in New Delhi. Shri Santosh Kumar Sarangi, Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), Government of India, officially opened the event. In his keynote address, DGFT, Shri Sarangi underscored the importance of Sourcex India in fostering a robust ecosystem for promoting India's foreign trade, particularly exports.



Government Ends Gold Monetisation Scheme :-

Following sovereign gold bonds, the Centre has closed another gold-related plan, the Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS), despite a surge in gold prices. When announcing the discontinuation, the Ministry noted developing market conditions and the scheme's performance. However, short-term bank deposits, which are covered by the program, will be kept at the discretion of individual banks depending on their financial viability, according to the Ministry. The Gold Monetisation Scheme was launched in November 2015.



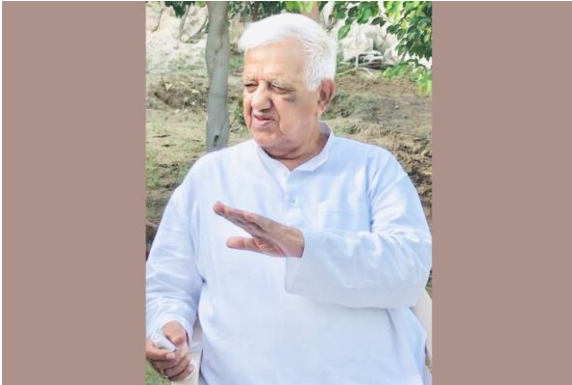
Cabinet Approves 2% Hike in DA for Government Employees :-

The Union Cabinet has approved an additional payment of Dearness Allowance (DA) for Central Government employees and Dearness Relief (DR) for pensioners, commencing January 1, 2025. The Centre said that 48.66 lakh Central Government employees and 66.55 lakh

pensioners will receive a 2% rise above the current rate of 53% of basic pay or pension. It will cost ₹ 6,614.04 crore per annum to the exchequer. Meanwhile, trade unions have condemned the decision to amend the

Central Civil Service (CCS-Pension) Rules using the route of Finance Bill and alleged that it was against the interest of pensioners and done without holding any discussion with the stakeholders.

12: Obituaries



Former Haryana minister and BJP leader Satpal Sangwan passes away at 77 :-

Satpal Sangwan, a former Haryana Cabinet minister and veteran politician, died after battling liver disease for several years. He was 77. Satpal Sangwan campaigned in six Haryana Assembly elections, winning twice from the Dadri constituency. He was elected MLA for the first time in 1996 as the Haryana Vikas Party's (HVP) candidate. He was elected MLA for the second time in 2009 as the Haryana Janhit Congress (HJC) party's nominee. Later, when the HJC merged with Bhupinder Singh Hooda-led Congress, Sangwan was inducted as a minister in the Cabinet.



Grammy-Nominated Singer Angie Stone Passes Away At 63 :-

Angie Stone, a Grammy-nominated R&B singer, died tragically in a car incident. She was 63. The singer, a pioneering member of the legendary hip-hop trio The Sequence, was returning to Atlanta from Montgomery, Alabama, after a performance when she was involved in an accident. Stone was a beloved member of the Hip-hop scene, and her group, The Sequence, held the distinction of being the first all-female group signed to Sugar Hills Records. The band released three albums in the span of six years, from 1979 to 1985, including hit tracks such as 'Funk You Up' and 'I Just Want You to Know.'



Renowned artist Himmat Shah dies of heart attack at 92

Himmat Shah (92), an acclaimed artist, died of a heart attack in Jaipur's Shalby Hospital. Shah's artistic journey spanned several decades and earned him significant recognition. He was a core member of the 'Group 1890', a short-lived but prominent group of male artists who were passionate about modernism. Throughout his career, Shah received multiple important awards for his contributions to the arts, including: Lalit Kala Akademi National Award (1956, 1962), Bombay Art Society Award (1962), Jammu and Kashmir University Gold Medal (1961), Sahitya Kala Parishad Award (1988) and Kalidas Samman by the Madhya Pradesh Government (2003).

**Mumbai spin great Padmakar Shivalkar dies aged 84 :-**

Padmakar Shivalkar, the champion left-arm spinner who is regarded as one of the greatest Indian cricketers who never played for India, died at the age of 84. Shivalkar played in ten of Bombay's successful Ranji Trophy campaigns from 1965-66 to 1976-77, winning the trophy in all but one of those seasons, and was a member of the squad that recaptured the title in 1980-81. Incredibly, he made a comeback seven years later at the age of 47 and played two matches during the 1987-88 season. In all, Shivalkar took 589 wickets in 124 first-class matches at an average of 19.69.

**PES University chancellor MR Doreswamy passes away**

Dr. Medarapatla Rama Doreswamy, an eminent educationist and chancellor of PES University, died. He was 88. As an academic and policymaker, he helped shape Karnataka's educational landscape. Dr. Doreswamy was born on November 7, 1937, in Narravuru village, Chittoor district, Andhra Pradesh. He comes from an agrarian family. Dr Doreswamy, who was also an MLC from 2005 to 2011, dedicated his career largely to academics. He served as principal of Dayananda Sagar Evening College and later as principal of PES College, Hanumanthanagar, Bengaluru.

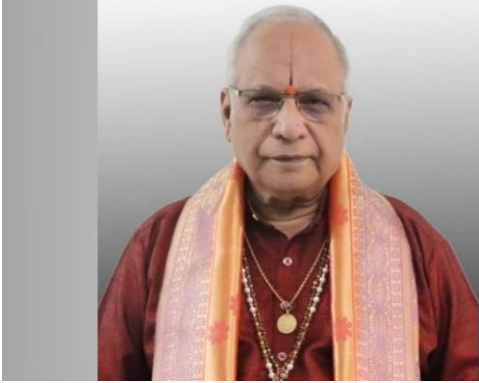
**Tennis Legend Fred Stolle Passes Away at 86 :-**

Tennis Australia announced the death of Fred Stolle, a two-time major winner and part of three Davis Cup-winning teams. He was 86. Stolle became world number one in 1966, defeating John Newcombe in the final of the US Championship, a year after overcoming Tony Roche at the French. He reached five further Grand Slam singles finals, twice in Australia and three times at Wimbledon, and helped Australia win three consecutive Davis Cups from 1964 to 1966. But his greatest successes came in doubles, winning 10 majors – four with Roy Emerson, four with Bob Hewitt and two with Ken Rosewall.

**Former Odisha minister Ananta Das passes away at 85**

Ananta Das, a former minister and senior BJD leader from Balasore district, died at his residence in Bhubaneswar. He was 85. Das was born on August 28, 1940, in Kuruthia village, Balim Panchayat, Bhogarai block. He was a postgraduate in Arts with a law degree and worked as an officer in the Odisha Administrative Service cadre. After leaving from the service, he founded the Bhogarai Vikas Parishad and dedicated himself to the region's development. The senior BJD leader represented Bhogarai constituency four times. He was

first elected to the legislative Assembly in 2004 on BJD ticket and continued to win consecutive elections in 2009, 2014 and 2019.



Legendary Classical Singer Garimella Balakrishna Prasad Passes Away at 76 :-

Garimella Balakrishna Prasad, a renowned classical vocalist and former Asthana Vidwan (court musician) of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), died of a heart attack at his residence in Tirupati. He was 76. Balakrishna Prasad, who worked for the TTD from 1978 to 2006, rose to prominence for composing the music for over 1,000 compositions by saint-poet Tallapaka Annamacharya. While the compositions were found and recovered in lyrical form, it was Balakrishna Prasad who brought them in musical form to the reach of music lovers.



Former India cricketer Syed Abid Ali passes away at 83

Syed Abid Ali, 83, a former Indian cricket all-rounder, died in Tracy, California. Abid Ali rose from the cricket grounds of Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, to become a significant figure in Indian cricket in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He was recognized for his lower-order batting and medium-pace bowling. Between December 1967 and December 1974, he played 29 Test matches. He

accumulated 1,018 runs at an average of 20.36 with six half-centuries and a highest score of 81. His bowling record includes 47 wickets at an average of 42.12, with best figures of 6/55.



Veteran BJP Leader and Ex-Union Minister Dr. Debendra Pradhan Passes Away at 84 :-

Senior BJP leader and former Union Minister Dr. Debendra Pradhan passed away on Monday in New Delhi after a short illness. He was 84 years old and is survived by his wife and two sons. Dr. Pradhan breathed his last at the official residence of his son, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. A respected figure in Indian politics, he played a significant role in various government initiatives during his tenure. His contributions to the nation, especially in the energy and education sectors, will be remembered for years to come. Leaders from across the political spectrum have expressed their condolences on his passing.



Actor-Comedian Bindu Ghosh passes away at 76 after prolonged illness:-

Bindu Ghosh, a veteran Tamil actor best known for her comedic roles, died at the age of 76 at a Chennai hospital. Bindu, born Vimala, made her debut as a child performer in the 1960 film Kalathur Kannamma, alongside six-year-old Kamal Haasan in his debut. Her

first adult acting credit was in the 1982 film Kozhi Koovuthu, directed by Gangai Amaran on his debut. Also known for her dancing, Bindu shared the screen alongside the likes of Kamal, Rajinikanth, Sivaji Ganesan, and Vijayakanth, and popular comedians like Manorama, Goundamani, and Senthil.



George Foreman, boxing champion and entrepreneur, dies aged 76 :-

George Foreman, the boxing heavyweight legend, died at the age of 76. In the ring, the American was known as Big George, and he fashioned one of the most spectacular and enduring careers in the sport, earning Olympic gold in 1968 and claiming the world heavyweight title twice, 21 years apart, the second making him the oldest champion in history at 45. He lost his first title to Muhammad Ali in their famous Rumble in the Jungle fight in 1974. But overall, he boasted an astonishing total

of 76 wins including 68 knockouts, almost double that of Ali.



Tamil Actor-Director Manoj Bharathiraja Passes Away :-

Actor Manoj Bharathiraja, the son of famous Tamil film director Bharathiraja, died after a heart arrest in Chennai. He was 48 years old. Manoj made his acting debut in his father's Tamil film Taj Mahal, followed by roles in Eera Nilam and Varushamellam Vasantham. He had recently taken on supporting roles in Tamil films. Manoj made his directorial debut in 2023 with the romance drama Margazhi Thingal, which starred his father, Bharathiraja. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin, music director Ilaiyaraaja, actor-politician Khushbu Sundar, and director Venkat Prabhu condoled Manoj's demise.

13: Ranks & Reports



State of States Report Launched at Anil Agarwal Dialogue :-

The State of States report, unveiled on 27 February 2025 during the high-profile Anil Agarwal Dialogue, provides a

comprehensive assessment of how India's states are progressing on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report reveals that while a few SDGs—such as Good Health and Well-being, Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy, and Decent Work and Economic Growth—have achieved moderate success, many states continue to lag behind on other targets. Key issues include inadequate data collection and the absence of critical indicators in several domains. The report calls on policymakers to address these gaps through targeted interventions, improved monitoring systems, and enhanced coordination between state and central governments, with the aim of

driving overall national progress toward sustainable development.



GST Collections Surge by 9.1% to Reach ₹1.84 Lakh Crore in February 2025 :-

In February 2025, Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections increased by 9.1% year on year to almost ₹1.84 lakh crore, according to official figures. This increase reflects the strength of domestic economic activity and increased compliance measures. The data shows a 10.2% growth in domestic revenues, totaling ₹1.42 lakh crore. The revenue from imports also saw a moderate growth of 5.4%, reaching ₹41,702 crore. These figures suggest a steady rise in consumption and a strengthening of tax compliance in the country.



Crisil Forecasts India's GDP Growth at 6.5% for FY26 :-

Crisil expects India's GDP growth to remain stable at 6.5 percent in fiscal 2026, with the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) cutting the repo rate by 50-75 basis points (bps). The rating agency predicted GDP growth of 6.5 percent this fiscal year, down from 9.2 percent the

previous year. Nevertheless, expansion remains close to the pre-pandemic decadal average of 6.6% between fiscal years 2011 and 2020, allowing India to maintain its status as the fastest growing big economy. Crisil's economic research team opined that easing monetary policy by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is expected to support discretionary consumption.



India has 6,327 river dolphins, finds first population survey :-

India's first riverine dolphin estimation research found 6,327 dolphins over 28 rivers in eight states. Uttar Pradesh had the largest total, followed by Bihar, West Bengal, and Assam. Prime Minister Narendra Modi published the report during a visit to Gujarat's Gir National Park, where he presided over the National Board for Wildlife's 7th meeting. The dolphin population survey, conducted under Project Dolphin, spanned 8,500 kilometers across the Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Indus river systems over two years.



Nearly a third of India will be obese by 2050: New Lancet study :-

The obesity epidemic has grown, with a recent Lancet study estimating that 21.8 crore men and 23.1 crore women in India will be classified as overweight or obese

by 2050, totaling up to 44.9 crore or nearly a third of the projected population. The study predicts that by 2050, more than half of all adults and one-third of children and adolescents would be overweight or obese. Among young men, the prevalence of overweight or obesity increased from 0.4 crore in 1990, to 1.68 crore in 2021, and is projected to increase to 2.27 crores by 2050.



PM Modi Announces the initiation of the Asiatic Lion Population Estimation :-

Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that the second round of Asiatic lion estimating would take place in May, along with a prey augmentation activity at the Barda Wildlife Sanctuary, which has become known as a new home for the big cats. The lion headcount will be the most intense this time due to a substantial increase in the lion population and its distribution throughout nine districts covering an area of 30,000 square kilometers. Considering that the Asiatic Lions made Barda Wildlife Sanctuary their home through natural dispersal, Modi said lion conservation in Barda would be supported through prey augmentation and other habitat improvement efforts.



India Ranks 4th in Global Wealth Rankings: Knight Frank's Wealth Report 2025 :-

According to the Knight Frank Wealth Report 2025, India placed fourth in global billionaire wealth, trailing only the United States, China, and Russia, with its billionaire population expanding by 12% between 2023 and 2024. The latest statistics compiled by the global property consultant underscores India's burgeoning wealth landscape, with the High Net Worth Individual (HNWI) population - people with assets worth more than \$10 million - reaching 85,698, according to the report. India currently boasts 191 billionaires, of which 26 were created within the past year – up from just 7 in 2019.



IndiGo Airlines world's second fastest-growing airline in seat capacity :-

With a 10.1% year-over-year rise in seat capacity to over 134.9 million seats in 2024, IndiGo Airlines has become the second fastest-growing airline in the world. According to the most recent data from the Official Airline Guide (OAG), India's biggest airline is now rated second only behind Qatar Airways, which had a 10.4% increase in seat capacity over the previous year. IndiGo has also been ranked as the fastest-growing airline in the world in terms of flight frequency growth at 9.7 per cent year-on-year in 2024. The airline recorded a flight frequency of 749,156 for the year, the figures show.



Amul Ranked as the 3rd Most Valued Brand in India :-

In the prestigious YouGov India Value Rankings 2025, Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (Amul) was named India's third most valuable brand. Amazon has the highest score (56.5), followed by Flipkart (53.0) and Amul (52.8). Amul is the leading brand in Tier 2 cities, while it remains in the top three in Tier 1 and Tier 3 cities. This honor is a tribute to Amul's cooperative business model, which guarantees reasonable prices for farmers and affordable prices for consumers, enabling every Indian home to have access to premium dairy products.

**Digital Payment Transactions Cross 18,000 Crore in FY 2024-25 :-**

According to the government, the number of digital payment transactions, including UPI, increased to over 18,120 crore in 2024-25 (until January this year), with a transaction value surpassing Rs 2,330 lakh crore. The total number of digital payment transactions increased from 8,839 crore in FY 2021-22 to 18,737 crore in FY 2023-24, with a CAGR of 46%. The Unified Payment Interface (UPI) was the main driver of this growth, rising at a CAGR of 69% from 4,597 crore in FY 2021-22 to 13,116 crore in FY 2023-24, the government said in a written response to a Rajya Sabha question.

**India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) Records 5.0% Growth in January 2025 :-**

India's industrial output, calculated by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), increased by 5.0 percent in January, up from 3.5 percent in December 2024, according to figures issued by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). The National Statistical Office (NSO) reported that the manufacturing sector's output increased by 5.5% in January, compared to 3.6% the previous year. Mining production grew just 4.4 per cent when compared to 6 per cent in January 2024 and power output increased only 2.4 per cent in the said month.

**India's GDP to Reach \$5.7 Trillion, Becoming Third Largest by 2028: Morgan Stanley :-**

Even as the global economy faces uncertainty, Morgan Stanley's latest analysis stated that India is on track to become the world's third-largest economy by 2028 as its share of global production climbs due to macroeconomic stability influencing policy and improved infrastructure. It will overtake Germany's GDP to become the third largest economy. The Indian economy is expected to grow to \$4.7 trillion by 2026, making it the fourth largest in the world behind the United States, China, and Germany. In 2028, India will overtake Germany as its economy will expand to \$5.7 trillion.



Finland Tops the World Happiness Rankings for the Eighth Consecutive Year :-

According to the World Happiness Report 2025, released by the Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford, Finland is the happiest country in the world for the eighth year in a row. Other Nordic countries, such as Denmark, Iceland, and Sweden, maintained their top rankings, showcasing their robust social support systems and excellent standard of living. The rankings are based on people's self-assessed life evaluations, compiled through surveys conducted by Gallup in partnership with the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network.



US Overtakes UAE as India's Largest Source of Remittances, Says RBI Survey :-

According to the Sixth Round of India's Remittances Survey 2023-24, the United States, United Kingdom, Singapore, Canada, and Australia combined accounted for more than half of all remittances to India. This demonstrates a progressive shift in the dominance of Indian remittances from Gulf Cooperation Council countries to advanced economies. The GCC countries, which include the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain, accounted for 38% of all remittances. The share of the US in India's total remittances remained the largest, rising to 27.7 per cent (23.4 per cent in 2021-22), followed by the UAE at 19.2 per cent (18 per cent) and the UK at 10.8 per cent (6.8 per cent).



Global funding for women-led startups drops in 2024 :-

Over 69,000 women-founded technology companies have raised a total of \$309 billion in funding worldwide. In 2024, women-led startups received only 11.7% of overall financing, owing to macroeconomic obstacles. According to a survey by startup research and analytics firm Tracxn, women-led tech companies globally secured \$29.6 billion in 2024, down 11% from \$33.1 billion in 2023 and 21% from \$37.5 billion in 2022. Many women-led tech startups reported big-ticket investments, with three companies reporting \$1 billion+ rounds in 2024, these include Open AI, Abound, and Wiz.



East Coast Railway Creates History, Becomes the First Railway Zone to Achieve 250 MT of Freight Loading in 2024-25 :-

East Coast Railway (ECoR) has achieved another historic milestone in freight loading by being India's first railway zone to reach 250 million tonnes (MT) of originating freight in fiscal year 2024-25. This was completed 11 days ahead of time and before the conclusion of the fiscal year. ECoR's freight loading record exceeds all prior Indian Railways records, cementing its position as the country's top freight-loading zone. The three railway

divisions of East Coast Railway played a crucial role in the remarkable achievement.



Public Sector Banks Witness a 33% Surge in Dividend Payouts in FY24 :-

The dividend paid by public sector banks (PSBs) increased by 33% to Rs 27,830 crore in FY24, suggesting a considerable improvement in these institutions' financial health. According to government data, PSBs distributed a dividend of Rs 27,830 crore to shareholders in 2023-24, up from Rs 20,964 crore the previous fiscal year, representing a 32.7 percent rise. In FY24, the government received roughly 65 percent of the total dividend of Rs 27,830 crore, or Rs 18,013 crore. During 2022-23, the government received Rs 13,804 crore as dividend from the public sector banks including State Bank of India (SBI).



India Becomes the World's Top Milk Producer :-

India is the world's leading milk producer, with a goal of producing 300 million metric tons (MMT) of milk over the next five years, up from the current 239 MMT, Union Minister of Animal Husbandry and Dairying Rajiv Ranjan Singh stated in the Lok Sabha. Mr. Singh further stated that since the Modi government launched the Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM) in 2014, milk output in the country

has climbed by 63.5%, and the government hopes to boost it further by 15% over the next three years.



S&P Lowers India's Growth Forecast for FY26 to 6.5% :-

S&P Global Ratings cut India's GDP growth forecasts for the upcoming fiscal year to 6.5% because it anticipates that the APAC region's economy will be impacted by growing US tariffs and opposition to globalization. According to S&P's Economic Outlook for Asia-Pacific (APAC), the majority of emerging-market economies should continue to have strong internal demand momentum in spite of these external pressures. "India's GDP will grow 6.5 per cent in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026, we expect. Our forecast is the same as the outcome for the previous fiscal year, but less than our earlier forecast of 6.7 per cent," S&P said.



JSW Steel Becomes the World's Highest-Valued Steelmaker with Over \$30 Billion Market Capitalisation

JSW Steel has become the world's most valuable steelmaker, with the Sajjan Jindal-led company's market capitalization exceeding \$30 billion. JSW Steel's excellent stock market performance mirrored a broader rally among Indian steelmakers following a government report that suggested measures to protect the domestic industry from an increase in inexpensive steel imports. Shares of JSW Steel, the country's largest steel producer by capacity, hit an all-time high of Rs 1,074.15 on the BSE. The stock has gained nearly 11% in a month and over 4% in a week.



Roshni Nadar Becomes First Indian Woman in World's Top 10 Richest Women :-

HCL Technologies' chairperson, Roshni Nadar Malhotra, created history by being the first Indian woman to rank in the top 10 of the Hurun Global Rich List 2025. She is now the fifth richest woman in the world, with an estimated net worth of Rs 3.5 lakh crore. Following a 47%

ownership transfer from her father, Shiv Nadar, the founder of HCL Technologies, she rose in the ranks. As a result, Roshni Nadar Malhotra will now oversee all strategic decisions for the \$12 billion technology giant.



Hurun Global Rich List 2025: Shanghai overtakes Mumbai as Asia's Billionaire Capital :-

India ranked third on the Hurun Global Rich List 2025, with 284 billionaires, an increase of 13 over the previous year. India trails the United States and China, followed by the United Kingdom, Germany, and Switzerland. Shanghai surpassed Mumbai as Asia's billionaire capital, with 92 billionaires, while Mumbai's total fell to 90. Gautam Adani, chairman of the Adani Group, had India's largest absolute wealth growth in the previous year. Roshni Nadar Malhotra, chairperson of HCL Technologies, became the first Indian woman to enter the global top 10 richest women.

