

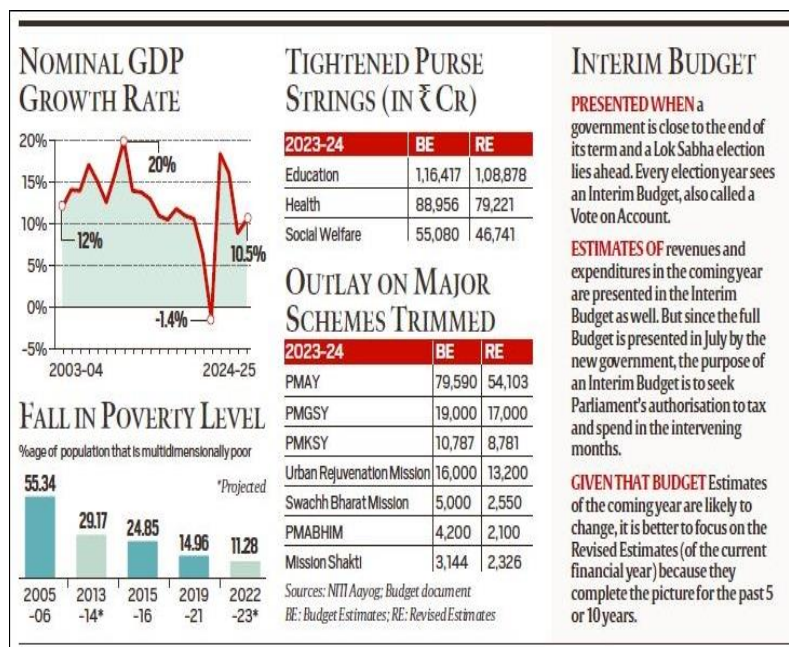
February - 03

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ The inaugural India-Saudi Arabia joint military exercise 'SADA TANSEEQ' had commenced in Rajasthan.
- ❖ The Netherlands team has won the inaugural Hockey 5s Women's World Cup, held at Oman, by defeating India.
- ❖ The Central Government launches the 'Anuvadini' app, an Artificial Intelligence-driven platform, to provide digital study materials in Indian languages.

NATIONAL

Interim Budget 2024



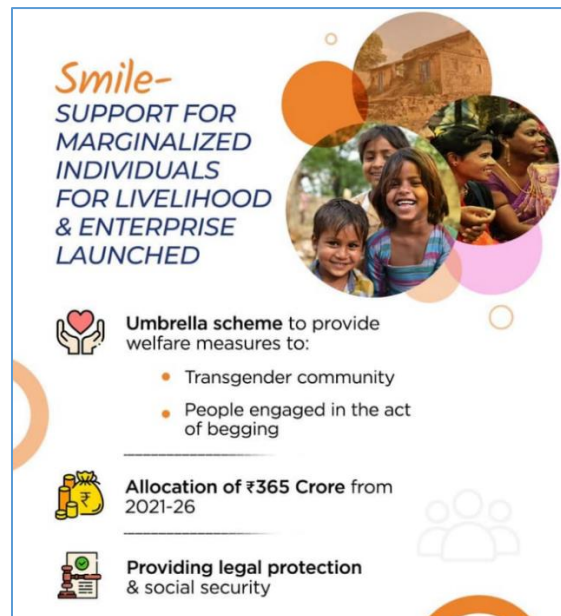
- ❖ Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Interim Budget in the Lok Sabha.
- ❖ She set a record by presenting the sixth Budget in a row -- five annual Budgets and one interim.
- ❖ She surpassed the records of her predecessors like Manmohan Singh, Arun Jaitley, P. Chidambaram, and Yashwant Sinha, who had presented five budgets in a row.
- ❖ Morarji Desai, as Finance Minister, had presented five annual Budgets and one interim Budget between 1959-1964.