14: Schemes & Committees



Madhya Pradesh Government to Provide Permanent Power Connections to Farmers for Just Rs 5 :-

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav declared that the Madhya Pradesh government will provide permanent energy connections to farmers for Rs. 5. While directing the rapid execution of this system in the central region, he promised that it will eventually be expanded throughout the state. The Chief Minister stated that in recent months, more than 1.5 lakh farmers having temporary connections had received permanent ones at a reduced

cost. Farmers using 3 HP pumps will pay only 5 per cent of the cost, while those with 5 to 7.5 HP pumps will contribute 10 per cent.



Uttarakhand Cabinet Approves Unified Pension Scheme and New Excise Policy for 2025 :-

The Uttarakhand Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, has authorized the introduction of the Central Government's Unified Pension Scheme for state officers and employees. The Unified Pension Scheme will be effective beginning April 1, 2025. The Uttarakhand cabinet also approved the new Excise Policy 2025. A statement from the government said that the state's new Excise Policy 2025 has decided to close liquor licenses near religious places, considering their importance.



Cheetah reintroduction plan to be expanded to Gujarat, MP's Gandhisagar :-

Cheetah introduction will be pushed beyond Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park to the Banni Grasslands in Gujarat and the Gandhisagar Sanctuary in MP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared at the seventh National Board of Wildlife (NBWL) meeting. African cheetahs were reintroduced to Kuno National Park in

two batches: September 2022 and February 2023. Banni Grasslands is a 2,500 sq km protected forest in the Kutch district of Gujarat that supports numerous animal genetic resources like Banni buffalo, Kankrej cattle, sheep, goats, camels, and horses.



Punjab launches 'Project Hifazat' to help women facing violence :-

On the eve of International Women's Day, Punjab Minister for Social Security, Women, and Child Development Baljit Kaur launched 'Project Hifazat' to empower women and children who have faced violence. The project intends to strengthen the response system and establish a safe atmosphere for reporting domestic violence and harassment, with the 181 helpline easily accessible. "The project aims to eliminate the fear that prevents women from reporting domestic violence, workplace harassment, or any other form of abuse," the minister said, adding that the project would enhance last-mile connectivity with victims and provide an integrated support system.



Uttar Pradesh Adopts Digital Monitoring for Routine Child Vaccination Through RISE App :-

Routine vaccination of children in Uttar Pradesh will now be monitored digitally via the 'Rapid Immunisation Skill Enhancement' (RISE) app, a platform utilized by nurses, ANMs, and health workers. "The app (RISE) plays an important role in vaccinators' capacity building, ensuring they stay up to date with evolving guidelines and the incorporation of new technologies in immunization programmes," said Dr. Ajay Gupta, Uttar Pradesh's state immunization officer. Currently, the focus is on training block-level officers, and when completely deployed, this project will benefit about 52,175 vaccinators.



Indian Railways Joins Mission Amrit Sarovar to Tackle Water Scarcity :-

The Indian Railways will dig ponds as part of the Union government's Mission Amrit Sarovar, which seeks to alleviate the country's urgent water scarcity crisis. Amrit Sarovar was inaugurated in April 2022 with the ambitious goal of building or renovating 75 ponds in each district of the country. The project made great progress, and by October 2024, more than 68,000 ponds had been constructed, restoring surface and groundwater availability in a variety of areas. These ponds have not only addressed immediate water needs but also established sustainable water resources.



PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana Achieves 10 Lakh Rooftop Solar Installations :-

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy said in a recent update that PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana (PMSGMBY), the world's largest household rooftop solar scheme, has reached a historic achievement, with 10



Govt introduces third edition of PM-YUVA for aspiring writers :-

The Prime Minister's Scheme for Mentoring Young Authors (PM-YUVA 3.0) was introduced in its third edition by the Ministry of Education. In order to encourage reading, writing, and book culture in India, the program trains young authors under the age of thirty. The program offers publication chances and mentorship to promote Indian writing internationally. The involvement of young authors in 22 Indian languages and English in PM-YUVA 3.0 expands upon that of its earlier versions. The scheme aligns with the government's effort to encourage youth to engage with India's heritage, culture, and contributions of key figures.

lakh homes now solar-powered as of March 10, 2025. This initiative, which was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 13, 2024, is fast transforming the Indian energy sector. With 47.3 lakh applications received, the initiative has already disbursed Rs 4,770 crore in subsidies to 6.13 lakh beneficiaries, making solar energy more accessible than ever.



Government Establishes Fintech Panel to Address Regulatory Challenges :-

The government has established an interministerial-industry committee on fintech (IMICF), which is going to be headed by the secretary of the department of financial services (DFS), to deal with regulatory concerns and long-term strategy for the financial technology sector. According to the directive, the committee would examine worldwide best practices in governance and regulation, pinpoint growth-hindering factors, and concentrate on how fintech has affected the larger banking and financial services sector. The committee will submit its report within three months from the date of its first meeting.



Cabinet Approves Revised Rashtriya Gokul Mission with ₹3,400 Crore Allocation :-

The Revised Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM), which aims to promote growth in the cattle industry, has been approved by the Union Cabinet. With an extra expenditure of ₹1,000 crore, the updated mission would be executed as a Central Sector component of the Development Programs plan, increasing the overall budget to ₹3,400 crore during the 15th Finance Commission cycle, which runs from 2021–2022 to 2025–2026. The scheme will continue its core activities, including strengthening semen stations and artificial insemination networks, implementing bull production and accelerated breed improvement programs.



Cabinet Approves ₹1,500 Crore UPI Incentive Scheme for Banks :-

In an effort to reduce costs for all parties involved in the UPI ecosystem, the Union Cabinet has authorized an extension of the Rs 1,500 crore incentive plan for minor digital transactions. The program will last for a year, from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025 (post facto), and it covers transactions up to Rs 2,000 for small merchants. Later, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw stated that this program would also be extended for the upcoming year. Under this initiative, small merchants accepting UPI payments will receive an incentive at the rate of 0.15% per transaction.



IRDAI Appoints Five New Members to Insurance Advisory Committee :-

India's insurance watchdog has selected five new members to its Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC), bringing together leaders from banking, asset management, and insurance to help define future laws. The new members comprises MR Kumar, former LIC chairman and current non-executive chairman of Bank of India; Dinesh Kumar Khara, former chairman of SBI, Vishakha Mule, CEO of Aditya Birla Capital; Nilesh Shah, MD of Kotak Mahindra AMC; and Alice G Vaidyan, former CMD of GIC Re and independent director at Air India and Tata AIA Life.



Baalpan ki Kavita initiative: Restoring Bhartiya rhymes for young children :-

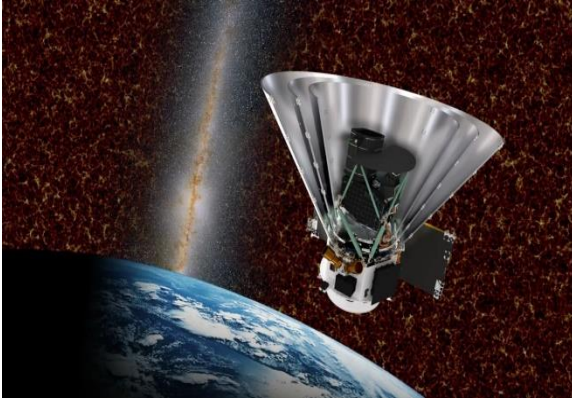
The Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSE&L), part of the Ministry of Education, has started the "Baalpan ki Kavita" Initiative to conserve and encourage Indian rhymes and poems for young children. This effort is consistent with the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes Early Childhood Education, Multilingualism, and Cultural Relevance in Primary Learning. This also aim to compile a collection of nursery rhymes and poems in multiple Indian languages, including English, which are deeply rooted in Indian culture and traditions.



Digital Crop Survey (DCS) System launched :-

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has launched the Digital Crop Survey (DCS) System, which intends to collect real-time crop-sown data directly from the field via a smartphone interface. This unique method provides precise, up-to-date crop area information for each agricultural plot, which is critical for accurate production estimates. As part of this initiative, the Agri Stack has been developed in line with the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, and other IT laws of India. Agri Stack is designed to ensure complete privacy and security of farmers' data.

15: Science & Technology



NASA Prepares to Launch SPHEREx Space Telescope for Deep Space Exploration :-

NASA is gearing up to launch its latest space telescope, SPHEREx (Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, Epoch of Reionization, and Ices Explorer), which will map the entire sky in near-infrared light. The mission aims to answer fundamental questions about the origins of the universe, the formation of galaxies, and the presence of water and organic molecules in our galaxy. Unlike traditional telescopes, SPHEREx will conduct a spectral survey, capturing detailed information about billions of celestial objects. Scientists hope that the data gathered from this mission will provide critical insights into cosmic history and pave the way for future space explorations.



Firefly's Blue Ghost becomes second private spacecraft with moon landing :-

Firefly Aerospace successfully landed its unmanned Blue Ghost lander on the lunar surface. The Texas-based corporation is only the second private firm to reach this historic milestone. The two-meter-tall lander touched down on the moon's near side. Blue Ghost landed near Mons Latreille, an ancient volcanic formation. This place is located in Mare Crisium, a huge lunar basin. The team selected this location to avoid magnetic anomalies. Such disturbances could interfere with scientific instruments. The mission faced several challenges but ended in success.



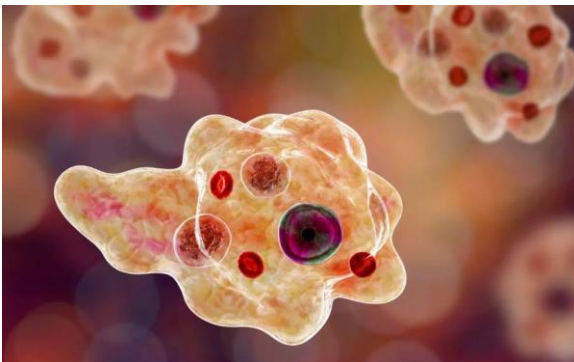
Ashwini Vaishnaw launches AI compute portal under IndiaAI Mission :-

Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology, has presented a range of AI-driven projects as part of the IndiaAI Mission, a significant step in bolstering India's artificial intelligence ecosystem. The launch ceremony showcased AIKosha: IndiaAI Datasets Platform, the IndiaAI Compute Portal, and a number of programs geared at skill development and startup acceleration. Speaking at the event, Vaishnaw highlighted the transformative potential of these initiatives in advancing AI research and innovation.



Assam Government to Launch Its Own Satellite 'ASSAMSAT' :-

The Assam state government has announced intentions to launch its own satellite, ASSAMSAT, soon, with the goal of improving data availability for critical socioeconomic projects and border surveillance. Assam finance minister Ajanta Neog made the statement while presenting the budget for fiscal year 2025-26. "(The ASSAMSAT satellite) can help providing dedicated services for agriculture, disaster management, infrastructure development, and security border management and police operations," Neog said.



Viral Meningitis Cases Reported Among Students in Kerala :-

Five students from a private school in Kalamassery, Kerala, have exhibited symptoms consistent with viral meningitis. Samples have been sent to the National Institute of Virology for confirmation. This situation underscores the importance of vigilance and prompt medical attention in educational institutions to prevent potential outbreaks and ensure the well-being of students. Viral meningitis is an inflammation of the protective membranes (meninges) surrounding the brain and spinal cord. It is primarily caused by viral infections.

Viral meningitis is more common in children than adults. It usually resolves on its own, unlike bacterial meningitis which can be fatal.



Discovery of Plastic Ice VII Sheds Light on Water's Behavior Under Extreme Conditions :-

Scientists have confirmed the existence of Plastic Ice VII, a novel form of water that emerges under extreme pressure and temperature conditions. Led by Livia Bove from Sorbonne University, this discovery enhances our understanding of water's behavior in harsh planetary environments and could have implications for studying celestial bodies with extreme conditions. The confirmation of Plastic Ice VII suggests that water in extreme environments behaves in even more complex ways than previously thought. Understanding this exotic ice could help scientists explore whether extreme planetary conditions could support life and how water influences the structure of celestial bodies.



Consolidation of AYUSH Drug Standards Recommended by Committee :-

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare has proposed consolidating all AYUSH drug-related standards under a single independent drug controller. This recommendation aligns with the Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1940. The committee aims to streamline processes and enhance the efficiency of

AYUSH drug standardisation. The committee suggests establishing an independent body to oversee AYUSH drug standards. This body would coordinate with existing organisations like the Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy and the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences. The goal is to ensure uniformity in drug quality and efficacy.



AI Monitors Offer New Hope to Struggling Farms in Nigeria :-

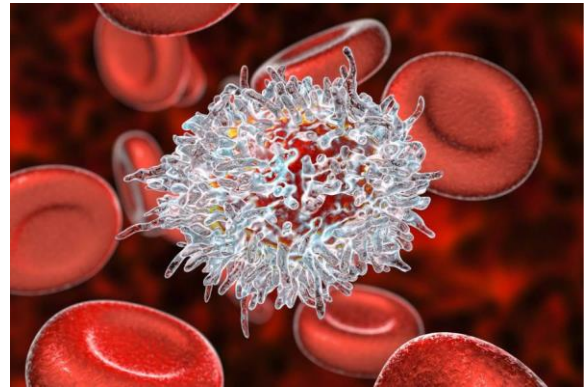
With just a few taps on his phone, Dandam Nangor, 34, can instantly check the temperature of his greenhouse, know the right time to water his crops, and monitor soil acidity levels. Powered by artificial intelligence, this technology aims to simplify pepper cultivation—potentially paving the way for a new era in Nigerian agriculture. From subsistence farmers to young tech professionals, millions rely on this sector, and AI-driven solutions could revolutionize farming practices.



Centre Approves Chandrayaan-5 Mission: A Significant Step in Lunar Research :-

The Indian government has approved the Chandrayaan-5 mission, aimed at conducting an in-depth study of the Moon's surface. Announced by ISRO Chairman V Narayanan on 16th March 2025, this mission will be executed in collaboration with Japan's space agency,

JAXA. This approval marks another significant step in India's space ambitions. Unlike Chandrayaan-3, which carried the 25 kg Pragyan rover, Chandrayaan-5 will deploy a more advanced 250 kg rover, enhancing India's lunar exploration capabilities.



India's Gene Therapy for Blood Cancer Shows Promising Results :-

Recent clinical trials in India have shown a 73% response rate for a novel gene treatment that targets blood malignancies such as leukemia and lymphoma. These tumors, which affect the bone marrow and lymphatic systems, have proven difficult to treat using traditional procedures. The optimistic results of these trials give promise for more effective treatments and better patient outcomes in the future. The clinical trials of India's first gene therapy for cancer offer hopes of another chance to live among these patients, that there is one more drug that doctors can try," IIT Bombay professor said.



Scindia highlights the need for satellite internet in India's remote areas :-

According to the telecom minister, India wants satellite internet, particularly in rural areas, indicating a positive

regulatory outlook for Elon Musk's Starlink Inc., which plans to commence operations in the world's most populous country. Speaking in New Delhi, Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia remarked that certain remote locations are inaccessible via fibre or mobile networks. He asked how total connectivity could be achieved without satellite internet. He also highlighted that in cases where natural disasters damage fibre networks and mobile towers, satellite connectivity would be the only feasible option to restore communication.



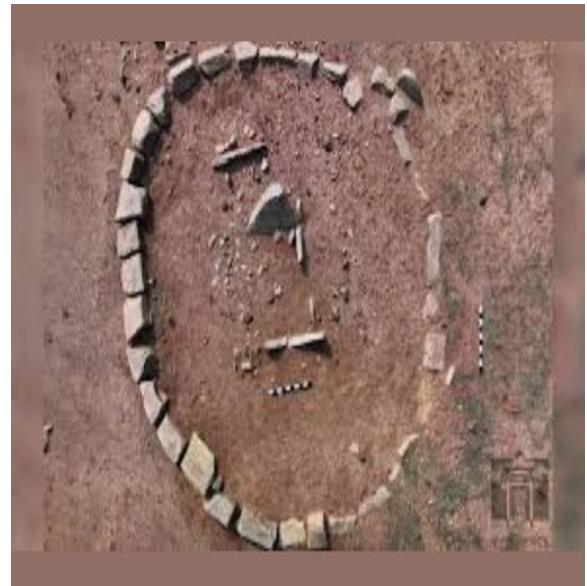
Human Coronavirus HKU1 Detected in Kolkata Woman

A 45-year-old lady in Kolkata has been diagnosed with human coronavirus HKU1, which belongs to the same family as COVID-19. Human coronavirus HKU1 is less lethal than SARS or COVID-19, but it can still be dangerous for the elderly, babies, and persons with weakened immune systems. The occurrence in Kolkata is not cause for alarm, but it serves as a reminder to be cautious of respiratory diseases at all times. It was first discovered in 2005 and is part of the same family as SARS, MERS, and COVID-19. However, HKU1 is usually not as dangerous as these viruses.



ISRO Chairman V Narayanan Launches Thermal Research Centre at IIT Madras :-

V Narayanan, Chairman of ISRO, opened a new research unit at IIT Madras. The 'Shri S. Ramakrishnan Centre of Excellence in Fluid and Thermal Science Research' seeks to assist 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' efforts by encouraging self-reliance in advanced space technologies while attracting worldwide talent and research funds. This initiative establishes India as a leader in thermal sciences research for space applications. This advanced research facility, situated in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, will concentrate on essential developments in spacecraft and launch vehicle thermal management, which is crucial for India's expanding space aspirations.



ASI's Discoveries: Megaliths in Kerala & Buddhist Finds in Odisha :-

According to research, explorers in Kerala discovered a treasure trove of over 110 megalithic buildings spread across 45 hectares near the enormous Malampuzha dam in Palakkad. Meanwhile, in Odisha, some 100 kilometers from Bhubaneswar, the Ratnagiri excavation has unearthed an incredible Buddhist legacy. The ASI crew unearthed ancient burial sites from the Neolithic and Bronze Age. Megaliths aren't new to India—southern states like Karnataka (Brahmagiri) and Tamil Nadu (Adichanallur) have their share—but finding this many in one spot is surely a game-changer.



Bellatrix Aerospace Partners with AstroScale Japan for Space Debris Removal :-

Bellatrix Aerospace, a Bengaluru-based space mobility startup, and AstroScale Japan have agreed to collaborate. The alliance intends to promote active debris removal, satellite servicing, and long-term in-orbit mobility, resulting in a cleaner and safer space environment. AstroScale Japan, a subsidiary of AstroScale Holdings Inc., is in the forefront of developing innovative technologies for in-orbit servicing and space debris mitigation. The company offers a range of scalable services, including life extension, in-situ space situational awareness, end-of-life disposal, and active debris removal.

16: Sports



Shaurya Bhattacharya Clinches Chhattisgarh Open Title

In an exhilarating display of skill and composure, 22-year-old Shaurya Bhattacharya from Chandigarh emerged as the champion at the SECL Rs 1 crore Chhattisgarh Open golf championship. Bhattacharya delivered a stellar performance by posting a six-under 63 in the fourth round, ultimately winning the tournament by a margin of five shots. This victory, which marks his second title on the professional circuit, has not only boosted his confidence but also significantly improved his ranking on the national Order of Merit. The tournament witnessed intense competition on a challenging par-69 course, and his consistent play—complemented by a strong performance in earlier rounds—underscores the growing talent in Indian golf, promising a bright future for the sport in the country.



Virat Kohli Becomes Seventh Indian Cricketer to Play 300 ODIs :-

On Sunday, March 2, batting ace Virat Kohli joined legendary Sachin Tendulkar in an exceptional list of cricketers by becoming the seventh Indian and 22nd player in the world to play 300 One-Day Internationals. The 36-year-old Delhi cricketer made his ODI debut for India on August 18, 2008, against Sri Lanka in Dambulla, and has since played 299 matches. With 14,085 runs to his name, Kohli is the third leading run scorer in the 50-over format of the game, and he scored his 51st ODI century in the last match played against Pakistan in Dubai on Sunday, February 23.

**Brandon Holt wins Bengaluru Open :-**

Brandon Holt of the United States won his second ATP Challenger singles championship of the season, defeating Japan's Shintaro Mochizuki 6-3, 6-3, in the Bengaluru Open 2025 tennis tournament's final. As a result, Holt, the 26-year-old son of Tennis Hall of Famer Tracy Austin, became the first American to win the Bengaluru Open. This was the ninth ATP Challenger 125 tennis competition. Serving first in a packed house at the KSLTA Tennis Stadium, third seed Holt saved two breakpoints in the very first game before capitalising on Mochizuki's unforced errors to go up a break. The American set the early trend with his lethal serves, forcing his opponent on the back foot and racing to a 3-0 lead.

**Vidarbha Clinch Their Third Ranji Trophy Title in Seven Seasons :-**

This season's remarkable performance in domestic cricket ended with Vidarbha's third Ranji Trophy title, which they won thanks to a first-innings lead in the top showdown. The contest's fate was all but determined on the third evening, when Vidarbha pushed ahead with a slim 37-run advantage in the first innings, dismissing a tenacious Kerala for 342 after scoring 379 runs batting

first. Kerala, the first-time finalists, fought hard but Vidarbha were rewarded for their hard work and discipline throughout a season in which they not only clinched the Ranji Trophy but also ended as the runners-up in the 50-overs Vijay Hazare Trophy.

**Steve Smith Announces Retirement from One-Day Internationals :-**

Steve Smith declared that he was leaving the ODI format. The announcement was made the day after Smith's Australia lost to India in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 semi-final. After Australia won the toss and chose to bat, they posted a solid 264 thanks in large part to Smith's crucial 73 off 96 balls in his final appearance in the 50-over format. He featured in 170 ODIs, in which he amassed 5800 runs at an average of 43.28. Smith's highest score of 164 was against New Zealand in 2016.

**Sharath Kamal to Retire from Table Tennis :-**

Achanta Sharath Kamal, India's legendary table tennis player, has announced that he will retire from professional table tennis. His final tournament will be the WTT Star Contender event, which will take place at Chennai's Nehru Indoor Stadium from March 25 to March 30, 2025. Kamal, 42, leaves an outstanding legacy after a career spanning decades, including ten National Championships and five Olympic participation. His

achievements on the global stage, including his stellar performances at the Commonwealth Games, Asian Games, and the Olympics, have made him one of India's most revered athletes.



India Wins ICC Champions Trophy for the Third Time :-

India won a record third ICC Champions Trophy championship and as they faced New Zealand in the fifth final of the Champions Trophy 2025 season on March 9 in Dubai. Having won the title earlier in 2002 (shared with Sri Lanka) and 2013, India qualified for their third consecutive summit showdown in the event after going undefeated since the group stage. Collectively, India won their seventh ICC title, only behind Australia (10). The title win also help India surpass Australia as the most successful team in the Champions Trophy.



Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma Break Yuvraj Singh's Record for Most ICC Final Appearances :-

Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli inscribed their names in history after entering the field for India in the 2025 Champions Trophy final against New Zealand at the Dubai International Stadium, breaking Yuvraj Singh's world record that had stood for more than a decade. Rohit and Virat reached their ninth final in an ICC tournament, the most by any player in history. Yuvraj had played eight finals in his career for the Indian team

across formats. Ravindra Jadeja also played the eighth final of his career in an ICC tournament.



Sunil Chhetri's Return to the Indian National Team at 40

Sunil Chhetri, an Indian football hero, will return to the national team at the age of 40, following an unexpected turnaround of his decision to retire last year. The former captain, who is the fourth-highest men's international goalscorer in history, will play his final match for India in a World Cup qualifier in June 2024. Manolo Marquez, India's head coach, has announced the return of the country's most capped player during the March international window. India are out of qualifying for the 2026 World Cup and are now targeting the Asian Cup in 2027.



Australia and England To Play Historic 150th Anniversary Test at MCG :-

The 150th anniversary test among Australia and England will take place under lights at the Melbourne Cricket Ground from March 11 to 15, 2027. Cricket Australia has declared that the historic encounter will be the first day-night men's test at the MCG. The historic stadium on the outskirts of downtown Melbourne staged the first cricket test in 1877 and the centenary test between Australia and England in 1977. Australia won by a 45-run margin in

both of those matches. Australia is hosting the 2025-26 Ashes series against England starting in November.



Hockey Jharkhand Clinches 15th Hockey India Senior Women's National Title :-

The 15th Hockey India Senior Women's National Championship 2025 featured an intense final match where Hockey Jharkhand triumphed over defending champions Hockey Haryana at the Tau Devi Lal Complex, Panchkula, Haryana. This landmark victory secured Hockey Jharkhand's maiden national title, marking a significant achievement in Indian women's hockey history. The team's exceptional performance and determination have set a new standard for future competitions.



F1 Chief Stefano Domenicali Discusses Potential Grand Prix in Thailand with Prime Minister :-

Formula One CEO Stefano Domenicali met with Thailand's Prime Minister to discuss the prospect of holding a Grand Prix in the country. Domenicali, who just extended his stay until 2029, hopes to expand into new areas as the sport grows in popularity around the world. Thailand has indicated interest in hosting the famous racing event, which aligns with F1's objective of extending its global presence. If successful, Thailand will

join the ranks of other Asian nations who hold Formula One races, expanding motorsport interest in the area. The discussions come as F1 continues to seek new venues that can enhance the sport's global appeal and attract a wider audience.



IPL 2025 :-

The 2025 edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL), one of the world's most anticipated cricket tournaments, will begin on March 22 with a magnificent opening ceremony at Eden Gardens in Kolkata. This is the tournament's 18th season, and ten franchise teams will compete in an electrifying T20 spectacle. The opening ceremonies for the IPL 2025 will take place at all 13 venues. After the opening ceremony, Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) will lock horns with Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in the tournament opener.



Japan Becomes First Team to Qualify for the 2026 FIFA World Cup After Host Nations :-

Japan became the first country to qualify for the 2026 men's World Cup, defeating Bahrain 2-0 at Saitama Stadium. Daichi Kamada and Takefusa Kubo's second-half goals were enough to earn the Samurai Blue a spot in next year's tournament, which will be held in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Japan became the

first non-host nation to qualify for the 2026 men's World Cup, with the three host countries already guaranteed a place in the 48-team competition. The win maintains Japan's unbeaten 2026 World Cup qualifying campaign with 19 points from seven games.



Oscar Piastri Triumphs at the Chinese Grand Prix :-

Oscar Piastri won the Chinese Grand Prix against his McLaren colleague Lando Norris, showcasing the team's remarkable performance in the second round of the Formula One 2024 season. Meanwhile, Ferrari experienced a post-race calamity when both Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton were disqualified for technical violations. Following a disastrous Australian Grand Prix in which Piastri spun out of second position, the Chinese Grand Prix triumph provided redemption for the Australian driver. Starting from pole position, Piastri controlled the race from start to finish, executing a one-stop strategy perfectly and managing tyre degradation efficiently.



Ajinkya Rahane Creates IPL History: First Indian to Captain Three Different Teams :-

Ajinkya Rahane, a prominent Indian batsman and captain of the Kolkata Knight Riders in IPL 2025, made history as the first Indian to captain three different teams in the

Indian Premier League. The opening match of IPL 2025, between KKR and Royal Challengers Bengaluru at Eden Gardens in Kolkata, marked Rahane's 26th as captain. In the past, he headed the Rising Pune Supergiant in one IPL match in 2017 and led the Rajasthan Royals in 24 matches in 2018 and 2019. Three players – Mahela Jayawardene, Kumar Sangakkara, and Steve Smith – have previously held captaincy roles for three different teams in the IPL.



Sunil Kumar Wins Bronze at Asian Wrestling Championships 2025 :-

Sunil Kumar, an Indian wrestler, earned bronze in the 87kg Greco Roman match at the Asian Championship in Jordan. Sunil defeated Jiaxin Huang of China in the bronze medal event after losing in the continental tournament's 87kg quarterfinals. Sunil, who won a silver medal in 2019 and is hoping to rediscover some of his previous magic, defeated Tajikistan's Sukhrob Abdulkhaev 10-1 in the quarterfinal. He scored all of his points in the second period. Umesh (63kg) lost in the qualification. Nitin (55kg) and Prem (130kg) were ousted in the qualification round.



Khelo India Para Games 2025 Concludes: Haryana Tops Medal Tally Once Again :-

With 34 gold medals, Haryana once again topped the team standings as the second edition of the Khelo India Para Games 2025 came to an end after eight days of fierce competition. In the overall rankings, Uttar Pradesh (23 golds) and Tamil Nadu (28 golds) came in second and

third, respectively. Eighteen national records were created in KIPG 2025 with Jaspreet Kaur (Punjab), Manish Kumar (Haryana), Seema Rani (Punjab), and Jhandu Kumar (Bihar) winning gold medals in Para Powerlifting.

17: State



Madhya Pradesh Emerges as a Leader in Gharial Conservation :-

Madhya Pradesh has made significant strides in conserving the critically endangered gharial, a unique species of crocodilian native to India. Over the past decade, concerted efforts involving habitat restoration, captive breeding, and stringent anti-poaching measures have contributed to a steady increase in gharial populations in the state's river systems. The Chambal River, a stronghold for the species, has witnessed an encouraging rise in gharial numbers, thanks to conservation initiatives by the forest department and wildlife organizations. Despite these successes, challenges such as water pollution, illegal fishing, and habitat encroachment continue to threaten their survival, necessitating continuous conservation efforts.



Chhattisgarh Budget 2025 :-

In its budget for the forthcoming fiscal year, the Chhattisgarh government promised initiatives to reduce red tape while still increasing capital investment significantly. In his second budget presentation, State Finance Minister O.P. Choudhary used the acronym GATI (good governance, accelerating infrastructure, technology and industrial growth) to showcase the vision for the future. The budget is estimated to be worth ₹1,65,000 crore. The Finance Minister said that to promote ease of doing business, the government had set a target of implementing 216 reforms in 20 departments in the first phase.



India's First World Peace Center Inaugurated in Gurugram :-

Former President Ram Nath Kovind, Governor of Punjab, Gulab Chand Kataria, Governor of Bihar, Arif Mohammad Khan, Chief Minister of Haryana, Nayab Singh Saini, Founder of Art of Living, Shri Shri Ravi Shankar, renowned Kathavachak Morari Bapu, Govinddev Giri, and many prominent religious leaders in Gurugram inaugurated India's first World Peace Center established by Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti under the guidance of Jain Acharya Lokesh. Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh

Saini stated that Gurugram, from which the message of Geeta was conveyed, will now spread the message of peace, harmony, and human welfare over the world.



CM Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurates Kerala Police's Advanced Cybersecurity Operations Centre :-

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan commissioned the "Advanced Cybersecurity Operations Centre" (SOC) of the Kerala Police Cyber Division via video conferencing to boost cybersecurity for police systems and critical infrastructure. TRINETRA, a cyber security operation center for the Kerala police, was created and built by the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), India's leading R&D center under the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications.



Bangalore City University to be Renamed After Dr. Manmohan Singh :-

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has announced that Bengaluru City University will be called Dr Manmohan Singh Bengaluru City University. The news about Bengaluru City University (BCU), originally Bengaluru Central University, a state university in Bengaluru established in 2017 and renamed in 2020,

came as the chief minister presented his record 16th budget. Siddaramaiah, who holds the Finance portfolio, claimed that the state government has maintained fiscal deficit of the state for the financial year 2025-26.



Tamil Nadu Govt Replaces Rupee Symbol with Tamil Letter :-

The Tamil Nadu administration, led by MK Stalin, changed the Rupee symbol "₹" to the Tamil script "ரூ" in the emblem for the state's 2025-26 budget. This decision comes amid the continuing language controversy, with the BJP-led central government and the DMK-led Tamil Nadu government at war once more over the NEP's three-language policy. The budget logo features "ரூ" (ru), the first letter of the Tamil word "Rubaai," which represents the Indian currency in the Tamil language. It also includes the caption "Everything for All," reflecting the ruling DMK's emphasis on an inclusive model of governance.



Maharashtra Inaugurates First-Ever Temple Dedicated to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Bhiwandi :-

On the Maratha king's birth anniversary, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis unveiled the state's first temple dedicated to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in

Bhiwandi, Thane district. The temple, dedicated to the Maratha king's courage and heritage, is characterized as a site where devotees can witness the majesty of Shivaji Maharaj's heroics. Inspired by the architectural grandeur of forts, the temple spans an area of 2,500 square feet, with a fort-like boundary wall covering an additional 5,000 square feet.



India's First Public-Private Partnership Green Waste Processing Plant in Indore :-

Under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U), Indore, which has been named India's cleanest city for seven years running, is about to take a significant step toward environmental sustainability with the opening of the nation's first green waste processing plant based on the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. This groundbreaking initiative aims to revolutionise the city's waste management system by converting green waste into valuable resources, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) said.



Cabinet Approves A New Brownfield Ammonia-Urea Plant In Namrup, Assam :-

The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has accepted a proposal to build a new brownfield ammonia-urea factory in Namrup, Assam. In her Budget

2025 speech on February 1, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed the establishment of a fertilizer plant in Namrup, Assam. The plant would manufacture 12.7 lakh metric tonnes of urea per year and will be built on the current Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer Corporation Limited (BVFCL) site. Under the New Investment Policy, 2012, the fertiliser plant will have an estimated total project cost of Rs 10,601.40 crore and a Debt-Equity ratio of 70:30 through a Joint Venture (JV).



Gujarat achieves 95% of NITI Aayog's TB elimination target :-

Gujarat made significant progress in 2024 toward Prime Minister Narendra Modi's aim of eliminating tuberculosis in India by 2025. According to an official announcement, the State government, led by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, has reached 95% of the NITI Aayog target for TB registration and treatment success, with a 91% treatment completion rate. Gujarat was given a target of identifying and registering 1,45,000 TB patients in 2024. Against this, 1,37,929 TB patients were successfully identified and registered.



Uttarakhand Government Plans Ganga and Sharda River Corridors to Boost Religious Tourism :-

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami underlined the religious and cultural importance of the Ganga and Sharda rivers, announcing intentions to build corridors along these sacred rivers to enhance religious tourism in the state. The proposed river corridors aim to improve infrastructure and facilities for pilgrims visiting

Uttarakhand, bolstering the state's reputation as a significant spiritual destination. The initiative aligns with the government's broader vision of promoting tourism while preserving Uttarakhand's cultural and religious heritage.

18: Summits & Conferences



White House to host first crypto summit :-

President Donald Trump will convene the first cryptocurrency summit at the White House on March 7, 2025. This is a significant step forward for US digital asset policy, indicating the government's support for cryptocurrency and a commitment to developing clear laws. The event will bring together major industry influencers, such as founders, CEOs, and investors, to debate how regulation and innovation may shape the future of the bitcoin business. The summit will be led by President Trump and organized by White House AI and Crypto Czar, David Sacks.



President to inaugurate conference on development of women on March 8 :-

On March 8, President Droupadi Murmu will open the National Conference organized by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi with the subject "Nari Shakti Se Viksit Bharat" in honor of International Women's Day. The ceremony will also be attended by Minister for Women and Child Development Annpurna Devi and Minister of State Savitri Thakur, as well as senior officials and notable visitors. On this occasion, a mega campaign through #SheBuildsBharat is also being organised.



Vividhta Ka Amrit Mahotsav Inaugurated By President



World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2025

:-

Inaugurated by Union Minister for Environment, Forest, and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav, the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2025 was held in New Delhi. Held from 5th to 7th March 2025, the event, organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), focused on strengthening global partnerships for accelerating sustainable development and climate solutions. The summit was attended by key international leaders, including Guyana's Prime Minister, Brigadier Mark Phillip, and Brazil's Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Marina Silva.



GRIDCON 2025 :-

GRIDCON 2025 – The International Conference cum Exhibition was held at IICC, Yashobhoomi, Dwarka, New Delhi. The event was organised by Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) from March 9-11, 2025, under the patronage of Ministry of Power, and in association with CIGRE, India. The event was inaugurated by Hon'ble Union Minister of Power and Housing & Urban Affairs, Manohar Lal in the august

presence of Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Power & New & Renewable Energy, Shripad Yesso Naik.



Chhattisgarh energy summit :-

At the 'Chhattisgarh Energy Investors Summit 2025', held in Raipur, Chhattisgarh attracted investments worth more than Rs three lakh crore through various energy-related industrial ideas. The investment proposals included nuclear, thermal, solar, and pumped storage power generation projects that will help not only industries but also the general public by providing inexpensive and reliable electricity. The proposed investment in the thermal power sector is Rs 107,840 crore, consisting of both private investors and public sector undertakings (PSUs).



PM Narendra Modi's Historic Visit to Mauritius :-

On the invitation of Mauritius' Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid a State Visit to Mauritius on March 11-12, 2025, to participate in the National Day celebrations as the Chief Guest. The ceremonies included a deployment of Indian Defence Forces as well as an Indian Navy ship. The Prime Minister last visited Mauritius in 2015. Prime Minister also interacted with the members of the Indian-

origin community, and inaugurated the Civil Service College and the Area Health Centre, both built with India's grant assistance. A number of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were exchanged during the visit.



India participates in 69th Session of UNCSW :-

India reiterated its staunch dedication to the autonomy and welfare of women and children at the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW), which was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, according to an official press release from the Ministry of Women and Child Development. A delegation from the Government of India, led by Union Minister for Women and Child Development (WCD) Annpurna Devi, participated in discussions at the global forum, which commenced on March 10, 2025.



Tata Communications Unveils Vayu – A Comprehensive AI Cloud Offering for Enterprises :-

Tata Communications Ltd., a private cloud services provider, has unveiled Vayu, its next-generation cloud fabric, to provide organizations with cost-effective cloud solutions. “With a unified, purpose-driven architecture, it [Vayu] tackles rising cloud costs, multi-cloud complexities, and AI infrastructure demands — empowering businesses to navigate the intelligent enterprise era seamlessly,” stated the company. The cloud fabric is designed for simplicity of use, control, and the future, seamlessly integrating IaaS, PaaS, AI platform, security, cloud connectivity, and professional services into a single, intelligent ecosystem, according to the company.

SECTION 2

Practice Questions with Answers



PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1) Which of the following company has launched an AI-powered customer support platform 'Nugget' to help businesses automate their operations?

- A) Zomato
- B) Swiggy
- C) Ola
- D) None of the above

2) Who among the following is the No. 1 ODI batsman as per the latest ICC ODI batting rankings?

- A) Babar Azam
- B) Rohit Sharma
- C) Shubman Gill
- D) None of the above

3) In which of the following city Google has unveiled its largest Indian campus, 'Ananta'?

- A) Bengaluru
- B) Kolkata
- C) Mumbai
- D) New Delhi

4) Union Minister Jitendra Singh inaugurated India's first 'Open Air Art Wall Museum' in _____.

- A) Bengaluru
- B) Jaipur
- C) New Delhi
- D) Pune

5) Assembly of which of the following state has become the first legislative body in India to introduce a translation facility?

- A) Andhra Pradesh
- B) Karnataka
- C) Kerala
- D) Uttar Pradesh

6) Who is the new Chairman of SEBI?

- A) Alok Chaturvedi
- B) Tuhin Kanta Pandey
- C) Raghuram Rajan

D) Sandeep Kumar

7) In which state is the Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary located, which was recently in the news?

- A) Karnataka
- B) Arunachal Pradesh
- C) Andhra Pradesh
- D) Kerala

8) Who chaired the 112th meeting of the EPFO Executive Committee?

- A) Rajesh Verma
- B) Sumita Dawra
- C) Anil Kumar Jha
- D) None of the above

9) Which country won the 2025 Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championship?

- A) Malaysia
- B) China
- C) South Korea
- D) Indonesia

10) Where was the 9th National Summit on Public Health Innovations held?

- A) Chhattisgarh
- B) Maharashtra
- C) Tamil Nadu
- D) Odisha

11) In which city has the International Radiobiology Conference on Space Radiation recently begun?

- A) Bengaluru
- B) New Delhi
- C) Chennai
- D) Surat

12) In Which of the following states has made teaching Punjabi compulsory in all schools?

- A) Rajasthan
- B) Punjab
- C) Delhi
- D) Uttarakhand

13) Where did Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal recently inaugurate the India Calling Summit 2025?

- A) Bengaluru
- B) Bhopal
- C) Hyderabad
- D) Mumbai

14) Who recently presided over the 112th meeting of the EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organization) Executive Committee?

- A) Ramesh Krishnamurthy
- B) Alok Verma
- C) Sumita Dawra
- D) Tarun Kumar

15) What is the main issue highlighted by the UN regarding the ongoing crisis in Sudan?

- A) Economic crisis
- B) Widespread famine-related deaths
- C) Climate change impact
- D) Climate change impact

16) Along with India which of the following country signed an agreement for expanding mining sector cooperation in lithium exploration and investment opportunities?

- A) Germany
- B) Brazil
- C) Australia
- D) Argentina

17) Who among the following became the fastest Indian bowler to pick 200 wickets in men's ODIs?

- A) Mohammed Shami
- B) Kuldeep Yadav
- C) Jaspreet Bumrah
- D) None of the above

18) Which of the following country was elected to the Vice Presidency of the International Organization of Aids to Marine Navigation (IALA)?

- A) China
- B) India
- C) Japan

D) Sri Lanka

19) _____ was appointed as Deputy Secretary in the Department of Expenditure.

- A) Rajesh Nirwan
- B) Mrithinjai Srikanthan
- C) M Mohan
- D) None of the above

20) Which of the following state has recently sanctioned a strict land law to protect the state's identity by restricting personal land buying?

- A) Assam
- B) Gujarat
- C) Himachal Pradesh
- D) Uttarakhand

21) Which of the following state government in collaboration with Remidio has introduced Nayanamritham 2.0, an AI-driven eye screening initiative?

- A) Assam
- B) Gujarat
- C) Himachal Pradesh
- D) Kerala

22) Who among the following was appointed as the Principal Secretary-2 to Prime Minister Narendra Modi?

- A) Abhay Singh
- B) Rajiv Kumar
- C) Shaktikanta Das
- D) None of the above

23) Who among the following has won the Asian Snooker Championship gold?

- A) Aditya Mehta
- B) Geet Sethi
- C) Pankaj Advani
- D) None of the above

24) Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be the guest of honour of which of the following country's National Day celebrations?

- A) Mauritius
- B) Bangladesh

- C) Nepal
- D) Sri Lanka

25) 139 artists created world record by dancing continuously for 24 hours in which of the following city?

- A) Hyderabad
- B) Khajuraho
- C) Kolkata
- D) Odisha

26) Which of the following country has approved a railway project worth over \$8 billion that will connect its northern port city to the Chinese border?

- A) Vietnam
- B) Sri Lanka
- C) Maldives
- D) Indonesia

27) Scientists of which of the following country have discovered a new lineage of a coronavirus in bats named HKU5-CoV-2?

- A) America
- B) Australia
- C) China
- D) Japan

28) According to a report by Moody's Analytics, India's GDP growth is forecasted to slow to _____ in 2025.

- A) 6.1%
- B) 6.4%
- C) 6.9%
- D) 7.0%

29) In which of the following state Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the 19th instalment of PM-Kisan scheme for eligible beneficiaries?

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

30) The Reserve Bank of India has launched _____, a mobile app providing

macroeconomic and financial statistics in a user-friendly format.

- A) AiRBI
- B) NamorBI
- C) RBIDATA
- D) None of the above

31) Madhya Pradesh's Global Investor Summit 2025 was held in which of the following city?

- A) Indore
- B) Gwalior
- C) Bhopal
- D) None of the above

32) Who among the following broke Sachin Tendulkar's record to become the fastest to reach 14000 runs in ODIs?

- A) Virat Kohli
- B) Steve Smith
- C) Babar Azam
- D) None of the above

33) US President Donald Trump has appointed who among the following as deputy director of the FBI?

- A) Dan Bongino
- B) Mike Waltz
- C) Paul Kapoor
- D) None of the above

34) The first Conference for Women Peacekeepers of the United Nations was held in _____.

- A) Bengaluru
- B) Chennai
- C) Gujarat
- D) New Delhi

35) Which of the following airport has won the prestigious 'Sarvashrestha Suraksha Puraskar' at the NSCI Safety Awards 2024?

- A) IGI Airport
- B) Manohar International Airport
- C) Mumbai Airport
- D) None of the above

36) Which of the following state has formally included 'Bathouism' as a religion?

- A) Assam
- B) Bihar

- C) Madhya Pradesh
- D) Uttar Pradesh

37) Who was appointed as the new Director of the Institute of Economic Growth (IEG), New Delhi?

- A) Chetan Ghate
- B) Rajiv Kumar
- C) Sabyasachi Kar
- D) None of the above

38) Along with India which of the following country is set to establish a new communication link between the deputy commanders of their respective border-guarding forces?

- A) Bangladesh
- B) Myanmar
- C) Nepal
- D) Sri Lanka

39) Who was awarded the CEO of the Year at the 23rd Edition of The Business Leader of the Year Awards?

- A) Dan Boigino
- B) Paul Kapoor
- C) Sameer Kanodia
- D) None of the above

40) Which of the following city hosted the 12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific?