- ❖ The Government proposed to maintain the same tax rates for direct and indirect taxes, including import duties.
- ❖ The Government borrowings on a gross and net basis for 2024-25, at Rs. 14.13 lakh crore and Rs. 11.75 lakh crore, respectively were lower than 2023-24.
- ❖ Spends on capital expenditure have been increased to ₹11.11 lakh crore for 2024-25.
- ❖ The Government will continue on path of fiscal consolidation to reduce fiscal deficit to 4.5% in 2025-26.
- ❖ A scheme to help middle class living in rented houses to buy or build their own houses will be launched.
- ❖ Tax benefits to start-ups and investments made by sovereign wealth or pension funds are extended by 1 year till March 31, 2025.
- ❖ Fiscal deficit for FY25 projected at 5.1% was lower than the revised estimate (5.8%) in FY24.
- ❖ The Govt is to borrow ₹14.13-lakh crore in next fiscal, lower than ₹15.43 lakh crore in FY24.
- ❖ Nominal GDP growth for FY25 is projected at 10.5%.
- ❖ Gross tax revenue target for FY25 was hiked 11.46% to ₹38.31-lakh crore, from ₹34.37 lakh crore in FY24.
- ❖ Direct tax collection target was set at ₹21.99-lakh crore, while that of indirect tax is at ₹16.22-lakh crore.
- ❖ The allocation for children in the interim Budget for fiscal year 2024-25 has witnessed a notable increase, reaching ₹109,493.08 crore.
- ❖ The defence budget was increased to ₹6.21 lakh crore for 2024-25 in a modest hike of 4.72 per cent from last year's allocation of ₹5.25 lakh crore.
- ❖ The budgetary allocation for the civil aviation ministry has come down to ₹2,300 crore.
- ❖ The agriculture ministry has been allocated ₹1,27,469.88 crore for 2024-25 financial year.
- ❖ The government has allotted more than ₹73,000 crore for school education in the interim Budget for 2024-25.
- ❖ The largest share of aid portfolio has been granted to Bhutan with the allocation of ₹2,068 crore.
- ❖ ₹13,000 crore was allocated to the Tribal Affairs Ministry in the interim Budget 2024-25, with an increase of 70 per cent from the previous financial year.
- ❖ The Ayushman Bharat scheme will be expanded to all ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers and helpers.

- ❖ The Centre will encourage cervical cancer vaccination and combine maternal and child health care schemes into one comprehensive programme.
- ❖ The Government will subsidise the construction of 30 million affordable houses in rural areas.
- ❖ Two crores more homes will be built under the PM Awas Yojana.
- ❖ Rooftop solar for at least 300 units of power generation which will be given free electricity for households.
- ❖ Government has pulled 25 crore people out of poverty in ten years.
- ❖ FM noted that government provided free food for 80 crore people through various schemes.
- ❖ Direct Benefit Transfers of Rs. 34 lakh crores through PM Jan Dhan Yojana accounts have led to savings of ₹2.7 lakh crore.
- ❖ 43 crore loans were sanctioned under PM Mudra Yojana.
- ❖ The Government will also expand the 'Lakhpati Didi' scheme to empower rural women and boost the rural economy.
- ❖ 30 crore Mudra Yojana loans were disbursed to women entrepreneurs.
- ❖ The next 'full budget' will be presented in July, once a new government has been sworn in after the Lok Sabha elections.

National Initiative to Rehabilitate Beggars



- ❖ The government targets 30 cities for a nationwide survey and rehabilitation effort to eliminate beggary, emphasizing adults, women, and children.

- ❖ The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment collaborates with local authorities, aiming to create beggar-free zones by 2026.
- ❖ The initiative is the part of the 'Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprises' sub-scheme (SMILE).
- ❖ It includes a national portal and mobile app for real-time updates.

Mineral (Auction) Amendment Rules, 2024



- ❖ The centre has notified changes to the Mineral auction rules recently.
- ❖ It caps the upfront payment at Rs 500 crore while also barring affiliates from bidding for the same block.
- ❖ A bidder shall submit only one bid in an auction of a mineral block.
- ❖ No affiliate of a bidder shall submit another one in the same auction.
- ❖ An affiliate has been defined as a person (or company) controlled by another bidder in the auction.
- ❖ These rules also make way for granting the exploration licenses (EL) by state government.
- ❖ EL can also be bid out by the state and centre.
- ❖ Performance security for an exploration license has been fixed at Rs 2 crore for area more than 500 square kilometres (sq km) but less than or equal to 1000 sq km.

INTERNATIONAL

World's First Malaria Vaccine Program for Children

- ❖ Cameroon will be the first country to routinely give children a new malaria vaccine as the shots is rolled out in Africa.

- ❖ It aims to curb the mosquito-spread disease on the continent, which accounts for 95% of the world's malaria deaths.
- ❖ In Africa, there are about 250 million cases of the parasitic disease each year, including 6,00,000 deaths, mostly in young children.
- ❖ Cameroon will use the first of two recently approved malaria vaccines, known as Mosquirix.