- A) Bengaluru
- B) Chennai
- C) Jaipur
- D) None of the above

41) Which of the following country has banned academic exchanges with seven Chinese universities over security risks?

- A) America
- B) Germany
- C) Russia
- D) Taiwan

42) Who among the following became the first woman pilot to be permanently assigned to the Indian Air Force's (IAF) Jaguar fighter squadron?

- A) Tanushka Singh
- B) Shivangi Singh
- C) Pratibha Singh
- D) None of the above

43) Veteran _____ Dr. Meena Sudhakar Prabhu passed away after a brief illness recently.

- A) Writer
- B) Singer
- C) Journalist
- D) None of the above

44) Which of the following country has officially declared English as the official language?

- A) Ukraine
- B) Spain
- C) Russia
- D) America

45) Following the success of Maha Kumbh, which of the following state government has developed five major spiritual corridors?

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

46) When the World Wildlife Day was observed?

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

47) Who among the following was conferred with the 'Icon of Excellence' award at the 14th edition of the Forbes India Leadership Awards (FILA) 2025?

- A) Jay Shah
- B) Narendra Modi
- C) Rahul Gandhi
- D) None of the above

48) Who among the following won the Bengaluru Open 2025 singles title?

- A) Shintaro Mochizuki
- B) Brandon Holt
- C) Blake Bayldon
- D) None of the above

49) In which of the following state a Rs 1,000-crore green hydrogen plant of Hero Future Energies (HFE) was inaugurated?

- A) Uttarakhand
- B) Punjab
- C) Haryana
- D) Andhra Pradesh

50) Who among the following became the seventh Indian cricketer to play 300 or more One-Day Internationals (ODIs)?

- A) Rohit Sharma
- B) Shikhar Dhawan
- C) Virat Kohli
- D) None of the above

51) Who among the following took charge as the Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA)?

- A) Manoj Mehta
- B) Dr Mayank Sharma
- C) Dr Aniruddha Jha
- D) None of the above

52) Which of the following state government will provide permanent electricity connection for farmers at Rs. 5?

- A) Odisha
- B) Madhya Pradesh
- C) Goa
- D) Andhra Pradesh

53) _____ clinched their third Ranji Trophy title.

- A) Vidarbha
- B) Kerala
- C) Gujarat
- D) None of the above

54) _____ became the first Indian woman to breach the 16-meter mark in indoor shot put.

- A) Krishna Jayasankar
- B) Abha Khatua
- C) Poornarao Rane
- D) None of the above

55) Which of the following state has organized a special workshop on 'Cyber Crime, Forensics and Law'?

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

56) Yamandu Orsi recently took oath as the president of which of the following country?

- A) Uruguay
- B) Peru
- C) Ireland
- D) None of the above

57) Legendary _____ Padmakar Shivalkar recently died due to age-related health issues.

- A) Cricketer
- B) Director
- C) Journalist
- D) Musician

58) Who among the following was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by Harcourt Butler Technical University (HBTU)?

- A) Manoj Mehta
- B) Dr. Mayank Sharma
- C) Dr. Dinesh Shahra
- D) None of the above

59) Who among the following was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Government e Marketplace (GeM)?

- A) Manan Mishra
- B) Anurag Shukla
- C) Ajay Bhadoo
- D) None of the above

60) Who among the following inaugurated the Vantara Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Centre, located in Gujarat?

- A) Amit Shah
- B) Anant Ambani
- C) Narendra Modi
- D) None of the above

61) _____ launched the first-ever trials of hydrogen-powered heavy-duty trucks.

- A) Tata Motors
- B) Mahindra
- C) Force
- D) Eicher

62) Who was honoured with the 'Lifetime Achievement in Hospitality and Education Through Technology' award by Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Shekhawat?

- A) Manoj Mehta
- B) Dr. Suborno Bose
- C) Dr. Mayank Sharma
- D) None of the above

63) Along with India which of the following country has inked an agreement to enhance cooperation in the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene?

- A) Sri Lanka
- B) Nepal
- C) Maldives
- D) Indonesia

64) Which of the following India's iconic table tennis star has announced his retirement?

- A) Harmeet Desai
- B) Manav Thakkar
- C) Sharat Kamal
- D) None of the above

65) Arab leaders approved _____ for the post-war reconstruction of the Gaza at an emergency summit in the Egyptian capital Cairo.

- A) \$40 billion
- B) \$53 billion
- C) \$62 billion
- D) \$70 billion

66) Who among the following was promoted to Executive Director of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)?

- A) Ajay Bhadoo
- B) Ajit Ratnakar Joshi
- C) Anurag Shukla
- D) None of the above

67) The Gujarat SemiConnect Conference-2025 was inaugurated by _____.

- A) Narendra Modi
- B) Bhupendra Patel
- C) Amit Shah
- D) None of the above

68) Who among the following was appointed the new Union law secretary?

- A) Manoj Mehta
- B) Suborno Bose
- C) Anju Rathi Rana
- D) None of the above

69) Padma awardee and renowned _____ Godawari Singh passed away after a prolong illness recently.

- A) Journalist
- B) Musician
- C) Craftsman
- D) Writer

70) The 86th India-Bangladesh Joint River Commission held its first meeting in _____.

- A) Bengaluru
- B) Kolkata
- C) Mumbai
- D) New Delhi

71) Who among the following has launched the IndiaAI Compute Portal?

- A) Rajnath Singh
- B) Piyush Goyal
- C) Ashwini Vaishnaw
- D) None of the above

72) In which of the following city the 24th World Sustainable Development Summit 2025 was held?

- A) Spain
- B) Russia
- C) New Delhi
- D) Nepal

73) Who among the following was roped in as the brand ambassador of Federal Bank?

- A) Alia Bhatt
- B) Kareena Kapoor
- C) Vidya Balan
- D) None of the above

74) Who among the following was appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of NMDC?

- A) Ajay Bhadoo
- B) Amitava Mukherjee
- C) Anurag Shukla
- D) None of the above

75) For innovative strategies in brokerage industry who among the following was named EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2024?

- A) Manoj Mehta
- B) Nitin Kamath
- C) Ritesh Agarwal
- D) None of the above

76) Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced that Bengaluru City University will be renamed after _____.

- A) APJ Abdul Kalam
- B) Dr. Manmohan Singh
- C) Ratan Tata
- D) None of the above

77) The All India Conference of Women Advocates was held in which of the following city?

- A) Bengaluru
- B) Kolkata
- C) Mumbai
- D) New Delhi

78) Which of the following state's Electronic City is set to be named after Ratan Tata?

- A) Assam
- B) Gujarat
- C) Madhya Pradesh
- D) Odisha

79) The Ministry of Defence has signed a contract with Rosoboronexport (RoE) of which of the following country to procure 1000 HP engines for T-72 Tanks?

- A) France
- B) Russia
- C) Spain
- D) USA

80) _____ emerged victorious in the Asian Women's Kabaddi Championship 2025.

- A) China
- B) India
- C) Iran
- D) Iraq

81) In Global Terrorism Index 2025 which of the following country secured top position?

- A) Syria
- B) Pakistan
- C) Mali
- D) Burkina Faso

82) Along with Iran and Russia which of the following country has conducted a significant joint military exercise, "Security Belt-2025"?

- A) Japan
- B) France
- C) China
- D) America

83) The prestigious 'Honorary Order of Freedom of Barbados' Award was bestowed upon _____ in recognition of his strategic leadership and valuable assistance.

- A) Rajnath Singh
- B) Narendra Modi
- C) Dr. S. Jaishankar

D) None of the above

84) Coal India has partnered with which of the following IIT to establish the Centre of Clean Energy & Net Zero (CLEANZ)?

- A) IIT Mumbai
- B) IIT Madras
- C) IIT Hyderabad
- D) IIT Guwahati

85) The Fisheries Startup Conclave 2.0 was held in which of the following city?

- A) Hyderabad
- B) Jabalpur
- C) Mumbai
- D) Patna

86) When was World Consumer Rights Day observed recently?

- A) 16 March
- B) 13 March
- C) 14 March
- D) 15 March

87) In which city did India recently participate in the 353rd Governing Body Meeting of the International Labour Organization (ILO)?

- A) New York
- B) Geneva
- C) London
- D) UK

88) Which state government has recently announced plans to operate all its municipal corporations using solar energy?

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

89) With which country did India recently hold its first Joint Working Group meeting on agriculture?

- A) Germany
- B) Australia
- C) Spain
- D) Chile

90) In which city was the Water Sustainability Conference 2025 held?

- A) Hyderabad
- B) Jabalpur
- C) Mumbai
- D) New Delhi

91) Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary is situated in which Indian state?

- A) Rajasthan
- B) Gujarat
- C) Kerala
- D) Maharashtra

92) Where was the 57th annual conference of the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) held?

- A) Assam
- B) Manipur
- C) Nagaland
- D) Manipur

93) Bongosagar 2025 Naval Exercise is conducted between India and which country?

- A) Myanmar
- B) Sri Lanka
- C) China
- D) Bangladesh

94) Recently, India has included how many properties in the tentative list for UNESCO recognition?

- A) 5
- B) 7
- C) 6
- D) 8

95) Which nation recently announced the establishment of ten advanced maternity and pediatric centers in Afghanistan?

- A) Turkey
- B) United Arab Emirates
- C) Saudi Arabia
- D) Qatar

96) _____ has become the World Junior Chess Champion at Petrovac, Montenegro.

- A) V Narayanan
- B) S Shankaran
- C) Pranav Venkatesh
- D) None of the above

97) Along with SIDBI which of the following bank has signed an MoU to strengthen MSME financing and foster the growth of the MSME ecosystem across the country?

- A) Yes Bank
- B) HDFC Bank
- C) Federal Bank
- D) None of the above

98) Liu Jiakun of which of the following country was awarded the 2025 Pritzker Architecture Prize?

- A) China
- B) Japan
- C) Singapore
- D) South Korea

99) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) has appointed who among the following as its new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD)?

- A) Vikas Kaushal
- B) Rajendra Singh
- C) Japprakash Garg
- D) None of the above

100) Which of the following state cabinet has approved a Bill that aims to regulate the state's coaching institutes?

- A) Assam
- B) Madhya Pradesh
- C) Rajasthan
- D) Uttar Pradesh

101) Which of the following company announced an agreement with SpaceX to bring Starlink's high-speed internet services to its customers in India?

- A) Airtel
- B) Jio
- C) VI
- D) Both A and B

102) _____ secured the third spot in YouGov India Value Rankings 2025.

- A) Amazon
- B) Amul
- C) Flipkart
- D) Meshoo

103) Which of the following state has announced plans to launch its own satellite to bolster data access for crucial socio-economic initiatives?

- A) Gujarat
- B) Goa
- C) Assam
- D) Punjab

104) Which of the following country has become the world's largest arms importer?

- A) France
- B) India
- C) Pakistan
- D) Ukraine

105) Honda Cars India Ltd (HCIL) has announced that _____ will become its new President and CEO effective April 1, 2025.

- A) Mamun Alam
- B) Nihsashi Takeuchi
- C) Takashi Nakajima
- D) None of the above

106) Who among the following won the ICC Men's Player of the Month?

- A) Shubman Gill
- B) Steve Smith
- C) Virat Kohli
- D) Rohit Sharma

107) Which of the following state government launched 'Rajiv Yuva Vikas Yojana'?

- A) Telangana
- B) Punjab
- C) Haryana
- D) Andhra Pradesh

108) _____ has replaced the Devanagari rupee symbol with a Tamil letter in its logo for the budget 2025-26.

- A) Andhra Pradesh
- B) Kerala
- C) Tamil Nadu
- D) Telangana

109) In which of the following city Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the New Smart City Hospital and Pathology Centre?

- A) Gorakhpur
- B) Jhansi
- C) Meerut
- D) Prayagraj

110) Who has launched Prismix, an AI-focused company aimed at revolutionizing storytelling through generative technologies?

- A) Ajay Devgan
- B) Shahrukh Khan
- C) Vicky Kaushal
- D) None of the above

111) Veteran _____ Syed Abid Ali passed away at 83 due to prolonged illness.

- A) Artist
- B) Cricketer
- C) Singer
- D) Writer

112) Which of the following country recently organized its 1st G20 Trade & Investment Working Group meeting?

- A) Australia
- B) Germany
- C) Nepal
- D) South Africa

113) Who among the following was appointed as the head of the Security Operations Center (SOC) of ICICI Bank?

- A) Kamal Wali
- B) Manoj Mehta
- C) Nitin Agarwal

D) None of the above

114) The Central Government has imposed _____ year ban on the Awami Action Committee (AAC) and the Jammu and Kashmir Ittihad Ul Muslimeen (JKIM).

- A) Two
- B) Three
- C) Seven
- D) Five

115) Which of the following states leads in rooftop solar panel installations under the PM Surya Ghar Yojana?

- A) Assam
- B) Gujarat
- C) Kerala
- D) Uttar Pradesh

116) Renowned _____ Deb Mukerji passed away at age 83.

- A) Writer
- B) Singer
- C) Artist
- D) Actor

117) Which country has deployed a powerful new Large Phased Array Radar (LPAR) system with a massive 5000+ kilometer detection range?

- A) Spain
- B) France
- C) China
- D) America

118) India has successfully conducted a test launch of the indigenous ASTRA Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM) from _____.

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

119) India's software and IT services exports reached _____ in 2023-24.

- A) \$150 billion
- B) \$190 billion

- C) \$200 billion
- D) \$250 billion

120) Tata Communications appointed who among the following as the Chairman of its Board of Directors?

- A) Kamal Wali
- B) N Ganapathy Subramaniam
- C) Nitin Agarwal
- D) None of the above

121) Renowned Odia _____ and former bureaucrat Ramakanta Rath died at his residence in Kharvel Nagar area in Bhubaneswar.

- A) Director
- B) Journalist
- C) Poet
- D) Writer

122) Which of the following won the inaugural International Masters League (IML) 2025?

- A) England Masters
- B) India Masters
- C) West Indies Masters
- D) None of the above

123) _____ has secured the second position in the country under the Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Yojana.

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

124) Which state government is set to develop three heritage hotels inspired by Suryagarh, Jaisalmer?

- A) Gujarat
- B) Madhya Pradesh
- C) Odisha
- D) Uttar Pradesh

125) _____ won the Women's Premier League 2025 title.

- A) Delhi Capital
- B) Gujarat Giants

- C) Mumbai Indians
- D) None of the above

126) _____ elected as the Chairman of ATMA (Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association).

- A) Abhay Karandikar
- B) Arun Mammen
- C) Vijay Mishra
- D) None of the above

127) Skechers the global athletic footwear company has roped in who among the following as its brand ambassador?

- A) Jaspreet Bumrah
- B) Mahendra Singh Dhoni
- C) Rohit Sharma
- D) Virat Kohli

128) Dina Boluarte, the President of which of the following country has declared a state of emergency in the capital Lima?

- A) Sudan
- B) Peru
- C) Morocco
- D) None of the above

129) Dr. V. Narayanan, Chairman, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) recently launched a new fluid and thermal research centre at which of the following IIT?

- A) IIT Delhi
- B) IIT Guwahati
- C) IIT Kanpur
- D) IIT Madras

130) Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis inaugurated the state's first-ever temple dedicated to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in _____.

- A) Bhiwandi
- B) Mumbai
- C) Nagpur
- D) Pune

131) Who among the following was appointed as the Goodwill Ambassador for VISION 2020 India to combat avoidable blindness across the nation?

- A) Abhay Karandikar
- B) Krishnamachari Srikkanth
- C) Vijay Mishra
- D) None of the above

132) Renowned _____ David Steven Cohen has passed away at the age of 58.

- A) Artist
- B) Journalist
- C) Singer
- D) Writer

133) What is the rank of India in latest free speech index?

- A) 08
- B) 05
- C) 24
- D) 99

134) Along with India which of the following country participated in the 23rd edition of the bilateral naval exercise VARUNA?

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

135) India's first public-private partnership (PPP) green waste processing plant has been set up in _____.

- A) Indore
- B) Jaipur
- C) Mumbai
- D) Pune

136) _____ Police has announced the creation of 'Shishtachar' anti-eve teasing squads to combat crime against women and improve safety.

- A) Punjab
- B) Haryana
- C) Delhi
- D) Andhra Pradesh

137) _____ has developed two cutting-edge 32-bit microprocessors, specifically designed for space applications.

- A) NASA
- B) ISRO
- C) CNSA
- D) None of the above

138) Who among the following was appointed as the new vice chancellor of Kathmandu University (KU)?

- A) Abhay Karandikar
- B) Dr. Achyut Prasad Wagle
- C) Vijay Mishra
- D) None of the above

139) In which of the following city the seventh edition of the National School of Drama's (NSD) Adirang Mahotsav was held?

- A) New Delhi
- B) Mumbai
- C) Kolkata
- D) Hyderabad

140) A new plant species named Uniyala keralensis (family Asteraceae) has been identified in the Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve in _____.

- A) Assam
- B) Bihar
- C) Kerala
- D) West Bengal

141) Which of the following country discovered the world's largest reserve of 46 million tons of natural hydrogen worth \$92 billion?

- A) France
- B) Ireland
- C) Japan
- D) Spain

142) At the Indian Open Throws Competition 2025, Seema clinched which of the following medal in the women's discus throw event in Navi Mumbai?

- A) Bronze

- B) Gold
- C) Silver
- D) None of the above

143) The book on CMC Vellore, 'To the seventh generation: the journey of Christian Medical College Vellore' was launched by _____.

- A) Ajit Mohan
- B) Dr. V.I. Mathan
- C) Krishna Kant
- D) None of the above

144) Organized by the Union ministry of social justice and empowerment, Purple Fest 2025 was held in which of the following city?

- A) New Delhi
- B) Mumbai
- C) Jaipur
- D) Hyderabad

145) Which of the following country held the third Central Asian Youth Delegation, under the International Youth Exchange Programme (IYEP)?

- A) Singapore
- B) Nepal
- C) Kazakhstan
- D) India

146) Who among the following was elected as the 10th President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC)?

- A) Pratima Mishra

- B) Mridulika Jha
- C) Kirsty Coventry
- D) None of the above

147) _____ became the first non-host nation to qualify for the FIFA World Cup 2026.

- A) Spain
- B) Japan
- C) Germany
- D) France

148) Who among the following was appointed as Joint Secretary (Director level) in the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), Delhi?

- A) Anuj Kumar Singh
- B) Manan Kumar Mishra
- C) N Ganapathy
- D) None of the above

149) Goibibo has roped in who among the following as brand ambassador?

- A) Akshay Kumar
- B) Rishabh Pant
- C) Rohit Sharma
- D) Virat Kohli

150) A 58-foot statue of Indian freedom fighter P Sriramulu is set to be installed in which of the following city?

- A) Odisha
- B) Kochi
- C) Chennai
- D) Amaravati

ANSWERS

1) Correct Answer: A

The Food-Tech platform Zomato has launched an in-house AI powered customer support platform for businesses known as 'Nugget'. It will help them to scale support effortlessly without any requirement of coding and development team.

2) Correct Answer: C

India's vice-captain Shubman Gill has overtaken Pakistan's Babar Azam to become the top-ranked ODI

batter in the latest ICC rankings. The 25-year-old Indian opener played a crucial role in India's 3-0 series sweep over England, registering two half-centuries and a century.

3) Correct Answer: A

Google has inaugurated Ananta, one of its largest global offices, in Bengaluru. The company says that its new campus underscores its commitment to India's digital transformation and its role as a key tech hub. It also

signifies the boundless potential we see to improve lives through technology.

4) Correct Answer: C

Union Minister Jitendra Singh inaugurated India's first "Open Air Art Wall Museum" a unique open-air art museum at Mausam Bhawan, New Delhi, depicting and celebrating the 150 years of milestone journey of the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

5) Correct Answer: D

The Uttar Pradesh Assembly set history as the first legislative body in the country to be equipped with a translation facility. The translation services are available in multiple languages, including Awadhi, Braj, Bhojpuri, Bundelkhand, and English.

6) Correct Answer: B

Tuhin Kanta Pandey, the Finance Secretary, has been named the new Chairman of SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India). He will take over from Madhabi Puri Buch, whose term concludes on 28th February 2025. His appointment is for a three-year tenure.

7) Correct Answer: D

A recent three-day off-season survey at Idukki Wildlife Sanctuary recorded 14 bird species, 15 butterfly species, and 8 odonate species. Established in 1976, the sanctuary is situated in Kerala's Idukki district, covering areas in Thodupuzha and Udumbanchola Taluks.

8) Correct Answer: B

Sumita Dawra, the Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, chaired the 112th meeting of the Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) Executive Committee. The meeting focused on key policy decisions related to employee provident fund management and future initiatives to enhance social security benefits.

9) Correct Answer: D

Indonesia secured its first Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championship title in February 2025 by defeating China 3-1 in the final held at the Conson Gymnasium in Qingdao from February 11 to 16, 2025.

10) Correct Answer: D

The 9th National Summit on Public Health Innovations was held in Puri, Odisha, on February 28, 2025,

inaugurated by Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda. It provided a platform for states to share healthcare initiatives.

11) Correct Answer: B

The International Radiobiology Conference on Space Radiation recently started in New Delhi. This event brings together experts from around the world to discuss the effects of space radiation on human health, especially for astronauts on long-duration space missions. The conference aims to explore innovative solutions and research advancements in radiobiology, radiation protection, and medical countermeasures for space travelers.

12) Correct Answer: B

The Punjab government has implemented a policy making Punjabi a compulsory subject in all schools across the state. This initiative is aimed at preserving and promoting the Punjabi language, ensuring that students remain connected to their linguistic and cultural heritage. Schools are now required to include Punjabi in their curriculum to strengthen its use and significance in education.

13) Correct Answer: D

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal inaugurated the India Calling Summit 2025 in Mumbai. The summit, organized by the Indian Merchants' Chamber (IMC), serves as a platform to enhance trade and investment ties between India and global partners. It brings together policymakers, industry leaders, and experts to discuss economic opportunities, innovation, and strategic collaborations to boost India's global trade presence.

14) Correct Answer: C

Sumita Dawra, the Secretary (Labour & Employment), chaired the 112th meeting of the EPFO Executive Committee. The meeting focused on key policy decisions related to provident fund management, social security benefits for employees, and reforms to improve the efficiency of EPFO services. Various measures were discussed to enhance transparency, ease of access, and the financial security of employees under the scheme.

15) Correct Answer: B

The United Nations (UN) has raised serious concerns about mass deaths due to famine in Sudan, as the ongoing conflict has severely impacted food supply chains, humanitarian aid, and basic resources. Millions of people are at risk of starvation due to displacement, infrastructure collapse, and restricted access to essential supplies. The UN has urged immediate global intervention to prevent a large-scale humanitarian disaster.

16) Correct Answer: D

India and Argentina signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation in lithium exploration and mining, the mines ministry said in a statement. The MoU was signed between Mineral Exploration and Consultancy Limited (MECL), a PSU under the Ministry of Mines, and the Provincial Government of Catamarca.

17) Correct Answer: A

Mohammed Shami began his Champions Trophy campaign with a milestone. The senior fast bowler broke the all-time record for the fastest bowler to 200 wickets in men's one-day internationals (ODIs). Shami achieved the feat during India's Group A match against Bangladesh in Dubai.

18) Correct Answer: B

India has been elected to the vice presidency of the International Organization of Aids to Marine Navigation (IALA) in Singapore. The first General Assembly of IALA also marks its transition from a non-governmental organization (NGO) to an inter-governmental organization (IGO), where India was elected to its Vice Presidency.

19) Correct Answer: B

Mrithinjai Srikanthan (IRS) was appointed as Deputy Secretary in the Department of Expenditure under the Ministry of Finance. Srikanthan has been selected for the appointment under the Central Staffing Scheme for a period of four years with effect from the date of taking over charge of the post or until further orders whichever is earlier.

20) Correct Answer: D

The Uttarakhand government has approved a land law to protect the state's resources, following a spate of demands by residents of the state, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami announced. The new land law is significant for the ecologically important state on the southern slope of the Himalayas.

21) Correct Answer: D

The Government of Kerala, in collaboration with Remidio, a leader in AI-driven ophthalmic screening solutions, has launched Nayanamritham 2.0 — the world's first government-led AI-assisted chronic eye disease screening program.

22) Correct Answer: C

Former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Shaktikanta Das has been appointed Principal Secretary-2 to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, according to a notification issued by the Secretariat of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.

23) Correct Answer: C

Pankaj Advani has once again showcased his brilliance on the international stage, capturing an unprecedented 14th gold medal at the Asian Snooker Championship. The triumph comes just days after he won the National Snooker Championship in Indore.

24) Correct Answer: A

PM Narendra Modi will travel to Mauritius as chief guest for the national day celebrations of the Indian Ocean country. After 2015, this is the second time Modi has been given that honour by Mauritius. President Droupadi Murmu attended Mauritius National Day celebrations last year as the chief guest.

25) Correct Answer: B

139 artists created a world record by dancing continuously for 24 hours 9 minutes 26 seconds during the 51st Khajuraho Dance Festival in Khajuraho. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav stated that the grand classical dance marathon, dedicated to the worship of the divine and now a Guinness World Record, will elevate the prestige of dance practitioners.

26) Correct Answer: A

Vietnam's parliament has given the green light to an ambitious \$8 billion railway project linking the northern

port city of Haiphong to the Chinese border. The 390-kilometer rail line will run through some of Vietnam's major manufacturing hubs, including Hanoi, before reaching Lao Cai, a border city adjacent to China's Yunnan province.

27) Correct Answer: C

A new bat coronavirus, similar to the one that caused the COVID-19 pandemic, has been discovered in China. According to the South China Morning Post (SCMP), the new virus called HKU5-CoV-2 was found by a team of virologists led by Shi Zhengli.

28) Correct Answer: B

Moody's Analytics has projected India's economic growth to slow down to 6.4% in 2025 from 6.6% in 2024, mainly due to softening of global demand and "new tariffs". The agency expects global growth to ease to 3.7% in 2025 and 3.5% in 2026 from an estimated 3.9% in 2024.

29) Correct Answer: B

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the 19th instalment of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme in Bhagalpur, Bihar. It will transfer approximately Rs 22,000 crore directly into the bank accounts of 9.8 crore farmers.

30) Correct Answer: C

Reserve Bank has launched mobile application 'RBIDATA' which will provide access to more than 11,000 different series of economic data related to the Indian economy. The mobile app offers macroeconomic and financial statistics relating to the Indian economy in a user-friendly and visually engaging format.

31) Correct Answer: C

Global Investors Summit 2025 was held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Among the major sectors that received the highest amount in proposals are new and renewable energy (₹5.72 lakh crore); mining and mineral resources (₹3.22 lakh crore); urban development and housing (₹1.97 lakh crore).

32) Correct Answer: A

Virat Kohli has once again etched his name in the record books, becoming the fastest batter to breach the 14,000-run milestone in ODIs. The Indian stalwart reached the

landmark during the high-voltage Champions Trophy clash against Pakistan.

33) Correct Answer: A

US President Donald Trump has appointed Dan Bongino as deputy director of the FBI. Bongino, 50, who has worked for the New York police department and the Secret Service, is a staunch Trump ally. His appointment means neither of the top two people running the agency has FBI experience.

34) Correct Answer: D

The first-ever Conference for Women Peacekeepers on the theme "Women in Peacekeeping: A Global South Perspective" was organised in New Delhi. The conference was organised by the Ministry of External Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence and the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping in India.

35) Correct Answer: B

Manohar International Airport (GOX), built and managed by GMR Goa International Airport Ltd. (GGIAL), has created history by becoming India's first airport to be awarded the prestigious "Sarvashrestha Suraksha Puraskar (Golden Trophy)" at the National Safety Council of India (NSCI) Safety Awards 2024 in the 'Service Sector' category.

36) Correct Answer: A

The Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) government in Assam has formally included 'Bathouism' as a religion option on important application forms such as admission forms, birth and death certificates. Bathouism is the Bodo people's traditional faith, which is practiced predominantly in Assam and the Bhutanese foothills.

37) Correct Answer: C

Professor Sabyasachi Kar was appointed as the new Director of the Institute of Economic Growth (IEG), New Delhi. He succeeded Professor Chetan Ghate. An economist, Kar currently serves as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Chair Professor at IEG and is a member of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's (Mospi) Committee on Regional Accounts.

38) Correct Answer: A

India and Bangladesh have decided to establish a new communication link between the deputy commanders of

their respective border-guarding forces. It was felt "necessary and important" to enhance the engagement between the two sides and hence, this new platform for commanders' interaction has been agreed upon.

39) Correct Answer: C

Sameer Kanodia, MD and CEO of Lumina Datamatics recognized as the CEO of the Year at the 23rd Edition of The Business Leader of the Year Awards. Since its inception in 2002, The Business Leader of the Year Awards has honored outstanding business leaders who embrace change, drive transformation, and create a lasting impact on their industries and communities.

40) Correct Answer: C

India hosted the 12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific at the Rajasthan International Centre in Jaipur from March 3 to 5, 2025. The event was focused on the theme "Realizing Circular Societies Towards Achieving SDGs and Carbon Neutrality in Asia-Pacific."

41) Correct Answer: D

Taiwan has imposed sanctions on seven universities linked to the Chinese Ministry of Industry and Information Technology due to concerns over national security, according to Minister of Education Cheng Ying-yao, Taipei Times reported.

42) Correct Answer: A

In a historic achievement, Flying Officer Tanushka Singh, a resident of Mangaluru, has become the first woman pilot to be permanently assigned to the Indian Air Force's (IAF) Jaguar fighter squadron. The Jaguar fighter jet, a key asset of the IAF, had never been permanently piloted by a woman until now.

43) Correct Answer: A

Veteran writer Dr. Meena Sudhakar Prabhu passed away after a brief illness. She was 85. Despite her medical career, she developed a passion for writing and became a celebrated travel writer in Marathi literature. She played a crucial role in elevating travelogues to a respected literary genre.

44) Correct Answer: D

The United States has officially declared English as its official language, a move that could have significant

implications for Indian professionals and students. While the US has long functioned primarily in English, this marks the first time the language has been given official status.

45) Correct Answer: C

Maha Kumbh 2025 has opened the doors to new possibilities of spiritual tourism in Uttar Pradesh. During this mega event, the Uttar Pradesh government developed five major spiritual corridors. The five major spiritual corridors include the Prayag- Vindhyachal-Kashi Corridor, through which the devotees will be able to travel from Prayagraj to Vindhyachal Devidham and then to Varanasi.

46) Correct Answer: B

Celebrated annually on March 3, World Wildlife Day is an international celebration of the immense variety of life on our planet and a call for the protection of endangered species and natural environments. Established by the United Nations in 2013, this day highlights the importance of sustainable living and wildlife preservation for future generations.

47) Correct Answer: A

ICC Chairman Jay Shah was conferred with the 'Icon of Excellence' award at the 14th edition of the Forbes India Leadership Awards (FILA) 2025 for his contributions to cricket administration. Shah previously served as the Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) before becoming the youngest-ever ICC Chairman.

48) Correct Answer: B

American tennis player Brandon Holt clinched his second ATP Challenger singles title of the season with a fluent 6-3 6-3 win over Japan's Shintaro Mochizuki in the summit clash of the 2025 Bengaluru Open, the tournament's ninth edition.

49) Correct Answer: D

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has virtually inaugurated Hero Future Energies' (HFE) Rs 1,000-crore green hydrogen plant at Rockman Industries in Tirupati. The HFE plant blends green hydrogen with Piped Natural Gas (PNG) and Liquefied Natural Gas (LPG) for industrial heating.

50) Correct Answer: C

Batting superstar Virat Kohli has joined legendary Sachin Tendulkar in an elite list of cricketers, by becoming the seventh Indian and 22nd player overall in the world to play 300 ODIs. With 14,085 runs to his name, Kohli is the third leading run scorer in the 50-over format of the game, and he scored his 51st ODI century in the match played against Pakistan in Dubai.

51) Correct Answer: B

Dr Mayank Sharma assumed the office of Controller General of Defence Accounts (CGDA) recently. He is a 1989-batch officer of the Indian Defence Accounts Service (IDAS) and has had a distinguished career in the government spanning more than three decades.

52) Correct Answer: B

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has announced that the Madhya Pradesh government will provide permanent electricity connection for farmers at Rs. 5. While directing the immediate implementation of this scheme in the central region, he stated that it would be gradually extended across the entire state.

53) Correct Answer: A

Vidarbha were crowned Ranji Trophy champions after drawing the final against Kerala. Vidarbha earned themselves a third title by virtue of their first innings lead. They had previously won the title in 2017-18 and 2018-19.

54) Correct Answer: A

India's Krishna Jayasankar shattered the national record in the women's shot put at the Mountain West Indoor Track and Field Championships 2025 athletics meet in Albuquerque, USA. With a throw of 16.03 metres, the 22-year-old Krishna Jayasankar also became the first Indian athlete to breach the 16m mark in women's indoor shot put.

55) Correct Answer: A

In Punjab, to deal with technology-driven crimes to safeguard the critical infrastructure, including power grids, water systems, and transportation networks, a special workshop on 'Cyber Crime, Forensics and Law' was organized, in which these challenges and the need for forensic investigation were discussed.

56) Correct Answer: A

Uruguay is set for a political shift to the center-left as Yamandu Orsi took office as the country's next president. Orsi, a 57-year-old former mayor backed by leftist ex-President Jose "Pepe" Mujica, narrowly won the November election against the ruling center-right coalition.

57) Correct Answer: A

Padmakar Shivalkar, one of the finest left-arm spinners the country has produced, passed away in Mumbai. In 2017, Shivalkar was conferred with the BCCI CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award along with his contemporary left-arm spinner Rajendra Goel, who too didn't get a chance to represent India.

58) Correct Answer: C

Harcourt Butler Technical University (HBTU) has conferred its prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award upon Dr. Dinesh Shahra, honoring his outstanding contributions to India's edible oil industry, nutrition security, and sustainability.

59) Correct Answer: C

The Government of India has appointed Shri Ajay Bhadoo, Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce, as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Government e Marketplace (GeM). He will assume this role alongside his existing responsibilities in the Department of Commerce.

60) Correct Answer: C

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and visited Vantara, the world's largest animal rescue, rehabilitation, and conservation centre, in Gujarat. Spread across 3,500 acres, Vantara is home to over 1.5 lakh rescued, endangered, and threatened animals.

61) Correct Answer: A

Tata Motors has launched the first-ever trials of hydrogen-powered heavy-duty trucks. The trial phase will span up to 24 months and involves deployment of 16 advanced hydrogen-powered vehicles with varying configurations and payload capacities.

62) Correct Answer: B

Dr. Suborno Bose, Chairman of the International Institute of Hotel Management (IIHM), one of India's foremost hospitality educators and a visionary in integrating

technology with hospitality, has been honoured with the 'Lifetime Achievement in Hospitality and Education Through Technology' award by Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Shekhawat.

63) Correct Answer: B

Nepal and India have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sector, including waste management. The comprehensive MoU outlines a collaborative framework encompassing several key areas, including capacity-building training programs for Nepali personnel in water resource management and related fields.

64) Correct Answer: C

India's iconic table tennis star, Achantha Sharath Kamal, has announced his retirement from professional table tennis. His final competition will be the WTT Star Contender event at the Nehru Indoor Stadium in Chennai, scheduled from March 25 to 30, 2025.

65) Correct Answer: B

A \$53bn (£41.4 billion) reconstruction plan to rival President Donald Trump's idea for the US to "take over Gaza" and move out more than two million Palestinians has been approved by Arab leaders at an emergency summit in the Egyptian capital Cairo.

66) Correct Answer: B

The Reserve Bank said it has appointed Ajit Ratnakar Joshi as Executive Director (ED) who will look after Department of Statistics and Information Management and Financial Stability Department. Prior to being promoted as ED, Mr. Joshi was serving as principal adviser in Department of Statistics and Information Management.

67) Correct Answer: B

CM Bhupendra Patel inaugurated Gujarat SemiConnect Conference-2025 in Gandhinagar. Global investors and NRIs mainly from the US, Singapore and the UK, have shown interest in Gujarat's Dholera Special Investment Region which is emerging as a semiconductor hub in the state.

68) Correct Answer: C

Anju Rathi Rana, an Indian Legal Service officer, was appointed the new Union law secretary. She is the first

woman to be appointed secretary, legal affairs, who is also called the law secretary. Rana joined the law ministry as a joint secretary in 2017. Prior to that, she was a public prosecutor in the Delhi government for 18 years.

69) Correct Answer: C

Padma awardee and renowned master craftsman Godawari Singh passed away after a prolong illness, in Varanasi. He was 84. Singh, a resident of Kashmiri Ganj locality in Kashi, was widely respected for his craftsmanship.

70) Correct Answer: B

The 86th meeting of the India-Bangladesh Joint River Commission was held in Kolkata. The Ganga Water Treaty, signed in 1996 between Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina, is set to expire next year after a 30-year term.

71) Correct Answer: C

Union IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw unveiled the IndiaAI Compute Portal during an event, which will provide accessible and affordable AI compute, network, storage, platform, and cloud services. AIKosha, an online repository containing datasets and AI models, was also introduced by the minister.

72) Correct Answer: C

The 24th edition of World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) was held at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. Under the theme 'Partnerships for Accelerating Sustainable Development and Climate Solutions,' WSDS 2025 has provide a platform for global leaders to for deliberation and knowledge exchange.

73) Correct Answer: C

Federal Bank has appointed actor Vidya Balan its first-ever brand ambassador. The announcement was made at a special ceremony in Mumbai, where Vidya Balan was presented with a commemorative memento by K.V.S. Manian, the bank's Managing Director and CEO.

74) Correct Answer: B

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Amitava Mukherjee as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of the National

Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC). Mukherjee is a 1995 batch Indian Railway Accounts Service officer.

75) Correct Answer: B

Nithin Kamath, the founder and chief executive officer (CEO) of Zerodha, has been named the EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2024. He was chosen by a 10-member jury that acknowledged Mr. Kamath's groundbreaking low-margin and high-volume strategy that transformed the brokerage industry.

76) Correct Answer: B

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced that Bangalore City University will be renamed after the late former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar had said that the government planned to institute a permanent scheme in Dr Manmohan Singh's name.

77) Correct Answer: D

Over 1,200 women advocates attended a two-day conference on International Women's Day, organized by the Akhil Bhartiya Adhivakta Parishad in collaboration with National Commission for Women (NCW) in New Delhi. The event focused on the historical contributions and empowerment of women, highlighted with discussions and keynote speeches by prominent figures, including Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal and Delhi High Court judges.

78) Correct Answer: A

In recognition of the contribution of Tata Group and its Chairman Emeritus, Late Ratan Naval Tata, the Assam Cabinet meeting has approved the naming of the entire area covered by the Assam Semiconductor & Electronics Logistics Park (ASELP), Jagiroad Tata OSAT Center, and the proposed township with social infrastructure as Ratan Tata Electronics City (RTEC), Jagiroad.

79) Correct Answer: B

The Ministry of Defence has signed a contract with Russia's Rosoboronexport (RoE) to procure 1000 HP engines for T-72 Tanks. There are commonly three categories of tanks: light, medium, and heavy tanks. The Army's MBT Arjun weighs around 60 tons, T-90 around 48 tons, and T-70 around 45 tons.

80) Correct Answer: B

India won its fifth title at the Asian Women's Kabaddi Championship. The Indian team beat Iran 32-25 in the summit clash in Tehran to successfully defend its crown. The Indian women's kabaddi team entered the competition as the defending champions, having beaten the Republic of Korea in the 2017 final in Gorgan, Iran.

81) Correct Answer: D

Pakistan has been ranked as the second-most terrorism-affected country in the world, moving up from its previous fourth position, according to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2025 report. Burkina Faso in Africa topped the list published by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).

82) Correct Answer: C

Iran, Russia and China have conducted joint naval drills in the Gulf of Oman, marking the fifth year the three countries have conducted military drills together. Iran's Press TV said naval groups from Azerbaijan, South Africa, Oman, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Qatar, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates and Sri Lanka were also observing the drills.

83) Correct Answer: B

In a ceremony held in Bridgetown, Barbados, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs and Textiles, Shri Pabitra Margherita received the prestigious 'Honorary Order of Freedom of Barbados' Award bestowed upon Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in recognition of his strategic leadership and valuable assistance.

84) Correct Answer: C

Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad and Coal India Limited (CIL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish the Centre of Clean Energy & Net Zero (CLEANZ). The centre will also provide training, R&D facilities and offer joint prospects for students, the faculty, and professionals from both the organisations.

85) Correct Answer: A

The Fisheries Startup Conclave 2.0 was organized in Hyderabad, Telangana, by the Department of Fisheries under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying (MoFAH&D). The event was attended by key figures, including Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh, Minister of State George Kurian, and Minister of State Prof. S.P. Singh Baghel.

86) Correct Answer: D

World Consumer Rights Day is observed annually on 15th March to raise awareness about consumer rights and protection. It was first celebrated in 1983 and marks the anniversary of President John F. Kennedy's 1962 address to the U.S. Congress, where he outlined the four basic consumer rights:

87) Correct Answer: B

India participated in the 353rd Governing Body Meeting of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which took place from March 10 to 20, 2025, in Geneva, Switzerland.

88) Correct Answer: B

The Government of Uttar Pradesh has announced plans to transform all 17 of its municipal corporations into solar cities. This initiative aims to promote clean energy and sustainable urban development within the state.

89) Correct Answer: D

India and Chile recently held their first Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting on agriculture to enhance bilateral cooperation in agricultural research, market access, and capacity building. The meeting focused on strengthening ties in horticulture, trade, and sustainable farming practices.

90) Correct Answer: D

The Water Sustainability Conference 2025 took place on March 12, 2025, at the NDMC Convention Centre in New Delhi. Organized by the Bureau of Water Use Efficiency (BWUE) under the National Water Mission (NWM), Ministry of Jal Shakti, in collaboration with The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), the conference focused on promoting industrial water use efficiency. The event was inaugurated by Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri C. R. Patil.

91) Correct Answer: D

Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Raigad district, Maharashtra. It was established to preserve the coastal woodland ecosystem of the Western Ghats. The sanctuary is home to diverse wildlife, including leopards, sambar deer, giant squirrels, and numerous bird species.

92) Correct Answer: A

The 57th Annual Conference of the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) was held at Bodofa Fwthar in Dotma, Kokrajhar district, Assam, from March 13 to 16, 2025. The conference focused on issues related to education, youth development, and the cultural identity of the Bodo community. The event included discussions, cultural performances, and policy resolutions aimed at the welfare of the Bodo people.

93) Correct Answer: D

The Bongosagar 2025 naval exercise is a bilateral maritime drill between the Indian Navy and the Bangladesh Navy. It aims to strengthen naval cooperation, enhance interoperability, and improve maritime security in the Bay of Bengal through tactical drills, surface firing, and joint operations.

94) Correct Answer: C

On March 7, 2025, India added six new properties to its tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage recognition. With this addition, India's tentative list now includes 62 sites. The tentative list serves as a preliminary inventory of cultural and natural heritage sites that a country may later nominate for UNESCO recognition.

95) Correct Answer: B

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has announced the setup of ten modern maternity and pediatric centers in Afghanistan. This initiative aims to enhance maternal and child healthcare, benefiting around 115,000 women by providing specialized medical services and infrastructure support.

96) Correct Answer: C

In the space of less than four months, India has another world champion in chess. Grandmaster Pranav Venkatesh is the new world junior chess champion. He needed only a draw in the final round to win the open category of the tournament held in Petrovac, Montenegro.

97) Correct Answer: C

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and The Federal Bank Limited (FBL) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance financial support for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). The partnership aims to provide

funding solutions for project finance, machinery and equipment purchases, working capital needs, and loans against property.

98) Correct Answer: A

Chinese architect Liu Jiakun was awarded the Pritzker Architecture Prize for his buildings that aim to prioritise people over architectural style. Liu became the 54th laureate and third architect from China to receive the award in its 46-year history.

99) Correct Answer: A

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) has appointed Vikas Kaushal as its new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) for the next five years. This marks the first time a private-sector executive has been chosen to lead a public sector undertaking (PSU) in India's oil and gas industry.

100) Correct Answer: C

The Rajasthan government has decided to introduce stringent regulations for coaching institutes operating across the state. In a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma, the proposal for the Rajasthan Coaching Centers (Control and Regulation) Bill 2025 has been approved.

101) Correct Answer: D

A day after Bharti Airtel, Jio Platforms Ltd (JPL), of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has announced an agreement with American billionaire Elon Musk's SpaceX to offer Starlink's broadband internet services to its customers in India.

102) Correct Answer: B

In the esteemed YouGov India Value Rankings 2025, Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (Amul) was named the third most valuable brand in India. Furthermore, Amul scores second among female consumers and third among male consumers, demonstrating its relevance and trustworthiness across all demographics.