ECONOMY

Switzerland-India Free Trade Agreement

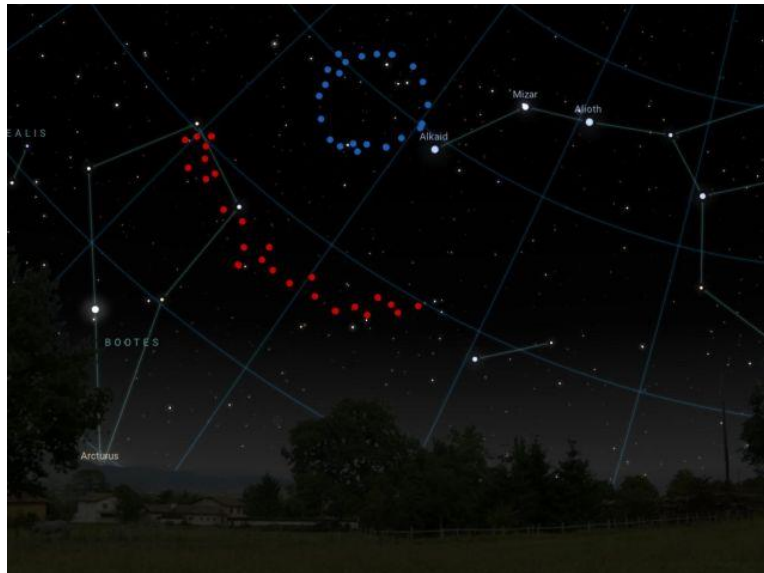


- ❖ Switzerland and India have reached consensus on a free-trade agreement after 16 years of negotiations.

- ❖ Switzerland has large historical accumulations of gold and it primarily refines imported gold.
- ❖ In 2022-23, India's imports from Switzerland stood at \$15.79 billion, in stark contrast to its exports of \$1.34 billion
- ❖ It was leading to a substantial trade deficit of \$14.45 billion.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Big ring

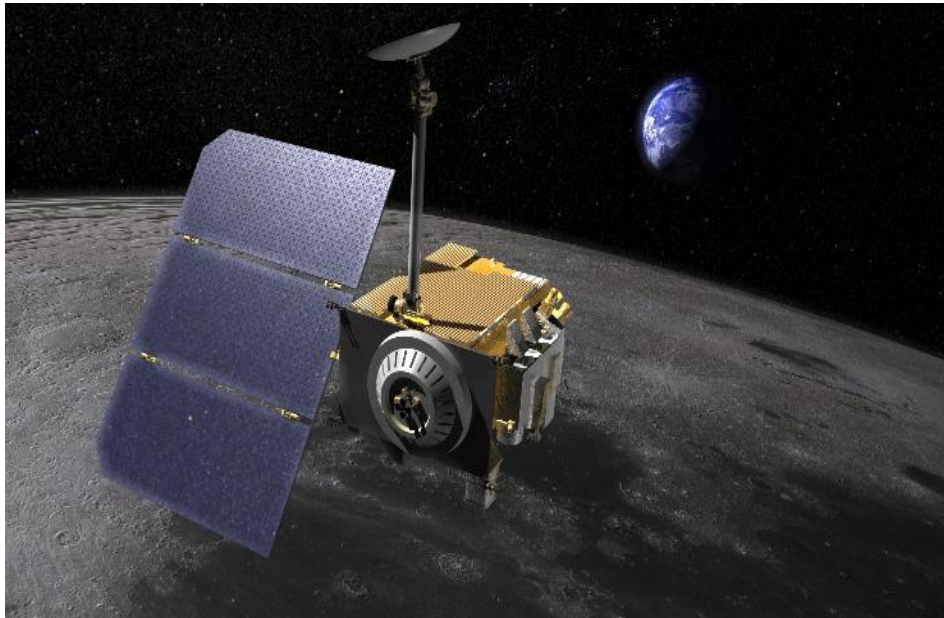


- ❖ Scientists have found an enormous ring-shaped structure called the Big Ring.
- ❖ It was positioned an astonishing 9.2 billion light-years away from Earth.
- ❖ This massive cosmic formation is made up of galaxies and clusters of galaxies.
- ❖ Its diameter is approximately 1.3 billion light-years and a total circumference of around 4 billion light-years.
- ❖ It appears to be roughly 15 times the size of the Moon in the night sky as seen from Earth.
- ❖ It is the second giant structure discovered in 2021 by Lopez and her colleagues.
- ❖ The first, called the Giant Arc, is actually in the same part of the sky, at the same distance away.

Laser Communication with Chandrayaan-3 Lander

- ❖ A NASA spacecraft has successfully pinged India's Chandrayaan-3 lander on the moon.

- ❖ A laser beam was transmitted and reflected between its Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) and the Vikram lander for the first time on the lunar surface.
- ❖ This successful experiment opens the door to a new style of precisely locating targets on the moon's surface.
- ❖ NASA's LRO pointed its laser altimeter instrument toward Vikram.
- ❖ The lander was 62 miles, or 100 kilometers, away from LRO, near Manzinus crater in the moon's south pole region, when LRO transmitted laser pulses toward it.
- ❖ The Vikram lander landed in the lunar south pole region on August 23, 2023.