103) Correct Answer: C

The Assam government announced that it is set to launch its own satellite, which will help collect data for the implementation of critical socio-economic projects, besides keeping surveillance on its border. The

announcement was made by Finance Minister Ajanta Neog while presenting the state budget for 2025-26.

104) Correct Answer: D

Ukraine, involved in a war with Russia for the past four years, was the largest importer of major arms in the world in the 2020-24. India was the second-largest arms importer, according to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

105) Correct Answer: C

Japanese automobile manufacturer Honda Motor Company has appointed Takashi Nakajima as the new President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Honda Cars India (HCIL), effective April 1. Nakajima, who joined Honda in 1994, will succeed Takuya Tsumura.

106) Correct Answer: A

India's star batter Shubman Gill has been named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for February 2025, adding yet another accolade to his ever-growing list of achievements. Gill secured the prestigious honour after outshining Australia's Steve Smith and New Zealand's Glenn Phillips, thanks to his remarkable performances in One Day Internationals throughout the month.

107) Correct Answer: A

The Telangana government has started the online application process for the Rajiv Yuva Vikasam Scheme 2025. Eligible candidates can apply online for financial assistance of up to Rs 3 lakh to establish self-employment units.

108) Correct Answer: C

Amid its war of words with the Centre over the three-language policy under the National Education Policy, the DMK-led Tamil Nadu government dropped the Devanagari rupee symbol and replaced it with a Tamil letter in its logo for the state Budget 2025-26.

109) Correct Answer: B

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the New Smart City Hospital and Pathology Centre in Jhansi. He also launched an exhibition of various startups in Bundelkhand at the Mela ground. The CM also visited the newly-built 200-bedded hospital and state-of-the-art pathology near the RTO office and inaugurated it.

110) Correct Answer: A

Indian actor and entrepreneur Ajay Devgn is making a bold move into AI-driven media with the launch of Prismix, a pioneering generative AI company focused on storytelling. Prismix aims to empower filmmakers, brands, and creators by providing high-quality, scalable, and visually compelling narratives through AI-driven innovation.

111) Correct Answer: B

Former India all-rounder Syed Abid Ali, who was known for his versatility and sharp fielding skills, died after a prolonged illness. He was 83. He was part of an illustrious group of Hyderabad cricketers that included MAK Pataudi, ML Jaisimha, and Abbas Ali Baig. He died in the United States.

112) Correct Answer: D

South Africa hosted the first G20 Trade and Investment Working Group (TWGW) meeting under its presidency from March 18 to March 20. The TIWG meeting, which was held virtually, brought together senior officials from G20 member countries as well as the European Union and the African Union.

113) Correct Answer: A

Kamal Wali, an 18-year veteran in cyber security and IT operations, has been chosen as the chief of ICICI Bank's Security Operations Center (SOC). In his new job, Kamal Wali will be responsible for upgrading the bank's cyber security infrastructure, risk management, and client data protection.

114) Correct Answer: D

The Central Government has imposed a five-year ban on the Awami Action Committee (AAC), led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, and the Jammu and Kashmir Ittihad Ul Muslimeen (JKIM), headed by Masroor Abbas Ansari, under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967.

115) Correct Answer: B

The PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana (PMSGMBY), the world's largest domestic rooftop solar initiative, has crossed a historic milestone with 10 lakh homes now powered by solar energy as of March 10. Among the top-performing states, Gujarat leads with 3,51,273

households benefiting, accounting for 41.47% of installations.

116) Correct Answer: D

Veteran actor-filmmaker Deb Mukherjee, father of director Ayan Mukerji, died due to prolonged illness at his residence in suburban Mumbai. He was 83. Mukherjee was part of the famous Samarth-Mukherjee family. He was the father-in-law of Ashutosh Gowariker and uncle of Bollywood actors Kajol and Rani Mukerji.

117) Correct Answer: C

China's new Large Phased Array Radar (LPAR), located in Yunnan province, extends surveillance capabilities over India, especially its missile tests. With a range of over 5,000 km, this advanced radar system is a significant concern for India's security, offering China real-time tracking of ballistic missile launches.

118) Correct Answer: C

India has successfully test fired beyond visual range air-to-air missile (BVRAAM) Astra from LCA Tejas AF MK1 off Odisha coast, paving the way for its integration in the indigenously developed fighter jet. Designed and developed by DRDO, Astra missile is capable of engaging the targets up to a range of over 100 km.

119) Correct Answer: C

India's software and IT services exports continued to grow in the financial year 2023-24, reaching an estimated \$200 billion, a new report said. This marks a 3.63 per cent increase from the \$193 billion recorded in the previous year.

120) Correct Answer: B

Tata Communications Ltd. appointed N Ganapathy Subramaniam as chairman of its board. Subramaniam worked with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) for over 40 years after graduating. He became the company's Executive Vice President in January 2012 and retained this post for over five years till February 2017.

121) Correct Answer: C

Renowned poet and Padma Bhushan awardee Ramakanta Rath, who was also a former bureaucrat, passed away at his residence in Kharavela Nagar, Bhubaneswar, marking the end of an era in Odia literature. He was 91. A towering figure in modernist

poetry, Rath's contributions left an indelible mark on Indian literature.

122) Correct Answer: B

India Masters etched their name in history by clinching the inaugural International Masters League (IML) 2025 title, after defeating West Indies Masters by six wickets in a grand finale. India Masters produced a clinical all-round performance to outclass Brian Lara's West Indies Masters to lift the coveted title.

123) Correct Answer: B

Maharashtra has secured the second position in the country under the Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Yojana. This was informed by state Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on social media. Maharashtra achieved this position with 1,92,936 solar power projects installed under the scheme.

124) Correct Answer: D

The Uttar Pradesh government in collaboration with Golden Triangle Fort and Palace Private Limited, will transform Roshan-ud-Daulah and Chhatar Manzil in Lucknow and Chunar Fort in Mirzapur into luxury heritage hotels. These heritage sites will be developed into luxury heritage hotels, following the successful model of Suryagarh, Jaisalmer.

125) Correct Answer: C

The WPL (Women's Premier League) 2025 season once again concluded, and it was Mumbai Indians who emerged victorious after an exceptional performance. Delhi Capitals faced their third defeat in the WPL, and it was their third consecutive loss in the final of the tournament.

126) Correct Answer: B

Arun Mammen, Vice Chairman & Managing Director of MRF Ltd, has been elected as the new Chairman of Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA), the national industry body for the automotive tire sector in India.

127) Correct Answer: A

Skechers has expanded its roster of elite cricket athletes by signing Jasprit Bumrah—one of the most celebrated cricketers and a globally acclaimed pace powerhouse. The India National Team and Mumbai Indians bowler

now competes in Skechers Cricket footwear and will feature in Skechers marketing campaigns.

128) Correct Answer: B

Peru's President Dina Boluarte recently declared a state of emergency in the capital and ordered the deployment of soldiers to help police address a surge of violence, amid widespread outcry a day after the killing of a popular singer.

129) Correct Answer: D

V Narayanan, chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched a new fluid and thermal research centre at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M), aimed at making India self-reliant in advanced space technologies and attracting global talent and research funding.

130) Correct Answer: A

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis inaugurated the first temple of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Bhiwandi town of Maharashtra's Thane district on the occasion of the Maratha warrior king's birth anniversary in accordance with the Hindu lunar calendar system.

131) Correct Answer: B

Former Indian cricket team captain and batsman Krishnamachari Srikkanth has been named the Goodwill Ambassador of VISION 2020 India, an initiative dedicated to eliminating avoidable blindness across the country.

132) Correct Answer: D

David Steven Cohen, the head writer of *Courage the Cowardly Dog*, has passed away at the age of 58, according to reports from animation historian Jerry Beck. Beck shared on Facebook that Cohen's cause of death was cancer.

133) Correct Answer: C

A new global survey by The Future of Free Speech, an independent U.S.-based think tank, has ranked India 24th out of the 33 countries surveyed on the question of support for free speech. Scandinavia dominated the top rankings, with Norway and Denmark finishing at the apex of the Future of the Free Speech Index with scores of 87.9 and 87.0.

134) Correct Answer: A

The Indian Navy and the French Navy has conducted the 23rd edition of their bilateral naval exercise, VARUNA, from March 19 to 22. The exercise has been an important part of India-France maritime cooperation since it began in 2001 and reflects the strong naval partnership between the two countries.

135) Correct Answer: A

Indore has opened the first Public-Private Partnership model-based green waste processing plant in the country under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U). This reflects the city's emphasis on unique methods of waste disposal.

136) Correct Answer: C

The Delhi Police has announced the creation of 'Shishtachar' anti-eve teasing squads to combat crime against women and improve safety across the national capital. 'Shishtachar' will impose stringent penalties without "imposing personal or cultural morality on individuals."

137) Correct Answer: B

ISRO's Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre and Semiconductor Laboratory (SCL), Chandigarh have jointly developed 32-bit Microprocessors -- Vikram 3201 and Kalpana 3201-- for space applications, the space agency has said. Vikram 3201 is the first fully Indian-made 32-bit microprocessor qualified for use in the harsh environmental conditions of launch vehicles.

138) Correct Answer: B

Prof Dr. Achyut Prasad Wagle has been appointed the Vice Chancellor of Kathmandu University, in Nepal. A PhD in Economics from the Indian Institute of Technology in India and an MSc from the University of Birmingham, UK Prasad has worked as an advisor to the Prime Minister and the central bank's advisor in the past.

139) Correct Answer: A

The seventh edition of the National School of Drama's (NSD) Adirang Mahotsav, also known as Adirangam, was held in New Delhi. It featured 15 dance and music performances, representing 13 states, alongside a captivating showcase of tribal craftsmanship from 11 states.

140) Correct Answer: C

Uniyala keralensis (family Asteraceae) is a new plant species discovered in the Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve in Kerala. The Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve is a UNESCO World Heritage Site recognized for its diverse ecosystems. The Asteraceae family contains over 32,000 flowering plant species globally.

141) Correct Answer: A

France discovered the world's largest reserve of 46 million tons of natural hydrogen worth \$92 billion that could reshape the world's clean energy industry, as per a report. French scientists have found the natural hydrogen below the soil in Folschviller, a region in the Moselle department.

142) Correct Answer: B

At the Indian Open Throws Competition 2025, Seema clinched the gold medal in the women's discus throw event in Navi Mumbai, with a 56.39-metre effort. The National Games champion finished well ahead of second-placed Neetika Verma (50.23 metres) and bronze medallist Priya (48.88 metres).

143) Correct Answer: B

The book on CMC Vellore, 'To the seventh generation: the journey of Christian Medical College Vellore' was launched by V.I. Mathan, who was the hospital's director from 1994-1997. The first copy was received by the present director and haematologist Vikram Mathew.

144) Correct Answer: A

The much-anticipated Purple Fest 2025 was hosted at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DePwD), Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, graced the occasion and witnessed cultural performances by Divyangjan, reflecting their extraordinary spirit and capabilities.

145) Correct Answer: D

The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India, held the third Central Asian Youth Delegation to India, under the International Youth Exchange Programme (IYEP). This initiative aims to promote youth collaboration and cultural exchange and strengthen diplomatic ties between India and the Central Asian

nations - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

146) Correct Answer: C

Kirsty Coventry was elected president of the International Olympic Committee, becoming the first woman and first African to get the post. Kirsty Coventry will succeed the ninth IOC President, Thomas Bach, whose 12-year tenure will officially end after Monday 23 June 2025.

147) Correct Answer: B

Japan became the first country to qualify for the 2026 men's World Cup after it beat Bahrain 2-0 at Saitama Stadium. Second-half goals from Daichi Kamada and Takefusa Kubo were enough for the Samurai Blue to earn its spot at next year's tournament which is being hosted in the US, Canada and Mexico.

148) Correct Answer: A

Anuj Kumar Singh (IRSEE) has been appointed as Joint Secretary (Director level) in the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), Delhi. The appointment has been made under the Central Staffing Scheme for a tenure of five years or until further orders, whichever comes earlier.

149) Correct Answer: B

Goibibo has launched its latest campaign featuring Indian Cricket Legend Sunil Gavaskar along with Rishabh Pant. Speaking about the campaign, Rishabh Pant said, "I am pleased to partner with Goibibo, a brand I resonate with as youthful and dynamic."

150) Correct Answer: D

In a statement Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said a 58ft tall statue of P. Sriramulu would be installed in Amaravati in a year and his house in Padamatipalli village in Nellore district converted into a museum.

SECTION 3

Detailed Analysis of Important Events



Economics

Navratna Status for IRCTC and IRFC



Why in the News?

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) and the Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) have been granted Navratna status, making them the 25th and 26th Navratna companies in India.

Other Navratna Companies in Indian Railways

- **Container Corporation of India (CONCOR):** Multimodal logistics.
- **Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL):** Infrastructure expansion.
- **ITES Ltd:** Transport consultancy.
- **IRCON International Ltd:** Railway and highway construction.
- **RailTel Corporation of India Ltd:** IT & communication services.

What is Navratna Status?

- Introduced in 1997, the Navratna scheme identifies high-performing CPSEs and grants them financial and operational independence.
- It allows selected companies to compete globally while maintaining public sector ownership.
- Categories of PSUs in India:
 - **Maharatna:** Largest CPSEs with highest financial powers.
 - **Navratna:** Mid-tier CPSEs with strategic autonomy.
 - **Miniratna:** Emerging CPSEs with limited independence.

Eligibility Criteria for Navratna Status:

A CPSE must-

- Be a **Miniratna-I** company with an **Excellent or Very Good** rating in its **MoU performance** in **three out of five years**.
- Achieve a **composite score of 60+** based on:
 - Net Profit to Net Worth
 - Manpower Cost to Total Cost of Production
 - Profitability Ratios (PBDIT & PBIT)
 - Earnings Per Share
 - Inter-Sectoral Performance

Benefits of Navratna Status:

- **Investment Autonomy:** Can invest **₹1,000 crore** or **15% of net worth** in a single project **without government approval**.
- **Strategic Expansion:** Freedom to form **joint ventures, subsidiaries, and acquisitions**.
- **Operational Flexibility:** Can make **independent business and investment decisions**.
- **Enhanced Market Position:** Attracts **more investors** and improves **stock performance**.

World Spice Organisation (WSO)



Why in the News?

According to the World Spice Organization (WSO), India's part of the worldwide seasoning market is still only 0.7%,

while China holds a 12% share and the United States holds an 11% share, despite being the world's largest producer and exporter of spices.

About the World Spice Organisation (WSO)

- WSO India's spice capital, Kochi, Kerala, is where WSO was founded in 2011.
- According to the Travancore Cochin Literary, Scientific, and Charitable Societies Act of 1956, it is a registered non-profit organization.
- It strives for market expansion for the spice business, sustainability, and food safety.
- It interacts with academic institutions, international spice groups, farmers, processors, and business executives.
- It collaborates with groups such as IDH (Netherlands), GIZ (Germany), Rainforest Alliance, and Spices Board India.
- Partners with global spice trade bodies like:
 - **American Spice Trade Association (ASTA)**
 - **European Spice Association (ESA)**
 - **International Pepper Community (IPC)**
- Participates in **national and international food safety regulations**, including:
 - **FSSAI (India's food safety authority)**
 - **BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards)**
 - **ISO (International Standards Organization)**
 - **Codex Alimentarius (Global food safety standards)**
- It serves as the **technical partner** for the **All India Spices Exporters Forum (AISEF)**.

Present Scenario of Spices

- One-fourth of the \$20 billion global spice market is currently supplied by India, which exports 1.5 million tons of spices valued at \$4.5 billion. However, whole spices make up the remaining 48% of these exports, which are primarily value-added items.
- India consumes 85% of its spices at home, leaving little left over for export.

- In the spice trade, nations like China, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Brazil are becoming fierce rivals.

Production:

- Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Assam, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala are the main producing states.
- India's spice exports reached US\$ 3.73 billion in 2022–2023, up from US\$ 3.46 billion in 2021–2022.
- Of the 109 variants recognized by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), around 75 are produced in India.
- **Major Produced and Exported Spices by India:**
 - Curry powder, curry oil, oleoresins, cardamom, chile, ginger, turmeric, coriander, cumin, celery, fennel, fenugreek, garlic, nutmeg & mace, and pepper.
 - About 76% of these spices are produced, with chile, cumin, turmeric, ginger, and coriander accounting for the majority.
 - At \$1.1 billion per year, chilli is the top export earner.
 - The compound annual growth rate (CAGR) for ginger exports is 27%.
- **Export:**
 - India exported \$4.25 billion worth of spices in 2023–2024, which accounted for 12% of all spice exports worldwide (statistics as of February 2024).
 - As of 2023–2024, India exported spices and spice-related products to 159 countries globally. China, the United States, Bangladesh, the United Arab Emirates, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the United Kingdom, and Sri Lanka were the most popular destinations. Over 70

percent of all exports came from these nations.

Sarthi and Pravaah Systems of RBI



Why in the News?

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was recently awarded the prestigious Digital Transformation Award 2025 by Central Banking, a recognition of its groundbreaking digital initiatives, Sarthi and Pravaah.

About Sarthi System

- The RBI introduced the Sarthi system in January 2023 with the intention of digitizing all internal organizational processes.
- The objective of this program was to improve operational efficiency throughout the RBI and lessen the dependence on paper-based procedures.
- Key features include:
 - Among the 13,500 personnel dispersed over more than 40 locations, it can safely store and exchange papers.
 - Through reports and dashboards, it also offers improved data analysis capabilities and enhances record management.
 - Sarthi also streamlines operations and enhances departmental collaboration by automating internal procedures like work tracking, approvals, and document management.
 - In addition to in-person training, an online training platform called Sarthi Pathshala was introduced to guarantee

that staff members are proficient in using the system.

- As recognized specialists in RBI offices, Sarthi Mitras help colleagues navigate and fix system-related problems.

About Pravaah System

- In May 2024, the RBI launched the Pravaah system, building on the success of Sarthi.
- Its main objective is to make it easier for external users to electronically submit regulatory applications to the RBI.
- The application submission procedure is now much more transparent and efficient thanks to this platform.
- Key features include:
 - Its flawless integration with the Sarthi database makes processing regulatory paperwork a breeze.
 - It greatly increases the speed and accuracy of submissions and supports over 70 distinct regulatory applications.
 - Both applicants and RBI management can monitor applications in real time because to its consolidated cybersecurity safeguards and digital tracking features.
 - An 80% rise in monthly applications has resulted from it, which is a noteworthy accomplishment in terms of cutting down on the delays that come with using conventional, paper-based systems and simplifying the procedure as a whole.

Health Expenditure at 1.84% of GDP



Why in the News?

The Union government has steadily increased its spending on healthcare, with the expenditure rising to 1.84% of GDP in 2021-22, up from 1.15% in 2013-14.

Overview of India's Health Expenditure

- Government investment on healthcare in India has been steadily rising, indicating a greater commitment to enhancing the public healthcare system.
- Government health expenditure (GHE) increased from 1.15% of GDP in 2013–14 to 1.84% of GDP in 2021–2022, and it is expected to reach the 2.5% GDP objective set by the National Health Policy 2017 by 2025.
- Following COVID-19, health expenditures has increased significantly, with government spending rising 37% between 2020–21 and 2021–22.
- Better access to healthcare, less financial strain on people, and increased emphasis on improving healthcare infrastructure are the results of this.

What is Total Health Expenditure?

- Current Health Expenditure (CHE) is the amount spent continuously on medical services, including hospital stays, doctor visits, and prescription drugs.
- Investing in healthcare infrastructure, such as constructing hospitals or buying medical supplies, is known as capital expenditure.
- According to estimates, India's THE in 2020–21 was ₹7,39,327 crores, or 3.73% of GDP, with ₹5,436 spent per person.
- This amount rose to ₹9,04,461 crores in 2021–2022, or 3.83% of GDP, demonstrating a strong government response to pandemic management and healthcare issues.

Reasons for Reduced Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE)

The reduction in OOPE can be attributed to:

- Higher government funding on health care, which lowers the cost of care.

- expansion of services related to public health, such as immunization and preventative care.
- expansion of social security and health insurance programs provided by the government, which lessens the need for private funding.
- The financial load has been lessened by health initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat.
- Low- and middle-income households are experiencing less difficulty as a result of improved financial protection and public healthcare access.

NPCI Launches BHIM 3.0 with Enhanced Features**Why in the News?**

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) subsidiary NPCI BHIM Services Ltd. (NBSL) introduced BHIM 3.0 with new features meant to improve user experience and give new services to banks and enterprises.

About BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money):

- Based on the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), BHIM is a mobile payment software created by NPCI with the goal of encouraging digital payments and cashless transactions through banks.
- BHIM, which was introduced on December 30, 2016, uses IMPS infrastructure to enable instantaneous money transactions between more than 170 member institutions.
- BHIM ensures speedy transactions at any time, even holidays, by transferring money directly

between bank accounts, in contrast to mobile wallets.

- Aadhaar-based authentication is now supported by BHIM to facilitate digital payments.
- More than 20 Indian languages are supported by BHIM, which is made to function well in places with spotty or poor internet access.
- BHIM employs a robust **three-factor authentication** (3FA) process to ensure the security of transactions:
 1. **Device ID and Mobile Number:** The app binds with the user's **device ID** and **mobile number** to verify the device.
 2. **Bank Account Link:** Users must sync their **bank account** (UPI-enabled or non-UPI-enabled) to the app for transactions.
 3. **UPI PIN:** A unique **UPI PIN** is required for completing transactions, which adds an extra layer of security.
- NPCI **does not charge any fee** for transactions between ₹1 and ₹100,000.

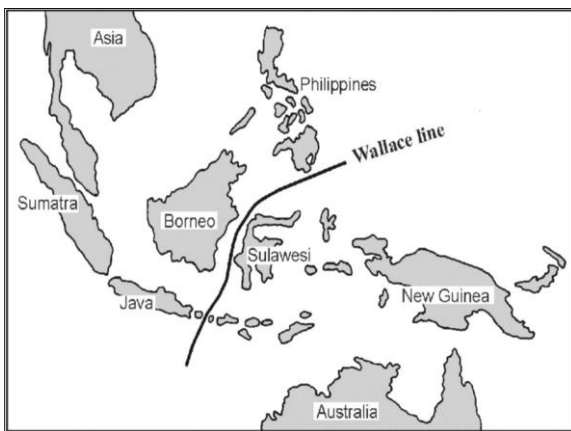
- Banks may charge fees for UPI or IMPS transfers, but there is no official information on BHIM-specific charges.

Key Features of BHIM 3.0

- **Divide Bills:** Users can now divide bills for shared expenses (such as group purchases, eating, and rent) and settle payments immediately.
- **Family Mode:** To improve financial management, users can designate specific payments, track shared spending, and onboard family members.
- **Spends Analytics:** To make budgeting simpler, a new dashboard automatically classifies monthly costs and offers a thorough summary.
- **Action Needed Alerts:** To keep users informed, BHIM 3.0 incorporates low Lite balance alerts, UPI Lite activation reminders, and reminders for outstanding bills.
- **BHIM Vega:** This feature streamlines transactions by enabling merchants to take in-app payments straight within the BHIM app, eliminating the need for third-party apps.

Environment & Diversity

What is Wallace Line?



Why in the News?

In the **19th century**, English naturalist **Alfred Russel Wallace** observed a **sharp shift in biodiversity** as he moved from **Asia to Australia**, leading him to propose

the **Wallace Line**—an **imaginary boundary** separating species from both regions.

About the Wallace Line:

- It is a **bio-geographical boundary** separating **Asia and Australia's eco-zones**.
- It was identified by **Alfred Russel Wallace** in **1863** during his explorations.
- It is an **imaginary line** running through the **Lombok Strait (between Bali and Lombok)** and the **Makassar Strait (between Borneo and Sulawesi)**.
- Distinct evolutionary histories:
 - **West of the line (Asia):** Tigers, elephants, and orangutans.
 - **East of the line (Australia):** Kangaroos, marsupials, and cockatoos.

- A very few species cross the line, particularly birds and mammals.
- This is a barrier for land species but not marine life.
- Its formation:
 - **Continental drift:** Australia separated from Antarctica and moved toward Asia (~35 million years ago). This created a deep-water channel, preventing species migration.
 - **Pleistocene Epoch Influence:** Lower sea levels exposed land bridges but deep waters maintained the boundary.

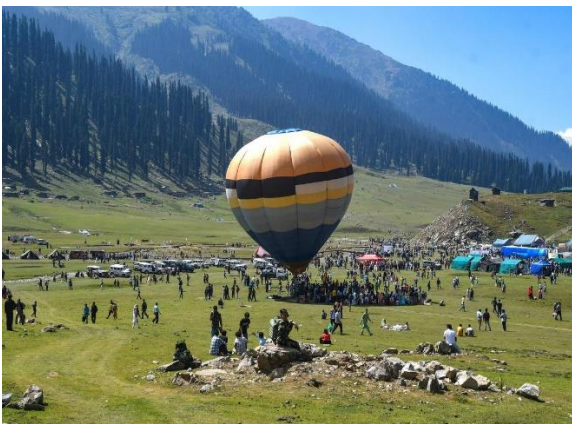
Scientific Relevance:

- Wallace Line is more of a gradient than a strict boundary.
- Understanding biogeography helps predict species adaptation to climate change.

Note:

Weber Line more accurately defines the balance point where the influence of Asian and Australian species is nearly equal, whereas the Wallace Line marks a sharper divide.

J&K to promote Bangus Valley near LoC for Ecotourism



Why in the News?

The Jammu and Kashmir government has announced new ecotourism policies for Bangus Valley,

a scenic yet lesser-known destination near the Line of Control (LoC) in North Kashmir.

About Bangus Valley

- It is situated in Kupwara district, Jammu & Kashmir, about 100 km from Srinagar in the Pir Panjal range, close to the Line of Control (LoC).
- It consists of 2 valleys:
 - **Boud Bangus (Big Bangus):** ~300 sq km, surrounded by Rajwar, Mawar, and Shamasbury ranges.
 - **Lokut Bangus (Small Bangus):** A smaller valley northeast of Big Bangus, known for trekking routes.
- Its name is derived from Sanskrit words “Van” (forest) and “Gus” (grass), meaning “Forest of Grass.”
- Connectivity:
 - Handwara via Reshwari Mawar (shortest and most preferred route).
 - Handwara via Rajwar (trekking route).
 - Kupwara via Chowkibal (under development, expected completion by 2025).
 - Road connectivity via Handwara is complete (June 2022).

Ecological Importance of Bangus Valley:

- **Biodiversity:** Home to 50+ animal species and 10+ bird species.
- **Key Mammals:** Musk deer, antelope, snow leopard, brown bear, black bear, red fox, monkeys.
- **Bird Species:** Tragopan, monal pheasant, black partridge, bush quail, wild fowl.
- **Flora:** Rich in medicinal plants and wildflowers, supporting traditional herbal medicine.
- **Water Conservation:** 14 tributaries, including Roshan Kul, Tillwan Kul, Douda Kul, feed the Pohru River.
- **Climate Sensitivity:** Threatened by glacial melt and changing precipitation patterns.

United Nations World Water Development Report, 2025



Why in the News?

On March 21, 2025, the United Nations marked the first-ever World Day for Glaciers, and in conjunction, the United Nations World Water Development Report issued a disturbing warning about the rapid loss of glaciers.

Key Highlights of the Report:

- **Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH) Glacier Loss:** Glaciers are melting 65% faster (2011-2020) than the previous decade, with up to 50% shrinkage by 2100 if global temperatures rise by 1.5-2°C.
- **WMO's Climate Report:** The 2024 climate year was the warmest in 175 years, reinforcing the link between rising temperatures and accelerated glacier melt.

- **Unprecedented Glacier Mass Loss:** Over 9,000 billion tonnes of ice lost since 1975, with 450 gigatons lost in 2024 alone.
- **Rising Sea Levels:** Melting glaciers contribute to sea level rise, displacing 200,000 to 300,000 people annually and increasing coastal flooding risks.
- **Increased Wildfires and Dust Storms:** Rising wildfires and dust storms accelerate glacier melt by darkening their surfaces.
- **Permafrost Thawing:** Thawing permafrost releases carbon and nutrients, worsening climate change and increasing landslide risks.
- **Declining Snow Cover:** A 7.79% global decline in persistent snow cover from 1979-2022 affects water resources.

About World Glaciers Day

- March 21, 2025, marked the **first-ever World Day for Glaciers**, aimed at raising awareness about glaciers and the risks posed by their loss due to climate change.
- It was **declared by the UN** in its resolution A/RES/77/158 along with the **International Year of Glaciers 2025**.
- The day calls for **governments, organizations, and individuals** to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adopt sustainable water management practices.

Governance

Plight of Prisoners with Disabilities needs attention : SC



Why in the News?

In response to a petition that highlighted the anguish and cruel circumstances that Professor G. Saibaba and Stan Swamy endured, the Supreme Court has recognized a significant problem with the absence of facilities in jails that are accessible to people with disabilities.

Even the Persons with Disabilities Act (2016) does not provide a legal framework to protect the rights of disabled inmates, according to a bench made up of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta.

Challenges Faced by Disabled Prisoners:

- **Inaccessible Infrastructure:** The majority of prisons are devoid of wheelchair-accessible cells, handrails, ramps, and other necessary assistive technology.
- **Denial of Medical Care:** Many inmates with disabilities are denied access to essential medical care, physical therapy, or even basic assistance like walking aids or hearing aids.
- **Psychological Distress:** Mistreatment, isolation, and a lack of amenities cause anxiety, despair, and worsening mental health in inmates with disabilities.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities (in Prisons)

- By guaranteeing equality before the law, Article 14 makes sure that inmates are not subjected to handicap discrimination.
- The right to life and dignity, which includes treating inmates with compassion, is protected by Article 21.
- Prisons continue to lack appropriate implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, which requires accessible public areas, medical services, and assistive technologies for people with disabilities.
- Many states have not implemented the disability-friendly infrastructure that the Model Prison Manual (2016) suggests, including ramps and medical care provisions.
- **Supreme Court Judgments:**
 - The Supreme Court upheld inmates' right to humane treatment in *Upendra Baxi v. State of U.P.* (1983).
 - The Court emphasized the pressing need for prison reform, including accommodations for prisoners with disabilities, in *Rama Murthy v. State of Karnataka* (1996).
 - The *Stan Swamy Case* (2021) raised awareness to Parkinson's sufferers being denied necessary supportive devices like sippers and straws.

Past Committees on Prison Reform:

- **Mulla Committee (1983):**
 - Recommended improved prison infrastructure, special provisions for disabled inmates, and measures to reduce overcrowding.
 - Suggested protection against abuse and better training for prison staff.
- **Krishna Iyer Committee (1987):** Focused on the welfare of **women prisoners**, recommending separate facilities, healthcare, and special provisions for pregnant inmates.
- **Justice A.N. Mulla Committee (1993):** Emphasized the need for humane treatment and rehabilitation, along with stricter measures against custodial torture.
- **Justice Krishna Iyer Report (2000):** Called for **legal aid for undertrial prisoners** and **mandatory inspections** to monitor prison conditions.
- **Model Prison Manual (2016):**
 - Provided guidelines for **standardized prison reforms**, including healthcare, accessibility, and rehabilitation programs.
 - Despite being issued by the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, many states have failed to adopt its recommendations.

Appointment of Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)

Why in the News?

The Supreme Court has decided to examine a plea challenging the current process of appointing the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG).

About Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG):

	Details
Role and Importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established under Article 148 of the Indian Constitution. Ensures efficient and lawful use of public funds. Audits financial accounts of Consolidated Fund of India, state funds, and public sector undertakings. Acts as a watchdog over government financial expenditure. Plays a critical role in maintaining financial accountability in governance.
Appointment and Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointed by the President of India under a warrant. Serves a 6-year term or until the age of 65, whichever is earlier. Must take an oath to uphold the Constitution and perform duties impartially. Removal can only occur for misbehaviour or incapacity, through a special majority in both Houses of Parliament.

Independence of the CAG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independence from the government: Ineligible for any government office after leaving office. Salary and Expenses: Equal to a Supreme Court judge, with expenses charged to the Consolidated Fund of India. No Ministerial Representation: No minister can represent the CAG or assume responsibility for their actions.
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Issues with the Appointment of the CAG

The current process for appointing the CAG is seen as problematic due to the centralized control by the Union government.

- The President appoints the CAG based on the government's recommendation, which raises questions about possible executive control over a crucial independent organization.
- The Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Chief Justice of India should all be on an impartial selection committee, according to critics who claim that this procedure undermines the CAG's independence.
- This would guarantee that the CAG is chosen impartially, openly, and without regard to political influence.
- Similar to the early years of judicial appointments, executive involvement has historically been permitted by Article 148's ambiguous provisions for the appointment of the CAG.

Supreme Court interventions have already reformed appointment processes for bodies like the Election Commission and Central Vigilance Commission, and similar reforms for the CAG are necessary to protect its autonomy.

History

Anniversary of the Muzhara Movement



Why in the News?

On March 19, the anniversary of the Muzhara movement is observed, marking a significant chapter in Punjab's agrarian struggles.

About Muzhara Movement

- Farmers who worked the land but lacked ownership rights were known as muzharas.
- They belonged to a wider group of Punjabi landless peasants who had to deal with harsh feudal regimes.
- The property was under the supervision of the biswedars, or landowners, who kept a third of the produce.
- Economic exploitation resulted from this system, since the feudal landlords and, eventually, the British colonial rulers received a substantial share of the produce and profits.
- The muzharas were fighting against both the colonial and feudal institutions by claiming their entitlement to the land they had farmed for centuries.
- When the Biswedars attempted to retake land from the Muzharas in March 1949, Kishangarh village became the focal point of the conflict.
- On March 17, a police officer was killed during a bloody standoff between the muzharas and the Patiala police.
- Four muzharas were murdered in the ensuing clash after the army intervened on March 19.

Other Contemporary Peasant's Movements

	Details
Champaran Satyagraha (1917)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Led by Mahatma Gandhi in Bihar against the tinkathia system, where peasants were forced to grow indigo on part of their land. Resulted in the Champaran Agrarian Act (1918), which abolished oppressive practices.
Kheda Satyagraha (1918)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organized in Gujarat after crop failures when the government refused to remit land revenue. Gandhi and Sardar Patel supported peasants in withholding revenue payments until demands were met.
Bardoli Satyagraha (1928)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Led by Vallabhbhai Patel in Gujarat against a 30% hike in land revenue. The movement succeeded, and Patel earned the title "Sardar" for his leadership.
Tebhaga Movement (1946-47)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiated by the Kisan Sabha in Bengal, demanding a two-thirds share of produce for tenants instead of the customary half. Despite being suppressed violently, it highlighted peasant rights.
Telangana Movement (1946-51)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A communist-led peasant guerrilla struggle in Andhra Pradesh against feudal landlords and the Nizam's oppressive regime. Achieved redistribution of land and improved

Revival of Vikramshila University



Why in the News?

A decade after the resurgence of Nalanda University, the Government of Bihar is now focusing on the revival of Vikramshila University.

About Vikramshila University

- In the eighth and ninth centuries AD, King Dharmapala of the Pala Dynasty established Vikramshila University in the Bhagalpur area of Bihar, close to the Ganges River.
- It was created in response to Nalanda University's deteriorating academic standards.
- The university focused on Vajrayana and Tantric Buddhism. Philosophy, grammar, metaphysics, logic, and tantras were among the subjects taught.
- Vikramshila was linked to eminent academics like as Atisa Dipankara and Naropa.

- It employed more than 100 professors and accommodated more than 1,000 kids.
- Monks studied and meditated in 208 monastic cells at the campus.
- A Kulpati, also known as a Mahasthavir, oversaw operations and academics in the administration.
- **Key Features:**
 - The famous cruciform brick stupa of the university was fifteen meters high.
 - It also featured a library that preserved manuscripts with a special cooling system.
 - The construction included a square design with votive stupas encircling it and entrances at each of the four cardinal directions.
- **Decline and Destruction:**
 - Before being destroyed by Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji in 1193 AD, it flourished for almost 400 years.
 - Foreign invasions, the demise of Buddhism, and the growth of Hinduism were the causes of the decline.

Cultural Significance of Vikramshila University

- With its emphasis on esoteric rituals and practices, Vikramshila was a significant hub for Tantric and Vajrayana Buddhism.
- Scholars like Buddhajnanapada helped spread the Cakrasamvara Tantra, which was developed here.
- Vikramshila's teachings helped Buddhism grow throughout the Far East, Central Asia, and the Himalayas.
- Vikramshila was the pinnacle of Buddhist scholarship in India and made substantial contributions to Buddhist writings, some of which have been preserved in Tibetan manuscripts.

International Relations

UN Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)



Why in the News?

The UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) is still responsible for the growing worry over uncontrolled satellite re-entries, which was brought to light by the December 2024 crash of a 500 kilogram metal object in Makueni County, Kenya.

It has not yet put into effect legally obligatory rules for re-entry control and the disposal of space debris.

About the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)

- In order to address legal concerns pertaining to space exploration and to foster international collaboration in the peaceful use of space, the COPUOS was founded in 1958.
- As of 2022, there are 102 member states on the committee, which convenes yearly in Vienna, Austria.
- In order to ensure responsible space activities and stop the militarization of space, COPUOS is essential.
- **Historical Context:**
 - COPUOS, which was founded after Sputnik was launched in 1957, played a key role in keeping space from turning into a new theater of conflict.

- International law is applicable in space, according to Resolution 1721 (1961), which also required states to notify the UN public registry of all space launches.

- **Subcommittees:**

- **Scientific and Technical Subcommittee** (meets in February).
- **Legal Subcommittee** (meets in April).

Space Treaties overseen by COPUOS:

- COPUOS oversees **five key UN treaties and agreements** related to space activities:
 1. The 1967 Outer Space Treaty forbids national sovereignty over celestial bodies and establishes guidelines for space travel.
 2. Rescue Agreement (1968): Regulates the return and rescue of space objects and personnel.
 3. The 1972 culpability Convention establishes absolute culpability for damages on Earth and defines accountability for harm caused by space objects.
 4. States are required to register launched space objects with the UN under the 1976 Registration Convention.
 5. Activities on the Moon and other celestial bodies are governed under the Moon Treaty (1984).

Defining Space Debris in Law

- There is no agreed-upon legal definition of space debris in international treaties.
- Non-functional man-made objects in Earth's orbit or reentering the atmosphere are classified as such by the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).
- Whether a piece of debris is considered a "space object" under the 1972 Liability Convention is a matter of legal controversy.

Liability Under International Space Law

- Article VI of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty states that states are accountable for their own space

operations, including those conducted by private enterprises.

- The 1972 Liability Convention established "absolute liability," which holds launching states automatically liable for harm brought on by space objects.
- Liability enforcement is still lax, nevertheless, and impacted countries frequently have difficulty obtaining full compensation.

India and the Arctic



Why in the News?

The Russian Ambassador to India recently stated that Russia views India's interest in the Arctic as a "stabilizing factor."

India-Russia Collaboration in the Arctic

India and Russia have strengthened their **cooperation** in the Arctic, focusing on **scientific research, energy resources, and shipping routes**:

- **Energy Resources:** Partnerships for the exploitation of gas and oil in the Arctic, especially in the Vostok oil cluster and the Dolginskoye oil field.
- **Northern Sea Route (NSR):** In an effort to lower shipping costs and increase connectivity, Russia and India are attempting to enhance shipping via the NSR.

About India's Arctic Policy

- The Ministry of Earth Sciences introduced India's Arctic Policy in 2022, adopting a comprehensive strategy including various sectors, including

scientific, environmental, economic, and strategic objectives.

- Focusing on sustainability, it seeks to safeguard the environment while investigating prospects in transportation routes, energy resources, and scientific cooperation.
- The policy includes **6 key pillars**:
 1. **Science and Research:** Pay attention to polar biology, geosciences, and climate change.
 2. **Climate and Environmental Protection:** Making sure that the Arctic ecology is not jeopardized by development.
 3. **Economic and Human Development:** Examining prospects in transportation and energy extraction.
 4. **Connectivity and Transportation:** Improving access to shipping lanes in the Arctic.
 5. **Developing relationships with foreign partners,** such as the Arctic Council, is a key component of governance and international cooperation.
 6. **Building national capacity** entails gaining knowledge of polar navigation and Arctic research.
- 7. The policy aims to strike a balance between strategic, economic, and scientific objectives while acknowledging the geopolitical dynamics of the Arctic.

India's Mission to the Arctic

- In 2007, India launched its first Arctic research mission, concentrating on geology, atmospheric sciences, and microbiology. In 2008, India also set up Himadri, a research base in the Arctic. Recent developments include: India studied climate change, sea-ice dynamics, and ocean circulation in 2023 by conducting a winter voyage under polar night circumstances.
- Through collaborative expeditions and research institutes, India works with Russia, Norway, and other Arctic countries.
- India is concentrating on comprehending how the Arctic affects weather patterns, especially in South Asia, and how it affects climate change.

Polity

Suspension of MLAs



Why in the News?

A member of the Maharashtra Assembly was suspended for endorsing and defending the acts of Aurangzeb, the Mughal emperor. This episode has spurred discussion about the laws and clauses in the Indian constitution that control MLA suspensions.

What is the Suspension of MLAs?

- The Speaker uses MLA suspension as a disciplinary action to keep the House civil and orderly.
- It is applied when members act erratically, interfere with business, or break parliamentary regulations.
- It may last for one day or for the duration of the session.

Rules Governing Suspension of MLAs:

Rule 53 of Maharashtra Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Speaker can order a member to withdraw for grossly disorderly conduct. • If repeated, they can be suspended for the remainder of the session.
"Rules of Procedure and Conduct of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Template for most state assemblies allows suspension for obstructing House business.

Business" in Lok Sabha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension should not exceed the session.
Maharashtra's Suspension Practices vs Other States	Maharashtra has no upper limit on suspension duration, unlike states like Odisha where it is capped at 7 days.
Article 212 (1) [Protection of Legislative Proceedings]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevents courts from questioning legislative proceedings on procedural grounds. • Used to argue that courts have no jurisdiction over suspensions.
Article 194 [Powers and Privileges of the Legislature]	Grants legislative bodies the power to maintain order and discipline. Justifies suspensions beyond Rule 53.
Article 190 (4) [Absence from Legislative Proceedings]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If an MLA is absent for more than 60 days without permission, their seat can be declared vacant. • Prolonged suspensions violate this provision.
Representation of the People Act, 1951 – Section 151 (A)	Mandates a by-election within six months if a seat becomes vacant. Supreme Court argues that suspensions beyond six months deprive constituencies of representation.

Supreme Court Rulings on Suspension:

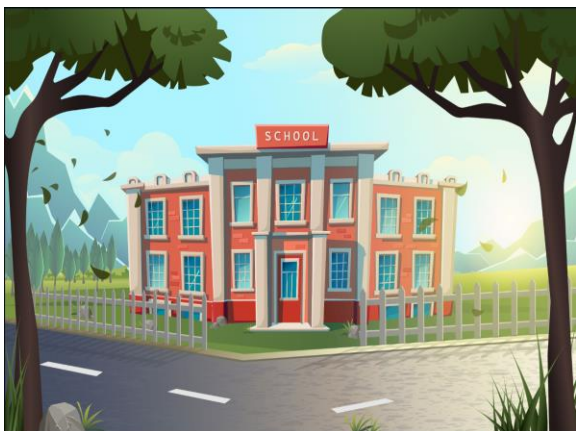
(a) 2022 Supreme Court Ruling on Maharashtra BJP MLAs

- In **2021**, 12 BJP MLAs were **suspended for one year** for disrupting proceedings.
- **Judgment:**
 - Suspensions beyond six months are unconstitutional.

- Prolonged suspensions deprive voters of representation.
- Governments could misuse suspensions to weaken the opposition.
- The Speaker's discretion is subject to constitutional limits.

(b) Jambhwantrao Dhote Case (1964): Only Maharashtra MLA expelled for throwing a paperweight at the Speaker during Vasant Rao Naik's Government.

PM Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) Scheme



Why in the News?

Union Education Minister comment accusing the Tamil Nadu government of being "dishonest" in implementing the PM SHRI scheme caused disruption in the Lok Sabha.

What is the PM-SHRI Scheme?

About	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centrally Sponsored Scheme launched in 2022 to upgrade 14,500 schools as model institutions for NEP 2020 implementation. • Objective: To create inclusive, nurturing schools with modern infrastructure, holistic education, and competency-based learning.
Implementation	<p>From 2022-23 to 2026-27. After this, states/UTs will maintain the benchmarks achieved.</p> <p>Funding Pattern:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 60:40 (Centre: State/UTs with legislature, except J&K). 2. 90:10 for Northeastern & Himalayan States, J&K. 3. 100% Central funding for UTs without legislature. States must sign an MoU with the Centre to participate.
Key Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic learning: Focus on communication, collaboration, critical thinking. Experiential, inquiry-driven, learner-centred pedagogy. • Modern facilities: Smart classrooms, Computer Labs, Integrated Science Labs, Vocational Labs, Atal Tinkering Labs. • Green initiatives: Water conservation, waste recycling, energy efficiency. • Competency-based assessments linked to real-life applications.
Eligible Schools	<p>Schools managed by Central/State/UT Governments & local bodies. Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) & Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) (non-project, with permanent buildings).</p> <p>School Quality Assessment Framework (SQAf) ensures performance evaluation & institutional excellence.</p>
Selection Process	<p>Challenge Mode (3-stage process):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage-1: Signing MoU with the Centre. • Stage-2: Identifying eligible schools using UDISE+ data. • Stage-3: Schools compete to meet selection criteria, verified by States/UTs/KVS/JNV.