ENVIRONMENT

Two new mammals in Kaziranga

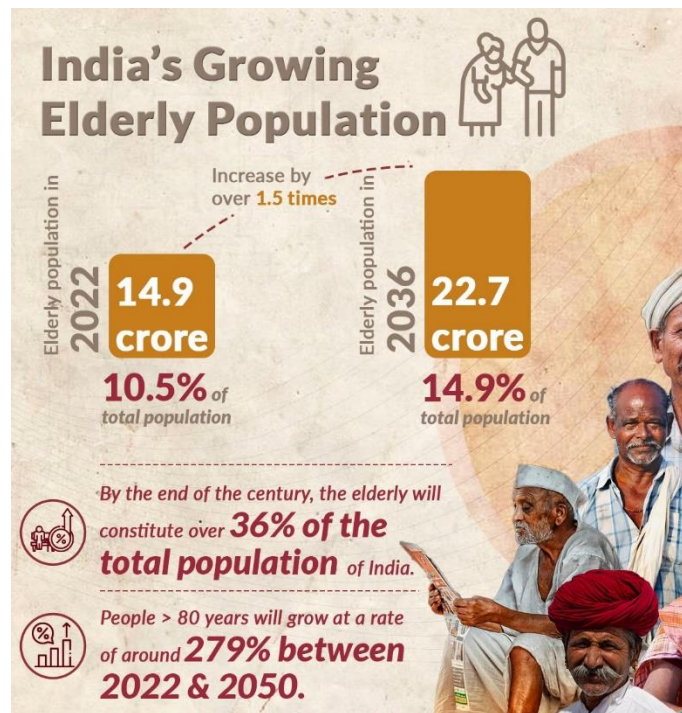
- ❖ Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR) in Assam revealed two new mammalian species, the Binturong and the small-clawed otter.
- ❖ The Binturong, the largest civet in India, was spotted during a migratory bird count.
- ❖ Small-clawed otter is the smallest otter species in the world.
- ❖ This mammal has a wide distribution range extending through India eastwards to Southeast Asia and southern China.
- ❖ In India, it is found mostly in the protected areas of West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and some parts of Kerala in the Western Ghats region.

- ❖ The park now hosts 37 mammalian species, enriching its biodiversity.



STATES

India Ageing Report 2023: Jammu Kashmir's Life Expectancy



- ❖ This is jointly conducted by the International Institute for Population Sciences and the United Nations Population Fund.
- ❖ Jammu Kashmir emerges as a region with remarkable resilience against elderly poverty.
- ❖ It has mere 4.2 percent of its aged population falling below the poverty line.
- ❖ Jammu Kashmir stands out with the highest life expectancy after the age of 60.

- ❖ Males exhibit a life expectancy of 20.3 percent, and females, 23.0 percent, making it the leader in this demographic indicator between 2015-19.

PERSONALITIES, AWARDS, AND EVENTS

Dr Nitya Anand

- ❖ Dr Nitya Anand, who discovered India's first oral contraceptive pill 'Saheli', passed away recently.
- ❖ He was the former director of the Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI) from 1974 to 1984.
- ❖ He was the brain behind the discovery of Centchroman', popularly known as 'Saheli.'
- ❖ It was the world's first and only non-steroidal, non-hormonal, once-a-week oral contraceptive pill.
- ❖ It was launched by then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986.
- ❖ Even today, it is the only non-steroidal non-hormonal contraceptive in the world.



SPORTS

Australian Open 2024

- ❖ Jannik Sinner of Italy secured his first Grand Slam in men's singles.
- ❖ Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus claimed her second in women's singles.
- ❖ Rohan Bopanna (India) & Matthew Ebden claimed Men's Doubles.

- ❖ Rohan Bopanna became the oldest man (at the age of 43) to win men's doubles.
- ❖ Hsieh Su-Wei and Elise Mertens won women's doubles.
- ❖ Hsieh, with Jan Zielinski, clinched mixed doubles.
- ❖ Sinner (22 years 165 days) became the youngest Australian Open champion since 2008.



MISCELLANEOUS

Madhika Language



- ❖ Madhika is a language spoken by the Chakaliya community that migrated from Karnataka centuries ago.
- ❖ It is fast becoming extinct with the younger generation opting for Malayalam.
- ❖ There are only two people left, who are the last fluent speakers of Madhika.



- ❖ Madhika is a language with no script and is a blend of Telugu, Tulu, Kannada, and Malayalam.
- ❖ Despite sounding similar to Kannada, it can bewilder listeners due to its diverse linguistic influences.
- ❖ Madhika is largely influenced by Havyaka Kannada, an old form of Kannada.