Final selection by Expert Committee headed by the Education Secretary.
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India ranked 24th out of 33 countries in Free Speech Index



Why in the News?

A global survey by The Future of Free Speech, a US -based think tank, has ranked India 24th out of 33 countries in terms of support for free speech.

Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of speech and expression, enabling people to freely express their thoughts. Speech, literature, art, digital media, RTI, and even the freedom to remain silent are all included in this right. However, as stated in Article 19(2), it is subject to reasonable limitations, such as those related to decency, public order, and security.

About the Free Speech Index

- This paper, "Who in the World Supports Free Speech?," was published by the independent U.S. think tank The Future of Free Speech.
- It assesses popular sentiment toward free speech in 33 nations, pointing out global patterns, regional variances, and obstacles to free speech.
- Despite broad support for free speech in many nations, it highlighted the fall in support for preserving contentious speech.

India's Ranking:

- With a score of 62.6, India is rated 24th out of 33 nations in the 2024 Global Free Speech Index.

- Despite the fact that Indians typically value free speech, the largest percentage of respondents— 37 percent—support limiting the ability to criticize government policy.
- An exception to the overall trend is India, where growing government limitations on expression are indicated by the public's support for free speech not matching real protections.

Global Highlights:

- Leading the rankings with a strong dedication to free speech and disagreement are Norway (87.9) and Denmark (87.0%).
- Even though they were remained lower on the scale, Pakistan (57.0), Malaysia (55.4), and Indonesia (56.8) displayed the largest advances.
- In a number of democratic countries, such as the US, Israel, and Japan, support for free speech has decreased since 2021.
- High scores for nations like Venezuela (81.8) and Hungary (85.5) show a discrepancy between public perceptions of free speech and constraints implemented by the government.

Bihar makes fresh demand for Special Category Status



Why in the News?

Certain Indian states that face topographical, socioeconomic, and infrastructure difficulties are given the designation known as Special Category Status (SCS). It offers particular financial support for their growth.

About Special Category Status (SCS)

- Based on the Gadgil formula for allocating funds, and it was first introduced in 1969 in response to

the Fifth Finance Commission's recommendations.

- Assam, Jammu & Kashmir, and Nagaland were the first states to be allocated territory; Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Uttarakhand, and Telangana were later added.
- **Evolution of SCS:**
 - Introduced in 1969 following the recommendations of the Fifth Finance Commission, based on the Gadgil formula for fund allocation.
 - Initially granted to Assam, Jammu & Kashmir, and Nagaland, with other states like Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Uttarakhand, and Telangana added later.
- **Eligibility Criteria (Based on the Gadgil Formula):** States must meet at least one of the following:
 - **Hilly terrain:** Challenging geography impeding development.
 - **Low population density or a large tribal population.**
 - **Strategic location** near international borders.
 - **Economic and infrastructural backwardness.**
 - **Non-viable state finances:** Financial instability due to lack of resources.
- **Benefits of SCS:**
 - Financial Aid: centrally supported programs receive 90% of grants, compared to 30% for states that are not SCS.
 - Special Plan Assistance: Extra money for projects of national significance.
 - Tax Benefits: Income, corporation, and excise tax breaks (many of which are absorbed by the GST).
 - Funds that are not used are carried over to the following year.

- Increased Budget Allocation: SCS states receive 30% of the Center's budget.

Assessment of Bihar's Demand:

- Lack of industrial development, made worse by the 2000 state split, is known as industrial backwardness.
- High Poverty Levels: With a low GDP per capita, India has one of the highest rates of poverty.
- Regular Natural Disasters: Droughts and floods have a major effect on agriculture.
- Infrastructure Deficiencies: Inadequate water and irrigation infrastructure reduce agricultural output.

About the Finance Commission

- In accordance with Article 280 of the Constitution, the Finance Commission is established every five years to distribute funds from the federal government to the states.
- Composition: The president appoints the chairman and four more members.
- Requirements: Members must possess specific expertise in accounting, economics, finance, or administration.
- The proposals made by the Fifteenth Finance Commission are good until 2025–2026.
- 16th FC Terms of Reference: Tax revenue distribution, grant-in-aid guidelines, increasing state funding for local governments, and assessing funding for disaster management.

PAC flags Failure of Swadesh Darshan Scheme



Why in the News?

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) has criticized the Ministry of Tourism for the poor execution of the Swadesh Darshan Scheme and highlighted lapses in planning, approvals, and project execution.

About Public Accounts Committee (PAC):

- In accordance with the Government of India Act of 1919, the PAC was founded in 1921.
- It has 22 members, 15 of whom are elected each year from the Lok Sabha and 7 from the Rajya Sabha.
- Since 1967, the chairman of the committee has been chosen from among the opposition.
- Examining the Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) audit reports with an emphasis on public spending is a critical function of the PAC.
- It guarantees the effective use of funds and examines government expenditures for waste, corruption, anomalies, and inefficiencies.

About Swadesh Darshan Scheme (SDS):

- The Ministry of Tourism introduced the Swadesh Darshan Scheme in 2015.
- Goal: Creating theme-based travel routes throughout India with a focus on sustainable travel, such as Buddhist, coastal, heritage, and eco-tourism routes.
- The program, which is entirely financed centrally, offers financial support for the construction of tourism infrastructure to state governments, administrations of Union Territories, and central agencies.
- Long-term expansion and the creation of eco-friendly travel destinations are given top priority.
- Under Swadesh Darshan 2.0, the Challenge-Based Destination Development (CBDD) sub-scheme focuses on the competitive development of travel destinations.
- In order to ensure that the tourism industry grows in a more contemporary and structured way, this program seeks to promote sustainability, digitalization, skill development, MSME support, and efficient management.

Lok Sabha approves Demands for Grants of ₹50 Lakh Cr



Why in the News?

The Lok Sabha has passed the Demands for Grants of various Ministries for the financial year 2025-26, approving an expenditure of more than ₹50 lakh crore.

What are Demands for Grants?

- Demands for Grants refer to the expenditure estimates that require approval from the Lok Sabha under Article 113 of the Constitution of India.
- These demands are essentially requests for funds by different ministries to cover their respective expenditure needs.
- The Demands for Grants cover:
 - **Revenue expenditure:** Routine expenses for the functioning of government.
 - **Capital expenditure:** Investment-related spending, such as infrastructure and development projects.
 - **Grants to States/UTs:** Funds allocated to state governments and Union Territories for various purposes.
 - **Loans & advances:** Amounts lent to other entities or bodies.
- Each **ministry** or **department** presents its own demand for grants. Larger ministries may have multiple demands depending on the scope of their activities.
- **Types of Expenditures in Demands for Grants:**
 1. **Voted expenditure:** It refers to the part of the budget that requires approval from the Lok

Sabha. This expenditure can be debated and voted on by members of the House.

2. **Charged expenditure:** It includes items like the President's salary, judges' salaries, debt servicing, and other such payments. This expenditure does not require a vote and is automatically passed.
- **Voting on Demands for Grants:**
 - **Exclusivity of Lok Sabha:** Only the Lok Sabha has the power to vote on Demands for Grants.
 - **Voting Process:** Voting applies only to votable expenditure, with each demand voted on separately.
 - **Guillotine Process:** If time runs out for discussion, the Speaker applies the guillotine, automatically approving remaining demands.

Constitutional Provisions on Demands for Grants

- **Article 113:** Requires the President's recommendation before any demand for a grant can be made.
- **Article 114:** Money cannot be withdrawn from the Consolidated Fund of India without parliamentary approval.
- **Article 115:** Allows supplementary grants if the budget is insufficient.
- **Article 116:** Provides for Vote on Account and Vote of Credit if the budget is not passed before the start of the financial year.

What is Finance Bill?



Why in the News?

Initiating the debate on the Finance Bill in the Lok Sabha, Shashi Tharoor said south Indian States have been the engines of growth and revenue but don't get their due share from the Central pool of revenue.

About Financial Bills:

- Financial bills are governed under Article 117 of the Constitution. It outlines the requirements and procedures for the introduction of financial bills and specifies special provisions for doing so.
- A Finance Bill is normally filed to address supplemental financial plans or to give effect to the financial proposals for the upcoming fiscal year, as per Rule 219 of the Lok Sabha's Rules of Procedure.
- After the yearly budget is presented, a Finance Bill is introduced in the Lok Sabha.
- Although the Bill does not contain Article 110 requirements, it nonetheless uses money from the Consolidated Fund of India.
- It follows the same legislative process as an ordinary bill, where:
 - **Rajya Sabha** can reject or amend it.
 - In case of a deadlock, a **joint sitting** of both Houses may be convened.
- The President has the option of returning the bill for review or signing it into law.
- Not all financial bills are money bills, but all money bills are financial bills.
- Money bills are only allowed to address issues specifically covered by Article 110, such as taxation, borrowing, or the administration of the Consolidated Fund of India.

Types of Financial Bills:

- **Type-I: Financial Bills under Article 110**
 - These laws include provisions pertaining to taxation, borrowing, and spending of monies from the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI), among other topics listed in Article 110(1)(a) to (f).
 - These bills combine elements of regular and money bills. They include non-financial things that do not precisely fall

under Article 110, although they are treated similarly to money bills.

- **Type-II: Financial Bills under Article 117(3)**

- These legislation do not qualify as money bills even though they use funds from the Consolidated Fund of India.

- The Rajya Sabha has the authority to alter or reject them, and they go through the same legislative process as regular bills. When the two Houses cannot agree, the President may summon a joint session to break the impasse.

Science, Technology, Art & Culture

Successful PHTA Test of ISRO's Semi-Cryogenic Engine



Why in the News?

A crucial milestone in completing the cryogenic stage for next launch vehicles was the successful completion of a hot test by ISRO on the semi-cryogenic engine (SE2000). The first hardware test for semi-cryogenic engines is this Power Head Test Article (PHTA).

About the SE2000 Engine

- ISRO created the SE2000 engine, a semi-cryogenic rocket engine, to improve propulsion for next heavy-lift launchers.
- It is intended to supply energy to rocket booster stages, boosting payload efficiency and capacity.
- Unlike conventional cryogenic engines, which use liquid oxygen (LOX) and liquid hydrogen (LH2), the engine runs on a combination of LOX and refined kerosene (RP-1).
- Key features of the SE2000 engine:
 -

- With a thrust capacity of 2000 kN (kilonewtons), it is among ISRO's most potent engines.
- Greater efficiency compared to LOX-LH2 combinations is provided by higher density impulses.
- Cost-effective: Compared to liquid hydrogen, kerosene is less expensive and simpler to handle.
- Storage benefits: Unlike liquid hydrogen, which needs to be kept at -253°C , kerosene can be kept at room temperature.

- The engine is expected to enhance the performance of LVM3 and will be used in ISRO's Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV).

- **Applications of the SE2000 engine:**

- Missions involving heavy lifting and a larger cargo capacity.
- upcoming space exploration initiatives, such as Gaganyaan and other human spaceflight missions.
- Reusable launch vehicles help make space travel more affordable and environmentally friendly.

What is the PHTA Test?

- The PHTA test is a crucial hardware test conducted as part of the SE2000 semi-cryogenic engine development process.
- It is designed to validate key engine subsystems before full-scale integration and testing.

- **Purpose of the PHTA test:**
 - Ensure subsystems perform as expected under operational conditions.
 - Evaluate pressure, temperature, thrust efficiency, and fuel combustion.
 - Identify potential technical issues before moving to full engine testing.
- A previous attempt in July 2023 was aborted due to technical issues at ISRO's Mahendragiri facility.

'AI Kosha' Platform



Why in the News?

The Union Government has launched **AI Kosha**, a platform dedicated to **non-personal datasets**, marking a major step in India's AI research and development efforts.

What is AI Kosha?

- A government-supported portal for non-personal datasets, AI Kosha aids in the research and development of artificial intelligence (AI) in India.
- It acts as a single repository for structured datasets, especially for Indian languages, that are used to train AI models.
- One of the seven pillars of the ₹10,370 crore IndiaAI Mission, which seeks to democratize AI access and innovation, is the IndiaAI Datasets Platform, of which the platform is a crucial component.
- It contains 316 datasets upon launch, a large percentage of which are devoted to language translation tools for Indian languages.

- Up from 10,000 earlier this year, the government has now commissioned 14,000 GPUs for AI research.
- To facilitate advanced AI training and research, more processing power will be supplied every three months.

Key Features of AI Kosha:

- Like China's DeepSeek, AI Kosha seeks to assist India's first foundational AI model.
- collaborates with data.gov.in, the Open Governance Data Platform, which now houses 12,000 datasets from different government organizations.
- ensures the development of regional language AI by concentrating on Indian languages.
- comprises data from the 2011 Census, satellite imagery, health records, weather, and pollutants.
- provides access to high-performance computing (HPC) resources to support the development of AI.
- outfitted with real-time filtering, data encryption, and secure API access for data protection.

Genetically-Engineered Bananas to Reduce Food Waste



Why in the News?

Scientists at Tropic, a UK-based biotech company, **disabled the PPO gene in bananas** slowing down the browning process while allowing normal ripening.

About the Genetically Engineered Bananas

- Biotechnology is used to modify genetically produced bananas to increase durability, prevent browning, and prolong shelf life.
- These bananas are less likely to bruise and retain their yellow color for 12 hours after peeling.
- By preventing enzymatic browning, the alteration prolongs the fresh appearance of bananas without changing how they ripen.
- The enzyme that causes browning, polyphenol oxidase (PPO), is the target of the alteration.
- Disabling PPO activity slows down pigment oxidation, which postpones the development of brown patches.

Gene-Silencing Method Used:

- The PPO gene is silenced via RNA interference (RNAi), which lowers its activity without influencing the development of bananas as a whole.
- Small RNA molecules are introduced by RNAi, which inhibits the expression of the PPO gene and stops the browning enzyme from being synthesized.
- This technique differs from conventional genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in that it is accurate and does not add foreign DNA.
- Future crop alterations are also being investigated using gene-editing methods like CRISPR-Cas9.

What is a Sonic Weapon?



Why in the News?

It is alleged that Serbian Police used a banned sonic weapon to disperse protesters in Belgrade.

What are Sonic Weapons?

- Devices that can produce loud sounds, including both audible and inaudible sound waves, over great distances are known as acoustic or sonic weapons.
- Disorientation, soreness, or discomfort may result from these waves.
- Although sound amplifiers have been around for millennia, sonic weapons were first employed in the military in Iraq in 2004 and were initially utilized for crowd control in the 1990s.
- Working Mechanism: Sonic weapons transform energy into concentrated sound that may be adjusted in frequency, intensity, and duration using contemporary transducers.

Types of Sonic Weapons:

- **Long-Range Acoustic Device (LRAD):**
 - Range: Up to 8,900 meters for intelligible speech.
 - Sound Level: Can reach up to 160 dB, causing pain and potential hearing damage.
- **Mosquito:**
 - Target Audience: Emits high-pitched sounds painful to younger people (teenagers and those in their twenties). Adults above 30 typically cannot hear it due to age-related hearing loss.
- **Infrasonic Weapon:**
 - Sound Type: Delivers inaudible low-frequency sounds that cause pain and disorientation.
 - Development: Still in early stages, with ongoing research into its full potential.

Health Implications:

- Short-Term exposure can cause tinnitus, headaches, nausea, and vertigo.
- Prolonged exposure may lead to permanent hearing damage, and symptoms like tinnitus can last for days.

Security Issues

'Brahmastra' Missile



Why in the News?

Indian scientists have achieved a breakthrough in hypersonic missile technology, developing a modern-day 'Brahmastra' with an astonishing speed of 12,144 km per hour (Mach 10).

About Brahmastra (Long Range Anti-Ship Missile – LRASHM):

- Modern hypersonic glide missile Brahmastra was created by the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO).
- It is intended to destroy critical naval targets and enemy warships with lightning-fast accuracy.
- One of the swiftest and most deadly weapons in India's defense arsenal, the Brahmastra can reach a range of 1,500 km and reach a speed of Mach 10 (12,144 km/h).
- The missile can avoid enemy radar and missile defense systems because to its hypersonic glide vehicle technology, which guarantees highly accurate hits on naval targets.

Features of Brahmastra:

- It increases India's maritime attack capabilities and can be deployed from both land and naval platforms.
- Within 7 to 8 minutes of launch, Brahmastra can kill an opposing battleship because of its hypersonic speed.

- Because the missile is constructed of cutting-edge heat-resistant materials, it won't break apart in extremely hot or cold conditions while in flight.
- Brahmastra ensures exact impact because, in contrast to conventional missiles, it maintains its structural integrity even at hypersonic speeds.
- For extended hypersonic flight, it makes use of glide vehicle technology and scramjet propulsion.
- Its ability to change course in midair makes it extremely agile and challenging to intercept.
- Its low detection probability and radar-evading capabilities lower the chance of interception.

Exercise Khanjar-XII



Why in the News?

The 12th edition of the India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise KHANJAR-XII is set to be held in Kyrgyzstan.

About Exercise KHANJAR-XII

- The goal of the 12th India-Kyrgyzstan Joint Special Forces Exercise, KHANJAR-XII, is to improve special operations and counterterrorism skills.
- Since 2011, India and Kyrgyzstan have alternatively hosted this bilateral military drill every year.
- The venue for the 2025 edition is Kyrgyzstan.

Participants:

- **Indian Contingent:** Parachute Regiment (Special Forces).
- **Kyrgyzstan Contingent:** Kyrgyz Scorpion Brigade.
- Strengthening military cooperation, enhancing interoperability, and improving combined operational capabilities are the main goals for the two countries' Special Forces.

Key Features:

- Focus on Counterterrorism: Urban and high-altitude warfare training to combat contemporary security concerns.
- Enhancing coordination in combined military operations is known as special forces interoperability.
- Skills for Mountain Warfare and Survival: Improving operational efficacy in difficult environments.
- Military Technology Exchange: exchanging knowledge of surveillance, intelligence collection, and weaponry systems.
- Increasing India's Central Asia Outreach: As part of its Connect Central Asia initiative, India is stepping up its interactions with Central Asian countries.

India second-largest arms importer after Ukraine


Why in the News?

India remained the second-largest arms importer, despite a 9.3% decline in imports between 2015-19 and 2020-24 a/c to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Report.

About SIPRI

- Based in Stockholm, Sweden, the SIPRI is an independent institution that was founded in 1966 and carries out research on disarmament, weapons control, and conflict.
- SIPRI tracks defense trends and geopolitical conflicts globally by providing comprehensive data on global arms imports, exports, and military spending.
- It provides policy recommendations for global peace and stability by analyzing current conflicts, nuclear proliferation, cybersecurity risks, and environmental security.
- Governments, scholars, and policymakers frequently consult SIPRI's main publications, including the SIPRI Yearbook, Arms Transfers Database, and Military Expenditure Database.

India's Arms Imports: Trends and Shifts

- India continued to be the world's second-largest importer of weaponry, even though imports decreased 9.3% between 2015–19 and 2020–24.
- Compared to 55% in 2015–19 and 72% in 2010–14, Russia accounted for 36% of India's weaponry imports in 2020–24.
- India has strengthened its arms agreements with France, the United States, and Israel while decreasing its reliance on Russia.
- 36 Rafale fighter jets and six Scorpene submarines have already been contracted, making India France's largest arms importer (28%).
- Agreements for three more Scorpene submarines and 26 Rafale-M planes are being finalized by India.

Global Arms Trade Highlights

- The biggest importer is Ukraine, whose imports of weapons increased by about 100 times between 2020–24 and 2015–19 as a result of the ongoing conflict.
- Of Ukraine's imports, the United States made up 45%, Germany 12 percent, and Poland 11 percent.

- U.S. export dominance: The United States strengthened its position as the world's largest exporter by increasing its share of the global arms market to 43%.
- The collapse of Russia: Russia's arms exports dropped 64%, to 7.8% of global exports, trailing only France's 9.6%.
- European rearmament: In reaction to growing Russian security threats, European arms imports increased by 155%.
- Imports into Pakistan have increased by 61%, with China now providing 81% of Pakistan's armaments, up from 74% in 2015–19.
- China's independence: As a result of its growing domestic defense sector, China fell out of the top 10 arms importers for the first time since 1990–94.
- Italy's increase in arms exports: With a 4.8% proportion of the world's total arms exports, Italy moved up from 10th to 6th place.

Exercise Varuna



Why in the News?

India and France recently conducted the **23rd edition** of Exercise Varuna, a key bilateral naval exercise aimed at enhancing **interoperability** and **combat readiness** between the two countries' naval forces.

About Exercise Varuna

- India and France are participating in a bilateral naval drill called drill Varuna.
- First started in 1993, Varuna was given its formal name in 2001.
- The goal of the exercise is to strengthen the two countries' cooperation in maritime security, increase combat readiness, and improve interoperability.
- It covers a variety of areas, including as air, surface, and subsurface operations, with a particular focus on air combat exercises and anti-submarine warfare (ASW).
- **Key Highlights:**
 - INS Vikrant (India) and Charles de Gaulle (France) were among the participants in the 2025 edition, which was held off the coast of Goa from March 19 to 22.
 - Joint surface warfare operations, aircraft carrier operations, and ASW drills were also part of this year's training.
 - Fighters from the French Navy's Rafale-M and the Indian Navy's MiG-29K engaged in advanced air defense and simulated air-to-air combat.
 - French and Indian frigates guarded valuable assets, such as the French oiler Jacques Chevallier, while Indian Scorpene-class submarines acted as aggressors.
 - These exercises increased ASW tactics and underwater domain knowledge.

Other Notable India-France Military Exercises:

- **FRINJEX:** A joint exercise between the Indian and French armies focused on ground operations.
- **GARUDA:** A bilateral air exercise between the Indian and French air forces, first held in 2003.
- **SHAKTI:** A biennial military exercise between India and France, focusing on counter-terrorism operations.
- **La Pérouse:** A multilateral maritime exercise led by the French Navy, with India participating for the first time in 2021.



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